

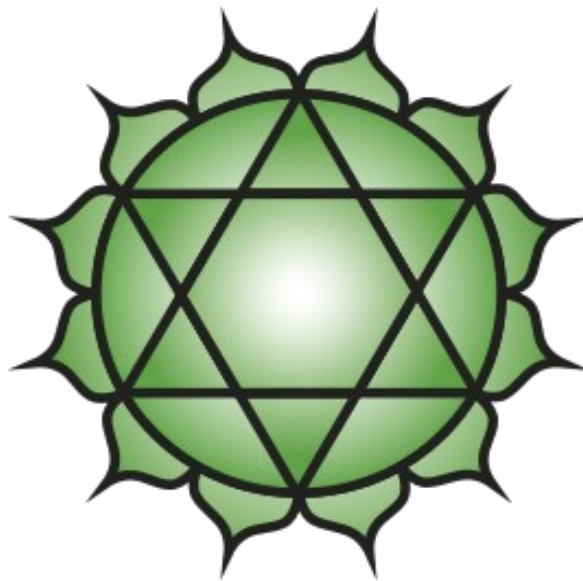


STUDY PAPERS ON THE ORIGINAL MICHAELIAN GROUP

The Legacy of Philip Wittmeyer – Volume 6

“SP-Partial” Preview Release — 18 April 2023

Parts, chapters, sections, and subsections marked with a number in a circle ① are complete. The numbers indicate batches that I wrote and that my editor reviewed. Parts, chapters, sections, and subsections marked with a check ✓ are semi-complete: they are not yet fully polished by me and reviewed by my editor. The remaining parts, chapters, and sections (that have no mark) are incomplete; you should probably just ignore them. Instead, watch this space for additional releases on the way to “SP-Whole”.



④ *Study Papers on the Original Michaelian Group*

by Philip Joel Wittmeyer

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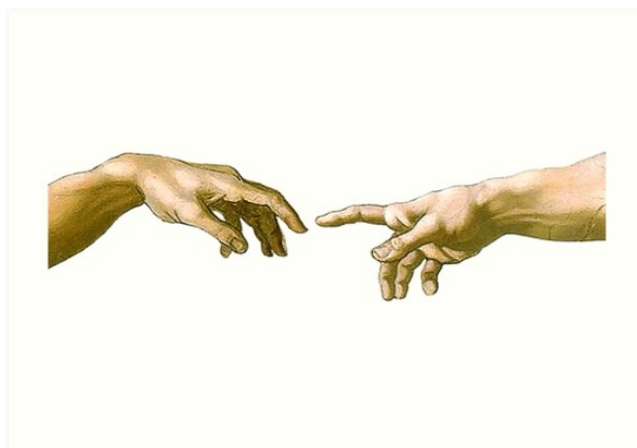
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The intention is that this book and six others by this author will eventually be published by The Center for Michael Teachings, Inc., a non-profit organization dedicated to procuring, processing, publishing, and promulgating Michaelian teachings materials; I am a board member there. For more information about that organization, and the Michaelian teachings in general, please visit www.centerformichaelteachings.org. And while you are there, you could purchase some of the books we have already published.

The image on the title page is of the Heart Chakra, called “Anahata” in Sanskrit; it was borrowed from the Wikipedia page on that subject. The Heart Chakra is the middle of seven major chakras; it is the bridge between a ‘lower’ triad and a ‘higher’ triad of chakras. The purple-colored image on page eight is called the “Antah’karana”. This is a Sanskrit word and image for the concept of the totality of Mind. As with the Heart Chakra, the image represents the bridge between the ‘lower’ and the ‘higher’ realms; it has been adopted by Reiki practitioners as a symbol of the healing of the three levels of Being, namely body, mind, and spirit. Note the three-dimensional cube in the center, with three ‘arms’, representing the fundamental trichotomy of the Cosmos. The image of two hands on this page is yet another evocation of the fundamental dichotomy of the Cosmos. It is from the Sistine Chapel ceiling painting by Michelangelo: the passive hand of Adam on the left and the active hand of God on the right are extended toward each other. The Yin–Yang symbol, on page nine — also with passive and active sides — has the Chinese name “Taijitu”; its meaning is that apparent opposites define and contain each other.



⑧ The Meta-Michaelian Project

Several channels have promulgated their own version of the so-called “Michael teaching” over the decades, and they have documented their words in books and on websites. When reading these, it is obvious even to the casual observer that the emphasis and style and substance and coverage embodied in each particular version is different from the other offerings, and it is also obvious that the differences depend somewhat on the personality of the channel. Thus, the Michaels’ messages have not been delivered with one ‘voice’, literally and figuratively. Each version consists of a conglomeration of doctrines and dogmas that have been delivered didactically and descriptively and without evidence or argument or explanation. Mostly there are similarities between these various versions, but there are also significant differences. Newbie students of the material quickly discover that there is not a *consistent* and *coherent* and *consilient* teaching that came *through* a single source, even though it is claimed that it comes *from* a single source.

By *inconsistent* I mean that sometimes the versions from different channels do not always agree with each other in all matters where the information overlaps; the information from one version is not supplementary or complementary to other versions, it is actually directly contradictory. By *incoherent* I mean that the author of each version has cobbled their doctrines together without realizing that they constitute an elegant, cohesive, integrated, holistic system that can be presented within a unified comprehensive explanatory framework. An analogy is that the various doctrines seem like a dissonant cacophony; reading about them is like listening to this musical instrument and then that musical instrument and so on without realizing that the individual instruments are playing in a combined coordinated harmonious orchestra. By *non-consilient* I mean that the versions do not agree in every respect with other credible sources, whether they be channeled, mystical, perennial, scientific, and/or philosophical systems. If I were to apply one word to these three types of defects or deficiencies in the Michael teachings, it would be “nonsense”.

Therefore, it seems to me that there is no collective body of information that can be reasonably called *The Michael Teaching*; rather, what we see is a variety of quasi-Michael or semi-Michael or Michael-like or pseudo-Michael (if Yarbro’s claim that groups other than hers are “frauds and impostors”) teachings, or what may be called “Michaelian teachings” — and that is what I call it in my books that refer to this body of information.

When I survey the situation, I see two broad divisions in the Michaelian teachings world. The “standard”, shall we say, Michaelian teachings includes the work of Sarah Chambers, of Leslie Briggs, of Quinn Yarbro and others in her orbit, of JP Van Hulle and others in her orbit, of José Stevens, of Shepherd Hoodwin, and of Troy Tolley. These channels have not drifted very far outside the ‘box’ of the generalized Michaelian teachings. Channels in the other broad division acknowledge that their work is, shall we say, “para-Michaelian”, “para” being the Greek-language prefix meaning “beside” or “next to”. For instance, Stephen Cocconi says he is working with the “Michael Consortium”, his channeling having stated that the Michaels have graduated to the next higher “plane” from where they originally spoke: (><https://www.themichaelteaching.com/about-stephen/michaels-consortium/><). Susannah Redelfs acknowledges the standard Michaelian teachings, but says she is actually working with the “Council of One” (><https://councilofone.org/><). Karen Murray (aka Talyaa Liera) says she used to work with the Michaels, but subsequently worked with “Polaris” and is now working with “Solara” (><https://oracleofdestiny.com/about-talyaa/><). Varda Hasselmann encountered Yarbro’s first two books about the Michaelian teachings in the mid-1980s, but became a channel for “Die Quelle”, described as a sibling reunited Entity to the Michaels on the third plane (><https://septana.de/septana/><). Larry Byram started out as a student of Alice Bailey, then became a channel for the Michaelian teachings in the mid-1980s, but has diverged away from that foundation to create his own teaching in the wider Michaelian world (><https://higheralignment.com/><). All of these channels in both of these divisions can be considered to be variations in the greater Michaelian teachings world, with some being more divergent or derivative than others.

Another instantiation of diversity in Michaelian sources is the assertion that the Michaels themselves do not always speak as a single unified entity. In *MFM*, on page 102 (quoting an early session the original Michaelian group, 27 October 1973), it was said that the Michaels are an “Entity” that consist of 850 Warrior Fragments and 200 King Fragments. However, in the first session that Sarah Chambers held when she resumed public channeling in 1996 (14 January), it was said that not just two Roles, but all Roles were present in the Michaels’ Entity. It was also stated that various channels prefer to hear from certain conglomerations of Roles, such as the Sages and/or the Priests and/or the Scholars within the Michael Entity. It was also stated that various

channels are better or worse at getting information on various subjects because of the depth of understanding that the channel has on the background information on that subject. This diversity in source and receiver provides further evidence for my assertion that there is no consistent, coherent, consilient body of “Michael Teaching”; rather, there is an inconsistent, incoherent, inconsilient “Michaelian teachings”.

The fact that there are various resources in the Michaelian worlds (heavenly and earthly) has its advantages and disadvantages. On the one hand, the Michaelian teachings are broader and deeper and richer as a result of the various perspectives provided by various alleged sources and receivers. On the other hand, it might be disconcerting to students to see the many actual inconsistencies and discrepancies within and between and among channels. I am one of those who finds the situation dismaying and disappointing. So what are we truth-seekers to do about this fact? What are we to make of these variations? My answer is: Do our own research — because I have done my own research. To me, this does not seem unimportant. To the Michaels themselves, they are reported to have said that this is not unimportant; in fact, it is said to be vital.

Some students are drawn to and prefer one version in the Michaelian teachings world over the other versions, and they let it go at that; they do not examine the issues of contradiction and incoherence and non-consilience at depth, and this avoids the difficulties and unpleasantness of confronting contradictions and incoherence and non-compliance with other teachings. However, to their credit, every Michaelian channel says that their students should not “let it go at that”; they say that it is up to students to “validate” the channeled information, and that to not do so renders the teaching worthless — or worse, misleading — for those students. Some Michaelian students take this injunction more seriously than others do. Furthermore, some students have more competence in scientific acumen and/or epistemological sophistication and/or experiential curiosity than others do, and they bring these tools to bear on their process of validation.

There is more to say regarding the process of validation.

There are far too many errors in channeling for us to trust it implicitly. We know for a fact that these errors exist because there are many obvious irreconcilable contradictions. The channels make no efforts that I know of to correct the errors, and the Michaels make no efforts that I know of to correct the errors (except maybe they are using me for that purpose). To their credit, the channels do say that we should not trust them implicitly, and they do enjoin students to validate the channeling. My concern is that most students are naively credulous by nature; my observation is that few if any students actually do the validation process at all. Or it may be that if they do it they do not broadcast their conclusions, as I have done.

Almost the entirety of the Michaelian teachings has been asserted without evidence and/or argument; it is delivered *ex cathedra*, by ‘pontification’, and students are *indoctrinated* thereby and therewith. Personally, I find this type of delivery to be profoundly problematic; it is like a fundamentalist cultish religion that takes some alleged Holy Scripture as the Word of God. Perhaps I find this to be more odious than others do because I was once a member of just such an organization. (“Fool me once, shame on you. Fool me twice, shame on me.”) What are we to do? Perhaps you have heard it said in some legal systems that a person accused of a crime is “presumed innocent until proven guilty in a court of law”. Following that pattern, my approach is to presume that a channeled dogma-doctrine is in the limbo zone of my belief system until corroborated or discredited “beyond a reasonable doubt”. Perhaps you have heard it said that “That which is asserted without evidence can be dismissed without evidence.” Following that aphorism, if I cannot accumulate enough evidence and argument to validate or invalidate a particular Michaelian dogma-doctrine, then I leave it in the limbo zone of my belief system.

Personally, I take the fact that there are issues of consistency, coherence, and consilience within and among the various Michaelian versions and scientific and philosophical and spiritual teachings as an incentive, not a disincentive, to study harder and deeper and wider. It may be that I function near the extreme, which is why I have adopted the motto, “The unexamined teaching is not worth believing.” Using the tools known to me, and bringing to bear whatever talents I may have, to my own satisfaction I have been able to validate some components of some versions of the Michaelian teachings, I have been able to invalidate some components of some versions of the Michaelian teachings, and yet other components are still in the limbo zone of my belief system, yet to be moved to one or the other side of the validation–invalidation ledger. Supplemental to the changes or modification to the Michaelian teachings arrived at via my process of validation, I have added some relevant components of my own to the validation ledger; they are my ‘special sauce’ added to the mix of various Michaelian versions. In addition to that, I have discovered that there are *explanations* for some of the Michaelian dogma-doctrines that were delivered *ex cathedra*, meaning, delivered without explanation. By

“explanations” I mean that there are levels of meaning and understanding both ‘below’ and ‘above’ the superficial layer that Michaelian students have been made aware of.

Regarding the concept of “explanation”, a metaphor is appropriate. Some, if not many, Michaelian students are in the ‘grade school’ level of their learning about the Michaelian dogma-doctrines. This is where the student typically learns by rote memorization, because that is all they are capable of ... before maturity. This is where they read the books and the websites and they can repeat what the channel said about a particular subject on this page of a book or that URL of a website. This is a necessary phase in the story arc of the overall learning process for newbie students. However, the Michaels enjoined us to validate and inculcate their teaching experientially: put it into practice. The Michaelian teachings cannot do that experiential learning for you — you must do that for yourself.

However, I take the position that there are layers of “explanation” ‘above’ and ‘below’ the superficial strata of data that is imparted via channeling. For instance, a personality trait on the Overleaf chart can be described in minute detail and at great length — Michaelian books and websites do just that — and it leads to comprehension, but only of a primitive and preliminary sort. What a dogmatic didactic teaching does not do is provide an *explanation* of *how* or *why* that particular trait is what it is and does what it does; the mere bare description of a trait does not provide the *context* in which the *content* of the trait is to be understood at the larger and deeper level of explanation and understanding. Most books mention the *Attributes* of the traits — e.g., Cardinal Inspiration — but none of them other than my books explain the Attributes of those traits in the context of the ontological substrate of the reality system in which we find our consciousness embedded, namely logic and mathematics and physics. And not only the Overleaf System, but many other components of the dogma-doctrines of the Michaelian teachings can be understood in terms of these ontological primitives. The goal of my project is to provide the *explanations* that get behind and go beyond the mere *descriptions* that have heretofore been provided by the channels to their newbie students.

Returning to the school metaphor: I aspire to emulate the kind of learning that takes place in the educational system after graduation from high school, where there is less mere description and more deep explanation. In American terms, this means the bachelor’s degree, the master’s degree, and the doctoral degree. Even here though, as I understand it, getting a master’s degree indicates that the graduate has mastered a subject at its current level of understanding. Only the doctoral degree goes ‘meta’ in the sense that it teaches the student — or *should* teach the student — how and why to learn, how and why to think for themselves, how and why to research for themselves, how and why to extend the horizon of knowledge and understanding beyond the current level of knowledge and understanding in a particular field of inquiry. My hope is that Michaelian students will get a master’s degree in the Michaelian teachings with the help of my books, but then go even further into what amounts to doctoral degree territory with the help of my additional components, which provides something like a doctoral degree of understanding and explanation. My extensions are not the complete or the final answer, but my claim is that they are steps in the right direction.

In abidance with the ethical principle of ‘full disclosure’, I would be remiss if I did not notify readers at the beginning of my books that what I offer in my books is not The Michael Teaching, first of all because there is no such thing, as indicated above, and second of all because I offer yet another distinct version in the pool of various Michaelian teachings; my Michaelian ‘train’ is running on a different ‘track’, so to speak. Because I have made unique modifications and added explanations to the standard version, I have come to refer to my version as the Meta-Michaelian project, “meta” being the Greek-language prefix meaning “above and beyond”. Perhaps I could have called it the “Philipian” project, but that would not acknowledge its broad affinity with, and my indebtedness to, Michaelian sources. Whatever the name, *the Meta-Michaelian project is my own thing*; it is not a thoughtless regurgitation of what the Michaels allegedly said through some alleged channel or channels; it is what I have validated and invalidated; it is what I say through my computer word processor. And, per the tradition of all other Michaelian teachings, I encourage validation, lest the reader find my particular offering worthless and/or misleading.

As I said above, the Meta-Michaelian project is not a re-presentation of the familiar material that the reader finds in other Michaelian books and on Michaelian websites. It is, among other things, a re-formulation of the Michaelian teachings from the ground up, built on a foundation of ontological primitives in addition to channeling; in fact, the reformulation occasionally overrides channeling. I am not a ‘channel’, but it may be that I am a ‘conduit’. Frankly, I am not exactly certain where it comes from. It may be that my muse is the “technology and science entity” that was mentioned in the 14 April 1974 session of the original Michaelian group. My process for doing the Meta-Michaelian project is perhaps similar to channeling. As I conceptualize

it, there is a sub-personality, which I call The Writer, which lives in the right hemisphere of my brain. It has absorbed a lot of cosmological, metaphysical, philosophical, sociological, anthropological, scientific, psychological, and technical information over this lifetime and perhaps other lifetimes; I have read a number of books that bear on ontological primitives or 'first principles', and I have had a number of transcendent mystical experiences that bear on 'first principles'. My right brain hemisphere assimilates and processes and integrates this information; it notices abstract patterns and systems and concepts; it translates it all into words, and sends them across the *corpus callosum* to the left hemisphere of my brain when it is in a receptive state, and that hemisphere instructs the body to write the words down on scraps of paper, take them to my computer, and commit them to a word processor. Beyond that conceptualization, I am reluctant to characterize my muse as a "higher self" or an "entity" on some Plane beyond the Physical. The bottom line is that I add to the Michaelian material when the Meta-Michaelian material comes to me or through me. Wherever the inspiration comes from, the unique perspective is what makes my books different from anything that Michaelian students have previously seen.

Looking back to August of 1981 when I first began to study the Michaelian teachings in earnest, it seems that I was not satisfied with the Michaelian teachings as they were then. Neither am I satisfied with them as they have become. From the beginning of this journey, I have seen things that Michaelian students have not yet seen; I have understood things that Michaelian students have not yet understood, even after four decades. It appears that I 'march to a different drummer'. This journey leads me to believe that I have never actually been a Michaelian student; rather, I have always been a Meta-Michaelian student. So, as I said, I have added and subtracted and multiplied and divided the mainstream orthodoxy of the Michaelian teachings in my own unique way. One metaphor for what I have done is that I found the Michaelian teachings as a 'diamond in the rough', a gem that has just been dug out of a mine, rough and covered with dirt. It is ugly in this state, but it has a lot of potential. It even has some practical utility in this raw state. My Meta-Michaelian project is to clean it, cut it, and polish it, so that it is a gem of sublime beauty as well as utility. The purpose of the Meta-Michaelian project is to throw out the 'bathwater' while retaining the 'baby'. Another metaphor, one from the Bible, is to 'separate the wheat from the chaff'. Yet another metaphor is that I found the Michaelian teachings to be like a dilapidated ramshackle edifice, and I have refurbished and remodeled them, and added some rooms. It can also be thought of in these terms, that by applying the tools of consistency, coherence, and consilience (described in the second paragraph of this section), the Meta-Michaelian project is the 'error-correction code' that attempts to clean up the Michaelian 'signal' by removing the 'noise' created by the fact that there are various sources and receivers of the Michaelian teachings. Please keep in mind that I am not averse to the sensible components of the Michaelian teachings; I am only trying to fix the senseless components. My aim in my books is to keep the beautiful, healthy 'baby' and throw out the filthy 'bathwater'; my purpose is to eat what is 'wheat' and throw out what is 'chaff'. And, speaking of babies and eating, I wish to no longer be 'spoon-fed' like an infant; what about you?

A situation that is common with Michaelian students is that they either lose interest in learning more about the Michaelian teachings so they look elsewhere, or they hunger for more within the Michaelian teaching but do not find it and become stagnant. The Meta-Michaelian project suggests that there is much to be 'interpolated' within the current realm of the Michaelian teachings, and much to be 'extrapolated' outside the current realm of the Michaelian teachings. My suggestion is that the entire cosmos, from the largest realm to the smallest realm, can be better understood with the help and guidance of the Meta-Michaelian project.

Personally, I find the defects and deficiencies in the Michaelian teachings to be awkward at best, and embarrassing at worst. The Priest-ish (Cardinal Inspiration) components in my personality (Priest tertiary influences, Spiritualist, Arrogance) feel disappointed that the teacher and the students have made no efforts to correct the issues — which are obvious even to casual observers — as part of the Validation process. The Priest in me says, "We can do better than this!" It wants to feel pride in the Michaelian teachings, it wants to be able to recommend the Michaelian teachings to others wholeheartedly, but, in its current state of disarray, it cannot be advocated.

The point that I drive home in my books is that the Michaelian teachings is not the be-all and end-all of accurate information. One should not presume that it is at the top level of available knowledge about anything. The lack of consistency, coherence, and consilience among the channels demonstrates that conclusively. To assume that a supernatural entity is able to accurately communicate through a mere human — if that is what is happening here — is a huge leap of faith. As Morpheus said to Neo in the Matrix movie,

my books suggest to the reader that they take the ‘red pill’, “free your mind”, and wake up in their own intuitive faculties that are enlightened by the real worlds of science, technology, engineering, and math.

Others may find it uncomfortable that some of my work involves pointing out the defects and deficiencies of the Michaelian teachings, but this could be a useful phase in their transition to a Meta-Michaelian project of their own, should they ever become dissatisfied with the Michaelian teachings in their current condition. Even though my Meta-Michaelian project is distinctive from the Michaelian teachings, in this book and in my six other books, my aspiration for service is that I have something worth sharing with the Michaelian community, after my four decades of involvement in it. “Your mileage may vary”, as the saying goes, but here it is for whatever it is worth to you, somewhere between zero and infinity; you make the evaluation. Seven books that document the Meta-Michaelian project are in progress. My aspiration is that the reader benefit from the fruits of my efforts thus far. May you enjoy and learn.

Dedication

To all Michaelian and Para-Michaelian and Meta-Michaelian students — everywhere and everywhen.

But also, I am reminded of Jesus’s parable of the sower and the seed:

The Parable of the Sower (sometimes called the Parable of the Soils) is a parable of Jesus found in Matthew 13:1–23, Mark 4:1–20, Luke 8:4–15 and the extra-canonical Gospel of Thomas.

Jesus tells of a farmer who sows seed indiscriminately. Some seed falls on the path (wayside) with no soil, some on rocky ground with little soil, some on soil which contains thorns, and some on good soil. In the first case, the seed is taken away; in the second and third soils, the seed fails to produce a crop; but when it falls on good soil, it grows and yields thirty-, sixty-, or a hundred-fold.

Jesus later explains to his disciples that the seed represents the Gospel, the sower represents anyone who proclaims it, and the various soils represent people’s responses to it.

[>https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Parable_of_the_Sower< — retrieved 28 March 2023]

My guess is that there are many spiritual seekers who could be likened to ‘dark matter’ in that they are influenced by the books and websites of the Michaelian teachings, but they are invisible to the Michaelian students who make themselves visible to other students. May this book be like a ‘seed planted in fertile soil’ — the ‘soil’ being the hearts and minds of spiritual seekers of every kind, not just Michaelian.

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The purpose of the copyright is, of course, not to stop the information from spreading; it is to give credit where credit is due. Although you are not forbidden to copy and disseminate the entire document verbatim, you may prefer to borrow (some of) the ideas, modify them, and/or add to them; you are also allowed to do this to your heart’s content, and present the modifications as your own. Even here it is common courtesy to let others know where some of the original inspiration came from, and that would be me and this book and my other books.

I believe that the Michaelian teachings deserves to be as widely known as other spiritual teachings. The book has been written in a way that it can be used as a manual, a manual that might lend itself to group learning such as monthly meetings and gatherings. I am not the type to lead seminars or retreats myself, but if you are, and if you have studied the system with a view to teaching it and receiving compensation, then by all means do so. If you want to rework the information in your own words and for your own purposes, I encourage that, so long as you attribute the source to me, so that others can find me. I in my turn refer the reader to the precursors to my perspective, first of all *Messages from Michael*, by Chelsea Quinn Yarbro, and subsequently other books and teachers who can be found via an internet search for “Michael teachings”. In my books I have uniquely adapted and modified the information found in the Michaelian teachings community as a whole. Go thou and do likewise.

It may not be possible to apply this present copyright notice strictly. Precursor portions of this *Study Papers on the Original Michaelian Group* manuscript have been distributed to Michaelian students over the decades since it was originally written, during the years 2010 to 2024. Many versions of the manuscript in various stages of completion and polish were released and distributed, and who knows what has become of them? Printouts of those versions had a cover letter, and it included a copyright notice that changed over the versions. Basically, my intention for copyrighting the manuscript was to preclude anyone else from claiming the work as their own and claiming their copyright on it and thereby blocking my ability to copyright it. Whatever it said in its various incarnations, perhaps those copyrights are still relevant for those printouts. If you are not sure what to do with the use and/or distribution of my writings, including this book and/or the previous versions, contact me and we will talk about it.

Acknowledgments

Thanks, of course, to Sarah Chambers for the original channeling of the Michael entity, to members of the original Michaelian group for recording, transcribing, and disseminating the transcriptions, and to Chelsea Quinn Yarbro for publishing *Messages from Michael* based on those and other transcriptions; all that allowed me to find the Michaelian teachings in 1980. Thanks to others who have published books on the Michaelian teachings and created websites: you know who they are. Thanks to all of the friends I have made among Michaelian students, and who have taught me much. Thanks to Nancy Gillpatrick Cross, who was my primary editor on this book; her comments were invaluable. Thanks to [\[\[names to be listed in alphabetical order \]\]](#) for proofreading and commenting on the pre-publication manuscript. “With a little help from my friends”, a crude, rough, primitive manuscript was transformed into the glorious manifestation that you have before you now. I feel such gratitude that you helped me with this project.

The serif and sans serif typefaces used in this document are from the Mesouran family of fonts. To the author’s aesthetic sensibilities, Mesouran has just the right balance between a “masculine” (angular or spiky) and a “feminine” (rounded or smooth) appearance, with a touch of elegance that is beautiful, but not so much as to be a distraction from easy readability.



*“Propagate the Logos. This isn’t trite. We expect this teaching to reach others.
We are not just hollering down the rain barrel.” — the Michaels*

Books by The Center for Michael Teachings, Inc.

The Michaelian teachings, filtered through the brains of various channels:

Michael Speaks — The Legacy of Sarah Chambers (Volumes 1 & 2 & 3)

Michael Speaks — The Legacy of Leslie Briggs

Michael Speaks — A Legacy of JP Van Hulle and Aaron Christean (Volumes 1 & 2 & 3)

Books by Philip Wittmeyer [in preparation]

The Meta-Michaelian project — the Michaelian teachings filtered through the brain of an engineer:

The Tao of Cosmology: Tao’s Template of First Principles (The Legacy of Philip Joel Wittmeyer, Volume 1)

The Tao of Cosmogony: The Natural Sequence of the Cosmic Septenary (The Legacy of PJW, Volume 2)

The Tao of Personality: The Process/Aspect System of Personality Traits (The Legacy of PJW, Volume 3)

The Tao of Relationships: The Chemistry and Alchemy of Service and Intimacy (The Legacy of PJW, Vol. 4)

A History of the Overleaf Chart: From the Original Michaelian Group to the Present (Legacy of PJW, Vol. 5)

Study Papers on the Original Michaelian Group (The Legacy of Philip Wittmeyer, Volume 6)

The Synthesis: The Michaelian Teachings as Perennialism (The Legacy of Philip Wittmeyer, Volume 7)

“The unexamined life is not worth living.” — Socrates
“The unexamined teaching is not worth believing.” — Wittmeyer



④ Back Cover Blurb for *Study Papers on the Original Michaelian Group*

“Propagate the Logos. This isn’t trite. We expect this teaching to reach others.

We are not just hollering down the rain barrel.” — the Michaels

In the original Michaelian group, the Michaels referred to their teaching as “The Synthesis”. They said that it was their attempt to pass on to their students the knowledge and understanding and wisdom that they accumulated during their many tens of thousands of incarnations as humans on this planet over tens of thousands of years. During those lifetimes they experienced what the Physical Plane has to offer, from the development of mundane coping skills to enlightenment on transcendent spiritual paths. If you are familiar with various metaphysical teachings, historical and present-day, you will recognize components of many of them in the Michaelian teachings; that is why the Michaels referred to their teaching as The Synthesis.

Phil Wittmeyer has been a student of the Michaelian teachings since 1981. His Scholar soul avidly acquires knowledge of all kinds; his Artisan Role structures the knowledge and applies tools to the knowledge in the production of tangible objects, in this case, books. In a series of books, he is attempting to pass on to other students some of his accumulation of knowledge and understanding and wisdom, prompted by what he received from the Michaels and from other of their students, and from other scientific, psychological, philosophical, and spiritual traditions and teachers. The Michaelian teachings has come to us piecemeal, a little here and a little there. As part of his own process of gathering these pieces, and his process of coming to understand the scattered elements of the Michaelian teachings, Phil has reformulated it ‘from the ground up’, from ‘first principles’. In other words, this series of books represents Phil’s synthesis of the Michaels’ Synthesis.

Phil started his first book in 1981, and has added several other books over the decades, never finishing any of them along the way, until recently. Each of these books presents what the author believes might be a unique and significant contribution to the Michaelian teachings community as a whole, but if not that, then perhaps some individual students will find his offerings edifying and informative. Because of the reformulation of the Michaelian teachings, Phil’s books are rather different from all other Michaelian teachings books. Therefore, even if you have read all of those other books, you will learn a lot more from Phil’s books. This is not just a retelling or a rehash of the material; the ‘bones’ of the Michaelian teachings are ‘fleshed out’ considerably.

The Michaelian teachings first appeared in 1973, and an enormous amount of channeling has added to it over the decades. Numerous expositors have presented and explained the Michaelian teachings in books and on websites. Phil’s suggestion is that the Michaelian teachings is now mature enough and complete enough to deserve an “academic” treatment of the material in a somewhat historical, scientific, objective, critical way. That is Phil’s intention with his books. In other words, Phil’s approach is analytical as well as synthetical.

The volume that you have in your possession now is an analysis and synthesis of the transcriptions of the channeling sessions of the original Michaelian group, which convened during the years 1973, 1974, and 1975 in the San Francisco Bay area. These sessions, which were held on average about twice per week, provide the foundation of the Micheal Teaching. Portions of some of those sessions were published in 1979 in the book *Messages from Michael*, authored by Chelsea Quinn Yarbro. A nearly complete set of the transcriptions of the original group became generally available in the mid-1990s, and a few more session transcriptions became generally available in the early 2010s. The entire collection was published by The Center for Michael Teachings, Inc., in 2013 and 2015. This volume, which you have in your hands now, is based on these published transcriptions.

“The unexamined life is not worth living.” — Socrates

“The unexamined teaching is not worth believing.” — Wittmeyer

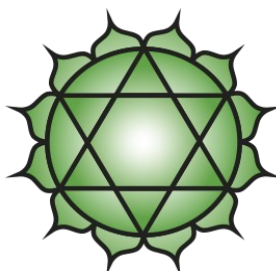




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④ PRELUDE

This is a book about the Michaelian teachings as it was originally presented to a group of spiritual seekers in the San Francisco Bay area during the years 1973, 1974, and 1975. This book is an analysis and synthesis of the transcriptions of the channeling sessions of that original Michaelian group. Many other groups and many other channels focused on the Michaelian teachings have appeared in the decades since then, but these original group sessions provide the foundation of the Michaelian teachings that has evolved and expanded since then. Portions of some of those original sessions were published in 1979 in the book *Messages from Michael*, authored by Chelsea Quinn Yarbro. A nearly complete set of the transcriptions of the original group became generally available in the mid-1990s, and a few more session transcriptions became generally available in the early 2010s. The entire collection was published by The Center for Michael Teachings, Inc., in 2013 and 2015. This book, *Study Papers on the Original Michaelian Group*, is based on these published transcriptions.

Context of This Book

This is the sixth in a series of seven books — a septology (that is an actual word) — that I, Philip Wittmeyer, have written on the Michaelian teachings. It is best if you read them in numerical order, Volume 1, Volume 2, and so on, but this book actually works pretty well as a stand-alone volume.

In the terminology of the Overleaf System, a collection of personality traits that was revealed to the original Michaelian group, I am a Scholar-Cast soul or “Fragment” (to use Michaelian terminology) experiencing the Artisan Role in this and all other lifetimes. Typically, the Scholar-Cast Fragment wants to know *what is*, and the Artisan Role wants to understand *how it works*. These seven books comprise what I refer to as my personal “systematic cosmology project” to satisfy those Scholar–Artisan basic needs to know and to understand. For me, the Michaelian teachings has provided the context and much of the content of that project. I am sharing the product of the project with the Michaelian teachings community, and beyond, via these seven volumes; these are the legacy of my forty-year plus Michaelian teachings student-hood.

(By the way, my *Legacy* books are not to be confused with the “Legacy” books published by The Center for Michael Teachings, Inc.: *The Legacy of Sarah Chambers*; *The Legacy of Leslie Briggs*; *The Legacy of JP Van Hulle*.)

The situation that we Michaelian students find ourselves in is that the Michaels revealed and *described* the Overleaf categories and the Overleaf personality traits, but they did not *explain* the Overleaf System, its structure and its meaning, its derivation from first principles, and its existence as an instantiation of logic, mathematics, and physics. Apparently that task has fallen to me; that is what Volume 1 and Volume 2 of my *Legacy* books are all about. The introductory material on cosmology and cosmogony is then elaborated in the subsequent five *Legacy* Volumes. Unless a Michaelian student understands this fundamental structure to the Overleaf System, they do not *understand* the Overleaf System, no matter how well they understand the Overleaf traits as they manifest in the mere human personality. The mere human personality is a faint shadow of the primordial archetypes of the Cosmos.

Here is a list and a description of my seven *Legacy* books.

VOLUME ONE: The first book, called *The Tao of Cosmology: Tao’s Template of First Principles* (hereinafter referred to as *Cosmology*), demonstrates how Chapter 42 of the *Tao Teh Ching* presented an algorithm for generating the framework of the universe in which we live, as well as the Overleaf System that we Michaelian students all know and love:

Tao produced the One; the One produced the Two; the Two produced the Three; the Three produced All things; All things carry the yin and embrace the yang; through the blending of the chi they achieve harmony.

Fans of Douglas Adams's book *Hitchhikers Guide to the Galaxy* will notice that — coincidentally — “42” is also “the meaning of life, the universe, and everything”. Anyway, in my book *Cosmology*, the realms of logic, mathematics, physics, science, philosophy, and theology are examined in the light of Tao's Template. The three subsequent Volumes are conceptual extrapolations of this first volume, in successively smaller subsets, which means that each volume provides some of the context for the content of subsequent volumes. This first volume was written sporadically over about four decades, starting in 1983 with the discovery of the Ra channeling and the physics theory of Dewey Larson (which can be correlated with the Overleaf System, thus uniting mathematics, physics, and psychology), and ending with the date of its publication. The Overleaf System is a subset of Tao's Template.

VOLUME TWO: The second book, called *The Tao of Cosmogony: The Natural Sequence of the Cosmic Septenary* (referred to in what follows as *Cosmogony*), was written mostly in the years surrounding the year 2000, although the seeds of it were planted in 1986 with the publication of *More Messages from Michael*. The seeds sprouted in 1991, but serious work did not begin until the late 1990s. The book is about that portion of the Tao's Template that refers to development or evolution over time, in seven steps or stages. In the Michaelian teachings, we know it as Milestones and Levels and Ages, but there are dozens of other realms of knowledge that discuss the same seven stages of development. In the *Cosmogony* book, I compare and contrast, analyze and synthesize them, into a coherent picture. Concerned as they are with the structure of space and time respectively, the first two volumes in this septology are rather abstract and impersonal. However, the next volume in this series is concerned with the concrete and personal application of this foundational knowledge and understanding.

VOLUME THREE: The third book, called *The Tao of Personality: The Process/Aspect System of Personality Traits* (referred to in what follows as *Personality*), was written mostly during the years 1981 to 1986. It is about the Michaelian teachings personality system, aka the Overleaf System — a pattern of personality traits first revealed to the world in the book, *Messages from Michael*, authored by Chelsea Quinn Yarbro and published in 1979. I have made some significant advances in the understanding of the Overleaf System based on my understanding of Tao's Template and the physics theory of Dewey Larson as documented in *Ch42*. The metaphor that I like to use, to explain the function of this book, is of the ‘trees’ and the ‘forest’. Most Michaelian students become acquainted with the ‘trees’ (the individual Overleaf traits) — this is an oak tree and that is a maple tree and so on — but they do not gain much acquaintance with the ecosystem of the entire ‘forest’ (the meaning and structure of the Overleaf System as a whole in terms of the logic–mathematics–physics of the Monadic and the Axial Attributes). This *PAS* book describes and explains both the ‘trees’ and the ‘forest’.

VOLUME FOUR: The fourth book, called *The Tao of Relationships: The Chemistry and Alchemy of Service and Intimacy* (referred to in what follows as *ML*), was written mostly during the years 1989 to 1991. In the late 1980's, after having written *PAS*, some of the people who had learned of the Michaelian teachings through me talked me into leading a group. For the purpose of teaching that group, I compiled information on about sixty subjects from three Yarbro books available at the time, namely *Messages from Michael* (*MFM*, 1979), *More Messages from Michael* (*MMFM*, 1986), and *Michael's People* (*MP*, 1988). That project helped me to understand the Michaelian teachings deeply, and then I tumbled to the realization that there was a correlation between the chakras and the Centers and some of my transpersonal experiences. Two of the written products of that study and that group were the Prequel and Part One of the *ML* book. Part Two of the *ML* book followed shortly thereafter.

Legacy Volumes 1 through 4 are written in such a way as to mainstream the Michaelian teachings to people who are not Michaelian teachings students. The last three *Legacy* Volumes, Volumes 5, 6, and 7, cannot be divorced from the Michaelian teachings and mainstreamed to a general readership, but some chapters from them are edited and incorporated into the mainstream versions of the first four *Legacy* volumes.

VOLUME FIVE: The fifth book in my septology is *A History of the Overleaf Chart: From the original Michaelian group to the Present* (referred to in what follows as *HOLC*). In *HOLC*, I discuss precursors to the Overleaf System, the revelation of the Overleaf System and its structure, Charts of the Overleaf System, and examination of discrepancies among expositions of the Overleaf System. The seeds of this book were planted in the late 1990s, when the internet exploded and online Michaelian teachings communities formed. I did my Scholar–Artisan thing and wrote some study papers on some Michaelian teachings subjects over the period of a few years, to share with those Michaelian teachings communities. It dawned

on me in about the year 2011 that these could be assembled into a book, this *History* book. I worked on it sporadically up until its publication; the most intense work was in 2019.

VOLUME SIX: The sixth book in my septology is titled *Study Papers on the Original Michaelian Group* (referred to in what follows as *SPOMG*). This is the book that you are now reading. Herein are gathered the Michaels' answers to questions on more than a hundred topics as found in the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group. These subjects are analyzed and synthesized with extensive commentary. The seeds of this book were planted in 1986 when I compiled information on five dozen subjects from the first two Yarbrow books, for the purpose of teaching a group of students that met in my home. About twenty years later, about the year 2011, I started this Volume Six with a similar objective but for the entire Michaelian teachings community, and worked on it sporadically up until its publication. I regard myself as a displaced member of the original Michaelian group, and one of my soul assignments is to clean up the mess that they left behind by their premature departure from the scene.

VOLUME SEVEN: It is appropriate, given the pervasiveness of sevenness in the Michaelian teachings, that I have a seventh *Legacy* book. It is titled *The Synthesis: The Michaelian Teachings as Perennialism*. Perennialism is the notion that ancient and modern religious and philosophical traditions have a common core of understanding. The Michaels referred to their teaching as "The Synthesis", meaning that it is inclusive of the many cultural, religious, spiritual, philosophical, and theological traditions that Fragments of the Michaels experienced during their incarnations over thousands of years. My *Synthesis* book compares and contrasts the Michaelian teachings with Sikhism, Hinduism, Buddhism, Zoroastrianism, Taoism, Christianity, Gnosticism, Neo-Platonism, Manichaeism, Islam, Sufism, Hermeticism, Kabbalism, Idealism, Theosophy, and Anthroposophy.

FYI, my Role-ish "energies" are, in descending order, Scholar — Artisan — Priest — Sage. Six of my books are from the Scholar–Artisan–Sage "Brainiac" side of my Being; one of them (*Relationships*) is from the Priestish "Cardiac" side of my Being. In non-Michaelian terms, I am a scientist, an engineer, a philosopher, and a mystic in that order.

You will notice from the dates above that I have been working on these books for more than forty years. It is my pleasure that now some others besides myself will presumably benefit from this investment in time and energy. My desire and intention is that others derive as much understanding from this gift of knowledge as I have — and that is considerable.

Note that in this book and others that I use the phrase "the Michaels" to refer to the original source of the information, allegedly a collective of souls that can be considered a plural being as well as a singular being, an "Entity". The Michaels refer to themselves as a "they" in the channeling, so it makes sense to conform their name to that plurality. Others within the Michaelian teachings originally proposed this, and I have adopted it.

Alternative Terminology Used

As stated above, this book is the second in a series of seven book about the Michaelian teachings, or inspired by the Michaelian teachings. These are my septology. It so happens that I have tweaked some of the standard Michaeliese special words into my own special words, and these alternatives appear occasionally in this Volume. Therefore, it is expedient for you to have a Glossary of the translation from Michaeliese to Philzese at this location in the manuscript. A thorough explanation of each of these changes is found in Chapter E-1, in the Epilogue of my book, *A History of the Overleaf System*, Volume 5 in the septology.

- Age/Level → Worldview
- Centers as adjectives → Centers as nouns
- Chief Feature → Shadow
- Exalted/Higher → Cardinal
- Higher Emotional Center → Sympathy Center
- Higher Intellectual Center → Concept Center
- Higher Moving/Sexual Center → Excitation Center
- Infinite/Causal Age → Ancient Age
- Instinctive Center → Impulse Center
- Internal Monads → Life-Stages

- Old Soul Age → Senior Age
- Retardation Goal → Reduction Goal
- Self-deprecation Chief Feature → Lowliness Shadow
- Self-destruction Chief Feature → Renunciation Shadow
- Slave Role → Server Role
- Stagnation Goal → Equilibrium Goal
- Transcendental/Astral Age → Elder Age

Michaelian Teachings Books Quoted

In this book, many times I refer to and quote from other books on the Michaelian teachings. In order to streamline the presentation, I will refer to them by their acronym only. Most Michaelian teachings students will own these books and have read these books; they are the standard reference books used in the Michaelian teachings community and have been for decades in many cases. The initial letters of the names of the books are italicized, as is the custom in the publishing industry. A more comprehensive, formal Bibliography can be found at the end of this book; it includes more information, such as the publishing company. Typically, I will use the entire book name the first time that it appears in a chapter, show the acronym in parentheses, and then use the acronym henceforth in that chapter. Rinse and repeat.

AOTS = *Archetypes of the Soul*, Varda Hasselmann and Frank Schmolke, 1993

ETT = *Earth to Tao*, José Stevens, 1989

ISM = *In Search of the Miraculous*, P. D. Ouspensky, 1949

JOYS = *Journey of Your Soul*, Shepherd Hoodwin, 2013 (Also known as the Second Edition.)

JPVH = *The Legacy of JP Van Hulle*, 2018

LSB = *The Legacy of Leslie [Susan] Briggs*, 2015

MFM = *Messages from Michael*, Chelsea Quinn Yarbro, Classic Edition, 1979

MMFM = *More Messages from Michael*, Chelsea Quinn Yarbro, Classic Edition, 1986

MP = *Michael's People*, Chelsea Quinn Yarbro, 1988

MTBT = *Michael: the Basic Teachings*, Aaron Christean, JP Van Hulle, M. C. Clark, 1990

PCTGO = *Psychological Commentaries on the Teaching of Gurdjieff & Ouspensky*, Maurice Nicoll, 1980

PP = *Personality Puzzle — Solving the Mystery of Who You Are*, José Stevens and JP Van Hulle, 1990

SJC = *The Legacy of Sarah [Jo] Chambers, Volume 1*, 2013

TFW = *The Fourth Way*, P. D. Ouspensky, 1957

TJOYS = *The Journey of Your Soul*, Shepherd Hoodwin, 1995 (Also known as the First Edition.)

TMH = *The Michael Handbook*, José Stevens and Simon Warwick-Smith, 1986

TTCI = *The Theory of Celestial Influence*, Rodney Collin, 1968

TTE = *Tao to Earth*, José Stevens, 1988

TYD = *Transforming Your Dragons*, José Stevens, 1994

Glossary

When these books are published for real, I might make a Glossary. Until then, I suggest that you refer to the Glossary in Shepherd Hoodwin's books, *The Journey of Your Soul* (1995) and *Journey of Your Soul* (2013), if you see any words or concepts in this book that you do not recognize or understand. Two other books, *The Michael Handbook* and *Michael: The Basic Teachings*, also have a glossary. In almost all chapters, near the beginning of that chapter, I provide a definition for the subject of the chapter. Of course, in the body of the chapter itself, a through description of the subject of the chapter is given.





STUDY PAPERS ON THE ORIGINAL MICHAELIAN GROUP

④ INTRODUCTION

This book, *Study Papers on the Original Michaelian Group*, consists of a collection of dozens of individual study pieces, which constitute its “chapters”. Each chapter provides a description and an explanation of a specific subject. These subjects are components of the belief system, value system, and behavior system of a psycho-social-spiritual movement that has come to be known as the Michael teachings, “Michael” being the name that a channeled entity provided when it first revealed itself to a group of spiritual seekers, the original Michaelian group. The channeling sessions were transcribed to written documents.

A short introduction to the history of the original Michaelian group is include here in this introduction, and the detailed story is told elsewhere. Here also is a history of how and why and by whom the *Study Papers* book came to be.

Apologies that there is some redundancy and out-of-sequence narrative in this Intro; it was expedient to do so because of the way I sectioned this introduction into subject categories.

A Very Brief History of the Original Michaelian Group

In early 1973, a few spiritual seekers in the San Francisco Bay Area made contact via an Ouija board with a source of information that came to be known as “Michael”. Because Michael is said to be an “entity” consisting of about a thousand souls, some students prefer to refer to them as “The Michaels”; I am one of those. In this *Study Papers* book this group will be referred to as the original Michaelian group. The primary channel by far for the original Michaelian group was Sarah Chambers, although there were others. By far, the most material came from the Michaels, although there were other sources, such as Tomas and Soleal. The group grew in number over the next two years until late February of 1975, when Chambers called a halt to the large group meetings. Afterwards, a core group of founders and friends continued to meet occasionally to receive messages, and some private sessions were held until about 1978. The messages, amounting to many hundreds of pages, were handwritten or tape recorded at the time of reception. They were then typewritten, and photocopies were distributed to the members of the original Michaelian group.

A much more complete history of the original Michaelian group was published by The Center for Michael Teachings, Inc., in two volumes, as *Michael Speaks: The Legacy of Sarah Chambers*. Chambers channeled for another group of students from 1978 to about 1983; I refer to that as the second Michaelian group. Some of the transcriptions from second Michaelian group were published as Volume 3 of *Michael Speaks: The Legacy of Sarah Chambers*.

Readers of the original Michaelian group and second Michaelian group transcriptions might notice that the Michaels seemed to have a different tone of voice in their channeling to these groups than to any other group that we know of since then. In subsequent groups, the Michaels passively wait for questions and provides neutral answers, mere information. With the original Michaelian group, they seemed to have an agenda, a purpose, or at least a message on their mind that they just had to get out. They promptly introduced the Overleaf system, for instance. They also emphasized that the group was together for a reason, for a purpose, namely to finish business that they started in earlier lifetimes — and that business included hearing the Michaelian teachings, heeding the Michaelian teachings, living the Michaelian teachings, and spreading the Michaelian teachings.

As subsequent Michaelian students all know, the original Michaelian group did not fulfill its promise in itself, but subsequent groups are attempting to carry on with the original intention. Following is the story about how that came about.

Directive to Publish

Almost from the beginning of the original Michaelian group, it was the Michaels' plan that their teaching be shared outside the group:

Dick: I am concerned about the slow growth of the group. It was said that we should spread the Logos.

It is the manner in which it is being presented that frightens many. Arrange the data in some suitable form and teach it yourselves. We will be with you to keep you from embellishing. [13 October 1973]

What can I do with this?

Propagate the Logos. This isn't trite. We expect this teaching to reach others. We are not just hollering down the rain barrel. [31 December 1973]

Many months ago, we advised some other way of introducing this teaching to potential students without reference to the mode of transmission [channeling]. This has not been done as yet, and many new students are lost because of this. We would hope that you would spend some time on this. [31 January 1974]

Should we send the transcripts out to those who do not participate? Should there be a school within a school for those who come each time?

We would prefer that you assemble the material here given, editorializing if you wish, and present it to all potential students in a palatable form. There are Scholars among you who are up to this task, as well as Artisans aplenty who can contribute the imaginative approach. We could see this as one of your major tasks, and we have advised you this before.... Now it is our aim to see you eventually propagate this teaching at large. We would see you exorcise the personal data prior to disseminating any information beyond this core; other than that, you may publish at will. [08 February 1974]

In a section further on in this Introduction, I tell how the original Michaelian group members began to fulfill this task of spreading the Teaching. However, as we all know, the task was interrupted by the untimely demise of the original Michaelian group. The task was immediately assumed by other members of the original Michaelian group (Leslie and Louise Briggs), and also by someone who was not a member of the original Michaelian group, Chelsea Quinn Yarbro. As time went by, numerous others assumed the task of spreading the Michaelian teachings. This *Study Papers* book presumes to have a part to play in the assembly, editorializing, presentation, and propagation of the material.

A fictionalized account of the original Michaelian group was published in 1979 (in hardcover edition) by Chelsea Quinn Yarbro in her book *Messages from Michael* (hereinafter abbreviated to *MFM*). In October of 1980 the paperback edition was published (that was when I first read it). Yarbro was a writer of fiction by profession, so it came naturally to her to fictionalize the account of the original Michaelian group. All names of the original Michaelian group members were changed in *MFM* to maintain their anonymity. The dialog between these members of the original Michaelian group was also created by Yarbro, as well as events in their story. The words attributed to the Michaels — shown in what printers call “caps and small caps”, that is, lower case letters being replaced with smaller capital letters — are, however, the actual words from the transcriptions, with some editorial liberties taken by Yarbro. Books about the Michaelian teachings published by Yarbro after *MFM*, namely *More Messages from Michael* (1986), *Michael's People* (1988), and *Michael for the Millennium* (1995) are not about the original Michaelian group; they are about the group that Yarbro led after the cessation of the original Michaelian group in 1978.

In the preface to *MFM*, Yarbro said that there were about three thousand pages of typewritten transcripts in late 1978. This does not fit with what eventually emerged (see below); I believe that she made it up as part of her fictionalization of the original Michaelian group. The reason I say this is that about 700 pages of original Michaelian group session transcripts began to emerge from obscurity in the mid-1990s, plus about 260 pages of compilation material, most of which is extracted from those session transcriptions. It is obvious that the first dated session in this collection (19 June 1973) is not the first, based on a reading of that session. There are undoubtedly a few sessions missing from our collection through February of 1975, and we only have a few sessions from February 1975 to January 1978. From 1978 to about 1983, Chambers channeled for an entirely different group of students, and I refer to this as the Second Michaelian Group. I retrieved some of the

transcriptions of that group from the transcriber in the early 2010s, separate from the acquisition of transcriptions of the original Michaelian group.

As we will see below, besides Yarbro, the Center for Michael Teachings, Inc. (CMT), also answered the directive of the Michaels to “assemble the material” and publish it, which they did in three volumes, *Michael Speaks: The Legacy of Sarah Chambers*. And it so happens that I am a Scholar–Cast Artisan, and I have also answered the call to “editorialize” as I wish, which in my case is not to fictionalize the account as Yarbro did, but to write “study papers”.

To some small extent, the original Michaelian group did fulfill this directive to publish. They created at least three compilations that extracted material from the sessions. They also, just after the large group was disbanded, produced a rudimentary magazine. These documents were obviously intended for external as well as internal use. However, the original Michaelian group never really completely fulfilled this mission itself, because the group was disbanded. It is apparent that Yarbro also began to fulfill the directive to publish, and carried the project further than the original Michaelian group did. However, I believe that her effort was also incomplete. We now know that she left a lot of material out of *MFM*, and based on what we have, I believe that she left out some of the best material, some of which I regard as central to the Michaelian teachings.

But regardless of what I believe or what others believe about what is or is not worthy and whether or not the Michael’s directive is fulfilled, by publishing *all* of the material that has been retrieved, the CMT lets the readers discern what is valuable to themselves, for themselves. The CMT has not even “exorcised the personal data”, but the names of all members except those who gave permission, were substituted with pseudonyms. Otherwise, the text is intact and complete. The CMT editors also corrected some typographical and grammatical errors, so that readers are not therewith distracted. Otherwise, the text is faithful to the original, whereas Yarbro was not. The CMT editors also “editorialized” as the Michaels suggested, with explanations, clarifications, and elaborations placed in footnotes, where it seemed appropriate.

Much of the original Michaelian group material that was published in the CMT *Legacy* books has nothing to do with the Michaelian teachings *per se*. Some of that material might seem irrelevant to many Michaelian students. The transcribers and typists who preserved this record for us included some of the peripheral and incidental information about their sessions. The CMT editors decided that current and future students of the material should have access to the complete record so that they can extract *whatever* learning they can from their forebears in the Michaelian teachings. They did not decide what is relevant for all time and for all students by taking something out. In the *Legacy* books the reader sees what the original Michaelian group members learned and what they did not learn during the few years that they kept a record of their journey.

Some members of the original Michaelian group might not be completely comfortable with the concept of serving as role models for subsequent generations of Michaelian students, but we subsequent students thank them for preserving and sharing their stories. We see in their transcriptions that they were *serious* about these teachings and other spiritual paths. Lengthy meetings were generally held two or three times a week. Between meetings, the transcribers were busy typing and making copies. This went on intensely for about two years. There were other spiritual events that members participated in.

Copyright Concerns

As stated above, the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group and the second Michaelian group were published by the CMT. That project had its own parameters, separate from and different from my *Study Papers* book project.

Note that this *Study Papers* book only examines material from the original Michaelian group and from the second Michaelian group, where Chambers was the channel for both groups.

Note that this *Study Papers* book only quotes from the original Michaelian group and second Michaelian group transcriptions that have been given to the Michaelian teachings community by members of the original Michaelian group and second Michaelian group. We know that much is missing from this collection, and we hope that it will eventually become available to the Michaelian teachings community.

Note that this *Study Papers* book does not include material from *Messages from Michael (MFM)* if the material has not also been given to the Michaelian teachings community directly by original Michaelian group and second Michaelian group members. The reason for this is that sometimes Yarbro word-smithed the original Michaelian group material for publication in *MFM*, and we believe that this makes *MFM* a “derived” work from Public Domain documents; thus Yarbro has a legitimate copyright on everything in *MFM*, not to be

infringed upon. However, where useful to explain a topic that was derived or retained from a similar teaching to the Michaelian teachings, such as Gurdjieff and Ouspensky, we (and anyone else) may quote from other published works under the so-called “fair use” doctrine. We avoided testing the “fair use doctrine” regarding the Yarbro publications.

The reader might find some history of Sarah Chambers and Chelsea Quinn Yarbro to be interesting.

In 1977 or 1978, the original and primary channel, Sarah Chambers, provided Yarbro, who was not a member of the original Michaelian group, a copy of the transcriptions channeled up until that time. You can read about this in the Preface to *MFM*. We now know that a contract was signed for Sarah to receive royalties for profits from the sale of any books published by Yarbro based on the original Michaelian group transcriptions. At that time, Sarah did not wish to become a public figure, but in the mid-1990s she did just that. At that time we students found out about the contract, and that Sarah had lost her copy of the contract, so we do not really know all of the terms of the contract. Therefore, we do not know if the contract precluded anyone else from publishing (or privately distributing) copies of the transcriptions. We do know that Sarah was not the only channel. We know others asked the questions, wrote down the answers, typed up the answers, and distributed the photocopies. The material would not exist without each of these activities. None of the other members of the original Michaelian group signed a contract with Ms. Yarbro, giving away their rights to distribute the material. We received transcriptions from five members of the original Michaelian group, none of them being from Chambers. Upon the advice of a lawyer (see below), we who wished to follow the directive to publish, were advised that we could do so regardless of Yarbro’s contract with Chambers.

Therefore, regardless of the terms of Chambers’s contract, it is certain at the present time that Yarbro has no legal “standing” to prevent distribution of the transcriptions, or have a copyright on material that was so freely available before she included it in her books. This material was freely distributed by members and non-members of the original Michaelian group to dozens of people, perhaps hundreds, during the years 1973 to 1979 (and later), so it precedes Yarbro’s copyrighted books. Therefore we know that it is legally acceptable to distribute and publish the transcriptions. In the late 1990s, a member of the original Michaelian group actually made a public offering to share copies of the transcriptions. It is possible, even probable, that Yarbro found out about this, but did not challenge the right to do so. Therefore, we regard the unpublished material to be “in the public domain,” which has a legal definition.

It is hoped that Yarbro will eventually make all of the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group and the second Michaelian group available. Our reason for hope is that Yarbro said in *Michael for the Millennium* (1995, Introduction, page 3) that she might eventually make some of the unpublished material available for viewing. Reliable sources and rumor suggest that this is a work still in progress, many years later. It would certainly please myself, and I assume Michaelian students in general, if she would make available all the original Michaelian group material in that way. She could also publish yet another Michael Messages book containing all the original Michaelian group material. If she ever does publish it or otherwise puts a price tag on its availability, we encourage you to purchase them from her. What really matters is that the Michaels’ full teaching be made available to the students with whom they have Agreements.

So, the material in this *Study Papers* book did not originate from Yarbro, and she had nothing to do with the production of this book.

The story of how the original Michaelian group transcriptions came to be released by original Michaelian group members to the Center for Michael Teachings, Inc. (CMT) is recounted below. The transcriptions were published in 2013 by the CMT. A history of the original Michaelian group, derived from the original Michaelian group transcriptions and interviews with original Michaelian group members, was published by the CMT in a second volume at the same time. This *Study Papers* book is the synthesis and analysis of those transcriptions.

Gathering the Transcriptions

It might be interesting to some readers of this *Study Papers* book to know how the widespread release of original Michaelian group transcriptions came about. I know the story because I personally played a role in processing and disseminating the original Michaelian group transcriptions in the mid-1990s, and it is not likely that anyone else will tell the story, so the task has fallen to me. I am also recording the story for the historical record, on the assumption that the Michaelian teachings might some day achieve enough notoriety among

academic scholars that a book about its early history might be written, as books have been written about the history of other ancient and modern spiritual movements.

For the purposes of this book, the story starts with the appearance of what I refer to as the non-Yarbro branch of the Michaelian teachings. The story of this branch is traced in detail in books published by the Center for Michael Teachings, Inc., such as *The Legacy of Leslie Briggs* and *The Legacy of JP Van Hulle*. The information relevant to this *Study Papers* book is that, during the years 1985 to 1990, the recently-formed Michael Educational Foundation (MEF) published a magazine called *The Michael Connection (MC)*. Books by members of the MEF, such as José Stevens and JP Van Hulle, were also being published at the same time as the magazine. All over the world, people would buy the books and write to their publishers and be led to the MC magazine. As more and more people contacted the magazine over those years, their contact information was listed in a column called “Out of Area Groups”. This is how Michaelian students all over the world found each other before widespread internet use emerged about a decade later.

I found the MEF serendipitously, as many Michaelian students do. Someone to whom I introduced the Michaelian teachings in about 1984 moved to Santa Fe, New Mexico. In a New Age book store there she found a notification that José Stevens, Aaron Christean, and J.P. Van Hulle were coming to town and holding a seminar. She sent me a photocopy of the flier, I phoned the local contact, she gave me Stevens’s phone number, I called him, I got on the MC mailing list.

The story of the discovery and release of the original Michaelian group transcriptions starts with a fellow by the name of Terence Powers (now deceased). He also somehow discovered the Michaelian teachings in the late 1980s, found the non-Yarbro channels via their books, and got on the MC mailing list. Sometime in the early 1990s, using the contact information published in the MC magazine, he initiated telephone conversations with me and with others. Among those others, he tracked down the only original Michaelian group member who became active in the non-Yarbro branch of the Michaelian teachings: Barbara Spurlock (aka Sara Alexander, now deceased). In late 1993, she provided him with a photocopy of the original Michaelian group transcriptions that she had, which amounted to hundreds of pages. In early 1994, Powers offered to provide a photocopy to me, so I drove from my home town of Kansas City to his college town of Wichita, Kansas, and we went to the local Kinko’s Copy Center. Names had been blacked out in order to maintain the anonymity of original Michaelian group members.

What was I to do with this treasure trove to make them generally available? During subsequent months, using my computer and a scanner, I scanned the transcriptions with optical character recognition (OCR) software in order to create an electronic file that could then be edited. During this edit, some personal and irrelevant information was deleted. When I was finished with the edits in late 1994, some copies of this document were released to other Michaelian students, and the document found its way from them to many other Michaelian students via the Michaelian community ‘grapevine’ that had developed over the preceding decade.

Spurlock led Powers to the discovery of other members of the original Michaelian group, including Sarah Chambers, which led to Chambers meeting Shepherd Hoodwin, which led to Chambers resuming channeling in 1996. But that is another story line, which one may read about in the *Legacy of Sarah Chambers* volumes published by the Center for Michael Teachings, Inc. In the *Study Papers* story line, know that Powers’s explorations soon led to Eugene Trout, an Old Artisan-Cast Scholar, one of the founding members of the original Michaelian group. On one of his trips from New York state to the San Francisco Bay Area, in 1996, Ed Hamerstrom retrieved Trout’s copy of the transcriptions in Louisa, Kentucky and delivered them to me in Kansas City. Trout had preserved an almost complete stash of the original Michaelian group transcriptions; there were many additional sessions that Spurlock did not have. As before, I photocopied them, OCRed them, processed them, and thereby created an enlarged version of the original Michaelian group transcriptions document. This tranche did not have the names of original Michaelian group members blacked out, but I substituted initials for the names so that the people could not be identified, but still could be followed in the session transcriptions. This updated version was then distributed by me to a few Michaelian students, and from them it found its way to many other Michaelian students via the Michaelian community ‘grapevine’.

Subsequent to this second edit, some other members of the original Michaelian group became known to some of us in the Michaelian teachings community, so I decided to delete the initials of people’s names in order to maintain complete anonymity, and I deleted even more non-teaching material, and reissued the edited transcriptions for a third time, in 1997 or 1998.

There stood the disposition and distribution of the original Michaelian group transcriptions for more than ten years. I was content with this, but, eventually, others were not. In about the year 2010, two other Michaelian students, a Scholar–Cast Sage named Kathryn Neall and a Scholar–Cast Priest named Barbara Taylor, got it in their heads that the original Michaelian group transcriptions should be formally published. They consulted with a Scholar–Cast Sage named Tom Coates — who happened to be a lawyer and a Michaelian student — to check into the legality of formally publishing the original Michaelian group transcriptions. It was known at the time that Yarbro had an exclusive contract with Chambers, and, of course, that Yarbro had a copyright on the tweaked original Michaelian group quotations published in *MFM*, but what about the fact that we received transcriptions from other members of the original Michaelian group? Coates’s determination was that the original Michaelian group transcriptions are considered to be in the “public domain” because of the way the members of the original Michaelian group freely copied and distributed them within the original Michaelian group and subsequent to the original Michaelian group. A legal precedent for this determination, tested in court, was that there could be no copyright on the text of *A Course in Miracles* because it was declared to be in the public domain for the same reason, namely that early transcripts were photocopied and freely shared among interested persons.

With that legal license to publish in hand, the Center for Michael Teachings was incorporated (with Neall, Taylor, and myself as board members) and work began on the process of editing and publishing the original Michaelian group transcriptions. About a dozen original Michaelian group members were tracked down and interviewed for historical background; a few more session transcriptions were recovered from some of them; material that I had deleted from my 1990s versions was added back into the text so that the final book would be as complete as it could be; with this, the *Legacy of Sarah Chambers* was published by the CMT in 2013 via the on-demand publisher Lulu, Inc.

But my personal work on the original Michaelian group transcriptions was not finished with that publication. The seeds of this *Study Papers* book had been planted and sprouted during the mid-1990s.

Scattered Delivery

As every Michaelian student knows, one of the challenges to a broad and deep understanding of the Michaelian teachings is the fact that the Michaels have revealed it to their students in a piecemeal fashion, a little here and a little there, via various channels in various groups. The Michaels have not dictated entire books on various subjects, as Seth did, for instance, via a single channel. The information transmitted on any given topic is scattered within many sessions, delivered over weeks, months, years, and now decades since the Michaels first appeared in 1973.

For the most part, the Michaels have been *active* in the sense that they have always had a specific systematic teaching that they are willing and able to share with us, their students, delivered from their unique viewpoint on a higher so-called “plane” of consciousness. On the other hand, the Michaels have been *passive* in the sense that they usually wait for students to ask for information on subjects of interest to them. Thus, the history of this revelation, in every subject category, is fragmented. Only when the scattered parts are assembled and arranged by their students do we see that there is in fact a comprehensive and coherent picture of the human experience and the soul experience within the cosmic experience — the structure and meaning of which, conveniently, has also been revealed.

One of my aims with this *Study Papers* book, and my other books, is to remedy that fragmentation, at least in terms of the Michaelian teachings as it was delivered during the very early years, the years of the original Michaelian group; hence the title *Study Papers on the Original Michaelian Group*.

Besides the spotty delivery during the early years, the other thing going on during the two years of the original Michaelian group, was that the information was coming so fast that they did not have time to thoroughly process it at the time; therefore many subjects got short shrift. They often had two or three meetings per week, and it was a challenge just to get the recordings and/or handwritten notes of sessions typed up and distributed to members of the group. If subsequent students are to do what the original Michaelian group members did not have time to do, which is to extract as much learning as possible, then they must *study* — research and ponder and ruminate on — the meager scraps given to the original Michaelian group. That is what I have done with this *Study Papers* project.

Why Me?

As noted above, I am a Scholar–Cast Artisan. Perhaps that personality configuration partly explains why the universe picked me to procure, preserve, process, and publish the original Michaelian group transcriptions, starting in the mid-1990s and continuing until now; more is explained in this section. Even so, I find it a bit curious that no other Michaelian students, that I know of, process and understand the Michaelian teachings materials similar to the way that I do.

The *Study Papers* project is unlike any previous presentation of the Michaelian teachings. About a dozen books have been published over the decades, and about a dozen internet websites have been established over the decades, but none of them have approached the Michaelian teachings the way that I have in this book. To be more specific, this book is a scholarly academic exercise. Because of who and what I am, I believe that this is a worthwhile way to present the Michaelian teachings; my method supplements (rather than supplants) the work that has been done by various other students of the revelation via their books and websites.

The scholarly academic method comes naturally to me. Prior to my involvement in the Michaelian teachings, I did something similar during my twenty-year stint in a fundamentalist pseudo-Christian cult, from age 12 to age 32: you should see my marked-up, heavily annotated, color-coded, wide-margin Bible. This sort of scholarly academic study is what Bible Commentaries and commentators do: entire books are dedicated to an analysis and synthesis of the passages in the so-called “Holy Scriptures”, done to the max. My first attempt to write a book was *A Harmony of the Gospels*, a synthesis of the four books of the New Testament — Matthew, Mark, Luke, John — that purport to be the story of the life of Jesus. This led to a second attempt to write a book, *Bible Chronology and the Hebrew Calendar*. I quit the cult in 1979 before I finished the books. I first read *Messages from Michael* in October of 1980 when it was published in paperback. The next year, in 1981, I started to write my first book on the Michaelian teachings, *The Tao of Personality*, which is about my unique understanding of the Overleaf System.

The original Michaelian group transcriptions are not to be recognized or regarded as Holy Scriptures, of course, but in my opinion they deserve a similar scholarly academic treatment, and in my opinion that sort of presentation can benefit students of the Michaelian teachings. (By the way, I no longer regard the Bible as Holy Scriptures, but one can still learn a lot from it. Rather, I regard the original Michaelian group transcriptions the way that archaeologists and scholars do the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Nag Hammadi library, as a precious window on a significant spiritual movement.)

Besides my natural penchant for scholarship with whatever I am interested in, another factor that figures into my initiation of the *Study Papers* project is that I regard myself as a time-displaced member of the original Michaelian group. When reading the transcriptions, I feel a special connection, as if I was a part of the original Michaelian group, ‘in the spirit’ though not ‘in the flesh’. Also, it has been extraordinarily meaningful for to me to interact with various members of the original Michaelian group since the mid-1990s. Two of the six founding members were Scholars, and I am Scholar-Cast; four of the six founding members were Artisans, and I am an Artisan, so I feel the affinity based on those soul factors. In fact, a couple of members (Eugene Trout and Louise Briggs) and myself have acknowledged the spiritual love that we feel for each other, which tells me that we have soul ties with each other. It is a feeling of a type of love that I have not felt for any one else before or since, so I do not here use the word “love” lightly. It was also channeled that in a past Grand Cycle my ‘spark’ was the Task Companion of the ‘spark’ of Sarah Chambers, the original Michael channel. (Michaelian students will know what I mean by ‘spark’ and Grand Cycle and Task Companion.) My sense of our potential relationship in this lifetime was that if Sarah had lived at least another decade (after her untimely death in 1998 at the age of 62), we would have worked together again, in this lifetime.

Whatever may be the validity, or not, of my sense of soul kinship with original Michaelian group members, my self-appointed task is now to clean up and tidy up the mess that the original Michaelian group left behind by their premature departure from the scene. In any case, this *Study Papers* project is very personal and very dear and very meaningful to me. You may consider this book a “brain dump” of my understanding of the original Michaelian group transcriptions: I do word searches on various words, I make a collection of the Q&A exchanges that contain those words, thoughts come to mind, and I write out that commentary on those subjects.

Because of the intimacy I feel for the original Michaelian group members, I have also chosen to use the actual real first names of the participants (but no last names). So that each person can be uniquely identified, sometimes I had to substitute a common nickname for that full name.

Precedents of the *Study Papers* Project

This *Study Papers* project is not exactly without precedent. During the original Michaelian group, in attempts to gather and organize the scattered bits of teaching material, at least three compilations of the transcriptions were produced. The first one (by Cynthia Railey Cutting, a Sage) was an edited compilation of transcriptions of session meetings that were held during 1973. This compilation was produced to have some introductory material to give to new original Michaelian group members as they arrived, to ‘get them up to speed’. Another compilation (by Louise Forrester Briggs, a Scholar-Cast Priest) was a brief introduction to the Michaelian teachings; it was a collection of a few of the basic ideas and quotations extracted from the transcriptions of sessions held in 1973 and 1974; it was produced after the large and open original Michaelian group meetings ceased in early 1975, in anticipation of spreading the Michaelian teachings under new leadership. Another one (by Barbara Spurlock, aka Sara Alexander, an Artisan–Cast Scholar, mentioned previously) was a much more thorough compilation: it gathered scattered answers on dozens of subject into categories, from sessions held during the entire history of the original Michaelian group from 1973 to 1975. All three of these compilations were published in 2013 by the Center for Michael Teachings, Inc., in Volume 2 of *Michael Speaks: The Legacy of Sarah Chambers*. I have had personal contact with all three of these people; I felt a special affinity for them; I regard my work as an extension of theirs.

After the original Michaelian group disbanded in late February of 1975, there were other efforts and methods to systematize and spread the Michaelian teachings. Two issues of a newsletter (that we know of) were produced, in April and June of 1975; it was called “Dimensions!”. Sometime in the late 1970s a member of the original Michaelian group, Louise Briggs, mentioned above, assembled a group, and her daughter Leslie Briggs, also a member of the original Michaelian group, was the channel for the group. Imitating the practice of the original Michaelian group, Louise tape recorded Leslie’s channeling, and produced handwritten or typed documents, (which she ultimately shared with the CMT in the early 2010s.) Perhaps this could be referred to as “Plan A” for spreading the Michaelian teachings beyond the original Michaelian group.

Separate from the work of Louise and Leslie Briggs, evidently in late 1976, Chelsea Quinn Yarbro also ‘picked up the ball’ that the original Michaelian group had ‘dropped’. She wrote and published *Messages from Michael* in 1979. She and other channels affiliated with her conducted their own group meetings. Perhaps this could be referred to as “Plan B” for the spreading of the Michaelian teachings beyond the original Michaelian group.

However, members of the original Michaelian group have said to me and to others that they were dissatisfied with what CQY did with the original Michaelian group transcriptions. I am also dissatisfied with her work. Perhaps my work with the *Study Papers* project is “Plan C” to do what they did not have time and talent and motivation to do during the original Michaelian group, and that others have not had the time and talent and motivation to do in decades subsequent to the original Michaelian group. Perhaps my involvement with the *Study Papers* project is part of an Agreement with the Michaels to further the Michaelian teachings, beyond previous efforts. At least that is what it feels like to me.

I have been a student of the Michaelian teachings since 1981. When many hundreds of pages of the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group first surfaced in 1994 and 1996, I was one of the early recipients of those transcriptions, as narrated in a section above. Being a Scholar–Cast, Artisan–Role “Fragment”, I felt the desire to compile the information within topic categories, then write some explanation about each topic, then arrange those topics in a logical sequence. That is one of the ways that I do the so-called “True Study” of the Michaelian teachings. I envisioned this project as a supplement to the transcriptions themselves, which were finding their way, consequent to my efforts, into the hands of many students via the Michaelian teachings grapevine. I started this *Study Papers* project in the late 1990s, but soon lost interest. In 2010, my friend, the Scholar–Cast, Sage–Role “Fragment” Kathryn Neall, mentioned above, revived my interest in the project. Together we were going to work toward the continuation of this project as a team, rather than as a solo, endeavor. This was going to take place on a website that was set up by Kathryn, the *Michael Teachings Student Community*. The online *Study Papers* project did not last very long, maybe a year, and that website is now defunct. Eventually, in about the year 2021, I got around to the start of driving it to conclusion on my own, as the next-to-last book of my own *Legacy of Philip Wittmeyer* septology.

Validation

In all of my books, I have a chapter or a section on what we in the Michaelian teachings refer to as “Validation”. This is that standard section in this particular book, the *Study Papers* book. I capitalize the word Validation because I regard it as one of the jargon concepts in the Michaelian teachings.

The injunction to Validate is so well known in the Michaelian teachings communities that some students thereof might wonder why it even needs to be repeated, but I for one am mindful to repeat it anyway. I do it because there are different ways to Validate; I do it because some of my methods are different from those of most other students; I do it because I have arrived at some unusual conclusions in my Validation process; I do it because I want to explain my conclusions to any others who might be interested in my Validation process. Researching and writing this *Study Papers* book and my other books is one of the ways that I ‘sort out’ the Michaelian teachings: I have confirmed some parts of it, I have disconfirmed other parts of it (as erroneous channeling), and I have sorted the remainder into a ‘limbo zone’, where it waits while I continue further rational research and empirical experience, which might move some limbo-zone stuff either to the confirmed zone or to the disconfirmed zone.

In this section on Validation in this *Study Papers* book, here is what I want to explain.

The original Michaelian group transcriptions publication project, and the *Study Papers* project, is subject to a potential pitfall. In the minds of some students, the original Michaelian group transcriptions could conceivably become a dogma, like the Bible or Qu’ran is in the minds of fundamentalist Christians or Muslims. I view this as an extremely remote possibility, because potential students who are drawn to the Michaelian teachings are not drawn to that worldview, and because the Michaelian teachings itself declares that mindset to be anathema. If it can be said that the Michaelian teachings has a “mantra”, then I suggest that a good candidate is to “validate, Validate, VALIDATE!” We are often reminded, by channels themselves, that the words of the Michaels are not the words of God, that the Michaelian community is not the Church of the Michaels, and that the channels are not the high priests of the Michaels.

Personally, I learned this lesson the hard way. As mentioned above, I was in a fundamentalist cult where, in the late 1970s, a few years before I discovered the Michaelian teachings, as recounted above, I wrote a scholarly book manuscript on *Bible Chronology and the Jewish Calendar*. Thereby I became familiar with so-called “exegesis” — expounding on co-called “sacred” writings. I have transferred the skills developed in my “religious” background to the *Study Papers* project, but I do not transfer the attitude of “fundamentalism”. I know first-hand how a detailed, scholarly parsing of a sacred text is done. However, now, as an introduction to my *Study Papers* project, I want to emphasize that I am applying my exegetical *skills* to the “word of Michael”, but not applying the fundamentalist *attitude*, as if the words of Michael were the words of God — because that would indeed treat the Michaelian teachings as if it were a religion. I fully understand that the original Michaelian group transcriptions are not sacred text as some regard the Bible to be. Rather, I analyze and synthesize the words of the Michaels somewhat as academic scholars do, for instance, the Dead Sea Scrolls. I first want to understand the information on visceral, emotional, intellectual, and intuitive levels; the subsequent application of the information is a different matter.

Perhaps because of that religious background I am more aware than others that sometimes it is easier to contact a channel and/or quote a book than to contact Essence for guidance. The easy route is not what I am ultimately advocating here. I am advocating that students progressively learn to contact their own inner authority rather than rely on any external authority (such as the Michaels) or subscribe unquestioningly to any belief system, value system, and/or behavior system (such as the Michaelian teachings). Therefore, the entire purpose of the *Study Papers* project is to provide an accelerated Validation, or not, of parts of the Michaelian teachings. Presumably, this will lead to various practices, which presumably will eventually make the Michaelian teachings obsolete as students learn to listen to their own ‘internal guidance system’.

Another way to say this is that I have applied the Skeptic Attitude to the original Michaelian group transcriptions specifically, and the Michaelian teachings in general, first with the Negative Pole of –Suspicion, and then with the Positive Pole of +Investigation. The *Study Papers* project is an investigation indeed.

Skepticism is not the only Attitude at work here. Regarding my attitude toward channeling in general, let me just state for the record that, the more I have seen of it, the less confidence I have that the product of channeling can be accepted credulously, unquestioningly, uncritically. As we all know, and as I keep saying, the mantra of the Michaels themselves and their channels is to Validate, using whatever academic and epistemic tools one may have or may develop. This injunction is especially significant to me, because of that

involvement in that fundamentalist Christian cult and its dogma that the Bible was the literal, inspired “word of God”. Yes, I studied the Bible religiously, and this actually appealed to the Negative Pole of my Spiritualist Attitude, –Faith. I also actually transferred some of this –Faith to Seth at first and then to the Michaels in the early 1980s. In my journey, it took decades to fully get into +Verification, the Positive Pole of the Spiritualist Attitude.

One reason I bang on repeatedly about Validation in my books is that, over the decades I have seen a few Michaelian students want to make the word of the Michaels into the word of God. Some students may like to believe that they are in contact with a near-omniscient, or at least very wise, very knowledgeable being. I suggest that this approach is a mistake. In fact, I suggest that the majority of the Michaelian teachings — which simply cannot be Validated — be put into what I call the “dogma-doctrine” bin. We do not even know for sure that the Michaels actually exist, let alone have any idea how accurately the information comes through from wherever. Comparison of the original Michaelian group material with other subsequent Michaelian channeling, with the vast differences in style and substance, should make that iffy status abundantly clear to students, if they happen to have any lingering –Faith after comparing them all. My suggestion is that everyone does well to approach all channeling as just another opinion from just another human being, or else it becomes like a fundamentalist religion rather than personal Validation. If the information provokes insights and action, great. If not, then move on to something that does.

Allow me to elaborate on the point about the change in style and substance of the story arc of the history of the Michaelian teachings.

The Michaelian Teachings: A Work in Progress

Some students might be tempted to believe that it is a waste of time to review this “ancient history” of the Michaelian teachings, thinking that we have evolved far beyond that primitive era. I believe otherwise; one can learn from the contrast with subsequent Michaelian teachings groups; one can learn from what has been dropped from subsequent Michaelian teachings groups. Let me explain.

Anyone who has read the original Michaelian group transcriptions might notice that the information and delivery has a different “feel” compared to subsequent channeling. My perception is that there has not been anything quite like the original Michaelian group since then. It was a unique time with a unique group of people. What are we to make of this? Does or does not the information therein apply in total or in part to present and future generations of students? Was it all the best information possible, or is some of it now to be eschewed?

It can be argued that the original Michaelian group channeling was unduly influenced by the “Fourth Way” teaching of Gurdjieff and Ouspensky, which the founding original Michaelian group members were familiar with. It can be argued that the original Michaelian group channeling was improperly skewed by New Age and/or Eastern Spirituality ideas that the members were exploring at that time. It can be argued that some “advanced” Michaelian teachings surfaced in the original Michaelian group that have not resurfaced since then. It can be argued that some original information has been superseded by superior information subsequent to the original Michaelian group.

My perspective is that *all* of the original Michaelian group material is potentially valuable to present-day and future Michaelian students, one way or another. That is to say, anyone who has the entirety of the original Michaelian group transcriptions has the unmitigated “best” and “worst” that the original Michaelian group has to offer. By examining the unexpurgated original Michaelian group transcriptions — ‘warts and all’ — each and every student may discern what is better than, and what is worse than, subsequent channeling, what is useful and what is useless — for himself or for herself. One of my goals with the *Study Papers* project is to present all views, not to promote any particular view of the original Michaelian group. This will de-mythologize the original Michaelian group rather than mythologize it (as Yarbrow did), or enshrine any part or the whole of it as dogma.

Students who are mostly familiar with post-original Michaelian group Michaelian channeling might notice as they read this *Study Papers* book that some information delivered during the original Michaelian group has been superseded by subsequent channeling, and that some things just don’t resonate with their current understanding of the Michaelian teachings. Sarah Chambers herself, in an email to me, said this:

I don’t think Quinn owns a copyright on anything but the material in her books, but I will have to say that she was very good at culling out the drivel, so, although I’ve only read the first one of her books, I’d say what they

contain is far more significant insofar as the purpose of the teaching is concerned, than the old unedited transcripts. So I'm not sure if those transcripts are copyrighted.

You will perhaps agree with Sarah as you read this book that some of the original Michaelian group channeling is "drivel". You might also agree with Sarah that Yarbrow, as a writer, had to decide how best to introduce the material to the world, and that she made an excellent selection for a first introduction to the Michaelian teachings that was released into the world at large. It is understandable that she didn't include everything from the original Michaelian group in *Messages from Michael* and her subsequent books. However, we now have the luxury and the method to provide *everything* that has become available to the Michaelian community, and each student may determine what portion thereof is valuable to them.

Some of the commentary that I provide in this *Study Papers* book points out the apparent dubious channeling, and also points out some of the changes or improvements that have been made to the Michaelian teachings in decades subsequent to the original Michaelian group. I also presume to point out what I regard as the good material that has not elsewhere seen the light of day subsequent to the original Michaelian group. My hope is that the reader finds this to be instructive in the art and science of "Validation", that important feature of the Michaelian teachings.

One point of this section is to emphasize yet again that the Michaels' messages are not the words of God, infallible and immutable; they have evolved and will continue to evolve. I want to emphasize that the Michaelian teachings is not a religion, once and for all time delivered to true believers. Key to these teachings are the prime directive from the Michaels that each student needs to Validate the material for themselves. This directive applies to the original Michaelian group transcriptions as well as to any and all subsequent material.

The Michaelian Teachings: Complete in the Original Michaelian Group?

It might be surprising for you to read what the Michaels had to say in one of the late sessions of the original Michaelian group, namely that their teaching was more or less complete at that time. My understanding of this is that the Michaels had an agenda when they first appeared, and that was to deliver the Overleaf System, plus some of its important implications and ramifications, to the world. When you read the first year of sessions, it is obvious that such was their plan. Of course, the members of the original Michaelian group had their own ideas of what they wanted from a non-physical teacher, so they asked a lot of questions that might be considered irrelevant to the core message. Nevertheless, a lot of information relevant to the Overleaf System was delivered, enough that the Michaels felt that they had laid the foundation, and that it was up to the students to build on that. Thus, during the original Michaelian group, the Michaels were *active* in pursuing their agenda; subsequent to the original Michaelian group, the Michaels have become more-or-less *passive*. This is the understanding that I gather from the following Q&A exchanges, which were delivered only a couple of months before the original Michaelian group ceased:

(We had also been wondering if there was anything else that had not been communicated yet by the teacher.)

As for new information, we endeavor to present some new information whenever we have your attention — new in the sense that perhaps you have never thought of it in quite that light before. However, dear students, you have heard all that there is to hear. Our task, as we see it, is to continue to present the body of this Logos until a student grasps at its meaning and begins to apply it and teach it to others. We will continue to present it, and since we are not limited by physical time, we can serve it up to you in an infinite variety of frames. Perhaps we have just not hit upon the winning combination. After all, yours is, as you have said many times, a verbal culture, and the words are eventually what you will hear, and then they can be translated into the action. Richard has hit upon the meaning of this Teaching, but his understanding is still basically intellectual and philosophical rather than emotional and transcendental.

"Intellectual" and "Philosophical" allude to the Ordinal and Cardinal poles of the Expression Axis; "Emotional" and "Transcendental" allude to the Ordinal and Cardinal poles of the Inspiration Axis. It looks to me as if the progression recommended by the Michaels is that Expression should translate into Inspiration, and Inspiration should translate into Action. In other words: think > feel > act. (By the way, this progression is reminiscent of "rational emotive behavioral therapy", which one may find discussed at length in this Wikipedia entry: >https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rational_emotive_behavior_therapy<.) It is not surprising that an Entity, the Michaels, that consists of Action Axis Roles (Warriors and Kings), should emphasize that this progression is the preferred path of spiritual growth.

The discussion presented above continued as follows:

(Cynthia: asked “which Richard” and this was the response:)

This Richard is the only Intellectually-Centered Richard in the room.

Cynthia mentioned that it seemed to be as she suspected, that the material the teacher has given us is complete and we just haven't figured out how to use it properly. This was the response:

No, Cynthia, the material is obviously not all there, as you — and we mean that collectively — are not satisfied and still search. When enlightenment occurs the quest is over, at least insofar as the Physical Plane is concerned. We have been so far unable to instill in you the permission, or give you the permission to seek that ecstasy or joy that is the end product of all that you seek. However, at least all of you are experimenting with the possibility that there may be such a state as ecstasy. Many are not even that lucky. Richard — the other Richard — has chosen to leave (he had fallen asleep on the floor) because this is frightening information for him. He cannot even contemplate what this quality might bring to him, for it would mean utter destruction of all of his defense mechanisms. Even simple happiness is quite beyond his grasp, and yes, anyone with the same Overleaves exactly will experience this difficulty to a greater or lesser extent. All those with Cynthia's Overleaves exactly will experience her dilemmas and frustrations, and if they are in a teaching, they will be fortunate enough to be allowed to look at them and decide whether or not to change their course [of action]. Cynthia uses the Overleaves many times to make her life not work because she has been led to believe that her life will not work. She uses her lack of formal education as an excuse not to have to formulate goals for herself because that would conflict with the picture that the Overleaves have of themselves. Alice defeats herself in the same fashion because two of her Overleaves would be terrified of success. [04 November 1977]

It is because of these statements that I regard this *Study Papers* book, and two of my previous books in the Legacy series, *A History of the Overleaf Chart* and *The Tao of Personality*, as a furtherance of the Michaels' original agenda to reveal the Overleaf System to the world. All of my books except one (*The Tao of Relationships*) are intellectual and philosophical in nature, so it is up to the reader to translate that information into emotional and transcendental experiences, and then translate the results into action.

This book is **way more than a thousand** pages long, but I regard the original Michaelian group transcriptions as such a rich ‘gold mine’ that it could have been hundreds of pages longer.

Furthermore, this book is not to be considered as the final word on any subject found herein. My hope is that other students with a scholarly and academic mindset will expand on one or another of these subjects in a systematic and even more thorough way.

Systematic Jargon

Perhaps you have heard the phrase “word salad” applied to someone's speech. Dictionaries have a definition of the phrase, and Wikipedia even has an article on it:

A word salad, or schizophasia, is a “confused or unintelligible mixture of seemingly random words and phrases”, most often used to describe a symptom of a neurological or mental disorder. The term schizophasia is used in particular to describe the confused language that may be evident in schizophrenia. The words may or may not be grammatically correct, but are semantically confused to the point that the listener cannot extract any meaning from them. The term is often used in psychiatry as well as in theoretical linguistics to describe a type of grammatical acceptability judgment by native speakers, and in computer programming to describe textual randomization. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Word_salad — retrieved 08 June 2021]

Some people who are not familiar with the special meaning given to the vocabulary words of the Michaelian teachings might describe many paragraphs of the original Michaelian group transcriptions as a word salad, but obviously the situation with the Michaelian teachings is not so extreme that Michaelian channels could be described as “schizophasic”. The point I want to make in this section is that one of the first things that a newbie Michaelian student must learn is to understand the Michaelian teachings lingo, or they will be confused or misled.

I prefer to refer to the Michaelian teachings vocabulary words as “jargon”. I do not regard this as a pejorative term:

Jargon is the specialized terminology associated with a particular field or area of activity. Jargon is normally employed in a particular communicative context and may not be well understood outside that context. The context is usually a particular occupation (that is, a certain trade, profession, vernacular or academic field), but any ingroup can have jargon. The main trait that distinguishes jargon from the rest of a language is special vocabulary — including some words specific to it and often different senses or meanings of words, that

outgroups would tend to take in another sense — therefore misunderstanding that communication attempt. Jargon is sometimes understood as a form of technical slang and then distinguished from the official terminology used in a particular field of activity. [<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jargon> — retrieved 08 June 2021]

Commonly, several Michaelian teachings jargon words might appear in a long question-and-answer exchange with the Michaels, and unless one understands the special meaning of those words, one might think the communication is a “confused and unintelligible mixture of seemingly random words and phrases”. Of course, we who are seasoned Michaelian students know that such is not the case, and likely we are the type of people who appreciate that the Michaelian teachings is organized and systematic and clear and distinct in its vocabulary; otherwise, we might not be attracted to the Michaelian teachings; we might be repelled by it.

The rationale for the use of jargon arises out of the fact that the Michaelian teachings is rather more systematic than most other spiritual teachings, including channeled teachings, that one might encounter. For instance, I regard the Seth material as a long-winded, somewhat rambling discourse that is not easily broken down into subject categories that could benefit from the use of jargon words. It is somewhat as if Seth is taking a “random walk” through his “stream of consciousness”. This is instructive in its own way, and many people prefer that manner of instruction. On the other hand, the Ra Material is somewhat more like the Michaelian teachings in that it is systematized according to categories with names and descriptions. If you visit <https://www.lawofone.info/> you will see that a student of the Ra teaching has conveniently categorized Ra’s basic concepts, concepts that Ra re-cycles and re-presents in various ways and in various contexts, just as the Michaels do. Well, that man’s Ra systematization project is similar to my Michaelian teachings/original Michaelian group *Study Papers* project.

I am the sort of person who prefers a systematic teaching to a rambling narrative; I like an organized teaching that defines its terms clearly, and that clearly provides an understanding of the relationships of those terms to each other within the context of the teaching as a whole. My nature appears to be somewhat like what social psychologist Simon Baron-Cohen refers to as a “hyper-systematizer”. You may wish to refer to <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2677592/> for more information about that. (Note that I am not extreme enough to be placed on the Asperger’s spectrum.) You will see this personality trait, a penchant for methodical systematization, in all of my books.

I suggest that some of the difference between systematic and unsystematic spiritual teachings has partly to do with the origin of the teacher of the teaching, either on the Astral Plane (which is emotional) or the Causal Plane (which is intellectual). The difference between teaching styles is also determined by what the students want from a teacher; they can be either primarily Inspirational and unsystematic, or Expressional and systematic.

The individual pieces that I refer to as the chapters of this *Study Papers* book are arranged in alphabetical order of mostly Michaelian teachings jargon words or conceptual categories. It could have been arranged in didactic order, starting with the most general subject and ending with the most specific, or some other sequence, but this book is not intended for newbie students. Learned and knowledgeable students can look up words of interest in the Table of Contents, read the relevant piece, and have their knowledge and understanding expanded and clarified thereby.

Another factor regarding jargon words is that some of the founding members of the original Michaelian group had been spiritual seekers for years in a Gurdjieff–Ouspensky group. These people were rather systematic, and these people had their own jargon. Therefore, readers of this *Study Paper* book will understand the individual pieces better if they are familiar with the Gurdjieff–Ouspensky teaching. Readers will also notice in the course of reading these chapters/study papers that some members of the original Michaelian group were interested in numerous other spiritual teachings and practices. For instance: Theosophy, *A Course in Miracles*, Werner Erhard and EST, John Lilly, Carlos Castaneda, Edgar Cayce, Jane Roberts/Seth, and many others. These teachings also had special words and concepts. New members were added to the original Michaelian group all of the time, and they brought with them questions and ideas from these other spiritual pursuits. In these studies, I have added brief commentary about these other teachings where appropriate, and I invite readers to pursue further information about them if they so choose. There are books galore, and of course lots of information freely available on the internet.

The Michaels had this to say about jargon:

Presented at the proper moment, this teaching is palatable to about thirty percent of the world's population, but for most to absorb it, it must be presented in that jargon that the Fragment already believes to be meaningful. No one of you is skilled enough to go forth and preach to the multitudes, but to individual students, yes. But we ask that you exercise care in that you know that the Fragment is asking [for it]; a teaching given against the will of the student never is absorbed. [30 September 1977]

More was said about the Michaelian evangelical agenda in a previous section, "Directive to Publish".

Besides the chapters dedicated to the examination of the core concepts of the Michaelian teachings — the ones that have jargon names — there are many chapters on peripheral subjects that came up for discussion numerous times in the original Michaelian group sessions. In my opinion, what the Michaels had to say about the various peripheral topics is almost as important as the core concepts. Those chapters cover ground that has not been covered elsewhere in Michaelian teachings publications. Therefore, my guess is that students will find them very interesting and informative.

To Understand and Explain the Michaels' Messages

While writing about the Bible, as mentioned above, I encountered the notion of "hermeneutics":

Hermeneutics is the theory and methodology of interpretation, especially the interpretation of biblical texts, wisdom literature, and philosophical texts. Hermeneutics is more than interpretative principles or methods used when immediate comprehension fails and includes the art of understanding and communication. Modern hermeneutics includes both verbal and non-verbal communication as well as semiotics, presuppositions, and pre-understandings. Hermeneutics has been broadly applied in the humanities, especially in law, history and theology. Hermeneutics was initially applied to the interpretation, or exegesis, of scripture, and has been later broadened to questions of general interpretation. The terms hermeneutics and exegesis are sometimes used interchangeably. Hermeneutics is a wider discipline which includes written, verbal, and non-verbal communication. Exegesis focuses primarily upon the word and grammar of texts.

[><https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hermeneutics>< — retrieved 06 February 2022]

If you know somewhat about the Bible, you might know that there are alleged to be different ways to interpret scripture, such as either literally true or figuratively and metaphorically true — or both, as if there are two levels of understanding, often called "exoteric" and "esoteric". There is no such need for a hermeneutics theory of interpretation when it comes to the Michaelian teachings. The Michaels did not speak in metaphors; they did not say things that had both a lower-outer and a higher-inner meaning. They did not need to conceal their true meaning by encoding or otherwise obscuring their presentation in some way. They did not talk in parables as Jesus did. Nor did they tell made-up stories with a hyperbolic meaning, as was typically done in ancient "mythology".

However, the original Michaelian group transcriptions do need to be interpreted and explained if they are to be understood correctly and thoroughly. The Michaels themselves said that: "We are guilty of some semantic ambiguity at times..." (27 March 1974), and so a careful parsing of their statements is required to mitigate the ambiguities. Furthermore, the Michaels did not introduce a topic and then elaborate and extrapolate on it in anything even remotely resembling a thorough exposition; that job seems to have fallen to others, their students, including me; that is what "study" is all about; that is what these "study papers" are all about.

In addition to defining the jargon words as described above, there are some other methods that help us to understand the Michaels. For instance:

- One can collate all of the quotations on a particular subject, which is what I have done for this book; Yarbro did some of that in her books. When you compare the original Michaelian group transcriptions with Yarbro's book *Messages from Michael*, you see that she often combined sentences from more than one session, and edited the words to make it seem as if it was all one answer, when in fact it was two or three answers that she cobbled together into one answer. Unlike Yarbro, I have not changed any wording; each question and answer exchange is shown, and the session date is shown in brackets at the end of the exchange. Within the quotations, I often added words in [brackets] where I thought it helped. I also sometimes took the liberty in some places of changing punctuation from that provided by the original typists; I am particularly fond of semi-colons.
- It helps to research what the original Michaelian group members knew of, for instance, the Gurdjieffian teachings, which was a significant influence and foundation for the Michaelian teachings. Beyond that, it helps to supplement what the Michaels said by comparing and contrasting

it with yet other psychological and spiritual teachings that the original Michaelian group members were familiar with. This gives us clues about why the original Michaelian group members asked what they did, and why the Michaels answered the way that they did. That is one of the methods I have applied in these study papers.

- My primary procedure is to compare and contrast the statements that the Michaels made on a topic, and add my explanatory comments interspersed among the original Michaelian group transcription quotations. In my comments I sometimes paraphrased what the Michaels said, added historical background information, and/or did my analysis and synthesis of what the Michaels said. More than any other type of comment, I refer the reader to other chapters in this *Study Papers* book that elaborate on what the Michaels said in the quoted passage; the Michaelian teachings is an interwoven fabric of related concepts, and so are these study papers.
- Because Yarbrow was a writer of fictional novels, she made up stories about conversations between original Michaelian group members that fleshed out some skimpy answers. Fictionalizing the background to the material distorts the material in a way that I am uncomfortable with. This is not my style, and some original Michaelian group members told me that they did not like it either, and I did not do it that way because it is just not my style. Yarbrow herself did not do it that way in her fourth book, *Michael for the Millennium*.
- The point of interpretation, the goal of analysis and synthesis, the purpose of comparison and contrast, is not to read *into* the original Michaelian group transcriptions one's biases and preconceived notions, but to extract *out* of the text as much understanding as one can. The information found in the original Michaelian group transcriptions is very 'rich'; it is a 'gold mine' with many 'nuggets'. A cursory reading of the text does not uncover the 'gems'. Unlike subsequent verbal trance channeling, which tend to be more verbose, the original Michaelian group used the Ouija board, which tends to be less verbose. Therefore the original Michaelian group channeling seems terse and pithy in comparison to subsequent channeling. In my view, this density lends itself to the way I do explanatory exegesis.
- This *Study Papers* project is limited to the original Michaelian group and the second Michaelian group, but it can be used as a model for other Scholar types with other projects focused on other Michaelian teachings channeling. This is how you do it: Pick a channel that you like and trust; pick subjects that fascinate you; collect all of the channeling that you can find on the subject; arrange it in a logical didactic sequence; study the material intensely; add all of the explanatory comments you can think of; share your work with others and solicit review and feedback.
- The way that I write about the Michaelian teachings is different from the way that any other Michaelian student does it, in their books or on their websites or in their public speaking. Specifically, my way is somewhat "academic" in nature. This means to me that I study the Michaelian teachings using the intellectual, scholarly, academic tools of analysis and synthesis, of comparison and contrast; it is as if I were a university student researching and writing a Masters or a Doctoral thesis. However, the situation is that I am not an actual trained and polished academic working under the supervision of a thesis advisor, but I am presumptuous enough to use means and methods that are somewhat academic in nature. The academic approach might not appeal to many or most Michaelian students, and perhaps I am being delusional in all of this, but one of my long-term goals is to make certain parts of the Michaelian teachings more appealing to people who are in fact actual academics, and/or they are practicing professionals of one sort or another. For instance, there are many components of the Michaelian teachings that counseling psychotherapists might find useful. Also, I foresee a time when the Michaelian teachings might become an object of study for academics in the field of comparative religion or modern religious movements, and my scholarly work might prepare the way for them. I assume that actual academics will find an academic presentation of the Michaelian teachings to be more appealing, perhaps even more authoritative, than that provided by other Michaelian sources. Thus, my hope is that academics will 'pick up' one or another of the 'balls' that I am 'throwing' to them, and then 'run' with it in their own way. Whatever the future may hold for my work, whether one or another of my imagined scenarios, this seven-volume project is just something I have to do, and this is the way that I have to do it, because this is who I am.

Abbreviations Used

Throughout this book, the following abbreviations and conventions are used.

- 2MG = Second Michaelian Group. This is another group of spiritual seekers who convened, from 1978 to 1983, for the purpose of receiving the Michaelian teachings; Sarah Chambers was also the channel, but the membership was almost entirely different from the original Michaelian group. Some of the transcriptions of these channeling sessions were published by The Center for Michael Teachings, Inc. as *Michael Speaks; The Legacy of Sarah Chambers, Volume 3*. Refer to Bibliography at the end of this book.
- [date] = Quotations of Michaelian teachings information in this book, extracted from transcriptions of the original Michaelian group and the second Michaelian group, are referenced with the date of the channeling session in which they are found.
- MFM = *Messages from Michael*, the first book to be published about the Michaelian teachings, in 1979; refer to the Bibliography at the end of this book. The Michaelian teachings information in this book was taken from transcriptions of the original Michaelian group, and some special channeling sessions that its author, Chelsea Quinn Yarbro, had with Sarah Chambers.
- EST = “Erhard Seminars Training (marketed as est, though often encountered as EST or Est) was an organization, founded by Werner Erhard in 1971, that offered a two-weekend (6-day, 60-hour) course known officially as ‘The est Standard Training’.” (Wikipedia) Many original Michaelian group members attended this seminar.

Comments on My Commentary

It helps me to understand my own thought processes when I organize them in a numbered list. My guess it that such a list also helps the reader to understand the function and purpose of my writings.

1. Because the Michael Entity is a plural being, a “they” consisting of an aggregation or constellation of many “souls” or “Fragments”, in this book they are referred to as “the Michaels”.
2. The Michaelian teachings is rather systematic. It consists of various and numerous concepts. Those concepts are named with common words, but because those concepts have specific meanings within the Michaelian teachings, their names become jargon words. In this book, these words are typically capitalized in order to distinguish them from the ordinary or common use of those words. This book is mostly about defining and explaining the concepts named with jargon words, but there are many other chapters about subjects on which the Michaels had somewhat to say when they were interrogated by members of the original Michaelian group.
3. Almost all readers of this book will already be familiar with the Michaelian teachings and its concepts and jargon words. Wherever one sees a capitalized jargon word in whatever individual study paper, it almost certainly has a chapter of its own dedicated to its definition, description, and explanation.
4. The study papers, aka book chapters, are arranged in the alphabetical order of the name of the chapter/subject. This arrangement will aid the reader in finding the study paper/chapter, but, of course, the Table of Contents is also useful for this purpose.
5. If the intended readership of this book were not advanced students of the Michaelian teachings, then it would have been expedient to arrange the individual studies in a non-alphabetical order, but rather in a logical presentation of the subject matter from most basic or general to more developed and specific.
6. A reasonable attempt has been made to make each chapter understandable on its own, such that if it were extracted from the book as a whole, it would still work as a “study paper”.
7. My method for producing this *Study Papers* book was to search the original Michaelian group transcriptions for all of the mentions of certain words plus related words and concepts, then provide an analytical and synthetical explanatory commentary on them. By “analytical” I mean that I parse the content of the text to extract as much meaning as I can from it, and by “synthetical” I mean that I compare and contrast the context of the concepts in the text with other components of the Michaelian teachings and other teachings so as to fit the topic of the chapter into the picture of the Michaelian teachings as a whole explained in the *Study Papers* book as a whole. My intention was to extract as much understanding from each Q&A exchange as I can.

8. This procedure is not new to me: I have an amateur background on Biblical exegesis: “Exegesis is a critical explanation or interpretation of a text. Traditionally, the term was used primarily for work with religious texts, especially the Bible. In modern usage, exegesis can involve critical interpretations of virtually any text, including not just religious texts but also philosophy, literature, or virtually any other genre of writing.” (><https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Exegesis>< — retrieved 27 July 2022) So, this *Study Papers* book is formulated somewhat like the commentaries on the Bible that I read in my younger days when I was a scholarish member of a fundamentalist apocalyptic quasi-Christian cult. (This sort of training could have been better if I had some actual academic institutional experience writing a masters and doctoral thesis under supervision, but what prior experience I had was not nothing.)
9. If the subject was familiar to the original Michaelian group members before the Michaels commented on it, I start the chapter with an introduction to the topic, extracted from literature that they were likely familiar with. Where that is not the case, I typically use an online dictionary to define the term, and/or use Wikipedia as a resource to provide an introduction to the topic.
10. Typically, I present the Q&A exchanges on the subject in the chronological sequence that they are found in the original Michaelian group transcriptions. Thus, we learn about the subject along the same trajectory that the original Michaelian group members learned about it. There are subjects, however, where it seemed natural and expedient for me to divide the study paper into sections and/or subsections based on some other organizing principle than the chronology of its appearance in the transcriptions.
11. I am not a channel. My comments on the original Michaelian group Q&A exchanges are my own idiosyncratic interpretations of the Michaelian messages, and they may not exactly reflect what the Michaels intended. It is true that the Michaels function on the Scholar level of the Artisan Plane, and it is true that I am a Scholar-Cast Artisan, and it is not meaningless that there is this correspondence, but that does not mean that I have a totally accurate perception of their meanings. Some if not all readers will almost certainly disagree with some of my interpretations.
12. I am a conduit. Besides describing the Michaelian teachings in this *Study Papers* book, my intention for it was also to extrapolate beyond what the Michaels had to say, if I may be so pompous, presumptuous, and pretentious. The name that I have given to my overall book-writing project is the “Meta-Michaelian teachings”; it alleges to provide an understanding of the Michaelian teachings as if given from the next higher level of integration and synthesis. My perception is that the pre-Meta-Michaelian teachings is like a dilapidated ramshackle ‘house’ that is in need of a ‘remodel’. Thus, my books present my suggested ‘upgrades’ for the Michaelian teachings communities and individuals to evaluate and implement, if they so choose.
13. This *Study Papers* book is one of seven books that provide my systematic explanation of the Michaelian teachings, and it provides suggestions for a Meta-Michaelian teachings. As such, this particular book is incomplete in itself; it should be understood in the context of the other six books.
14. The modern Michaelian teachings has added a lot of information since the original Michaelian group, but I suspect that many readers of this book will be astonished as they learn about how much has been lost to the modern Michaelian teachings because it was not carried over from the original Michaelian group.

Orthodox and Heterodox

It may be that some readers of this *Study Papers* book will not have read my others books, or otherwise may not have become aware of my departures from what I refer to as the orthodox Michaelian teachings.

One of my significant departures from post-original Michaelian group Michaelian teachings orthodoxy was not actually relevant to the original Michaelian group, because the post-original Michaelian group orthodoxy did not appear until *More Messages from Michael* was published by Yarbro in 1986. That post-original Michaelian group orthodoxy pertains to the so-called “Michael Math Sequence” (1-Server > 2-Artisan > 3-Warrior); it became the orthodoxy as it was adopted without question by subsequent students. That orthodoxy is distinct from what I refer to as the “Natural Sequence”. There are a few places in this *Study Papers* book where I will point out that the Natural Sequence was the orthodoxy in the Gurdjieffian teachings and in the original Michaelian group with regard to the Levels of Being and the Centers (1-Moving > 2-Emotional > 3-Intellectual). The discrepancy between the two is discussed at great length in my book *The Tao of Cosmogony*.

As for other heresies, Part Four of my book *A History of the Overleaf Chart* documents about a dozen doctrines of the Michaelian teachings that the Michaelian teachings communities have not come to a consensus about, even after more than four decades. It can be said then that there is no orthodoxy on those dozen subjects, which include:

1. Which septenaries of personality traits belong in the so-called “Overleaves” category?
2. Do the Body Types fit into the Overleaf System, and if so, how?
3. What are the best names for the seven planes?
4. What is the Instinctive Center all about?
5. How do the Action Centers fit into the Overleaf System?
6. How do the chakras correlate with the Centers?
7. What is the nature of the so-called “higher” Centers?
8. What are suitable names for, and characteristics of, the seven Levels?
9. What is the so-called “Mid-cycle” as purported by Yarbrow but no one else?
10. What are suitable names for, and characteristics of, the seven Soul Ages?
11. What about the awkward situation with the various dogmas concerning the Casting of kindred souls?
12. What are the variations in color assignments to components of the Overleaf System?
13. How do the seven Milestones, aka seven Internal Monads, aka seven Life-Stages correlate with the other septenaries mentioned in the Michaelian revelation?

I have come to my own conclusions about these discrepancies. Only a few of them are relevant to this *Study Papers* book, and I note them where appropriate in this book.

There are a few subjects where the post-original Michaelian group orthodoxy has departed from the original Michaelian group doctrine and yet I have no problem with the improvements. These instances are noted where appropriate in this book.

How to Read these Study Papers

This book could have been divided into several Parts, each Part containing several chapters on related subjects, but the Parts would have had ambiguous boundaries (some chapters would have fit into more than one Part), so I decided not to arrange the book this way. It also seemed like too much work, and I am getting too old for that.

This book could have also been arranged in a “didactic” (teaching) manner. It could have started out with the most basic and/or most general subject, and then it could follow some trail through less basic and/or more specific subjects. However, I could not figure out a logical way to make this work. Besides, readers of this book are almost certainly not newbie Michaelian students who would need this kind of ‘hand-holding’. This book is certainly not intended for newbie Michaelian students; it is most appropriate for “advanced” Michaelian students, meaning, those who already have a good understanding of the Michaelian teachings, and who are now ready to ‘dig deeper’ and ‘dig wider’.

- This book is intended to be used by Michaelian students as a “handbook” or “manual” that they can refer to repeatedly for instruction and inspiration. So far as we know at this time, the original Michaelian group was unique in the history of the Michaelian teachings; they were a unique group of people, and they had a unique agenda. (We do not know much about the nature and function of the members of the secretive Yarbrow group that followed the original Michaelian group.) However, this does not preclude the possibility that at some time in the future, a group of students could come together and pick up where the original Michaelian group left off. In that case, this *Study Papers* book could conceivably be used as a sort of handbook or manual, providing clues and guidance about what to do and warnings about what not to do.
- *Caveat emptor*: this is a massive tome of **more than a thousand** pages. Unless you love to read, and love the subject matter of this book, and love the way I have compiled and commented the information, you might find it daunting to contemplate the immensity of the task of reading it all. If this challenges your normal capacity to focus, then I suggest that you focus on reading it in easily-digestible bite-sized chunks, and persevere to the limit of your ability or interest.

- There are more than **two hundred** chapters aka study papers in this book. The chapters are not numbered. The titles of the chapters are arranged in alphabetical order, from “**Acceleration**” to “**Yoga**”. This makes it relatively easy to find a subject without checking in the Table of Contents for the page number of that chapter.
- It makes sense that I tell readers to jump right into the middle of this book somewhere, by first finding a chapter that grabs their interest. My hope is that readers will thereby be drawn into the fascinating revelations found in the original Michaelian group transcriptions, covering subjects that are not usually found elsewhere in Michaelian sources. My suggestion is that you read the entire Table of Contents, then pick the chapter that most interests you, then read that chapter. Almost every chapter has comments in it that refer to other chapters that are in some way related to that chapter. So then read one of the related chapters referenced in that chapter that looks like it might be interesting to you. That procedure will eventually lead you to every last one of the chapters. If you lose the ‘scent of the trail’, then you could, of course, just check back with the Table of Contents, and start a new path of exploration and discovery through the chapters.
- As I said above, in my opinion, this book could be used by groups of Michaelian students as a ‘study guide’, to facilitate discussions, in-person or on-line. Students would not even need to read my commentary; they might prefer to read only the quotations extracted from original Michaelian group sessions, and then talk among themselves about what they have read. If you, dear reader, do this online in a discussion group, please let me know, so that I can monitor your classes, and thereby improve this book.
- We are “students” of the Michaelian teachings. Student-hood implies study. This book is a product of my study of the Michaelian teachings. You, dear reader, will derive benefit from my studies to the extent that you are willing and able to study my studies. A rapid and superficial and thoughtless reading of this book will do you little good. Take your time; stop after every question and every answer and every comment to intuit/think/feel about what the Michaels say and what I say about what the Michaels say. As you read, consider how you might change your way of being to align with what you learn by reading this book, because the Michaelian teachings is not just a belief system; it is also a value system and a behavior system.
- The fact that these study papers are presented in a somewhat scholarly academic fashion might be off-putting to many readers who are not familiar with and comfortable with this format. My suggestion and hope is that readers will persevere in any efforts to put themselves into an academic mentality or mindset, because I believe this approach — new to the Michaelian teachings community — is a beneficial way to come to understand the Michaelian teachings in its full depth and breadth.

Every time I finished one of these chapters, I found myself wishing that all Michaelian students would read them also, so that they would have the benefit of the depth and breadth of knowledge and wisdom that the Michaels imparted to the original Michaelian group members.



[[Note to reviewers: Are there any chapters on subjects that you would like to see me include in this book?]]



STUDY PAPERS ON THE ORIGINAL MICHAELIAN GROUP



⑥ ACCELERATION

This chapter is the product of a search for the word accelerate in the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group channeling sessions. In almost all cases, the word refers to the soul moving through the story arc of reincarnation at a faster pace than usual. This word does not represent a significant component of the Michaelian teachings. However, there are good reasons to discuss the subject in this *Study Papers* book: 1) the subject came up numerous times during the original Michaelian group; 2) some interesting things were said about the subject; 3) the subject is related to a number of other components of the Michaelian teachings that are considered to be significant; 4) students can presumably benefit from having the mentions conveniently collected and commented all in one place.

The word acceleration not capitalized in this chapter or other chapters of this *Study Papers* book because it has no special meaning in the Michaelian teachings; it is not a Michaelian jargon word that needs a definition apart from its use in the common vernacular.

Acceleration per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

The following extracts from original Michaelian group transcriptions are Q&A exchanges, where an original Michaelian group member asks a question (or makes a comment), and the Michaels provide an answer. These extracts are presented in the chronological order in which they were given. As is my custom, I often provide some explanatory comments following the question or answer. Underlined words in the Michaels' answers are my emphasis, to draw attention to what it is that I comment on. Sometimes I embed words or phrases [in brackets] that I believe help to clarify the question or the answer.

As we will see as this chapter develops, there is a dichotomy in the way the Michaels' use the term "acceleration". Sometimes it refers to the fact that some souls just *naturally* transit the reincarnation cycle faster than others, and sometimes it refers to the fact that some souls *intentionally* speed up their transit time through the reincarnation cycle by various means.

Although the word acceleration is not used, and even before the Michaels showed up, the first mention of acceleration is of the *intentional* variety:

I would like to know how long you have been the leader of your world and I would like to know what you teach them.

[Soleal:] I have been here for ten of this world's revolutions [around its star]. I teach them what I would teach you: that is, to seek moderation in all things, to love unselfishly, to become intimate with the inner workings of your spirit, to live in the essence of that spirit, to liberate the trapped Essence is the reincarnational purpose. I try to guide them in this path, so that they might be free sooner. [mid 1973]

That passage pretty much sums up the reason for intentional acceleration of one's journey: the sooner the reincarnation cycle is over, the better, generally speaking. Refer to the chapter "Liberation" for more discussion of that. There you will read that, basically and briefly, the more the Personality understands what is really happening in life, the more effective is the learning, and the more efficient is the journey, which means that it happens faster than it otherwise would.

The next mention of acceleration is also of the intentional kind, although it seems to be the intention of the Essence rather than the intention of the Personality, which (although it helps) doesn't need to be aware of the Essence's plans:

The Mature Soul can also accelerate within the Cycle. Young Souls can burn Karmic Ribbons rapidly sometimes and accelerate; Elizabeth Blackwell and Florence Nightingale are examples. Louis Pasteur, Walter Reed, Marie Curie, [and] Frank Lloyd Wright accelerated. [18 September 1973]

These are all famous people who did important things that influenced a lot of people, and this is the sort of thing that often results in spiritual acceleration. Acceleration, in that passage above and in other passages (see below), is often connected to a fast burning of many Karmic Ribbons; refer to the chapter "Karma" for further discussion. There you will read that, basically and briefly, unpleasant though it often is, Karma is an intense and effective accelerant of spiritual growth. In fact, if it were not for Karma to enliven and accelerate the journey, life would be boring and transit would be slow.

Sarah ... stated that she had developed quite an admiration for Gaius Octavian (Caesar Augustus) upon reading [the book] Caesar and Christ and wished to know about him.

This extremely perceptive final [Seventh] Level Young Soul burned much Karma and accelerated. He chose the statesman role again in the recent past, and is a First Level Old Soul, returned as Dag Hammarskjöld.

You might or might not know that Hammarskjöld was Secretary General of the United Nations during the 1950s. People who are in positions of power can do much good or much harm; they often earn and burn Karmic Ribbons with a large quantity of people. Doing this results in acceleration.

Besides the intention of Essence to burn Karmic Ribbons in order to accelerate, the Personality can intend spiritual practices and thereby accelerate spiritual growth:

Edgar: I would like advice regards getting rid of pain.

We can be of assistance only in that your illness is a part of Karma for you, and when you come to grips with your spiritual controversy, the pain will no longer be necessary. This can be accelerated, of course, by those methods we have outlined for the others; that is: meditation, concentration, fasting, and study. Edgar is waging an internal battle with reason versus dogma. This is not unusual, just agonizing, particularly for [those] Scholars who are slaves to reason. [15 November 1973]

Refer to chapters "Meditation and Concentration", "Fasting", and "Study". Means and methods of spiritual growth are found in the Michaelian teachings and other spiritual teachings; their purpose is to accelerate spiritual growth; refer to the chapter "Growth, Spiritual". Basically and briefly, spiritual growth happens whether or not the Personality understands what is happening and why, but growth is accelerated when one knows what life is really all about, and applies tools that foster the journey. Regarding Scholars, that Role correlates with the Neutral Assimilation Center, which is not a "slave to reason"; it is actually inclined to intuition and instinct, and that Center is like a 'bridge' or 'gateway' to the higher Centers. Another comment regarding "slaves to reason", being an Artisan myself, it is fair for me to accuse them of being "slaves to reason" because that Role correlates with the Intellectual Center, the Negative Pole of which is -Reason. Edgar was a Scholar, but I take "slaves to reason" to refer to all those, not just Scholars, who are stuck at the third stage of development, the mental stage, the Artisan stage, and not able to advance to the fourth stage, the intuitive/instinctive stage, or higher, where contact with Essence is had:

The Work brings about Frictions and growths like new grass in the forest after a rain. Your growth will be accelerated because you will be working from Essence. That is what matters, not just doing Work or not doing Work. [20 November 1973]

Refer to chapters "Work, The" and "Friction" and "Essence and Personality". Although Work is not required, acceleration happens via contact with Essence, and contact with Essence is augmented by doing the spiritual practices recommended by the Michaels.

Warriors do not as a rule accelerate rapidly. This pertains to you, too, Cheryl. Because you are a Priest, you will accelerate much faster than those around you. This is why you [a Young Soul] feel the resentment now [for older Souls looking down on you]. [22 November 1973]

Whereas Priests have a spiritual consciousness by nature, Warriors do not, and this Role factor is another one of those factors that affects spiritual growth rate. This may be true in some way, but what is said above needs to be reconciled with what is said below:

The Server has all means open for reaching the goal and is the only Role that is so by nature. All other Fragments require special circumstances to achieve the goal, those special circumstances increasing with Role Cardinality. For many Kings, the circumstances for progress toward the goal may be very limited. [Yarbro, *Michael's People*, p. 269]

According to Yarbro, the Priest, because of its high Cardinality, would be slow to transit, and the Warrior, because of its low Cardinality, would be rapid to transit, contrary to the original Michaelian group passage. My proposed reconciliation is that the original Michaelian group passage refers to spiritual acceleration, and the Yarbro passage refers to physical acceleration. In other words, we are talking about two types of acceleration here, namely, speed in coming to understand how physicality works (which favors Ordinal Roles) versus speed in coming to understand how spirituality works (which favors Cardinal Roles).

Role is one factor that generally accounts for the speed of one's journey through the reincarnation cycle. Other than Role, Soul Age also figures into the velocity of transit:

Billie: Was that my last [most recent past] life?

No, the pirate was in between. There was no acceleration. Étienne Delacroix lived only thirty-four years. [29 November 1973]

It does not say so here explicitly, but it does say so elsewhere, that in order to advance a Level within a Soul Age, it is necessary to complete all seven Internal Monads in the Positive Poles. A premature death, such as at age 34, retards the process. Therefore, the more full lifetimes, in which one dies in advanced old age, the faster the journey through the reincarnation cycle.

In a spiritual teaching, the teacher/student ratio affects spiritual growth:

This time is good for more small group meetings. With four souls present, it will become easier to counsel each of you individually. It has come to the point that your entities will require personalized information. Also, in smaller groups, there can be greater control of subject jumping. A whole evening can be spent on one subject without covering everything. We are seeing much growth in the entities in our group, and also see the need for smaller meetings like tonight, for further advancement at an accelerated rate. [14 December 1973]

The smaller the quantity of attendees in a group meeting the faster they can move; the larger the quantity, the slower they move.

Is the entity of Tomas a young soul?

This Fragment, in the last physical interval, accelerated because of psychic growth. If he chooses to remain on the Astral Plane for several more of your centuries, growth may be such that he will be reincarnated as a First Level Old Soul. He has an advantage over you: he is not encumbered by the physical vehicle and has access to much information, but is also challenged by Maya. [20 December 1973]

Elsewhere it was said that spiritual growth is slower on the Astral Plane than it is on the Physical Plane, because the developmental catalyst is so much more intense on the Physical Plane, in spite of some impediments here that are not found there. And that is why souls incarnate, because evolution is faster here, even when it is possible to accelerate on the Astral Plane. Refer to the chapter "Maya" for more discussion of that factor that retards spiritual growth. Basically and briefly, Maya can be thought of as misinformation and disinformation about the nature of reality.

Gene: Things are happening so rapidly. Many changes are occurring. I made a New Year's resolution and kept it one day: that was to get up at 2:00 AM and meditate. Are there any suggestions for improving the meditation?

Interrupting needed sleep to meditate is not evolutionary; it would not work. Early morning would be more effective. You are moving rapidly, Gene. This will even accelerate more in the coming two weeks. Be prepared for some radical changes within. You are now able to handle some fairly wide leaps.... [03 January 1974]

Acceleration is not just something that happens gradually over long periods of time. Quite often, the acceleration happens during a brief and intense transition from one relatively stable plateau to the next. Accelerated *revolutions* are perhaps more the norm than accelerated *evolutions*.

Gene: I'd like to ask about a recurring dream. I'm in school all the time and I can't find my books. Finally, I take a test and I'm not prepared; I haven't studied well. Next dream, I am better prepared and I am going to pass the test. One thing, I'm learning to fly. In the sequence of dreams, I float up and fall. Last night, at will, in the dream, I levitated. I was also prepared for the test.

You are now ready for the next step. We see much acceleration occurring. We sense in you a new willingness that has not been there before to let go of the rational and explore new areas. [20 January 1974]

As hinted above, reality systems are structured step-wise, with levels and stages. Acceleration can happen on the 'runs' of the stairs, but acceleration is most apparent on the 'rise' of the stairs. Acceleration really gets going above and beyond the rational step, which is only the third step on the staircase.

Alice: I would like a comment on a conflict I see in Dick and myself, that whenever I come up with new directions for myself (Ellis's group, teen-parent thing at EST, electronic music course at the college), he always tries to talk me out of them by saying he doesn't see how they would do any good.

This often happens in long-term relationships. When the soul in Submission [such as yourself] decides to alter this Goal, it is quite a shock to those around it, and you must be prepared for resistance, sometimes disguised and covert, but sometimes the pot actually boils over. Dick, you should be able to see this in yourself and resist the temptation to pull (her) back. This is an interesting reaction and invariably happens even in situations where one soul has been urging the other to grow. When the growth movement occurs, the resistance is virtually automatic. This creates some fascinating paradoxes, in that sometimes the rate of growth in the one altering seems to accelerate rapidly, leaving the other temporarily behind. Many broken relationships stem from this period of relative acceleration. Many are not willing to ride out the storm and see where the evening-out begins. [27 January 1974]

Spiritual growth is not a race to a finish line, but when married people run the journey at different rates, obviously there are going to be challenges for the two to adjust to each other. I am reminded of the cartoon where a caterpillar and a butterfly are seated on a marriage-counselor's couch, and the caterpillar says to the therapist, "I don't know who she is anymore." I am also reminded of the Biblical injunction to not plow with an ox and a donkey yoked together. This is a metaphor for marriage: sometimes a divorce is necessary if one is to be allowed to grow on their spiritual path and the partner resists that. This idea can be generalized to the notion that one must be free of physical encumbrances and restrictions in order to grow spiritually.

Barbara: I'd like to ask about a shaky reaction I received when I saw a guru's picture over 20 years ago. I felt he was my guru. His name is Ramana Maharshi.

We find no real fault with this man's expression. This was a Fifth Level Old Scholar in Growth, a Spiritualist, who accelerated through application of the principles we have laid out here. This man is worth reading, but since he no longer lives, cannot answer any queries you might have, which is one of the problems with all inspired literature. [06 February 1974]

Sometimes spiritual acceleration is accidental or spontaneous, sometimes it is a natural phase in the course of evolution, and sometimes it requires Work. One form of Work is to aspire to be like an exemplar personage that one reads about or that one knows personally. Not only is it okay to follow an enlightened teacher, it fosters acceleration to have a guru such as Ramana and ask oneself, "What would Ramana do?", and emulate that.

Dick: Why start [Monads] while you're here?

Many souls choose this [Monads] as a method of accelerating. [27 February 1974]

Refer to the chapter "Monads" for a thorough discussion of that accelerant of spiritual growth. There you will read that Monads are challenging experiences that come in two phases, an Ordinal phase and a Cardinal phase. In psychotherapeutic terms, the advice usually given is to "face your fears; don't run from them". The point is to not ignore or deny a negative experience; 'milk' it for all it is worth, and it will rebound to a positive experience. This Monadic process is actually the driver, the key element, of spiritual growth.

Did she [Mary mother of Jesus] accelerate during her lifetime?

No. [03 April 1974]

One might think that intimate contact with an exalted person would provoke spiritual acceleration, but in the 17 April 1974 session it was said that, in this case, Jesus's mother experienced "sufficient emotional trauma" regarding what happened to her son that it caused "psychic disintegration". My surmise is that some traumas can result in acceleration, and some traumas can result in the opposite.

In none of the transcriptions is acceleration exactly defined, but as we see in the next few passages, it could mean advancing a Level within a lifetime rather than between lifetimes, or it could mean skipping a Level within a Soul Age, or it could mean skipping an entire Soul Age:

Cheryl: Does that mean a jump from a Young Cycle to an Old Cycle?

We did not say that. There will be a major acceleration though. We are not saying that you could not transcend, Cheryl. We are, however, saying that we doubt that you will. The lady knows how. An entire Cycle

would be a monstrous task. We are not saying that it cannot be done, but it is not attempted often and is usually unsuccessful. [15 May 1974]

Cheryl was a late Level Young Soul Priest, and was therefore extraordinarily ambitious to succeed in her endeavors, but there are limits to acceleration of one's spiritual journey.

For an example of a successful acceleration of a reasonable amount, see next.

Re: Pope Giovanni Roncalli (?) [Pope John XXIII]. SRG? Slave, compassionate? He was to have been only an interim pope (he was ill when he took over) and the services are now in English for those speaking English. He accomplished much.

The man, John, was the archetypal Sixth Level Old Soul transcendent. His acceleration was more marked in the last year of his life. Yes, a Slave and yes, in Passion and Emotional Center; mostly Jovial, some Martian; a Spiritualist in Growth. He jumped from Sixth Level Old to Transcendental level. [18 May 1974]

Pope John's Cardinal Inspiration Overleaves (Passion, Growth, Spiritualist, Sixth Level) were well suited for promoting his acceleration, and presumably they would do the same for others. The fact that John was an Old Soul "Transcendent" (unencumbered by Karmic Ribbons) was also a major boost. So, add certain Overleaves to the mix of factors that promote spiritual growth.

Dick: Question regarding the speeding up of spiritual growth.

There is some validity in the statement that the Personality and Essence must eventually "battle it out", at least if progress is to be made on the Physical Plane, and this does not happen when entities [marijuana] that knock Personality out of the box are used, but those [psychedelic] crutches do a valuable service in that they allow you to glimpse the goal and make an intelligent decision about its worthiness as a full-time pursuit. [12 June 1974]

The potential role of psychedelics to accelerate one's spiritual growth are covered in the chapter "Psychedelics".

In a previous session, quoted above, it was said that Pope John was able to skip a Level, so Gene asked about another notable person:

Gene: Was Milarepa an Old Soul? Did he shortcut many lifetimes?

The "Way of the Fakir" is not a recommended path for your culture. It is only rarely successful and requires more of its proponent than is necessary. This is successful in accelerating. [25 June 1974]

Milarepa was a Tibetan Buddhist yogi who lived in the 11th Century. Refer to the chapter "Yoga" for more discussion of that spiritual path. The point to be made here is that, besides reasonable expectations about how much acceleration is possible, there are reasonable and appropriate methods for any particular person in any particular culture.

Besides spiritual practices as indicated previously, another method of promoting acceleration is mentioned in the next occurrence of the word, three months after the previous occurrence:

Living in life requires what you are calling self-image and ego strength. Spiritual acceleration does not require this; it requires negation of the cultural facade. [14 September 1974]

Refer to the chapters "Ego" and "Culture" for more discussion about those potential encumbrances to spiritual growth. The point to be made here is that the conditions for success in spiritual acceleration often run counter to the conditions for success in advancing one's physical life. This factor is discussed at some length in the chapter "Asceticism and Austerity".

Allyn expressed difficulty "finding himself" in all areas of his SRG [Overleaf array]. Asked [for a] review. Discussion put this problem with Center, Mode, and Soul Level.

This man is in Growth [Goal] and has undergone already tremendous exploration and acceleration in this life. This is the primary reason he is uncomfortable with the Level [Fourth Level Mature]. It feels transitional to him, and at the end of this life, it very well may be. There may have been an error in transmission concerning the Centering. If so, then this man is in the Emotional Part of Intellectual Center. We find no fault with the total picture otherwise. [24 September 1974]

Here again, with Allyn as with others, we see that a person who has the Goal of Growth is prone to desire acceleration and to achieve it.

The questioner in the following exchange was said to have died in Auschwitz in his previous life:

Bill: What about Richard's intuition that he [Bill] accelerated in the past life?

(He went) from Sixth Level Mature [to First Level Old]. Ironically, these death camps provided an environment for rapid spiritual acceleration, especially for those who were able to stand aside and see their torturers as False

Personalities rather than as monsters. Many accelerated during their last days of life, when they were able to come to grips with the impermanence of physical reality in the face of a blameless existence. In other words, the realization that no crime had been perpetrated and yet they were to die in answer to a mad man's [Adolph Hitler] dream. [15 October 1974]

As stated previously, trauma can result either in acceleration or retardation, depending on the type and severity of the trauma. In this case, the type of acceleration was that a Level was able to be skipped. This case provides another argument for the acceptance and transcendence of any intense and concentrated seemingly negative experience, thereby "finding the sliver lining in the cloud" and "turning lemons into lemonade".

David asked if he had accelerated along wrong lines, outside of his boundaries, too quickly and without enough knowledge. If so, what does he have to do to Balance himself?

You are well aware of the fact that you have a marked tendency to overreach your available energies. This is no exception. The only way out of the morass is to again give yourself space. This is something you did not allow for in your present prospectus. This is the well-known danger of which Dick spoke earlier. [07 December 1974]

David was another person who had some Cardinal Inspiration Overleaves, which are the class of Overleaves that typically promote acceleration. In his case these were Sixth Level, Spiritualist, and Growth. However, the tendency of Cardinal Inspiration Overleaves is to cause "overreach" "outside of boundaries" "too quickly". Unbalanced attempts to accelerate are counterproductive. The collection of passages in this chapter about acceleration provides clues about the means and methods that foster healthy acceleration.

On erasing Tapes ... to achieve Agape eventually ...

One thing we might suggest that perhaps could be a start at least, would be to determine those core beliefs in you regarding your ability to achieve a state of Agape or consciousness. When the belief is brought to the surface, often the Tapes that accompany it are clearly heard for the first time. For many reasons, this process is more effective if performed in a group setting, as quite often it leads to what you might term psychic surgery. You have only an inkling of the strength of these master Tapes and the hold they have over you. Only when they are found, played out, and discarded does serious accelerating begin. Once the process begins, however, it does have a tendency to snowball, and it is difficult, if not impossible, to slide back into old patterns once the Tape has been erased. Sometimes, the behavior patterns continue for awhile, but even they eventually cease, as there is nothing supporting them. By the way, you are quite correct in assuming that you have both negative and positive programs on all of these and that you do play them one against the other, constantly. [19 January 1975]

Refer to the chapter "Bio-computer — its Programs and Tapes" for a thorough discussion of that particular impediment to spiritual growth. The chapter "Imprinting" covers some of the same territory. Basically and briefly, everyone is imprinted with the belief, value, and behavior systems of their parents and their society. Quite often, this is influence from younger souls and therefore an impediment to the spiritual paths of older souls.

A discussion was held about helping.

To help someone else, you must, of course, know the truth about yourself, and you must know that which is false in them. This is why Mechanical Man fails so in his efforts to help. He does not know truth in himself, let alone in others. Balanced Man can certainly accelerate the growth around him, and those on their way to Balance can impart that which is truth in them to others. Yes, Adepts are followed up the [seven] rungs of the cosmic ladder through no efforting on their part, because telling the truth is not an effort; telling lies is. [30 January 1975]

Not only does the term "acceleration" apply to skipping Levels as documented above, it also applies to climbing the ladder of the so-called Levels of Being, from Mechanical Man trapped in the lower Centers, to Balanced Man in the Neutral Assimilation Center, to Adepts and Masters in the higher Centers; refer to the chapter "Levels of Being". Also refer to chapters "Truth", "Mechanical Man", "Balanced Man", and "Adepts and Masters" for discussion of subjects that appear in that passage.

Not only does the term "acceleration" apply to individuals on a spiritual path, it also applies to socio-cultural revolution and evolution:

James Bolen received a plan from Edgar Phillips about going to Japan and contacting people to establish a magazine. Edgar told him the magazine would be successful internationally. Does Michael feel this is true?

Of course, the expansion of this type of publication is inevitable. We, perhaps, would have suggested expansion into the Soviet Union, but it does not really matter, as the receptivity would be virtually the same. The

predominant reasoning behind that suggestion, of course, would be the ultimate exchange of information and the eventual acceleration of the psychic revolution. There is almost a direct current now existing between these two vortices of psychic change, which is both exciting and gratifying, and there it is that the acceleration will come about. The Orient, however, has always been receptive to this and this will prove to be no exception to this.

James Bolen had communicated with a man in Russia, who is now in jail because of their correspondence, so it was difficult to plan to go to Russia. Japan would be easier.

The difference, of course, is that we suggest sometimes the most challenging area of operation, because we see that as the ultimately most satisfactory, in terms of the long goal of spiritual and psychic rebirth. The expansion of this exchange into the Orient is not a Bad Work for now. In fact, it may prove to be the most financially sound move that could be made at this time. Finances aside, the expansion into another vortex of psychic energy would prove in the long run the most accelerating. The psychic revolution is accelerating now of its own accord, as you are well aware, but it is students such as you who have the vehicle for exchange, who can reach the outposts. We do not recommend this, however, if there is any danger to financial integrity. This is far too valuable a vehicle and tool to tamper with.

Although not all of the information thus far received has any basis in fact, much of it is valid and constitutes an enormous stride in approaching the vast problem of expressing the Logos in the language of this time frame. Never before has so much emphasis been on intellectualism and realism, and, therefore, never before has the task been so strenuous. Not since the destruction of Atlantis has so much information of a scientific nature been available to Mechanical Man on this planet, and he is so busy entering this into the computer and storing it all in the books, that he has little time to pursue the awesome and mystical. He has barely enough time to assimilate that which is absolutely necessary to shape out his survival. Yet, he has because of this also become blasé and is not easily awed by information from any source. It is not easy in this time frame to shock awareness into Mechanical Man. This shotgun approach works best, we have found, and this is why a publication such as yours can be such a valuable tool, a vehicle for expression of the revolution. It bombards the senses. This will, of course, be the ultimate battle plan. [31 January 1975]

Socio-cultural change has been accelerated by print media ever since the invention of the printing press, and the process was accelerated even more with the invention of electromagnetic media (radio and television), and the process was accelerated even more with the invention of the internet. It is no wonder then that spiritual evolution in whole groups of individuals should also be accelerated along with socio-cultural evolution.

Concluding Comments on Acceleration

Members of the original Michaelian group were especially interested in spiritual growth, apparently far more so than subsequent students, so naturally the subject of acceleration of spiritual growth came up for discussion. So far as I know, subsequent students generally have not shown much interest in spiritual growth. (Those who have psychological issues have shown some interest in A psychological components of the Michaelian teachings.)

Spiritual evolution occurs at the pace that the Fragment and/or Essence plans, but the whole point of the spiritual path is that the Personality self-consciously and intentionally participate in the process. Therefore, so far as the Personality is concerned, the process is on 'auto-pilot', and most Fragments go through the entire reincarnation cycle in the 'waking sleep', but some Fragments chose for this to happen accompanied by awareness, and apparently this is what is meant by acceleration. It is appropriate that this chapter be the first chapter in this *Study Papers* book because the assumption is that readers are interesting in conscious participation in the plans made by Fragment and Essence, thereby accelerating and otherwise facilitating the transit through the reincarnation cycle.

Sometimes spiritual acceleration is accidental or spontaneous, sometimes it is a natural phase in the course of evolution, and sometimes it requires spiritual practices, aka "Work". Numerous factors that determine the speed of spiritual growth through the reincarnation cycle are mentioned in the original Michaelian group transcriptions:

- Burning masses of Karmic Ribbons aids acceleration of spiritual growth.
- Doing spiritual practices, aka doing the "Work", also promotes acceleration.
- Some Roles and some Soul Ages advance more quickly than others.

- The Cardinal Inspiration Overleaves, namely Growth, Passion, Spiritualist, and Higher Emotional Center, tend to impel the person to accelerated spiritual growth
- Psychedelics can be therapeutic, and also be a temporary accelerant to spiritual growth.
- Living a full lifetime, into advanced old age, gives greater scope for growth processes.
- Smaller, more intimate group meetings can result in its members advancing faster.
- Mitigation of Maya, aka misinformation and disinformation in one's belief system is a needed factor in spiritual growth.
- Traumatic events sometimes lead to acceleration in soul growth.
- Shedding ego and acculturation promote spiritual growth.
- Erasing programs and tapes from the bio-computer is a spiritual growth process.





ACHIEVEMENT

This chapter is the product of a search for the word “achievement” in the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group channeling sessions, and other words with a similar meaning. I have added some commentary, which consists of my analysis and synthesis of the quotations. Obviously, this word does not represent a significant component of the Michaelian teachings, but even so, the word appears often enough that it seems to me that students can benefit from seeing all of those instances documented and commented on in a chapter of this *Study Papers* book. Furthermore, the word is related to a number of other components of the Michaelian teachings that are considered to be more significant; these will be noted in the commentary on the instances of the word and its contexts. Basically and briefly, the Michaels recommended to the original Michaelian group members that they

The word “achievement” is not capitalized in this chapter **and** other chapters of this *Study Papers* book because it has no special meaning in the Michaelian teachings; it is not a Michaelian jargon word that needs a definition apart from its use in the common vernacular. One might therefore wonder why it is even included in this book. One answer is that it is just a Scholar–Cast Artisan thing to do: I study the Michaelian teachings documents and I write about them and I want to be thorough. Another answer is that achievement issues are pervasive in human psychology and sociology, the subject came up in the original Michaelian group numerous times, some interesting things were said about it, and it might be helpful for Michaelian students to have the answers conveniently collected all in one place.

This chapter is one of many in this book that focuses on a psychological and psychotherapeutic component of the Michaelian teachings as found in original Michaelian group transcriptions, rather than on a spiritual component, as so many other chapters in this book do. The Michaelian version of psychology is not to be confused with the pop psychology of the self-improvement movement, those that do not have a spiritual core or perspective. Rather, the Michaelian psychotherapeutic path (aimed at improving psychological health) is a beneficial precursor to the spiritual path (aimed at improving soul health). To skip the former but attempt the latter is referred to as “spiritual bypassing” (>https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spiritual_bypass<), and it usually proves to be problematic.

Definition of Achievement

So what is meant by achievement? The online Merriam Webster dictionary definition is:

Achievement per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

The following extracts from original Michaelian group transcriptions are Q&A exchanges, where an original Michaelian group member asks a question (or makes a comment), and the Michaels provide an answer. This is **[not]** a subject that would benefit by division into subcategories, as some subjects do. These extracts are presented in the chronological order in which they were given, even though this is not a subject where there was a development or evolution of a specific revelation of a facet of the Michaelian teachings, as was often the case with the original Michaelian group. As is my custom, I often provide some explanatory comments following the question or answer. Underlined words in the Michaels’ answers are my emphasis, to draw attention to what it is that I comment on. Sometimes I embed words or phrases [in brackets] that I believe help to clarify the question or the answer.

Concluding Comments on Achievement



ADEPT AND MASTER

[[This chapter is arranged in the chronological order of the sessions. Consider if it could be arranged in a logical order of progressive revelation.]]

[[Check to see if Adept and Master were a component of the Gurdjieffian teachings. If so, do a section.]]

Even though the words Adept and Master do not have a special jargon meaning in the Michaelian teachings, I capitalize them anyway to let the reader know that they are a component of the Michael's cosmological system, and to let the reader know that they have a chapter in this book when they see the words in other chapters.

The original Michaelian group was convened for the purpose of making contact with a supernatural being who could give them knowledge, understanding, and accelerate their spiritual path. For several months, they had contact with "Tomas" and "Soleal" via an Ouija board, and then the Michaels appeared. In the very first session with the Michaels, the subject of Adepts and Masters came up. As we will see in this chapter, these are the two highest levels of "spiritual enlightenment". *[[What is the relation, if any, to Soul Age and/or Transcendental or Infinite Souls?]]*

The question was asked concerning the decision to go on in the search for spiritual enlightenment, to go on to becoming an Adept. What do you do when you get so far and are not too sure you want to continue? We wondered if the Masters picked those in whom the desire for "psychic experiences" was quite strong to become Adepts.

Complexity is the antithesis of what the spirit seeks. The body represents the epitome of complexity. That is why the spirit is again and again attracted to it, until the partially awakened Essence catches a glimpse beyond the "veil." [12 August 1973]

This seems to me to be a very obscure answer to the question. What I gather is that Essence must pass through the experience of the complexity of incarnation on its way to the simplicity of being an Adept or Master, which is beyond the veil of complexity.

Near the end of this first session with the Michaels, we find that the original Michaelian group members were impressed with their new teacher, and we find this in the transcriptions:

We tried to thank him [Michael] and he replied:

Thanks are not necessary. This gift is given freely in the spirit of love. I will give as much as you will receive. This is true of all of us. We are also Soleal's teacher. ("Soleal" is the name given to us by an entity who says that he is an Astral [Plane] projection from another planet approximately twenty light years away. Michael describes Soleal as an "Adept".) [12 August 1973]

The parenthetic statement was inserted by the editor of the transcriptions. Tomas was on the Astral Plane between incarnations. Soleal was incarnate on the Physical Plane but, due to his Adept status, was apparently able to transmit his thoughts via the Astral Plane to a channel (Sarah Chambers) living on a different planet of the Physical Plane.

Is there any way to figure out your Karmic Ribbons?

Yes, there is a way. You must first be able to recall the threads. This is what takes the practice. This is why concentration and mediation have been stressed. You have indicated that you wish this, and we are showing you how. We will dictate what amounts to a book to you within the next year. What you do with this information depends on your desires entirely, but the information will be given within this group. There will be an Adept who will aid the others. There is one among you who will master the techniques. [17 August 1973]

Based on contacts and interviews that I have had with original Michaelian group members, I doubt that anyone in the original Michaelian group actually achieved Adept status. Even so, it does not hurt to try, using the practices that the Michaels recommended: concentration and meditation. These methods have a chapter in this SPOMG book. One of original Michaelian group members (Barbara Spurlock, aka Sara Alexander) compiled the sessions into something like a book, divided into subject categories — refer to Volume 2 of *Michael Speaks: The Legacy of Sarah Chambers*. This SPOMG book is a continuation of her work.

The appearance of the word "master" in the answer above needed clarification:

Richard wanted to know what his obstacles were.

Richard's main obstacle is misdirected tenacity. He is attempting to rectify that. I said an "Adept," not a "Master." [17 August 1973]

This is a clue that Adept and Master are not the same thing.

Dick had a question about a dream he had.

The experience was not real. It had to do with symbols you are unwilling to deal with in reality. Part of your “dreaming” is real: it is time spent out of the body. Adepts such as Soleal can spend the entire [sleep] time out of body. [17 August 1973]

So there we are told about one ability that an Adept has. There are other abilities; see next Q&A exchange.

Because of their knowledge of various spiritual teachings, the original Michaelian group members had their understanding of what an Adept was, but then someone asked for a definition of Adept from the Michaels:

What is an Adept?

An Adept is one who has cleared the mind of all trivia. This is an integrated being who is firmly committed to the path, who is unafraid to leave the Physical Plane for hours at a time, is thoroughly versed in the occult teaching, is aware of karmic ties, and has recall beyond the grave, can materialize both self and objects from borrowed energy sources, is both clairaudient and clairvoyant. This means nonattachment to both [Physical and Astral] planes and its inhabitants. [21 August 1973]

This answer would seem to indicate that an Adept has access to the third plane, where the Michael’s live.

Unless it was a typographical error, I thought I heard you say that I would become an occult Master, and I want to know if it was meant to be in this lifetime.

Not in this lifetime, Dick. It is within you to become an Adept [in this lifetime]. [26 August 1973]

That answer indicates that a Master is a level above the Adept. Having met him on several occasions, I can say with some confidence that he did not live up to his potential in this lifetime.

Dick had a daughter who was also on a spiritual path in a different group:

Is it within Kathryn’s grasp to become an Adept within this lifetime?

Yes. All Old Souls have this within their grasp. Whether or not it is achieved depends upon the soul’s ability to burn Karma as rapidly, and then pursue the [spiritual] path. One of you has made this decision already and will become the teacher for the others. The skills are there. They need to be practiced. [26 August 1973]

In the original Michaelian group, Dick was said to be an Old Soul, but two decades later he was demoted to a Mature Soul. I am unaware of any indication that any original Michaelian group member achieved Adept status. Furthermore, having corresponded with and having met Kathryn in person — she was a member of Robert Burton’s Fourth Way commune for decades — I would say the same about her. If any Michaelian teachings student subsequent to the original Michaelian group has achieved Adept status, I do not know about it.

Richard: I will finish the book on Gandhi tomorrow. Then what should I do?

First, make sure that absorption has taken place. Then continue with the meditation. Any of the Adepts and Masters we have discussed this evening would be valuable. [18 September 1973]

Dick: I did read Sir James Jean’s book on time, and I’ve never thought about it since, but he projected this idea of movement through space. That’s why time exists ahead and behind, and you could look ahead or behind if you knew how.

There is a vortex on each celestial body through which the time planes transect. This can be used for interstellar space travel. However, it requires an Adept who can teleport to program the computer. [02 October 1973]

Gene: He says that it requires an Adept who can teleport to program the computer. What computer?

The computer in the space ship. These ships literally go back in time and forward in space. [02 October 1973]

Dick: Guess I’m saying there has to be large internal changes in order to make a change in jobs, before I can trust cosmic influences. Soleal said you have to use your own resources. Michael is saying, “Don’t toil so much.” That’s what I’m complaining about. They say not to work so hard.

We hold up Soleal as an example of how this can be done by someone living very much in the world. He is not an ascetic by any stretch of the imagination. He simply has learned to dissociate himself from the mundane and concentrate on the arcane. The decision to pursue spiritual liberation is an agonizing one for everyone who makes it, without exception. No Adept has found it easy. If we have led you to think that being an Old Soul means being on the gravy train, that is your misinterpretation. It is probably the most difficult [Cycle] of all. The only thing that makes it better is your own readiness to stand apart from the mainstream and begin to verify. This, of course, makes you even odder than ever. [06 October 1973]

Dick: It seems that the unification of Fragments goes on inter [between physical] life[times]. You can’t do it here, can you?

You can, but it is difficult. It requires psychic union and that by definition requires that you be an Adept. That is always [sexually] polar. It is usually done between lives. [06 October 1973]

Sarah: Can you tell us about the Astral Plane and its levels?

The first level of the Astral Plane is populated by living Fragments adept at Astral travel and those souls who penetrate this plane accidentally through drugs. The second level of the Astral Plane is inhabited by all those between [physical] bodies. The third level attracts Old Souls who are trying to burn final karma without being reborn. The mid Astral bodies are partially reunited Entities. You have manifested a mid Astral entity previously [Tomas]. The three higher levels are progressively integrated. Access to the high planes is through these levels. Even very high Adepts such as Soleal have fantasies concerning the high planes. We have confronted him on the low Astral Plane, and have been required to descend a staircase which does not exist except in his mind. [08 October 1973]

I am confused about which souls inhabit what planes after the physical level. I would like more information about this

There are, of course, seven planes in all, each with seven levels. Beyond the Astral Plane is the Causal Plane with seven levels: three low, one mid Causal Plane level, upon which we reside, and three higher levels upon which reside the high causal bodies — the Transcendental Souls contiguous with this plane; and the Mental Plane is the Akashic plane, which is a photographic record of all history. Some very high Adepts have access to this plane. On the Mental Plane resides the Infinite Soul and the low and mid-mental bodies. Beyond this is the Buddhic Plane, and upon this level are all of those souls who have achieved physical communion with the Tao. Beyond this of course, [is] the Tao. [29 November 1973]

Dick: My perception is that sex and sexual relationships are the major impediment on this plane to staying on the path. If we are going to have a medical clinic and grow, it is essential to deal with this problem.

Your perception, of course, is completely valid. This is the reason why most Adepts eventually refrain from entering into such relationships. Some, but only relatively few, have been able to continue to engage in a physical sexual relationship while evolving spiritually. The reason for this should be fairly obvious when you stop and realize that sexuality of the physical sort pertains to the Physical plane. This does not exist on the other planes. It is supplanted by more open communication. Persons who are hostile and aggressive enough to inflict pain or death upon other persons are always found to be sexually uptight in some way. Sexually satiated persons are normally passive, but this is only true when the mind accepts the sexual act in the same frame as the body does. As long as there is conflict in the mind, there is not complete satisfaction, and aggression results. [29 November 1973]

Betty: In my reading, a Master (Rama Krishna) touched his pupils on the forehead and told them they would be more aware.

Ritual is sometimes extremely valuable. It only works for those who believe in its power. Actual transference of energy between adepts only occurs when both are telepaths.

Betty: Will there be anyone in our group with that power?

There are Adepts who can do this. Soleal is one. There are Adepts on your planet who can do this with practice. [29 November 1973]

Like two AM?

No. We were thinking of eight or nine in the morning. He is an Adept. He is a student of mine. That, interestingly enough, is a densely populated, Emotionally Centered, masculine world. They are volatile, explosive, and kind all at the same time. [16 December 1973]

Gene: How about a five-book set of work by Thomas Spalding, The Life and Teachings of the Masters of the Far East? [These books tell of Masters who lived for hundreds of years.]

We are not aware of any Adepts who have chosen to remain on the Physical Plane beyond the allotted span. However, many Adepts do still have karmic Ribbons which bring them back for another go. [20 December 1973]

Is the entity of Tomas a Young Soul?

This Fragment, in the last physical interval [incarnation], accelerated because of psychic growth. If he chooses to remain on the Astral Plane for several more of your centuries, growth may be such that he will be reincarnated as a First Level Old Soul. He has an advantage over you. He is not encumbered by the physical vehicle, and the man of whom you speak [Thomas Spalding] is or has been in contact with several of these. Their recall is spectacular, and they do not spend as long on the Astral interval as do other souls, this accounts for the Tibetan theory of the forty days between lives. Some Adepts do this. Bodies die. The organic

constituents break down eventually, regardless of the skill of the Adept. It is wiser to change the body. Yes, read this book [by Thomas Spalding]. They are interesting. [20 December 1973]

Gene: I would like to verify a story told to me by HB, about a space ship, and information from these people, with something like 45 billion souls on the ship, who will act as missionaries.

Wow, this figure is astounding. This would virtually devastate most worlds we know of population wise, especially if they were all Adepts. It is true, you will be visited probably within the coming year and this visit will have a profound effect. We have advised you of the possibility of this contact. The missionary aspect is hazy. The exchange will be good for both. [20 December 1973]

We discussed how Jesus taught that the children of light were to have no sex, and that if you want to grow in this way there would be no sex. Someone suggested this might refer to a level above our physical one, and that the soul is sexless. Someone said the Bible said there are no marriages in heaven. EM then asked if Jesus really did work miracles, or if that was imagination.

This man was an occult Master. The miracles are there for those who wish to become Masters. Mass hypnosis was not beyond the grasp of ordinary priests, let alone one who has mastered all of the mysteries. Even most Adepts can perform feats which could be considered miracles by those who were looking on. Many of the stories surrounding the birth of the man Jesus were concocted long after his death to satisfy those who felt that the ancient prophecies should be fulfilled. [25 December 1973]

Ellis: Is my soul's movement random or purposeful? From the moment the soul Fragments into pieces then the evolutionary process evolves into ultimate unity and the process is repeated. I see it as by chance and not happening by purpose.

Do you really believe that "chance" brought this group together in Walnut Creek, California? We cannot believe that at all. The searching is solely through Essence, and the False Personality fights this as long as it exists, which may or may not survive to the bitter end. All of you were involved in a specific situation, which has now brought you together in a parallel time frame, which allows you to complete the Monad. For those of you who initially came together in Rome and Syria, Palestine, there is the teaching of Christ, who you all knew of then, for you to hear this time with unplugged ears. One among you heard it loud and clear then, and will become an Adept in this physical interval. SC wrote a book during that lifetime, and now she is writing it again. Some changes are being made. Others are playing out almost identical life roles as you did then. This will become more apparent as we progress. [27 December 1973]

Edgar: We are not likely to become Adepts when we are working for Kaiser [Permanente]. The satisfaction for the yearning for knowledge is interfered with by having to work.

The thirst for pure data accumulation is almost insatiable in the older Scholar. Yes, your lifestyle is interfering with the Goal of Growth. This teaching is not well understood in solitary. (EM has done much studying alone.) [31 December 73]

Edgar: How can one figure the exact soul level and information about previous lives?

Only by becoming an Adept and having access to the Akashic Plane. [31 December 1973]

The high Mental body spends time with all adepts. Some see the Infinite Soul in several transcendental forms. This is usually because the perceptions of physically tied adepts is not keen enough to perceive that much of the synthesis.... There are many troubled souls on the low Astral plane, and contact with them is often disturbing, even to the adepts who travel there. [03 January 1974]

Does what we're doing parallel the Eleusinian way of doing things?

This can happen only with a high Priest who can do the ritual work. This should be an Adept really, but some successful Priests were simply Old Priests in Dominance. Rituals solidify groups in many instances. [10 January 1974]

I would like Michael to comment on his last statement about "cosmic consciousness".

We see in one student the desire and ability to become an occult Adept in this lifetime.

Can the involvement of the occult pull one away from the spiritual?

If you make the mistake of equating the arcane arts with "magic", yes, we agree. [27 January 1974]

We have a method by which all of you can choose to achieve a modicum of growth on a spiritual plane. Many of you can even use it as a springboard toward becoming an adept. This is entirely up to you.

I would like to know if unblocking the emotions as is seen in the Esalen film is a healthy thing. It looks good.

We do not see the necessity for this action within the group, but perhaps an outlet needs to be provided elsewhere. In this we will not mediate, as this is within the realm of life crises, and does not pertain to spiritual growth. This is not to say that these matters do not have to be dealt with — they most certainly do. Long before you can even talk about growth — spiritual growth for the dedicated student and for the Adept — requires detachment from the mundane and trivial matters which are such immoderate energy drains. How can you possibly grow if you are immersed in all this Maya? [24 February 1974]

Dick: How does the "Adept" and "occult Master" correlate to the #4, #5, and #6 Man of Gurdjieff?

They are not precisely the same, although the Adept is usually crystallized [Man] Number Four. The occult Master has use of higher Centers at will. It merely means that this soul is in Balance with no danger of backsliding. [03 March 1974]

Contrary to the above, an Overleaf chart created during the original Michaelian group indicated that an Adept equates with Gurdjieff's Man Number Five, and that a Master equates with Gurdjieff's Man Number Seven. I would rather Adept = Man Number Six. The reason I say this is that the Positive Pole of the King Role, the seventh Role, is +Mastery. It also would make sense if an Adept equated with Man Number Six because of the correspondence with the spirituality of the Priest Role.

Teleportation is a skill mastered by many Adepts. This is not beyond many on your world. The man Uri [Geller] is able to do this without understanding what it is that he is doing, which accounts for his somewhat erratic performances. He also has enormous reserves of energy available and is relatively unfettered by the usual Maya; in fact, [he] is rather simplistic. [08 May 1974]

Gene: Does my task involving teaching and aloneness — separation?

Also, an important part of this task involves the discrimination in knowing who can hear the words without wasting the energy on those who cannot. Yes, the separation is almost accomplished, and yes, it is a solitary task and cannot be interfered with. If there is interference there is nothing accomplished. The true occult Adept is usually lonely. [12 June 1974]

Gene: Is Susan an adept now?

This lady could certainly become an Adept, but lacks command of her emotions. This imbalance prevents her. [16 June 1974]

It is not unusual for Astral beings and Adepts from other worlds to use whatever method it has at hand to effect communications. [16 June 1974]

What is ectoplasm?

This is the shell left behind [at the death of the body]. Also, many fragments now who are in teachings, such as the yogis, and to a certain extent teachings such as this one, have a shorter period of adjustment [to the Astral plane] as they are prepared for what really is. "Ectoplasm" is also used to refer to the Astral material used by adepts to materialize Astral beings and phenomena. [03 July 1974]

_____ talked of a headache he sometimes gets — this came tonight immediately after receiving the information he asked for. What is it? Why?

As for the band of tension, there is an underlying disappointment that needs not be. You are a good student and as capable as those others. As the goal of agape or spiritual liberation entails ultimately becoming an adept, the concept of telepathy should not be taken lightly. It is within the grasp of you, and would require an enormous amount of predictability. When you meet with an adept who is strongly telepathic, and also totally vulnerable, you will understand this more fully, but it is not an unrealistic goal for the man _____. [24 September 1974]

Can souls experience other entities or planes even if they are young or troubled or full of anger?

The difference, of course, lies in the level of the contact and the amount of volition involved. It is true that all of you spend a portion of your day on a plane other than the physical, and we have suggested to you an exercise whereby you can open your eyes and perceive this as it is. Certainly, beings other than adepts can arrive on these planes, usually under the direction of others. However, their control of the experience is limited, and their perceptions are largely based upon physical standards, and, of course, largely inaccurate; but, yes, they can glimpse this. The adept controls the visits and moves about at will. Often group work leads to an experience of the high planes, and many times this is due to the strength of the leader. If you were in the presence of an adept, the travel would be easier, yes. It is a part of the balanced man and is not available to these occasional voyagers. [29 September 1974]

You have heard it said by one [Jesus] who is an adept that, "I am all that there is, and you are with me." This is agape. [22 October 1974]

_____ asked if the procrastination was on our part or on Soleal's.

You students are aware of your own day-to-day fluctuations. This student also has many doubts about his own capabilities in fulfilling this task and fluctuates about his readiness. You see, the essence travels Astrally relatively free of the personality in an adept, but the vestiges of the personality come roaring back when this student is back in his body. Although he is at a firmly fixed balance, there is still part of him that wants to maintain a certain comfortable status quo. By the way, this student is uncomfortable with the knowledge that we were going to share this with you. [10 November 1974]

Don Juan [of the Carlos Castaneda books] was referred to in the past tense. Has he died, or does it involve the transcendental soul taking over the body?

No, the Transcendental Soul has not manifested, but this soul has become an adept and for this reason much does not apply in the same sense. We referred, we believe, to Overleaves which no longer apply, such as Chief Features and entrapment in Centers. If more was inferred, this was an error in transmission. [19 November 1974]

Most of them, by the time they have reached the stage in which they can travel between the stars, can detect the readiness on a world for contact. Most have adepts who know this long before the venture is undertaken. [20 November 1974]

We asked for a comment about the "third force" of which Gurdjieff spoke; the need of this [third force] to go [progress] from personality to Essence.

We have spoken many times of the neutral universal flow. This is what they try to put into words as the force acting upon you. Yes, this does exist, and yes, does have the influence that the student is trying to explain. When the fulcrum tips too widely to one side or the other though, the neutral force has no effect on the action. Only when the middle ground is reached, or at least approached, can this [force] be effective. This is why it is so difficult for students to put [it] into words. It is illusively [elusively?] felt by all but the most powerful adepts. It is almost never recognized by the others who come into its range unaware. In other words, although they are benefited, they do not know why. They only feel the neutralizing effect, but cannot describe the feeling. [07 December 1974]

Some students are able to remain in life roles and become adepts, but this requires total detachment — or "non-attachment" if you prefer.... On some planes, even on this world, the distinction has been made by good students and adepts, and the instinctive patterns have been overridden.... The personality is clever in the way that a wild beast is clever. It learns to avoid traps that might lead to its death, which is precisely what happens in a teaching when a student becomes an adept. [21 December 1974]

JH asked if we can ever experience total death of the false personality. Are there lapses? Does it always continue?

There are instances which we remembered well where there has been total death or extinguishment of the false personality, concomitant with the emergence of true personality of the essence. This was indeed gratifying to behold, but it happens rarely on the Physical plane, even in adepts who are at a high “level of being” [a Gurdjieff term]. They must be constantly alert to prevent the instinctive behavior reactions of the false personality from sneaking in.

H commented that she thought she had perceived her Essence while in hypnosis to be fragile. Was this a valid perception of her own Essence?

In the essence of the student, there is an undeniable quality of softness of which she is well aware, but we would certainly not consider this fragile. The true personality of the essence is, in fact, tough enough to withstand anything the Physical plane can throw up as barriers. Students expressing the Higher Centers can, for instance, withstand physical torture that the personality would buckle under in the first five minutes. This is readily observable in the behavior of some adepts under fire. The false personality has difficulty differentiating between conditions such as fragility, softness and the like. These are called by the culture “feminine” characteristics, and therefore there is a tendency to lump them all together and perceive them as the same. The false personality is perhaps the most fragile, as it is one that can be extinguished. After all, the true personality cannot be [extinguished], no matter how deeply you bury it in “bullshit.”

I feel the only route to positive pole of Sexual Center is love.

We have no quarrel with that, either. The only ecstasy that we know of occurring during the sexual act has occurred in adepts who are balanced and who do express agape. [25 January 1975]

Your culture is at fault here in that all of you have core beliefs that are strongly anti-[spiritual] growth. Being spiritual is, of course, being nonproductive and everyone “knows” that this is “bad.” Just to enable you to come past this barrier requires much ingenuity and could be disaster in the hands of a physical Adept, no matter how positive the adept might be. Strange as it may seem, many of you are among our most earnest students, and yet among our most Stubborn. [30 January 1975]

A discussion was held about helping.

To help someone else, you must, of course, know the truth about yourself and you must know that which is false in them. This is why Mechanical Man fails so in his efforts to help. He does not know truth in himself, let alone in others. Balanced Man can certainly accelerate the growth around him, and those on their way to Balance can impart that which is truth in them to others. Yes, Adepts are followed up the rungs of the cosmic ladder through no efforting on their part, because telling the truth is not an effort; telling lies is. [30 January 1975]





ADVICE

This chapter is the product of a search for the word “advice” in the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group channeling sessions. This word does not represent a significant component of the Michaelian teachings. However, there are good reasons to discuss the subject in this *Study Papers* book: 1) the subject came up numerous times during the original Michaelian group; 2) students can presumably benefit from having the mentions conveniently collected all in one place; 3) some interesting things were said about the subject; 4) the subject is related to a number of other components of the Michaelian teachings that are considered to be significant; 5) Concerns about giving and receiving advice are pervasive in human psychology and sociology and spirituality.

The word “advice” is not capitalized in this chapter or other chapters of this *Study Papers* book because it has no special meaning in the Michaelian teachings; it is not a Michaelian jargon word that needs a definition apart from its use in the common vernacular.

This chapter is one of many in this book that focuses on a psychological and psychotherapeutic component of the Michaelian teachings as found in original Michaelian group transcriptions, rather than on a spiritual component, as so many other chapters in this book do. The Michaelian version of psychology is not to be confused with the pop psychology of the self-improvement movement, those that do not have a spiritual core or perspective. Rather, the Michaelian psychotherapeutic path (aimed at improving psychological health) is a beneficial precursor to the spiritual path (aimed at improving soul health). To skip the former but attempt the latter is referred to as “spiritual bypassing” (>https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spiritual_bypass<), and it usually proves to be problematic.

Definition of Advice

So what is meant by advice? The online Merriam Webster dictionary definition is:

Advice per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

The following extracts from original Michaelian group transcriptions are Q&A exchanges, where an original Michaelian group member asks a question (or makes a comment), and the Michaels provide an answer. This is [not] a subject that would benefit by division into subcategories, as some subjects do. **These extracts are [not] presented in the chronological order in which they were given, even though this is not a subject where there was a development or evolution of a specific revelation of a facet of the Michaelian teachings, as was often the case with the original Michaelian group.** As is my custom, I often provide some explanatory comments following the question or answer. Underlined words are my emphasis, to draw attention to what it is that I comment on. Sometimes I embed words or phrases [in brackets] that I believe help to clarify the question or the answer.

Concluding Comments on Advice





⑤ AGAPE

Every seasoned Micheal Student knows that the stated purpose of the Michaels in giving their teaching is that their students learn about and practice and develop “Agape”. Students are also given to understand that Agape is the Greek word for love of a philosophical sort. Wikipedia has an article on it:

Agape ... is a Greco-Christian term referring to unconditional love, “the highest form of love, charity” and “the love of God for man and of man for God”. The word is not to be confused with *philia*, brotherly love, or *philautia*, self-love, as it embraces a universal, unconditional love that transcends and persists regardless of circumstance. It goes beyond just the emotions to the extent of seeking the best for others.

The noun form first occurs in the Septuagint [ancient Greek translation of Hebrew scriptures], but the verb form goes as far back as Homer, translated literally as affection, as in “greet with affection” and “show affection for the dead”. Other ancient authors have used forms of the word to denote love of a spouse or family, or affection for a particular activity, in contrast to *eros* (an affection of a sexual nature). Within Christianity, *agape* is considered to be the love originating from God or Christ for humankind. In the New Testament, it refers to the covenant love of God for humans, as well as the human reciprocal love for God; the term necessarily extends to the love of one’s fellow human beings. Some contemporary writers have sought to extend the use of *agape* into non-religious contexts. The concept of *agape* has been widely examined within its Christian context. It has also been considered in the contexts of other religions, religious ethics, and science.

[><https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Agape>< — retrieved 16 June 2021]

The Michaels sometimes use the word Agape as somewhat synonymous with the word love throughout the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group, and the two words sometimes appear in the same paragraph. However, I have chosen to have a separate chapter on “Love”, a compilation from the original Michaelian group transcriptions where that term is used. Personally, I am loathe to use the word love because it is so ambiguous in the English language, whereas the Greek language had three words, as Wikipedia said (*philia*, *eros*, *agape*). A careful reading of the transcriptions indicated to me that the best reconciliation of the ambiguous use of the two words seems to be that the word love applies to the most general phenomenon and that Agape applies to a special kind of love, just as the Wikipedia article says. I will indicate this distinction in my comments where appropriate.

Now that we know what Agape refers to, let’s take a look at what the Michaels had to say about it. We will see that the Michaels regarded Agape as central to their teaching, so I regard this as an important chapter, even among many significant chapters. The word “Agape” is capitalized in this chapter and other chapters of this *Study Papers* book because it has a special meaning in the Michaelian teachings; it is a Michaelian jargon word that needs a definition apart from its use in the common vernacular.

Agape per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

The following extracts from original Michaelian group transcriptions are Q&A exchanges, where an original Michaelian group member asks a question (or makes a comment), and the Michaels provide an answer. These extracts are presented in the chronological order in which they appear in the transcriptions. As is my custom, I often provide some explanatory comments following the question or answer. Underlined words in the Michaels’ answers are my emphasis, to draw attention to what it is that I comment on. Sometimes I embed words or phrases [in brackets] that I believe help to clarify the question or the answer.

This is a subject that benefits by division into subsections. In the following subsections on Descriptions of Agape, Facilitators of Agape, and Impediments to Agape, there is, as one might expect, some overlap in the Michaels’ answers — meaning that some extracts could fit into more than one subsection — but I did not repeat them.

Descriptions of Agape

The first instance of the word Agape in the original Michaelian group transcriptions is from a channeled source that preceded the appearance of the Michaels, namely Tomas:

[Tomas:] This is not the only kind of commune.... There are many communes with both males and females, but this ... becomes less important as the level rises. The fact that you still question this should give you a hint about some areas that need work. This won't be instant. Nothing worthwhile ever is, but the need for erotic love is Maya too. The need for Agape is real and this is the goal. The other often gets in the way and prevents the emergence of Agape, for erotic love is always based on something physical and something fleeting — it will fly before the winds and illusion, or rather disillusion, which is even worse, since it is malfunctioning illusion, will set in. It is easy for even the partially awakened soul to distinguish. Erotic love has a tendency to be fickle and slips away at the mere hint of an unfulfilled expectation, while Agape has no expectations to begin with — asks nothing in return and accepts, and is the hallmark. Gandhi was able to say, "God bless you" to his assassin and mean it. This is Agape, and do not say that you cannot get to that point; you can. Even if it takes you fifty lifetimes to do it, you will get there. That is the reason for your existence. You might as well try it this time. You have nothing to lose. If you give up now, I can guarantee a lifetime of nagging doubts, and always the gnawing suspicion that at one time you were on the right track of something great and properly awesome. [24 July 1973]

Refer to the chapter "Communal Living". There you will find that the function of communal living should be to facilitate Agape, as it says here. Many transcriptions that we review in this chapter let us know what is not loving, what is not Agape. In the quotation above, Agape is contrasted with erotic "love" — sexual desire — a distinction made in the Wikipedia article quoted above. Refer to the chapter "Sexuality" for more discussion about the distinction between *eros* and *agape*. The underlined phrases only just begin to describe Agape; many more follow below.

The next series of Q&A exchanges were extracted from the first session in which the Michaels appeared. The word Agape did not appear at the beginning of the series; it was near the end:

Comment: He's probably talking about major Monads — not minor Monads. Probably a million little minor Monads just don't make any difference. To love and to be loved may be the greatest Monad.

To be loved and to love is a positive Monad of the highest order. You must be able to realize that you are loved in order to complete this Monad, and that is what is difficult.

Refer to the chapter "Monads" for an explanation of the type of experience that involves the reconciliation of positive and negative phases — or active and passive phases as in the case of "loving and being loved". There you will see that Agape is one of the results of completed Monads. Briefly, Monads conform to the so-called "dialectic principle": Ordinal thesis plus Cardinal antithesis equals Neutral synthesis. What this means is that Agape could be understood as a neutral regard for others — in the sense that you see them for exactly who they really are, with neither a positive nor a negative bias or distortion. On the other hand, we will see below that Agape itself is described as the positive energy of the cosmos.

Comment: "Jesus loves me, yes I know, for the Bible tells me so." That's being loved.

But you must feel this force. Intellectually saying "Jesus loves me" will not do it. You use Jesus as a convenient source of love. It is one that will not backfire and that's OK, but you must eventually get it together with your own Fragmented Entity. The conscious beings are all loving.

Love is subjectively tangible as a felt energy or impulse. Conscious beings are discussed in the chapter "Adepts and Masters". Further on we will see it said that it is easiest for people to experience love/Agape with their kindred souls, Fragments of their Entity and Cadre. Unlike love experienced between people, which is sometimes unreciprocated and unrequited, love (devotion, contemplation) for Jesus allegedly does not "backfire". Refer to the chapter "Tao" for the explanation that Jesus as Christ is an Avatar (Infinite Soul) of the immanent, embodied, component of Tao, as distinct from the transcendent component of Tao, which is said to be "abstract and cannot be personified". In my view, the ultimate expression of the word "love" applies best to the immanent component of Tao and the word Agape ultimately applies best to the transcendent component of Tao, but I do not see where the Michaels were that unambiguous in their use of those two words.

Comment: When a baby is deprived of a mother because she is sick when it is born and a certain amount of time goes by, that mother doesn't have the Agape love anymore. It is gone. The mother's love is instinctive.

Nurturing, not loving, is instinctive.

Comment: We didn't all necessarily experience the love. We experienced the nurture. I've often wondered about the child that results from super high love — the planetary kind — that child is bound to experience love as an infant because of this great love between the mother and the father. He'll experience more than nurture.

They all have. Read the autobiography of Mohandas Gandhi.

Nurturing is common to all of the animal kingdom. Man, through Personality, tries to retain control by calling it love and making the relationship continue long after the need for that type of nurturing is gone. [12 August 1973]

Actually, nurturing is not really all that common with reptiles, who mate and lay eggs and the hatchlings are on their own. Nurturing is mostly from the Emotional Center, which the reptiles do not have much of, but which was developed in mammals, and which has reached its pinnacle in humans. In the above we see that love and Agape are contrasted with the instinctive nurturing that mothers, including animal (mammalian) mothers, have for their children. Not that there is anything wrong with nurturing, of course, but there is a difference between what comes naturally to parents and what comes naturally to Essence but not to Personality, as we will see further on.

The last sentence in the thread above probably referred to what psychologists call “co-dependence”, which is an unhealthy phenomenon that should be substituted with “inter-dependence”, and which is loving but still not Agape, but which can lead to Agape:

With the right partner (another Mature Soul who has become centered or an older soul), the Mature Soul can be an ardent lover. The love is deep and lasting, for Agape is possible during this Cycle if the inner conflicts are resolved. With the wrong partner, there is apathy, impotency, frigidity, infidelity. This soul has more of a tendency to “mate for life” than any of the other Cycles, providing a comfortable mating occurs. [late August 1973]

My preference is to allow that love can happen between psychologically healthy persons and that Agape can happen between spiritually healthy Fragments of the same Entity and Cadre, but the Michaels were not always that clear and distinct in their use of those two words, love and Agape. As a step toward the disambiguation, I would connect the statement above with other statements, noted further on and elsewhere in this book, about older souls seeking their kindred souls, and when they find them they can experience Agape if they are psychologically healthy and spiritually mature.

Dick: Tomas lectured to us so much on not being selfish, that that was incorrect to be selfish.

That depends on your perception of self. If you perceive yourselves as part of the larger whole, then loving self becomes Agape.

Dick: It's a substitute search for me.

Loving the creative force [Tao] itself requires separation from any personification. [06 October 1973]

More is said about self-Agape as a facilitator of other-Agape in the next subsection. These exchanges begin to make the distinction between the words love and Agape. The best reconciliation seems to be that the word love applies to the most general phenomenon and that Agape applies to a special kind of love. This interpretation is pretty clear in the following Q&A exchanges:

Dick: When love is turned on, this in itself puts you on a high. Maybe that's "Man #4" [aka Balanced Man] according to Gurdjieff and it is not permanent.

The love of the Logos or Agape permeated the being of Jesus even prior to the manifestation [of the Infinite Soul]. He lived for the Word. The quest for spiritual liberation took precedence over all things, sometimes to his despair prior to manifestation. This was an Emotionally Centered Mercury-Saturn. He was passionate and sensual. When others rejected his opinions, he was astonished. [06 October 1973]

Refer to the chapters “Levels of Being” and “Balanced Man” and “Logos” and “Transcendental and Infinite Souls” and “Jesus — Christ — Christianity” and “Emotional Center” and “Liberation”. Further on we will see that becoming a Balanced Man is the first Level of Being where Agape is possible.

Ellis: We all have negativity and there is all this evil. What do we do with it? How do we handle it?

Evil *per se* exists only in the minds of those perceiving an action. If you happen to be a Young Soul, your desire will be to change that evil to good, “to right the unrightable wrong.” You will not hesitate to wipe out the lives that stand in your way. After all, are they not evil? Mature Souls often perceive evil in themselves and seek to exorcise this. Young Souls perceive the differences in people often as evil. The Old Soul ordinarily does not perceive evil as such. He perceives the cause and does not seek to eradicate the agent. This is what is meant

loosely by “acceptance”. On a higher level, this acceptance becomes Agape. Your negativity can be dissolved as soon as you realize how futile it is. Souls enthralled in [the] Glamour of the Physical Plane do senseless things, granted, but realize this, Ellis: the soul is eternal; these acts are temporal. [08 October 1973]

More than a year later the Michaels identified the Positive Pole of the Goal of Acceptance as +Agape. Sometimes it seems that the Michaels use the concept of Agape as a subset of love and sometimes they use the word Agape to denote an exaltation above and beyond love; both can be true. Refer to the chapter “Glamour” for discussion of one of those distortions that mitigate love and Agape. Also refer to the chapter “Good and Evil” for more about that.

If Jesus' prejudiced ideas of divorce were attributed to his early childhood, how does Michael form their ideas to set down values and judgments of divorce?

The Fragments of this Entity (Michael) at the time they were on the Physical Plane, ran the gamut of opinion culminating in the opinion that acceptance of all other souls in the form of Agape was the greatest truth. This did not occur until the [entire reincarnation] Cycle was completed.

The interpersonal relationships induced by your culture are superficial and are for the most part to be condemned in teachings such as this. The students [of such teachings] often grow to the point where the relationships transcend this superficiality and truly become spiritual bonding or psychic union, which is what Jesus was talking about. He attempted to discourage relationships based upon erotic love, especially among those close to him. [20 January 1974]

Refer to the chapter “Psychic Union”. It would seem that “transcendent spiritual bonding or psychic union” is a description of the most exalted instantiation of Agape. This can happen in a sexual relationship, but rarely in cases other than between Adepts or between kindred souls — “soul mates”, and older souls at that.

Gene: There is no positive or negative in Essence. True?

We would agree with that. But you must remember that in Essence, one experiences; one does not evaluate.

We would point out that that which is the soul operating from Essence feels that which we called “Agape” and that is a feeling of tranquility, of peace, and we doubt that the Personality of many earthbound souls would consider these particularly strong emotions. [05 June 1974]

These statements describe Essence Agape as a neutral phenomenon, whereas other statements refer to it as positive; see below. My reconciliation of this apparent discrepancy is that one must pass through the neutral phase as Balanced Man on the way to the positive phase when one is an Adept, living primarily in Essence; Agape as “positive” includes but transcends Agape as “neutral”. Refer to the chapter “Essence and Personality”; there you will read that Personality cannot love in the sense of Agape, but Essence does and can only do Agape. Note that one is not in Agape if one is disturbed or distorted toward the negative. This reminds me of the so-called “serenity prayer”: “God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can, and wisdom to know the difference.”

Dick: Discussions of the Tao lead [to] no place. We can't perceive this. Maybe we can begin to comprehend when Astral traveling. We can feel the love ...

That for which we call for you “Agape” is the positive force of the universe. This is the only positive force. All other positive emotions or energy sources are borne of this. [25 June 1974]

The only positive energy we know of is that which we have elected to call “Agape”. Other sources may be either neutral or negative. The high states are free of the complexity found in the lower states. This should explain the purity of the energy flow. The lower states, being more complex, require more complex emotions to feed upon and be fed upon. ... if you do not believe that there is a state of Agape, you can effectively block out any experience of such. [05 October 1974]

Consider how much simpler your life would be if you abode in the positive Agape frame of mind more of the time, not being judgmental or upset so much of the time. Refer to the chapter “Complexity versus Simplicity”.

Dick: Would like some clarification of the word “Agape.”

We use this word to express the unqualified acceptance of another person's being as the greater part of self. We know of no other word that would be appropriate. This is the love of the Tao.

Is there a familiar word in another language familiar to this medium?

There is no word in the tongues of this culture that would express this concept. It is the releasing of self to the flow of the pan-dimensional universe. It is the recognition that the solid isolation of the Physical Plane is only the Personality's faulty perception, and that in truth there is no separation — there is only one. You have heard

it said by one who is an Adept [namely Jesus] that, "I am all that there is and you are with me" — this is Agape. [22 October 1974]

If you resist the flow of the universe, or insist that it flow some other way, you might not be functioning within the parameters of Agape. The self as ego has a need to be in control; for more discussion about "releasing of self to the flow of the universe", refer to the chapter "Surrender". Briefly, surrender is not about always being passive; it includes being active ... if affecting the universe is part of your true nature. The trick, of course, is to learn to discern the flow of the universe and at the same time learn to discern the part that you are to play in that flow, whether passive or active. All of this is yet another description of Agape versus non-Agape.

The following three passages mostly just provide more definitions and descriptions and synonyms of Agape:

Ralph: Is there some dimension we might call "feeling" or "love" or "value"?

Or truth or light. Of course. Value, truth, love, feeling, intuition, understanding, knowledge. Synonyms. No substantial difference. Knowledge is understanding, is Agape, is the goal. Once there is understanding, there is knowledge, there is love. [26 December 1974]

You all exist in a state of love. It is merely the acknowledgment that is denied. We will amend our previous statement to say love recognized, accepted, and acknowledged with one is love of all. That is Agape. You refuse, for various reasons, to know when you are loved. Therein lies the dilemma. Often, it must be an intensely personal experience before it can grow and envelop all of life; which, of course, already lies awaiting your love. Awake to the reality, or rather the truth, of the oneness of all that lives. [12 January 1974]

In true Agape there is, of course, an intensive, constant flow of love and caring from one to another. The Personality rejects this out of hand, of course. It cannot even admit the possibility. That is why it is so difficult for you to Photograph yourself intermittently dispensing affection in your interpersonal relationships. [15 January 1974]

Facilitators of Agape

As noted above, the Michaels said that Agape is possible for the Mature Soul "if the inner conflicts are resolved", and Agape is experienced when you "get it together with your own Fragmented Entity", which usually becomes important during the Old Soul Age. There are other conditions that promote the experience of Agape, and those are collected and commented on in this subsection.

All of these overlays [Overleaves] come into play. You must learn their significance. A by-product of this will be a far deeper understanding of the others, which must be learned before you can truly feel Agape. [23 October 1973]

This is one of numerous statements about the reason that the Michaels revealed the Overleaf System, namely as an early stage in learning to Agape other people, an experience that goes beyond tolerance and beyond acceptance, to a deep understanding of other people as Fragments of the "larger whole".

Tina: What is the purpose of learning all these labels? I dislike labels.

It is only important if you wish to make the synthesis. We agree, verbal communication is a poor excuse for the sum of communication. However, until one of you break through with telepathy, this will have to do. This study enables you to have insights to the motivation of certain activities that could conceivably be perceived by you as hostile or undesirable, and prohibit the understanding necessary for Agape to take place. It will also enable you to aid those who seek your counsel. [31 December 1974]

This statement is full of words that apply to phenomena that accompany development of Agape. Refer to the chapters "Synthesis" and "Telepathy".

Ellis: I would like to ask about the meaning of "synthesis." Byron has a theory about it, and I have the theory that it means putting the knowledge into effect for [spiritual] growth.

Both are valid. You cannot begin to put this into practice until you fully understand it. The synthesis will allow you to see the entire systems of ideas as one unified idea — the continuous creative force. Understanding why those around you are like they are will open you up to Agape and true acceptance. This will allow you to put personal agendas aside and pursue the path toward communion with the high teachers. [17 January 1974]

This statement is full of words that apply to phenomena that accompany Agape.

Mallory: What is meant by "intellectual teaching"?

Answer: To translate what you have learned intellectually as knowledge into what you do — (being). It's "turning water into wine" [as Jesus allegedly did].

This is, of course, our teaching also. The discipline, of course, includes going toward Balance through concentration, meditation, and other conscious[ness]-raising techniques. Also, the understanding and ultimate complete acceptance of all others, leading to the spiritual Agape, which is the doorway to true consciousness. [03 February 1974]

The path to Agape is often described as the journey from sexual activity at the low end of the septenarian spectrum, up through Emotional Center, Intellectual Center, and Impulse Center (Balance), until one arrives in the higher Centers, which is where Adepts and Masters hang out. This is stated more clearly in some passages than in others, and it might not be said explicitly in any one of them reviewed in this chapter, so one has to assemble all of the statements to arrive at the complete picture of the journey to Agape. Following is one statement to include:

Comment: Everything we do should complement the goal of the group. We tend to take on too many things to do. You don't have to give up everything, but you should pull your life towards the goal.

[Soleal:] I would like to point out to you at this time that many of you are dabblers. You dabble in this and that, tasting all of the fruits, eating of none, and in this light you also dabble in spiritual growth as well. Now, this is all right; there is nothing wrong with this — it incurs little Karma — but on the other hand, it leads nowhere. Also, the concept of Agape requires the actions of a closely-knit group of supportive students in order to come to reality. No one can feel Agape in an ivory tower. It can only be felt when Higher Centers are contacted in the course of close association with others. There is no way to do this alone that I know of. Where the misunderstanding has come about, I think, is where the teacher [Michael] has advised you of the dangers of the cloisters and the stifling atmosphere there that retards growth, and has pointed out to you the relative lack of success among those who choose the solitary path. If you wish, we could prepare for you some examples of what works here [on Soleal's planet]. If you are being completely honest with yourselves and others, the need for privacy and aloneness disappears, and is replaced by the feeling of Agape. This is not easy. The teacher has not said that it is easy, only that it can be obtained. [18 February 1974]

There are healthy spiritual groups that can foster Agape, and beyond that there are healthy spiritual communes that can foster Agape. Refer to the chapter "Communal Living" for what the Michaels had to say about that. Compare this quote with the previous one, which mentioned "discipline", and we come to the notion that there are beneficial disciplines (concentration, meditation, fasting, study, and so on) and there are detrimental disciplines (authoritarian, doctrinaire, stifling, rule-based cloisters). One goal is to have a balanced proportion of spiritual-practice disciplines and social interactions, a balance that is different for different people and for different groups and for different communes.

Nichols: The method is to live the teaching in an attitude of love.

Individual verification of the given material is perhaps the most vital precept upon which this teaching is based, for this process alone opens the door to expanded perception, which is, of course, necessary in order to experience Agape and thus grow spiritually. [24 February 1974]

Add the process of experiential validation to the techniques for fostering Agape; refer to the chapter "Validation and Verification" for the whole story. Basically, this type of verification is beyond learning that something is true intellectually or even conceptually; it involves the whole self, which includes the higher self.

In pair bonds, is there more apt to be erotic love?

We speak of pair bonds in Essence and this leads to a feeling of Agape. Usually, however, these very fortunate souls are sexually compatible simply because they are so open, and they place so little emphasis on method and more emphasis on the quality of the relationship. [24 February 1974]

Numerous times in the original Michaelian group transcriptions, the contrast is made between *eros* and the Agape that is experienced by kindred Fragments who are spiritually mature enough to have Essence contact.

We shared a discussion about a weekend full of Friction.

Friction such as this always forces one to objectively assess one's inner progress in a situation such as this one provided at the end of the week. One is also forced to see the contrast, as the lady Cheryl points out. Then the progress can be seen with far more clarity than if one goes on in the same old rut.

Is there anything Michael can say to help us feel Agape toward this [obnoxious, noxious] sort of person?

We feel that it is indeed possible for you all to accept this lady in all her glory and yet, we would not recommend that any of you spend too much time in that negative environment. You do not need to be present to feel Agape. This lady creates a vortex of negative energy that is particularly difficult for those souls in Acceptance, which is precisely why certain people instinctively elected not to go to this place. [03 April 1974]

None of us are spiritual giants yet; none of us are Adepts or Masters yet; we should not kid ourselves about the size and strength of our Agape, believing that we can “resist all evil” or “save the world” from itself. In physics terms, we should not get very close to the event horizon of a black hole, lest we be sucked in. Refer to the chapter “Friction”, where we find that we should regulate the amount of Friction we deal with in our lives lest we “bite off more than we can chew”.

Cynthia: That’s hard on the Agape.

We would speak of Agape in this context, thanks to Cynthia: Agape sometimes means only not appointing yourself as judge and jury. Agape also always means forgetting. Notice that we did not say, “forgive”. This is beyond you and is far too abstract. We said, “forget”, and this means quite literally “the end”. It does not mean crawling away to lick your wounds and to plan a counter-attack. It means forgetting once and for all. The concept of Agape does not mean [a required] proximity [to the other person]. In practice, it often can be more easily applied when one moves away from the immediate cause of the hostility.

Cynthia: If we have a goal of Agape, we should be able to use these situations to help us grow.

[Yes.] One of the first steps, of course, is the realization that you alone are responsible for your reaction to the situation. [17 April 1974]

Take ‘baby steps’ on the path toward Agape: take responsibility for yourself as being neither the victim nor the hero; realistically evaluate your progress.

Richard expressed the desire to know from Michael if his perceptions were valid or not of Ray and Gene.

The only way we know of to come to Agape, which presumably is the goal, is to acknowledge your feelings, likes and dislikes, and then come past them. We have not ever advocated the toleration of any obnoxious behavior to you and we never will. It is far too much of an energy drain. The fact remains that Mechanical Man has no inkling of his behavior or how it is perceived by others. The only way that he can ever have that inkling is if some higher being, or even one who is far enough along the path to see it, will hold up the psychic mirror in whatever way possible at the time. Only then can Mechanical Man perceive himself as others perceive him. That is the first step toward self-perception — especially, if the consensus that [the] latter factor is one other compelling reason for staying in a teaching rather than striking out alone. (Hello, out there!) When you do not have this constant yardstick, you cannot measure your progress. [21 September 1974]

The underlined words are yet another description of what Agape is about. There are shades of Zen Buddhism in Agape, in that Zen recommends the mitigation of cravings and aversions, of neutralizing negativity. Refer to the chapters “Photography” and “Self-observation” to learn more about those tools for mitigating non-Agape.

Ted: Would it be good for the men of this group to meet separately (as the women have done)?

The pitfalls would, of course, be falling into a masculine, Mechanical-type dialog pertaining to life interests and not to the teaching. With effort, the move could be fruitful especially in the direction of Agape. Many of you [men] need to cast out your stereotypes and learn to love in other arenas besides the sexual one. [24 September 1974]

The elimination of pre-conceived notions, and the mitigation of habits of behavior, emotions, and thoughts is very Agape, and very Zen.

As the goal of Agape or spiritual liberation entails ultimately becoming an Adept, the concept of telepathy should not be taken lightly. It is within the grasp of you and would require an enormous amount of predictability. When you meet with an Adept who is strongly telepathic and also totally vulnerable, you will understand this more fully, but it is not an unrealistic goal for the man Gene. [24 September 1974]

Refer to the chapters “Liberation”, “Adept and Master”, “Telepathy”, and “Vulnerability” in order to more completely connect those concepts with Agape. Briefly: as you grow in Agape toward being a full-fledged Adept, you will feel more liberated and experience more telepathy because you are susceptible to the promptings of your higher/greater self.

Donna: [Question not recorded.]

Love of children is not “love”. Rather, [it is] a feeling for the “Agape” wanting expression. [03 November 1974]

It is probably easier for us to feel unconditional, non-judgmental Agape toward infants because our expectations of the maturity of their behavior, emotions, and thoughts are so much lower than what we might expect from adults. Let this be a lesson for us in what Agape feels like: without being condescending toward adult people in general, let us clear our minds of expectations about them, the same way that our minds are clear and clean of expectations of new-born infants. We all have this pure and simple Agape wanting to be expressed from our Essence consciousness.

Sarah made a comment on threads bringing us together.

Getting in touch with the threads is a very strong feeling, not only from the standpoint of merging Entities, but also getting in touch with the emotions connecting the threads that are so strong. You, Sarah, are struggling with the dichotomy of the strength of feelings and the strength of Entities. You must realize the effect of this on the False Personality and its ramifications. You must deny the feelings to get in touch with the flow of the thread. The feelings are stronger than the thread, although appearing the opposite. You, Sarah, must deny these feelings as part of the Overleaves. Get in touch with your emotions. Let feelings flow. This process will free much more and you, Sarah, will experience the depth of the gift. You were attempting to get in touch with support in the great times of trial that you were going through. The denial will not be much longer. The support of Agape. The tension will cease with the adjustment. The feelings are not as buried as you think. The trust has been there longer than you would admit. [08 November 1974]

Refer to the chapters “Vectors” and “Agreements and Sequences” for the explanation of “threads” that bring people together, especially friended and kindred souls for the experience of Agape. It is easiest to feel Agape with kindred souls, therefore, as Fragments of the same Entity meet and get to know each other, Agape is felt. The Personality might resist yielding to this experience, so beware, and let go of the blocks. Refer to the chapter “Emotional Center” for more discussion of that Center as facilitator of Agape.

Ted asked what we could physically do to prepare for this visit.

The emotional preparation will be by far the most trying. Spiritually, you can accept this, but emotionally, many of you have fears, some great doubts, and then many are ambivalent. The exercises we have suggested to disengage the rationalizations would help. More closeness between members on an affectionate basis is now beginning. True affection is the beginning of the long road to Agape. This is difficult for some of you and we know this, but we will persist in recommending that you at least try. When you can express this affection openly with no expectations of gain on a physical basis, you will have come a long way. The exercise that the man Robert proposed to his students that they refer to themselves as “it” could be valuable to you in a very different sense. It would consciously help you in dropping gender. [10 November 1974]

Agape is not experienced as rational; it is beyond rationality. Nor does it conform to socio-cultural norms of expected and approved experiences. Refer to the chapter “Emotional Center”, where you will read that on numerous occasions, the Michaels recommended to original Michaelian group members — most of whom were Intellectually Centered — that they should learn to experience the Emotional Center more; that is where affection is experienced, and the exaltation of Emotional Center is the Higher Emotional Center, and the higher Centers is where Agape is experienced.

James asked what must we do to become awake.

We have, of course, outlined to this cadre the steps that they must take if they are to ever become sufficiently awake to hear the words. We have told them of the highest truth, which is Agape, which is the unqualified acceptance of other creatures as the greater part of self. We have given them the tools for attainment of this state, which are yes, meditation, concentration, fasting, and study. We have endeavored to warn them, or rather apprise them, of the pitfalls they may encounter on the Path. We have recommended that they simplify their lives, that they may free the necessary energies for pursuit of this objective. 20 November 1974]

Refer to the chapters “Awakening from Sleep”, “Meditation and Concentration”, “Fasting”, “Study”, “Path — Spiritual”, and “Complexity versus Simplicity”.

We have spoken to you many, no countless, times about what you and we choose to call a “trust level.” This trust level is, of course, essential to Agape or a spiritual love. The Personality can never experience this. The Personality cannot trust, therefore cannot love. If this trust level is to develop, it must develop in an environment of almost constant exposure. If Agape is to develop, it must develop in an environment where students observe each other in all facets of life, not just when the students are on their good meeting behavior. It is easy to love most of you during the weekly comings together of this cadre. We doubt that this would hold true twenty-four hours a day without much work. Most of you trust each other only superficially. Not one of

you feels the bonds that we would foster in this [original Michaelian group] cadre, but the ability is there and a start has been made several times. However, when it becomes frightening, it is quickly aborted and the subject is changed rapidly over to something less scary. [14 December 1974]

Refer to the chapters "Trust" and "Communal Living" for more discussion of the conditions that foster the development of trust and Agape within any group of people who are focused on spiritual growth.

The following answers begin to discuss the interactions of Overleaves and how that can be used to develop Agape:

Narra asked for more information.

Just imagine how easy it would be for you to accept [your husband] Robert's Rejection were it not for the Mode you selected. Repression [Mode] automatically erects a barrier between you and the Positive Pole of your Goal [Acceptance]. To scale this barrier is a significant feat. You have begun to feel this change and are on the way to verification. It is not an easy lesson. The block or barrier stems from the Mode of Repression. Even the Acceptance of one who has chosen this Mode is repressed. To find the ability within to feel Agape in spite of this, [is a] formidable task and it requires a yardstick to measure the progress. The ideal yardstick, of course, is the polar opposite, in this case, one in Rejection [Robert's Goal]. For you to go to and remain in the Positive Pole of Acceptance requires much work and you are still not entirely able to work from there. This is simply another Balancing tool that Older Souls often choose. It would be possible, for instance, for Robert to choose to utilize the same tool [Acceptance] were he so inclined. This is usually possible in all Sequences; that is, the motive can become easily the motivator. Of course, the hallmarks of the Negative Pole of Acceptance are conciliation, placation, and ingratiation. Do you now have the feeling for the fact that in most souls not acquainted with a teaching that the Mode stands forever as a barrier between the Positive and Negative Poles of the Goal? No matter how exalted that Goal may be, this principle stands between all Modes and Goals. We would say so, yes.

All teachings?

A comparable teaching that has as its goal Agape through Balance. It may be Gurdjieffian in origin or may have true religious grounding, as long as that remains as the goal (Agape). [16 January 1975]

On erasing Tapes ... to achieve Agape eventually ...

One thing we might suggest that perhaps could be a start at least, would be to determine those core beliefs in you regarding your ability to achieve a state of Agape or consciousness. When the belief is brought to the surface, often the Tapes that accompany it are clearly heard for the first time. For many reasons, this process is more effective if performed in a group setting, as quite often it leads to what you might term psychic surgery. You have only an inkling of the strength of these master Tapes and the hold they have over you. Only when they are found played out and discarded does serious accelerating begin. Once the process begins, however, it does have a tendency to snowball, and it is difficult, if not impossible, to slide back into old patterns once the Tape has been erased. Sometimes, the behavior patterns continue for awhile, but even they eventually cease, as there is nothing supporting them. By the way, you are quite correct in assuming that you have both negative and positive programs on all of these and that you do play them one against the other, constantly. [19 January 1975]

Refer to the chapter "Bio-computer" for more discussion of Tapes and their programs that are part of unconscious, anti-Agape Mechanicity.

Dick: I feel the only route to Positive Pole of Sexual Center is love.

We have no quarrel with that, either. The only ecstasy that we know of occurring during the sexual act has occurred in Adepts who are Balanced and who do express Agape. [25 January 1975]

Refer to chapters "Poles — Positive and Negative" and "Love" and "Sexuality" and "Adept and Master" and "Balanced Man".

Liz: What are my blocks?

You know them without asking. As with many in this alienated society, you lack love of yourself. Love, acceptance, Agape — all are synonymous. Accept yourself and you may move to love for another. Until you do that, all that we say to you is theoretical. It is an illusion that Agape may be experienced before love for one may be experienced or indeed that Agape may precede your love of yourself. "Self" includes the Personality, as well as the Essence. Can you love that "self" unconditionally, without hope for change? Until you can, Agape is a theory. [05 February 1975]

Agape is not just expressed and felt toward others; one must do/feel/think the same about oneself before one can do/feel/think it toward others. The chapter "Love" also has somewhat to say about it.

It has been our experience that the most significant progress in the Work is always made by groups of dedicated committed students, together working toward the goal of Agape. This can only be done in any steady sense in a communal setting, in that there must be continuity, and there must be Overleaves that are incompatible for the Work to be continuous. Most in life choose to live with only those other souls whose Overleaves complement their own. ... Joy is an integral part of Agape and, therefore, an indispensable part of the goal of this teaching. This joy, of course, is not to be experienced by the Personality, so if you are to have this, it also is going to have to come from somewhere else. The joy is there for the asking. It can be in a walk in the woods, a meal prepared and shared in a community, a Moving Centered activity such as a game, a shared meditative period. It can be found in anything, but only if the Overleaves do not interfere. The mindlessness that is preliminary to successful meditation can also be used to prepare oneself for joy. In fact, it is perhaps the most certain preparation that we know of. [Dimensions! April 1975]

Refer to the chapter "Friction" for a discussion about the growth-producing effect of learning to Agape people whose Overleaves 'rub you the wrong way'. Friction between Overleaves can happen even when the two people involved are in the Positive Poles of their Overleaves. Part Four of my book *The Tao of Personality* describes in detail the positive and negative interactions of Overleaf combinations; implementing the knowledge found there will help one to understand the 'chemistry', and facilitate the transmutation of Friction into Agape. Also, refer to the chapter "Joy" for more about that; the Michaels had a lot to say about it.

We talked about efforting, not getting any place — just get into deeper and deeper trouble with life. It seems there should be no effort. (I did not get the specific comment that brought about this next response.)

What you are experiencing is passion. This is a gateway to Agape if used in the proper perspective. The man Jesus was passionate. The transcendence to Agape took place only when the Infinite Soul began to manifest. [12 December 1976]

Passion is one of the gateways to Agape, when applied to that purpose, of course; there are numerous other facilitators, recorded in this chapter.

Impediments to Agape

There are many facilitators of Agape, of course, but there are also specific impediments to Agape.

Alice: Can these [Chief Features] be changed in our lifetime? Can you get rid of them?

You must grow to extinguish this.

Comment: In other words, we must go through our Chief Features to arrive at Agape.

You must grow to the point where this [Chief Feature] is no longer a barrier to Agape. [27 February 1974]

The Chief Feature might be the biggest impediment to Agape.

Entrapment in the physical body provides another barrier:

Dick: Is Agape a function of the spirit and not the body?

It is of the Essence, yes. [03 March 1974]

Refer to the chapter "Essence and Personality" for clarification and exposition.

Dick: Agape love sputters for only 15 seconds and it does not happen often. Is this moving toward a #4 person?

We agree. It is a difficult place to be, but definitely rewarding. [03 March 1974]

In the Gurdjieffian teachings, a #4 person is said to be Balanced, which means being crystallized in the Instinctive Center, which I prefer to call the Impulse Center. Refer to the chapters "Balanced Man", "Levels of Being", and "Instinctive Center" to get a more complete picture. The Impulse Center is a 'launching pad' or 'bridge' or 'gateway' to get from the lower Centers to the higher Centers, which are the abode of the experience of Agape.

Dick: Ordinary morality has nothing to do with true morality.

That is valid. When you attach too much importance to this very mundane and temporal morality, you become encrusted in Maya. The only morality that exists in the high plane is that which leads to Agape. That is the unqualified acceptance of all other creatures, both physical and ethereal, as the greater part of self. [06 March 1974]

On the Physical Plane, our perspective is so limited and so distorted compared to the perspective on the higher planes, that it makes sense for us to reserve judgment about the quality of our own, and other people's,

sense of right and wrong. This is not to say that we can safely ignore our “conscience”, but there is a question about how endarkened our conscience is by the socio-cultural perspective versus how enlightened our conscience is by influence from higher realms. This is not said as an endorsement of so-called “moral relativism”, the notion that morality is merely and only a socio-cultural phenomenon that differs over time and change in location. Rather, this is saying that there is a spectrum, a morality scale, and the quality of morality leaves the realm of the relative uncertainty and approaches the realm of Absolute certainty as one ascends the cosmic ethical hierarchy. We and every other human are prone to learn Agape the hard way, by first doing the inferior stuff on the way to learning to do the superior stuff. Refer to the chapter “Morality and Ethics” for further discussion.

Dick: I hear the teaching and hear the hostility. It's unchangeable sexually — that's where I am. The program is so programmed. It cuts me out of making the skip to Transcendental Soul. Agape is impossible in people with sex problems. It is impossible in people with emotional hang-ups of any sort, whether it be sex or fear of cats or the dark.

It is difficult to achieve Agape if you place the blame for your “hang ups” on others. The Agape can be present, though, in the face of inner conflicts as long as the source is realized. The man, Jesus, before the manifestation, is an example, also Gandhi: both had what you would consider insoluble sexual conflicts, but both recognized the source as themselves. [19 March 1974]

This statement builds on the previous statement about the socio-cultural standard of moral righteousness of humans on the Physical Plane differing from the standard of moral righteousness of beings on the higher planes. Knowing that there is this difference perhaps helps one to feel Agape for oneself, and Agape for others who struggle with whatever internal moral dilemmas they may have. Refer to the chapter “Guilt” for further discussion. The ramifications of “Sexuality” are covered in its own chapter.

Dick: Repression Mode — people do not feel Agape?

They do not ordinarily allow themselves this, you are right.

Gene: Sarah thinks Observation Mode keeps her from feeling Agape. Comment?

All of these Modes can be used to varying degrees to prevent the acceptance of Agape. In particular: Repression, Caution, Perseverance, and Observation. But the powerful [Cardinal] Modes [Power, Passion, Aggression] can be also used to startling effectiveness. Many souls who choose too Neutral a composite [array of Overleaves] for a resting Cycle find themselves in a position of being unable to react appropriately. This sometimes brings them to the negative attention of those around. Then, if they meet with a teaching, they can sometimes be Shocked out of their stifling neutrality.

Richard: Is Agape [the] prime energy for faith healing?

It is certainly the force that makes it effective.

Gene: Repression [Mode] — can it be used to find Agape?

We would amend that to say that the Repression can certainly be used for the impetus to propel a soul forward. The sadness of Repression is a powerful motive for seeking a teaching. [25 June 1974]

All of these organizations purport to have a lofty goal, but since the goal of none is Agape, again, they can only lead to more entrapment and more isolation from the goal. Examples of organizations that act as barriers are: the Democratic Party, or any other party; the Catholic church or any other dogmatic church; the cult of the Ku Klux Klan or any other terror organization; the Central Intelligence Agency or any other espionage agency; Black Panthers or any other separatist organization. The list is endless, and they are real barriers to growth if you align yourself solely in them to where you become identified in their dogma and accept it as your own. [21 December 1974]

So, do not join any organization that does not foster and promote and aspire to express Agape.

It is wise to keep these Overleaf factors in mind as one fine-tunes ones aspiration and path to Agape.

...all still hidden in many relationships stands in the way and acts as a permanent barrier to Agape, even on that level, to true cooperation. [16 January 1975]

The general point to be made in response to this answer is that secrecy is an impediment to Agape.

Concluding Comments on Agape

The original name of the Positive Pole of the Goal of Acceptance was given as +Agape. The following summary of this chapter provides a good if brief description of what that is like.

CHARACTERISTICS: Agape has no expectations or stereotypes or biases or prejudices; asks nothing in return; has expanded awareness; perceives the wholeness; has unqualified acceptance; is tranquil and peaceful; emanates positive energy; has profound understanding; is loving and caring; is intimate to the point of telepathic empathy; is affectionate and trusting of self and the universe; is caring rather than nihilistic; is joyful; is manifested in the higher Centers.

FACILITATORS: Agape is facilitated by spiritual disciplines such as meditation, concentration, study, and fasting; it is fostered in intense group dynamics and communal living; it is easiest to experience with friended and kindred souls, especially between and among older souls; uses Friction to increase awareness.

IMPEDIMENTS: Agape is diminished by Chief Feature, Negative Poles of Overleaves, False Personality, and Maya; it is impeded by organizations that emphasize conflict or competition rather than cooperation; it is inhibited by irresponsibility, cognitive dissonance, and “hang-ups”.

The aspiration to achieve Agape is noble and virtuous in the long run — the scores and maybe even hundreds of reincarnations — but the reasonable expectation is that in any give lifetime we learn to put up with our own and other people’s shit just a little bit better.





① AGENDA

This chapter is the product of a search for the word agenda in the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group channeling sessions. This word does not represent a significant component of the Michaelian teachings. However, there are good reasons to discuss the subject in this *Study Papers* book: 1) the subject came up numerous times during the original Michaelian group; 2) some interesting things were said about the subject; 3) the subject is related to a number of other components of the Michaelian teachings that are considered to be significant; 4) students can presumably benefit from having the mentions conveniently collected and commented all in one place; 5) Agendas are unavoidable. They are pervasive in human psychology and sociology and spirituality — subjects covered extensively in this book — so it behooves us to have a working knowledge of it.

The word agenda is not capitalized in this chapter or other chapters of this *Study Papers* book because it has no special meaning in the Michaelian teachings; it is not a Michaelian jargon word that needs a definition apart from its use in the common vernacular.

It might be a little surprising how often this word agenda shows up in the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group, considering that it has not appeared very many times in subsequent channeling sessions that we have record of. Precisely because it covers a subject that might otherwise have been ignored and forgotten, I regard it as useful and valuable to include this chapter, as with numerous other similar chapters on obscure topics in this *Study Papers* book. Doing so makes our understanding of the Michaelian teachings richer and more complete.

If you study the chapter “Spiritual Path — Physical Path” alongside this chapter on “Agenda”, you will find much overlap in the concepts covered by the Michaels under the two headings.

Definition of “Agenda”

Just to be clear about its meaning, let’s take a look at the dictionary definition of the word “agenda”:

- 1: a list or outline of things to be considered or done: “agendas of faculty meetings”.
- 2: an underlying often ideological plan or program: “a political agenda” [<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/agenda>] — retrieved 27 August 2021]

The Michaelian use of this word does not depart from the dictionary definition.

Agenda in the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

The following extracts from original Michaelian group transcriptions are Q&A exchanges, where an original Michaelian group member asks a question (or makes a comment), and the Michaels provide an answer. This is not a subject that benefits by division into subsections. These extracts are presented in the chronological order in which they were given. As is my custom, I usually provide some explanatory comments following the question or answer. Underlined words are my emphasis, to draw attention to what it is that I comment on. Sometimes I embed words or phrases [in brackets] that I believe help to clarify the question or the answer. Numerous study papers related to this chapter are to be found among my comments.

As we will see in the collection of original Michaelian group quotations that follow, during the original Michaelian group, it is said that almost always there is a conflict between the agenda of the Personality and the agenda of the soul or Essence. It is said that personal and transpersonal paths, and/or physical and spiritual paths, often interfere with each other. This is the case in the first mention of the word in the second session in which the Michaels were the source:

Later in the month, the group met again and there was some initial discussion about personal agendas getting in the way of the Teaching.

There is nothing wrong in having personal agendas; it merely interferes with concentration, and if meditation or manifestation is the goal, then all personal agendas must be set aside — suspended, so to speak. [17 August 1973]

Even though it does not say so here, it is obvious that “personal agendas” are not to be confused with those activities that are necessary to maintain one’s physical existence at a comfortable level. Rather, personal agendas are those activities where one has a choice, either to focus on one’s physical life or one’s spiritual life. What it does say here is that there is a reciprocal relationship between personal agendas and spiritual agendas: the more one focuses on one the less one focuses on the other; a person only has so much time and energy to do as one chooses. Obviously, people vary in their commitment to their physical versus their spiritual agendas. Founding members of the original Michaelian group were of a mind to focus on spiritual development, but the Michaels advise that there must be a balance of the two.

The word agenda was used again in the same original Michaelian group session:

Comment: EST might take care of people’s personal agendas.

Not if it means financial disaster to the person involved. It is enough that several of you know the techniques, then you can teach the others. [17 August 1973]

Refer to the chapter on “EST — Erhard Seminars Training”. This seminar was at that time, and is now in the present day, an intensive group psychotherapy program that has somewhat to say about managing one’s life, with a view to minimizing what is false about oneself (personality agendas) and maximizing what is true about oneself (Essence agendas). It was a valuable seminar according to the Michaels, but it was also an expensive seminar, so the recommendation here is to mitigate that expense so that one’s life does not become unbalanced with respect to physical agendas versus spiritual agendas.

Dick: Is fasting healthy?

Fasting when done properly leads to the liberated meditation. It produces the same state as marijuana if practiced long enough and diligently enough. You should not fast if you are ill or if there is honest grief or pressures of private agendas. [21 August 1973]

There are times when it is necessary or expedient to take care of a personal, private agenda. When not thus physically encumbered or distracted, then a committed seeker will turn their attention to spiritual liberation. Here again, the Michaels are advocating balance between the physical agenda versus the spiritual agenda.

Our energy levels?

Yes. You are tired and there are some agendas in the way. [13 October 1973]

A recurring problem during the original Michaelian group was that people sometimes were so encumbered with unnecessary physical agendas that they did not have the energy and/or attention to spare for spiritual matters. Often they were distracted by physical agendas when they should have been focused on the spiritual agenda, which was the purpose for which the original Michaelian group convened; the original Michaelian group was not intended to be just a social party of friends.

Ellis: I would like to ask about the meaning of “synthesis”. Byron has a theory about it, and I have the theory that it means putting the knowledge into effect for [spiritual] growth.

Both are valid. You cannot begin to put this [Synthesis] into practice until you fully understand it. The Synthesis will allow you to see the entire systems of ideas as one unified idea — the continuous creative force.

Understanding why those around you are like they are [via the Overleaf System] will open you up to Agape and true acceptance. This will allow you to put personal agendas aside and pursue the path toward communion with the high Teachers. [17 January 1974]

Here again, the pursuit of personal agendas is contrasted with the pursuit of the transpersonal agenda. The Michaelian teachings provides knowledge that demotes the former and promotes the latter, so that one achieves a balanced spiritual/physical life as explained in other Q&A exchanges.

Edgar: I would like to return to the comment you made at the beginning of the evening on the origin of the species, Homo Sapiens. We seem to ignore it with our [personal] egotistical questions.

We have discussed the problem of personal agendas before. We do understand this drive [to ask egotistical questions] and we do not deplore it; it is just that we have much more time than any of you and we would be of as much help as possible in the limited time available. Being in a more intimate [communal] situation would also eliminate this problem [because it would minimize egotistical focus]. We will discuss this question of origin

[of Homo Sapiens] again soon. It is important that you have some foundation in this before you begin to expound. [24 January 1974]

In a previous Q&A exchange, the lack of *energy* for spiritual matters was mentioned; here the lack of *time* for spiritual matters was mentioned. Also, here a contrast is made between general (Homo Sapiens) knowledge and “egotistical” knowledge; understanding the former provides a foundation for understanding the latter. Because of both time and energy constraints, it is generally better for a group as a whole to pursue understanding of general and foundational matters than to be distracted by the idiosyncratic or the trivial.

Richard: Are there suggestions for improvement? I feel the personal agenda could be handled by each person relating to each other, rather than running to Michael right away.

Richard: Personal agendas create a block. [31 January 1974]

A recurring problem during the original Michaelian group was that many new people wanted to focus on themselves rather than on advancing the Michaelian teachings in general. Also, not all new people were as focused on the spiritual path as the founding members were, so this diluted the value of the original Michaelian group meetings in general. One solution proposed by Richard is that one could have newbies mentored by oldies in a setting other than the formal group gathering. Another solution is that some subsequent Michaelian teachings groups implemented a two-meeting strategy, one meeting type being a core group of oldies, and another group of newbies. A three-meeting strategy is to add informal parties and/or outings, where the function was to get to know each other personally. Then there is the communal solution mentioned in another Q&A exchange, documented in the chapter on “Communal Living”. These sorts of things were discussed in the original Michaelian group:

On absenteeism, please let the others know if you are unable to come. Three absences in a row and you’ve missed too much and our continuity is lost. See older members before making a decision.

New persons must have several meetings with older members before coming before the board. (Ouija, that is.)

It was said that the Wednesday evening meetings be used for [Ouija] board study and the Sunday meetings for social things.

We discussed many things in doing so, compiled a list of questions to be asked later in the evening.

Later that evening: We asked if there was a comment from the [Ouija] board.

We would like to see you proceed with the agenda you have prepared. [09 February 1974]

The appropriate comment for this passage is to note that one can systematize the spiritual–path agenda as well as the physical–path agenda: make a list of priorities, policies, and procedures, and follow it; don’t just stumble blindly and aimlessly through life, whether the life of the group or the life of the individual.

Admittedly, focus is hard to do:

Richard informed us that he had “talked” with Soleal, and that Soleal was willing to be with the group this evening.

[Soleal:] I have no real revelations to offer, just that I am struck again by the tremendous scattering of energies even in this group, due in the most part to the myriad personal agendas that take Intellectual Center and sometimes Emotional Center out of play for long periods of time.

The lady who has prepared the paper has hit upon an important truth when she speaks of diverse goals within a tight partnership such as your culture demands within the custom of marriage, or really I should say, divergent [goals]. The goals of the Teaching, and thus of the Students, must be unified in order to be effective. The Teacher can only suggest to you the methods if you wish to grow. Right now, the response within the group is almost solely intellectual; there is relatively little emotional commitment to the Teaching or to each other, which is really more important. This leads to the haphazardness with which the group goes about its business.

[18 February 1974]

The lack of ability to focus on the transpersonal agenda that was present in the original Michaelian group is also present with subsequent Michaelian students; perhaps not all Students, but most. One wonders if this condition will ever change, but my hope is that as the Teaching and the Students mature, there will be more convergence, cohesion, and commitment.

Of course, there will never be perfect convergence, cohesion, and commitment:

Gene: It is important that we say what we feel as individuals, not what we think the group ought to feel. For me, the group is great and I will do it as long as it’s good growth for me. Other [people’s] agendas do not have to mesh [with mine]. [24 February 1974]

But the nature of various types of group meetings can be tweaked for maximum benefit for the greater good:

Sarah: I am seeking a way of life within the group, not to become more effective in the milieu.

There is a way, you know, that this Teaching can serve the needs of all who seek, and you have it within the original nucleus to perform this service. Those who have the need for intensified personal searches can arrange for this. Those who are not certain of their level of commitment may find that the general session is adequate for them. The smaller sessions are most valuable for the more committed students and definitely should be reserved for that purpose. There is some merriment derived in the general session merely by pursuing some of the less dedicated students' personal agendas and this will benefit all. We still see the tendency in all of you to expect of the others, and to be disappointed when the anticipated reaction does not come about. This cannot be avoided unless much intensive work is done. We could do this with you and we are always available for this. There is a need for some diversification here now with all of the parts contributing toward a greater whole in the end. We have not suggested that the nucleus of this Teaching expand to the point where needs are no longer being served. We are concerned only that you share the knowledge once it has been assimilated and verified. We have a method by which all of you can choose to achieve a modicum of growth on a spiritual plane. Many of you can even use it as a springboard toward becoming an Adept. This is entirely up to you. We will find many vehicles through which we can teach the Logos — this does not present us with a problem. We answer all calls for this Teaching. [24 February 1974]

This answer reinforced the notion broached in previous Q&A exchanges, that there should be different types of group meetings attended by different people who have different needs. One way to optimize meetings to be maximally effective and efficient for the most people is to have meetings with various agendas, and stick to those agendas, simple as that.

Easier said than done:

Dick: Things in Personality are keeping me from my Essence. Anything subjective can be called personal agenda and needs to be worked with.

By personal agendas, we refer to the irrelevant thoughts flitting through the mind and preventing a focus upon the Teaching: the projections into the business world and the movie you saw three years ago; an unpaid bill — these are the items to which we refer. [27 February 1974]

By the way, the wandering mind is sometimes referred to as “monkey mind”. One solution for this, proposed by the Michaels, is to discipline the mind with “Concentration and Meditation”, the subject of another chapter.

Heretofore we have not had a description of “agenda” by the Michaels; we inferred it from context. There we had an explicit description

From personal experience in Michaelian group meetings, I can say that, if left to human nature, and if there is no enlightened charismatic leader, they typically devolve into mundanities rather than evolve into profundities. However, one can tip the balance toward the latter if the established agenda is that members bring to the meetings specific items for discussion. These more profound items can be personal and/or transpersonal.

Dick: I believe that personal agendas are important to learn about our own internal world. Tomas wanted to get on with the Teaching and forget personal agendas. I've fought against therapy and encounter groups. We function well enough as we are, but we cannot go on to spiritual growth. Ordinary therapy deals with personality alone and the processes are usually formulated by Mature Souls for Young Souls. Is there an ultimate therapy where we can know ourselves ??????

We are here with you. Yes. We would agree with that, indeed. There is a form of ultimate therapy — a clearing house for the Essence where the final cobwebs can be swept away and the clarity can shine through. Yes, also the crutch of the Personality, the one most frequently employed in situations where the Essence might come crashing through, is a most effective barrier. [19 March 1974]

At least two insights can be extracted from this Q&A exchange: 1) there is the psychotherapeutic path and there is the spiritual path — one cannot pursue the latter well until after the former has done most of its foundational function of taking out the garbage; 2) to some extent, an intimate Michaelian teachings group can serve both functions, but there must be a healthy balance of the two, as stated in other Q&A exchanges.

Allyn asked for a comment or clarification of the Teacher's comment of 12-14-74, saying that we should set aside personal agenda. Allyn asked if the Teacher meant all personal agenda such as doing other things when the group was meeting, or personal questions during general meetings.

The agenda [is] in reference is the personal questions at the general meetings. The agenda of the group and its social gathering will evolve as the group pulls together. The agenda at meetings is loose and needs confirming. Explanation: needs to confirm the group. The group actions are what the group needs to discuss in the large

meetings. The confirming of the group comes with the insights that the group discovers together. [14 December 1974]

If this answer seems accurate while also being disjointed, it is because it was via Leslie Briggs (daughter of Allyn) at the very beginning of her channeling career, rather than via Sarah Chambers. I prefer the words used previously — convergence, cohesion, commitment — to the word used here: confirming.

We started off rather slowly. Donna asked for a general comment and eventually drifted off into slumber. Bill [her husband] suggested she was sleeping "for a reason".

[Soleal:] Gathering of energies can sometimes be difficult if all of the agendas have not been run out. This is even the case on my world. [01 February 1974]

My takeaway from this answer is that, perhaps if a group were to “agendize” the meetings with a to-do list, then it would be best to get the personal mundanities out of the way first so as to then be able to focus on the transpersonal profundities. In the original Michaelian group, sometimes a person was assigned to be the “chairperson” for that meeting, apparently to help keep people on track.

[Soleal:] Perhaps we should clear the agendas and then I will be around for those who wish more.

People tend to come into group meetings with some personal “stuff” on their minds, their current concerns that are irrelevant to the meeting agendas. Clearing these agendas right away could be made a formal component of the meetings.

Is this referring to a literal or a symbolic altar?

[Soleal:] It can be either. Where is your symbolic altar if you do not have that quiet space?

As long as it does not become a crutch, the material altar serves those brothers who do not have the altar of the soul. You see, it is possible to transfer the psychic energy to your brothers, but there must not be agendas in your way or the flow will be scattered, and you will not be able to transmute the collective energy into the higher expression. Those troubled among you will simply feed on the energy flow. [16 February 1975]

Elsewhere in the original Michaelian group transcriptions there is discussion of group members whose “energy” and agenda cannot be harmonized with the group as a whole; these people typically left the group on their own volition. However, in some groups, such people must be asked to leave, for the sake of the greater good.

General Comments on Agenda

Whenever two or more people gather together on a regular basis, there is always some concern for whose agenda, or what agenda, prevails. The original Michaelian group did not have a strong, competent, mature leader that everyone looked up to and trusted — someone who could provide that agenda and make it stick, for the good of the group as a whole. Therefore, the members kicked the problem around repeatedly as they struggled to develop some cohesion and coherence in the absence of such a unifying leadership. The Michaels themselves had an agenda — to reveal the Overleaf System — but they did not exercise that kind of leadership; they did not impose their focus on the members. Frankly, I suspect that this is one of the reasons that the original Michaelian group did not live up to its promise. Warriors Leslie Briggs and Quinn Yarbrow seem to have been able to sustain group meetings longer than the Scholar Sarah Chambers.

In review: the Personality self has its plans, and the Essence self has its plans; often the two are at loggerheads because of time and energy available for each. I am reminded of a Biblical passage:

No servant can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to one, and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon [money]. [Luke 16:13]

A search for the word “agenda” in the published channeling of Lesley Briggs subsequent to the original Michaelian group did not yield any results. A search for the word “agenda” in the published channeling of JP Van Hulle found that the concept of agenda was usually applied to what became known formally as the “Life Plan”, which is what the soul and/or Essence intended to happen during the lifetime. This is not exactly the same usage of the term as during the original Michaelian group; I regard it as an additional application of the term.

There are situations where physical and spiritual (aka Personality and Essence) agendas are reciprocally related: the more of one the less of the other. There are at least two ways to deal with this situation in a healthy way:

1. Minimize the physical needs and distractions, but not so much that it becomes asceticism. In other words, aim for “moderation in all things”, the Zen Buddhist ideal. One can read more about this in the chapter on “Balanced Man”. Briefly stated and generally speaking, the Michaels do not recommend asceticism — “poverty consciousness” — as the ideal spiritual path for their Students, but neither do they recommend “prosperity consciousness”, as if wealth was an indicator of righteousness.
2. Maximize the extraction of spiritual catalyst from physical experiences. One might say that this is the essence of the Michaelian teachings: it purports to provide the understanding of what life is all about, so that one can derive the most benefit from it, in both the physical and the spiritual realms.





AGREEMENTS AND SEQUENCES

Because reincarnation is the foundational doctrine of the Michaelian teachings, one can reasonably expect that the Michaels would have explained to the original Michaelian group how it worked. One of those doctrines is that Fragments on the Astral Plane between lives make plans for the upcoming incarnation. Two components of those plans are called “Agreements” and “Sequences”. Because the two components are somewhat related, they are discussed in this one chapter.

So let’s take a look at what the transcriptions have to say. The following Q&A exchanges are provided in the chronological order in which they were given.

Agreements and Sequences per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

The following extracts from original Michaelian group transcriptions are Q&A exchanges, where an original Michaelian group member asks a question (or makes a comment), and the Michaels provide an answer. This is [not] a subject that would benefit by division into subcategories, as some subjects do. **These extracts are [not] presented in the chronological order in which they were given, even though this is not a subject where there was a development or evolution of a specific revelation of a facet of the Michaelian teachings, as was often the case with the original Michaelian group.** As is my custom, I often provide some explanatory comments following the question or answer. Underlined words in the Michaels’ answers are my emphasis, to draw attention to what it is that I comment on. Sometimes I embed words or phrases [in brackets] that I believe help to clarify the question or the answer.

Before the doctrine of Agreements and Sequences was formally introduced, I take the following passage as a hint of them:

Billie: I would like to know where my [deceased] twins are living [reincarnated] now.

We would prefer not to [say], for some fairly obvious reasons. There was a necessity for you to experience this grief. The souls that obliged [your necessary experience] also had the need to finish out a role [Agreement] they cheated on [Abdicated]; both of them suicided previously. They needed only to experience the death [not a full life]. [01 November 1973]

The first mention of Agreements and Sequences nearly a year after the beginning of the original Michaelian group sessions. This happened the usual way that the Michaels initiated a new component of their teaching, namely as a side comment to a question asked. In this case it was in an answer about Karma:

Cheryl: Do you need to acknowledge all Karma before you can become conscious?

That is valid. There are also what we will call for the moment “Sequences” that link souls together life after life and are not true Karmic Ribbons. In these Sequences, souls Agree to ‘play out certain scenes’ together, again reversing the goals and completing Monads. Many of you are in Sequences with other members of this group, but there are no Karmic Ribbons between you. [20 February 1974]

Refer to the chapters “Karma” and “Monads” for lengthy discussions about those components of the Michaelian teachings. Basically and briefly, Karma and Sequences are types of Monads, and Monads always consist of Cardinal and Ordinal halves, and these require role reversals so that the person experiences both sides of an equation, and that advances the person forward a stage or upward a level. Regarding “play out scenes”, refer to the chapter “Drama” for more instances where the Michaels use the metaphor of the theatrical arts for some of the things that happen during reincarnation. The whole thing about Monads (which includes Karma and Agreements) is that two Fragments have some differences in terms of some Cardinal-Ordinal polarity that they need or want to resolve and reconcile and transcend in order to grow spiritually or reintegrate the Entity. I refer to this Monadic process as “alchemy” because it is like transmuting a base metal (lead) into a noble metal (gold).

Do we as a group have any obligation to our fellow man?

No. You have a desire to hear now some information that you rejected at another time. Also, you have Agreed to perform a task for yourselves to burn Karma. [13 March 1974]

Refer to the chapter “Karma”, where you will read further documentation that the matter and manner of burning Karmic Ribbons is a type of Agreement between souls on the Astral Plane to do a Sequence during incarnation.

The financial problems arise mostly out of the scrapes from the differing Overleaves. Mostly the two of you Agreed to play out this Sequence — this to help you complete a Monad when you were barren. [20 March 1974]

Refer to the chapter “Overleaves — Interactions”. There are circumstances and situation where and when issues and difficulties and problems are the result of something other than Karma, and something other than an Agreement to play out a Sequence where there is conflict resulting from the polarity that is built into the experience of a Monad.

Joan said something about the soul choosing on the Astral Plane ...

We would agree with the lady Joan. (It chooses) without interference of Maya. The Infant Soul is able to make the choices on the Astral Plane, but the quality of those choices is often poor.

Joan: Do some [souls] make choices to work out certain things while on the Astral level?

This is Agreed upon Astrally. This does not appear as difficult as it becomes on the Physical Plane. [03 April 1974]

Refer to the chapter “Maya” for more information about distorted perceptions on the Physical Plane, and Maya means that choices made by people are not totally ideal. On the other hand, souls on the Astral Plane have a distorted perception of life on the Physical Plane — they forget how difficult it is there — so that means that sometimes the Agreements made on the Astral Plane are not totally ideal. People who have a Near Death Experience (NDE) often report that “guides” help souls make better choices. Whatever the situation that leads to a choice or Agreement, recall that reincarnation is all about the learning process, and learning means that stupid, ignorant souls and people inevitably learn the ‘hard’ way.

I read in previous notes that Karmic Ribbons must be burned. How are Ribbons burned?

Burning Karmic Ribbons consists essentially of collecting or repaying debts incurred in the past. As your Sequential partners do not necessarily reincarnate at the same time always, this process may take centuries. The problem being that you as the debtor will still have subliminal knowledge of the debt whether or not the person to whom it is owed is on the Physical Plane. This will usually result in some barrier to spiritual growth. Sometimes, souls search for entire lifetimes, are restless and insecure and cannot gain any insight to why they are compelled to search. The payment or collection can consist of a physical remittance such as money or an emotional one such as nurturing, or even a spiritual bond such as master and pupil. Karmic Ribbons concerning violence are usually settled with violence in the earlier Cycles. Those occurring in the later Cycles are usually settled more pacifically. We would encourage acknowledgment of any of these. The Older Souls are generally not given to commit violent acts. [17 April 1974]

Apply what is said here about burning Karmic Ribbons to the making of any kind of Agreement to experience a Sequence. Anyone who works for a large company knows that it can be a tangled mess to coordinate the calendars of various people for the purpose of conducting a business meeting.

About a month later, a lengthy Q&A exchange on this topic ensued:

Comment: We wondered if he would burn the Ribbons he had left, and went on considering that everyone on earth has a goal — a set of things to experience and learn on the Physical Plane. We wondered about the betrayal of Astral Agreements we may have made, and someone asked if Michael would let us know what missions we had decided to accomplish.

We will, yes, but we had hoped that by giving you the Overleaves and Photographing the patterns, the insights would come. Many of you already have some inkling of what you have Agreed to do merely by discussing your Karmic Ribbons and interwoven Sequences. These tasks are not always difficult; many are not even very interesting, but in some way, they enrich the Fragment and lead to the experiencing of all of life.

Refer to chapters “Photography” and “Insight” and “Task”.

Is our Essence aware of the things we have to accomplish?

The group answered, yes, and that we needed to be in touch with our Essence.

Being in contact with Essence is a good thing in every way, not just in discerning Agreements; refer to the section “Essence Contact” in the chapter “Essence and Personality”.

Dick: Can Michael tell me what I have chosen to accomplish in this life?

On the Astral Plane, you Agreed to experience the frustrations of one seeking love through the Repression Mode, to learn the lesson of sadness, which you had not experienced previously. The true feeling of poignancy of sadness only comes to those in this Mode. Other emotions simply mock this. It is a necessary part of life in order that you experience [its opposite] joy. Also, on the more mundane side, you also Agreed to provide the children for Alice’s Monad.

Refer to chapters “Love” and “Joy”. Those are the Positive Poles of Monads, the Negative Poles being “frustration” and “sadness”.

Who do you [make Agree[ments] with on the Astral Plane?

With yourself and the others in your Sequence. For example, the man Jim and the lady Joan agreed that their paths would cross in this life so they could burn a Ribbon. [15 May 1974]

My understanding is that “with yourself” means that your Astral self (the Fragment) makes an Agreement with the “dominant thread” of the incarnate Personality self; refer to the chapter “Composites” for more about the notion that the greater self has levels within it, and the notion that coordination between them is a thing.

Following is another lengthy Q&A exchange about the relationship of the levels of the self when it comes to the whole phenomenon of Agreements and Sequences:

Shirley: Is my husband Glenn’s eye deterioration a Karmic thing?

Not strictly speaking. However, he did Agree to experience this. You were blind in a former life.

Shirley: How is he experiencing this?

He is experiencing it the reverse of that life now, except you were brothers then. You also could distinguish light from dark then. We do not see him losing light perception.

Shirley: Why would anyone choose this?

Much can be learned from this vantage point. Many Older Souls do choose blindness to come in touch with other senses. Blindness, as considered on the Astral Plane, appears quite different than that experienced directly on the Physical Plane, although the basic concept remains the same, and the lesson is learned. Perceptions and sensations are so different on the Astral Plane. It is necessary that they be, otherwise no Fragment would ever complete the physical Cycle. Most of the time, by the time the Astral Fragment settles down to work, at least twenty five and usually fifty or more, years have gone by since transition, and memories are dim.

Shirley: Would eye surgery help him? (He has glaucoma and the cornea is becoming stiff.)

This adventure will not have a great deal of effect one way or another, but if he wishes, we see no risk to his life.

Shirley: It is a hell of a lot of bother if it won’t help.

Dick: When is enough? What decides? In Personality, one could say it was enough ...

This decision cannot be made from Personality with any positive results. The only positive results emanate from the true realization that this has been experienced, but more important, that the soul recognizes a pattern controlled by self. The Essence or soul, as we have said before, does become encrusted with [metaphorical] ‘barnacles’, and has much to go through to act intuitively. Most of the time, its powers are totally suppressed, and it spends its time slumbering, as you well know. Those moments of crystal clarity come about when it is prodded into wakefulness by some shock.

Cheryl: What have I to accomplish?

Yours is much harder, Cheryl. For one thing, you have Agreed to jump from one Cycle to the other, which involves a major change in your perceptions of the world around you. We think this is progressing rather nicely.

Cheryl: Could the task be that of a teacher?

Why does this not seem plausible from your present Level? There are certain Sequences and major Monads that are more easily experienced from the Mature Cycle than any of the others. After all, it is during this Cycle that the perceptions of the emotions of those around you are sharper than they will be again. [15 May 1974]

The point to be emphasized here is a repeat of what was said previously: if one is to understand and appreciate and deal effectively and efficiently with one’s Agreements and Sequences during an incarnation, then it is good to be in contact with one’s Essence, where one can see the phenomenon from a higher perspective.

In the next session, there was another lengthy discussion of Agreements and Sequences. Again, notice that Agreements with others to do Sequences together are intended to learn specific lessons:

Dick: I found the most important key to myself was asking Michael the question concerning what my purpose with this incarnation was. Would you like to ask that?

This lady Agreed, among other things, to achieve the state of the true filial love through the barriers of rather severe disability not to give up, but to continue to seek, no matter what befell her, and this she has done. The lady has also Agreed to serve as an example to three others similarly afflicted, but not so indomitably, and to two she has presented this example; one is yet to come. The lady has few Ribbons to burn.

Mary: I feel I have much unfinished Business with many and I can't correlate this to what I have just heard.

That which incurs Karma must be considered as the most serious of all of life's endeavors. Many times, you have the feeling you describe merely by being closely involved in the lives of others, or by playing out a Sequence that has, for you, an unhappy or unsatisfactory ending. This happens more usually in the male-female relationships that ebb and flow, as those involved run into their Sequential or Karmic patterns and leave you by the wayside. This has happened several times in your life where you have had to change course in midstream in order to keep an Astral-made Contract.

Richard: I have a feeling that [with the] task I chose, I have bitten off more than I can chew.

We think that you can handle it. You are correct that you have not begun. You wasted a good many years fretting, Richard.

Dick: Would you like to ask — what is the task you have chosen when on the Astral Plane?

Richard has Agreed to come to Balance through the Intellectual Center in this life since he is still Trapped in the Emotional Part of Moving Center. He does have a formidable task. This will result in some quite startling changes in perception of those all-important priorities.

Alice: What have I agreed to accomplish in this life? I don't seem to have any perceptions along this line. Perhaps, I just had to raise the six children.

It was more important than simply bearing the children. The lesson lies in the recognition of those children as true entities within themselves and not merely as an extension of yourself. You have had many children in the past, but not these children. In them lies the lesson. [18 May 1974]

I like to capitalize the word "Business" in this context as a generic term for what souls Agree to do together (Karma, Monads, Sequences) because it is consistent with capitalizing those specific types of Business. The word "Contract" is also a good synonym for an Astral-made Agreement; a Contract seems more serious than a verbal promise sealed with a handshake. Refer to the chapters "Task" for more instances of the use of that word, here used as a synonym for a Sequence.

Shirley: What did I Agree to accomplish while on the Astral Plane?

Easy interpersonal relationships have not always been possible for this Warrior. To grow in the strength of firm interpersonal ties was one of the Agreements. In the past, you have been terribly independent and have not worked at this. It is necessary that you experience the cooperation borne of filial love. Also, Shirley, you agreed to assist the man [husband] Glenn, to adjust to the sightlessness and build a life based on this change.

Shirley had several siblings, Louise among them. The family migrated from dust-bowl Oklahoma to California during the Great Depression. This is the type of thing that required much cooperation. This instance can be generalized to the notion that spiritual family members often Agree to incarnate in a physical family in order to work out issues and learn lessons. It sometimes, perhaps often, takes the strength of an Astral Agreement to persevere in the face of adverse circumstances. Agreements are mutual: Shirley and Glenn both had things to experience. Although it does not say so here, the soul of Glenn apparently also had reasons to experience a handicap.

Mallory: I would like to know if ... I have a Sequence with these people — mother, father, son.

Yes. You Agreed to aid this man in understanding at a deeper level. [30 May 1974]

She was an older soul than they were, and understanding trickles 'down hill' in such cases.

Could we recall about him/her?

Yes. You have a Sequence that you Agreed upon with another student.

Joan: Someone in this group?

Definitely. The Sequence is not with you, Joan. In the case of Sequences, we would prefer that the students recognize them. We could easily manufacture many Sequences. Fertile imagination.

Narra: How do I discover this Sequence?

Unfolding events, most likely.

Betty: Do I have a Sequence with Barbara or Cheryl?

The lady does not have a Sequence with Barbara, but we did not say that she and Cheryl had not known each other before. They have, many times. [05 June 1974]

This is not the only time that the Michaels suggested that students figure things out for themselves, rather than depend on the Michaels to give the answers from on high; refer to the chapters “Insight” and “Intuition” for more about that.

Another extensive Q&A exchange was recorded as follows:

Dick: Regarding Sequences: Do souls differ in Sequences? How many? Are all of us in this group part of my Sequence?

Sequences, of course, vary a great deal from life to life. Usually, those in a Sequence with you will make a far greater impression upon your memory than just ordinary acquaintances. Then too, in some way, there will be influences within the relationship.

Often, a favorite teacher has been in a Sequence with you or a particularly close adolescent chum with whom you later lose track. Sequences can be between two people or can be large enough to accommodate a group this large. This group is not just one Sequence though. There are at least five Sequences here.

Dick: What establishes a Sequence?

Souls agree while still on the Astral Plane to experience certain segments of life and also may choose at that time to experience it with other Fragments of the same Entity or close Entities, primarily because of the ease with which such experiences can be accomplished.

Dick: Sequence involves Fragments or Entities?

It can involve both your own Entity and Fragments of another Entity that has the same or similar needs. For example, Richard, Sarah, Cheryl, and Victoria all have different Sequences that can be accomplished by the same route. Cheryl and Sarah are also within a same Sequence.

Louise: Shirley and I are sisters now — are we Sequencing?

This [siblinghood] does not normally make a Sequence.

Cheryl: So what does make a Sequence?

Agreement to play out a certain fragment of life. For instance, we have told you before that not all parents and their children are playing out the Parent-Child Monad. This Monad results in a far more complex relationship than just the ordinary one. Siblings are taught by this culture that they must feel something for each other and are encouraged to even falsify such conditions. This is not always true. Relationships within the typical nuclear family are rarely honest because of this.

Dick: Dislike carry over on Astral Plane, because on the Astral Plane, the facade is all gone.

Discussion about why we can't pay Karmic debts on the Astral Plane.

You may think of it as an enormous theater with continuous performances, if you wish. The analogy is a good one, for that is precisely what happens. On the Astral Plane, the actors Agree to perform certain roles, only they are cast loose on a booby-trapped stage [onto the Physical Plane], so to speak — it makes for livelier action, more experiences that way. The birth trauma [in returning to the Physical Plane] most of the time takes care of [erases] a great deal of the memories [of prior lives and Astral Plane plans]. It also plants the seeds of aggressiveness and the will to survive.

Betty: What is my Life Task?

As with most Priests, it is primarily missionary in nature and will involve your own ability to project the teaching from your own center of serenity to the most unlikely group of students. Also, in this lifetime, you have agreed to play out Sequences, only two of which you have begun.

A “task” — is it one or several things?

“The” task that most of you in this room have agreed upon is that you will attempt to hear the words. This is paramount. The others are life tasks and vary from Fragment to Fragment, depending upon what you have experienced in the past. [12 June 1974]

Richard: I would like a comment on my intuitions lately and the "fact" that my aura indicates healing. Did I Agree to this [healing intuitions] on the Astral Plane?

It is not that you Agreed to do this on the Astral Plane, it is more that the combination of Overleaves you chose given your affinity for this. By all means, try it. [16 June 1974]

Marty: [Karmic] Ribbon or a Sequence with Dennis (the alcoholic)?

This man is a Mid-Cycle Mature Sage, yes, in Submission with Self-destruction as a Chief Feature, not as strong now as formerly. He was badly frightened by his recent experiences, enough to take a look at this. An Idealist in the Observation Mode. There was Agreed upon a Sequence here that you would offer shelter. [19 June 1974]

Joan: How many Sequences have I begun in this life, how many are finished and how many have I agreed to pay out in this life

You have finished one to mutual satisfaction. You have agreed to two total life Sequences, meaning that you will probably relate closely to these two for the entire physical [life] span. There are three additional Sequences, two of which you are aware of now, one which has not yet begun. [23 June 1974]

Victoria: What is my task?

Your primary task is, of course, the same as the others, that of an attempt to hear these words. Also, you have Agreed to give of your creative abilities, the gift of color and design, and to express yourself in this mode. [25 June 1974]

Cheryl: I think I have Agreed to do something in medicine or music as a secondary task. Is this so?

Couldn't these be successfully combined or, perhaps, the answer will come to you on your journey?

Is a Sequence always an agreement or plan between two, or can three or more play out the same Sequence?

Yes, as many as is necessary. There can be several hundred [in a Sequence].

Joan: Can Sequences be categorized in any way? If so, can you describe the categories?

Only loosely, as experiential, [as] vicarious, and those Sequences that involve only minimal participation, in which you act merely as the catalyst.

Do Sequences always involve learning or do they ever agree for frivolous reasons?

Souls in resting Sequences often agree on the Astral Plane to play out frivolous Sequences.

Have Narra and Joan agreed to play out a Sequence?

Yes.

Is that the one I am aware of?

Yes. You are not in the resting interval. It is a learning Sequence.

Joan: Is the other Sequence I am to play out with Jim?

No.

Joan: Is there anybody else in the group besides Narra with whom I have a Sequence?

You do, yes.

Joan: Do I have a Sequence with anyone in this room?

All of these are more readily verified if the insights come to you.

Joan: Could my teaching be a Sequence?

In part. It is communication vastly expanded. Your talents — teaching — will be more in demand, soon. [03 July 1974]

Dick: I need a change of my Overleaves in order to have courage enough to look at strange people's eyes as deeply as I need to, but rarely do. It seems that a Power Mode would be best for this or Passion, also.

... the relationship with Kathryn is a Sequence that you Agreed upon and one that requires that you move from your present Mode if you are to see it through. [07 July 1974]

Victoria: Do I have a Sequence with anyone in this group?

Yes.

Victoria: Is it with Cheryl, or Sarah and Richard?

Liz is quite correct in saying that most of you are in a Sequence together.

For five of you, it amounts to a life Sequence. In other words, one that will keep you together for the remainder of this physical life.

Ten of you have Agreed also to work with each other in this group.

Victoria has Sequences with Cheryl, yes, but with two others who she has not yet met, and with Patrice (a French girl who spent a week with the Alice and Dick last spring and whom Victoria and Cheryl will be spending a month with in Europe, if things go right).

Carolyn: I will be taking a trip in two weeks and a friend of mine wishes to go, too. I would like verification of his SRG and if we have Sequences together. He keeps popping up at odd times. Is he a Young Slave?

Your Sequence is with the lady. [17 July 1974]

Liz: Was my experience with Paul a Ribbon or merely a Sequence?

The lady Liz is the one who has had a Sequence with the man Paul. Your experience with him enabled her to go through. The man Paul is in Stagnation. He is a Mid-Cycle Mature Sage.

Liz: Does Ted have a Sequence with Richard?

Yes. You have Agreed to work together on a dream that belongs to each of you. You have Agreed with this Artisan to assist him in the implementation of his plans for building. [13 August 1974]

[[Continue to search. Include "abdicat" in search.]]

Concluding Comments on Agreements and Sequences





ALEXANDRIA

Are you as pissed as I am, two thousand years later, about the destruction of the Library of Alexandria? Could our dismay about this monumental loss of knowledge go beyond the typical Scholarly love of information? As we will see in this chapter, when we compile and review the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group, it was said that many Michaelian students were members of the Alexandrian Mystery School, which was affiliated with the Library.

Alexandrian Library and School

>https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Library_of_Alexandria<

>https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alexandrian_school<

Alexandria per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

The first mention of Alexandria in the original Michaelian group transcriptions happened about two months after the appearance of the Michaels:

We had discussed the burning of the library at Alexandria by Justinian. Richard voiced the fear that perhaps we would do a repeat of this, but this time out of shame, so that future generations would not know how irresponsible we were. Then he asked Michael if the books were burned at Alexandria out of shame.

Misguided zeal. He (Justinian) regarded science as evil. [08 October 1973]

The Wikipedia article on the Library of Alexandria (>https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Library_of_Alexandria<), does not mention a burning by the Roman emperor Justinian (>https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Justinian_I<), who ruled from 527–565 CE, but it does mention a burning in the time of Julius Caesar in the year 48 BCE. Historical accounts differ, but many scrolls may have been destroyed, but the Library is known to have continued to function in some capacity for the next few hundred years.

Regarding the partial burning of the library, that seems to have happened a couple of times:

In 48 BC, during Caesar's Civil War, Julius Caesar was besieged at Alexandria. His soldiers set fire to some of the Egyptian ships docked in the Alexandrian port while trying to clear the wharves to block the fleet belonging to Cleopatra's brother Ptolemy XIV. This fire purportedly spread to the parts of the city nearest to the docks, causing considerable devastation. The first-century AD Roman playwright and Stoic philosopher Seneca the Younger quotes Livy's *Ab Urbe Condita Libri*, which was written between 63 and 14 BC, as saying that the fire started by Caesar destroyed 40,000 scrolls from the Library of Alexandria. The Greek Middle Platonist Plutarch (c. 46–120 AD) writes in his *Life of Caesar* that, "[W]hen the enemy endeavored to cut off his communication by sea, he was forced to divert that danger by setting fire to his own ships, which, after burning the docks, thence spread on and destroyed the great library." The Roman historian Cassius Dio (c. 155 –c. 235 AD), however, writes: "Many places were set on fire, with the result that, along with other buildings, the dockyards and storehouses of grain and books, said to be great in number and of the finest, were burned." However, Florus and Lucan only mention that the flames burned the fleet itself and some "houses near the sea".

Thereafter in the Wikipedia article followed some discussion of the varying stories about the extent of the destruction. Then we find that there were other destructive fires:

In 272 AD, the emperor Aurelian fought to recapture the city of Alexandria from the forces of the Palmyrene queen Zenobia. During the course of the fighting, Aurelian's forces destroyed the Broucheion quarter of the city in which the main library was located. If the Mouseion and Library still existed at this time, they were almost certainly destroyed during the attack as well. If they did survive the attack, then whatever was left of them would have been destroyed during the emperor Diocletian's siege of Alexandria in 297.

[>https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Library_of_Alexandria< — retrieved 15 April 2022]

So, Justinian lived and reigned a few hundred years after the library was apparently destroyed. Therefore, I would say that this passage seems to be an instance of a lack of accuracy on the part of the channel. (By the way, I personally am not of a mindset to supposedly reconcile apparently erroneous channeling with recorded history by saying that there are different timelines in parallel universes, so as to make both true.)

The next mention of Alexandria is this

Ray: Michael has said I am a Sage. I have the feeling that I have had lives before with soldiers and I would like them to verify that.

You always expressed yourself in a most vociferous way, even as a soldier. This resulted in your not always being there at the finish, but you have also been a philosopher of some renown twice; a teacher of rhetoric three times: once in Alexandria, at the same time that Shirley was employed by the household of Marcus Antonius. You were also a stevedore once, but still managed to expound. In fact, you ended up owning the ships you once loaded.

Ray: Oh, wow ... which philosophers?

One of the philosophers was Epictetus and David Hume. [08 November 1973]

JimB: Was I ever in Egypt?

In the fourth century before the Common Era and again in Alexandria at the turn of the Cycle. [31 December 1973]

Was Christ influenced by the Eleusinian mystery religion?

Not particularly, but [he] was heavily influenced by Socrates and Epicurus, as well as the Alexandrian brotherhood, which really was a counterpart to the Eleusinian School. [10 January 1974]

The Alexandrian brotherhood were those versed in both traditional Judaism and the Pagan mysteries. From the book *Suns of God* (page 537): the Alexandrian brotherhood became known as the Therapeuts, who in turn created Christianity using the Greek scriptures, which had been translated by their predecessors.

Richard: I would like to ask about 3 temple scenes that came to me in meditation recently.

One was the Great Mosque, Medina. One was a Buddhist monastery in Laos still extant. The other a temple in Alexandria.

Richard: Why?

The mosque was something that Sarah was remembering. The others were Fragments of your own past. [10 January 1974]

Mallory: Are there any ties for me in this group?

Your ties with this group go back to the first century of this era, when you were in Alexandria [Egypt]. [22 January 1974]

Barbara: Does this mention of Alexandria in Egypt have anything to do with the "White Brotherhood"?

By all means. We wish for you the opportunity to propagate the Logos. How you do it should be as comfortable as possible, so that you can devote yourself best to growth and not to struggle.

Refer to the chapter "Brotherhood (Occult)". From ><https://holyorderofmans.org/advanced-activity/history-of-the-white-brotherhood/><: "A few centuries before the birth of Jesus, the White Brotherhood built a college of the higher sciences at Alexandria, similar to the former religious center they built in Heliopolis centuries earlier as one of the largest and best structures for the preservation of the ancient Egyptian records."

Barbara: When? Who was our master?

You were students together at the museum at Alexandria. Medical students.

Jim: Since it was said that I was there, too, was I there at the same time?

That is valid.

Mallory: It was said that I, too, was in Alexandria; was I with them?

(You were there) several hundred years prior to that in the time of the Macedonian conquest.

Shirley: I was said to have tutored there; was I there at that time?

(You were) there also. Two of you were sent there to study: Dick and Joan.

Dick: Was it to study medicine?

No.

Dick: What, then?

Astronomy, rhetoric, philosophy. [06 February 1974]





⑤ ALIENATION

This chapter is the product of a search for the word alienation in the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group channeling sessions. This word does not represent a significant component of the Michaelian teachings. However, there are good reasons to discuss the subject in this *Study Papers* book: 1) the subject came up numerous times during the original Michaelian group; 2) some interesting things were said about the subject; 3) the subject is related to a number of other components of the Michaelian teachings that are considered to be significant; 4) students can presumably benefit from having the mentions conveniently collected and commented all in one place; 5) Alienation issues are unavoidable; they are pervasive in human psychology and sociology and spirituality, so it behooves us to have a working knowledge of it.

The word alienation is not capitalized in this chapter or other chapters of this *Study Papers* book because it has no special meaning in the Michaelian teachings; it is not a Michaelian jargon word that needs a definition apart from its use in the common vernacular.

This chapter is one of many in this book that focuses on a psychological component of the Michaelian teachings as found in original Michaelian group transcriptions, rather than on a doctrinal or spiritual component. A psychological component is usually either a positive to be cultivated or a negative to be mitigated. As we will see, the Michaels tell us that alienation is a negative to be mitigated. The Michaelian version of psychology is not to be confused with the popular psychology of the self-improvement movement, those that do not have a spiritual core or perspective. Rather, the Michaelian psychotherapeutic path (aimed at improving psychological health) is a beneficial precursor to the spiritual path (aimed at improving soul health). To skip the former but attempt the latter is referred to as “spiritual bypassing”. This is discussed at length on such websites as https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spiritual_bypassing. To skip mitigating one’s psychological issues and attempt to go straight to enlightenment usually proves to be problematic.

Chapters closely related to this chapter are “Intimacy”, “Strangers”, and “Trust”, as you can readily see from their names. Many other chapters are not so closely related to this chapter, and those are noted where appropriate.

Alienation per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

The following extracts from original Michaelian group transcriptions are Q&A exchanges, where an original Michaelian group member asks a question (or makes a comment), and the Michaels provide an answer. These extracts are presented in the chronological order in which they appear in the transcriptions. As is my custom, I often provide some explanatory comments following the question or answer. Underlined words in the Michaels’ answers are my emphasis, to draw attention to what it is that I comment on. Sometimes I embed words or phrases [in brackets] that I believe help to clarify the question or the answer.

The first appearance of the word was in one of the Tomas sessions in the summer of 1973, all of which occurred before the Michaels themselves appeared:

Angie: I have been considering moving into a commune and I would like to know if it is better to live in a commune or to live alone.

[Tomas:] I think that the communal life offers a great deal so long as the goals of the commune are those of continued spiritual growth and they do not conflict with what you know to be true. Living alone offers little and I would not recommend it to anyone. Isolation breeds alienation and alienation breeds suspicion that leads to jealousy, possessiveness, and greed, the three cardinal stumbling blocks on the path to awareness. [24 July 1973]

The founding members of the original Michaelian group had been members of the Fellowship of Friends, an esoteric group based on the Gurdjieffian teachings. That group was moving toward communal living as a method for mitigating the alienation that is a by-product of civilization, and the original Michaelian group also discussed moving in that direction during the entirety of its two-year existence. Communal living

mitigates alienation as a by-product of spiritual growth. Refer to the chapter “Communal Living” for the whole story.

The following appeared in the first session in which the Michaels were the contactee:

Comments: Concerning the “alien corn”. That part that was brought to mind was about homesickness and longing. The corn, you know, is neutral. It just grows and gives ears of corn, but it is called “alien corn” because it is not growing in her home.

To have the feeling of home, the Essence must be at peace. As long as the ‘different drummer’ still sounds different to you, you will remain out of step with the music. [12 August 1973]

American philosopher Henry David Thoreau (July 12, 1817 – May 6, 1862) wrote in the conclusion of his book *Walden*: “If a man loses pace with his companions, perhaps it is because he hears a different drummer. Let him step to the music which he hears, however measured, or far away.” The point of including this Q&A exchange in this chapter is to note that some people are born to be weird, and obviously this means that it is difficult for them to fit into the socio-cultural milieu in which they are born. Thus, they tend to feel alienated, unless they can accept and embrace themselves as weird. As we will see below, it is common for older souls to not be able to fit into this world dominated by younger souls, and this is why some of them are drawn to communal living, where their inherent belief, value, and behavior systems are not weird. Refer to the chapters “Essence and Personality” and “Liberation” where we find the metaphor that Essence feels ‘trapped’ by incarnation; this world and human bodies are not its natural abode, its ‘home’.

Dick: Do you have any suggestions for my changing attitudes in work? Is there anything I could bring into my grasp right now?

You are beginning to understand the concept of Maya. This will automatically aid you in your practice.

Structural Integration is valid only for Emotionally Centered souls who are out of contact with Intellect[ual]

Center and alienated from their [Moving Center] bodies. Gestalt therapy is valid for Intellectually Centered souls who need to contact their emotions. Hypnosis is most valuable for Moving Centered souls. None of this will be successful if you are not dealing with Mature Souls (middle Cycle) [or older]. [04 September 1973]

Not only can a person be ‘out of step’ with their socio-cultural milieu as mentioned above, they can also be ‘out of touch’ with components of their own being as discussed here. Some therapeutic modalities have been discovered or devised to mitigate the alienation that each Center can have for the other Centers. Refer to the chapter “Balanced Man” for a discussion of physio-therapeutic, emoto-therapeutic, psycho-therapeutic, and spiritual practices that foster integration of Centers. Refer to the chapter “Maya” for a discussion of the notion that the younger-soul socio-cultural milieu is ‘out of touch’ with (alienated from) truth.

That last statement is confirmed in the next appearance of the word alienation”

Sarah: People with money are Young Souls. That is what their goal is.

Dick: They [Michael] have never told us about war.

Christopher: It’s Karmically programmed to happen.

It [war] happens because Young Souls are in the majority on your world. They are largely motivated by the desire for material achievement [what money can buy]. This is an alienating goal. [08 September 1973]

In my understanding of the structure and meaning of the Overleaf System, the Young Soul Age is an Aspect of the so-called “Analysis Process” along with the other Aspects of the Analysis Process, namely Rejection, Caution, Self-destruction (Renunciation), Artisan, Skeptic, and Intellectual. All of these Aspects of Personality tend to alienate the person from themselves and from the environment, so if a person has one or more of these traits, they will have greater likelihood of feeling alienated compared to people who do not have an Analysis Process trait.

Dick: We’re likely to feel alienated from society. Perhaps the Young Souls who are with it, do not feel the alienation. [06 October 1973]

By “we” Dick referred to the older souls who were members of the original Michaelian group; they found each other because of their common interest in esoterica. “Birds of a feather flock together”. Young Souls are interested in exoterica; they are competitive by nature precisely because they are not in harmony with, they are alienated from, the natural order. However, they do gather together in businesses in order to more effectively deal with the “civilized” world that they create and exploit. In a Young Soul socio-cultural milieu, there is a constant struggle between cooperative and competitive behavior, emotions, and beliefs; as with all struggles, this is paradoxical:

Then [in the ancient Roman Empire] cities were crowded, and [yet] the city dwellers were alienated from each other. [27 December 1973]

The paradox of feeling alienated in crowded cities has been noted by sociologists. The reason for it is that humans evolved in extended family units during the paleolithic hunter-gatherer stage, and evolved in tribal villages during the neolithic agricultural-pastoral stage — everybody knew everybody else in the family and in the tribe. The human psyche has a limitation in the quantity of people that it can get to know and effectively deal with, about 150 others (the so-called “Dunbar number”, named after the sociologist who researched and elaborated on the notion). Therefore, when people began to collect into cities during the bronze-iron civilization stage of socio-cultural evolution, as a whole everyone was surrounded by strangers; thus they were “alienated” from each other. Consequently, for the city-state to work, there was a need for top-down governmental control of the citizenry. City-states both traded with each other and warred with each other as they constantly sought a workable balance or trade-off between cooperation and competition.

One of the consequences of living in large socio-cultural milieus such as cities is that people tend to seek companionship and friendship in smaller groups of like-minded people where they are not surrounded by strangers, where they do not feel alienated, such as a church or a guild or a business ... or a commune:

Take a look at the problems that bring millions of people to the psychiatric couch each year and they all boil down to alienation. The greatest advantage of communal living is the elimination of isolation in an opportunity to grow in an environment that is protective and nurturing. If you are concerned about others taking advantage of you, this simply means that much more work is needed in this area by you. Then you must get to a space where no one else can take advantage of you. You can become invulnerable, particularly if you stop taking a lack of enthusiasm on others’ part as a personal slight. [30 December 1973]

Previously I noted that the Intellectual Center and its beliefs tends to be alienating, as that Center is an Aspect of the Analysis Process. In a commune, the Intellectual Center’s propensity for alienation tends to be mitigated because of whatever shared belief system brought the people together into a cooperative environment. A commune also provides a safe environment for Moving Center “protectiveness” and for Emotional Center “nurturing”. Refer to the chapter “Trust” for relevant information.

Ellis: Going back to the origin of man[kind], I find the source of my trouble is awareness of self in contrast to intellect, as an individual.

That is valid. That is where all of the problems are. You are right on that. We have said much about alienation, and one of its causes is this awareness of self as a separate and unique being in a hostile universe. We have also said that the universe is not hostile; it is completely neutral. Man’s separatism is an illusion, part of Maya for the Essence to overcome on the upward climb. You are now beginning to reorganize your perceptions to include the larger whole; all Old Souls do. Your own manifestation has been protracted by your own design. It has taken you a long time to question this and you must still ask many questions, as there is still a hiatus in your knowledge. [24 January 1974]

Among the mentions of alienation in the original Michaelian group transcriptions, this is one of the best descriptions and explanations. Refer to the chapter “Creature of Reason” for a more complete description of the humanoid stage of biological evolution and its challenges. Briefly, the Creature-of-Reason stage of biological evolution is the third stage, the human stage, above and beyond the first stage (reptile) and the second stage (mammal). It is another Aspect of the Analysis Process that includes Intellectual Center, Rejection, Skeptic, Caution, and Renunciation.

Edgar: Did the Atlanteans have help?

They were more imaginative and far less aggressive. Also, they were not alienated. [27 January 1974]

No more information is given about the reason for the alleged lack of alienation of the alleged Atlantean civilization. If I were to speculate on the reason, I would point out that to be “imaginative” is an expression of the Higher Intellectual Center, which is said to have the Poles of +Integration and –Telepathy, both of which are contra-indications of alienation. This is in contrast to the function of the Intellectual Center, which tends to be alienating:

Dick: Is introspection a way to spiritual growth? I find if I pursue it, I get depressed and it just repeats and repeats.

Some degree of introspection is, of course, necessary in order to dredge up blocked truths. But you are right, Dick, it is a trap, a very clever one, that False Personality throws out every so often just to keep the alienation going. This is a primary defense mechanism. For Intellectually Centered souls, it is a sure way of keeping them in Intellectual Center. [06 February 1974]

This passage is yet another indication, in addition to what we see above and below in this chapter, that alienation is related to Intellectual Center function. It is the function of that Center to see and note and name

distinctions in the external world as part of the symbolization process that is mostly unique to Creatures of Reason, where symbols represent things 'out there', separate from the self; symbols are manipulated in the Poles of the Intellectual Center, +Thought and -Reason. Entrapment there inhibits the person from progressing through the Neutral Center to the higher Centers, where there is no alienation.

Alice: I feel I have accepted these things.

The primary difficulty lies in the sense of longing, and this is an inner struggle that both Alice and Dick must work through. The alienation is real at the present; it may not always be. [12 June 1973]

Emotional yearning is fingered in this passage as part of alienation. Add that to the cognitive dissonance noted in other passages.

Dick: Alienation; varies from person to person. Stems from conditioning...

Also, [alienation varies] from the sense of pride one has in one's achievements, this being wholly in Personality, and it [culture-induced alienation] can be almost inversely proportional to the amount of alienation suffered by the soul [from the Personality]. And yes, this [alienation] is culturally induced. That [alienation] is valid we think directly [— it varies proportional to the amount of cultural influence absorbed by the Personality]. [19 June 1974]

This passage took some thought for me to parse what it was clumsily trying to say; the words in brackets present my best guess at its meaning. I would rephrase it thus: the Personality feels alienation to the direct extent that it is enculturated in this alienated society, and to the inverse extent that the soul or Essence is not alienated from the Personality. This is just another way of saying that as a person grows spiritually, they become less alienated from Essence, and they also become less alienated from the socio-cultural milieu because of the increase in loving-kindness and compassion and Agape and such. One might tend to believe that contact with spirit would increase alienation from physicality, but it does not work that way, because spirit should be thought of as inclusive of All That Is, unopposed to anything.

Marty: Newly recovered alcoholic living in my home. Mature Sage or Priest in Submission?

Many [Sages], yes, do have this [alcoholism] problem, sometimes due to the extremely false facade of the life they lead on stage or as a "famous personage". The alienation again drives them into an escape route that often ends in degradation. Sages, because of their flair for the dramatic, usually at one time or another, choose this type of life [alcoholism]. [19 June 1974]

Alienation produces facades or masks that either express what one is not or hide what one is. The point of this passage appears to be that if one is being more true to Essence, to one's true/higher self, then one is less alienated from oneself, and then one is less alienated from other selves and from society in general.

Dick: Could you comment on [Sigmund] Freud's Oedipus Complex?

The imprinting discovered by Freud is not normal imprinting and is perhaps then only a "half-truth." This imprinting is the result of an alienated society with limited identification. In societies where the alienated nuclear family does not exist, this phenomenon does not exist. Intense rivalry will produce this phenomenon each time it occurs, to Exalted Roles more than others. It will be more noticeable in feminine Roles in masculine bodies and the vice versa. Where exposure to models is limited, the phenomenon will be most marked and will have the most far-reaching consequences, in this society especially where seldom more than two generations occupy the same living quarters. [03 September 1974]

From Wikipedia: In psychoanalytic theory, the term Oedipus complex denotes the emotions and ideas that the mind keeps in the unconscious, via dynamic repression, that concentrate upon a boy's desire to sexually possess his mother, and kill his father. Sigmund Freud, who coined the term "Oedipus complex," believed that the Oedipus complex is a desire for the mother in both sexes (he believed that girls have a homosexual attraction towards their mother).

Sarah: Been thinking of Ann Landers and her place in the scheme of things. Her reason for existence is part of alienated society. We are isolated; can't ask anyone else for help. Sad commentary on our existence. Should I write about this?

Of course. [01 October 1974]

It does seem sad that we may have so few intimate friends in this culture that we do not know who to go to other than a newspaper advice columnist to get answers to deeply personal questions.

Would a hypochondriac be a Martyr or what?

This syndrome runs the gamut and permeates the Cycles. It is also another example of the alienation on this world, as often it is an honest plea for some attention, even though that attention might hurt or otherwise be

unpleasant. It often takes the form of an uneducated person's reaction to scare propaganda; also, a need for punishment of family members who have not been nice; also, the result of imprinting by an over-concerned parent. [19 October 1974]

Not only can mental health issues result from alienation, but physical health issues can also result; refer to the chapter "Health — Physical and Mental". It has been shown by clinical psychological studies that, for optimal functioning, people should have intimate physical, emotional, and mental contact. To those lower Centers we can add that the Personality self should have intimate contact with the Essence self, in the neutral and the higher Centers.

The original Michaelian group channeling sessions were not the kind of social situation where there was time to focus on developing lack of alienation, aka intimacy, so once in a while they had a party:

We held a group discussion of experiences and impressions during the weekend we spent together. Many of us experienced verification of Soleal, Emotional Center experiences, and a cohesiveness of the group. We then asked Michael for a comment about the weekend the group had spent together, specifically about trust.

It was excellent work to have the group pressed into a crowded situation and yet come away with far more positive emotions than negative ones, even though many privately held belief systems concerning the need for alienation were violated. Those of you who made the experience count will not lose the ground gained. Those students who refused to penetrate the experience are in precisely the same spot as they were before the experience.

Dick: Asked for a comment from Michael regarding his own experiences during the weekend. He felt in an obligated emotional state, non-relating, alienated, didn't feel well, a psychosomatic type illness. He asked if this was a past life carry-over and if there was a rewarding answer, he would like to hear it. [12 November 1974]

The feelings of alienation always surface more strongly when the alienated student is in a situation where he senses on some level that the other students are in contact, either with each other or with the teacher. This happened to you this time. You even anticipated that it would happen and yet your presence was felt and acknowledged by many other students, and they would have felt a definite loss had you not conquered your fears and attended. It would probably astonish you if you could transverse these barriers and feel the cohesiveness.

Dick was an Artisan, and the central issue with Artisans is alienation from self and other, because Artisans are the 'personification', you might say, of the Analysis Process, as noted above. It is a huge step in the right direction for them to experience intimacy with themselves and others, and this often takes very special circumstances. Michaelian students who have attended one of the national gatherings get a taste of what it is like to experience a lack of alienation.

James asked what must we do to become awake.

We have, of course, outlined to this [original Michaelian group] cadre the steps that they must take if they are to ever become sufficiently awake to hear the words. We have told them of the highest truth, which is Agape, which is the unqualified acceptance of other creatures as the greater part of self. We have given them the tools for attainment of this state, which are yes, meditation, concentration, fasting, and study. We have endeavored to warn them, or rather apprise them, of the pitfalls they may encounter on the Path. We have recommended that they simplify their lives, that they may free the necessary energies for pursuit of this objective. We would give you the same advice. It cannot change. This is as we have said many times, the shortest Path of which we are aware. The most penetrating barriers on the Physical Plane are the "I cannot" belief systems that stand in the way of spiritual evolution. The easiest way we know of to break through these barriers is to eliminate the alienation, the frustrating isolation that your culture now imposes. [20 November 1974]

With this statement, all of the following named chapters are made relevant to the subject of this chapter on alienation: "Awakening from Sleep", "Agape", "Meditation and Concentration", "Fasting", "Study", "Path — Spiritual", "Growth — Spiritual", "Complexity versus Simplicity", and "Barriers".

We have suggested to you something even harder in this culture — that of living together. Some of you would much prefer to walk across the desert from Medina to Mecca than even to contemplate living together. This is why it would, in the long run, be valuable. It is perhaps the hardest task you would ever undertake on the Physical Plane, for everything in your culture mitigates against it. The entire culture is achievement-oriented, and this alone implies alienation and competition. Anti-achievement groups [such as spiritual communes] are frightening and, therefore, anti-culture and to be eliminated. Financial integrity is the watchword of this culture

and, therefore, fraught with Maya. This can always be easily seen in any culture. That which is held up as the goal of society is the goal of False Personality and, therefore, opposed to spiritual growth. [14 December 1974]

With this statement, all of the following named chapters are made relevant to the subject of this chapter on alienation: “Communal Living”, “Culture”, “Maya”, “Personality — True and False”.

There are abundant resources on this planet. Even though it has been rather ruthlessly plundered, there is still much to spare. The loneliness is heartbreaking, literally, as it is so unnecessary and something that the Personality elects as a method to keep the battle going. If the Personality no longer felt threatened and alienated, there would be no incentive to continue the instinctive drama....

Belonging to these barrier groups gives the illusion of taking the edge off the loneliness. After all, if you can be a party in an organization of several million members, how can you be alone? In fact, these barrier groups only serve to alienate you even further, as they separate you from a larger segment of the population that does not belong to your barrier group. Then, of course, prejudices and hates arise from the perpetuation of these barrier groups, and these serve to fan the fires even further. The war is strengthened and you continue to struggle against the hostile environment, which you must continuously create for yourselves, as it does not exist any longer. This land has been tamed and this is the time to enjoy the fruits of your labor. Why are you not doing so? [21 December 1974]

Refer to the chapters “Loneliness” and “Instinct”.

Ralph: Is the synthesis simpler than the systems that man erects?

In its most evolved form, yes. In words suitable for communication with the members of this enclave, it becomes complex. Again, Creatures of Reason take the simplest activity and render it complex through symbols. The synthesis is not complex. The synthesis seeks integration, simplicity. Creatures of Reason seek to justify their existence through expressions of individuality, isolation, alienation. Creatures of Reason seek to justify their existence by assigning themselves a role, even a negative one, if that be the case, of subrogation, taking the responsibility from themselves, assigning that responsibility to a higher power, conveniently beyond the five physical senses and, therefore, unarguable, unprovable, unassailable, safe, comfortable, complex. [26 December 1974]

Refer to chapters “Creatures of Reason”, “Complexity versus Simplicity”, “Justification”, and “Responsibility”.

We have spoken to you earlier of fear. The fear of closeness in your culture is quite a phenomenon. Living communally is a frightening thing. It is, therefore, an experience through which you may learn to move through and beyond fear. Alienation is not synonymous with aloneness. Aloneness is essential for spiritual evolution — aloneness as experienced in the meditative state. You must ultimately stand alone. Alienation is not this spiritual aloneness, but merely a defense mechanism of the False Personality, which wishes to enjoy its illusion of uniqueness.... Group living, your most menacing new horizon, is an opportunity for embracing growth. You may, of course, make another choice. That choice leads to further apartheid, further alienation and further desire to compete — further desire, in other words, for war. [28 December 1974]

Refer to the chapters “Communal Living” and “Loneliness”.

[Soleal:] Until you open yourself to the joy of this verification, you cannot experience the “key”, as you have called it. You have asked for this key many times and it can only be given in love and joy. It cannot be given to an alienated Personality. There is no meeting point where the gift can be transferred. When the meaning of this perception of oneness comes, only then can the gift of higher expression be given. It will then become a gift to your self. It cannot come from the teacher [Michael], nor can it come from me. [11 January 1975]

Refer to chapters “Validation and Verification”, “Love”, “Joy”, and “Centers, Higher”.

Jackie asked about an experience she had about twenty months ago. It was an awful experience — she felt as if her mind had totally went away. It freaked her out. There was a tunnel and she was unconscious.

The experience of nothingness and dissemblance is a common one, for students still see themselves as alienated and alone. Even though you have a close interpersonal relationship at the present moment, at many levels, there is still much fear in you of being alone or symbolically cut off from the rest — in a tunnel so to speak, able to see, yet unable to touch. As long as you feel that alienation from those close to you, the use of these expanding techniques will occasionally produce these bad results. You have conflicts, yet, about those with you forging ahead and leaving you behind. Give them up and you will give up your tunnel vision at the same time. You have as much ability to make the choice of growth as they have — you need only to make it. [25 January 1975]

A question was asked how to go about acquiring property for communal growth.

[Soleal:] Just do it. Enough of you are able to look at this as the way out of the alienation and a new start toward true growth, so that failure is unlikely. That failure is unlikely anyway with such a preponderance of older souls. [01 February 1975]

Refer to the chapter “Communal Living”.

Liz: What are my blocks?

You know them without asking. As with many in this alienated society, you lack love of yourself. Love, acceptance, Agape — all are synonymous. Accept yourself and you may move to love for another. Until you do that, all that we say to you is theoretical. It is an illusion that Agape may be experienced before love for one may be experienced or indeed that Agape may precede your love of yourself. “Self” includes the Personality, as well as the Essence. Can you love that “self” unconditionally, without hope for change? Until you can, Agape is a theory. [05 February 1975]

Refer to chapters “Agape” and “Love” and “Essence and Personality”.

This group engaged in a lengthy discussion of communal living, discipline of small children, the rights of teenagers and the problem of domestic animals. We then asked the Teacher for a comment.

Many thoughts, of course.

The whole purpose of bringing you together communally was not to present you with insurmountable situations and more Friction than you can handle. The purpose instead was to bring you together in the Work. The most startling advantage of all would not be apparent until you were well into the venture and had some experience in dealing with a lack of alienation.

The subject of domestic animals [dogs and cats] is interesting, in that domesticating animals was one of the first symptoms of growing alienation in this culture many centuries ago — almost, in fact, at the dawn [ensoulment of hominins] of Creatures of Reason on this world. Once man gives up his need for alienation, he can then, and only then, look at the reasons for his need for substitutes; he uses domesticated animals in lieu of people. They are expendable, relatively cheap and give away no secrets. (If you are not wearing a cape, how can you conceal a dagger?) [12 February 1975]

Refer to the chapters “Communal Living”, “Friction”, “Work, Spiritual”, “Creatures of Reason”.

In less than a dozen days after this session, the original Michaelian group disbanded, at least in terms of the large group meetings, due partly to the alienating Friction of one self-righteous and obnoxious Gurdjieffian student.

Concluding Comments on Alienation

In one of the earliest transcriptions there was mention of communal living as a lifestyle that mitigates (or should mitigate, if done right) alienation, and in one of the latest transcriptions there was also mention of communal living. One does not realize how alienated one is until one experiences true intimacy with a kindred soul or a group of kindred souls.





ANGER

This chapter is the product of a search for the words “anger” and “angry” in the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group channeling sessions, and other words with a similar meaning. I have added some commentary, which consists of my analysis and synthesis of the quotations. Obviously, this word does not represent a significant component of the Michaelian teachings, but even so, the word appears often enough that it seems to me that students can benefit from seeing all of those instances documented and commented on in a chapter of this *Study Papers* book. **Furthermore, the word is related to a number of other components of the Michaelian teachings that are considered to be more significant; these will be noted in the commentary on the instances of the word and its contexts. Briefly and basically, the Michaels recommended to the original Michaelian group members that they**

So what is meant by anger? The online Merriam Webster dictionary definition is:

The word “anger” is not capitalized in this chapter or other chapters of this *Study Papers* book because it has no special meaning in the Michaelian teachings; it is not a Michaelian jargon word that needs a definition apart from its use in the common vernacular. One might therefore wonder why it is even included in this book. One answer is that it is just a Scholar–Cast Artisan thing to do: I study the Michaelian teachings documents and I write about them and I want to be thorough. Another answer is that anger issues are pervasive in human psychology and sociology, the subject came up in the original Michaelian group numerous times, some interesting things were said about it, and it might be helpful for Michaelian students to have the answers conveniently collected all in one place.

This chapter is one of many in this book that focuses on a psychological and psychotherapeutic component of the Michaelian teachings as found in original Michaelian group transcriptions, rather than on a spiritual component, as so many other chapters in this book do. The Michaelian version of psychology is not to be confused with the pop psychology of the self-improvement movement, those that do not have a spiritual core or perspective. Rather, the Michaelian psychotherapeutic path (aimed at improving psychological health) is a beneficial precursor to the spiritual path (aimed at improving soul health). To skip the former but attempt the latter is referred to as “spiritual bypassing” (>https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spiritual_bypass<), and it usually proves to be problematic.

Anger per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

The following extracts from original Michaelian group transcriptions are Q&A exchanges, where an original Michaelian group member asks a question (or makes a comment), and the Michaels provide an answer. This is [not] a subject that would benefit by division into subcategories, as some subjects do. These extracts are presented in the chronological order in which they were given, even though this is not a subject where there was a development or evolution of a specific revelation of a facet of the Michaelian teachings, as was often the case with the original Michaelian group. As is my custom, I often provide some explanatory comments following the question or answer. Underlined words in the Michaels’ answers are my emphasis, to draw attention to what it is that I comment on. Sometimes I embed words or phrases [in brackets] that I believe help to clarify the question or the answer.

The Baby Soul perceives itself and the world around it as “me” and “many other me-s.” The Baby Soul forms strong beliefs early in childhood, borrowed from those around it, and these are literally unshakable and incorruptible. The Baby Soul is normally agreeable, a pillar of the community — until an opposing viewpoint is expressed. Then, inwardly the Baby Soul is bewildered, baffled by the difference. Outwardly, it will express anger, hostility, negative emotional energy, belligerence. [undated, late August 1973]

Kathryn: Back to being modest: is there any other act I could put on?

Openness would be the best approach. You are quite open, but there are still some closed corridors. You are conscious of the futility of anger, but are not quite sure of how to handle what you interpret as anger, so you tend to avoid situations that might give rise to this. [08 September 1973]

Phyllis: We were talking about depression before. Freud explains that depression is aggression turned inward or that anger turned inward creates depression, doesn't he?

Alice: Like you are mad at yourself?

Phyllis: Like you are mad at anything and if you have no legitimate or acceptable ways of showing it, if I recall Freud correctly, then you turn it inward upon yourself as it were and that creates a depressed state. Experientially, does that seem correct to the people in this room? [02 October 1973]

Phyllis: We were talking about depression before. Freud explains that depression is aggression turned inward or that anger turned inward creates depression, doesn't he?

Alice: Like you are mad at yourself?

Phyllis: Like you are mad at anything and if you have no legitimate or acceptable ways of showing it, if I recall Freud correctly, then you turn it inward upon yourself as it were and that creates a depressed state. Experientially, does that seem correct to the people in this room?

Richard: Yes.

Sarah: Uh huh. (Apparently, others nodded.)

Phyllis: It does?

Dick: It's a question of internal flagellation and I think that it is (False) Personality beating on Essence.

Depression is normally the passive Personality's only channel through which it can express hostility. The anger can be self-directed, but does not have to be.

Alice: Do you mean that people who are aggressive don't get depressed?

Phyllis: Well, that would be the logical conclusion from all this, but I suspect that people who show aggressiveness in ways that manifest to other people, but who, in fact, also suffer this inability to direct their anger in its proper places and therefore turn it inward.

Richard: Some aggressiveness may be caused by inner prodding. You know, "Well say something, dammit!" You shove it onto someone else, yet you still retain a certain amount inside.

Concluding Comments on Anger

Talk about vectors, inertia, motions, energy of motion, brakes on a car and turning corners as analogous to the creation of anger.





ANIMALS AND PETS

This chapter is the product of a search for the word(s) “**template**”, “**__**” in the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group channeling sessions. This word does not represent a significant component of the Michaelian teachings. However, there are good reasons to discuss the subject in this *Study Papers* book: 1) the subject came up numerous times during the original Michaelian group; 2) students can presumably benefit from having the mentions conveniently collected all in one place; 3) some interesting things were said about the subject; 4) the subject is related to a number of other components of the Michaelian teachings that are considered to be significant; 5) “**Template**” issues are pervasive in human psychology and sociology and spirituality.

The word “**template**” is not capitalized in this chapter or other chapters of this *Study Papers* book because it has no special meaning in the Michaelian teachings; it is not a Michaelian jargon word that needs a definition apart from its use in the common vernacular.

[[expand this chapter to include all animals]]

Animals per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

Pets per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

The following extracts from original Michaelian group transcriptions are Q&A exchanges, where an original Michaelian group member asks a question (or makes a comment), and the Michaels provide an answer. This is [not] a subject that would benefit by division into subcategories, as some subjects do. These extracts are [not] presented in the chronological order in which they were given, even though this is not a subject where there was a development or evolution of a specific revelation of a facet of the Michaelian teachings, as was often the case with the original Michaelian group. As is my custom, I often provide some explanatory comments following the question or answer. Underlined words in the Michaels’ answers are my emphasis, to draw attention to what it is that I comment on. Sometimes I embed words or phrases [in brackets] that I believe help to clarify the question or the answer.

Baby Souls do not like longhaired cats as a general rule.

Young Souls often own status pets, such as ocelots and Lhasa Apsos.

The pets belonging to Mature Souls will most often reflect their owner’s personalities. Many winners of obedience trials belong to Mature Souls.

Most shaggy dogs belong to Old Souls. Old Souls begin to relate to wild animals and often have an affinity for all living creatures. [late August 1973]

We discussed wild animals and wondered if they had some feelings besides instinct.

Wild animals have no personality at all. Some domestic animals, through training, do develop the rudiments of what might be called personality. All acts of the animal kingdom except for [hu]man are the result of the hive soul or group Essence.

Gene: If two thousand years ago I had a pet cat, could that etheric part of it be in my current lifetime and recognize me?

That happens often. [03 April 1974]

Phyllis: What is the Soul Level of my rabbit?

The animal kingdom picks up on the vibrations around it. The domesticated animals have a tendency to imitate the one who renders the major part of nurturing. The hive soul is truly ancient and was here [on Earth] long before individual souls were Cast from the Tao. [03 April 1974]

The subject of domestic animals [dogs and cats] is interesting, in that domesticating animals was one of the first symptoms of growing alienation in this culture many centuries ago — almost, in fact, at the dawn of Creatures of Reason [ensoulment of hominins] on this world. Once man gives up his need for alienation, he can then, and only then, look at the reasons for his need for substitutes; he uses domesticated animals in lieu of people. They are expendable, relatively cheap, and give away no secrets. (If you are not wearing a cape, how can you conceal a dagger?) [12 February 1975]

Concluding Comments on Pets





② ASCETICISM AND AUSTERITY

This chapter is the product of a search for the words asceticism and austerity in the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group channeling sessions. This word does not represent a significant component of the Michaelian teachings. However, there are good reasons to discuss the subject in this *Study Papers* book: 1) the subject came up numerous times during the original Michaelian group; 2) some interesting things were said about the subject; 3) the subject is related to a number of other components of the Michaelian teachings that are considered to be significant; 4) students can presumably benefit from having the mentions conveniently collected and commented all in one place; 5) The phenomena of asceticism and austerity are common in spiritual movements, so it behooves us to have a working knowledge of them.

The words asceticism and austerity are not capitalized in this chapter or other chapters of this *Study Papers* book because it has no special meaning in the Michaelian teachings; it is not a Michaelian jargon word that needs a definition apart from its use in the common vernacular.

The founding members of the original Michaelian group were focused on spiritual growth. One of the ways of facilitating that lifestyle that is suggested in some spiritual teachings is to minimize material possessions, and otherwise minimize focus on physical things. This ideology has a name: asceticism. The question is, how far, if anywhere, should one take this practice for best results on one's spiritual path? Various religious traditions have their answers, and the Michaels have theirs. Let's take a look at both resources in turn.

Asceticism per Wikipedia

My favorite internet resource has an extensive article on the subject. Underlined words are my emphasis on synonyms:

Asceticism (from the Greek: ἄσκησις, romanized: *áskesis*, lit. 'exercise', 'training') is a lifestyle characterized by abstinence from sensual pleasures, often for the purpose of pursuing spiritual goals. Ascetics may withdraw from the world for their practices or continue to be part of their society, but typically adopt a frugal lifestyle, characterized by the renunciation of material possessions and physical pleasures, and also spend time fasting while concentrating on the practice of religion or reflection upon spiritual matters. Various individuals have also attempted an ascetic lifestyle to free themselves from addictions, some of them particular to modern life, such as alcohol, tobacco, drugs, entertainment, sex, food, etc.

Asceticism has been historically observed in many religious traditions, including Buddhism, Jainism, Hinduism, Islam, Christianity, Judaism, and Pythagoreanism, and contemporary practices continue among some religious followers.

The practitioners of this philosophy abandon sensual pleasures and lead an abstinent lifestyle, in the pursuit of redemption, salvation, or spirituality. Many ascetics believe the action of purifying the body helps to purify the soul, and thus obtain a greater connection with the Divine or find inner peace. This may take the form of rituals, the renunciation of pleasure, or self-mortification. However, ascetics maintain that self-imposed constraints bring them greater freedom in various areas of their lives, such as increased clarity of thought and the ability to resist potentially destructive temptations. Asceticism is seen in the ancient theologies as a journey towards spiritual transformation, where the simple is sufficient, the bliss is within, the frugal is plenty. Inversely, several ancient religious traditions, such as Zoroastrianism, Ancient Egyptian religion, and the Dionysian Mysteries, as well as more modern Left Hand traditions, openly reject ascetic practices and either focus on various types of hedonism or on the importance of family life, both rejecting celibacy.

Dom Cuthbert Butler classified asceticism into natural and unnatural forms:

- "Natural asceticism" involves a lifestyle which reduces material aspects of life to the utmost simplicity and to a minimum. This may include minimal, simple clothing, sleeping on a floor or in caves, and

eating a simple, minimal amount of food. Natural asceticism, state Wimbush and Valantasis, does not include maiming the body or harsher austerities that make the body suffer.

- “Unnatural asceticism”, in contrast, covers practices that go further, and involves body mortification, punishing one’s own flesh, and habitual self-infliction of pain, such as by sleeping on a bed of nails.

Self-discipline and abstinence in some form and degree are parts of religious practice within many religious and spiritual traditions. Ascetic lifestyle is associated particularly with monks, nuns, fakirs in Abrahamic religions, and bhikkhus, munis, sannyasis, Vairagis, Goswamis, yogis in Indian religions.

The Wikipedia article follows the above introduction with an extensive discussion of specific types of asceticism in various religious and spiritual traditions. Among those, I thought the following was the most interesting and relevant to this chapter:

According to Shoghi Effendi, in Bahá’í Faith, the maintenance of a high standard of moral conduct is not to be associated or confused with any form of asceticism, or of excessive and bigoted puritanism. The standard inculcated by Bahá’u’lláh seeks, under no circumstances, to deny anyone the legitimate right and privilege to derive the fullest advantage and benefit from the manifold joys, beauties, and pleasures with which the world has been so plentifully enriched by an All-Loving Creator. [<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Asceticism> — retrieved 05 November 2021]

To me, this Bahá’í doctrine seems to be consonant with the Michaelian teachings as I understand it; see below.

Asceticism per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

The following extracts from original Michaelian group transcriptions are Q&A exchanges, where an original Michaelian group member asks a question (or makes a comment), and the Michaels provide an answer. These extracts are presented in the chronological order in which they were given. As is my custom, I usually provide some explanatory comments following the question or answer. Underlined words are my emphasis, to draw attention to what it is that I comment on. Sometimes I embed words or phrases [in brackets] that I believe help to clarify the question or the answer. Numerous study papers related to this chapter are to be found among my comments.

So, with regard to asceticism, what do the Michaels recommend in their teaching? They recommend moderation:

We hold up Soleal as an example of how this can be done by someone living very much in the world. He is not an ascetic by any stretch of the imagination; he simply has learned to dissociate himself from the mundane and concentrate on the arcane. [06 October 1973]

Know or recall that Soleal was a humanoid Adept living on another planet, who was channeled in the original Michaelian group before (and after) the Michaels became the original Michaelian group’s primary source. Even though he was the political ruler of that planet, he was also the spiritual leader of the planet. Apparently, he was able to balance his physical life and his metaphysical life — the “mundane” and the “arcane” — and be competent in both. That is an Adept indeed.

Perhaps you have heard the aphorism that you should own your possessions, not be owned by them. This means that you should be the master of your domain; your empire should be no more than you can manage competently and easily, lest it be an encumbrance to that which satisfies and fulfills Essence. The following quotation affirms that aphorism. Very early in their contact with the Michaels, the original Michaelian group members knew they had something special, and that they would become teachers of the Michaelian teachings. How were they to do that while encumbered with making a living?

You have all made strides toward eliminating superfluous material possessions. Don’t fall into the trap of begrudging younger souls their possessions. This is merely transference of Identification and equally pervasive. [The] teaching is a full time obligation. If you wish to make this commitment, you must resign yourselves to the fact that someone must support the teaching. In order to stay alive, you must eat. We see no virtue in crippling asceticism [at the impoverished end of the wealth–poverty spectrum]. The danger lies in immoderation [at either end of the wealth–poverty spectrum]. [20 October 1973]

(Refer to the chapters, “Identification”, “Teaching”, and “Traps”, for more information about those subjects.)

The Wikipedia article mentioned that there are some spiritual aspirants who teach that the opposite of asceticism, namely hedonism, is the way to go, but the Michaels recommend against either extreme. Elsewhere

in the original Michaelian group transcriptions, it is said that during the multiple reincarnations that are part of a Grand Cycle in earth life, souls must experience “all of life”. Sometimes that includes extreme experiences, such as wealth and poverty, as part of completing Monads, but here we find that, for the purposes of an intentional conscious spiritual path, moderation is preferred. The point is that there is an optimal balance point that facilitates spiritual growth most effectively and efficiently. If one is too ascetic, then that is a distraction from the spiritual path, and if one is not ascetic enough, then that is also a distraction from the spiritual path. I suggest that it is up to each individual to determine where that optimal point of spiritual seeking is for themselves, apart from the teachings of any particular religious or spiritual tradition on the asceticism–hedonism spectrum.

One example of asceticism being taken too far is this:

Gene: Question about apparitions (from a book Eugene is reading by Rex Stanford).

These apparitions are very often no more than the hallucinations of a hysterical Personality, in the case of religious ascetics. In some cases, there have been appearances of Astral beings who simply assume the character desired by the medium. [05 June 1974]

Asceticism itself is an *ideology* that provides a very unbalanced view of the world, but the extreme negative product of some ascetic *practices* is when they lead to “hysterical hallucinations” due to such things as sensory deprivation and/or physiological depletion and/or psychological radicalism.

There are less extreme ascetic practices that do have potential benefits at times:

Mention was made of rituals and practices designed to bring about enlightenment.

We simply speak of various asceticisms that are unnecessary. Rituals do help the uninitiated, but only in the preparatory stages. These serve to quiet the mind. [12 December 1976]

(Refer to the chapters, “Enlightenment” and “Ritual”, for more information about those subjects.)

Ascetic practices are counterproductive if they torture the body and mind rather than quiet the body and mind. If the ascetic practices quiet the body and mind, then they are okay with the Michaels.

Austerity per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

One of the synonyms for asceticism is austerity, so I searched for that word in the original Michaelian group transcriptions and found the following:

How about the other side as in India with so much spirituality?

It is more apparent than real. This method that is total austerity seldom qualifies the senses enough to complete any of the Monads, and the soul must reincarnate again in order to experience what it missed while it was sitting in its hair cloth. [24 February 1974]

In other words, the denial of physicality via asceticism and austerity does not automatically enhance one’s spirituality as the Michaels teach it. Also, add this statement to the statements found elsewhere that the soul must experience “all of life” in order to graduate from reincarnation, and “all of life” includes physicality.

Barbara: I would like to ask about the Essene Gospel of Peace. Manuscripts contemporary with Jesus are said to have strict prescriptions on diet and bathing, including a long tube. I would like some comment on this, if there is anything there that might help us along the way.

The Essene prescriptions for healthy living were among the pioneers of food fads. They were good enough for the time when they were given. We would not recommend the dietary restrictions nor the rather brutal methods of cleansing the body, which normally cleanses itself satisfactorily, provided that it was healthy. The man Jesus was not a member of the sect. The man John [the Baptist] was. The man Jesus came in contact with them in the late teens and early twenties, and thought them to be relatively austere, and not for most people. Some of their doctrines he accepted as good. This is valid. Some would still be Good Work for serious students. Exposure to periodic heavy manual labor and an extremely strong feeling of community was the hallmark of the Essene settlements. All of them took their turn in the fields and in the house, freeing them for serious study. They ate only enough to keep the body healthy, never to the point of satiation. They wore little constricting clothing. They were personally clean, although they carried this into a ritual form; the idea was good. They also felt that the good was its own reward, drawing from the Hellenes [Greeks]. [03 March 1974]

For the most part, in the times and circumstances in which they found themselves, the Essenes had a lifestyle that was not counterproductive to their spiritual aspirations.

The final quotation in this chapter does not contain either the word asceticism or the word austerity, but it does discuss the subject, and it comes to the same conclusion: find the balance between materialism and spiritualism that optimizes your search for enlightenment:

Surrender is perhaps the most difficult task before you, and the stakes are high if you wish to achieve what you set out to do. Therefore, many are likely to act out an experience that is not real. All of you here present have more difficulty with the concept of vulnerability and surrender than any other aspect of spiritual training. All of you are escaping the fear of poverty and degradation that the early decades of your lives instilled in you. Young ones, just ten years your junior, do not have this fear. It is not necessary to be poor in order to be spiritually enriched. It is only necessary to give up the effort of the unrealistic goals set for you by the culture and go on from there. More true spiritual thought and action comes from relatively secure environments than from impoverished backgrounds. Squalor does not ordinarily breed enlightenment; rather, it breeds defeat, frustration and, ultimately, a giving up of goals. It's okay to be comfortable as long as the goals are realistic and do not compromise the values of the teaching — then the amount of luxury accrued is relatively trivial. In other words, if the wealth comes easily and at no expense to the spiritual life, then the wealth is immaterial. It is when the desire for the wealth overrides all spiritual considerations that trouble occurs, and then irreconcilable conflicts [between ego and Essence] arise, and there is an inability to proceed any further with any teaching. There is a point where a choice must be made and a true assessment of your material needs versus wants must occur if you are to go on. If you decide at that point that continued acquisition beyond that which is necessary is vital to your survival, then you must pursue this or dissatisfaction will follow you and plague you the rest of this life. You will give up spiritual teachings at this point — and that is not necessarily a bad choice — just a choice. [10 April 1977]

In this answer I see yet another injunction from the Michaels to be wary of undue influence from your environment during youth — the culture, the society, and the historical circumstances — if one is serious about one's spiritual aspirations. The founding members grew up during the Great Depression and World War II. Those events created an entire generation that had a distorted view of the proper balance between poverty-avoidance and prosperity-seeking.

Concluding Comments on Asceticism

It always helps to summarize my thoughts on a subject by putting them in a succinct bulleted list.

- People who have a Chief Feature of Self-destruction (which I prefer to rename Renunciation), might be attracted to an ascetic or austere lifestyle as part of their spiritual aspirations. This Chief Feature is the opposite of the Chief Feature of Greed; where people are prone to self-indulgence. To extinguish these opposite Chief Features in oneself results in a lifestyle of moderation in all things.
- If one chooses to focus away from the material world and onto the spiritual world, one must still take care of one's material world, enough so that it does not distract or detract from one's spiritual life.
- One of the potential pitfalls of asceticism, not mentioned above, is that for some people, when the asceticism is extreme enough to become conspicuous, one can be self-righteous about it.
- On the opposite end of the poverty-prosperity spectrum, some people regard their conspicuous consumption as an indication that they are righteous, and therefore blessed by God. This even has a name: spiritual materialism. Religious Young Souls might endorse this notion, but the Michaels do not.
- One of the premises of some ascetics is that the body is evil and should be eschewed as much as possible, whereas the spirit is good and should be pursued as much as possible. Certainly, the wrong ideology about asceticism is when it punishes the body and mind for being "evil", which is not the case, according to the Michaelian teachings. This is a type of escapism, and it also has a name: spiritual bypassing. The way to enlightenment is *through* respect for incarnation in the body, not escape from the body. And not in the other extreme either, hedonism, but in moderation, according to the Michaelian teachings.
- If I were to characterize asceticism in terms of the Overleaf System, I would say that a Baby Soul Spiritualist Warrior in Rejection and Self-destruction would be the most likely personality type to find this lifestyle appealing, and take it to extremes.

- Fasting is a part of some ascetic traditions, and it is also on the Michaels' recommended to-do list for spiritual aspirants, so I would say that fasting is one occasional asceticism that the Michaels find reasonable, not immoderate. (Refer to the chapter "Fasting".)
- Many monastic traditions embrace asceticism. As we see in the chapter "Communal Living" the Michaels suggested that communal living was a viable and valid lifestyle as part of the spiritual aspirations of some, but I do not find asceticism within the recommendation.
- Please excuse me for getting a bit preachy here, but at this time in the history of humanity on this planet, when its resources are being plundered and exploited by the conspicuous consumerism of many wealthy people, maybe a move toward moderation is in order, or else even more of humanity will end up in ascetic poverty, whether it chooses it or not.





③ ASTROLOGY

This chapter is the product of a search for the word astrology in the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group channeling sessions. This word does not represent a significant component of the Michaelian teachings. However, there are good reasons to discuss the subject in this *Study Papers* book: 1) the subject came up numerous times during the original Michaelian group; 2) some interesting things were said about the subject; 3) the subject is related to a number of other components of the Michaelian teachings that are considered to be significant; 4) students can presumably benefit from having the mentions conveniently collected and commented all in one place.

The subject of astrology is interesting to me because, during the 1980s, I more than dabbled in it: I read books, I attended club meetings, I hung out with astrologers, I ran computer-generated charts on people, I talked to people about their charts. I did this even though astrology seemed implausible to me, partly because I already knew a lot about astronomy and Greek and Roman mythology. It was always obvious to me that the ancient assignment of meaning to planetary deities was arbitrary because different cultures made different assignments, assigning stars to constellations with particular meanings was arbitrary because different cultures made different assignments, and assigning meaning to aspects of planets was arbitrary because different cultures made different assignments. The package and the practice of astrology makes sense to the way some people's brains work, but does it make sense to the cosmos itself to work that way? And even if the cosmos actually coordinated planets with people, which astrology of which culture does one use?

All of these questions leaped into my scientist-engineer mind during the 1980s, and it was still interesting to me to research what the Michaels had to say about astrology when the original Michaelian group transcriptions surfaced in the mid-1990s. That research is documented in this chapter in this *Study Papers* book.

Astrology per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

The following extracts from original Michaelian group transcriptions are Q&A exchanges, where an original Michaelian group member asks a question (or makes a comment), and the Michaels provide an answer. These extracts are presented in the chronological order in which they were given. As is my custom, I usually provide some explanatory comments following the question or answer. Underlined words are my emphasis, to draw attention to what it is that I comment on. Sometimes I embed words or phrases [in brackets] that I believe help to clarify the question or the answer. Numerous study papers related to this chapter are to be found among my comments.

It so happens that Sarah, the primary channel of the original Michaelian group, had an astronomy degree, and Richard, her civil engineer husband, was an amateur astrologer who taught classes. We have been told by their daughter Dorothy that Sarah met Richard at an astrology meeting. Perhaps that is why a question about astrology came up so early in their channeling sessions:

[Richard?:] *Is astrology a valid science?*

[Soleal:] It is not a science at all. It purports only that which is fundamentally true, and that is that all levels exert some influence on other levels. [Mid-1973]

As you will see in the remainder of this chapter, I have no issues with that statement.

It is a huge leap of inference to go from the general principle that there is influence from level to level in the cosmos, to the specific claims of astrology, that planets affect people. Even if the former is true — and it is generally recognized as true — it does not necessitate the truth of the latter. So, how is one to bridge the gap? Our best bet is to use the scientific method to examine such claims. An internet search on the phrase “debunking astrology” reveals that a scientific examination of astrology has been unable to validate the specific claims of astrologers (e.g.: >https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Astrology_and_science<). Therefore, even if astrology *per se* expresses a valid principle, namely that the cosmos is interconnected, actual astrology fails the

scientific test. Based on the evidence, we can say with some confidence that, whatever the valid connection between planets and people may be, if any, astrology has not (yet?) found it. This is what makes astrology the so-called “queen of pseudo-sciences”.

Members of the original Michaelian group did not have access to the internet to confirm what Soleal said, as we do, so the question of the validity of astrology came up on other occasions; one such was this:

Dick: Do the planets have an influence on us?

[Tomas:] Haven't you already felt the influence of the Moon? Try an experiment and chart your emotions and moving instincts. This should prove it to you. It is ancient knowledge and is true. [05 July 1973]

Picky comment: in astrology, the Moon is considered a “planet”; in astronomy it is not.

As for ancient and modern claims that the moon affects emotions and actions, scientific researchers have “charted” many people, and it finds these claims to be mostly dubious, according to this website article: ><https://www.healthline.com/health/full-moon-effects><. So, who or what is one to believe? My bias is to prefer the scientific evidence rather than channeling, but this is an instance where I suggest that the information should be considered to be in the limbo zone between confirmed and disconfirmed.

The question about planetary influence came up again, a few days later:

Dick: In that [Robert Burton] teaching, there were teachings of certain Body Types and influences of planets. Is this true?

[Tomas:] You are under the influence of all planets, as they are in you. The planets or planet that controls you the most strongly, therefore, is the most strong in you, was your [Body] Type. I assume I have that right. It is true if that is the way it was stated [by Burton]. The [Body] Types are a generalization of the common things, habits, personality traits in most people, and can resemble astrology. It can be well used if not in imagination. [10 July 1973]

This statement seems to me to be saying that there is a truth to planet-influence Body Types *in principle*, but one wonders if its proponents have discerned the actual correspondence, or if the specific claims are imaginary. Refer to the chapter “Body Types” in this *Study Papers* book, and to the two chapters on Body Types in my book *A History of the Overleaf Chart*. There you will see my examination of the subject and its claims, and how it is that I find some of the specific claims to be dubious, even though I allow that knowing Body Types can be “well used”.

Tomas's response was not the end of the matter; the subject came up repeatedly thereafter:

Richard: Asked question about the validity of astrology as we know it. We also wondered about the Gurdjieffian system.

[Michael:] Not [valid] as you know it, although you have good beginnings. Gurdjieff did see this. Ouspensky rejected astrology. If you construct charts for entire families, you will find striking similarities. [22 September 1973]

“Not as you know it” is a pretty clear statement, except one might ask what it is that “as you know it” refers to. Does it only mean the Western (Greek-Roman-Babylonian) astrological tradition that Richard knew, or does it include the various other brands of astrology from other traditions (e.g. Chinese, Indian) that other cultures “knew” but that Richard may not have been familiar with? Rather than this, further on we see that this repudiation of astrology most likely refers to “natal” astrology: a horoscope based on time and place of birth.

Further on in this same session, more was said:

Richard: Michel Gauquelin said a male child is conceived at the same time that the male parent was conceived; the female, at the time of the female parent. Some studies proved blood plasma changes with ionization in the atmosphere, and there is a correlation. The planet on the horizon is the important one genetically (the “Ascendant”). The soul could influence its structure.

Michel Gauquelin (November 13, 1928 – May 20, 1991) was a French psychologist and statistician who conducted research in an attempt to develop a scientific basis for astrology. His results contradicted standard astrology, and then allegedly discovered other statistically-significant correlations, which were, of course, contested; refer to the Wikipedia article referenced above.

Souls enter the Physical Plane at different times. That [assertion in your question] is not valid in that sense. The body, being physical, or organic if you will, is influenced by the celestial bodies [not by the soul].

Souls allegedly do not enter the body at conception, or exactly at birth either, according to the Michaels and Michael Newton's between-life regressions. Being spiritual, whenever a soul enters the body, it does not influence the physical Body Type. I have no problem with that statement.

Comment: Then Body Typing is not genetically determined?

Yes, they are [genetically determined]. Each strand of deoxyribonucleic acid [DNA] is totipotential. This allows for the [planetary] influence [at conception].

In the discussion of Body Types in this *Study Papers* book and in *A History of the Overleaf Chart*, there is a careful examination of this assertion of planetary influence by physical means, and I find it extremely dubious, and even if it is true, it cannot be validated by scientific means.

At what point does this [planetary] influence take place, when the sperm meets with the ovum or at the time of the first breath?

This is why we say that astrology, as you know it [based on time of birth], is largely invalid. However, ironically we might add, it does work backwards, unless you are dealing with a premature child.

One can know the time of birth, but one cannot know the time of ensoulment. One can estimate the time of conception by counting backward from the time of a full-term birth, but the time could still be hours if not days off, and that inaccuracy is allegedly significant for astrological influences. I do not see how this assertion by the Michaels, even if true, helps the case for astrology, since the actual time, within hours and days of conception that is relevant to astrology, is unknowable.

Then astrology would be valid if we knew the moment of conception?

Yes. The time of birth is also important. [22 September 1973]

So far as we know from available transcriptions, it was not subsequently explained how the time of birth was important. Even if we accept that this is valid channeling, because the time of conception is unknowable, astrology is useless FAPP (for all practical purposes), and can therefore be safely ignored.

This was not the end of the matter:

Gene: Could you comment on the virtue of astrology and the validity to this discussion?

The position of all of the planets and their position in relation to the Sun and to each other must be taken into consideration. For instance, Venus without the influence of Mars exerts much more influence than when Mars is in apposition on the far side of Earth.

Richard: [question lost].

Those who do [take planetary aspects into account?], stand a better chance of being accurate. [27 September 1973]

But if time of conception is unknowable, how can there be any validation of any of this? Ascendant, Mid-heaven, Nodes, Sun, Moon, and Mercury all move fast enough in the sky that if time of conception is off by a day or two, astrologers says that makes a difference.

The subject came up again a few months later:

Joan: It was said that astrology would be valid if we knew the time of our conception. Why?

Because of the conjunction of the heavenly bodies, and also the sunspot activity at the time of birth. (At Joan's conception,) the constellation, Leo, was ascending; the Moon was in Pisces. [27 February 1974]

Here again, in order to have an accurate cause of one's Body Type, not only planetary locations, but we would allegedly have to know about sunspots. Sunspots eject ions toward earth, which do affect the planet earth for sure, but their effect on DNA is questionable.

The following is the last time that the subject of astrology appeared in the original Michaelian group transcriptions:

Question regarding astrology.

The relationship [of astrology] primarily pertains to the Body Types and the Centering. [27 March 1974]

Per documentation in my book *A History of the Overleaf Chart*, the Michaels regarded Center/Body Type as one of the seven Overleaf categories; above is one of the supporting passages for that notion; there are others; these are not two separate Overleaf categories.

So finally, if there is any validity to astrology, according to the Michaels, it would be that the positions of the planets and other astronomical phenomena (at the time of conception and at the time of birth) has an influence on the Body Type/Centering Overleaf that one is born with — and that is about all there is to it. Thus, according to the Michaels, the “natal” chart is not a predictor of the personality of individuals or of organizations, “horary” astrology (><https://www.astrology.com/article/what-is-horary-astrology/><) is not a legitimate form of divination for the question of the moment, and “progressed” charts are not a legitimate way to predict the future of individuals or of an organization or of the planet.

Concluding Comments on Astrology

Even though the mentions of astrology in the original Michaelian group transcriptions are skimpy and of little consequence to the Michaelian teachings as a whole, I thought it useful to discuss the subject in a chapter of this *Study Papers* book.

About this subject I make the following points:

- The Michaels allege that there is a connection between planetary positions and the Centering/Body Type a person is conceived with. However, the exact time (minute, hour, day) of conception is not known or reasonably knowable, so this allegation cannot be validated.
- In spite of how much I appreciate what the Michaels have to say in general, it stretches my credulity way past the breaking point to believe that every human everywhere on the planet conceived at the same moment has the same Centering/Body Type.
- The preceding point does not dismiss the subject of Centering/Body Type. In my opinion, it is okay if Michaelian students discern Centering/Body Type for themselves and for other people, if it helps with the purpose for which the Michaels revealed the Overleaf System, namely to promote tolerance and understanding, eventuating in Agape.
- What I have issues with is the unvalidatable assertions that planetary positions and sunspots and so on have anything to do with Centering/Body Type; even if it is true, it is useless information. One can benefit from understanding Body Typology while ignoring and even forgetting the alleged astronomical coupling.
- The two chapters on Body Type in my book *A History of the Overleaf Chart* provide much more detail about the various issues regarding Body Types than are found in this chapter.
- The Michaels said that astrology is not valid “as we know it”. With the advent of scientific measures of personality, and with the advent of computers to crunch the data about personalities, and with the recognition of cognitive biases (“I want to believe...”), the illegitimacy of astrology is now known with reasonable certainty; with confidence we can agree with the Michaels on this point, and dispense with this ancient pseudoscience.
- Astrology is something like a ‘sacred cow’ in metaphysical circles; it is a ‘doctrine’ in the New Age ‘church’ that is not questioned. To adhere to this doctrine is every bit as unscientific as fundamentalist dogmatic religions, who take certain texts as “holy scriptures”, and who take certain beliefs on “faith”.
- Unlike myself, there are some people who find astrology to be plausible, and they study it and they use it and they find that it “works”. Who can argue with that? Cognitive scientists argue with that. Cognitive errors have been studied and cataloged, and the particular error at work here is called “confirmation bias”: you believe something without evidence because it seems plausible, and then you find evidence that supports your belief; see: >https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Confirmation_bias<. More is said about this and other cognitive errors in the chapter “Validation and Verification”.
- So, my original bias was that astrology was not legitimate, and I confirmed that to my satisfaction during the 1980s. Yes, it seemed to “work” about 2/3rds of the time, but I saw how ambiguous the system was, such that it was possible to read into, or read out of, a chart whatever one saw in a personality, and *vice versa*. Unbiased and thorough scientific research has improved in the decades since then, and the science has settled on the conclusion that the specific claims of birthday astrology are bogus. This confirms what the Michaels said, that astrology “as we know it” is not valid.
- However, another specific claim that the Michaels made — the one aspect of astrology that the Michaels endorsed, about planets affecting Body Type at conception — has not, and reasonably cannot, be validated or invalidated, because the moment of conception is not discernible.
- Claims and assertions can initially be dumped into three available bins: confirmed, disconfirmed, and limbo. In the validation project recommended by the Michaels, the goal is to move claims out of limbo and into either the confirmed bin or the disconfirmed bin. Astrology “as we know it” apparently belongs in the disconfirmed bin, and regarding the Center/Body Type claim, astrology apparently belongs in the limbo bin because it can neither be confirmed nor disconfirmed.

In my opinion, the lesson to be learned from the examination of astrology via scientific methods is that one should not be credulous about metaphysical claims, even if those claims originated thousands of years ago,

and even if they have gained a considerable purchase among many esotericists over that time span. To be credulous — about astrology or anything else — is to fall prey to cognitive biases, and also to the Negative Pole of the Idealist Attitude, –Abstraction or –Naivety, or to the Negative Pole of the Spiritualist Attitude, –Faith or –Superstition, or the Negative Pole of the Realist Attitude, –Supposition or –Guesswork. The claims of astrology and astrologers are subject to the same injunction by the Michaels to validate all such claims, or else real psychological and spiritual progress will not be made; refer to the chapter “Validation and Verification”.

However, in my view, even though astrology is apparently without validity, it is not completely without value. It can safely be regarded and used as a game or as a toy, and it is okay to play with it as such, and one will learn from the intellectual exercise in symbol manipulation. It embodies phenomena that are real — such as real personality traits and things that actually happen in the real world — but astrology as a proposed model of the universe does not reflect the way the universe actually works. Therefore, one should not take it seriously, as if it were valid. I toyed with astrology in the 1980s, and I learned from playing the game. The other benefit of examining astrology for me has been that it informed and enhanced my process of validation, and this knowledge and this skill can be, and has been, used in other realms of my life.





④ ATLANTIS

Certainly every reader of this book will be at least vaguely familiar with the story that there was allegedly a continent somewhere in the Atlantic Ocean that had a highly advanced human civilization, and that was destroyed by a cataclysm thousands of years ago. One may read about that in many places on the internet; the information is conveniently summarized in a Wikipedia article:

Atlantis (Ancient Greek: Ἀτλαντὶς νῆσος, *Atlantis nesos*, “island of Atlas”) is a fictional island mentioned in an allegory on the hubris of nations in Plato’s works *Timaeus* and *Critias*, wherein it represents the antagonist naval power that besieges “Ancient Athens”, the pseudo-historic embodiment of Plato’s ideal state in *The Republic*. In the story, Athens repels the Atlantean attack unlike any other nation of the known world, supposedly bearing witness to the superiority of Plato’s concept of a state. The story concludes with Atlantis falling out of favor with the deities and submerging into the Atlantic Ocean.

Despite its minor importance in Plato’s work, the Atlantis story has had a considerable impact on literature. The allegorical aspect of Atlantis was taken up in utopian works of several Renaissance writers, such as Francis Bacon’s *New Atlantis* and Thomas More’s *Utopia*. On the other hand, nineteenth-century amateur scholars misinterpreted Plato’s narrative as historical tradition, most famously Ignatius L. Donnelly in his *Atlantis: The Antediluvian World*. Plato’s vague indications of the time of the events (more than 9,000 years before his time) and the alleged location of Atlantis (“beyond the Pillars of Hercules”) gave rise to much pseudoscientific speculation. As a consequence, Atlantis has become a byword for any and all supposed advanced prehistoric lost civilizations and continues to inspire contemporary fiction, from comic books to films.

While present-day philologists and classicists agree on the story’s fictional character, there is still debate on what served as its inspiration. Plato is known to have freely borrowed some of his allegories and metaphors from older traditions, as he did, for instance, with the story of Gyges. This led a number of scholars to investigate possible inspiration of Atlantis from Egyptian records of the Thera [volcanic] eruption, the Sea Peoples invasion, or the Trojan War. Others have rejected this chain of tradition as implausible and insist that Plato created an entirely fictional account, drawing loose inspiration from contemporary events such as the failed Athenian invasion of Sicily in 415–413 BC or the destruction of Helike in 373 BC.

[><https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Atlantis>< — retrieved 20 June 2022]

The lengthy Wikipedia article continues with an examination of Plato’s comments on Atlantis, then it provides ancient and modern interpretations of what Plato meant, then it notes that Theosophists and Edgar Cayce channeled information about Atlantis, then it provides an overview of the proposed hypotheses about the location of Atlantis. If you read the article you will be provided with lessons in scholarly and academic presentations, and lessons in weighing evidence and argument typically applied to disputable matters.

My second favorite channeled material is from the Entity named Ra; they refer to their teaching as The Law of One. This information is available for free on the internet. You may read what they have to say about Atlantis at ><https://www.lawofone.info/results.php?q=atlantis><. Some of Ra’s information confirms and some of it contradicts what the Michaels have to say. There is also disagreement in the information provided by other channeled sources. For instance, one may read about what Theosophical channels had to say about Atlantis at ><https://theosophy.wiki/en/Atlantis><. For instance, one may read about some of what Edgar Cayce said about Atlantis at this website: ><https://www.edgarcayce.org/the-readings/ancient-mysteries/atlantis/>< and at this website: ><https://mysteriumacademy.com/atlantis-edgar-cayce/><. Therefore, my suggestion is that we should not be naive and credulous about this subject, because it cannot be Validated, either by any objective scientific experimental methods or by any subjective psychological experiential means. Rather, my focus in this chapter is to look for metaphorical, ethical, philosophical, and spiritual lessons that can be extracted from the story regardless of its literal veracity. Plato invented or passed on the story with a similar intent; we should do likewise.

To have a chapter on this subject might seem strange, since it would seem to have little connection to the gist of the Michaelian teachings, but the subject appeared in the original Michaelian group transcriptions on several occasions, the Michaels offered their perspective on the subject, and I have discerned some interesting points that I believe make the subject worth examining in this *Study Papers* book.

Atlantis in the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

The following extracts from original Michaelian group transcriptions are Q&A exchanges, where an original Michaelian group member asks a question (or makes a comment), and the Michaels provide an answer. These extracts are not presented in the chronological order in which they were given. As is my custom, I usually provide some explanatory comments following the question or answer. Underlined words are my emphasis, to draw attention to what it is that I comment on. Sometimes I embed words or phrases [in brackets] that I believe help to clarify the question or the answer. Numerous study papers related to this chapter are to be found among my comments.

The subject was broached by an original Michaelian group member, who happened to be an Old soul Scholar, and it came up repeatedly thereafter during the two years that the original Michaelian group convened.

Edgar: I would like to know what happened to the Mayans, and if there was an Atlantis what happened to the civilization?

Like all other great civilizations, the Mayans became complacent in their superiority and allowed themselves to be conquered by [Spanish conquistador] barbarians who did not appreciate their philosophy or their astronomy, but did like their gold. Yes, Edgar, there was an Atlantis. Natural disasters destroyed both the Atlantic and Pacific [Lemurian?] civilizations, fifty and thirty thousand years ago, respectively.

Theosophy and Cayce and Ra, according to internet websites linked above, said that Atlantis lasted until about eleven or twelve thousand years ago. The alleged Lemurian (Mu) civilization is mentioned in Theosophical sources, and by Cayce.

Edgar: What happened to Atlantis?

Volcanic eruptions and tidal waves. [13 December 1973]

The Wikipedia article mentions that historians, archaeologists, and geologists who looked for scientific evidence that would confirm or dis-confirm the stories about Atlantis, often focused on examining the remnants of volcanism and earthquakes and tsunamis, because, obviously, it would take a gigantic physical cataclysm to destroy or sink a continent. The date of the destruction of Atlantis given by sources other than the Michaels coincides with the end of the last ice age (about 11,700 years ago), at which time the sea level rose by about three hundred feet to get to its current level. Obviously, this rise caused floods that covered low-lying coastal areas ... and maybe Atlantis. The destruction of Atlantis was said to be “sudden” (due to volcanism), but the rise in sea level after the ice age took a few centuries of increasing tides. Earthquakes in the ocean often cause tsunamis, so that is a type of sudden destruction by “tidal waves”.

Edgar: If I am ten thousand years old and history only goes back six thousand years, where were my previous lives?

In Babylonia, in Syria, in Atlantis; but that is more than ten thousand years ago. You were not very aware then, Edgar. You really came in touch with the occult in Sumeria.

(From Wikipedia:

Sumer is the earliest known civilization in the historical region of southern Mesopotamia (south-central Iraq), emerging during the Chalcolithic and early Bronze Ages between the sixth and fifth millennium BC. It is one of the first civilizations in the world, along with ancient Egypt, Elam, the Caral-Supe civilization, the Indus Valley Civilisation, the Minoan civilization, and ancient China. Living along the valleys of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, Sumerian farmers grew an abundance of grain and other crops, the surplus from which enabled them to form urban settlements. Proto-writing dates back before 3000 BC. The earliest texts come from the cities of Uruk and Jemdet Nasr, and date to between c. 3500 and c. 3000 BC. [<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sumer> — retrieved 20 June 2022])

Edgar: Were we technologically up with the Atlantis people?

Technologically, you are about equal now. Philosophically and spiritually, you are nowhere near. [31 December 1973]

One of the alleged moral lessons to be derived from the stories about Atlantis is that the Atlanteans brought the destruction upon themselves due to their technology outrunning their wisdom. This is similar to one of the

lessons that some cultural critics point out from the Greek myth of the god Prometheus — who gave technology to humanity and was condemned by other gods for his renegade presumptuousness — namely that modern civilization is even more at risk of self-destruction due to its technological folly than Atlantis allegedly was. It seems obvious to some cultural critics that advancements in modern technology have outrun advancements in philosophy and spirituality; such an imbalance is thought by these somewhat enlightened people to be very risky.

Barbara: I wonder why any Atlanteans did not escape... [22 January 1974]

The Wikipedia article discusses the use of DNA analysis in attempts to find evidence for the survival of Atlanteans among modern populations, and the results so far are negative or inconclusive.

... the Atlanteans were familiar with matter–antimatter propulsion. [27 January 1974]

Obviously, “warp drive” via matter–antimatter propulsion is a technology where the Atlanteans were allegedly far ahead of present-day technology, contrary to what was stated in the 31 December session, when it was said that modern technology is approximately equal to Atlantean technology. So, was the notion of the warp drive a mere fantasy of Star Trek in the decade previous to the original Michaelian group, or was the idea an intuition or premonition of an actual possibility?

Edgar: How long will it take for our civilization to have reactions of matter–antimatter?

Without help, eons. We would add though, Edgar, that the help is available. [27 January 1974]

To “help” in such a way would violate Star Trek’s “prime directive” to not interfere in the cultural evolution of planets that are not in the Federation. It would also repeat the Promethean disaster of advancing technological maturity ahead of ethical maturity, which generally comes with the advance of the average Soul Age of the human population. One wonders if this is why the inhabitants or controllers of UFOs, whose technology is apparently ‘light-years’ beyond our own, seem to be loathe to reveal themselves openly. I seriously doubt that channeling will reveal advanced physics. Rather, some super-genius will be inspired with the information, it is hoped if/when the ‘time is right’, meaning, if/when the philosophical and spiritual maturity of humanity can handle the technology wisely and beneficially.

Edgar: Did the Atlanteans have help?

They were more imaginative and far less aggressive. Also, they were not alienated. [27 January 1974]

So, the Atlanteans did not have help from advanced sources; they figured the technology out on their own because they were so advanced “philosophically and spiritually”, as worded previously.

Dick: Could I have an approximate date when I was Cast from the Tao?

Approximately fifty thousand years ago, before the cataclysm that destroyed Atlantis.

Barbara: I’d like to ask: After the [Atlantean] cataclysm, it was said Infant and Baby Souls were Cast [into incarnation]. Now, if Infant Souls are Cast, if they do not know right from wrong, how can they be taught? Who’s to teach them?

Through us.

Questions: Were we at Atlantis?

Most of this group was, yes.

What was the population of Atlantis when it disappeared?

Five million. That was a city-state isolated by choice.

Shirley: What was I in Atlantis?

You experienced five lives there. All as [an] Infant Soul.

Shirley: How long was that?

Almost ten thousand years. [06 February 1974]

My interpretation of this is that Shirley took ten thousand years to experience five lifetimes as an Infant Soul in Atlantis. The alternative interpretation, that these lifetimes happened ten thousand years ago in Atlantis, contradicts the information, given in the 13 December 1973 session, that Atlantis was destroyed about fifty thousand years ago.

Alice: I wonder if there is any truth to what Robert [Burton] used to say, that if too many people woke up, there would be another catastrophe such as Atlantis. Robert said the reason for Atlantis being destroyed was that too many people were conscious.

We do not agree with that. It would merely speed up the evolution on this world, but would not affect the stellar evolution. [14 April 1974]

Refer to the chapter “Gurdjieff, Ouspensky, Collin, Burton” for information about Robert. The Logos (mind) of this planet evolves on a timescale that is different from the timescale of the evolution of the Logos of our star — refer to the chapter “Logos” for more information. Refer to the chapter “Awakening from Sleep” for more information about that metaphor for enlightenment, used by Robert and by the Michaels. That the Atlanteans were said to be “more awake/conscious” in this session shadows the statement in the session of 31 December that they were more advanced “philosophically and spiritually”. As with the Michaels, I see no downside to having more people become “awake”, “conscious”, “enlightened”.

The following few Q&A exchanges add nothing new to the discussion of Atlantis, but I include them anyway, for the sake of completeness.

Abdullah: in May 1973 — Atlantis, white garb, black girl, body 24 years of age?

The character of whom you speak could be a valid picture or memory of your own brother during that period. He was at that time a priest, in spite, of course, being a Sage, which explains the white robe.

Were we involved in Atlantis?

All of you here present were in Atlantis during the same period, yes.

Is there some connection between Abdullah, Gene, Dick and Elizabeth?

Well, of course, you know about this life in Atlantis, also in Greece and again in Rome, then in Roman Britain. Most of you.... Then again, in Spain with Gene and again off the coast of Portugal with the lady Elizabeth. [10 September 1974]

Liz: Atlantis?

In Atlantis, you served a King, yes. [17 September 1974]

Now, the man Thaddeus remembered something quite significant when he saw the lady [Liz] again, for she was wearing the same gown she wore when he first saw her in Atlantis. [29 October 1974]

The longest Q&A exchange about Atlantis came near the end of the original Michaelian group:

Eugene asked a question about a book he is reading, written in 1860. He asked about the book's reference to Atlantis.

The information contained in this volume is for the most part a fairly good description of the civilization of which you were a part, embellished by time and the medium's bias, but still fairly good. This was an advanced civilization that would have had interplanetary space travel within fifty years of the time it was destroyed. The [channeled] source at that time was Astral, many Fragments [of] which have been since reincarnated. Of those who were Mature Souls at the time of the destruction of Atlantis, many have waited these many centuries for a similar time frame in which to experience out their physical lives. The same is true for all who were Older Souls at that time. Most of you were Baby and very early Young Souls at the time, and it was necessary for you to experience some of the interim.

This might be referring to *Atlantis: the Antediluvian World*, written by Ignatius Donnelly, published in 1882: >https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ignatius_L._Donnelly<. Refer to the chapter “Bias” for a thorough discussion of how the biases of a channel can distort and/or block accurate information from getting through to us from the Astral and Causal Planes. A review of the internet sources linked in the introduction to this chapter reveals that the information about Atlantis via various channels differs in some regards.

Question about anti-gravity devices: Did they have them in Atlantis?

Yes.

The documented ability of UFOs to apparently defy inertia, which is intimately connected to gravity, is an indication that there are physics phenomena yet to be widely understood by modern humans, but which the Michaels say were understood by Atlantean humans.

Are there any physical marks, e.g., an “M” on the palm, to show who were Atlanteans?

There is no distinctive physical mark, but all of those with Atlantean memories will seek a [spiritual] teaching. They will seek a spiritual teaching in modern times as a continuation of their philosophical and spiritual endeavors mentioned above as being more prevalent and advanced in Atlantean times.

Was there an Infinite Soul manifest in Atlantis?

The Infinite Soul did not manifest in Atlantis, but the Transcendental Soul manifested three times.

Refer to the chapter “Transcendental and Infinite Souls”. There you will see that the manifestation of an Infinite Soul is only required if the manifestation of the Transcendental Soul does not provoke the needed

socio-cultural change. What is said here makes sense in the context of the Atlanteans being philosophically and spiritually advanced, as stated in the 31 December 1973 session.

Louise had a reading last year and was told she was "Temah" in Atlantis. Was this male or female?

This, or a word similar to it, was not a proper name, but a title: that of priestess. In this case, "keeper of the word." You were female, yes, and because of the annals, did not predict a cataclysm. There was widespread disbelief. You see, at that time more, but not enough, credence was given to the power of intuition. Obviously, though, it was not enough to prevent the destruction of what was then [the] civilized world, even though it was within their grasp.

Louise said she saw a white door in meditation with gold and emeralds. Was this associated with Atlantis?

In part; also, the student Alice has a similar memory of a stairway in her home.

Dick commented that not just an earthquake could sink that much land, that it had to be something more.

But a shifting of the magnetic poles could.

Dick asked if the people in Atlantis (their activities) caused the poles to shift?

What was the capital of the Atlantean civilization lies buried beneath the northern tip of Greenland.

This channeling is suspect because the planet was in the midst of an ice age fifty thousand years ago when Atlantis was allegedly destroyed:

The Last Glacial Period (LGP), also known colloquially as the last ice age or simply ice age, occurred from the end of the Eemian to the end of the Younger Dryas, encompassing the period c. 115,000 – c. 11,700 years ago. From the point of view of human archaeology, the LGP falls in the Paleolithic and early Mesolithic periods. When the glaciation event started, Homo sapiens was confined to lower latitudes and used tools comparable to those used by Neanderthals in western and central Eurasia and by Denisovans and Homo erectus in Asia. Near the end of the event, H. sapiens migrated into Eurasia and Australia. Archaeological and genetic data suggest that the source populations of Paleolithic humans survived the LGP in sparsely wooded areas, and dispersed through areas of high primary productivity, while avoiding dense forest cover.
[>https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Last_Glacial_Period< — retrieved 20 June 2022]

Are the Basque people a remnant of Atlantean culture?

Small scattered bands of survivors did appear on the European continent. This was one, yes. [30 January 1975]

Refer to ><https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Basques>< for an introduction to these inhabitants of the western Pyrenees area, overlapping Spain and France. There you will read that DNA analysis does not necessarily support the notion, proposed by early anthropologists, that the Basque people are unrelated to other Europeans, based on the fact that their language is not of Roman or other Indo-European origin. It was and is a huge leap of inference on the part of believers in Atlantis to claim that the Basques are descended from Atlanteans.

Not since the destruction of Atlantis has so much information of a scientific nature been available to Mechanical Man on this planet.... [31 January 1975]

Refer to the chapter "Mechanical Man" for more information about the un-self-aware people who are in control of this planet, who have brought humanity to the brink of disaster. Astronomers, even those who believe that other planets in nearby solar systems are likely to be populated by advanced humanoids, wonder why we have not yet been contacted by them. (Maybe we have: UFOs?) One of the speculations is that humanoid civilizations self-destruct at the stage in technological development that humanity is at now; for the account, refer to >https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fermi_paradox<. One of the stories about Atlantis is that they unwittingly engineered or otherwise prompted their own destruction. If Atlanteans learned anything from their mistakes, and if they are indeed incarnating in droves in the modern world as the Michaels (and others) said, one might hope that they would engineer or otherwise prompt humanity's diversion away from the path to apocalyptic destruction.

Louise: When we were together?

Louise, the life in Atlantis is strong in your recall. The denial of this is the Personality's. [23 February 1975]

My Personality also has issues with the notion that Atlantis was an actual island or continent with an advanced actual civilization during prehistoric times, but it might not be from "denial", because no such memory is "strong in my recall". Rather, it is due to the lack of convincing solid evidence.

Summary Comments on Atlantis

Based on what I read in the Wikipedia article on the subject, it makes sense to me to regard Atlantis as an invented story *with an archetypal meaning* — which people were especially prone to do back in those days — and that is why it has captured the imagination of so many people. If it was an actual island with an actual civilization, and if the information that has been channeled about it is true, then I am okay with that also. However, to me it seems more useful for us in the present day to learn the lesson that the legendary story illustrates, rather than to take it literally. One such lesson is stated thus:

Plato scholar Julia Annas, Regents Professor of Philosophy at the University of Arizona, had this to say on the matter:

The continuing industry of discovering Atlantis illustrates the dangers of reading Plato. For he is clearly using what has become a standard device of fiction — stressing the historicity of an event (and the discovery of hitherto unknown authorities) as an indication that what follows is fiction. The idea is that we should use the story to examine our ideas of government and power. We have missed the point if instead of thinking about these issues we go off exploring the sea bed. The continuing misunderstanding of Plato as historian here enables us to see why his distrust of imaginative writing is sometimes justified.

[><https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Atlantis>< — retrieved 20 June 2022]

Certainly, all levels of government could use an upgrade from the systems that are currently extant. Plato suggested that potential leaders should be selected at an early age for their obvious nascent superior qualities, and then they should be educated and trained in all manner of knowledge and wisdom, so that they would be competent and authoritative in political positions; he famously referred to these as “philosopher kings”.

Another lesson to be learned from the story of Atlantis, mentioned a few times in this chapter, is that it is dangerous in a civilization for its technology to outrun the wisdom and ethics required for the beneficial use of the technology.





① AURAS: COLORS AND MEANINGS

There was a time span during the original Michaelian group, mostly May and June of 1974, when the members of the group became interested in the subject of auras. They explored it for a while, people asked what the color of their aura was, but soon the members of the group lost interest, and rarely returned to it, while continuing to add other information to their Michaelian teachings database.

Let's first take a look at the origin and history of the subject, and then take a look at all of the occurrences of the subject in the original Michaelian group transcriptions. After that, a summary list of the information is provided.

Definition of Auras

Wikipedia provides an introduction to this topic, with a description and a history:

According to spiritual beliefs, an aura or human energy field is a colored emanation said to enclose a human body or any animal or object. In some esoteric positions, the aura is described as a subtle body. Psychics and holistic medicine practitioners often claim to have the ability to see the size, color and type of vibration of an aura. In spiritual alternative medicine, the human being aura is seen as part of a hidden anatomy that reflects the state of being and health of a client, often understood to even comprise centers of vital force called chakras. Such claims are not supported by scientific evidence and are thus pseudoscience. When tested under scientific controlled experiments, the ability to see auras has not been proven to exist.

The concept of auras was first popularized by Charles Webster Leadbeater, a former priest of the Church of England and a member of the mystic Theosophical Society. Leadbeater had studied theosophy in India, and believed he had the capacity to use his clairvoyant powers to make scientific investigations.... In his book *Man Visible and Invisible* published in 1903, Leadbeater illustrated the aura of man at various stages of his moral evolution, from the "savage" to the saint. In 1910, Leadbeater introduced the modern conception of auras by incorporating the Tantric notion of chakras in his book *The Inner Life*....

In the following years, Leadbeater's ideas on the aura and chakras were adopted and reinterpreted by other Theosophists such as Rudolf Steiner and Edgar Cayce, but his occult anatomy remained of minor interest within the esoteric counterculture until the 1980s, when it was picked up by the New Age movement.

In 1977, American esotericist Christopher Hills published the book *Nuclear Evolution: The Rainbow Body*, which presented a modified version of Leadbeater's occult anatomy. Whereas Leadbeater had drawn each chakras with intricately detailed shapes and multiple colors, Hills presented them as a sequence of centers, each one being associated with a color of the rainbow. Most of the subsequent New Age writers will base their representations of the aura on Hill's interpretation of Leadbeater's ideas. Chakras became a part of mainstream esoteric speculations in the 1980s and 1990s. Many New Age techniques that aim to clear blockages of the chakras were developed during those years, such as crystal healing and aura-soma. Chakras were, by the late 1990s, less connected with their theosophical and Hinduist root, and more infused with New Age ideas. A variety of New Age books proposed different links between each chakras and colors, personality traits, illnesses, Christian sacraments, etc.... [[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aura_\(paranormal\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aura_(paranormal))< — retrieved 23 August 2021]

Most of the remainder of the Wikipedia article consists of a refutation of the existence of auras based on scientific investigations. You may make of this what you will.

Shepherd Hoodwin describes auras this way:

The aura is a band of etheric substance surrounding our physical body that reflects our seven levels of self. It consists of seven layers of mid-physical substance vibrating a little more quickly than the physical body itself. It is at the fringes of human perception — some people can see it.... Our essence "shining through" our personality is like a "light bulb" lighting up the various colors and shapes of our aura. When false personality

obscures essence, the aura reflects this with grayer colors; heavy blocks can show up as patches of black. The aura is constantly changing, reflecting the person's internal "climate", although its basic framework remains constant. [*The Journey of Your Soul* (1995), p. 350]

Even though I have not researched the notion of auras in terms of scientific principles, my general impression from what I have read, and my intuition, is that auras are a biological field, a field that is concomitant with living organisms. This bio-field is analogous to the gravitational field that is concomitant with matter, the magnetic field that is concomitant with magnets, and the electric field that is concomitant with ions and electricity.

Aura Colors During the Original Michaelian Group

The following extracts from original Michaelian group transcriptions are Q&A exchanges, where an original Michaelian group member asks a question (or makes a comment), and the Michaels provide an answer. These extracts are [not] presented in the chronological order in which they were given. As is my custom, I usually provide some explanatory comments following the question or answer. Underlined words are my emphasis, to draw attention to what it is that I comment on. Sometimes I embed words or phrases [in brackets] that I believe help to clarify the question or the answer. Numerous study papers related to this chapter are to be found among my comments.

The introduction to the subject during the original Michaelian group happened in the session of 08 May 1974, as follows:

Someone discussed coming across a new concept in two different places: one, through William Bucke's book, Cosmic Consciousness; also in the Book of Aurals; and Edgar Cayce, that man[kind]'s ability to see certain colors, such as blue, is a recent development — it could not be seen in ancient history.

Color perception, as all other perceptions, is a part of the normal pattern of evolution; that is valid, yes. We would place perception of shades of the primary colors [red, yellow, blue] further back in history, though, and the second[ary] colors [orange, green, violet] later. At the time of Pericles [ancient Greece, 495–429 BCE], only vivid shades of green could be perceived as a separate shade.

Sarah asked if seeing or perception is an indication of spiritual growth.

That adaptations of the machine [physical body] are dictated by the needs of the psycho-spiritual apparatus [soul]. This will be difficult for you to verify, since you are now able to perceive blue. However, the work with hypnosis may expand your perception somewhat.

Narra: Asked a question about a class she took in coloring. Do Overleaves determine coloring? Or is there a color category that describes the personality?

Both of these are valid. The auras do change, but usually it is not a permanent change. Therefore you would not notice the clashing for long enough to bother your perceptions, but it is valid to say that certain colors do clash with the aura.

The class that Narra took might have been about the Lüscher Color Test, which is described at this website: >https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lüscher_color_test<. For the purpose of comparison with what the Michaels revealed, the meanings ascribed to colors in the Lüscher schema are:

- Blue = "Depth of feeling" passive, concentric, tranquility, calm, tenderness
- Green = "Elasticity of will" passive, concentric, defensive, persistence, self-esteem/assertion, pride, control
- Red = "Force of will" eccentric, active aggressive, competitive, action, desire, excitement, sexuality
- Yellow = "Spontaneity" eccentric, active, projective, aspiring, expectancy, exhilaration
- Violet = "Identification" unrealistic/wishful fulfillment, charm, enchantment
- Brown = Bodily senses, indicates the body's condition
- Black = Nothingness, renunciation, surrender or relinquishment
- Grey = Non-involvement and concealment

The original Michaelian group session transcription continues:

No one in the room has an unhealthy aura showing signs of serious physical illness. These tend toward deep grays and dark brown into black.

What are the aura's significance?

You are more at peace in an environment that is aesthetically pleasing to you. With this tool you can sometimes create such an environment. The auras do make a statement about the orientation of the individual Fragment, yes. Predominantly spiritually oriented souls tend to show the brightest blues. The vivid colors usually emanate from dynamism.

What about yellow?

This in you indicates your drive and comes from dynamism.

What about red?

This emanates from the Emotional Center.

In the modern chakra system, the Navel Chakra, which corresponds to the Emotional Center, is orange.

Phyllis: What about violet?

This in you indicates the drive to feel that which is spiritual within you.

Can it change to another color.

Yes. The reds are emotional colors, yes. Violet suggests work.

Carol: I am supposed to be in a Passion Mode and yet I am blue-green?

You do have many modifying Overleaves.

Does gray indicate Repression?

Yes. Gray has. It is not unusual for Intellectually Centered Stoics to show predominant gray. Some are much more predominant than you. You are showing much more blue than gray. We simply said that it is not unusual. You do have some very bright Overleaves.

Chakras within auras?

This is another perception. That is of the subtle changes in the wavelengths of different energy sources.

Why do I, a Spiritualist, have a red aura?

This whole line of questioning should prove most fruitful in allowing you to flash on the great differences. The various combinations of Overleaves modify the soul. The various combinations meld together and produce the total package. The Spiritualist Priest in Growth is, for instance, usually in the bluish deep color range, going toward the reds. This is modified by the Passion Mode, and will often deepen the aura to a dark red or even a bluish-red.

What about yellow-orange?

Primarily dynamic Overleaves produce vivid, bright colors. Our comment would be that some of you will wish to teach this [personality system], of course, but there are others, who, because of their Overleaves, will not be prepared to teach this lifetime. The reality of becoming a teacher does not necessarily always imply a break with former students — only personality dictates this. [08 May 1974]

The next session in which the subject of auras came up was a few days later, 15 May.

Betty: Is my aura purple?

We do not agree with that. This aura is dark blue bordering on violet.

Betty: What is the significance of that?

This is significant to this lady's innate spiritual consciousness, yet there is still some drive toward the physical glamour. The lady, Cynthia has a bright reddish-orange aura. For this emotionally active lady in the Passion Mode, this is to be expected; this is the inner fire manifesting.

Narra: What is my husband's aura?

This man's aura is reddish brown, (signifying) in him some suppression of true desires. Brown usually is indicative of subduing.

Narra: Was he born with that color?

The true color of the aura usually becomes manifest by adolescence.

Narra: Does it have to do with his health?

Yes.

Alice: Why is mine blue-gray?

Many Stoics have this feature. You have far more blue than gray.

What is the importance of knowing chakras?

It would aid you in releasing specific energy. It would be a visual crutch to help you locate the energy pocket.

Is there a source where we could read about colors?

We cannot recommend one source. (We) only can correct your misconceptions as they arise. You will feel the error soon. Most of you are now at the point where you are able to verify the validity of what you are reading, at least to the extent where you bring your questions here when the feeling is wrong.

Alice: [Son] Craig's aura?

Greenish-blue now with overtones of gray. This is not unusual in the adolescent male.

Richard: As I understand it, the aura green has to do with healing. Is there something along that line that I should be pursuing that I am not now doing?

Green does indicate strong drives to serve, yes, and most of those who choose healing and are successful do have this. You have within you the ability, but not the scope or knowledge, but could conceivably attain this. It would be much work, but perhaps far more rewarding than what you are doing now. You could certainly work miracles in the design of certain electronic crutches.

The heart chakra has been assigned the color green in esoteric lore, and it is the chakra that bridges the lower with the higher chakras, and is thereby involved in healing. Richard was an Artisan, and Artisans are typically good with technological devices. His occupation was that of an engineer, which is not a waste of Essence for Artisans, but the healing arts and technologies ("electronic crutches"!) would have been more fulfilling and satisfying. The point to be emphasized here is that, when a person is doing what the Role is built for, then that is subjectively experienced as rewarding. Evidently the aura also provides some basis for rewarding work.

Louise: What might I develop from my green aura?

You would have to take a more intellectual approach, but there again, the ability is there along with the drive.

You can learn to do energy transfers quite easily. The skill will lie in not exhausting yourself in the process.

Be a transducer [that transmits higher energy through you,] and not a battery that runs down. Clear your aura and get aligned [so that you can channel the energy].

Cheryl: What can I do with my bright blue aura?

We would say that most of the esoteric teachers have blue auras.

Joan: How can [husband] Jim develop his green aura?

The most important contribution he could be would be in the creative intellectual area, also.

Does cowardliness have anything to do with Old Souls?

Not much. Some old souls have yellow streaks. This does not necessarily mean that they will be cowardly, just very cautious.

Does this have anything to do with the common language referring to a "yellow streak" in fearful people?

Yes. Fear often brings the yellow in a given soul's aura to the point where it is subliminally visible.

I thought yellow meant leadership.

It does when it is permanent.

When it is said that a person is "seeing red", is he seeing through his own aura?

Sometimes, yes, they are, and what he sees is more orange than red. Anger and fear are quite close to passion — both are what could be called fiery emotions.

Joan: How can I develop my pink aura?

Reddish pinks are always sensual colors. There is nothing negative there about this aura. It is healthy and vibrant.

Joan: Then is my total personality sexually oriented? I don't act out the sex.

The orange-red auras normally indicate those in whom the orientation is primarily physical, or, if you will, sexual. Those going toward the pinks are more tactile, or sexually oriented.

Narra: What do I do with my turquoise aura?

This denotes the searching Personality that caused you to seek this and other Teaching(s), but because it is so bright, it also supplies you drive that enables you to succeed. This can be channeled to all of you to become spiritually successful also.

Herein lies the "greener pastures" syndrome — "I would like to change my pink aura for your purple one."

Do the planets influence auras?

No. [15 May 1974]

A few days later, 18 May, there was another flurry of questions about aura colors and indications:

[Mary's] Aura is blue with strong overtones of gray.

Is the gray from illness or Martyrdom or what?

Both. The darkness is fading now.

What is that due to?

Emotional depression and physical illness. [18 May 1974]

A few days later, 22 May, there was another flurry of questions about aura colors and indications:

We would like to know Mallory's aura. Blue-green? Red? Orange?

This aura is mostly red with overtones of blue.

What does it mean?

There has been a progressive conscious effort toward the spiritual in this lady. As she moves toward this the overtones become more striking.

Mallory: What about white auras? Do they represent Christ?

We also agree with that.

Cynthia: [What about a] rainbow aura seen in me by a medium? What is that? What did he see?

Sunlight and imagination.

Dick: What would the aura be in a Transcendental soul?

We would like you to make a distinction between Old Souls "transcendental" and the Transcendental [Soul] which is a manifestation of the high Causal body. The auras of those Old Souls who complete their physical Cycle is generally of a clearer, brighter hue [than others]. Mohandas Gandhi was physically ill and still had gray overtones until the time of the manifestation [of the Transcendental Soul], at which time the aura became deep blue. [22 May 1974]

Do the Centers and chakras correspond?

Yes, they do. This is what the yogis perceive when they expound on this. In one able to visualize [see] the auras this becomes easy, for there is a transitory "puff" of color accompanying significant outputs, such as occurs in the digestion of the major meal of the day or in deep meditation. The gut chakra is Emotional Center, Intellectual Center manifests itself at chest level, and so forth. The Sexual Center can be measured at the level of the thyroid; the Higher Emotional Center at the level of the pineal body; the Higher Intellectual Center at the level of the anterior pituitary. Procreation is handled by the Moving Center in sleeping animals. [16 June 1974]

Refer to the chapter on Chakras for a thorough treatment of that subject.

What does a gold aura indicate?

The golden shades normally indicate an altruistic bent.

Does one's aura change in one lifetime?

If the change is a permanent one, the aura will change correspondingly. As long as the desire remains, the aura will give this away in brilliant technicolor. [19 June, 1974]

After this date, references to the aura became quite spotty.

Someone asked about his attraction to healing. Is there a connection?

Well, this "connection" can successfully be made by many of the students, but you do have more affinity for it. You have a deep green aura, which would indicate success in this area to us. The Essence understands this and therefore the desire. [19 November 1974]

Can it be seen in a patient's eyes when they are going to die soon, or in their aura?

Interestingly enough, there is also a thermal change in the aura that is measurable as it changes from its usual color to black. But yes, many good students can see this in the eyes just as clearly as they can see the Overleaves. [14 December 1974]

In meditation I had imagery, flowers blooming and shutting off the bud.

Experiences such as this one should occur with increasing frequency when students begin to experience deeper states of concentration and allow the images to merely come into their focus. Of course, there is much symbolism here of the drawing closer, of the unfolding and opening, then the retreat. The colors will usually reflect the colors of the student's aura, yes, since these are the colors of maximum affinity. [21 February 1975]

Summary of Aura Colors

Vivid Auras: Indicate dynamic energies in the individual, Cardinal Overleaves.

White: Christ Consciousness.

Gold or golden tones: altruism.

True Violet: You are on the spiritual path and are driven to look within to find the Creator/Self. Read this as "on the path and doing the work".

Blues that trend to red: Passion mode for those on the path.

Brightest Blues: Spiritually oriented individuals, esoteric teachers.

Dark blue that borders on violet: Trending toward the path but still involved in maya to some degree.

Bluish-Gray: stoicism on the path.

Green: strong desire to serve others; ability to heal as energy transfer.

Turquoise: Combination of seeker with acceptance qualities, if clear and bright it has a drive in it to succeed. It has the ability to transfer spiritual energy as well.

Reds: From Emotional center, passion, agape.

Orangish Reds: can be anger, which is fear based and as such comes from emotional center. This can also be sexuality, physically emotive individual.

Bright Reddish-Orange: Emotionally centered in passion mode [the inner fire manifest].

Pink to Red: sensuality, again a positive state from emotional center.

Red with Blue overtones: a progressive conscious effort towards spiritual self.

Reddish-Brown: Emotional submission of true desires.

Yellows and Oranges: denote drive, leadership, dynamic personality, vitality.

Paler Yellow: Caution Mode.

Yellow as an overlay: fear, this is usually transitory, in the moment.

Unhealthy Auras: These tend toward deep grays and dark brown, and shade into black near death.

Gray: the graying overtones can be from Overleaves that are repressive, stoicism — not disease.

Auras Subsequent to the Original Michaelian Group

There was no significance to the time or two that auras were mentioned in *Messages from Michael*. Yarbro had nothing of significant to do with the subject in any of her four books on the Michaelian teachings.

The aura was mentioned a few times in the Briggs group, which met from about 1980 to 1983, but no explanation was attached to the colors that were ascribed to some people.

José Stevens wrote and published a section on auras in his 1988 book *Tao to Earth*, pages 226–230.

JP Van Hulle devoted a session to auras on 18 March 1993. It can be found on pages 258–261 in *Michael Speaks: The Legacy of JP Van Hulle, Volume 2*, published by The Center for Michael Teachings, Inc.

Several references to auras can be found in both editions of Shepherd Hoodwin's books, *The Journey of Your Soul* (1995) and *Journey of Your Soul* (2013), as noted in the Indexes of those books.

Concluding Comments on Auras

A couple of seminal books on auras were mentioned in the Wikipedia article quoted above. If you are inclined to pursue the matter, you can download a PDF or eBook copy of Leadbeater's book *Man Visible and Invisible* from this website: ><https://www.globalgreybooks.com/man-visible-and-invisible-ebook.html><. Christopher Hills's book *Nuclear Evolution: The Rainbow Body*, also mentioned in the Wikipedia article quoted above as seminal in the development of the concept, is not out of copyright, but it is available for cheap as a used book;

search the internet. I have not compared and contrasted what the Michaels say with what these two books say, but of course you are welcome to do so.

So, this concept of auras was borrowed from other teachers and traditions. Is not a subject that has gained much traction in the Michaelian teachings community; it is certainly not an essential component of their revelation, and it might even be of dubious validity and utility.





AUROBINDO, SRI

This chapter is the product of a search for the word “Aurobindo” in the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group channeling sessions I have added some commentary, which consists of my analysis and synthesis of the quotations. Obviously, this word does not represent a significant component of the Michaelian teachings, but even so, the word appears often enough that it seems to me that students can benefit from seeing all of those instances documented and commented on in a chapter of this *Study Papers* book. Furthermore, the word is related to a number of other components of the Michaelian teachings that are considered to be more significant; these will be noted in the commentary on the instances of the word and its contexts. Basically and briefly, the Michaels recommended to the original Michaelian group members that they

Brief Biography of Sri Aurobindo

From Wikipedia, as usual...

Aurobindo per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

The following extracts from original Michaelian group transcriptions are Q&A exchanges, where an original Michaelian group member asks a question (or makes a comment), and the Michaels provide an answer. This is not a subject that would benefit by division into subcategories, as some subjects do. These extracts are presented in the chronological order in which they were given, even though this is not a subject where there was a development or evolution of a specific revelation of a facet of the Michaelian teachings, as was often the case with the original Michaelian group. As is my custom, I often provide some explanatory comments following the question or answer. Underlined words in the Michaels’ answers are my emphasis, to draw attention to what it is that I comment on. Sometimes I embed words or phrases [in brackets] that I believe help to clarify the question or the answer.

Only mentioned once?

Concluding Comment on Sri Aurobindo

The reason that I included a chapter about Aurobindo in this *Study Papers* book is so that I could put in a plug for longer examinations of his work, and my comparisons of it with the Michaelian teachings. These reviews are found in my other books, namely *The Tao of Cosmogony* and *The Synthesis: The Michaelian Teachings as Perennialism*. Taking a hint from the Michaels’ comment that they found nothing wrong with Aurobindo’s work, so I can with confidence recommend that you check him out, and I would say that the two teachings complement each other nicely.





⑤ AWAKENING FROM SLEEP

This phrase, “awakening from sleep”, is a metaphor for “enlightenment”. It occurs many times in the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group. Unsurprisingly, it is also found throughout the Gurdjieffian teachings. Because some of the founding members of the original Michaelian group were familiar with the Gurdjieffian teachings, the Michaels used the metaphor in their exchanges with the original Michaelian group members. The principle here is that what happens in the spiritual realm can be understood by analogy with what happens in the physical realm. Refer to the chapter “Enlightenment” for the definition and description of Enlightenment and its metaphors.

According to Gurdjieff, people who are not on a valid spiritual path function in what he referred to as the “waking sleep”. This is another phrase like “Mechanical Man” that refers to the typical human state of consciousness, which is to say, a minimal state of awareness. The person might actually function quite well in the world, but is more or less on 'autopilot', unaware that there is any other way to behave or feel or think than he or she does. The person does not actually have much in the way of “free will” because they are oblivious to the options. They are ruled by False Personality and Maya and they function within the parameters of the cultural ‘trance’ — the subjects of other chapters. Sleeping humans are simply not aware of the greater consciousness and the higher reality.

The word “awakening” is not capitalized in this chapter or other chapters of this *Study Papers* book because, other than the fact that it is a metaphor, it has no special meaning in the Michaelian teachings; it is not a Michaelian jargon word that needs a definition apart from its use in the common vernacular. The subject came up in the original Michaelian group numerous times, some interesting things were said about it, and it might be helpful for Michaelian students to have the answers conveniently collected and commented all in one place.

So, let’s take a look at what Gurdjieff had to say about it, and then take a look at what the Michaels had to say about it.

Awakening per Gurdjieff

The Gurdjieffian teachings is well known in esoteric circles for its claim that people are “asleep” compared to their “higher” nature, which is “awake”. Here is how Wikipedia described this metaphor:

George Ivanovich Gurdjieff ... was a Russian philosopher, mystic, spiritual teacher, and composer, of Armenian and Greek descent, born in Alexandropol, Russian Empire (now Gyumri, Armenia). Gurdjieff taught that most humans do not possess a unified consciousness and thus live their lives in a state of hypnotic “waking sleep”, but that it is possible to awaken to a higher state of consciousness and achieve full human potential. Gurdjieff described a method attempting to do so, calling the discipline “The Work” (connoting “work on oneself”) or “the System”. According to his principles and instructions, Gurdjieff’s method for awakening one’s consciousness unites the methods of the fakir, monk, and yogi, and thus he referred to it as the “Fourth Way”.... Gurdjieff believed that people cannot perceive reality in their current condition because they do not possess a unified consciousness but rather live in a state of a hypnotic “waking sleep”. “Man lives his life in sleep, and in sleep he dies.” As a result of this each person perceives things from a completely subjective perspective. He asserted that people in their typical state function as unconscious automatons, but that a person can “wake up” and become a different sort of human being altogether.

[>https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/George_Gurdjieff< — retrieved 10 June 2021]

This entire Wikipedia article is very useful for understanding Gurdjieff and his teaching and his influence on others. For anyone wanting to understand the Michaelian teachings, it helps very much to understand the Gurdjieffian teachings.

The metaphor of ‘awakening from sleep’ as another name for that other metaphor, ‘enlightenment’, and that other metaphor ‘liberation’ did not originate with Gurdjieff; it has a history going back at least to the Buddha:

In Buddhism, *Buddha* (Sanskrit: ... “awakened one”), is a title for those who are awake, and have attained nirvana and Buddhahood through their own efforts and insight, without a teacher to point out the *dharmā* (Sanskrit: ... “right way of living”). The title is most commonly used for Gautama Buddha, the founder of Buddhism, who is often simply known as “the Buddha”. Buddhahood (Sanskrit: ... buddhatva; Pali: buddhatta or buddhabhāva ...) is the condition and rank of a buddha “awakened one”. This highest spiritual state of being is also termed sammā-sambodhi (Sanskrit: samyaksaṃbodhi) (Full complete Awakening).
[><https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Buddhahood>< — retrieved 24 May 2022]

My surmise is that some research would reveal that many other religious and spiritual traditions would be found to use the same metaphor for whatever their version of full spiritual maturity might be.

This chapter is divided into two sections, the first section is mostly about sleeping, and the second section is mostly about waking.

‘Sleep’ per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

The following extracts from original Michaelian group transcriptions are Q&A exchanges, where an original Michaelian group member asks a question (or makes a comment), and the Michaels provide an answer. These extracts are presented in the chronological order in which they were given. As is my custom, I often provide some explanatory comments following the question or answer. Underlined words in the Michaels’ answers are my emphasis, to draw attention to what it is that I comment on. Sometimes I embed words or phrases [in brackets] that I believe help to clarify the question or the answer.

The first appearance of the ‘sleep’ metaphor appears in an original Michaelian group transcription from two weeks before the Michaels themselves appeared:

Carolyn: I have felt the need to express my opinions more lately and I wonder if this is good. Sometimes I have spouted off.

[Tomas:] Do you understand the source of the negative emotions? If so, then you should examine them carefully and see if you can turn them into something positive. Hostility is never an act of conscious will. The only positive forces are peaceful, loving ones. Carolyn still has a tendency to slip into the patterns or vibrations of the moment. Many sleeping souls provide the necessary shocks to keep her on the right track — constantly examining herself. This is a common failing among neophytes on the true path. There are always many doubts until the integration takes place, and the commitment is made and is irrevocable. Life on the material plane with all its glamour continues to lure you back. The glamour is illusion — Maya, if you prefer the more esoteric term. Maya is part of Karma and is present for a very specific purpose. It tests your spiritual growth all the time and is your sole eternal safety checkpoint. When you reach the point in your spiritual growth when you “know” that all hostile feelings and thoughts and words — and even world wars — come from lower Centers in sleeping souls and they are not in control, then you will lose the desire or need to retaliate or spout off. It’s like spouting off to a stone wall for all the good it does you. You gain nothing and lose a great deal. [24 July 1973]

This passage is full of words that refer to concepts that have study papers in this book: “Glamour”, “Maya”, “Growth, Spiritual”, “Path, Spiritual”, “Karma”, and “Shock”. My suggestion is that “sleeping souls” in this passage does not refer to spirits; it refers to unenlightened people, those who are encumbered with negative emotions, lower Centers, Maya, and so on. An alternative explanation is that the phrase refers to “Essence sleep”, mentioned several times in the original Michaelian group transcriptions; see below.

The metaphor of ‘sleep’ is found in the first original Michaelian group session in which the Michaels appeared:

Concerning being unpopular because you held unpopular beliefs, pursued teachings, etc.

There will always be unpopularity when unpopular ideas are espoused and expressed. The body does not wish the Essence to be freed. It will fight to keep the Essence asleep. It takes many such fights to strengthen the Essence. [12 August 1973]

Gurdjieff had a different understanding of Essence than what the Michaelian teachings eventually came to understand about Essence. Gurdjieff thought of Essence as the unified mind, the goal of spiritual work, whereas the Michaelian teachings regards the Essence as the “innermost core of the [spiritual] soul”. Refer to the chapter on “Essence and Personality” for a complete explanation. In both senses of the Essence referent,

body and Essence have an adversarial relationship because they are opposite poles of a Monad; refer to the chapter on “Monads” for more information about that. The awakening of Essence is a metaphor for enlightenment, but it is not the only metaphor. Notice the word “freed” here; there is also a chapter, “Liberation”, which discusses that metaphor for enlightenment.

Dick: Could we have a definition of Karma from Michael?

As you reap, so you also sow. Or as you sow, so you shall reap. However, this goes far deeper than mere action by those immersed in the waking sleep. For them, the energy loss is far greater, for most of their lives are wasted in fantasy and fantasy costs much in Karmic debts. You must fulfill all carnal desires before serious work is begun on the Essence. This can take many lives, usually a minimum of forty-nine. [26 August 1973]

Recall that “waking sleep” is the phrase used in the Wikipedia article quoted above. Generally speaking, younger souls can be considered to be in the ‘sleeping’ part of the reincarnation cycle, and older souls can be considered to be in the ‘waking’ part of the reincarnation cycle; “carnal desires” are fulfilled in the first half of the cycle, and Essence desires are fulfilled in the second half. A similar statement can be said about Karma: younger souls earn Ribbons and older souls burn Ribbons. The turning point in the entire story arc of reincarnation is Fourth Level Mature. A similar statement can be made about the Milestone stages during a lifetime: a person is mostly ‘asleep’ during the first half, and ‘wakes up’ during the second half. (Milestones, aka “Internal Monads”, are discussed in Part X, Chapter X, in my book *The Tao of Cosmogony*.)

The following Q&A is repeated in the Awake section below:

Richard: Are the Karmic Ribbons influenced by False Personality?

Yes. Entrapment in the body and the Chief Feature are Karma for Essence. All others [Karmic Ribbons] arise from actions born of the waking sleep. If you are awake, you would not do it.

Sarah: Gurdjieff says that most people pass their lives in the “waking sleep.” If you want to verify it, just try to remember what you had for dinner last Tuesday or how many traffic lights did you drive through when you came over here. [17 October 1973]

One could make a list of unpleasant stuff that happens during ‘sleep’. So far we have Karma, Maya, negative emotions, fantasy, hostility, doubts, and mindlessness.

We do not object to expressions of enthusiasm when enthusiasm is genuine. It is when you feel compelled to exclaim that it becomes “formatory” and of the “waking sleep”. The expression “far out” can be valid or it can be inane. [20 October 1973]

Add insincerity and inanity to the list of ‘sleep’ stuff. Refer to the chapter “Formatory” for more about that.

According to Gurdjieff, only with a conscious teacher can one “do” anything. Most people plea when anything goes drastically wrong, “God help me!” At EST, we learned that only “I” am responsible for the mess “I’m” in. We have to look inward and not put the blame on something outside ourselves.

That is, of course, valid. Without a teacher, you can do nothing. You are blind and deaf; “asleep.” [27 February 1974]

Add blindness, deafness, irresponsibility, and ineffectiveness to the list of ‘sleep’ stuff.

Waking sleep results from being entrapped [in a Center]

Yes. The Cave (Plato) was analogous to this entrapment. [03 March 1974]

Refer to >https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Allegory_of_the_cave< for an explanation of that reference. There is that word “entrapment” again; refer to the chapter on “Liberation” for a thorough description of this other metaphor for the unenlightened human condition, namely the ‘prison/freedom’ metaphor; it is another way of analogizing the ‘sleep/awake’ metaphor.

Could Michael give us some of James’s Agreements on the Astral Plane?

This student has elected to reach a large number of souls with what he discerns as the Logos. This to us represents a good beginning. Although on the surface this may seem to be a commercial venture, the observations are at a deeper level and the Essence here has more influence than you would think. Although he is still quite “asleep,” he does follow many intuitive drives. [20 November 1974]

This passage hints at the notion that there are stages or levels of awakening from sleep. If I were to systematize the sleep > awake metaphor in terms of the septenary — the seven stages of growth that are pervasive in the Michaelian teachings — I would put the ‘sleep’ phase in the Ordinal triad and the ‘awake’ phase in the Cardinal triad, with “intuition” in the Neutral stage. The transition from asleep to awake begins when the Personality begins to intuitively listen to the promptings of Essence.

Discussion about Artificial Space — False Personality — Karmic debts.

For a moment, look at the physical universe as an enormous stage, and all of the physical things within it as the sets and actors. Then look for a moment at the possibility that Karma or the system of Karma, may in fact be looked upon as the director of the play of life. Souls experiencing all of life on the Physical Plane never have to seek spiritual growth. They can, and most do, go through the whole cycle [of reincarnation] in the “waking sleep.” The moment that you elect to commit yourself to the [spiritual growth] path, you remove yourself from the list of available actor’s equity. Were it not for Karmic Ribbons, souls would not experience much at all. They certainly would not experience all of life. [08 February 1975]

Even though many older souls choose to experience lifetimes in which they ‘wake up’, it is not mandatory. Elsewhere it is said that it is not necessary for all souls to experience “all of life”; it is for the Entity as a whole to integrate the experiences of all of its Fragments on the upper levels of the Astral Plane, thus achieving full wakefulness or enlightenment.

Mechanical Man, or man asleep, does not communicate, at least not if one is to posit communication as a two-way street. One of the most useful Shocks we have seen applied by both Adepts and Masters in their Schools, has been when they have, from a position of awakeness (operating not from Personality but from Essence) have asked someone to leave the School. This has many times been enough of a shock to transform a leech into a student. Yes, it is a negative Shock, but it is certainly not delivered or dumped from the Negative Pole of the Overleaves [which] results in Leakage downward. All negativity comes from the negative. Therefore, we certainly do not consider it Good Work.... Of course, it is Bad Work to constantly disrupt a line of work and if this is done in sleep, it is reprehensible. [Dimensions! magazine, April 1975]

This passage is full of terms that have their own chapter: “Mechanical Man”, “Adepts and Masters”, “School”, “Essence and Personality”, “Energy and Energy Leaks”, “Good Work — Bad Work”. Refer to the chapter on “Shocks” for a description and explanation of that term, borrowed from Gurdjieff. The point is that ‘asleep’ people are resistant to and/or insensitive to feedback from other people and the world in general. That is why it takes a Shock to ‘wake them up’. One can get wakeup calls from the universe in the natural course of learning the hard way, or one can have intentional shocks delivered in a “School”, where one is surrounded by people who are more enlightened. This phenomenon has been likened to a “cosmic two-by-four” that “hits one between the eyes” to get one’s attention, indicating that a “course correction” needs to be made.

The conflict that you feel comes about because the Personality does exactly what it wants to do all of the time. The essence does not have the chance to act in the moment and it goes to sleep in order to avoid the conflict. The forces of “good and evil” that you feel fighting within yourselves are not the essence fighting the Personality, but are the Overleaves fighting each other. [21 November 1976]

I suggest that this is another instance where the Gurdjieffian understanding of essence as a component of the physical psyche is intended, rather than the later Michaelian understanding of Essence as of the transpersonal soul.

So, now let’s shift our investigation from the negative side of the ‘asleep/awake’ metaphor to the positive side of the ‘asleep/awake’ metaphor.

‘Awake’ per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

Having searched the original Michaelian group transcriptions for instances of the ‘sleep’ metaphor, let’s start from the beginning again and this time search for instances of the ‘awake’ metaphor.

The first appearance of the awakening metaphor appears in a transcription from two weeks before the Michaels themselves appeared:

[Tomas:] It is easy for even the partially awakened soul to distinguish [the difference between Eros and Agape]. [24 July 1973]

The role of sexuality as a potential component of one’s spiritual path is discussed at length in my book *The Tao of Relationships*. There is also the chapter “Sexuality” in this *Study Papers* book.

Does it not seem that all [spirits who are] seeking the least complex will return to the [simple] energy from whence they came? Complexity is the antithesis of what the [matured] spirit seeks. The body [of incarnation] represents the epitome of complexity. That is why the spirit is again and again attracted to it, *until* the partially awakened Essence catches a glimpse beyond the “veil.” [Then it again seeks simplicity.] [12 August 1973]

In this statement we find the metaphor of Essence being allowed to ‘wake up’ in the process of reincarnation in the physical body, plus the metaphor of that embodied Essence becoming able to see beyond a ‘veil’ that obscures perception of a spiritual reality. The phrasing in that quotation is clumsy, so I added some clarifications in brackets, but if I understand it correctly, it is telling us that in the first half of a cycle of reincarnation, the simple spirit it attracted to complexity, and then there is a turning point, and then the spirit is attracted to the simplicity from which it originated. This simplicity > complexity > simplicity process is built into the seven-stage structure of the cosmos. It is explained in detail in terms of geometric space/time and time/space dimensions in the chapters on Worldviews (aka Soul Ages) in Part Three of my book *The Tao of Personality*.

Richard: Are the Karmic Ribbons influenced by False Personality?

Yes. Entrapment in the body and the Chief Feature are Karma for Essence. All others [Karmic Ribbons] arise from actions born of the waking sleep. If you are awake, you would not do it. [17 October 1973]

Some deep concepts presented in this quotation are discussed in depth in other chapters, such as “Liberation” and “Karma”. The phrase “waking sleep” appeared above, in the extraction from the Wikipedia article on Gurdjieff. Very unpleasant things happen when you sleepwalk your way through life, oblivious of the way the world works.

Mallory: I wonder about my recent backpacking trips: how would this relate to my Centers? I stopped picking at my fingers, did not think, did not feel: I just was. I did not feel any more awake or more high. I feel uncomfortable because I feel I’m not accomplishing anything [by merely Being in nature].

It is correct to say, as the questioner did, that there is a difference between being “awake” and being “high”.

It is related to the fact that students often experience an Essence or Balanced state for prolonged periods when removed from the Maya, error, familiar Maya of their [acculturation] environment and are forced to “be” in the moment [by being, for instance, in a pristine natural environment].

That answer is a good description of what it is like to be “awake”: it involves an absence of Maya, among other things. I added the word “acculturation” in brackets because I believe that is the type of “environment” being referred to there, as distinct from an unspoiled natural environment, which the questioner visited during a backpacking trip. To wander in nature is one of the best ways to get out of your Maya-encumbered acculturated environment, which only creates and reinforces False Personality.

Mallory: It is not a dramatic thing. It just is. A person in the present is not experiencing anything dramatic. Does a Balanced Man feel high? It was said last time that the “surge” comes when one becomes Balanced.

If the moment is a quiet one, Balanced Man will feel the tranquility. If it is a “high” [moment], then Balanced Man will feel the ecstasy of the moment. Ironically, the reverse is often true in Mechanical Man. Young Souls involved with ecology legalization will often feel surges of emotionalism when confronted with a pacific, woodland environment. [17 September 1974]

There is another endorsement for the spiritual benefits of being in nature. It does not say so here, but it does elsewhere, that the stage called “Balanced Man” is just the lowest of the higher “Levels of Being”; there are levels beyond; people “wake up” by stages and degrees; refer to the chapters by those names.

About witnessing an apparently illegal act in San Francisco on O’Farrell Street — the shock of seeing something as we interpret it — a warning?

We would call it so, yes. You see what happened then happens often to Mechanical Man. He is in his customary state of slumber and all of a sudden awakens briefly from his dreams and attempts to interpret a scene in that split second before he sleeps again. Often, his momentary vision is grossly distorted and then the Emotional Center or Emotional Parts of Centers takes over and directs the action.

Unlike a Mechanical Man, a Balanced Man will respond from the appropriate Center, not necessarily from the Emotional Center or Emotional Part of a Center.

These experiences are good for students in that they often call attention to the depths of the trance in which you go through life. It is true, students do often witness heinous crimes of violence, but then usually the alert student is prepared to spring into action and do what must be done from the proper perspective. It is not true, however, that the high planes arrange convenient accidents to aid the students. We just hope that you do notice those experiences that come your way as [spiritual] growth experiences. [08 October 1974]

Although it does not say so here, one need not wait for random shocking things to help you realize how asleep you are; one can expose oneself to new and challenging experiences in general, and one can engage in

spiritual practices designed for that very thing. The original Michaelian group transcriptions, the Gurdjieffian teachings, and other esoteric spiritual paths, are full of suggestions for helping you wake up.

The Physical Plane and its pervasive atmosphere demands that you “do” something physical about ethereal matters. Consequently, when the Essence awakens for an instant and feels love for its Essence Twin or an old [physical] twin [from a previous lifetime], the False Personality immediately goes to work on this emotion, converting it into something it can understand. This is what is meant by some spiritual leaders who exhort their followers to rise above the Physical Plane. Mechanical Man has not learned to rise above the desire for instant gratification; therefore, he experiences much frustration, since the culture largely denies him that gratification.

The wording in this passage and other passages might imply that Essence can be asleep and can awake, but my preferred interpretation is that Essence is always awake and that the Personality actually needs to go to ‘sleep’ in order for the Essence to ‘wake up’ in the sense that it manifests overtly and obviously in a person; from the point of view of the Personality, it is as if the Essence awakens. The alternative interpretation is to understand essence as Gurdjieff understood it, as something that is awakened, aka “crystallized”, by working on oneself. (Perhaps it is just me, but it seems to me that the transition from the understanding of essence in the Gurdjieffian teachings and the understanding of Essence in post-original Michaelian group groups was not made clear during the original Michaelian group.)

James asked what must we do to become awake.

We have, of course, outlined to this [original Michaelian group] cadre the steps that they must take if they are to ever become sufficiently awake to hear the words. We have told them of the highest truth, which is Agape, which is the unqualified acceptance of other creatures as the greater part of self. We have given them the tools for attainment of this state, which are yes, meditation, concentration, fasting and study. We have endeavored to warn them, or rather apprise them, of the pitfalls they may encounter on the [spiritual] path. We have recommended that they simplify their lives, that they may free the necessary energies for pursuit of this objective.

We would give you the same advice. It cannot change. This is as we have said many times, the shortest path of which we are aware. The most penetrating barriers on the Physical Plane are the “I cannot” belief systems that stand in the way of spiritual evolution. The easiest way we know of to break through these barriers is to eliminate the alienation, the frustrating isolation that your culture now imposes. [20 November 1974]

Elaboration on these subjects can be found in the chapters “Agape”, “Meditation and Concentration”, “Fasting”, “Study”, “Path — Spiritual”, “Complexity versus Simplicity”, “Alienation”.

Dick asked if his painting was for him a form of concentration.

Oh, very definitely, as is some vigorous physical activity for Moving Centered individuals. Swinging [a type of dancing] is for Sarah. Many mundane chores also can be employed to keep the body busy while the Essence awakes and concentrates. [20 November 1974]

Besides the methods recommended above to awaken essence or Essence, here are some more methods; these types are meant to distract the Personality from its usual concerns, rather than to focus on awakening *per se*.

If you wish to Photograph your False Personality at work, then you must be in a situation where the Overleaves abrade. Then and only then can real progress take place. In a limited sense, this can be done in small, scattered groups and we would see this even before we would see total separation of the “life” and the work. You see, it is when the life becomes the work that the gift is given. As long as there is a schism there is limited chance for awakening. The discontinuity severely retards the growth. The more continuity, the more growth. [Dimensions! magazine, April 1975]

Here is another method for waking up: “Photograph” (refer to chapter by that name) the instances where you are in conflict with other people. This can happen in True Personality as well as in False Personality.

Mechanical Man, or man ‘asleep’, does not communicate, at least not if one is to posit communication as a two-way street. One of the most useful shocks we have seen applied by both Adepts and Masters in their schools, has been when they have, from a position of awakeness (operating not from Personality but from Essence) have asked someone to leave the school. This has many times been enough of a shock to transform a leech into a student. Yes, it is a negative shock, but it is certainly not delivered or dumped from the Negative Pole of the Overleaves [which] results in Leakage downward. All negativity comes from the negative. Therefore, we certainly do not consider it Good Work. [Dimensions! magazine, April 1975]

The Fellowship of Souls is a group of people who have willingly embarked upon the journey. We utilize many methods and disciplines, taking from each the essence that is relevant, and that produces growth. By studying the teachings of many who have traveled the path before us, we learn to validate the Universal Truths and apply them in our lives. By using various disciplines of meditation and concentration, we learn to reach deep within to the source of all knowledge – and we learn that All lies within, awaiting our moment of awakening. [Dimensions! magazine, June 1975]

False goals are those that are largely unattainable, as they exist only in fantasy. True goals lead to the awakening of the Essence and its breakthrough. This is indeed possible for those who wish it and without great sacrifice upon the mountain-top. [12 December 1976]

Closing Comments on ‘Sleep’ and ‘Awake’

Chapters related to this one are “Bio-computer”, “Enlightenment”, “EST”, “Liberation”, and “Shock”.





① BALANCED MAN

One of the major themes of the original Michaelian group was *spiritual* development. This goes beyond psychotherapy, although psychotherapy is a necessary prerequisite for spiritual development in the original Michaelian group and elsewhere. In the metaphorical ‘school’ of life, one must do the ‘homework’ in psychotherapy before ‘graduating’ to the ‘school’ of spiritual growth. One of the stages in the process of psychotherapeutic and spiritual development is where one has become Balanced. Per the Michaelian teachings, this is in fact the middle stage in a process of seven stages. Because this stage in the seven-stage story arc of psychotherapeutic and spiritual development had a special meaning in the original Michaelian group, it is capitalized.

Balanced Man, and Balance in general, is mentioned dozens of times during the years when the original Michaelian group met. Describing and explaining it makes this one of the longest chapters in this *Study Papers* book. The phrase, if not the concept itself, has largely been lost to later students of the Michaelian teachings. It seems unfortunate to me that a subject that was so important to the original Michaelian group has been lost to post-original Michaelian group Michaelian students. Also lost, generally speaking, to post-original Michaelian group groups is the information that there are a couple of stages of spiritual development beyond Balanced Man. These are named Adept and Master; together these two have their own chapter.

There are numerous other concepts that are related to Balanced Man, and they each have their own terminology. For instance, there are Levels of Being, Centers and Parts of Centers, Center of Gravity, Magnetic Center, Mechanical Man, Soul and Essence, False Personality, True Personality, Traps, Energy Leaks, Psychic Energy, Friction, Chakras, Meditation and Concentration, John Lilly, and Schools. Each of these terms has its own chapter in this *Study Papers* book.

The phrase, *Balanced Man*, originated with Gurdjieff. In that teaching it is often contrasted with Mechanical Man, and these terms were brought into the original Michaelian group because founding members were familiar with Gurdjieff. Basically, Mechanical Man is someone who operates more or less automatically and habitually out of his nature and his nurture — the personality he was born with and the personality he develops afterward. Mechanical Man is not aware of any transcendent influences, those transcendent influences often referred to as *Essence* in both the Gurdjieff and Michaelian teachings. In both, *Man* is used in the sense of *Human*, not pertaining to males specifically. By taking a look at what Balance meant to Gurdjieff, we will see what it meant to members of the original Michaelian group, and we will understand its use by the Michaels.

Levels of Being per Gurdjieff

Gurdjieff taught that there were seven stages in the development of *awareness* on the spiritual path, which he called “Levels of Being.” The middle stage of the hierarchy was said to be transitional between the three ‘lower’ and the three ‘higher’ stages, and the key descriptive word for it was *Balanced*. The higher up the seven-step ladder one was, the more *awake* one was, to use Gurdjieff’s term. Before the middle stage, people were said to be “Mechanical.” The following quote is from one of Gurdjieff’s star pupils, Peter Ouspensky.

Interjection: if you are not familiar with the way that Ouspensky, and his teacher, Gurdjieff, use the word “school”, it would be helpful to understanding some material quoted below to glance at the subsection “Schools According to Gurdjieff and Ouspensky” in the chapter “School — Learning — Teacher — Student” in this *Study Papers* book.

Man number one, number two, and number three: these are people who constitute Mechanical humanity on the same level on which they are born.

Man number ONE means man in whom the center of gravity of his psychic life lies in the MOVING CENTER. This is the man of the physical body, the man with whom the moving and the instinctive functions constantly outweigh the emotional and thinking functions.

Man Number TWO means man on the same level of development, but man in whom the center of gravity of his psychic life lies in the EMOTIONAL CENTER, that is, man with whom the emotional functions outweigh all others; the man of feeling, the emotional man.

Man number THREE means man on the same level of development but man in whom the center of gravity of his psychic life lies in the INTELLECTUAL CENTER, that is, man with whom the thinking functions gain the upper hand over the moving, instinctive, and emotional functions; the man of reason, who goes into everything from theories, from mental considerations. [P.D. Ouspensky, *In Search of the Miraculous*, p. 71]

The first three categories are practically on the same level. Man number 1: a man in whom the moving or instinctive centers predominate over the intellectual and emotional — Physical Man. Man number 2: a man in whom the emotional center predominates over the intellectual, moving, and instinctive — Emotional man. Man number 3: a man in whom the intellectual center predominates over the emotional, moving, and instinctive — Intellectual man. In ordinary life we meet only these three categories of man. Each one of us and everyone we know is either number 1, number 2, or number 3. There are higher categories of man, but men are not born already belonging to these higher categories. They are all born number 1, number 2, number 3 and can reach higher categories only through [spiritual] schools.

Man number FOUR is not born as such. He is a product of school culture. He differs from man number 1, number 2, and number 3 by his knowledge of himself, by his understanding of his position, and as it is expressed technically, by his having acquired a permanent center of gravity. This last means the idea of acquiring unity, consciousness, permanent 'I', and will. That is, the idea of his development has already become for him more important than his other interests. It must be added to the characteristics of man number 4, that his functions and centers are more **balanced**, in a way in which they could not be **balanced** without work on himself, according to school principles and methods. [**Bold** text is my emphasis.]

Man number FIVE is a man who has acquired unity and [subjective] self-consciousness. He is different from ordinary man, because in him, one of the higher centers [*the higher emotional center*] already works, and he has many functions and powers that an ordinary man — that is, man number 1, number 2, and number 3 — does not possess.

Man number SIX is a man who has acquired objective consciousness. Another higher center works in him [*the higher intellectual center*]. He possesses many more new faculties and powers, beyond the understanding of ordinary man.

Man number SEVEN is a man who has attained all that a man can attain. He has a permanent 'I' and free will. He can control all the states of consciousness in himself and he already cannot lose anything he has acquired. [P.D. Ouspensky, *The Psychology of Man's Possible Evolution*, pp. 53–56]

These then are the seven Levels of Being in Gurdjieff's teaching. Notice that they are generally related to the Centers. The Centers were the only "Overleaf" that Gurdjieff was familiar with (although he did not call it that, and the Michaels added six others to it during the early months of the original Michaelian group). The next section of this chapter describes Man number Four, Balanced Man, in greater detail.

Balanced Man per Gurdjieff

Following are some more quotes from two of Ouspensky's books that bear specifically on the subject of Man #4, Balanced Man. Other resources can be found on the Internet. It is with this background that members of the original Michaelian group understood the differences among people, and what the Michaels built upon and emphasized.

Man No.4. This means the beginning of change, chiefly in consciousness but also in knowledge and capacity for observation. [P.D. Ouspensky, *The Fourth Way*, p. 15]

Man No.4 is a man who has acquired a permanent center of gravity, but in every thing else he is an ordinary man. [P.D. Ouspensky, *The Fourth Way*, p. 101]

Man No.4 knows his aim and how his aim can be attained. He goes with his eyes open, while we [Men Numbers 1, 2 & 3] go with our eyes shut. [P.D. Ouspensky, *The Fourth Way*, p. 141]

Man number four is an **intermediate** stage. Man number four is not born ready-made. He is born one, two, or three, and becomes four only as a result of efforts of a definite character. Man number four is always the product of school work. He can neither be born, nor develop accidentally or as the result of ordinary influences of bringing up, education, and so on. Man number four already stands on a different level to man number one, two, and three; he has a permanent center of gravity which consists in his ideas, in his valuation of the work, and in his relation to the school. In addition, his psychic [psychological] centers have already begun to be **balanced**; one center in him cannot have such a preponderance over others as is the case with people of the first three categories. He already begins to know himself and begins to know whither he is going. The knowledge of man number four is a very different kind of knowledge. It is knowledge which comes from man number five, who in turn receives it from man number six, who has received it from man number seven. But, of course, man number four assimilates of this knowledge only what is possible according to his powers. But, in comparison with man number one, man number two, and man number three, man number four has begun to get free from the subjective elements in his knowledge and to move along the path towards objective knowledge. [P.D. Ouspensky, *In Search of the Miraculous*, p. 71–73]

Building on Gurdjieff's concept of Balance, this description was fleshed out and used in the original Michaelian group.

Descriptions of Balance in the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

The following extracts from original Michaelian group transcriptions are Q&A exchanges, where an original Michaelian group member asks a question (or makes a comment), and the Michaels provide an answer. These extracts are not presented in the chronological order in which they were given. As is my custom, I usually provide some explanatory comments following the question or answer. Underlined words are my emphasis, to draw attention to what it is that I comment on. Sometimes I embed words or phrases [in brackets] that I believe help to clarify the question or the answer. Numerous study papers related to this chapter are to be found among my comments.

The first quote is actually from Soleal, the entity who preceded the Michaels for the original Michaelian group, rather than from the Michaels, and the word balance is not used, but it seems to apply in principle to Man #4 and higher. Soleal was actually identified as an *Adept*, the alleged next step in the enlightenment hierarchy above Balanced Man. (Refer to the chapter on “Adept and Master”.)

I think a sense of responsibility toward your job is essential. Don't you have a sense of responsibility toward your job?

Oh yes, I certainly do. I just **do not worry** about it. It takes skill to separate [responsibility from worry]. That is your Friction, to learn to take the action necessary with **calm detachment**. [Soleal, early 1973]

Friction is another one of those concepts that came into the original Michaelian group from the Gurdjieffian teachings; refer to the chapter with that name. Soleal here, and Michael elsewhere, used the term occasionally. So far as they both were concerned, Friction was catalyst for spiritual growth. Friction is whatever happens inside or outside that gets the Mechanical Man upset. This makes one aware of issues that probably need to be eliminated if one is to be happy and healthy. When one no longer experiences Friction in life — when one sees and accepts reality exactly as it is without getting perturbed — then one has become Balanced.

Another characteristic of Balanced Man is the ability to remain constant:

*In the Gurdjieff school, we were always supposed to **remain neutral and not go up and down**. What you wish to separate from are **all the peaks and valleys of the False Personality**. The Essence seeks ecstasy. [16 December 1973]*

There is internal Friction as well as external, and “harshness” is another word for issues within oneself that will relax as one achieves Balance:

Hopefully, the personality which produces **harshness will soften** as you move toward Balance. [08 February 1974]

So, being mellow is a symptom of Balance. The following passage reinforces the gentleness exhibited by people in Balance:

*In the **tranquil** period, are Centers Balanced?*

Usually the soul experiences a moment of Balance, yes; also during meditation. [03 March 1974]

How does the “adept” and “occult master” correlate to the Number 4, Number 5, and Number 6 Man of Gurdjieff?

They are not precisely the same, although the Adept is usually crystallized Number Four [Man]. The occult Master [Number Seven] has use of Higher Centers at will. It [Man #4] merely means that this soul is **in Balance with no danger of backsliding**. [03 March 1974]

Crystallized is another term that the Michaels borrowed from Gurdjieff. It means fully formed, stabilized, and permanently set. We have a chart document from the original Michaelian group equating “Man #5” with “Adept”, so I interpret the above statement to mean that a crystallized Man #4 is a Man #5/Adept still in development. As one can see, with both Gurdjieff and the Michaels, Man number Four was said to be Balanced, as well as the Adept and the Master. (That same chart document equates “Master” with Man #7.) “Adept” and “Master” are very high Levels of Being. The Balanced Level of Being seems to be a prerequisite. In other words, one has to become crystallized in Balance before one can develop as an Adept, and one has to become crystallized as an Adept before one can develop as a Master.

Someone asked a question regarding his apprehension at changing jobs (going into business for himself).

It is primarily a fear of failure, which is not at all complex, and usually accompanies a move of this type. We would be astonished if you did not manifest some of this. A **completely tranquil acceptance of the possibility of failure** requires Balance. [16 June 1974]

Someone brought up the subject of trust. He asked for the group response as to how we felt about trusting him, et cetera. Considerable discussion followed.

If one is truly striving toward Balance, there will be a **desire for harmony in the environment**. They are one in the same. There is only chaos in the environments of those struggling with conflicts on the glamorous Physical Plane. The struggle to meet the expectations of others that is, sadly enough, most often without knowledge of those expectations. There is so much guesswork going on, how could you possibly trust? We agree with you more than you think, that ultimately trust has to do with **constancy — predictability**, if you will. This endows the persona with a certain amount of **reliability** with which to operate.

Do you refer to “predictability” on my part?

At first, yes, then with those you allow access to. If the emotions are chaotic, the Work cannot proceed in this direction; that is where the Balance comes in. When the student first comes into contact with an unfamiliar Center, there is an initial surge, and then until the adjustment is made, the insights are unrelenting and chaotic. [24 September 1974]

There are some more words to describe Balance: desiring harmony, being constant, predictable, and reliable. The opposite of these are said to be chaotic emotions. We could add chaotic thoughts and actions to this, since achieving Balance is about bringing all of the lower Centers into conscious control — ruling them rather than being ruled by them. More will be said about the relationship of *Balance* to *Centers* in a following section of this chapter.

Mallory: I wonder about my recent backpacking trips: how would this relate to my Centers? I stopped picking at my fingers, did not think, did not feel — I just was. I did not feel any more “awake” or more high. I feel uncomfortable because I feel I’m not accomplishing anything.

It is related to the fact that students often experience an Essence or Balanced state for prolonged periods when **removed from the Maya, error, familiar Maya of their environment, and are forced to “be” in the moment**. [17 September 74]

Refer to the chapter “Maya” for more information about that subject. The Balanced Level of Being is the first Level above and beyond the lower Levels/Centers, and there Essence contact is routine. Of course it is much easier to be Balanced when one is relaxing in nature than when one is in crisis. So maybe one should spend more time in nature than in crisis to get a feel for Balance, and then recall that state of mind when one finds oneself in a crisis.

The exchange which was begun above continued into the next question:

Mallory: It is not a dramatic thing; it just is. A person in the present is not experiencing anything dramatic. Does a Balanced Man feel high? It was said last time that the “surge” comes when one becomes Balanced.

If the moment is a quiet one, Balanced man will feel the **tranquility**. If it is a “high,” then Balanced Man will feel the **ecstasy** of the moment. Ironically, the reverse is often true in Mechanical Man. Young Souls involved with ecology-legalization will often feel surges of emotionalism when confronted with a **pacific**, woodland environment. [17 September 1974]

The point here is that a Balanced person is internally harmonious and consistent and serene when appropriate, and blissful (in the Higher Emotional Center) when appropriate, even under duress. This passage tells us that higher states of consciousness are not a part of Balance *per se*. Note that “equanimity” and “tranquility” are good synonyms for Balance.

Following is another statement that a Balanced person is not a scattered, chaotic person. One can depend on them to do, feel, and think the appropriate thing.

This will be far more believable coming from a Balanced student than a scattered one. [12 November 1974]

The male-female relationship is one of the realms of life that most challenges a Balanced state of consciousness. Following is some advice given to a couple in the original Michaelian group:

It would be possible to establish a warm and close **constant** relationship, only if the fears of both could be erased. You [the female] must begin to perceive your own tendency to fluctuate in [response to] the intensity with which he gives of himself. In the Balanced Man, there is no fluctuation of this sort. In the climb toward Balance, this is one of the very real lessons that must be learned. Balanced Man is above all constant in his relationships. This constancy stems primarily from a **lack of fear**, for Balanced Man knows that he cannot be “trapped” by another less-Balanced personality. In true **agape** there is, of course, an intensive, constant flow of love and caring from one to another. The Personality rejects this out of hand, of course; it cannot even admit the possibility. That is why it is so difficult for you to photograph yourself intermittently dispensing affection in your interpersonal relationships.... This culture places such an enormous value on the quality of individual relationships that it is almost impossible for the student still struggling with Balance to separate from this in a confined relationship such as a resident school or commune. To see this and choose to separate from it as a task is a strong sign of progress. In very advanced students, there is a degree of **detachment** from the master tapes that sometimes works against them in strange ways. For one thing, it sometimes makes them unaware of behaviors that are still continuing on lower levels, mostly by rote, to some degree. There is always, until Balance has been achieved, the risk of slipping back into these behavior patterns. [15 January 1975]

The “master tapes” spoken of here is terminology used in the original Michaelian group, borrowed from John Lilly and his book, *Programming the Human Biocomputer*. “Tapes” refers to the programming of the biology at a very deep level, producing behavior from below the level of consciousness. Think of the reel-to-reel magnetic tapes used in the mainframe computers of the day. Refer to the chapter “Bio-computer — Its Programs and Tapes” for more information. Balanced Man is not trapped in his biology, but has integrated his spirituality, his soul, his Essence with it.

About relationships in general we have this:

No relationship that is not between Balanced Man [on both sides] can be one hundred percent intimate. [01 February 1975]

With the above, we see several more descriptions of the Balanced state: constancy, fearlessness, and non-attachment. So, the reader may want to add “working on Balance via relationships” to their toolkit; more tools are in a section further on.

Someone asked about “artificial rhythms.”

Energy, you see, does have a vibratory quality, and psychic energy is no exception to this. If the vibratory quality of the universal flow [through the Assimilation Center] is neutral, and the psychic energy flow from the Essence [through the higher Centers] is positive, then the vibratory quality of the Personality [through the lower Centers] must be negative. We would call this [Personality vibration] “artificial rhythm,” as we would call the other [Universal and Essence vibration] the “natural rhythm.” Personality lives with artificial rhythms always. Seldom does it even come into contact with natural rhythms. [Spiritual] Schools of the type we have been discussing many times will produce an environment wherein natural rhythms begin to flow. As students come to Balance, they find their own rhythmic niche and follow it through. Natural rhythms, of course, require that the Essence be satisfied with its occupation of the moment, whether it is Moving [Centered], Emotional [Centered], or Intellectual [Centered]. Much work still must be done in **dissolving the grip on allurements**. This still has you fast in its jaws, and we wish that you all could feel the level of vibrations emanating from you this evening: diffuse, peaked, and jerky, with no particular pattern other than discordance and jumbled rhythms going off into the ethers with no direction or focus. At this point in the Work, it is not necessary that you be receiving data. In order to focus, you must merely **concentrate and focus your energies**. If you are bored with the material being shared, that simply indicates to us that you are coming from an inappropriate Center. The

same goes for apprehension over new students or visitors who happen to have strong Overleaves. If you respond with the appropriate Center, the apprehension will fade. [21 February 1975]

There are, of course, chapters on “Essence and Personality”, and “School”, and “Work”. In this quote we see more description of what imBalance is like: discordant, jerky, jumbled, unfocused, bored, apprehensive.

There are other spiritual paths than achieving Balance, and that is okay:

Why doesn't he see the Personality in her and work on this?

He perceives and chooses not to react. That is not the aim of this [Eckankar] movement. People drawn into this are not interested in achieving Balance in Being [as the Gurdjieff and Michaelian teachings groups are]. They [Eckankar] are interested in having a “mystical” experience, and this they receive. [15 April 1975]

Is Balanced Man tapeless?

No. There are survival tapes [programs for the biological functions] that even the realized Masters must have — the “how to” tapes. [15 April 1975]

In this passage, just as in a previous passage, “tapes” are “programs” in the “biocomputer” that play out in life, often in inappropriate ways. This of course was terminology adopted from the way mainframe computers stored programs and information in the 1970s. In the first half of the Twentieth Century, before computers existed, Gurdjieff used an equivalent concept, Mechanical Man. More is said about tapes further on.

Going Toward Balance per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

Achieving Balance was a major component of the Michaels' spiritual path. There are numerous instances of the phrase “moving toward Balance” in the original Michaelian group transcriptions; this section is the collection of them.

Dick: I am coming to a realization of ignorance. Is the “Dark Night of the Soul” [poem] similar to what [Saint] John [of the Cross] felt? I am beginning to appreciate the ignorance of previous conditions. I do not want to talk because there is nothing to say — you realize you know nothing.

We do feel that you are going toward Balance, and yes, the feeling [of knowing nothing] is the same [as what Saint John of the Cross felt]. That is the first step. You must plunge all the way down in order to start the climb up. Even Jesus had to do this — even before the Infinite Soul would manifest. [27 January 1974]

Wikipedia has an entry on this phrase that says: “The term 'dark night (of the soul)' is used in Christianity for a spiritual crisis in a journey towards union with God, like that described [in a poem] by Saint John of the Cross.” (>https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dark_Night_of_the_Soul<)

Dick: I think I'm Centered in Intellectual Part. I used to think I was in Emotional Center.

We think so too, but you use Emotional Center often. You have had a tendency toward downward [energy] Leaks. This is not so much in evidence now. You are moving toward Balance [where all Centers are used]. [08 September 1973]

There is a chapter on “Energy and Energy Leaks” further on in this *Study Papers* book.

Dick: Agape love sputters for only fifteen seconds and it does not happen often. Is this moving toward a #4 person?

We agree. It [moving toward Balance] is a difficult place to be, but definitely rewarding. [03 March 1974]

In the long run and when successful, the destination of Balance is rewarding, but the above implies that the road to getting there can be fleeting at first and rough along the way.

Is SusanT an adept now?

This lady could certainly become an Adept, but lacks command of her emotions. This imBalance prevents her. [16 June 1974]

Over and over the original Michaelian group channeling maintains that gaining *conscious* control of the lower Centers is essential in going toward Balance. This is not the same thing as stuffing, ignoring, or denying their appropriate function in the Positive Poles. There is a part of one's being (Essence) that can ride above whatever is happening inside and outside the lower Centers.

Mechanical Man finds his suffering very hard to give up and certainly seldom does this willingly. It only comes with the struggle for Balance. [29 October 1974]

Keeping a lookout for times when one is attached to suffering, one will know one needs to let go of it. It might not detach easily, but one can consciously *decide* to let go of it. This is a very Buddhist practice. “Struggle” may have been a poor choice of words here. It is an oxymoron, because struggling with suffering

does not let go of it. Elsewhere, Buddhists and the Michaels make clear that mitigating suffering involves non-attachment to it, or dis-identification with it, and identifying with a higher state of consciousness. Likewise, moving toward Balance is not so much a struggle as it is a giving up and a letting go.

Balance of Centers per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

As indicated in the previous sections, the Balanced *Level of Being* has more to do with Centers than anything else. One of the major components of the spiritual path is to Balance the lower Centers (Moving, Emotional, and Intellectual). That is, instead of habitually *reacting* to life's situations from one or two of them no matter how inappropriate, the student on the spiritual path according to Gurdjieff and the Michaels learns to *respond* from the particular Center fitting the situation and do it in a healthy way. The student develops some of the lower Centers that are not normal for him. The original Michaelian group transcriptions had considerable to say about Balance of Centers, and that is the subject of this section.

We start off with a definition straight from one of the original editor-typists of the transcriptions:

What is Balance of Centers?

Comment: Access to all Centers at will when required — that is, all Centers doing their correct work, not wrong working, such as growing ulcers and causing hypertension, etc. [03 March 1974]

And there is a lot more to it than that:

Comment: I'd say he was in Balance so he is not in any Center. [23 June 74]

It can in fact be difficult to tell what, if any, lower Center a Balanced person is responding from. The #4-Balanced state of consciousness cannot necessarily be characterized as #1-Moving, #2-Emotional, or #3-Intellectual. The study paper further on, "The Instinctive Center", makes the point that Balanced consciousness is equivalent to being seated in the Neutral Assimilation Center because the NAC is the composite or blend of all the other Centers.

One of the comments in the transcriptions describes how they understood Balance of Centers:

Georges Gurdjieff said that the only way to consciousness was through the Moving Center. When Peter Ouspensky was nearing his death he had premonitions of it, and he advised everyone to abandon the system and start a new system based on [doing] what you want. Are there any comments?

The man Georges [Gurdjieff] was accurate in assessing the needs of most students. Yes, this [Moving Centered approach] can be a way toward Balance. The man Peter [Ouspensky] glimpsed the truth in the need for a living teacher who can render the teaching dynamic [adapted to the times and to the students]. He saw change in the attitudes and the "wants" of his students. This was an Intellectually Centered teacher with mostly Emotionally Centered students. The man Georges was Moving Centered in the beginning, and had mostly Intellectually Centered disciples. This helped him to verify the need for Balance. He and Peter both had a tendency to deprecate Emotional Center, and the man Peter went even further and refused to acknowledge the very real need to grow to the point where sexuality can be expressed through the Sexual Center. This was due, for the most part, to guilty inhibitions. The man Georges did not have this handicap, but did not give Emotional Center quite the status it deserved. Balance is just that — a balance of all Centers. But, yes, most of you are suffering from physical inertia [a deficit of Moving Center]. [27 February 1974]

That was another good general statement about developing and using all Centers appropriately if one is to achieve Balance.

I would like to know if the Gurdjieff idea of Man #1 [kinetically-focused], Man #2 [emotionally-focused], Man #3 [mentally-focused], et cetera, is correct, and if so, at what level am I.

It is valid when the Man number six is thought of as the Transcendental Soul. You are going toward Balance [Man #4]. Fear of emotional abandon holds you back [from achieving Balance] — the fear of losing emotional control. [20 October 1973]

Fear of any particular Center means of course that one's consciousness has not risen above it and gained control over it, which is the case when one is Balanced. The *control* mentioned here, which a Balanced person has over the lower Centers, does not mean *suppression*. There are times when uninhibited emotional (or intellectual or kinetic) expression is appropriate, and it would be inappropriate to deny or repress it.

The next question and answer exchange is an example of appropriate use of Centers:

Dick: I am in my head [Intellectual Center] at [my job in] the hospital, in Moving Center playing golf, Sexual Center in sex, but my Emotional Center is always "playing background music." The Emotional Center seems to pull in the opposite direction [of all those others].

This [Emotional Center background music] is the sensation that accompanies the beginning of the moving toward harmony and Balance. This sensation, however unpleasant it may seem, heralds being able to bring all Centers into play during all activity, so that the situation can be [intellectually] assessed, [emotionally] felt, and [moving] acted upon. Not in everyone it does, but in you, the Emotional Center has come in for the strongest barrage of work. You must be able to see intellectually, feel emotionally, and act with Moving Center almost instantly in order to be working out of Essence through intuition. [16 December 73]

This would seem to indicate that as one develops on the spiritual path, the Center that needs Balancing will start to act up, clamor for attention, and then get worked on. The word *intuition* here is appropriate for the influence from Essence when working through the Positive Poles of *all* of the Centers, not just the lower Centers mentioned here, but also the middle Center and the higher Centers.

The following passage explains more about what is meant by *control* of the Centers. It is an intentional centralizing, channeling, refining, and transmuting of the psychic energy for appropriate utilization:

I would like comments on energies used by various energy Centers.

All of this energy is psychic energy. Imagine a superconductor with many terminals, each representing a different power drain. If one of these users or consumers is utilizing massive amounts of power, there will be a corresponding loss in the other areas, occasionally even short circuits and blown fuses. The power that energizes the psyche is all the same type, or rather, the same grade of electromagnetic radiation. There is no refinement from one Center to the other until the powers of transmutation become yours to utilize; then this energy becomes centralized — channeled, so to speak. When we speak of harmonious Balance, we refer to that state in which this concentration is reached. And this also goes for the release of specific amounts of energy.... We wish to remind you that there are two very specific types of reactions: implosion and explosion; also, two specific charges in polarization: negative and positive. A great deal of the energy utilized by the lower Centers in life situations are implosion reactions with negative charges. Controlled reactions of this type do not ever become as spectacular as their antitheses [the higher Centers]. [27 December 1973]

The date of this passage is approximately one year before the reveal of Positive and Negative Poles of Overleaves, but the phrases "implosion reactions" and "negative charges" seem to foreshadow the description of Negative Poles.

There was a definition of psychic energy in an earlier session:

Psychic energy is the energy generated by the Essence. It is naturally a more refined energy than that generated by the internal [lower] Centers of emotion, intellect and instinctive and moving functions. This energy is independent of the others. [29 November 1973]

Some months later there was an exchange that revealed the relationship of psychic energy to Balance and higher Centers:

The source for the [psychic] energy is the same. The speed that it is burned as fuel is faster when utilized by the Higher Centers.

Dick: Clarify this.

The fuel is the same for all Centers. It is the consumer [Center] that is different.

The production of fuel: does it have anything to do with self-remembering? In order to balance the Centers, we have to have a larger supply to reach higher Centers.

An analogy would be an old fashioned stove with insufficient insulation, a leaky chimney and an inefficient flue compared to a brand new radar [microwave] oven. Moments of pure consciousness do produce contact with Higher Centers, yes.

Is Self-remembering the way to produce psychic energy?

Not the way, simply the by-product. The Self-remembering must be produced first through those methods we have outlined to you [meditation, concentration, fasting, study]. Then as you go progressively toward Balance, you automatically will have more and more flashes of consciousness, opening the door to higher expression. [07 February 1974]

Numerous times during the original Michaelian group, the Michaels mentioned these methods for achieving Balance: meditation, concentration, fasting, and study. Another name for Balance is also used here: Consciousness of higher expression which is present in the higher Centers.

One Scholar was concerned that his lack of Emotional Center would be an impediment to achieving Balance:

Edgar: If Scholars who are not Emotionally Centered have trouble with their emotions, how can we overcome that part in us?

First, you must wish this. Most Scholars have little regard for emotional entanglements, unless they happen to be Emotionally Centered. Most Scholars would prefer not to be bothered with the responsibility that goes along with these intrigues. The way you can handle it is to become Balanced, and thus come into contact with the Emotional Center and learn to control the output. Right now, there is sporadic high output with little insight — it resembles volcanic eruptions. [27 December 1973]

Here again is that word “control”, but remember it does not mean repression; control means it does not rule one automatically; one rules it with heightened, Balanced self-awareness.

Ray: How close am I to being Balanced?

Work must be done still in the Intellectual Parts of all Centers and in the Moving Part of Moving Center. You need to be able to **detach from the romance** of even this [Michael] Teaching. [06 March 1974]

Some prefer the word and concept “non-attachment” to “detachment” for describing a Balanced response. Detachment implies that one does not care about what is going on; non-attachment does not imply that. The ideal toward which one on the spiritual path aspires is to empathetically and compassionately care and yet not lose personal integrity, or contact and intimate involvement with reality. Regarding “romanticizing” things, that refers to an idealistic projection of one’s own unrealistic perceptions onto something else. It typically comes from the Negative Pole of the Emotional Center.

Edgar: Moses “raised the serpent” and Jesus said, “If I be lifted up,” etc. What is the relationship to Kundalini here.

Yes, this is the highest form of movable energy you have at your disposal, and therefore that which you can utilize for each: the emotional states or Higher Emotional Centers, Higher Intellectual Centers — which are synonymous with subjective consciousness [and] objective consciousness respectively. The lower Centers are fixed, and the energy is like a closed system. The higher Centers are capable of ecstasy or bliss; the lower Centers are not. The Sexual Center or the Kundalini force can only be breached by bringing the lower Centers into harmonious Balance — in other words, in **separating from the Maya or illusions for glamour of the Physical Plane, and by giving up your expectations** of what a sexual experience “should” be. [24 April 1974]

The relationship of Kundalini (or psychic energy, as it is otherwise called) to the Centers is discussed in another chapter “Sexuality”. There we see that the Sexual Center was a higher Center, aka the Higher Moving Center. There are also the chapters “Maya” and “Glamour” in this *Study Papers* book.

Joan: Unless there is Balance [in the lower Centers] we can’t reach higher Centers? Am I getting in touch with my Moving Center?

The desire is certainly there, and sometimes you are able to just move without rationalizing it away as being “good for me.” When you reach the point where you no longer do this rationalization, you will be utilizing the Moving Center exclusively for these moving activities. [16 June 1974]

Mechanical Man lies to himself all of the time. Mechanical Man tends to rationalize his emotions and actions with improper use of his Intellectual Center, rather than perceive and use the other Centers accurately, realistically, and appropriately from the Balanced state of consciousness.

Loving is [from the] Higher Emotion[al Center] and that requires Balance [of all Centers]. The person who is “conscious” is not a doer anyway. Most who have reached that exalted state of physical being prefer not to *do*. They are content merely to *be* with the present. [14 September 1974]

Note the juxtaposition of “balance” with “be” — not “do”, “feel”, or “think.” A Balanced person has a state of consciousness outside or above or beyond doing, feeling, and thinking.

Dick: Should the proper role for the Intellectual Center for a Balanced person be shut down until there is an actual problem to be solved?

[Not exactly:] The Intellectual Center should be functioning as a decision-making partner in the process. The Emotional Center cannot make decisions properly, as it cannot think out the ramifications of any given situation with the speed necessary to make a valid, split-second decision. The Intellectual Center works at a far greater speed than does the Emotional Center when the soul [person] is in Balance. In Mechanical Man, the Moving Center takes over the rapid functions. This is, of course, necessary for survival of the body, as when a hand is removed from a hot stove by the Moving Center in cooperation with the Instinctive [Physiological] Center. In

Balanced Man, the Intellectual Center claims its rightful functioning and becomes the decision maker. In other words, Balanced Man chooses to remove the hand. [17 September 1974]

Here again we see that Balanced people are more “conscious” or “self-aware” or less “automatic-mechanical” than people operating merely out of their nature and nurture in the lower Centers.

A word about Balance for the new students: this means simultaneously utilizing the Moving Part of Moving Center, the Emotional Part of Emotional Center, and the Intellectual Part of Intellectual Center, and in a split second differentiating which applies in a given situation, with no consequent energy leak. [10 July 1974]

Another point in achieving Balance is to not have extraneous Parts of Centers active and distracting or “leaking” energy. More is said about is in the chapter “Energy and Energy Leaks”.

Dick: I've read that, in Zen, once one has reached satori, he realizes he's always been there. Does this mean that all the Centers are operating all the time, but we are not aware of them?

All Centers are not working in Mechanical Man — they are only potentially workable. This is why perceptions of man are so inaccurate and so scattered. This is the reason that criminal identification is so fraught with error. No two souls perceive the moment in precisely the same way, unless, of course, you happen to have two Balanced men [wherein **all Centers are working correctly**]. [17 September 1974]

“Satori is a Japanese Buddhist term for awakening, ‘comprehension; understanding’. In the Zen Buddhist tradition, satori refers to a deep experience of kenshō, ‘seeing into one’s true nature’. Ken means ‘seeing’, shō means ‘nature’ or ‘essence’. Satori and kenshō are commonly translated as enlightenment, a word that is also used to translate bodhi, prajñā and Buddhahood.” [<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Satori> — retrieved 16 October 2021]

The final point to be made at the end of this section is that Balance is not just that the lower Centers are functioning well, but Centers all up and down the spectrum are working well.

So now that we have Balance defined, how do we get there? That is the subject of the next section.

Achieving Balance per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

It is one thing to understand Balance and aspire to it; it is another thing to have the tools and practices to achieve it. In this section, we are given the toolkit. They are highlighted in bold text to make them easy to spot.

[Gurdjieff taught that] To translate what you have learned intellectually as knowledge into what you do [is] “being” [a Gurdjieff term]. [To use a Biblical reference:] It is “turning water into wine.”

This is, of course, our Teaching also. The discipline, of course, includes going toward Balance through **concentration, meditation, and other conscious[ness] raising techniques; also the understanding and ultimate complete acceptance of all others, leading to the spiritual Agape which is the doorway to true consciousness**. [03 February 1974]

So, there some specific tools are listed. For more information about them, check out the chapters on “Concentration and Meditation”, and “Agape”. Another tool is having higher Centered experiences:

An analogy would be an old-fashioned stove with insufficient insulation, a leaky chimney, and an inefficient flue compared to a brand new radar [microwave] oven. **Moments of pure consciousness** do produce contact with higher Centers, yes. [09 February 1974]

The phrase, “moments of pure consciousness” seems to be related to the following question about “self-remembering” from the previous day’s session:

Abdullah felt very highly charged bolts of energy coming in. He don't need much sleep, and cannot find a way to outlay the energy.

You can utilize these periods of positive energy flow to work toward Balance through work in the Centers. Moving Center is a good one for this channel [Sarah], and is, of course, the easiest to reach. [All you have to do is move your body.] Other Good Work can involve the **breathing exercises** that you experienced, **turning the energy upward and out into the liberated meditation**. You see, even meditation is subject to real and artificial space, and the Personality imposes limitations on the space that the meditation may occupy. The liberated meditation of the Essence utilizes the energy efficiently, and does not cause leakage, resulting in fatigue. The moments of power that those in the Caution Mode experience from time to time may be utilized in the same fashion. [08 February 1975]

Other methods for achieving Balance of Centers are ones commonly used in esoteric spiritual teachings, namely, breathing techniques and directed intention.

Is self-remembering the way to produce psychic energy?

Not the way, simply the by-product. The **self-remembering** must be produced first through those methods we have outlined to you [meditation, concentration, fasting, study]. Then as you go progressively toward Balance, you automatically will have more and more **flashes of consciousness**, opening the door to higher expression [psychic energy]. [09 February 1974]

Note that “Self-remembering” is yet another term from the Gurdjieffian teachings. It means:

Beyond the division of attention lies “remembering oneself” — a state, which is permanent in a “conscious” person, while fleeting and temporary in the average person. In this state a person sees what is seen without ever losing sight of himself seeing. Ordinarily, when concentrating on something, people lose their sense of ‘I’, although they may, as it were, passively react to the stimulus they are concentrating on. In self-remembering the ‘I’ is not lost. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fourth_Way — retrieved in 2014, subsequently removed]

Refer to the chapter on “Self-remembering” for more information. It is good work to add the practice of self-remembering to the toolkit of spiritual growth (meditation, concentration, study) influences, while not ignoring increasing self-awareness of, and conscious use of, the lower Centers.

Self-remembering and the experience of higher Centers were mentioned above as tools for moving toward Balance. Another tool is to expose yourself to higher influences that will draw you up from the lower Centers into Balance; in order to Balance the Centers, we must have a larger than normal supply of higher Center energy. This tool (higher Center experience) is mentioned in another passage:

Joan listens to [the music of the German composer Richard] Wagner and has a high. Where does this come from?

Very **high influences** such as this can prepare you for transient higher states. These can be experienced in the moment and perceived as **great, overwhelming joy**. This is fine, but should be experienced when they happen and not sought to the exclusion of work with [Balancing] lower Centers [Moving, Emotional, Intellectual]. [15 April 1975]

Music (and dancing) have been a means to experience higher or greater states of consciousness from the beginning of recorded history for sure, and probably from the time of ensoulment.

Dick: I would like to ask about Eugene. He leads a simple, healthy life in Essence. He uses his Moving Center and enjoys what he does.

This man now has access to the sum of the Moving Center. He needs only to **pursue his present line of internal questioning** to come into Balance. [03 March 1974]

The hint here is to look inside for the subtle promptings of Essence and pay attention to them. If there is something niggling one at the moment, it might be Essence drawing one into Balance.

I have trouble with seeing Mohandas Gandhi as a Transcendental Soul. Why do I feel negative toward him and his way of denial?

It [**denial**] is only one way to achieve the Balance. We have offered still another. [03 July 1974]

Gandhi’s type of “denial” was valid, according to the Michaels, but it was extreme, and probably not a preferred way for most aspirants for Balance. The “denial” here spoken of was perhaps Gandhi’s focus on the things that really mattered to him and to Essence, rather than pandering to the whims of the body, the lower self, the False Personality, the cultural imprinting, and such.

Are my Centers changing from Emotional to Balance?

Yes, you are beginning to utilize Intellectual Center. This has been a hard pull for you, and you still react emotionally to what you read, occasionally, but the work is good. [03 July 1974]

This passage is best interpreted as a recommendation to avoid *negative* and *inappropriate* reactions to what one reads. Some people get emotionally upset about things they cannot do anything about, such as what they read in a newspaper, but this is characterized here and elsewhere as an energy drain and a distraction from the path toward Balance. It is a different matter if what one reads elicits a positive response — to do, feel, or think positively.

Abdullah: How about Balance?

We speak of blocks now. Coming to Balance entails **removing those blocks**. Blocks experienced, blocks erected, by those in this room have been largely predicated, yes, we would agree, upon three incidents involving withdrawal, retreat, dissemblance. This is the same for most of you, not limited to the one who asked the question. [26 December 1974]

It is unstated what specific “blocks” are being referred to, but there are a number of references to “traps” in the passages quoted in a section further on. Elsewhere Balance is said to be characterized by flowing freely with the situation, rather than getting hung up by Moving Center habits, Emotional Center attachments, and Intellectual Center expectations.

David asked if he had accelerated along wrong lines, outside of his boundaries, too quickly and without enough knowledge. If so, what does he have to do to Balance himself?

You are well aware of the fact that you have a marked tendency to overreach your available energies. This is no exception. The only way out of the morass is to again **give yourself space**. This is something you did not allow for in your present prospectus. Planning does take energies away from growth, and the more complex the planning becomes, the more energies are expended uselessly. Any venture too well planned is bound to die aborning. This cannot be emphasized enough. Dragons aplenty will rise up to be slain. Your own case is no exception. In your planning, you forgot to allow for enough space for your own continued work, which is with self. Please remember, all of you, the first and only obligation is to self. This is only true if spiritual growth is the goal. In all other cases this is, of course, not true. If spiritual growth is the goal, and Balance is one step toward the goal, then space must be allotted to be sure that this comes about. This, in the case of this cadre, means much interaction to reprogram the bio-computer. Many of these students have not allowed for this either, and so you are not alone. Your own growth over the near future will depend solely upon your willingness to allow those closest to you to hold up the mirror so that you can begin anew looking at the many facets of the personality still cropping up in your dealings with your own students. You wish to teach, and we do not feel that this is an unreasonable aspiration for you; but for you to be a valid teacher you must also be a dutiful student. This you need. All of you can take heart here. All of you can now be teachers, but not by laying aside the student’s cloak. In fact, we are somewhat gratified that some of you have begun to show more spunk in teaching. We will not hesitate to remind you of the precepts when a schism occurs. [26 November 1974]

There we have a couple of other tools. One can think about and plan one’s strategy for achieving Balance, but it is wise to not over-plan. It is advisable that one’s expectations about Balance be reasonable and realistic, so that one can pace oneself. Also, working with other students on the same spiritual path is a very useful tool for achieving Balance.

Liz: I just started dancing again, and all of a sudden my depression lifted, and everything looks okay to me — my life, my marriage, etc. I feel I’m using Moving Center to get high. If I want to be Balanced, should I not give in to the urge to use Moving Center and dance?

No. This is a false interpretation. In Essence, there is a movement [that does not involve moving the body]. The [Balancing] work in this for you would be to get in touch with the Moving Part of Emotional Center during the dance, which is essentially what you are doing. As long as you **do not compete with yourself**, you will succeed at this [Balancing exercise]. [28 September 1974]

Evidently she had an appropriate amount of Moving Center, but could use some more Emotional Center, accessed via the Moving Part of it. The injunction about not competing with oneself is Good Work for anyone on the path toward Balance.

Following is a recommendation on how to bring Intellectual Center into the Balance equation.

Liz: How can I get in touch with Intellectual Center?

This will be the most difficult for you, and for all others in the Centering you are in [Moving], as it involves single-minded **concentration**, and application of **non-judgmental logic**. Reading very studious works has done it for other students. Continuous **study** will also do it. The determining factor is the boredom factor. As soon as boredom creeps in, the Emotional Center has crept in too. Boredom is simply not intellectually possible. It is a lower [Negative Pole] emotional function. Most of the time, in fact, it is a function of the Emotional Part of Moving Center. [28 September 1974]

In this section we have seen a number of tools for achieving Balance. What is not explicitly mentioned in any of these passages is the Gurdjieff practice called “self-observation” — which in the original Michaelian group was referred to as “Photographing” — even though that practice is the essence of these tools. The main trick to achieving Balance is to notice when one is unBalanced, and that in itself will help nudge one into Balance. There is of course a chapter on Photographing.

Centering “Traps” per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

According to both Gurdjieff and Michael, when people habitually respond from one Center rather than from the appropriate Center for the situation at hand, they are said to be “Trapped” in that Center. Obviously this keeps them from becoming “Balanced” — responding appropriately from the appropriate Center. Following are a few quotes to that effect.

Betty: What Center am I Trapped [in]?

The Emotional Part of Emotional Center. If she wishes Balance, she must reach Intellectual and Moving Centers.

Dick: Are some intellectual Scholars trapped in the Intellectual part of Intellectual Center?

It is possible to be Trapped here, and yes, you are right. Many of the theoretical scientists are indeed immured [imprisoned, confined, held captive] in the Intellectual Part of Intellectual Center. [However,] This is a route to higher Centers when there is Balance. [03 March 1974]

Other statements declare it is Good Work to respond from the Intellectual Part of Intellectual Center when appropriate. Therefore, it is only a “Trap” if one is “stuck” there, meaning one cannot respond appropriately from Emotional Part of Emotional Center or Moving Part of Moving Center. Balanced Centering is a “route to higher Centers,” and Intellectual Part of Intellectual Center is as good a launching place to higher Centers as the appropriate use of other lower Centers.

Dick: I would like to ask how to bring the perceptions of the Emotional Center and those of the Intellectual Center together to be Balanced. Perceptions seems so limited: there is so much input and only one thing seems to get through.

Of course, the perceptions of one Trapped in the Intellectual Center are going to be based upon what is thought, and will be largely analysis of the perception rather than a perception at all. The perception itself will be lost in the analysis. The perceptions of one lost in the Emotional Center will be swamped by the feelings surrounding the moment, and again the perception itself will be lost to sight. This is what is meant, of course, by not experiencing one’s experiences. Those trapped in the Moving Center will be already planning or carrying out some action surrounding the perception before it has time to register. No Mechanical Man is able to appreciate any experience fully because of this. All perceptions are, of course, stored, and can be recalled by the Balanced Man if need be. In order to perceive and experience a moment in time, all Centers must be working (correctly). [17 September 1974]

Balanced people experience life *objectively* rather than *subjectively*. That is, they are aware of and in control of what they are doing. This paragraph is mostly a description of unBalanced people who experience life *subjectively*. The gist and purpose of “Self-remembering” is to experience life objectively. Even for Balanced people, it is sometimes difficult to experience one’s experiences objectively, but at least Balanced people are more likely to review after the heat of the moment has passed. Unbalanced people rarely do this as life happens to them, but once taught about it, they can ease their way toward Balance by reviewing and reflecting on their life experiences sometime after the experience — retrospectively Self-remembering.

Edgar asked about his work recently in trying to get into the Moving Center by using hobbies. He is Trapped in the Intellectual Center, and by using the hobbies is trying to Balance this.

Yes, this is a good attempt on your part and could be successful if pursued. [26 November 1974]

The point here is to intentionally do, feel, or think from a Center not one’s typical Center if it increases one’s Balance. This will help one escape their habitual enTrapment.

Am I in Emotional Center when I am meditating? It seems like I am simply perceiving.

Sometimes it is Higher Emotional Center Emotional Center, when it is not the Trap, acts merely as a barometer, sensing the variances around. This includes the dangers and the anger, the joy and the pain being beamed about. This Center makes no judgment on this information and cannot react to any situation when it is being used in tandem with the other Centers. When it is the Trap, it is utilized much as the other Centers, having then a Thinking, Reacting and Acting Part. This [Emotional Center] does not differ from the other Centers. Balanced Man thinks with the Intellectual Center, perceives with Emotional Center, and acts with the Moving Center. The divisions [“Parts” of Centers] no longer hold [when you are] in Balance. [15 April 1975]

This means that a Balanced person has deactivated not only the “Traps” but also the “Parts” of their lower Centers. Balanced people respond purely from unified Centers, so to speak. Their Centers are not confused or ambiguous; they don’t send mixed messages.

More is said about “Centering: Traps” without reference to Balance in a chapter by that name.

Besides “Traps” and “Parts” of Centers that hinder the achievement of Balance, there are also “Leaks” to watch out for, and these are explored in the next section.

Leaking Centers per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

In previous sections we learned that all Centers are “energy” centers in the consciousness. There can be a “Leak” of energy when there is “wrong use” of that Center. These words with quotation marks are all Gurdjieff terms adopted in the original Michaelian group. There are a number of passages on the subject of Leaking Centers, and it connects to the concept of Balance.

Dick: Is there anything useful about this [energy Leak subject] for us to know?

Well, of course, you can use them as a fairly handy yardstick by which to measure your progress toward Balance [of Centers]. You can feel the energy being expended, and after a while locate its point [chakra] of exit and then more accurately pinpoint the Center responsible for the output. If it is not the proper Center to handle the particular action then you know that there has been a leak. [16 June 1974]

The “point of exit” here referred to is apparently the chakra correlated with the leaking Center; see next quoted Q&A exchange. As you would expect, “Chakras” is the subject of yet another chapter. However, take a look at the following:

Is there a correlation between energy Centers and chakras?

When one becomes Balanced, there is tremendous correlation, yes, for you feel the use of the energy in these spots described as, or called, chakras, with the higher Intellectual Center being, of course, analogous to the highest chakra or the chakra of liberation that places it above the physical body. All the chakras would be felt as energy centers, yes. Now that the Emotional Center was responding to an appropriate situation, this would be felt in the “gut” chakra. [25 January 1975]

Betty asked about Centering, and what force makes one achieve Balance.

The achievement of Balance is an act of will. The force behind it is the combined energies of the true “center of gravity” [a Gurdjieff term] within you. You always have this energy, but normally you allow it to dissipate unused. When you work toward Balance, you learn to conserve this energy and divert it into the [spiritual] Work [another Gurdjieff term]. This energy does not run out, by the way. It is part of the neutral universal flow and is infinite. You must learn to tap it, however. Your centers of gravity are now top heavy, or off true center. When you go to Balance it is centered — ergo, balanced; not very mystical, but far more practical. There is no Leakage of energy in Balanced Man, and all of this energy can be diverted into the [spiritual] Work — whether this be meditation, concentration, or study. The trap into which most fall is simply a continuation of habit patterns picked up early in life. This happens in part because of the [adult role] models that an adolescent observes. There is beneath that a chosen direction of flow, but unfortunately, this can be overridden easily by the influences; for instance: a hysterical parent, a parent with serious dissemblance, a parent who is unduly stern. The direction then takes a reactive turn and the trap is exchanged for another. With [spiritual-path] Students then, there is another pitfall. They begin to go toward Balance, find new experiences, and make a subliminal choice to stay there [unBalanced] because it is a richer experience. [26 November 1974]

The Gurdjieffian term, “Center of Gravity”, is the subject of another chapter. Basically it means the most important thing in your life, that which gives it meaning and direction. The “true” center of gravity for a Michaelian student should be this “psychic energy”, the subject of yet another chapter. Regarding the unBalanced state being a richer experience, this is only true when one has not had one’s fill of trauma–drama. On the way to Balance, the person increasingly prefers equanimity, which has its own riches and rewards.

Dick asked about Centers. He was disturbed that his concept of Centers is so hazy. What part of the brain would correspond to the Centers? Is it a set [part], a gestalt [whole], or what?

More than anything, this [Balanced Centering] can be seen as an **appropriate reaction to the situation**. In the case of the lower Centers, [when you respond appropriately] it means that there is no Leaking of energy and fatigue buildup as a result. You see, if you respond to an intellectual situation with an emotional reaction, it is usually totally inappropriate, and it comes not from Emotional Center, but usually from the Emotional Part of the Center in which you spend your life. If you respond to an emotional situation in a Moving Centered way, there is a tremendous downward relegation of energy, and fatigue follows. You can readily determine wrong use of Centers in yourself by the way that you feel after the situation has passed. If you are tired, angry, or any of those negative things, you can be sure that wrong use of Centers is to blame. If you feel high, elated, joyous, et cetera, then perhaps good use of Centers has occurred. Any situation that produces a negative reaction is

wrong use of Centers, and therefore wrong work for Students on this path. This is why we ask that you look at your negative reactions, even in retrospect, and determine what happened to your energy when you expressed. Centering, or [rather] Balance, is, above all, appropriate. That is what it means — the loss of all of these unreasonable [unaware, unconscious, automatic] lapses in the volition. When you react negatively, you are certainly not in **control** — your [unconscious, automatic, “mechanical”] False Personality is in control. The True Personality of the Essence merely looks at the script and makes the appropriate response at the moment it is called for — from the Center equipped to **handle that situation with dispassion**. [25 January 1975]

This paragraph is almost pure Gurdjieff. “Wrong use of Centers” is another Gurdjieff term. Right use of Centers is one of the central tools for raising “Level of Being” in Gurdjieff’s version of spiritual development. “True” and “False” Personality also came from the Gurdjieffian teachings. Note that Balanced people are self-aware people, in conscious control of their lower Centers so that they can do the right thing in the world. Note that if people are not self-aware enough to make their response appropriate in the situation immediately at hand, then it helps their spiritual development to review it afterward at a time when they can be reflective without distraction or distortion. This also takes enough self-awareness to sense when there is an energy Leak/drain in their body and/or in their psyche. Hopefully they will do better next time in a similar situation.

Not only the Centers, but the other Overleaves are involved in the climb toward Balance. This is the subject of the next section.

Balance and Overleaves per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

The following paragraph is one of the earliest instances that begin to explain how one can use Overleaves that abrade as a tool for spiritual growth. That is to say, harmony and Balance can be learned because of the shock and contrast of conflicting Overleaves.

Narra asked for more information.

Just imagine how easy it would be for you to accept [your husband’s] Rejection [Goal] were it not for the Mode you selected. [Your] Repression [Mode] automatically erects a barrier between you and the Positive Pole [+Agape+] of your Goal [of Acceptance]. To scale this barrier is a significant feat. You have begun to feel this change and are on the way to verification. It is not an easy lesson. The block or barrier stems from the Mode of Repression. Even the Acceptance [Goal] of one [such as yourself] who has chosen this Mode is repressed. To find the ability within to feel +Agape [the Positive Pole of Acceptance] in spite of this, [is a] formidable task, and it requires a yardstick to measure the progress. The ideal yardstick, of course, is the polar opposite, in this case, one in Rejection [your husband’s Goal]. For you to go to and remain in the Positive Pole of Acceptance requires much work, and you are still not entirely able to work from there. This is simply another Balancing tool that Older Souls often choose. It would be possible, for instance, for [your husband] to choose to utilize the same tool [Balance] were he so inclined. This is usually possible in all Sequences; that is, the motive can become easily the motivator. Of course, the hallmarks of the Negative Pole of Acceptance [–Ingratiation] are conciliation, placation, and ingratiating. Do you now have the feeling for the fact that in most souls not acquainted with a Teaching that the Mode stands forever as a barrier between the Positive and Negative Poles of the Goal? No matter how exalted that Goal may be, this principle stands between all Modes and Goals. [16 January 1975]

In the channeling from subsequent groups, there is some elaboration on the task of coming to Balance within oneself via conscious monitoring and neutralizing of the abrasion between one’s and other’s Overleaves. Also elaborated in later channeling is the practice of using the complement of one’s Overleaves to achieve Balance within oneself. In the passage above, there is Balance to be found between Acceptance and Rejection, complementary Goals on the Expression Axis. The principle applies to all other Cardinal and Ordinal Overleaf pairs. For instance, refer to *More Messages from Michael* (1979), p. 211.

More was said about Balance in this same session, as follows.

All teachings?

A comparable Teaching that has as its goal Agape through Balance. It may be Gurdjieffian in origin, or may have true religious grounding, as long as that (Agape) remains as the goal.

Balancing seems to involve more than just Centers. What about other Overleaves?

Not only can Mechanical Man not “do” [as Gurdjieff said], but he also cannot think, and, if this is denied, how can you possibly choose to change an Overleaf? All that Mechanical Man can possibly achieve is the continual playing out of the master Tapes around the beliefs. A good beginning would be for each of you to look within and discover once and for all those hard-core beliefs that are running your life. Then, stand apart and listen to

Mechanical Man play out the Tape. It will be enlightening, to say the least. For each belief, there is a Tape: a master Tape for each core belief, an auxiliary for each auxiliary belief. In the latter case, many are Tape Loops.

Narra asked if we had some "good" core beliefs.

You have some core beliefs without which you could not [physically survive], yes.

Dick: Are these the only legitimate ones?

These core beliefs and master Tapes are the property of the personality, and — aside from the rules for survival — are unnecessary. The Balanced Man is **flexible** above all. You remember the teaching of the man, Robert [Burton], insisting that you **learn to turn on a dime**. By becoming Balanced, you replace the master Tapes with [conscious] thought [versus "mechanical", automatic, unconscious thoughts, feelings, and behaviors]. [16 January 1975]

The Michaels did not here directly answer the question about Balance in regard to Overleaves other than Centers. They said that unBalanced people definitely cannot *change* Overleaves, but in a session three weeks later, they said Overleaves can be changed. This still does not address the question if one can be Balanced and retain your Overleaves. It was a week later that this question gets answered.

Joan asked if the Essence has a personality. Does this relate to the Positive Poles [of the Overleaves]?

In order for the True Personality to emerge, the student must be in a firm state of Balance, and if the Centers are Balanced, all work will be from the Positive Poles of all Overleaves. In fact, at that moment, the whole concept of Overleaves becomes obsolete. Balanced Man is not a victim of his Overleaves any longer. This is, of course, why the Work is to strive for Balance and why we attempt to effect those exercises that will allow you to choose the Work you need tailor made. [25 January 1975]

More is said about obsolete Overleaves in a session a few days later:

Balanced Man can certainly accelerate the growth [of people] around him, and those on their way to Balance can impart that which is truth in them to others. [30 January 1975]

The converse is also true: If one is not Balanced, then one's untruth will affect others negatively, hindering their spiritual development.

Joan asked about the personality of Essence. What is it? Could Michael describe it? Traits?

The True Personality perceives the oneness and does not feel apartness. Thus, it is expansive in its expression. The True Personality does not need the pain, for it has access to the joy and again, can express this in the world. The True Personality knows truth and therefore has no further use for lies. Above all, the True Personality is appropriate in its response to each and every situation. Of course, this is manifested in the world as joyousness, as warmth, as a very special radiance, as a high energy course of a positive nature. However, False Personality is uncomfortable around this True Personality, and the farther removed from a Teaching one is, the more uncomfortable one will be when faced with an encounter with Balanced Man. Balanced Man has the confidence that only knowledge of truth can possibly bring. Balanced Man brings this confidence to bear in all of his endeavors. Balance implies **obsolescence of the Overleaves**. Balanced Man is **no longer stuck**. He is **free to move into real space where there are no limitations**. For the "[women's] libbers" present, substitute balanced "woman" for Balanced "Man." [08 February 1975]

"Obsolescence of the Overleaves" is not a concept that survived beyond the original Michaelian group, so it begs consideration. Post-original Michaelian group, it has generally been considered Good Work enough just to get into the Positive Poles of one's Overleaves and mitigate one's Chief Feature. This creates a healthy Personality. This idea could be described as mere psychotherapy because it goes no further than making a better human being. For those whose spiritual paths take them beyond mere psychotherapy, then there is guidance for that in the original Michaelian group version of the Michaelian teachings. They can go beyond False Personality, go beyond even the Positive Poles of the Overleaves, and into the personality of the Soul or Essence itself, which here is referred to as the True Personality that functions in Real Space. Using this definition of terms, Overleaves are a limitation non-existent in the Real Space of the soul/Essence.

Michael had addressed the relationship of the Overleaves to Essence and Personality some months before:

What part of the Overleaves are in Essence and what part are in Personality?

All of the Overleaves are geared to the Physical Plane and thus primarily of the False Personality. Of course, you cannot alter your Body Type or Role except by subtle extinguishment, and this is achieved only after all else is Balanced. Thus, the Role can still manifest in one acting primarily out of Essence, but not to any measurable extent in the occult Master. [25 June 1974]

In subsequent channeling however, after the original Michaelian group, the Overleaves were said to be part of True Personality. (“True Personality is the manifestation of the Overleaves in the life.” *MMFM*, p. 48, and see *MMFM*, p. 104) This is one of the changes that Ms Yarbro made to the original Michaelian group revelation. The later presentation may refer to people not on a spiritual path upward toward Balance and beyond – which includes most Michaelian students, actually. If so, then *MMFM* is true because the Michaelian teachings for them is mostly psychotherapy — making a better Mechanical Man — which is Good Work so far as it goes. However, for people on track to advance beyond mere psychotherapy, then transcendence of Overleaves is part of the package. The spiritual–path component found in the original Michaelian group has been largely lost to Michaelian students because that component was not published in *MFM* and beyond, leaving the mere–psychotherapy component as standard fare in the subsequent Michaelian teachings community.

A fuller explanation of the dichotomy between “Personality and Essence” is presented in another study paper by that name.

Summary and Conclusion regarding Balanced Man

The following comments on Balance look like a cross between paraphrase and quotes from the Michaels. They appeared in the June 1975 edition of *Dimensions* magazine.

Schools and Teachings differ, and this divergence must be understood. Schools are environments wherein Students can work toward Balance and understanding of the Truth.

Schools can only be considered valid when the aim has been achieved, e.g., the Students come to Balance and understand Truth. Teachings are only valid when the system can be verified as True. Also, Teachings must be dynamic. They must be contemporary, flexible, and constantly in motion. It does not matter how much or how little Truth is contained within a system. Each individual system has but a finite period of dynamism.

The “Law of Accident” applies only to the Overleaves, the False Personality operating in artificial space, using the artificial rhythms of the Physical Plane. This term does not apply to Students in the Work. Things happen to Mechanical Man; Students and Balanced Man *choose* to experience.

Following is the collection of words used by the Michaels to characterize Balanced Man:

- does not worry and has calm detachment
- maintains neutrality, the highest form of which is Agape
- lacks harshness
- is tranquil and serene
- desires harmony and lack of chaos and drama in the life
- is constant, unwavering, predictable, and reliable
- maintains a state of being rather than doing, feeling, or thinking
- is fearless

Following is the collection of tools mentioned by the Michaels for achieving Balance:

- Relationships of all sort polish off the rough edges
- True spiritual Schools promote the Teaching about achieving Balance
- Meditation, concentration, fasting, and study help this and all other spiritual aspirations.





BARRIERS AND BLOCKS

This chapter is the product of a search of the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group on the word “barrier” **and its variants and synonyms**. The word appears in the context of many Michaelian ideas that are discussed in other chapters, but I thought it would be helpful to students to see all of the instances gathered into one place, and helpful to students for me to provide an analysis and synthesis of those instances. You might be surprised to see just how many times the Michaels waxed eloquent and impassioned on this subject.

The gist of the idea of barriers is that the sense of separation between people is artificial; it does not reflect the underlying reality that we are all connected ...

Numerous other chapters bear on this subject, such as “Maya”; I will note those where appropriate.

Other types of barriers were mentioned in the transcriptions (language, recall,), but only spiritual barriers are documented in this chapter.

The word “barrier” is not capitalized in this chapter or other chapters of this *Study Papers* book because it has no special meaning in the Michaelian teachings; it is not a Michaelian jargon word that needs a definition apart from its use in the common vernacular, although I provide one in the next section, below. One might therefore wonder why it is even included in this book. One answer is that it is just a Scholar–Cast Artisan thing for me to do: I study the Michaelian teachings documents and I write about them and I want to be thorough. Another answer is that barriers are pervasive in human psychology and sociology, the subject came up in the original Michaelian group numerous times, some interesting things were said about it, and it might be helpful for Michaelian students to have the answers conveniently collected all in one place.

This chapter is one of many in this book that focuses on a psychological and psychotherapeutic component of the Michaelian teachings as found in original Michaelian group transcriptions, rather than on a spiritual component, as so many other chapters in this book do. The Michaelian version of psychology is not to be confused with the pop psychology of the self-improvement movement, those that do not have a spiritual core or perspective. Rather, the Michaelian psychotherapeutic path (aimed at improving psychological health) is a beneficial precursor to the spiritual path (aimed at improving soul health). To skip the former but attempt the latter is referred to as “spiritual bypassing” (>https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spiritual_bypass<), and it usually proves to be problematic.

Definition of Barrier

1a: something material that blocks or is intended to block passage [as in] highway barriers, a barrier contraceptive

1b: a natural formation or structure that prevents or hinders movement or action [as in] geographic barriers to species dissemination, barrier beaches, drugs that cross the placental barrier

2: barriers or Barriers plural : a medieval war game in which combatants fight on foot with a fence or railing between them

3: something immaterial that impedes or separates : obstacle [as in] behavioral barriers, trade barriers

Barriers per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

The following extracts from original Michaelian group transcriptions are Q&A exchanges, where an original Michaelian group member asks a question (or makes a comment), and the Michaels provide an answer. This is **not** a subject that would benefit by division into subcategories, as some subjects do. These extracts are presented in the chronological order in which they appear in the transcriptions, even though this is **not** a subject where there was a development or evolution of a specific revelation of a facet of the Michaelian

teachings, as was often the case with the original Michaelian group. As is my custom, I often provide some explanatory comments following the question or answer. Underlined words in the Michaels' answers are my emphasis, to draw attention to what it is that I comment on. Sometimes I embed words or phrases [in brackets] that I believe help to clarify the question or the answer.

[[perhaps section into personality, culture, etc. barriers]]

Dick: Is my incarnate soul a single Fragment?

In your physical body, there is a single dominant thread, but you must understand that you are no longer separated from your integrated Fragments; they are very much a part of you. When the Entity first fragments and all of it is on the Physical Plane, there is wide separation, then there is progressive integration. All of the Fragments still incarnate have the pull exerted on them by their Astral Fragments. There is no "real" separation, merely a physical barrier that is easily scaled. [22 November 1973]

Refer to chapters "Casting", "Fragmentation and Integration", and "Composites" for more information about how the "Tao" (refer to the chapter by that name) divides and subdivides and sub-subdivides and so on itself *ad infinitum, ad eternum*. From the point of view of the Tao, these partitions are artificial, but to those of use who are Fragments, they seem "real". That passage above is key for understanding the concept of dissolving these artificial barriers as we develop spiritually. It can almost be said that the entire process of spiritual evolution is the dissolution of artificial barriers, first on the Physical Plane, then on the Astral Plane, and then on the Causal Plane. The closer the soul kinship, the easier it is to dissolve barriers, and the sooner it happens in the overall scheme of things.

Permit me to wax theological-philosophical about this subject. The so-called "fragmentation" of the Tao went like this: "Tao produced the One; the One produced the Two; the Two produced the Three; the Three produced All things." (Lao Tsu, *Tao teh Ching*, Chapter 42) In terms of the actualization or realization of geometry, three-dimensionality is the creation of a membrane (barrier) that separates an "inside" from an "outside". (One-dimensional and two-dimensional objects do not have this attribute.) Membranes serve the purpose of maintaining the integrity that is necessary for life to function inside the membrane even when the outside is not alive. If the membrane is breached, the organism inside it dies. Similarly, as our human artificial barriers are breached as a result of our spiritual practices, our ego (sense of self) 'dies'. However, there is larger 'membrane' around the next more integrated group of kindred souls: 7-Cadence > 49-Greater Cadence > 343-Side > 1029-Entity > Cadre. The reintegration of the Tao can be visualized as the dissolution of the artificial barriers around increasingly larger composites of Fragments. The Fragmentation of the Tao is the invention of "Personality" is the creation of 'barriers'. The reason that the Michaels revealed the Overleaf System in the beginning of the original Michaelian group was to show us students what it is that we are to master — and then transcend by dissolving increasingly larger barriers, level by level.

After this first mention of barriers that are created and un-created between kindred souls, over the course of the original Michaelian group, the Michaels named various other types of barriers. First up for our review are the types of barriers erected between the Overleaves, particularly the Soul Ages:

Nichols: Is there any relation between super Maya, Goals, and Roles?

Of course, souls in the various Goals will create specific sets of obstacles and barriers — in other words, Maya — and the older the soul, the more exalted the Maya becomes, and finally, it even comes around to masquerading as spiritual growth — the most super refined Maya of all. When you have learned to differentiate between this and the genuine article, you will have arrived at the point where you can no longer slip back into old, safe patterns and, therefore, must go forward. The awareness groups are, of course, super Maya groups of Mature Souls, the political action groups of the Young, and splinter religious quackery groups of the Babies. It all comes back to the lack of inner purpose and the knowledge of the trapped Essence. Many Young and Mature Souls actively practice witchcraft and black magic in answer to the increased perceptions that they encounter in themselves but are unwilling to investigate at a deeper level. Many Old Souls dabble in Orientalia for the same reason. [24 February 1974]

Refer to chapters "Maya" and "Soul Age". The concept is Maya is almost synonymous with barrier. As the saying goes, "Birds of a feather flock together", and the same principle applies to Soul Age. It is as if the people in a Soul Age gravitate to each other in the formation of informal or formal groups, whether it be in a type of church, or a type of business, or a type of political organization, or whatever type of endeavor — wherever a singleness of perception and purpose are required to get something specific done. We may call this "natural segregation". Furthermore, organizations typically write a "vision" or "mission" statement because the group

as a whole must share the same 'Goal'; it must collectively go in the same direction, whether it be to build and sell a widget, or serve a human need, or change the world.

Comment: In other words, we must go through our Chief Features to arrive at Agape.

You must grow to the point where this [Chief Feature] is no longer a barrier to Agape. [27 February 1974]

Refer to the chapter "Agape". Whereas Soul Age provides a high barrier in terms of group affiliations, the Chief Feature provides a high barrier in terms of individual egos. Refer to the section on "Chief Features" in the "Overleaves" chapter. There you will see that the CF is the core of one's false self-image, and as such it is a personality factor that alienates us from each other; it is a repulsive force that counteracts the magnetism of intimacy and Agape.

Dick: Things I cannot deal with are subconscious — say a guilt feeling. I have no idea where its source is. The thing that triggers the guilt feeling does not seem bad. Ordinarily, morality is B.S. In all cases, the guilt emotions are from lower Centers, as the higher Centers are not operating.

Anger is another reaction that is self-programmed by Personality as a barrier.

Refer to the chapters on "Guilt" and "Anger" for more discussion about those negative emotions. There you will read that anger is caused by unfulfilled expectations. In the context of this chapter, we can say that expectations exist because Personality exists; Personality itself is a barrier, and its function is to be and to perceive differences, and when reality does not agree with Personality's pre-conceived expectations, then anger results.

Eugene: The body throws up a shield to keep Essence from coming through. First, we have to start by seeing our Chief Feature.

We discussed phobias such as fears of staircases, cats, heights, and wondered if they could be carryovers from past lives. Someone added that we should not resist evil, that we should face the fear and experience it out. The little evils are barriers to experiencing life. [27 February 1974]

Refer to chapters "Fear" and "Evil and Good". The point to be made here is that negative thoughts, negative emotions, and negative behaviors are like 'barriers' in that they block Essence from our awareness.

Mallory: What is the work necessary for me to becoming unTrapped in Essence?

The work for you, Mallory, includes moving. Your dance is an excellent place to start, preceded by your period of meditation, with the thought of preparation for the dance. We see emotional involvement. The way through to Intellectual Center is, of course, the rendering of this type of input neutral. The inability to accept input in a detached fashion separates you from the Intellectual Part of this Center, and thus there is a barrier to Intellectual Center. The love of the movement, or more accurately, the exhilaration you feel when moving, creates a barrier to Moving Part of Moving Center. All students must discover their area of enTrapment and work from there, emulating the energy Center toward which they are moving. Students Trapped in the Emotional Part of Intellectual Center rationalize all technical material well, but romanticize all other input, trying to find that completely personal slant. There is "love" of literature and words in these souls. They are normally exceedingly verbose in tutorial positions, not so much in others. These souls find the romance of the Logos so alluring that this enTrapment is among the most difficult to scale. Most souls Trapped in the Moving Part of Intellectual Center are veritable whirlwinds of intellectual activity. They spend the entire [incarnation] interval collecting facts, sometimes in a random fashion and sometimes to negligible results. On the other hand, many inventors, such as the man Thomas Edison, were trapped here [and his results were not negligible]. [03 March 1974]

Refer to chapters "Work, The", "Meditation and Concentration", "Centering Traps". Previously we have been informed that aspects of the Overleaf System, including Soul Age and Chief Features, provide barriers. The point to be made here is that much work on the so-called 'lower' Centers is required before one can surmount them and 'ascend' to the so-called 'higher' Centers, where certain types of barriers do not exist.

Ray: I would like a comment from Michael on my past six weeks' activity, my new experiences with bioenergetics and work with Dr. Palmer. I want an updated evaluation of myself.

You are correct when you say that you are now allowing new experiences to happen. Of course, this is a positive movement. When you limit your experiences, this is fear and it serves as a barrier to growth. [06 March 1974]

One of the conditions of the soul being in a physical body is the tendency for the body's behavior to become habitual. We learn new stuff, but then it becomes old stuff, and we get 'stuck in a rut', and that 'rut' has 'walls', aka barriers, to spiritual growth. One exercise that is often recommended by psychotherapists is that we should intentionally extend ourselves outside of the limitations that some part of our 'lower self' have

artificially set. We can do this in a structured, safe setting established by a healthcare professional, and/or we can seek new experiences of our own choosing, outside of our “comfort zone”.

As Dick, the soul sees beyond the brain barriers set up by the organism in order to cushion the Shocks. [17 March 1974]

The body, the organism, has barriers against the soul and Essence. Refer to the chapter “Shocks” and you will read that we sometimes receive a “wake up call” from the supernatural realm, which is beyond our barriers.

There is a form of ultimate therapy — a clearing house for the Essence where the final cobwebs can be swept away and the clarity can shine through. Yes, also the crutch of the Personality, the one most frequently employed in situations where the Essence might come crashing through, is a most effective barrier. [19 March 1974]

Refer to the chapters “Crutches” and “Essence and Personality”. Psychotherapy can be regarded as a ‘crutch’ that helps us ‘ambulate’ toward the “ultimate therapy”, which is the spiritual ‘path’ recommended by the Michaels. The Overleaf System itself, because it is of Personality and not of Essence, is a temporary ‘crutch’. We should master it, and then move on. Past a certain point on the ‘journey’, the ‘crutch’ can be discarded.

More is said about the desirability of a ‘change in scenery’ in the following passage:

Mollie: I read the group’s book and would suggest a glossary would be most helpful, with definitions of such words as Maya, Monad, Logos, and Karma.

We propose an exercise in psychic Photography for all of you as follows: begin to Photograph yourselves reacting to suggestions of change with the statement, “I cannot”, then realize that this is not true. Sometimes, the truth will be that you do not at the present moment possess the required skills or knowledge, but more often than not, the truth will be, “I do not want to.” This is vital, and a positive step on the path. You can help by Photographing each other in this. Also, all of you are guilty of using this as an excuse many times a day to shift the blame, and this accomplishes that nicely. You present then the picture of a student at the mercy of the cosmos, which is, of course, absurd. Personality sets up many barriers along the [spiritual] path. This is merely one of them, and chipping away at this will only result in the uncovering of many more similar guises.

The goal of the organism [Personality and the physical body] is, of course, survival. Sexuality is made more difficult by culturally imposed barriers and artificial conditions. This is another barrier. Denial of the pleasures of eating, sleeping, and just biding your time on a pleasant, sunny day are more.

The Personality can come up with many efforts to rationalize why these pleasures should not be experienced: they are not good for you; they cost too much; they waste too much time; they are not useful; they are evil, *et cetera*. [20 March 1974]

Refer to the chapter “Photography” for more information about that technique for getting around the barriers that Personality erects. Refer to the chapter “Sexuality” and “Culture” for more information about how culture inhibits sexual expression, which can be a gateway to spiritual experience if practiced with that intention.

In order to teach the Logos, must we get rid of problems, such as cultural problems, before we teach?

We would agree with that. Where major conflicts stand as significant barriers between the students and the Logos, then the student can seek the guidance group. Most of you, though, are in a position where you can begin to look at your own conflicts and, with our help, work through them. [27 March 1974]

Refer to the chapter “Logos”. There you will read that the Logos is the organizing principle of creation, and, as such, can be regarded as our ultimate teacher about how things exist and function. If we have any “conflicts” with, or barriers to, the primordial and fundamental reality system, then we should not presume to teach others.

I feel isolated from people. Is it related to sex or Overleaves or what? How can I approach this problem?

We would also point out to you that you have erected many barriers between yourself and possible emotional trauma. You do not allow yourself the luxury of intimacy. [27 March 1974]

The potential rewards of physical, emotional, and psychological intimacy outweigh the risks of potential trauma, so don’t make it harder than it needs to be by imagining problems (creating barriers) that might or might not arise.

Is the work ethic a carry-over from a past life?

We would see it as one of the most tenacious barriers you must scale. In some instances, the man Robert [Burton] was right about this. We feel, however, that you should discharge your obligations made in good faith, whether or not the respondents are in the teaching or not. Whoever is beyond this, we see no real obligations. We would see you pursuing some form of relaxation every day, even though this may at first seem like work for you. The relaxation obtained with the marijuana is all right. Just resting is all right, also. The penchant to “do” is part of Friction for the Ordinal Roles. [27 March 1974]

The body, the emotions, and the mind all need “R&R” — rest and relaxation — on occasion. Some cultures are hung up on the “work ethic”, and if we abide by that, it is a ‘barrier’ to spiritual growth. Refer to the chapter “Friction” for more about the notion that we experience discomfort when the Essence rubs up against the barriers erected by Personality and culture.

The choice is your strongest barrier to success right now — or to be more explicit, your denial of the fact that the choice rests always with you. We have suggested to you all various methods by which others have achieved spiritual growth. This is all that we are employed to do. If and when you make the choice to follow this path, the protection is there. [14 April 1974]

One common type of barrier to spiritual growth is the reluctance to make a decision and then take responsibility for the consequences of that decision. Refer to the chapter “Choice” for more information about that.

I read in previous notes that Karmic Ribbons must be burned. How are Ribbons burned?

Burning Karmic Ribbons consists essentially of collecting or repaying debts incurred in the past. As your Sequential partners do not necessarily reincarnate at the same time always, this process may take centuries. The problem being that you as the debtor will still have subliminal knowledge of the debt whether or not the person to whom it is owed is on the Physical Plane. This will usually result in some barrier to spiritual growth. Sometimes, souls search for entire lifetimes, are restless and insecure and cannot gain any insight to why they are compelled to search. The payment or collection can consist of a physical remittance such as money or an emotional one such as nurturing, or even a spiritual bond such as master and pupil. Karmic Ribbons concerning violence are usually settled with violence in the earlier Cycles. Those occurring in the later Cycles are usually settled more pacifically. We would encourage acknowledgment of any of these. The Older Souls are generally not given to commit violent acts. [17 April 1974]

Evidently, delayed repayment of Karmic debts is a drag on spiritual progress while incarnate. This is something that the Personality can do nothing about; it is up to the Fragment on the Astral Plane to make the arrangements.

... The lady struggles with this in her head and may come to grips with it, but now cannot go past the cultural barrier. [13 May 1974]

Refer to Chapter “Culture” for more information about the desirability of shedding acculturation where it is an impediment to True Personality and spiritual advancement.

Karma with other people was addressed in a previous QA exchange; self-karma is addressed in the following Q&A exchange:

Dick: I found the most important key to myself was asking Michael the question concerning what my purpose with this incarnation was. Would you [Mary] like to ask that?

This lady Agreed, among other things, to achieve the state of the true filial love through the barriers of rather sever disability not to give up, but to continue to seek, no matter what befell her, and this she has done. The lady has also Agreed to serve as an example to three others similarly afflicted, but not so indomitably, and to two she has presented this example; one is yet to come. [18 May 1974]

Self-karma is a type of Agreement made by the Fragment to experience an impediment in an incarnation for the purpose of learning a specific lesson. Perhaps “barrier” is a poor choice of words here because it does not really fit well with the other instances of the use of this word as documented in this chapter. I suggest that “challenge” would have been better, so my comment is this: It has been said “What does not kill you makes you stronger” (Nietzsche), and it has been said that “no pain, no gain”, and it has been said that “suffering is good for the soul”. To the extent that these aphorisms are true, then the path forward is not *around*, but *through* the ‘barrier’. Facing adversity squarely in order to overcome it does result in resilience and progress. There is something deep within us that tells us that an easy life is a wasted life. Note the innumerable stories about a hero’s journey of defeating some monster. In the Michaelian teachings story, the ‘monsters’ are

Karma, Maya, False Personality, the Negative Poles, the Chief Features, and so on, as documented in this chapter on barriers, and in other chapters.

Dick: A step there is unknown to me and that is what turns on the fire? I'd like to verify that I was on the Astral Plane.

We would agree with that.

Comment: There were powerful, positive emotions.

It [powerful, positive emotion] is present throughout [the Astral Plane], but those still in the physical body seldom penetrate higher levels, mostly from fear. However, there are no real barriers, but they feel the energy emanating from those levels and refuse to trespass. This can be surmounted. Of course, the emotions are powerful. They are diluted. [18 May 1974]

The barrier that exists between the Physical Plane and the Astral Plane is said to not be “real”, meaning that it is illusory. Here again the illusion is attributed to the natural human condition, in this case the physical body. A Fragment living on the Astral Plane does not perceive such a barrier.

Do dolphins and whales communicate with each other?

There are barriers, much the same as your language barriers present. [22 May 1974]

Refer to chapters “Cetaceans” and “Communication”. Add language to the list of barriers that have already been given, such as Personality, Culture, and Karma.

Jean: I feel open and vulnerable.

One of the most positive changes in you, Jean, has been your willingness to throw down barriers. Yes, knowing your Role and your philosophical Attitude has helped you in this. [27 September 1974]

Refer to the chapter “Vulnerability”. There you will see that the Positive Pole, +Vulnerability, is about “throwing down barriers” that the Personality has erected against Essence. The reason that the Michaels revealed the Overleaf System is to show us the barriers, the specific personality traits, that we are to throw down in our own case.

The flagrant misuse of someone else’s definition of a word usually denotes a lack of understanding and a semantic barrier rather than any particular breach of trust. [24 September 1974]

Even if one is speaking the same language, one might not attach the same meaning to what another person is saying. It is Good Work to try to understand where other people are “coming from”. The chapter “Trust” is very relevant to this chapter on barriers, since distrust — unless earned by another person’s unwillingness to come to an agreement on what is Good Work — is an artificial barrier.

Dick visioned that life should contain joy and rapture. He felt that no barriers were between us and that experience [except] imaginary ones created by us.

True. You can have it any time you wish. It is not a difficult transition, but it requires that you cease denying yourself the pleasure. You see, this culture places pleasure on a high shelf marked “reward” and it must be earned. Ironically, Mechanical Man is totally unable to experience this as joy, and continues to strive toward an elusive goal that always remains just beyond the fingertips. This is truly sad, Dick, perhaps the only sadness on the Physical Plane, for it is really within your grasp all the time. Give up the idea that joy must come as a reward for faithful service. This is nonsense. You can have it free. [05 October 1974]

Refer to the chapters “Joy”, “Reward”, “Culture”, “Mechanical Man”, and “Planes” for further discussion of terms found in that passage. The point made here as well as in numerous other passages is that many kinds of barriers are more imaginary than real, and are self-imposed.

Comment: During hypnosis, Dick asked the question, “Is the power in the present moment?” This was in relation to material he had read in the newest Seth book.

You see, there is truly a power in the present moment, but it can only be felt when that moment is expanded to include all that you have been and all that you are now. If you are erecting and maintaining barriers against past pain, then how are you going to do this? [05 October 1974]

In order to make progress in the future, one must deconstruct barriers that were constructed during past negative experiences. The brain itself, not just the mind, has a way of denying or suppressing painful memories. Sometimes psychotherapy can mitigate the barriers, and psychedelics have also been found to be effective.

... [He is] in the Emotional Part of Moving Center, which right now is a barrier also toward full potential, as the enTrapment is truly strong. He can look at this, also. [15 October 1974]

Refer to the chapter “Centering Traps”. There you will read that, basically and briefly, Work on Centers involves, among other things, experiencing a Centers purely, as in Moving Part of Moving Center in the case of this person, rather than experiencing the impure mixture of two Centers.

Ralph: I have the impression that within our group, the articulation of the teachings emphasizes the static, the intellectual, and the hierarchical. Is this primarily a distortion arising from my biases or the group's or the languages? Or is this an accurate transmission of the teachings? Please comment.

In the beginning of this group, the primary concern was in the development of the belief system in the language necessary to explain it to each other and to oneself. This is a necessary step in the formation of any group, but in most, becomes a barrier toward further growth, and eventually becomes the belief system itself. In this group, there has been evolution of a sort that now points toward continuance in growth. The possibility still exists, however, that you will continue to concern yourselves with the intellectual hierarchical aspects and neglect the spiritual, yes, but you do not have to. You can put this belief system to the acid test and see if it works. Until you do this, yes, you are still trapped in the beginning stages. This is where most of the other belief systems remained throughout their existence, including the world's great religions. The concern remained hierarchical and primarily intellectual and never got off the ground spiritually. You are right, of course, you are trading one belief system for another; but there is a unity here that has not been before, and there is a trend toward integration that you are capable of verifying implicit within the system. [19 October 1974]

The chapter “Crutches” has more to say about this phenomenon, where something that is good in the beginning stages of a journey should be cast aside after it has done its work of healing.

The session of 22 October 1974 was mostly focused on the theme of barriers:

Man's place in the universe should, of course, have become a little more apparent to you since we opened the discussion on complexity. As we have intimated before, the Tao is the epitome of simplicity, and therefore the simplicity toward which we all strive in our return to the primeval. Therefore, the Physical Plane, with its enormous complexity, offers by far the most challenge and also the most barriers to spiritual liberation. Man, or rather, Mechanical Man, must then cut through the glamour and allurements of the Physical Plane in order to see the light of truth. Nowhere else is this as difficult, for on the Physical Plane, all is glamour and all is complex, even compared to the Astral Plane, which to the high planes can seem quite complex.

Man must strive uphill in the battle to free the Essence. By “man”, of course, we refer to all Creatures of Reason. For in all languages we know of, there is a word meaning “man” [in the sense of human as distinct from other animal species]. This uphill battle is growth-producing and also provides the strength to persevere through the several Cycles spent on the Physical Plane. The lessons learned on the Physical Plane are necessarily [psychologically] painful just because they are so complex. With simplification, there is analgesia [less pain]. On this world, there have been significant cultural and religious barriers to growth. On other worlds, there have been hostile natural environments and threats from without to contend with.

Man is the first rung on the cosmic ladder and must take this rung slowly, learning to place one foot in front of him at a time. Here on the Physical Plane, there are limitations placed on size and speed, on senses and acuity, with which man can perceive his universe. Until he realizes that he can break these barriers, he is trapped. We say trapped by Maya, and this is precisely what it amounts to, because he becomes so immersed in life crises that he fails to contemplate even the purpose of his sojourn here until quite late in the [reincarnation] Cycle. Then he must race to make up for lost time. By that time, however, he has usually experienced the greater part of life, and can relax and get down to the real business of study and contemplation that allows him access to the pan-dimensional universe.

You have been told [by Gurdjieff] that Mechanical Man cannot love, and that is true. Love is the highest truth of all, and isn't it said that ultimate truth is sealed off from man? Man also cannot “help”. In fact, man cannot do anything at all, at least from the standpoint of will or volition, because of the two imperative senses he chooses not to use: we speak of the intuitive sense and the telepathic sense. One would think that these had suffered the atrophy of disuse. This is not the case at all; they are simply held in abeyance until such a time that Mechanical Man can willingly look behind the barriers he has constructed about these very frightening senses and put them to use. This is usually the last lesson learned on the Physical Plane, and the hardest one, because it, or rather they, are the one that the Personality fights the most. Of course, it fights these, and it is a fight for survival, for once the door is open in this direction, only the Essence can go through it and behind the barrier is knowledge.

Man must meet with a cosmic teaching in order to look behind the barriers. Psychology will not do it for you: for, if the psychologist is a Mechanical Man himself, he also has adaptive behavior taking place, and he cannot look behind your barriers or very well allow you to, either. It would be too scary for him — he would then also have to look behind his own barriers. The broad purpose of the Physical Plane, of course, is then to cut through the first layer of complexity.

Comment at this point: Richard asked how can we prepare ourselves? What can we do to help ourselves see through the veil?

You are right, Richard: “veil” is a word we would prefer for these barriers — from our vantage point — are as insubstantial as the morning mists. But man chooses to solidify them to the point where he cannot destroy them. This brings them into line with the solidness of the Physical Plane. “Solid” is very much like ponderous to us. The weighty philosophical battles, battles waged by Mechanical Man, are his attempts to solidify even thought and make it more complex. He must first come to the point that he can verify for himself the tenuousness of that which stands between him and the pan-dimensional universe, and the path toward simplicity and therefore perfection. All in this universe is truly perfect; it is only faulty perception that renders it imperfect. Once the perception is full, the imperfection is gone and the liberated Essence can perceive all there is on the higher planes, and can move about without the solid limits of the Physical Plane. Many of you have had a taste of this and know of what we speak. The heavy weightiness of the Physical Plane is a burden you have chosen to bear in order to come to this point. Now you wish to throw off the yoke and this is why we have chosen to assist you. If you were not ready, you would simply not hear the words. We have stated, essentially, the purpose — succinct to be sure, but still essential.

There are steps, of course. Man’s purpose, then, being to learn that there is love and that it is accessible, and that it is accessible only through those “extrasensory” perceptions that he chooses to deny. The foundation we have given; the application you have agreed to try. Until you manage to open these doors — or at the very least, verify that they are there — you will notice no significant change in yourself, although that change may be readily perceptible to other students, but not to the one stuck with it. The application of this teaching in a loving, trusting environment could enable you to verify the presence of these blocks. If you choose to take advantage of this, of course, we will be there to assist.

Essentially, what Mechanical Man is saying when he says, “I do not trust you,” is, “I do not trust you not to show me what is behind those blocks.” Perhaps this, then: “If I allow you to come too close, you will violate my barriers and I will be naked in the void.” Once the stripping happens, the work, of course, becomes far easier and Personality begins to lose ground. It can do nothing else at this point. The Essence knows no shame, no guilt. If you can learn to share your fears, however childish they may seem to you, you will have gone a long way along the path. The realm of unfulfilled desires is fraught with Maya and one that must be conquered. What you are saying, in saying that you do not trust, is also, “I am so terrible that if you knew it, you could not love me,” and on a Personality-to-Personality basis, this is, of course, probably true; but the level of comprehension in this group is such that very little has not been met and dealt with already. It is doubtful that you could peel away the acceptance with your escapades. In fact, this would invariably bring you all much closer, and at this moment that is the goal. You have all been told about the utter foolishness in setting up impossible goals for yourselves: fixating on a goal years in the future is another of the Personality’s defenses against the Essence’s experiencing of the moment. [22 October 1974]

The Michaels were on quite a roll there as they riffed on the subject of various barriers. Refer to chapters “Complexity versus Simplicity”, “Mechanical Man”, “Glamour”, “Liberation”, “Knowledge”, “Planes”, “Culture”, “Religion”, “Creatures of Reason”, “Maya”, “Love”, “Intuition”, “Telepathy”, “Trust”, “Essence and Personality”, “Veil” for more information about subjects that appear in that passage. All of those chapters discuss phenomena that constitute barriers, or are related to, barriers or the lack of barriers.

If you first learn to express your feelings to one another without shame or guilt or any of the other myriad barriers, then you open the door to silence. Only then can you be truly comfortable without the chatter. Chattering is usually just another shield so the Personality does not have to be honest. You see, the Essence cannot lie; therefore, the Personality cannot tell the truth. It can only lie. This is an important point to remember, since the chattering emanates from the Personality. The Essence does communicate. There is no need for mindless silence in the path toward Balance, but it might as well be truthful communication, and until you can knock away the barriers, this cannot come about.

The feelings of alienation always surface more strongly when the alienated student is in a situation where he senses on some level that the other students are in contact, either with each other or with the teacher. This happened to you this time. You even anticipated that it would happen and yet your presence was felt and

acknowledged by many other students, and they would have felt a definite loss had you not conquered your fears and attended. It would probably astonish you if you could transverse these barriers and feel the cohesiveness. [12 November 1974]

Refer to chapters “Shame”, “Guilt”, “Alienation” for more information about subjects that appear in that passage.

How do we burn Ribbons on the Astral Plane? Was Tomas on the Astral Plane burning Ribbons? Is it easier that way?

It is less painful in a physical sense, but that does not mean that it is pain-free. It takes much longer to accomplish anything this way, as all [that] can be offered is guidance to those who are on the Physical Plane and to whom the debt is owed. It involves patient monitoring and the establishment of rapport through the barriers of the planes. We would discuss this when the energy level is better. There is much scattering now and transmission is difficult. [19 November 1974]

The barrier between planes is not of the kind that we create in our imaginations as described above; rather, it is of the ‘imaginary’ kind that the Tao has created, thus much more difficult to surmount.

The most penetrating barriers on the Physical Plane are the “I cannot” belief systems that stand in the way of spiritual evolution. The easiest way we know of to break through these barriers is to eliminate the alienation, the frustrating isolation that your culture now imposes. [20 November 1974]

A negative attitude toward life is obviously a huge barrier. Refer to the chapter “Alienation” for more discussion of that particular barrier to spiritual evolution. In the next passage, we see how a person’s array of Overleaves affect their approach to lived experience:

Joan asked if fear is a part of the Caution Mode.

All of your experiences will vary tremendously over the next several months, much according to the Mode of approach by which you live. Naturally, those in Caution or Repression and, of course, those in Observation, will continue to put a distance between themselves and the experience. Those in Passion will perhaps experience more, sooner than the others, but sooner or later, students will be able to work through the barriers. [26 November 1974]

The Modes indicated (Caution, Repression, Observation) that create barriers are not the Cardinal Modes; the Mode mentioned that mitigates barriers is a Cardinal Mode (Passion). It can reasonably be inferred that, not just the Mode, but all of the Ordinal Overleaves incline one to create barriers, whereas the Cardinal Overleaves mitigate barriers. This notion could even be quantified in a person’s case by counting the quantity of Cardinal (positive) Overleaves they have and subtracting the number of Ordinal (negative) Overleaves they have. If the result is a negative number, then they might be especially beset by barriers to intimacy at the level of Personality.

Lyle asked what stops him from submitting to love — growth — what is the barrier there for him to the emotional experience? His SRC is Old Priest, Spiritualist, Arrogance, Emotional Part of Intellectual Center.

... we have suggested to you an alternative method wherein much stripping [of the barriers of Maya and False Personality] would occur and you would all be forced to confront your own and other student’s Personalities. When you commit yourselves finally to a cause, whatever that cause might be — Christianity, occultism, revolution, *et cetera, et cetera* — there is too much at stake to pull out, and you are forced to confront your blocks and either sink or swim with them. The concept of extended community or family is one environment in which this can come about. The students can sometimes overcome these blocks or barriers rapidly when their livelihood depends upon it. Right now in this cadre, nothing real is at stake. There is nothing to lose if the students are unable to work through their blocks.

The barrier between you and the Emotional Center is one that many in this cadre share. You are not alone. The sacrifices, yes, are necessary in yours and other cases, for only through these “sacrifices” will you be able to have this experience. As it is now, there is no good reason, and your Personality is well aware of it. In many ways, you and other students are much like the Sunday Catholics throughout the world, who do not have the experience [of transforming knowledge into understanding] either, because there is no commitment.

We have recently decided that this will no longer be the case, at least where we are concerned. We will no longer go along with the whims, the capriciousness, of various students who do not wish to face their barriers. Perhaps then we should say, the winnowing has begun. [14 December 1974]

Refer to the chapter “Emotional Center” for a review of other passages where original Michaelian group members were apprised of the benefits of developing their Emotional Center as an adjunct of spiritual

experiences. Refer to the next section in this chapter for the collection of passages that contain the word “blocks”, an obvious synonym for the word “barriers”.

The Michaels delivered another lengthy lecture on barriers in the next session, a week later. It is as if they picked up where they left off:

We first asked for a general comment from the teacher. This is what we received.

As long as you continue to play the game of the culture and undergo the constant role-switching that occurs day in and day out, there will not be too much outward change in you. But this does not mean that there has been no change. It is merely that the role-switching uses up a tremendous amount of psychic energy that could be utilized for Work on the Path.

Some Students are able to remain in life roles and become Adepts, but this requires total detachment — or “non-attachment” if you prefer. You see, as long as you are involved in the conflict of the Personality against all other Personalities, then the Essence is held back. If the student is performing in a capacity that allows the Essence to bloom, it is possible for him to remain in the mainstream if he wishes and yet not lose contact with the Teaching.

Most of you Students still lose contact with the greater part of the teaching the moment you walk out into your life role. It is even at times, spectacular, to observe as you don your masks. There is still some need in many of you to hide the fact that you are “into” something like this from those who still have your permission to organize your lives. Do you wonder then why you do not live the teaching or why there is no outward visible sign at all that you have grown through this teaching? As long as this remains something to be hidden, your Personality will be externally vigilant to ensure there is no slip-up and that no one suspects you might be a little strange.

When souls are first Cast into a dominant species, some, or rather many, of the instinctive drives of the creatures-of-no-reason still remain embedded with the bio-computer. The Personality makes no attempt to override these instinctive behavior patterns and fights against the intrusion of any outside source. This suggests that they can be overridden.

One who observes from this [Causal Plane] vantage point is struck by the commanding, overriding trait of this culture, that of loneliness. You are the loneliest people we know of. This, in part, relates to your not attempting in any way to override the embedded instincts left as vestiges of a more primitive self.

Before souls were Cast [into incarnation], the creatures-of-no-reason from which you [Creatures of Reason] have ascended were largely governed by fear, and their lives were taken up in many ceaseless battles for survival. This is no longer necessary on this world, and yet it goes on ceaselessly in spite of this. There are few large carnivores roaming the city streets, and yet most behave as though there are. The battle for survival is but another Tape Loop that plays on and on, even to the point of starving large portions of the culture, while the others waste and hoard. This only provides for the realism in the drama, for this is no longer necessary at all.

There are abundant resources on this planet. Even though it has been rather ruthlessly plundered, there is still much to spare. The loneliness is heartbreaking, literally, as it is so unnecessary, and something that the Personality elects as a method to keep the battle going. If the Personality no longer felt threatened and alienated, there would be no incentive to continue the instinctive drama.

You see, the instinctive drama is safe and easily learned, for the memories are all still there. The dominant species from which you ascended ran in packs. There was a dominant leader. This has continued, for it enables the Personality to abdicate self-responsibility. In other words: “The boss told me to do it”; “Hitler told me to do it”; “God told me to do it”.

Whatever your particular persuasion happens to be, you can always manage to delegate the response[ibility?]. Even in emotional battles, it is always someone else who is ultimately blamed or credited for the action, whatever it may be. This is animal behavior and is widespread in this culture. We see examples of this every day, even in this cadre, where the responsibility is given over to someone else, while the choice and the result was distinctly yours.

On some planets, even on this world, the distinction has been made by good Students and Adepts, and the instinctive patterns have been overridden. But it is not easy, especially since so many of you have chosen to be “top baboon” and the pecking order is well delineated. This top space is just as hard to give up as the bottom rung, even though the latter does afford much more magnificent suffering.

To be “bottom baboon” in this culture is an enviable spot, as everyone can feel sorry for you and offer sympathy and comfort. “Top baboon” requires independence and is rather difficult in this culture, as you are told from the cradle that someone else, or many someones, are in charge of your lives — your parents, your teachers, your bosses, God, your clergy — though no one is in charge but you.

You even choose to live with terrifying organizations within the fabric of society, just to keep the conflict going. This is the only reason. If these organizations were eliminated, then the war would be weakened.

You choose to continue to live with terror only because the instincts for survival in a terrifying environment are still so strong.

You raise your own dragons. They are carefully nurtured in the bosom of your society and equally as carefully released as the need arises, to fan the fires.

If this ceases, then again, the war is weakened, and all those instincts begin to spin wheels and leak energy. Without a Teaching, you do not know that there is any alternative to this, and you do not have a chance to break the patterns. This permeates all facets of your living. Even your eating and sleeping rituals are stylized and smack of earlier times. Few break from these patterns, and even those who do, feel pain when they do.

Sexual behavior in this culture is largely instinctive to the point where any gesture of friendliness is interpreted as a sexual overture if it comes from one of the opposite gender, and the fantasies and expectations begin. When you behave as society wishes you to, you can know for certain that instinct has a large part in it, unless of course it happens to coincide with what you really desire, and this is rare.

The dictates of this culture are severe and stern. We doubt that it is much fun for anyone. This is not necessarily true of the entire Physical Plane. Although the Physical Plane is by nature solid, ponderous and complex, you make it even more so by trying to analyze these behavior patterns in terms other than instinct.

You have been taught that to even think of instinctive behavior in conjunction with human beings is bad. Well, this is nonsense. It is so strong that it overrides your pleasure and your growth.

Creatures of Reason have it all over their fellow inhabitants, as they alone are able to experience awe and delight. But the Creatures of Reason in this culture seldom allow themselves this luxury. They instead find devious methods of avoiding these experiences. The denial of pleasure and the pursuit of pain is high on your list of priority, and it should be clear now why this is true, but there is no reason for it other than the instinctive memories. This is the strongest reason we know of for working on the separation from your Personality and allowing the Essence to free itself. Only the Essence can experience ecstasy. We have told you this before and we emphasized it again and again, to keep you aware of the goal. Separation from the Personality’s conflicts allows the student to override the instinctive behavior patterns that now govern your actions.

This culture erects tremendous barriers in the name of progress to keep you from sighting the goal. Many of these are in the forms of false organizations that supersede the true organizations and keep you from seeking your cadre. When you align yourself with these false organizations or barriers, you become completely caught up in their dogmas and lose sight of any alternatives.

All of these organizations purport to have a lofty goal, but since the goal of none is Agape, again, they can only lead to more entrapment and more isolation from the goal. Examples of organizations that act as barriers are: the Democratic Party, or any other party; the Catholic church or any other dogmatic church; the cult of the Ku Klux Klan or any other terror organization; the Central Intelligence Agency or any other espionage agency; Black Panthers or any other separatist organization. The list is endless, and they are real barriers to growth if you align yourself solely in them to where you become Identified in their dogma and accept it as your own.

Other barriers can be found in the educational system. Many have seen this and have written about it, but their words have fallen largely on deaf ears. The moment that you Identify with any of these barrier groups, you move off the [spiritual] path, and Personality likes this and struggles to keep you Identified.

Changes in government cause the Personality great pain as they result in a failure of the chosen barrier, and those identified with the barrier feel fear. Naturally, they would, as they associate their personal barrier with the “good” while all other barriers are “bad”. Even the barriers [of] liberalism and conservatism are fear-producing if you happen to be on the other side. The alignment with one or more of these barrier groups rules out effectively a positive change in any other direction, especially if the alignment occurred early in life, childhood for instance.

When we speak, for instance, of a totally different economic system than any so far introduced on this planet, all of you go through an exercise — some mental, some verbally — in which you ultimately conclude that it will not work. This without any evidence that it will not work, because it has never been tried, and even though we

assure you that it has indeed worked quite successfully elsewhere. Now this defeatist attitude is not limited to members of this cadre — far from it. Most of you, in fact, are a little more optimistic than average. But this attitude prevails throughout your culture because the alignment with barrier groups is so strong that you must fear change of any kind.

Belonging to these barrier groups gives the illusion of taking the edge off the loneliness. After all, if you can be a party in an organization of several million members, how can you be alone? In fact, these barrier groups only serve to alienate you even further, as they separate you from a larger segment of the population that does not belong to your barrier group. Then, of course, prejudices and hates arise from the perpetuation of these barrier groups, and these serve to fan the fires even further. The war is strengthened and you continue to struggle against the hostile environment, which you must continuously create for yourselves, as it does not exist any longer. This land has been tamed and this is the time to enjoy the fruits of your labor. Why are you not doing so? Oh, of course, if you identify with this group in the same manner and to the extent that you identify with barrier groups, it will serve as an isolating factor and a very good one at that.

On the other hand, you can take the teaching for what it is — a liberating, growth-producing force and expand your love to include all man. You see, this teaching does something that these barrier groups do not like very much. It gives you *carte blanche* permission to love and it does not specify that you must love only white American Protestants or any other barrier group members.

Of course, there is a method by which you can override the instinctive behavior patterns that separate you from the truth. We believe it was the man Lewis Carroll who first suggested that you do at least six impossible things before breakfast.

From Alice in Wonderland by Lewis Carroll: The White Queen: "I'm just one hundred and one, five months and a day." "I can't believe that!" said Alice. "Can't you?" the Queen said in a pitying tone. "Try again: draw a long breath and shut your eyes." Alice laughed. "There's no use trying," she said: "One can't believe impossible things." "I daresay you haven't had much practice," said the Queen. "When I was your age, I always did it for half-an-hour a day. Why, sometimes I've believed as many as six impossible things before breakfast."

Just gradually forcing yourselves to attempt all of these impossible things, such as meditation and even communal living, which is the most impossible thing of all, since it violates all of the precepts of all the most prestigious barrier groups in this culture. To admit that this might be a viable alternative to some of your struggles would be to give up all of your cherished concepts of how you should suffer.

The reason that this concept of communal living has been such a dismal failure when tried on this world is fairly easy to understand when we reflect upon the foregoing. We do not even suggest that you would be able to solve all the problems that would arise, but even a positive discussion would be a step in the right direction, as all previous discussions have revolved around how none of these problems could ever be solved.

We will now give response words we would like to see Photographed in yourselves and they are: "never," "forever" and "always." These irritate us far more than "very," "a lot," *et cetera, et cetera, et cetera*. Yes, it would be valuable for a while to photograph these in each other. We will tell you when you have become identified with the exercise, when it has become mechanical. It would be interesting to tabulate all those situations to which you apply these absolutes. There are truly few conditions and most of them are cosmic, to which these do apply. [21 December 1974]

Refer to chapters "Photography", "Communal Living"

Blocks per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

[[search for “block(s)” and “shield(s)”]]

Concluding Comments on Barriers

Ego-dissolving psychedelics – see that chapter

The whole subject of barriers is fundamental to experience all up and down the levels of creation. In fact, making and breaking barriers is what it is all about.

The usual suspects

So many barriers, so little time to throw them all down in one lifetime.

The subject of ‘barriers’ is an instantiation of a mathematical abstraction, a component of the structure of the Cosmos, namely three-dimensionality (3-D). What I mean by this is that a 3-D entity has an ‘inside’ that is separated from an ‘outside’ by a semi-porous membrane or boundary. Other terms for this are: an agent in an arena; a self in an environment. The chapters on [\[list in alphabetical order:\]](#) “Casting”, “Ego”, “Fragmentation”, “Group Cohesion” [\[and so on\]](#), discuss other instantiations of 3-D. The goal of the evolution of consciousness is that it crash the barriers, metaphorically shed its ‘skin’ as it outgrows what it was before, become ‘all that it can be’ in a succession of ‘molts’.





BEAUTY

This chapter is the product of a search for the word “beauty” and its derivatives in the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group channeling sessions. This word does not represent a significant component of the Michaelian teachings. However, there are good reasons to discuss the subject in this *Study Papers* book: 1) the subject came up numerous times during the original Michaelian group; 2) students can presumably benefit from having the mentions conveniently collected all in one place; 3) some interesting things were said about the subject; 4) the subject is related to a number of other components of the Michaelian teachings that are considered to be significant; 5) Beauty has always been a consideration in human psychology and sociology and spirituality.

The word “beauty” is not capitalized in this chapter or other chapters of this *Study Papers* book because it has no special meaning in the Michaelian teachings; it is not a Michaelian jargon word that needs a definition apart from its use in the common vernacular.

Definition of Beauty

So what is meant by happiness? Wikipedia:

Personally, I believe that beauty might be an ontological primitive, meaning that it is built into the structure and function of the cosmos at the level of the seven fundamental archetypes, namely the fourth level....

Beauty per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

The following extracts from original Michaelian group transcriptions are Q&A exchanges, where an original Michaelian group member asks a question (or makes a comment), and the Michaels provide an answer. This is [not] a subject that would benefit by division into subcategories, as some subjects do. *These extracts are [not] presented in the chronological order in which they were given, even though this is not a subject where there was a development or evolution of a specific revelation of a facet of the Michaelian teachings, as was often the case with the original Michaelian group.* As is my custom, I often provide some explanatory comments following the question or answer. Underlined words are my emphasis, to draw attention to what it is that I comment on. Sometimes I embed words or phrases [in brackets] that I believe help to clarify the question or the answer.

The word appeared in the very first session that has come into our possession:

[Tomas:] This man, [who] is from India, can do this because he has developed himself through meditations and through research and through his traveling down through his various lifetimes, until he has reached this place. It is a beautiful thing, and many people do reach it — many more people than you realize do reach it. [19 June 1973]

The meaning of beauty in this context is that people of a certain type find it to be aesthetically pleasing when they see some other person reach their goal or their potential. People of some other type might experience gratitude; some people of yet another type might experience empowerment. These three types are all manifestations of higher Centers.

Sarah: How do I put me out of the way?

[Tomas:] You are doing a good job, Sarah. You are doing a beautiful job. You just close your mind and let in whoever wants to talk. You will get great things. You are writing a book. [19 June 1973]

There are various ways to offer support for what people another person is doing. Tomas was fond of the word beauty for this purpose, above and below:

[Tomas:] I would like to continue on this subject, perhaps next week if you like. I would like to study and meditate now, in order to bring the beautiful words that are associated with love [to fruition], and learn the correct way, in order to help you understand. [10 July 1973]

Comment: Soleal is very psychic.

Soleal is also a seeker. He is a beautiful being. [17 August 1973]

Alice and Dick expressed how good they felt when they met him.

He is a beautiful guy. [17 October 1973]

The Michaels also used the word beautiful to describe a person, and I suspect they were not referring to the outer beauty, but the inner beauty. Perhaps this is a lesson for us all, to look for the beauty in all people, wherever that may be.

Dick: Should I keep the Capri?

The Capri is a worthless piece of junk, but it is providing you with some beautiful Friction. Yes, scrap it.

The Michaels were using the word “beautiful” here ironically, for emphasis, as Friction is ‘ugly’; refer to the chapter “Friction”. There you will read that Friction is a Gurdjieffian notion borrowed by the Michaels. The idea is that there are “opportunities/challenges” in life where things or people do not do as you prefer, and the proper “spiritual path” is to “turn the lemons into lemonade.” Therefore, you should regard Friction as a beautiful, attractive thing, because facing it and embracing it and overcoming it is for your own good in the long run.

The Mature Soul perceives beauty with a clarity not found in earlier Cycles. [08 September 1973]

The Mature Soul Age is the fourth of seven Soul Ages. It is the Neutral Assimilation Age, which is both/neither Cardinal/Ordinal. As such, it is the symmetrical balanced stage of the Cycle. Note what is said in a Theosophy book about what that theological philosophy refers to as the “Fourth Ray”:

The fourth note [Ray] is the middle unit, the pivot, the fulcrum, the stable point of rest, the lowest point in the swing of the pendulum of Life between the primordial three pairs of opposites. It is the state of perfect interrelation, of balance, of the highest area of self-expression, of harmony between Life [Cardinal] and form [Ordinal], vehicle [Ordinal] and consciousness [Cardinal]. It is the point of rest at which the pendulum of manifested life makes an apparent pause in its everlasting swing between Spirit [Cardinal] and matter [Ordinal]. In that “momentary pause” of ultimate stability, perfect equipoise, the beauty of the Supreme is revealed. In the universe, it is the beauty of Nature. In the Logos, it is Beauty’s Self. In man, it becomes love of the beautiful; in developed man, it is the faculty of perceiving and portraying the beauty of the Supreme. [Geoffrey Hodson, *The Seven Human Temperaments*, p. 7]

Kathryn: Who should I go to, to meditate with better?

Chogyam Trungpa’s methods would work for you.

Kathryn: What? Who is that?

Sarah: He’s a Tibetan Llama from Delhi. He has one place in Vermont and another in Colorado.

She could read the book or could seek him out; either would work; the latter would be more interesting. He is a beautiful, joyous Essence. Find him. [08 September 1973]

Previously we saw that beauty was been mentioned in conjunction with love, and here we see it mentioned in conjunction with joy. That passage implies that not all Essences are **beautiful and/or joyous...**

The language is really very beautiful. [18 September 1974]

Sight and sound can be beautiful. Touch and taste and smell are described with different adjectives.

Could you appreciate the beauty of the differential equation if you did not first have understanding of algebra and the linear equation? [18 September 1973]

Besides sights and sounds being beautiful, abstract concepts and procedures can seem to be beautiful to some people.

Concluding Comments on Beauty





BELIEF

This chapter is the product of a search for the word “belief” and its derivatives in the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group channeling sessions. This word does not represent a significant component of the Michaelian teachings. However, there are good reasons to discuss the subject in this *Study Papers* book: 1) the subject came up numerous times during the original Michaelian group; 2) students can presumably benefit from having the mentions conveniently collected and commented all in one place; 3) some interesting things were said about the subject; 4) the subject is related to a number of other components of the Michaelian teachings that are considered to be significant; 5) Belief issues are pervasive in human psychology and sociology and spirituality.

The word “belief” is not capitalized in this chapter or other chapters of this *Study Papers* book because it has no special meaning in the Michaelian teachings; it is not a Michaelian jargon word that needs a definition apart from its use in the common vernacular.

This chapter is one of many in this book that focuses on a psychological and psychotherapeutic component of the Michaelian teachings as found in original Michaelian group transcriptions, rather than on a spiritual component, as so many other chapters in this book do. The Michaelian version of psychology is not to be confused with the pop psychology of the self-improvement movement, those that do not have a spiritual core or perspective. Rather, the Michaelian psychotherapeutic path (aimed at improving psychological health) is a beneficial precursor to the spiritual path (aimed at improving soul health). To skip the former but attempt the latter is referred to as “spiritual bypassing” (>https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spiritual_bypass<), and it usually proves to be problematic.

Definition of Belief

So what is meant by belief? [Wikipedia has an article that provides a definition and a description, as follows:](#)

Belief per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

The following extracts from original Michaelian group transcriptions are Q&A exchanges, where an original Michaelian group member asks a question (or makes a comment), and the Michaels provide an answer. This is [not] a subject that would benefit by division into subcategories, as some subjects do. [These extracts are \[not\] presented in the chronological order in which they were given, even though this is not a subject where there was a development or evolution of a specific revelation of a facet of the Michaelian teachings, as was often the case with the original Michaelian group.](#) As is my custom, I usually provide some explanatory comments following the question or answer. Underlined words are my emphasis, to draw attention to what it is that I comment on. Sometimes I embed words or phrases [in brackets] that I believe help to clarify the question or the answer.

Concluding Comments on Belief





⑦ BELIEF SYSTEM

This chapter is the product of a search for the phrase “belief system” in the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group channeling sessions. This phrase does not represent a significant component of the Michaelian teachings. However, there are good reasons to discuss the subject in this *Study Papers* book: 1) the subject came up numerous times during the original Michaelian group; 2) some interesting things were said about the subject; 3) the subject is related to a number of other components of the Michaelian teachings that are considered to be significant; 4) students can presumably benefit from having the mentions conveniently collected and commented all in one place; 5) Belief systems are unavoidable; they are pervasive in human psychology and sociology and spirituality, so it behooves us to have a working knowledge of them.

The phrase “belief system” is not capitalized in this chapter or other chapters of this *Study Papers* book because it has no special meaning in the Michaelian teachings; it is not a Michaelian jargon word or phrase that needs a definition apart from its use in the common vernacular.

Generally speaking, the Michaels are not keen on belief systems, preferring what might be called “knowledge systems” instead; refer to the chapter “Knowledge as Gnosis” for the whole story. Basically and briefly, by definition, it is possible to have false beliefs, but it is not possible to have false knowledge. There is also a chapter, “Value”, which discusses the concept of a value system. If you ask me to place these systems into the Overleaf System, then I would say that belief systems are of the Expression Axis, knowledge systems are of the Assimilation Axis, and value systems are of the Inspiration Axis. Behavior systems are of the Action Axis, and one relevant chapter for that subject is “Ritual”.

Among other things, the Michaelian teachings presents an elaborate belief system as a psychological component of a spiritual path. Psychological components of the Michaelian teachings usually address either a positive to be cultivated or a negative to be mitigated during a lifetime. In this case, the Michaelian teachings asserts that its belief system is superior to other belief systems. Obviously, having a true and healthy belief system is a positive worth cultivating. Both negatives and positives are amenable to psychotherapeutic techniques. The Michaelian version of psychology is not to be confused with the pop psychology of the self-improvement movement, those that do not have a spiritual core or perspective. Rather, the Michaelian psychotherapeutic path (aimed at improving psychological health) is a beneficial precursor to the spiritual path (aimed at improving soul health). To skip the former but attempt the latter is referred to as “spiritual bypassing”. This is discussed at length on various websites, including https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spiritual_bypass. To skip mitigating one’s psychological issues and attempt to go straight to enlightenment usually proves to be problematic.

Definition of Belief System

So what is meant by belief s system? Wikipedia describes it this way:

Belief systems

A belief system comprises a set of mutually-supportive beliefs. The beliefs of any such system can be religious, philosophical, political, ideological, or a combination of these.

A belief system can refer to a religion or a world view. A world view (or worldview) is a term calqued from the German word *Weltanschauung*. *Welt* is the German word for ‘world’, and *Anschaung* is the German word for ‘view’ or ‘outlook’. It is a concept fundamental to German philosophy and epistemology and refers to a wide world perception. Additionally, it refers to the framework of ideas and beliefs through which an individual interprets the world and interacts in it.

Philosopher Jonathan Glover, following Meadows (2008), says that beliefs are always part of a belief system, and that tenanted belief systems are difficult for the tenants to completely revise or reject. He suggests that

beliefs have to be considered holistically, and that no belief exists in isolation in the mind of the believer. Each belief always implicates and relates to other beliefs. Glover provides the example of a patient with an illness who returns to a doctor, but the doctor says that the prescribed medicine is not working. At that point, the patient has a great deal of flexibility in choosing what beliefs to keep or reject: the patient could believe that the doctor is incompetent, that the doctor's assistants made a mistake, that the patient's own body is unique in some unexpected way, that Western medicine is ineffective, or even that Western science is entirely unable to discover truths about ailments. [<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Belief> — retrieved 05 February 2023]

The Michaelian teachings is a comprehensive mutually-supportive belief, value, and behavior system, and the Michaels refer to it as such, naming it “The Synthesis”; refer to the chapter by that name. Typically, belief systems are formalized by appending the suffix “-ism”. That being the case, this *Study Papers* book is about Michaelism.

Belief System per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

The following extracts from original Michaelian group transcriptions are Q&A exchanges, where an original Michaelian group member asks a question (or makes a comment), and the Michaels provide an answer. These extracts are presented in the chronological order in which they were given. As is my custom, I often provide some explanatory comments following the question or answer. Underlined words in the Michaels' answers are my emphasis, to draw attention to what it is that I comment on. Sometimes I embed words or phrases [in brackets] that I believe help to clarify the question or the answer.

The first mention of “belief system” came three months after the Michaels introduced themselves to the original Michaelian group:

The only souls who would really benefit from this [Michaelism] approach would, of course, be Mature Souls and Old Souls. Young Souls do not possess a developed sense of self, and could not direct the knowledge inward. Also, their belief system would mitigate against their acceptance. [15 November 1973]

The older the soul, the more comprehensive and encompassing is their belief system. Every Soul Age has an appropriate belief system (and value system and behavior system). Altogether, these three systems add up to a worldview that is common to whatever Soul Age. One characteristic of older souls versus younger souls is that the former have a much richer “inner” world than the latter; their “sense of self” is more “developed”.

Ray: Where do people stay after death? In what space are they?

This depends a great deal on the level [Age] of the soul and the belief system going at the time of transition [physical death]. [15 November 1973]

That statement implies that a person's belief system changes over a lifetime; evidence for that is everywhere, including within ourselves. Also implied is that our belief system influences “what [metaphorical] space” we inhabit, and who we ‘hang out’ with. “Birds of a feather flock together”, as the saying goes, here on the Physical Plane and apparently on the Astral Plane. If we accept the analogy of soul growth being like advancing through ‘grades’ in a ‘school’, then people learn best when surrounded by souls functioning at approximately the same level, and this includes the belief, value, and behavior systems operating at that level. Soul Age is not the only factor, but probably one of the most significant.

Jeff.: What benefit or harm is there to stimulating the acupuncture point known as the “Divine Door”?

No harm. The benefit depends on your belief system. If you think or believe in it, it will probably be of benefit. If your belief system is such that you believe that stimulation of certain areas of the human brain such as the hypothalamus, the pineal gland, [or] the anterior pituitary produces a doorway to enlightenment and this belief is strong enough, sometimes the result is just short of miraculous. [15 November 1973]

This appears to be a reference to the so-called “placebo effect”: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Placebo>. The placebo phenomenon is better studied and documented than another “mind over matter” phenomenon, namely psychokinesis (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Psychokinesis>), but the placebo effect is thoroughly confirmed in clinical medical trials. Life works best when one's internal belief system is consistent with external reality, and that can include the higher reality where co-called “miracles” can happen; refer to the chapter “Enlightenment” for more discussion about that.

More is said about that sort of thing in the next Q&A exchange to be found in the original Michaelian group transcriptions:

Gene: I have several questions here from someone else, Denise. Denise felt moved to move to the East Coast [but did not], and now because of what has happened to her, she feels like they should have moved.

We do not feel that the move would have altered the course of Denise's disease. It already reached the state where she, or rather that body, had decided. Psychically, Denise would benefit, not by the experience, only by searching. She believes that she would. She would have to work with someone there just as she would have had to do in the beginning. It is important that she stay in contact with Gene now. Gene can help her to reevaluate her belief system. [20 December 1973]

It usually takes a lot of external information and/or a charismatic personality and/or an acknowledged authority figure and/or a trusted friend (as Gene was to this person) to help a person reevaluate their entire belief system. It is easier if the person gets to the point where the old belief system is simply not working for them any longer, and then the person of their own volition and conviction looks for and tries to find a better belief system to take its place.

Susan: I wrote a letter to my parents recently, thanking them for their support and help while I was working on a goal, and my mother wrote back and said she knew all the time that I would do this, because when I was born I had a "veil" over my face, and the midwife predicted great things for me. I would like to know how valid these superstitions are, and if "omens" mean anything.

The superstition concerning the psychic power of those born with a "caul" is a very ancient one, having its roots in Babylonia. The place of superstition in the scheme of things is sometimes valid, in that it allows powerfully psychically energetic souls to exercise their powers without disrupting their already formed dogmatic belief systems. The lady in question was one of those. She used a convenient superstition to explain the tremendous amount of psychic energy she felt. [20 December 1973]

Refer to the chapter "Superstition" for more discussion about that subject. Our belief systems are such that we tend to interpret novel phenomena that we encounter within the framework of the existing belief system ... at least up until so many anomalies accumulate that the old belief system cannot reasonably accommodate the anomalies. At that time it becomes necessary that a whole new belief system come into view and/or snap into place, one that does adequately accommodate the new data. In the scientific realm, this is called a "paradigm shift": ><https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paradigm><. A philosopher of science named Tomas Kuhn wrote *the* book about that: >https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Structure_of_Scientific_Revolutions<.

Richard: Is "False Personality" and "Maya" the same?

He [Tomas] is challenged by the glamour of the diversified belief systems, and is only able to differentiate because of higher teachers [than him] who are available. We do not prevent the dissemination of valid information from the Astral Plane [where Tomas was], but this is monitored carefully, and attempts are made to invalidate false data. Sometimes this is not possible, primarily because of the rigid belief systems of the medium involved. This is why we always attempt to work with Older [Soul] mediums. Their convictions tend to float more easily, and it is possible to sneak past their bias. [20 December 1973]

Refer to chapters "Glamour" and "Bias", where two impediments to arriving at an accurate belief system are discussed at length. Such impediments as glamour and bias are why the Michaels emphasized the value of "Validation and Verification", documented in a chapter by that name. Implied by the words "diversified" and "rigid" is the notion that a person can hold their belief system too loosely or too closely for their own mental and social well-being. Perhaps you have heard the aphorism "Don't be so open-minded that your brains fall out". This situation appears in the Overleaf System in such things as the Negative Pole of the Idealist Attitude, namely -Naivety, and in the Negative Pole of the Scholar Role, namely -Speculation. In the opposite case, a too-rigid belief system appears in the Overleaf chart in such things as the Negative Pole of the Pragmatist Attitude, namely -Dogma, and in the Negative Pole of the Stubbornness Chief Feature, namely -Obstinacy.

Gene: I would like to ask about Denise and her recent receiving of the "Holy Spirit," which she received unsolicited and unexpected at the Charismatic Catholic Renewal. I had worked with her on our ideas, and since going to the Holy Spirit meetings, [she] has gone for that. How does this fit?

It fits in with her belief system. It still remains to be seen whether she can transform it into a conflict-resolving mechanism. [03 January 1974]

As I said above, we tend to fit new information into our existing belief system, but a belief system can be supplanted if it proves inadequate in the long run, as the evidence accumulates to the breaking point. Often the anomalies that accumulate enough to challenge a belief system provoke a reorientation that "resolves" the "conflict" in a catastrophic fashion, as in 'the straw that broke the camels back'.

Nichols: I would like to ask about Mike, a key leader in TFR ("Time for Reality"). He demonstrates an ability to accept people where they are and not try to change them.

He still will not perceive, but he will accept your explanation with some reservations as long as he is not existentialistic in his present belief system. This man is not. [20 February 1974]

Existentialism is a philosophy, aka a belief system, that does not concern itself with any alleged supernatural realm, limited as it is to an interest in understanding the human condition, not the soul condition:

Existentialism is a form of philosophical inquiry that explores the issue of human existence. Existentialist philosophers explore questions related to the meaning [Intellectual], purpose [Moving], and value [Emotional] of human existence. Common concepts in existentialist thought include existential crisis, dread, and anxiety in the face of an absurd world, as well as authenticity [Higher Intellectual], courage [Higher Moving], and virtue [Higher Emotional]. [<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Existentialism> — retrieved 05 February 2023]

The Michaelian teachings is existentialist to the extent that it concerns itself with the human condition, which is much. Getting all philosophical now, I note that Existentialism focuses on the processing of life experiences in the various Centers, as shown with the words in [brackets]. In this interpretation, Existentialism as a whole would be the word for the processing that takes place in the Neutral Assimilation Center, which is a combination of the other six. An internet search revealed to me that the opposite of the philosophy of Existentialism is Nihilism, a belief system that denies belief systems, and is therefore self-contradictory. However, the Michaelian teachings is not limited by Existentialism or Nihilism; it is a belief system that affirms the meaningfulness of life in human form, but also affirms that there is a life transcendent, a life above and beyond the human form.

Comment: When there is bias through the Ouija board, there is distorted information due to thought patterns of the one operating the board.

The bias is most easily defined as the absolute limit of the individual's belief system. [03 March 1974]

Previously I mentioned that there is a chapter on "Bias". The Soul Age, and consequent belief system, of the channel influences the type and the quality of the information that comes through that channeling. As the soul ages, its belief system becomes more and more open to a larger and higher reality.

There is, more often than not, a period of utter confusion following transition [from Physical Plane to Astral Plane] for those who had no well-thought-out belief system, or those who fluctuated wildly from one [belief] system to another. They will inevitably flit back and forth for sometimes many years, sampling all the fruits of their floating convictions. [27 March 1974]

The Michaels are not the only ones who tell us humans that for a while in the afterlife, to a significant extent, the soul experiences what the personality expects to experience. However, just as with life on the Physical Plane, on the Astral Plane reality inevitably and eventually overrides an inferior or false belief system. Pushing the Michaelian metaphor, I say that, as with fruit, belief systems come in a spectrum of quality, from poor to fair to good to best. The Michaels provide a belief system that will supposedly fare well in the immediate afterlife world, but one of my "notes to self" is to, when I get there, immediately ask what is really going on as distinct from whatever I might have been lead to believe via channel bias, as noted above, and below:

The information received by the man Edgar Cayce in his trances was difficult for him to transmit as it was so contrary to his own belief system. The more rigid and orthodox the person is, the more ambiguous the transmission will be. [24 April 1974]

Cayce had a fundamentalist Christian background. History has proven that his channeling was of poor quality, unreliable. Considering the nature of his religiosity, it does not seem likely that he was an older soul. One of the ways to validate or invalidate channeling on the subject of the afterlife is to review other sources, such as the Near Death Experience and between-life hypnotic regression. Doing that helps to inform and firm up our belief system. The principle of validation and verification applies to all beliefs, not just the nature of the afterlife.

Comment: Someone intimated that the sisters may be Baby Souls who are rigid in their belief systems. [18 May 1974]

As stated elsewhere in this chapter, the more primitive the soul, the more primitive the belief system that belongs to that Soul Age. Rigidity of belief system is a component of primitivity, and flexibility of belief system is a component of maturity. But not too flexible, as noted above, because wishy-washy is not healthy.

One of the longest single passages in the original Michaelian group transcriptions on the subject of belief systems is this one:

Dick: Many teachings speak of an inner fire that needs to be turned on to achieve consciousness. I cannot turn it on consciously. Can Michael give us the secret to turn this on?

To answer your question, Dick, let us speak of belief systems for a moment. For you see, if the belief system is strong enough and tenacious enough, the Lower Centers can effectively block out all information conflicting with that belief system and all of its attendant emotions. In other words, if you do not believe that there is a state of Agape, you can effectively block out any experience of such. The secret for you, Dick, is in that space of which you have spoken. If you can ever once allow yourself to feel the presence of one who loves, then experience that state vicariously, you can incorporate that into your belief system. Right now, your belief system does not allow for that experience. You may have it by experiencing this Entity and knowing that this state does exist. You must feel it before you can give it yourself. You must be at a point where you know beyond the shadow of a doubt that it does exist, and the only way you will is to experience it from one who is there. You almost felt it with the man Robert [Burton] because he was very close to achieving it. He could, at times, bring his entire following to that neutral energy flow, which for Mechanical Man is a very high place. This neutral energy force is within the reach of this group, if you wish to strive for it and once there, you will find the access easier to allow. But all of you first must feel, then you can love. Mechanical Man does not like innovation or change. This explains the reason. Experiencing this feeling will light the fire. [05 October 1974]

Refer to the chapter “Mechanical Man” for a discussion of the Gurdjieffian concept of a person trapped in a faulty belief system. Several sentences in that passage indicate that a verified belief system is actually a knowledge system based on personal experience; refer to the chapter “Experience” for more about that. I take the word “feel” to refer to personal subjective experience, which helps to bump beliefs up into the verified knowledge category; refer to the chapter “Knowledge as Gnosis” for more about that.

Comment: During hypnosis, Dick asked the question, “Is the power in the present moment?” This was in relation to material he had read in the newest Seth book.

You see, there is truly a power in the present moment, but it can only be felt when that moment is expanded to include all that you have been and all that you are now. If you are erecting and maintaining barriers against past pain, then how are you going to do this? When two souls meet again and there is Recognition, this can be a powerfully positive experience, if it is felt by both. It can also be scary, as it was for this man, because his belief system does not go beyond the grave.

Refer to the chapter “Barriers and Blocks” for more about that which blocks substituting a good belief system in the place of a bad belief system. Refer to the chapter “Recognition” for a discussion of the general principle that you learn to “know a good thing when you see it”, and that includes one’s belief system.

Should Jim tell his friend about this?

Please know that belief systems permeate all lower Centers in their control. Although this man can intellectually rationalize on alternatives, this intellect eventually comes to reject these alternatives, as the belief system does not allow them room. It is like the mountains of evidence versus the shred of proof of which you have all spoken before. You will cling to the shred of non-proof tenaciously as long as the belief system is in control. [05 October 1974]

Here again is an instance where a belief system needs to be updated by a personal experience that indicates that “there are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamed of in their philosophy” (Shakespeare). The typical reaction to a severe challenge to a Mechanical Man’s belief system is fear, and the person might even get defensive or offensive in order to maintain the status quo. The proper response for a Balanced Man is to *investigate* any new belief or experience with *curiosity*. Also important is to take steps to mitigate preconceived ideas and other biases; psychologists have made lists of “cognitive biases” that make people resistant to updating their belief system; refer to https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cognitive_bias for the definition and the descriptions.

Perhaps you have heard the joke: “How many people does it take to change a light bulb? None. If the light bulb is ready to change, it will do it itself.”

... we would recommend a very radical approach, such as ... regression hypnosis if their belief system does not include the possibility of reincarnation. The latter will still often be successful, as the memories are still buried there, and in the trance can override the belief system. However, these souls are experts at rejecting solutions to

their problems. It still remains that you cannot force one to change ... but if you are successful, it will simply mean that one was ready to seek the change. [08 October 1974]

Due to the suggestible state of mind that exists during a hypnotic trance, it is possible to sneak around an entrenched belief system.

Perhaps there are other clever ways to introduce and inject new ideas into the belief system of otherwise resistant people, such as the Socratic method:

The Socratic method (also known as method of Elenchus, elenctic method, or Socratic debate) is a form of cooperative argumentative dialogue between individuals, based on asking and answering questions to stimulate critical thinking and to draw out ideas and underlying presuppositions. It is named after the Classical Greek philosopher Socrates and is introduced by him in Plato's [book] *Theaetetus* as midwifery (*maieutics*) because it is employed to bring out definitions implicit in the interlocutors' beliefs, or to help them further their understanding. The Socratic method is a method of hypothesis elimination, in that better hypotheses are found by steadily identifying and eliminating those that lead to contradictions. The Socratic method searches for general commonly held truths that shape beliefs and scrutinizes them to determine their consistency with other beliefs. The basic form is a series of questions formulated as tests of logic and fact intended to help a person or group discover their beliefs about some topic, explore definitions, and characterize general characteristics shared by various particular instances. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Socratic_method — retrieved 10 April 2023]

The upshot of the Socratic Method is that, if a person expresses an opinion that you disagree with, it does not seem good to simply rebut their opinion or assert your opinion. The most effective strategy is to interrogate the person in detail about the factual evidence and logical arguments that back up their opinion until, presumably, they see that it does not 'hold water'. And, of course, the other person in the disputation is well-advised to do the same with you, because, whether you realize it or not, your own opinion might be 'full of holes'. The basic idea is that the interactive dialogue will get both parties closer to truth; refer to the chapters "Communication" and "Dialogue". The Socratic method does not come naturally to most people, so they must be consciously intentional about implementing it.

... the mind of a Mechanical Man intent upon his comfortable belief system that rejects order. [15 October 1974]

As I said above, people are comfortable with their own belief system ... until there aren't, either by the accumulation of external contrary evidence or by reason of some internal transformation process. The thing about Mechanical Men is that they have been 'programmed' to believe as they do, mostly by the parents and the schools and the culture in which they grew up, and it feels right to them on that account; refer to the chapter "Bio-computer" for the whole story. Basically and briefly, to change a belief system one has to have one's brain neuronal connectome 'reprogrammed' throughout. I know what this is like because in my youth I was a member of a fundamentalist quasi-Christian cult. They had their answer for everything. It was only because I am by nature not of a fundamentalist mentality that I grew out of the programming, with a little help from a better belief system.

Her belief systems are quite tenacious, even though she tries to deny this intellectually, and now she is lost out on the goal of her particular dogma, and that is frightening. [19 October 1974]

Refer to the chapter "Dogma" for more discussion of that term. To "deny something intellectually" is called rationalization. The thing about a belief system is that it seems so rational and reasonable to the person who has it. The belief system has been developed over the course of the person's life and it makes perfect sense ... until it doesn't. What makes belief systems hard to crack is that they appear to be coherent, with each belief in the system interlocked with and confirming the other beliefs in the system as a whole. However, reality has a way of intruding, and a dogmatic person finds this to be scary.

The Michaels readily admit that their teaching is a belief system. The questioner in this case, Ralph, was a very bright, well-educated, academic-minded, social-activist person:

Ralph: I have the impression that within our group, the articulation of the teachings emphasizes the static, the intellectual, and the hierarchical. Is this primarily a distortion arising from my biases or the group's or the languages? Or is this an accurate transmission of the teachings? Please comment.

In the beginning of this group, the primary concern was in the development of the belief system in the language necessary to explain it to each other and to oneself. This is a necessary step in the formation of any group, but in most, becomes a barrier toward further growth, and eventually becomes the belief system itself.

In this group, there has been evolution of a sort that now points toward continuance in growth. The possibility still exists, however, that you will continue to concern yourselves with the intellectual hierarchical aspects and neglect the spiritual, yes, but you do not have to. You can put this belief system to the 'acid test' and see if it works [leads toward transcendence]. Until you do this, yes, you are still trapped in the beginning stages. This is where most of the other belief systems remained throughout their existence, including the world's great religions. The concern remained hierarchical and primarily intellectual and never got off the ground spiritually. You are right, of course; you are trading one belief system for another; but there is a unity here that has not been before, and there is a trend toward integration that you are capable of verifying implicit within the [belief] system. [19 October 1974]

By "acid test" the Michaels were probably referring to the psychedelic method of blowing one's belief system 'out of the water':

The Acid Tests were a series of parties held by author Ken Kesey primarily in the San Francisco Bay Area during the mid-1960s, centered on the use of and advocacy for the psychedelic drug LSD, commonly known as "acid". LSD was not made illegal in California until October 6, 1966." [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Acid_Tests< — retrieved 10 April 2023]

Refer to the chapter "Psychedelics" for more information. Taking them is one of the most effective and efficient ways to change a person's belief system. In fact, psychedelics often launch a person out of their intellectualism into spiritualism, and, as we see in the "Psychedelics" chapter, that was one of the goals that original Michaelian group members had for themselves, and that the Michaels were teaching them how to do.

The Michaelian teachings has proven to be a better belief system than the religion that I participated in during my youth. In my opinion, part of being "better" means to me that the Michaelian belief system points beyond itself to what I am calling a "knowledge system" in this chapter. A knowledge system is not merely intellectual and hierarchical; it is experiential and spiritual; refer to the chapter "Knowledge as Gnosis" for a thorough discussion.

Besides psychedelics, positive emotions and intimate social experiences are good breakers of intellectual belief-systems:

It was excellent work to have the group pressed into a crowded situation and yet come away with far more positive emotions than negative ones, even though many privately held belief systems concerning the need for alienation were violated. Those of you who made the experience count will not lose the ground gained. Those students who refused to penetrate the experience are in precisely the same spot as they were before the experience. [12 November 1974]

Sometimes a belief system breaks down under its own weight in the natural course of life, but sometimes the process can be engineered or accelerated, as for instance, when one puts oneself in an intense situation where a breakthrough becomes likely. Refer to the chapter "Alienation" for more about that component of a primitive belief system. The better belief system of a group can prompt experiences that can help individuals break down an obsolete belief system and replace it with the better belief system, one that does not include alienation.

Dick: Asked for a comment from Michael regarding his own experiences during the weekend. He felt in an obligated emotional state, non-relating, alienated, didn't feel well, a psychosomatic type illness. He asked if this was a past life carry-over, and if there was a rewarding answer, he would like to hear it.

With some students, and we include you, Dick, in this, the desire to experience the experience was counterbalanced by the feeling of unreadiness and unwillingness to verify that on a strong plane. Also, the belief systems of some students includes the "I'm not psychic" fact, and this was strongly operative during this group gathering. [12 November 1974]

Some few people are psychic from birth; they take this for granted and don't deny it. Most people are only a little bit psychic, so they might not recognize it on those rare occasions or in those rare circumstances when it happens. Refer to the chapter "Paranormal, The", and open yourself to the possibility, if not probability, that you might be just a little bit psychic. One would hope that Michaelian students would examine their limited belief system, if such be the case, acknowledge their psychic gifts, if any, and even cultivate them; refer to the chapter "Intuition".

This verification [of past lives via reincarnation] is always shattering as it usually strips away belief systems of long standing. [12 November 1974]

Such is the case except in cultures where reincarnation is a component of the prevailing religious belief system. Reincarnation is more widely believed in Western civilization now than it was in the 1970s, thanks to the incursion of Asian religions.

The most penetrating barriers on the Physical Plane are the “I cannot” belief systems that stand in the way of spiritual evolution. [20 November 1974]

Refer to the chapter “Barriers and Blocks” for an accounting of many impediments to spiritual progress. Many of them are self-imposed as in the case here of self-sabotage; many of them are part of parental and cultural belief systems.

Ralph: You have told us about man’s habitual rendering complex — the way he complicates things. If we have moments of knowledge and love, it seems difficult to maintain them in this culture. Can you comment on this?

These moments are moments of utter simplicity. Of course, it is difficult to maintain in this state, in the false order, the complicated chaos that this and other cultures like it have created. As we have said before, to explain away the unexplainable, man must create for himself the answer to all those questions, those imponderables for which there is no proof. Man, in order to be satisfied, must define, within the limits of his belief system, all those phenomena that he observes. In moments when the Essence breaks through the barriers, the true order — the natural order — becomes perceivable. Man takes the simplest activity and renders it complex by analyzing, examining, granting it priority, granting it precedence. We should not limit this simply to man. This is common to Creatures of Reason throughout the Physical Plane. This is not unique to that which you call man. Man takes the simplest function and renders it complex in order to give an illusion of importance to his life.

The thing about “Creatures of Reason” (refer to the chapter by that name) is that they are slaves to intellectualism, which, although complicated, is a rather limiting belief system because the universe is so much richer than that which can be comprehended by the intellect.

Ralph: Is The Synthesis simpler than the [belief] systems that man erects?

In its most evolved form, yes. In words suitable for communication with the members of this enclave, it becomes complex. Again, Creatures of Reason take the simplest activity and render it complex through symbols. The Synthesis is not complex. The Synthesis seeks integration, simplicity. Creatures of Reason seek to justify their existence through expressions of individuality, isolation, alienation. Creatures of Reason seek to justify their existence by assigning themselves a role, even a negative one, if that be the case, of subrogation, taking the responsibility from themselves, assigning that responsibility to a higher power, conveniently beyond the five physical senses and, therefore, unarguable, unprovable, unassailable, safe, comfortable, complex. [26 December 1974]

Refer to the chapter “Synthesis, The” and read about what the Michaels called their teaching. It is indeed a belief system, as indicated above, but it is rich enough to include all phenomena.

Refer to the chapter “Complexity versus Simplicity”. There you will read that the Michaels acknowledged the seeming complexity of the belief system that they teach, but the suggestion is that it is necessary to start with a complex belief system in order to extract students from the belief system that people are mired in, and then move toward the simplicity of the truth, which is not a belief system but is reality.

Only that which your mind has decided [belief system] and your heart has become committed to [value system] can occur [behavior system]. All is possible when you give up the dearly held belief systems, and open your being [experiential system] to the new. [11 January 1975]

That was yet another statement that belief systems, value systems, and behavior systems are usually limiting rather than freeing. Ideally, one does not have a rigid belief, value, or behavior system; rather, one does well to live in the flow of an experiential system that is consistent with a Balanced Level of Being or higher. That passage reminds me of >https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cognitive_emotional_behavioral_therapy<. The basic idea of CEBT of that the ‘lower’ components of one’s whole being should be understood and governed by the ‘higher’ components of one’s whole being. Thus, intuition (Essence) rules intellect rules emotion rules behavior.

Carolyn: I have no Agreement to do anything for him?

In a sense, the Agreements made benefit both parties. In the long haul, this will be evident. Remember that the conflicts felt are the result of, first, the individual belief systems, which are part of the Mechanical Man, as well as some rather rigid master Tapes on the part of both students.

Carolyn: Will this recur if I allow it to?

If you allow it to, and if he persists hanging onto old patterns, yes. [15 January 1975]

Romantic relationships, because they are an attempt at intimacy and unification, are almost always made difficult by differing belief, value, and behavior systems. The solution is to graduate from being “Mechanical Man” to being “Balanced Man”; refer to the chapters by those names. Also refer to “Bio-Computer” for the story about ‘Tapes’, which are deeply-ingrained beliefs or values or behaviors.

Jean asked for a comment about the “psychic revolution” and the magazine’s role in it.

Well, you see, there are ten, approximately, alternative courses open to this world at this time — eight of which we would consider fairly unattractive. The other two concern what we are terming “psychic revolution”. This would, of course, be in fact the overthrow of the prevalent belief systems that now control the governing forces of this world, and would return leadership to those best qualified to lead on the basis of intuitive knowledge and what we call truth. Whether you like this or not, it is what is happening now, and it is what the [original Michaelian group] cadre has asked to become a part of. This revolution, like all other revolutions, would result in widespread anxiety and perhaps even an exchange of hostility. We can in no way guarantee that this will not happen, but it is far less “bloody” than the eight alternatives. They will burn witches again as they have in all ages past. We never told any of you that it would be a “rose garden”. [31 January 1975]

Each Soul Age has an accompanying belief system, value system, and behavior system. Allegedly, at this time in human history, the average Soul Age on the planet is in transition from Young Soul to Mature Soul. This is one of the biggest transitions in the Soul Age cycle, so that is why we see it being so disorienting and tumultuous.

Joan asked for help with her “blind spots” in order to work on herself.

In the first place, there are at least three blocks caused by traumatic events that the Personality is unable to assimilate, and it insulates itself against further recall. This might include acts of violence and betrayal. There are those blocks caused by pride in one’s own creations. These might include one’s children, paintings, compositions, etc. The third type of blocking occurs when imprinted belief systems, such as religion, are attacked from without. Surprisingly, the latter are most tenuous and require the most drastic work in order to detect them in oneself. [21 October 1977]

Refer to chapters “Violence”, “Imprinting”, and “Religion” for more discussion about those sources of belief systems.

Concluding Comments on Belief System

It is impossible for a sane person to not have a belief system, some more firmly held than others. In a relative sense, some belief systems are more appropriate for some people. In an absolute sense, some belief systems are better than others.

There is the belief system that a person adopts from external influences, such as family and church and school and culture. In the Michaelian teachings, this is called False Personality. But then there is the belief system that is inherent or inborn in the soul that incarnates and expressed through the brain, and in the Michaelian teachings this is called True Personality. Much of psychology and spirituality is aimed at making the transition from the False belief system to the True belief system. Many study papers in this book speak to this struggle. And not just belief system, but also value system and behavior system.

Personally, I remember vividly when the quasi-Christian belief system that I had been involved in was replaced by the belief system found in the book *Seth Speaks*, which I read on Saturday 12 July 2008, when I was 33.5 years old. The disorientation and reorientation was palpable as my belief system turned inside-out, top-for-bottom, end-for-end.





④ BIAS

This chapter is the product of a search for the word bias in the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group channeling sessions. This word does not represent a significant component of the Michaelian teachings. However, there are good reasons to discuss the subject in this *Study Papers* book: 1) the subject came up numerous times during the original Michaelian group; 2) some interesting things were said about the subject; 3) the subject is related to a number of other components of the Michaelian teachings that are considered to be significant; 4) students can presumably benefit from having the mentions conveniently collected and commented all in one place; 5) Issues of bias are unavoidable; they are pervasive in human psychology and sociology and spirituality, so it behooves us to have a working knowledge of it.

The word bias is not capitalized in this chapter or other chapters of this *Study Papers* book because it has no special meaning in the Michaelian teachings; it is not a Michaelian jargon word that needs a definition apart from its use in the common vernacular.

This chapter is one of many in this book that focuses on a psychological component of the Michaelian teachings as found in original Michaelian group transcriptions, rather than on a doctrinal or spiritual component. A psychological component is usually either a positive to be cultivated or a negative to be mitigated. As we will see, the Michaels tell us that bias is a negative to be mitigated. The Michaelian version of psychology is not to be confused with the popular psychology of the self-improvement movement, those that do not have a spiritual core or perspective. Rather, the Michaelian psychotherapeutic path (aimed at improving psychological health) is a beneficial precursor to the spiritual path (aimed at improving soul health). To skip the former but attempt the latter is referred to as “spiritual bypassing”. This is discussed at length on such websites as https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spiritual_bypass. To skip mitigating one's psychological issues and attempt to go straight to enlightenment usually proves to be problematic.

Definition of Bias

Although we all know what the word means, it seems expedient for me to provide a formal definition.

Definition of bias:

a: an inclination of temperament or outlook, especially : a personal and sometimes unreasoned judgment : PREJUDICE

b: an instance of such prejudice

c: BENT, TENDENCY

d(1): deviation of the expected value of a statistical estimate from the quantity it estimates

d(2): systematic error introduced into sampling or testing by selecting or encouraging one outcome or answer over others

Synonyms: Noun

favor, nonobjectivity, one-sidedness, partiality, partisanship, ply, prejudice, tendentiousness
[><https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/bias>< — retrieved 11 June 2022]

Obviously, bias is something that we do not want in a spiritual teacher or in a spiritual teaching or in ourselves.

Bias per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

The following extracts from original Michaelian group transcriptions are Q&A exchanges, where an original Michaelian group member asks a question (or makes a comment), and the Michaels provide an answer. These extracts are presented in the chronological order in which they were given. As is my custom, I often provide

some explanatory comments following the question or answer. Underlined words in the Michaels' answers are my emphasis, to draw attention to what it is that I comment on. Sometimes I embed words or phrases [in brackets] that I believe help to clarify the question or the answer.

Recall that before the Michaels appeared, the original Michaelian group was in contact with Tomas and Soleal. The first appearance of the word "bias" in the original Michaelian group transcriptions is found in the second session in which the Michaels were the teacher, and in that session Sarah Chambers was the channel. Some students might be surprised to learn that Sarah was not the only person to channel during the original Michaelian group. In the early sessions, different channels and different methods were used, but Sarah soon emerged as the main channel. Sarah at first preferred to work the Ouija board with her husband Richard, but soon was able to work the board alone. Besides Sarah, there was Lorraine and there was Carolyn. Gene used hypnosis to induce Carolyn into trance. Sarah was the channel for this answer:

[Please comment on] Carolyn.

Her bias is quite strong, and [it is] difficult [for us] to manifest [accurately]. [17 August 1973]

Regarding the words in brackets, it may seem that I am putting words in the Michaels' mouth, but as we will see in the next (and following quotations), the Michaels were more explicit, so I stand by my extrapolation. Carolyn almost never channeled the Michaels during the original Michaelian group, even though she continued as a regular attendee until at least 1975, when the large group was disbanded, and only a core group continued.

Gene, one of the founding members of the original Michaelian group, reported to us that he met a trance medium named Ruth Flagg during his first year of surgical residency (1966). She was a psychic who told him things that she could not possibly have known by non-psychic means, and this was such an astonishing experience for him that he became interested in metaphysical subjects. Gene's wife Susan was also interested in spirituality. This is the reason that they asked about Flagg in one of the earliest Michael sessions:

Susan: Does that mean the high Mental body [Infinite Soul] is expressing itself through Ruthie Flagg?

No.

Susan: Who is manifesting through Ruth Flagg?

A mid-Causal [Plane] teacher.

Gene: Is this material that I have then, from this mid-Causal teacher, of value?

That which is without Ruth's bias [is of value]. The manifestation can be partially or wholly blocked by a medium unwilling to apprehend certain facts. [27 September 1973]

That statement confirms my interpretation of the previous communication. One form of bias blocks information from even getting through. Other forms of bias distort the information that gets through:

Michaels: I would like to ask about the direction I am going and the Entities I have contacted.

This is Good Work for you if you do not attach too much bias of your own to the information. It would be helpful to work with another [Entity] as a 'safety valve'. Michaels, you have an exotic imagination, and this could throw you in 'hot water'. [01 November 1973]

The related metaphors of 'safety valve' and 'hot water' might have been especially meaningful to Michaels; maybe he was a plumber who had a painful experience.

It might be meaningful to you to refer to the chapter "Good Work, Bad Work" to gain an understanding of the Michaels' use of those phrases. One of the advantages of the Michaelian teachings (compared to other teachings that come through only one channel) is that we students can compare and contrast what various channels say, and thereby work to eliminate the bias of each channel. There is not much of that in this *Study Papers* book because Sarah was the channel for almost all of the original Michaelian group sessions, but there is a lot of it in my book *A History of the Overleaf Chart*.

Billie: Could Michael give me some names of my Fragments?

We are not unkeen about this. This sort of transmission frightens Sarah. [01 November 1973]

Obviously, the word "bias" is not used here, but a source of bias in channeling, namely fear, is mentioned.

Dick: I would like to ask about Sue's Role. I believe she once was said to be an Artisan, and last Tuesday it was said she was a Warrior.

Sue is a Warrior. The information was given correctly but transmission was coming through a great deal of bias. [22 November 1973]

Newbie Michaelian students quickly learn that getting accurate Overleaves on a person is notoriously difficult. If more than one channel is consulted, more often than not the results are different. Sometimes it takes years for a student to Validate their Overleaves after getting various sets of Overleaves — refer to the chapter “Validation and Verification” for more about that. Perhaps lack of bias is especially difficult if the channel knows the person, and the channel has formed an opinion of what that person’s Overleaves are, based on their own subjective perceptions. In Sue’s case, the only channel was Sarah, and yet she gave contradictory information. In her later years, Sarah acknowledged to others that in those early days, before knowledge of Casting was given, sometimes she was getting the Casting “Role-ish” rather than the Role. It is possible that Sue was what we modern Michaelian students refer to as an Artisan-Cast Warrior. It is notoriously difficult to objectively distinguish a person’s Casting from their Role.

Soleal’s advice is colored by his own personal bias, but still good. [29 November 1973]

Refer to the chapter “Soleal” for more information about this highly-evolved Adept from another planet (not on the Astral Plane or the Causal Plane) who was a student of the Michaels, and a source of the Michaelian teachings in the early days of the original Michaelian group, and who showed up occasionally over the next couple of years to pass on his “colored” but “good” information. If we assume that, unlike Soleal, the Michaels had no bias, they still had difficulty getting through the bias of whatever channels they used.

Susan: Comment on the value of her present work done at the A.R.E. clinic, especially their views of dream interpretation.

Some of the work being done there is extremely valuable. We are not impressed with what appears to be a doctrinal bias, but aside from that, yes.

Most readers will probably know that A.R.E. is Edgar Cayce’s “Association for Research and Enlightenment”, but if not, you may refer to www.edgarcayce.org/ for more enlightenment.. Two physicians interested in researching and applying the modalities of the Cayce readings had established the A.R.E. Clinic in Scottsdale, Arizona. Susan’s “work” there may have been her work on issues that took her there, in a standard 2-3 week stay at the Clinic, where clients participated in a structured program of Cayce-derived holistic modalities, one of which was focused on dream study. Susan continued to work with the A.R.E. at least into the early 1980s.

Gene: [Do you mean] religious bias?

Not specifically religious, more judgmental, but this pertains to the scientific method of research. The dream work is perhaps now their most valuable study. [29 November 1973]

So much of organized “religion” is about inculcating biases — dogmas and doctrines. True and valid religiosity should be about experiencing the transcendent, which is very freeing; refer to the chapter “Liberation”.

The “scientific method of research” can be biased if it limits or excludes other legitimate methods of research. Usually, the biased limitation of the scientific method is to do “objective” research of the outer universe, and its exclusion is of “subjective” research of the inner universe. My suggestion is that objective and subjective paths of inquiry ultimately lead to the same truth. Advancement in either direction is fostered by not having preconceived expectations, aka biases, of the outcome of the journey. One of the most common biases of the human condition is to not like surprises, because they are perceived as alarming, as potentially dangerous.

There are different types of bias, most of them having to do with personality factors. In my opinion, one of the most important components of one’s spiritual path should be the study of personality traits, because it will help the seeker to understand that their own perceptions are biased by their own personality, that their perspective is therefore not privileged, that therefore their view of the universe is not truly objective. I believe that the reason why the Michaels launched into their revelation of the Overleaf System shortly after their first appearance was because this is the first step toward the transcendence of the biases of personality. One can also use dream work to transcend the limits of one’s personality — refer to the chapter “Dreams and Dreaming”.

Jack: I would like to know how long the Ouija board has been used and what other forms of communication can be used.

We communicate in many ways with many people....

Jack: Okay, and how long has the Ouija been used and what other means of communication are possible?

We have communicated this way [Ouija board] for approximately one hundred years. We communicate directly with all those students who have mastered the skill of Astral [Plane] travel. We are willing to use hypnosis for induction of trances, but trans-mediums who can go into trances spontaneously are easier to work with. There are different kinds of mediums.

According to <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ouija>, the modern version of the “talking board” was 1890. The article noted that there are historical records of similar devices hundreds of years prior to that.

The best methods of channeling are those that bypass the biased conscious personality more effectively and efficiently. With the Ouija board, the personality is awake and aware and capable of interfering with the transmission, whereas with trance channeling that is not the case. There is even less bias from the personality when the soul is on the Astral Plane communicating with the Michaels on the Causal Plane.

Billie: Can Michael tell us where other groups are located and are working with them? Would it be worthwhile to contact other groups in contact with Michael?

Ellis: They won't give that to you. I don't think they will because it isn't necessary.

Ellis is right; we won't. Actually, yours is the only organized group void of sufficient bias for us to transmit to. There are other students, either in very small groups of two or three individuals, or single souls in search. [13 December 1973]

Apparently the Michaels were on the lookout, from the late 1900s onward, for a group of seekers of a type and caliber that could faithfully receive their messages. There was a surge in so-called “spiritualism” (contact with the spirit world via seances) at that time; refer to <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spiritualism> to read about the history of that phenomenon.

More was said about the reasons that the Michaels' selected the original Michaelian group in a later session: it was because of the presence of older souls, who tend to not be as opinionated as younger souls:

Richard: Is “False Personality” and “Maya” the same?

He [Tomas] is challenged by the glamour of the diversified belief systems, and is only able to differentiate because of higher teachers [than him] who are available. We do not prevent the dissemination of valid information from the Astral Plane [where Tomas was], but this is monitored carefully, and attempts are made to invalidate false data. Sometimes this is not possible, primarily because of the rigid belief systems of the medium [channel] involved. This is why we always attempt to work with Older [Soul] mediums. Their convictions tend to float more easily, and it is possible to sneak past their bias. [20 December 1973]

Refer to the chapters on “Personality — True and False” and “Maya”. These are two of the personality factors that lessen as the soul matures over the course of many incarnations, making it easier for denizens of the higher planes to communicate accurately, with a Causal Plane source being even better than an Astral Plane source.

Richard: I had a strong Soleal presence feeling this afternoon and would like a comment.

It is partially valid. You were not sufficiently relaxed to destroy your own bias. You were quite angry this evening. We suggest that you try to discover the source of this anger. The source [cause of an anger] can be deceptive and, of course, this teaching is moving toward the understanding of these hostile emanations. [03 January 1974]

So, bias is not just a product of erroneous intellectual opinions; emotions are also factors in to bias, especially negative emotions such as anger. Note that it is impossible to feel emotions (positive or negative) when the physical body is completely relaxed — try it next time you get pissed. Entering a trance state for the purpose of channeling involves relaxation of the body and a dismissal of the emotions, as well as a quieting of the mind.

Dick: Robert [Burton] said that [his teacher] Alex's [Horn] teacher was Lord Pentland, and that he was a “C” influence teacher. Could we have a comment?

He [Lord Pentland] was a student of Rodney (Collin). The Englishman (Pentland) did have [“C” = Cosmic] contact, but the psychic energies [of Alex Horn] were low, and there was much bias. [20 January 1974]

Collin was a student of Ouspensky; refer to the chapter “Gurdjieff, Ouspensky, Collin, Burton” for the history of successive students of the Gurdjieffian teachings, which included Alex Horn and Henry Sinclair, aka Lord Pentland. Refer the chapter “Influences: A, B, C” for more information about the characteristics and qualities of various teachers. There you will see that according to Gurdjieff, “C” influence, aka “Cosmic” influence, is the highest and best. According to https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alex_Horn, Alex turned out to have questionable ethics, so it is understandable that the Michaels would characterize his work as low quality. The point to be made here, and with other statements about bias, is that not only the quality of the channel but the quality of the source is important.

It seems that even Jesus, a Seventh Level Old King before the manifestation of the Infinite Soul, was not immune to bias in his teaching, due to some adverse childhood circumstances:

I would like to hear something about the teachings of Jesus in relation to divorce. He was always so harsh.

The question of divorce is a tragic one only in your culture, as relatively little thought is given to the suitability of the pair-bonding initially. Assigning all of this to "Providence" is nonsense. We are surprised only that more pair-bonds contracted in this haphazard manner do not dissolve. Jesus was cognizant of this. There was some personal bias here that came out in this man [Jesus], as the marriage between his mother and father was dotted with interference from his mother's family. His father's only recourse was to threaten regularly divorce when he could no longer stand the pressure exerted by an obnoxious brother-in-law. Jesus grew up with this hanging over his head. [20 January 1974]

(The Biblical reference that elicited that question is as follows:

Some Pharisees came to him to test him. They asked, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any and every reason?" "Haven't you read," he replied, "that at the beginning the Creator 'made them male and female,' and said, 'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh'? So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate." "Why then," they asked, "did Moses command that a man give his wife a certificate of divorce and send her away?" Jesus replied, "Moses permitted you to divorce your wives because your hearts were hard. But it was not this way from the beginning. I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another woman commits adultery." The disciples said to him, "If this is the situation between a husband and wife, it is better not to marry." Jesus replied, "Not everyone can accept this word, but only those to whom it has been given. [Matthew 19:3-11, NIV]

My understanding of this Biblical passage is that the Tao Casts kindred souls with polarities, and the problem with the majority of marriages is that the people involved do not marry one of their kindred souls — their "soul mates" — so the marriages end up in divorce. Refer to the chapter "Psychic Union". Also refer to the chapter "Romantic Relationships" and there you will find that the Michaels were okay with "open" relationships (polyamory, polyfidelity) among spiritually-mature kindred souls.)

Refer to the chapter "Jesus – Christ – Christianity" for the complete review of what the Michaels had to say about Jesus during the original Michaelian group. The point to be emphasized here is that some of our biases are produced by adverse or unusual circumstances that affect us during our entire lives, in addition to the biases given to us by inborn personality traits. We see this phenomenon mentioned again in the next appearance of the word "bias"; in this case it was about the alleged author of the Gospel of Matthew:

Comment: Matthew seemed the most judgmental and bitter [of the Gospel authors].

The concept of bitterness in Matthew is valid. He had an ax to grind and, although he tried desperately to purge his bias, it did spill out at times. He was cruelly treated in the country of his birth. [20 January 1974]

Matthew was one of Jesus's twelve apostles, and that Gospel book was attributed to him about a hundred years after Matthew's and Jesus's time, but many modern scholars reject the notion that Matthew was the actual author: >https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Matthew_the_Apostle<. The Michaels did not dispute the connection of Matthew to that Gospel book, and whatever the truth about authorship may be, that does not negate the notion that adversity creates a biased person. So, how idyllic was your childhood?

Barbara: I get some different information from Betty Bethards. What is the reason?

The differences must be attributed to the individual mediums, in ability to reconcile certain bits of information and successful blocking. Your method of confirming and verifying should successfully overcome what little bias exists here. [22 January 1974]

Here again the Michaels enjoin their students to Validate channeling by whatever means and methods they have available. You may read about Betty Bethards at ><http://www.bettybethards.com/>< and also at >www.innerlight.org<. In 1969 she founded the Inner Light Foundation in Petaluma, CA, and she died in 2002.

Some members of the original Michaelian group entertained the notion that they could become channels:

Would Jim be a good trance medium?

Jim has now tight control, and would have to learn to relinquish this before it would work. Cheryl would be easier, yes. Cynthia has sufficient energy, but it is true there is difficulty involved in transcending a Plane, and the attentions of the group must be directed toward the manifestation. There is an infinite supply (of energy), which she may draw upon. Tight control would act as inhibition; also the Acceptance Goal [her Goal]. The only difference is in the amount of bias that must be fought in order for us to manifest with complete control. We

would not attempt to manifest through a Baby Soul. We do not see that much bias in you, Cheryl. You are a bit unique right now. You have most of the perceptions of the Mature Soul and all of the potential [even though you are a Young Soul]. [18 February 1974]

Jim and Cynthia were Mature Souls; Cheryl was a Young Soul. As noted previously, the Michaels prefer Old Souls as their channels because their biases tend to be weaker than in younger souls, but the Michaels were willing to work with younger souls, if they were able to transcend their biases.

Michael channels (and other channels) have typically been women, apparently because they usually are more able to yield or surrender any need to control than men are. The men who are Michael channels usually tend to femininity, even if they are not actual homosexuals. It is not just a cultural thing that femininity is commonly associated with passivity; it is a bias that is built into the gender, generally speaking.

Richard: Is bias [the same as] Tape Loops?

A major part of it, yes. Some [biases] are, of course, original [not imprinted].

Comment: When there is bias through the Ouija board, there is distorted information due to thought patterns of the one operating the board.

The bias is most easily defined as the absolute limit of the individual's belief system.

Richard: Some have a stronger rubber band than others and can stretch more.

Also, the rubber can stretch more easily in one direction than the other. [03 March 1974]

Refer to the chapter "Bio-Computer: Its Programs and Tapes" for the discussion about Tape Loops. Briefly, that is a name for irrational and inappropriate maladaptive behavior, usually resulting from adverse personal experience. A Tape Loop restricts behavior to a predefined pattern, whereas the opposite condition is an open mind that has been exposed to diverse ideas and is able to entertain them without the interference of personal predispositions. At the time of this writing (2022) there is a lot of angst in the zeitgeist about the apparent fact that so many people are sequestered in "information bubbles", in tribalism, in factionalism. This Balkanization does not foster the needed breakthroughs into more eudaptive belief systems, value systems, and behavior systems. Obviously, the Michaels are able to work with open minds more easily than they are able to work with closed minds.

The following two extracts from the original Michaelian group transcriptions are about the greater potential for bias when one channels about themselves.

Eugene: Am I Emotional or Moving Centered? The [Ouija] board at home said I was in Emotional Center and I see Michael has said I was in Moving Center.

This is your bias [belief that you are Emotionally Centered], Eugene. This is also due in part to the fact that when you are using the Ouija [board], you go into Emotional Center. [06 March 1974]

Refer to chapters on Centers and Overleaves. It is appropriate to shift into a Center that is appropriate for the immediate situation or circumstance one is involved in. The least biased Center is the Instinctive Center because it is Neutral, neither Ordinal nor Cardinal. If a channel can quiet the other Centers and get into that Center, there will be less blocking and distorting of the flow of information.

Sarah: I'd like to ask if I was Aristotle or Ptolemy but I need someone else to act as medium. I do not trust my own answers as bias may come through. [06 March 1974]

We do not know if the answer to Sarah's question was ever answered through another channel. In the history of the Michaelian teachings, it is acknowledged that the greatest potential for a biased answer exists when a channel is channeling something about themselves.

According to the Michaels, Sarah had good reason to not trust her own channeling, including that about other people, not just herself:

How much of the transmission is altered by Sarah?

Substantially, where guests are concerned. Much is blocked, but what does come through with old students is unvarnished.

Eugene: Would Michael comment on the session I had Monday night with a medium?

The only comment we would make at this time is that the emotional bias differs greatly from intellectual bias. Different processes [are] at work here and, therefore, the alterations will be at variance. [22 May 1974]

In the Gurdjieffian teachings and in the Michaelian teachings it has been stressed that one learn to respond to the immediate situation from the appropriate Center for that situation. Otherwise, things get all “altered”, aka distorted, *biased*.

We have seen it above, and we see it here, that some original Michaelian group members consulted channels other than those within the original Michaelian group:

Question: “Life reading” by a friend. [Is it] valid?

Mostly valid.

What isn't?

We find no great fault with this man. He is a trance medium and he does surrender well in trances.

Bias comes from lack of surrender (giving up) of the biases of the channel.

Louise: Information from Evelyn valid?

Not all, but some. Some comes through considerable bias.

Personally, I have never been one to run to a psychic of any sort to get answers to whatever question was bugging me at the time, preferring to tune into my own “internal guidance system” and/or let the “universe” work it out. Maybe this is just me, a typical guy who does not like to “ask for directions”, but then again, in the long run, the onus of Validation is on me for my stuff and you for your stuff, not on what some channel may or may not say.

Delia: Is the Fischer-Hoffman school valid?

This school is as valid as the other Astral physical schools. It must cut through the bias of Arrogance, but is essentially valid. The man will do no harm if he continues to Photograph his vanity. He has been [Photographing], yes, but when a physical teacher begins to regard himself and his Astral counterpart as omnipotent, trouble begins in a snowballing fashion. This does not need to happen. [03 July 1974]

Refer to the chapters “Photography” and “Self-observation” for the essays on one type of procedure that will decrease one’s own biases. Inappropriate Centering was mentioned above, and so was immaturity in Soul Age, but among the seven Overleaf categories, the Chief Features are especially egregious in their tendency to bias a person’s perceptions.

Leslie: From where is Seth speaking?

This Entity speaks from the Causal Plane. The bias through which he is speaking lessens now. (The medium’s bias is lessening.) [Parentheses in original.] [15 October 1974]

One would hope and expect that a channel would get better in terms of less bias as the years go by. This notion applies to the Michaels and their teaching as well:

Ralph: I have the impression that within our group, the articulation of the teachings emphasizes the static, the intellectual, and the hierarchical. Is this primarily a distortion arising from my biases or the group’s or the languages? Or is this an accurate transmission of the teachings? Please comment.

In the beginning of this group, the primary concern was in the development of the belief system in the language necessary to explain it to each other and to oneself. This is a necessary step in the formation of any group, but in most, becomes a barrier toward further growth, and eventually becomes the belief system itself. In this group, there has been evolution of a sort that now points toward continuance in growth. The possibility still exists, however, that you will continue to concern yourselves with the intellectual hierarchical aspects and neglect the spiritual, yes, but you do not have to. You can put this belief system to the acid test and see if it works. Until you do this, yes, you are still trapped in the beginning stages. This is where most of the other belief systems remained throughout their existence, including the world’s great religions. The concern remained hierarchical and primarily intellectual and never got off the ground spiritually. You are right, of course, you are trading one belief system for another; but there is a unity here that has not been before, and there is a trend toward integration that you are capable of verifying implicit within the system. [19 October 1974]

So, the Michaels say that their own revelation is evolving to become less biased ... because it must happen that way. It is necessary for the teaching to start out biased in order to accommodate the level of spiritual development of their newbie students, but as the level of understanding of the students rises, so does the quality of the revelation, with less distortion and more balance and more thoroughness.

Regarding the “world’s great religions”, typically there has been the “intellectual hierarchical” mainstream exoteric institution with its dogmas and doctrines suitable for the less-advanced souls, and then there has been

the spiritual mystical esoteric branch, of the same nominal religion but with a revelation suitable for the more-advanced souls. This phenomenon was recognized in the Bible, using the metaphor of the weaning of infants off of milk and onto meat:

And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able. For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men? [1 Corinthians 3:1-3 (KJV)]

For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. [Hebrews 5:12 (KJV)]

We might do Good Work to ask ourselves where we are in the weaning process.

The subject of bias in the Michaelian teachings came up again a month later. As usual, it is repeated that it is up to us as students to validate and verify the channeling, because bias is almost inevitable:

Carolyn asked if the interstellar travelers on the Causal Plane are teachers. Information that seems discrepant could be biased because of the medium involved.

... yes, there are many Entities on this [Causal] plane who are working with groups and with single souls, on this and many near worlds. You are not unique in this and you are quite right, the individual bias through which we come [via human mediums] does distort the words somewhat, in some cases, beyond verification. We choose [channels] on the basis of desire and ability to serve as a transmitter. This does not always prove successful, and the only positive feature arising from this is that the resulting distortions are readily discerned and discarded. Those who perpetrate them are quite quickly branded as “crackpots” and forgotten. Those who make the most unbiased transmitter-receivers are those with the most Neutral Overleaves. Unfortunately, these are also the ones who normally resist their intuition the longest and sometimes never span the chasm. [20 November 1974]

As it says above, the least biased Overleaves are the Neutral Traits: Fourth Level Mature Scholar in the Observation Mode with a Goal of Stagnation, a Pragmatist in the Instinctive Center with a Chief Feature of Stubbornness. If such a person exists, they would be incredibly bland, but they would also be “fair and balanced”, you know, like the news reports are supposed to be, and like Joe Friday enjoined the witness: “just the facts, mam”. (><https://www.snopes.com/fact-check/just-the-facts/><)

Eugene asked a question about a book he is reading, written in 1860. He asked about the book's reference to Atlantis.

The information contained in this volume is for the most part a fairly good description of the civilization of which you were a part, embellished by time and the medium's bias, but still fairly good. This was an advanced civilization that would have had interplanetary space travel within fifty years of the time it was destroyed. The source [channel] at that time was Astral, many Fragments [of] which have been since reincarnated. Of those who were Mature Souls at the time of the destruction of Atlantis, many have waited these many centuries for a similar time frame in which to experience out their physical lives. The same is true for all who were Older Souls at that time. Most of you were Baby and very early Young Souls at the time, and it was necessary for you to experience some of the interim. [30 January 1975]

One of my personal biases is to not take channeling about Atlantis credulously, precisely because of the difficulty of Validating it with means and methods of my preference. Just because two or more channels say the same thing, to me that is not the type of Validation that rings true for me. In my personal belief system, I tend to sort stuff into three categories: probably true, probably not true, and undecided. ‘Your mileage may vary.’

Sarah felt she had blocked on this information. Much discussion was held about the Role being wrong. Why was the word “child” used?

This selection of the word was the bias of the medium. It does not matter to us. The Goal of Dominance [which Sarah had] will often display the confusion in the Role of Slave. The Mode [Observation, which Sarah had] will at times border on Stubbornness and Power, yes. The Mode [of Observation] will not block, but rather clarify [in the Positive Pole of +Clarity] the Role and Goal, as this child manifests. You, Sarah, are correct in the feelings of blocking, and this is the one area we hope to work on. He is a Third Level Mature Slave. We would not argue. [30 January 1975]

This is just another reminder that the reason the Michaels gave their students the Overleaf System is so that they could Photograph themselves and thereby mitigate the biases provided by their default Traits.

When the Infinite Soul manifested through the man Jesus, the sum of the Logos was brought to bear. In the stories about this Master and his system, however, there is much emotional bias, occult nonsense and romantic embellishment. [Dimensions! June 1975]

So, even if there is no bias in the teacher, their teaching gets distorted by their students, who are not functioning at the same level of development as their teacher. Therefore, *caveat emptor*, “buyer beware”, “do your own research”, “the unexamined teaching is not worth believing”.

That is a good note on which to end this chapter.





⑤ BIO-COMPUTER: ITS PROGRAMS AND TAPES

If you have not read the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group, you would wonder what in the world bio-computer, programs, and tapes have to do with the Michaelian teachings. There are mentions in some of the transcriptions that some of the original Michaelian group channeling sessions were tape recorded, but that is not the subject of this chapter. Rather, the situation under review here is that the mainframe computers of the 1970s were programmed with punch cards and used tape reels for data storage, and this provided a metaphor for the psychological phenomenon where subconscious memories stored in the human brain influence the conscious Personality in ways that counter or thwart the manifestation of Essence.

So far as we can discern from the transcriptions, the original Michaelian group members, and the Michaels, borrowed the metaphor from a contemporary person, a prominent psychologist named John Lilly, who used the words “bio-computer, programs, tapes” in conjunction with the metaphor of the human psyche as functioning somewhat like a computer. This metaphor was not carried forward into subsequent Michaelian teachings lore because it was not perpetuated by Yarbrow in her books [verify], or by Briggs in her groups [verify], or by the Bay Area channels [verify]. Even though the metaphor did not survive the demise of the original Michaelian group, the analogy is still valid and useful for subsequent Michaelian students, in my opinion, so that is why I compiled the relevant quotations and wrote this chapter.

The words Bio-computer, Programs, and Tapes are capitalized in this chapter and other chapters of this *Study Papers* book because they have a special meaning in the Michaelian teachings; they are therefore Michaelian jargon words that need a definition apart from their use in the common vernacular.

Before we find out what the Michaels had to say on the subject, let’s set the stage with some background documentation on John Lilly and his ideas

Bio-computer, Programs, and Tapes per Lilly

Not everyone will be familiar with John Lilly and his work, so let’s first have a brief biography, and then an introduction to his theory about the human biocomputer.

John Cunningham Lilly (January 6, 1915 – September 30, 2001) was an American physician, neuroscientist, psychoanalyst, psychonaut, philosopher, writer, and inventor. He was a member of a generation of counterculture scientists and thinkers that included Ram Dass, Werner Erhard, and Timothy Leary, all frequent visitors to the Lilly home. He often stirred controversy, especially among mainstream scientists.

Lilly conducted high-altitude research during World War II and later trained as a psychoanalyst. He gained renown in the 1950s after developing the isolation tank. He saw the tanks, in which users are isolated from almost all external stimuli, as a means to explore the nature of human consciousness. He later combined that work with his efforts to communicate with dolphins. He began studying how bottlenose dolphins vocalize, establishing centers in the U.S. Virgin Islands, and later San Francisco, to study dolphins. A decade later, he began experimenting with psychedelics, including LSD, often while floating in isolation. His work inspired two Hollywood movies, *The Day of the Dolphin* (1973) and *Altered States* (1980).

[>https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_C._Lilly< — retrieved 23 June 2021]

Werner Erhard also had an influence on members of the original Michaelian group; refer to the chapter named “EST”. Both Lilly’s isolation tank (23 June 1974) and Lilly’s communication with dolphins are mentioned in the original Michaelian group transcriptions. It was Lilly’s involvement with dolphins that led to the revelation by the Michaels that cetaceans were sentient in the same way that humans are sentient; refer to the chapter “Cetaceans”.

The blurb on the Amazon website that offers Lilly’s book *Programming the Human Biocomputer* is as follows:

The parallels between the human brain and computers is easy to see today. But in the 1950’s when John Lilly developed his theory of the human biocomputer, this was a dramatic new way of viewing humans. Much like a

driver can step out of the car, we are not our biocomputer. The Self is something far greater and more mysterious. Rooted in his extensive knowledge of neurophysiology, neuroanatomy and electronics and developed through personal experimentation in the sensory isolation tank which he invented, Lilly presents a method for learning to manipulate — to drive the bio-robot, which is our vehicle here on Earth. This manual shows how to step out of the mind-body and find out who we really are.

[><https://www.amazon.com/Programming-Human-Biocomputer-John-Lilly/dp/1579510655>< — retrieved 23 June 2021]

The blurb on the Amazon website that sells Lilly's book *Center of the Cyclone* is as follows:

In this long-out-of-print counterculture classic, Dr. John C. Lilly takes readers behind the scenes into the inner life of a scientist exploring inner space, or "far-out spaces", as Lilly called them. The book explains how he derived his theory of the operations of the human mind and brain from his personal experiences and experiments in solitude, isolation, and confinement; LSD; and other methods of mystical experience. It also includes glimpses into Lilly's friendship with such 1960's notables as Oscar Ichazo, Ram Dass, Timothy Leary, Albert Hofmann, Fritz Perls, and Claudio Naranjo. Written for the non-specialist, *Center of the Cyclone* shows an important, modern thinker at his most personal and profound. [<https://www.amazon.com/Center-Cyclone-Looking-Inner-Space/dp/1579510388>< — retrieved 23 June 2021]

To summarize: "Tapes" are subconscious memories, usually negative, that get "recorded" during some life situation, often childhood, and then "played" in another later situation, usually as an inappropriate response or reaction to the current situation. This is a well-known concept in psychology and spirituality.

The subconscious mind ... is like a tape player — it just goes on playing the same old tapes we learned in early childhood. Those tapes are the messages we picked up mostly from our parents, or from anyone else who was very influential for the first six years of our lives. Most of the tapes run along the lines of, 'You are not good enough,' 'You don't deserve,' 'Other people are better than you,' 'You are not acceptable or respectable as you are, you have to be better.' Whether these messages were given to us directly or indirectly, they are what we picked up from the way we were treated, and those messages went into our innocent unconscious minds where they became truths. And then the tape player started re-playing those messages any time we were in similar situations, and we acted accordingly. In other words, we started living in a vicious cycle where we went on proving those negative ideas about us were true, thus making them even stronger. And it still happens today! We still continue to sabotage our attempts at happiness, success, love, etc. Just we are not aware that we are doing it ourselves, because it is, well... unconscious. [><http://www.oshonews.com/2011/09/law-of-attraction/>< — retrieved 13 July 2021]

A Michaelian student will recognize the similarity of the above statement to the descriptions of acculturation, socialization, and False Personality.

Both of Lilly's books *Programming and Metaprogramming in the Human Biocomputer* and *The Center of the Cyclone*, were available when the original Michaelian group was meeting.

Bio-computer, Programs, and Tapes in the Original Michaelian Group

The following extracts from original Michaelian group transcriptions are Q&A exchanges, where an original Michaelian group member asks a question (or makes a comment), and the Michaels provide an answer. This is not a subject that would benefit by division into subcategories, as some subjects do. These extracts are presented in the chronological order in which they were given, even though this is not a subject where there was a development or evolution of a specific revelation of a facet of the Michaelian teachings, as was often the case with the original Michaelian group. As is my custom, I often provide some explanatory comments following the question or answer. Underlined words in the Michaels' answers are my emphasis, to draw attention to what it is that I comment on. Sometimes I embed words or phrases [in brackets] that I believe help to clarify the question or the answer.

This section is the product of a search for the words "bio-computer", "program", and "tapes" in the original Michaelian group transcriptions. These words are a metaphor for features of the electronic computers that had been coming into increasingly common use ever since World War II, and are still on the ascendant even today. Underlined words and phrases in the following extracts from original Michaelian group transcriptions are my emphasis.

Evidently the computer-tape metaphor for a psychological phenomenon was known to some of the original Michaelian group members from the very beginning of the meetings:

[Richard:] I've been told that I have some obstacles toward spiritual growth — some "bad Tapes", so to speak — that are keeping me from progressing. Can you tell me about them?

Anxiety over others' impressions of your actions, obsessions with systems and procedures, worry about what is right, the fear that you will not be somehow the good little boy. [But the reality is:] Your halo can be tarnished, and many will still love you. [mid-1973]

This answer is a good introduction to the kind of things that are subconsciously recorded on bad Tapes, and played to the conscious Personality: anxiety, obsession, worry, and fear.

Richard: I am trying to work on my bad Tapes and get rid of them, and I have a strong feeling when these impulses are coming in on the board and we're going over certain words, I get a different register than I get when we're going over other words, and I seem to correlate the one group of words with the bad Tapes. Are you helping me work on the bad Tapes in that way?

[Soleal:] Not to my knowledge. You may be picking up on core words that have special meaning to you. If this can be of help to you, if you can be conscious to it. Whenever you ask a question, there is much hesitation because you have so many auxiliary readings going. To separate, Richard, is as I told you already, your major part of Friction. [03 July 1973]

The "hesitation because of many auxiliary readings" mentioned here is probably from what later came to be called "inputs", which were described as channels of focus and processing. The Artisan (Richard was an Artisan) is said to have five, more than any other Role. Artisans seem "scattered" to the point of often being disconnected from self and from reality. Therefore, one of the primary challenges for an Artisan is to collect themselves into a coherent, unified being. Bad Tapes provide a similar disconnect in a person. Hesitation can happen when there is conflict between a subconscious Tape and the super-conscious Essence. Richard was also in the Caution Mode, which makes a person hesitant.

Richard: Some time ago, Soleal suggested that I get a hypnotist to help me work off some bad "Tapes" and I am having difficulty doing this. I wonder if I could have a comment on this? Should I continue to look for someone or what should I do?

When you really wish this to happen, the hypnotist will be available. Eugene is capable; Dick, also. [26 August 1973]

Psychotherapy to mitigate Tapes, via hypnotism or any other method, is a useful prerequisite, perhaps even a necessary one, for successfully treading the spiritual path.

Christopher: [silent question.]

It would be Wrong Work for you to even try. Much wasted energy. You cannot change anything outside of self and you are not in contact with self.

Karma is subject to change, but only by those who know. Any attempt without knowledge will be wasted. You have chosen this role. You have also chosen the course your life must take. Unless you know why, then you cannot make alterations. I could tell you why, but it would not change the role. We cannot erase your Tapes. [08 September 1973]

This passage apparently refers to self-Karma ("you have chosen this role; you have also chosen the course your life must take") rather than other-Karma. A soul is said to have plans for a lifetime, and that would seem to include the Tapes that it is likely to acquire during childhood, which the Personality self might not be equipped to change. This entire chapter on Tapes should be understood in the light of this caveat: you had better understand the implications and ramifications before you attempt to change the 'program' (see below): if the program is from the Essence, do not interfere; if the program is from Personality, you may attempt to erase the Tapes.

Dick: They [Michael] have never told us about war.

Christopher: It's karmically programmed to happen.

It happens because Young Souls are in the majority on your world. They are largely motivated by the desire for material achievement. This is an alienating goal. [08 September 1973]

Refer to the chapter on Karma to see what the relationship of Karma to programming may be: Karmic compulsions (via the Soul) are not the same thing as Tape compulsions (via the environment), but it might be difficult for an unintuitive or unenlightened person to discern the difference.

Ellis: I had a blissful childhood, with love and enjoyment. Was I aware of my Role then?

Children, before they are thoroughly programmed for their societal role, usually operate from Essence and know their Roles. The Role the child first voices as a desire usually comes from Essence. After that, from False Personality, based on expectations of those around the child. To return to this state is, of course, a major part of

the goal. Until you do, you cannot shake the enthrallment of the physical, material plane. The child, especially the young child, often sees beyond the veil. This is quickly squashed. The happy childhood is mostly a myth. In your case, it was a *bona fide* ["good faith" = genuine, valid] experience and your desire to return there is Good Work. [23 October 1973]

This answer is one of the best summaries of the metaphor of programming the bio-computer and storing the data on tapes during childhood, to be played repeatedly into adulthood. The comparison of programming is made to False Personality, and the contrast is made to Role and Essence.

Someone helpful: It serves a useful purpose and also Buffers the Essence.

False Personality is only a part of this. The total False Personality includes, of course, all of the "shoulds" that you learned in childhood, the various machinations you go through as a result of your Goals and those reactions that are solely the result of the Tape Loops provided by the Attitude. [24 February 1974]

Add the three underlined words to the list of Bad Tapes to those words given above. At the time this answer was given, the Negative Poles of the Overleaves had not been revealed. However, I propose that a Tape (and also False Personality in general) reveals itself in the Negative Poles of all Overleaves, not just the Goals and Attitudes mentioned here. This is the first, but not the last, mention of "Loops", which refers to the fact that Tapes can play the same song over and over.

Dick: Things I cannot deal with are subconscious — say a guilt feeling. I have no idea where its source is. The thing that triggers the guilt feeling does not seem bad. Ordinarily, morality is B.S. In all cases, the guilt emotions are from lower Centers, as the higher Centers are not operating.

Anger is another reaction that is self-programmed by Personality as a barrier.

Eugene: The body throws up a shield to keep Essence from coming through. First, we have to start by seeing our Chief Feature.

We discussed phobias such as fears of staircases, cats, heights, and wondered if they could be carryovers from past lives. Someone added that we should not resist evil, that we should face the fear and experience it out. The little evils are barriers to experiencing life.

Most computer programmers study hard to learn their trade. It takes you many years to program the bio-computer thoroughly. [27 February 1974]

The ambiguity of this statement (not all of the programmers of the bio-computer are listed) led to the next question.

Alice: Are they [Overleaves] chosen on the basis of Karma?

First of all, the locale, the socioeconomic status, the parents you chose — all are formative in programming the bio-computer. These Overleaves are chosen by the soul to be acted out in life, independent — most of the time — of the wishes of the Essence. The soul chose them to complete the specific task. The soul desires simplicity and freedom, making a split between soul and Essence. [27 February 1974]

My understanding is that the Fragment, which lives on the Astral Plane, "casts" a part of itself as a "soul" on the Etheric levels of the Physical Plane. The soul or so-called "Etheric Body" is complete with Overleaves and other plans and configurations for the lifetime as part of programming the bio-computer at the time of ensoulment of the physical body. This soul programming is obviously at a deeper level of the person than the programming that happens after birth, and one needs to be very careful about messing with that level of the programming, as stated above.

How much does the Attitude determine where one is Trapped?

Very much. Most of the imprinting of early childhood is very effectively converted into Tape Loops. [03 March 1974]

Refer to the chapter named Liberation for a discussion of Traps. The Attitude provides the lens through which one views the outer world, and imprinting comes from the outer world, so imprinting distorts the lens, the Attitude; thereby a Tape Loop Traps a person in the Negative Poles, in the False Personality. These various Michaelian jargon words are all related, and they all have chapters in this *Study Papers* book.

The Q&A exchange above was followed immediately by the Q&A exchange below.

Richard: Is bias [the same as] Tape Loops?

A major part of it, yes. Some [biases] are, of course, original [not imprinted]. [03 March 1974]

Tapes provide some of a person's biased perceptions and perspectives, but not all of them.

Ray: I'd like a comment from Michael on how best to learn or deal with Impatience.

The best way to counteract the Chief Feature of Impatience is to deliberately expose yourself to exasperating situations and then Photograph the feelings around the Impatience. Usually, you will find that the reaction is habit rather than emotion and amounts to a Tape Loop. [06 March 1974]

Original Michaelian group members progressively explored how the metaphor of Tapes relates to the Overleaves. The Goal and Attitude are documented above, and here the Chief Feature is mentioned. Habitual *reactions* come from the subconscious programming of a Tape; the goal of a psycho-therapeutic technique, such as Photography, is to have appropriate conscious *responses* to exasperating situations. The chapter on Photography makes clear that it is the Essence that decides what to do with its observations, but the next Q&A exchange also has somewhat to say.

The metaphor of 'programming' covers both spiritual and physical 'Tapes'. In the spiritual realm the Fragment programs the Soul which programs the body as discussed above; in the physical realm the environment forms the Tapes as discussed below.

Dick: I hear the teaching and hear the hostility. It's unchangeable sexually — that's where I am. The program is so programmed. It cuts me out of making the skip to Transcendental Soul. Agape is impossible in people with sex problems. It is impossible in people with emotional hang-ups of any sort, whether it be sex or fear of cats or the dark. [19 March 1974]

The biological imperative to reproduce the species is obviously a very strong program, and if that program is unhealthy, it can indeed impair spiritual growth.

Apparently some of the members of the original Michaelian group were familiar with this metaphor from the very beginning of the original Michaelian group. Lilly's book was published in the calendar year 1972, one year before the original Michaelian group first convened in mid-1973. The first mention of the concept was in one of the first session transcriptions as noted above, but the source was not explained there. The first mention of the source of the concept did not appear until about a year later:

Is John Lilly correct about LSD unprogramming [the] Personality?

It can, if you transfer the knowledge gained [in the altered state] to the waking state. Yes, it is difficult because you are immediately bombarded with Maya [after return from the LSD]. [16 June 1974]

This same book was mentioned in a subsequent session:

Dick: I've been reading John Lilly's [book], [Programming] The Human Biocomputer and would like to ask about his method using isolation. It looks scary. An alternative would be the "hypnosis machine", which would be less hazardous.

The "isolation" referred to in this question is probably the sensory deprivation tank mentioned in the brief bio above. The "hypnosis machine" referred to in this question is probably the "hemi-sync" audio device of Robert Monroe, which some members were experimenting with; refer to the chapter on that man. A third alternative for achieving altered states of consciousness is the use of psychedelics, mentioned above and in the answer below:

Of course, the chemical [psychedelic] route is much swifter than the electronic [audio], but since you have the option, you might try the hypnosis first and if this is too slow for you, then go to the other. We personally think that the man John Lilly hit upon the only sure method by which souls in Repression [such as yourself] can force themselves out of that space. Then, even though they might slip back again, the slipping is not as far and it is no longer as difficult to regain the ground lost so, as we said before, the man John hears the words.

Dick: In the book, he describes a person who had a below-conscious baby Tape running where he would run to mommy and mommy was busy and he was told to run to daddy, and when he would do that, daddy was busy, so back to mommy who.... Under LSD, this came out in consciousness and he became aware of it. He had much energy after that, but then began to sink into unconsciousness after six weeks or so. The programs are so intense that it is hard to remain unprogrammed.

In many instances, the soul deliberately chooses not to erase the Tape and merely deactivates temporarily. After all, many of these [Tape] loops afford enormous security in relationships and one never knows when one might need them again.

As you may know, computers in those days were the size of refrigerators, used reel-to-reel tapes for memory storage, and were programmed with punch cards; hence the metaphor that Lilly used to describe how humans get 'programmed' in childhood, and the subconscious memories get played over and over again in 'loops'.

Dick: It seems to me that John Lilly's book is a better exposition of how human beings operate than I've ever read before.

We agree with that. [23 June 1974]

Various therapies from then to now, especially the body-centered kind, are aimed at unprogramming the adverse pre-conscious memories stored in the organism before the conscious mind of the child was developed enough to defend itself.

Dick: I would like to ask about the pineal [endocrine] gland. I never quite believed the stories about the Third Eye in relation to the pineal. To me, the hypothalamus [endocrine gland] is the link between the mind and the body for the biocomputer.

This is, of course, a tremendous source of raw primitive energy that enables the organism to preserve itself. We agree that it [pineal gland] should be given more credence than it has been as an important pivot in the struggle between Personality and Essence. [07 July 1974]

If I understand the answer correctly, the hypothalamus is a link between mind and body as Dick said, and the pineal is a link between Personality and Essence as the Michaels' said. (For those few readers who might not know this: both endocrine glands are brain structures.)

In many instances, the soul deliberately chooses not to erase the Tape and merely deactivates temporarily. After all, many of these Loops afford enormous security in relationships and one never knows when one might need them again. [23 June 1974]

As you may know, computers in those days were the size of refrigerators, used reel-to-reel tapes for memory storage, and were programmed with punch cards; hence the metaphor that Lilly used to describe how humans get 'programmed' in childhood, and the subconscious memories get 'played' over and over again in 'loops' in adulthood. Apparently, the soul or Essence chooses, for reasons of its own, which battles to fight with Tapes specifically and False Personality in general. Refer to a following section on Programs for more instances of that word in the original Michaelian group transcriptions.

Most of you have Tape Loops of agreeability going for you. Your behavior is stylized and rigid. In certain situations, the timidity is especially pronounced when the person who needs confronting is in an Exalted [Cardinal] Role [Sage, Priest, King]. We would see you looking at this in the psychic mirror. Progress is never made by timid people — only by those who are strong enough to resist the pressures exerted upon their psyche by those Mechanical Men around them. As long as you allow those around you to dictate your mood of behavior to you, you will remain entrenched in the fixed Tape Loops and there will be no progress. [21 September 1974]

Add some more words to the description of Bad Tapes: "stylized, rigid, timid, and fixed" — this is what 'programming' does to a person.

Dick: In my work [as a physician], I find getting fat people to diet is virtually impossible. They will not diet. We are immutable.

In view of the fact that most of the programming of your "computer" was done by someone not cognizant of your Overleaves, we would say that most of it was traumatic, particularly to the Personality. [21 September 1974]

Research, in the years since the 1970s, on the reasons that people get fat and stay fat, indicate that it is not just a matter of diet: there are genetic factors and there are gut microbiome factors involved, and who knows what else. The problem is still intractable as of the date of this writing (2022).

The unwitting programmers are parents and teachers and the culture in general. The Michaels said that teachers would do well to be aware of their students Overleaves, in order to be appropriate in their instruction.

If spiritual growth is the goal and Balance is one step toward the goal, then space must be allotted to be sure that this comes about. This, in the case of this [original Michaelian group] cadre, means much interaction to reprogram the bio-computer. Many of these students have not allowed for this either and so you are not alone. [07 December 1974]

Because adverse programming of the bio-computer happens in the cultural milieu during childhood, then changing the cultural influence to a spiritual one should help to reprogram the bio-computer. Among other things, the Michaels recommended communal living to intensify this process: refer to the chapter "Communal Living".

Before souls were Cast [into incarnation], the creatures-of-no-reason from which you have ascended were largely governed by fear and their lives were taken up in many ceaseless battles for survival. This is no longer necessary on this world and yet it goes on ceaselessly in spite of this. There are few large carnivores roaming the city streets and yet most behave as though there are. The battle for survival is but another Tape Loop that plays on and on, even to the point of starving large portions of the culture, while the others waste and hoard. This only provides for the realism in the drama, for this is no longer necessary at all. [21 December 1974]

Refer to the chapter “Instinct” for a further discussion of this concept.

[Soleal:] All of want or desire is played through the [subconscious] Tapes that the Personality has accumulated.
[11 January 1975]

Understanding the existence of Tapes is important because they distort “all of want or desire”.

Carol: I have no Agreement to do anything for him [Gene]?

In a sense, the Agreements made benefit both parties. In the long haul, this will be evident. Remember that the conflicts felt are the result of, first, the individual belief systems, which are part of the Mechanical Man, as well as some rather rigid master Tapes on the part of both students. [15 January 1975]

Any given two people are likely to have rather different Tapes, and this will muck up their interactions in whatever kind of relationship they have. Especially in romantic relationships where psychological intimacy is attempted, the people involved are likely to expose these discordant Tapes, and this can result in serious conflict. Unenlightened people rarely enter an intimate relationship wanting to grapple with discordant Tapes, but even a half-enlightened spiritual seeker should face the challenge squarely when it shows up.

The subject of Tapes surfaced again in this session, which was a special session held for two people who were having difficulties in a romantic relationship:

Carol: I don't feel I am playing a game. I haven't said I am burning any bridges.

In very advanced Students, there is a degree of detachment from the master Tapes that sometimes works against them in strange ways. For one thing, it sometimes makes them unaware of behaviors that are still continuing on lower levels, mostly by rote, to some degree. There is always, until Balance has been achieved, the risk of slipping back into these behavior patterns. In this cadre [the original Michaelian group], there are students at all levels [of spiritual growth] and you can observe this easily. In society, most contracts and most interpersonal relationships are based upon manipulative behavior patterns. In the male-female relationships, this is especially apparent. In this cadre, there is an increasingly low level of this type of behavior, but in this case we do see some evidence of manipulative behavior on almost an entirely instinctive level, with detachment from the feeling of wanting to manipulate. [15 January 1975]

Add three more phenomena to the description of bad Tapes: lack of self-awareness, rote and instinctive behavior, and manipulation of others.

The next day, in a group session, the subject of Tapes also came up for review and discussion:

Balancing seems to involve more than just Centers. Other Overleaves?

Not only can Mechanical Man not “do,” but he also cannot think and, if this is denied, how can you possibly choose to change an Overleaf? All that Mechanical Man can possibly achieve is the continual playing out of the master Tapes around the beliefs. A good beginning would be for each of you to look within and discover, once and for all, those hard-core beliefs that are running your life. Then, stand apart and listen to Mechanical Man play out the Tape. It will be enlightening, to say the least. For each belief, there is a Tape: a master Tape for each core belief, an auxiliary for each auxiliary belief. In the latter case, many are Tape Loops.

“Master” Tapes are mentioned many times, above and below, without embellishment; only here are “auxiliary” Tapes mentioned. This is not enough context for me to arrive a clear distinction or complete understanding of the subject.

Narra asked if we had some “good” core beliefs.

You have some core beliefs without which you could not [physically] survive, yes.

Dick: Are these the only legitimate ones?

These core beliefs and master Tapes are the property of the Personality, and aside from the rules for survival [of the physical body], are unnecessary. The Balanced Man is flexible above all. You remember the teaching of the man Robert [Burton] insisting that you learn to turn on a dime. By becoming Balanced, you replace the master Tapes with [conscious] thought [versus unconscious thought, feelings, and behavior].

Physical survival Tapes are the type of Tapes that good parents should inculcate into their children.

Dick spoke of realizing that as you get older, you get tired of thinking Tapes and action Tapes. [16 January 1975]

One could add “emotion Tapes” to this list, and then all three lower Centers would be covered. Tapes distort all components of the Personality. The aging process mitigates Tapes whether or not a person assists the process intentionally via self-observation, as recommended by the Michaels in the previous two answers, and in the next session.

On erasing Tapes ... to achieve Agape eventually ...

One thing we might suggest that perhaps could be a start at least, would be to determine those core beliefs in you regarding your ability to achieve a state of Agape or consciousness. When the belief is brought to the surface, often the Tapes that accompany it are clearly heard for the first time. For many reasons, this process is more effective if performed in a group setting, as quite often it leads to what you might term psychic surgery. You have only an inkling of the strength of these master Tapes and the hold they have over you. Only when they are found played out and discarded does serious accelerating begin. Once the process begins, however, it does have a tendency to snowball, and it is difficult, if not impossible, to slide back into old patterns once the Tape has been erased. Sometimes, the behavior patterns continue for awhile, but even they eventually cease, as there is nothing supporting them. By the way, you are quite correct in assuming that you have both negative and positive programs on all of these and that you do play them one against the other, constantly. [19 January 1975]

Tapes impede Agape; refer to the chapter "Agape".

The sexual Tapes are only strong in the culture because of the spectacular expectation placed upon this simple biologic process, while ignoring the tremendous energies available through the Sexual Center if it can only be tapped. When you once tap this energy and have a taste of it, of course you want it again, and it can be yours but only after you release all of the unreasonable expectations placed upon the physical act itself and on the partner, and take responsibility for your own experience. We have said this before, but cannot emphasize it enough. [19 January 1975]

In the Gurdjieffian teachings and in the original Michaelian group it was understood that the Sexual Center was a higher Center, and that its energy, called Kundalini, could be used for spiritual growth. Refer to the chapter "Sexuality" for more information about that. The relevance to this chapter is that the energy of the Sexual Center is typically encumbered with Tapes and Programs.

For you, Dick, in order that this be of help to you, several events must take place. First of all, you must give this [original Michaelian group] cadre permission, something that they do not now feel. In other words, you must place yourself in the student role in such a way that they feel this from you. Otherwise, the group process will only be another session of bullshit. Then you must make an agreement with both yourself and the cadre that you will not stop the process at the point of break-through, as you have done in the past. You must promise your Essence the experience it wishes to have, in other words. We admit this is a scary proposal, but it is a way and it does work. This is not to say that you cannot at a later time, even the same evening, resume your leadership role. But for the time set aside for a Tape-playing, you must be a student. Merely revealing yourself in this fashion will boost the trust level tremendously, as this is a side of you that not many of the group has been privileged to see. Many students regard you as a teacher, much more than a student, and most are reluctant to Photograph for you while not for themselves. We have knowledge sure and certain that this cadre will be positive toward such an experience and will welcome it. [19 January 1975]

Evidently, "tape-playing" involved revealing one's deepest and darkest secrets to oneself and to others. If one does not have a Michael group in which to do this, then one might consider attending a group therapy session led by a professional psychotherapist. This might be geared for a specific issue, such as some type of addiction. (The word "addiction" is not used by the Michaels in the original Michaelian group sessions, nor is it discussed as such in this chapter, but surely an addiction is a Program or a Tape.) Here again, it is self-observation, aka Photography, that sheds light on Tapes, and it is the light of Essence that erases Tapes that are embedded in the Personality.

(Thaddeus plans to work with us [for] one hour during the next weekend together.)

In order to use the appropriate Center, you must be ahead of the game, at least ahead of your human brain, the great computer that plugs in all the Tapes. [25 January 1975]

In this, and other passages quoted above, we see that Tapes in the Bio-computer affect the appropriate use of Centers — appropriate use of Centers being a major feature of the psychotherapeutic and spiritual-path component of the Gurdjieffian teachings and the Michaelian teachings.

Carol: In hypnosis, she experienced something that seemed like a skipping from one lifetime to another. True? Also, experienced a feeling of physical expansion and feeling very small at the same time.

In answer to the latter question, while in the hypnotic state, the person experiences both the Astral and Physical Plane in an incomplete symbiosis, and thus the distortion of physical boundaries with the accompanying

unpleasant sensation. This same applies to all other instances wherein the Astral Plane is experienced in the waking or the trance state, where the Personality remains vigilant.

Yes, there were many memories crowding into play here. Many times, this does happen in [past-life] regression, which does much for discrediting the experience to those wishing to discredit. When this happens, you can always go back to the starting point and move forward more gradually, for instance, day by day, until you are thoroughly oriented to that life you wish to pursue.

Incidentally, this form of remembering is far more valuable than myriad transmissions of information from the Akashic Plane. The experiencing of the past directly through recall triggers many more insights than receiving this indirectly from this Entity. You see now that by our reading of this into your memory banks merely facilitates the manufacture of a new Tape. [30 January 1975]

The takeaway from this Q&A exchange is that the best way to erase Tapes is not from acquiring knowledge from outside to inside. Rather, it is much more effective to experience altered states of consciousness — from inside to outside, as it were. For example, having a past-life-regression via hypnosis is far better than getting a past-life reading from a channel.

Each teaching now on-going has different tools, and yet the Synthesis can be easily made by one caring to make the comparison. In choosing the specific tools that we have, each of your Overleaves was taken into consideration, as well as all your imprinting, your core beliefs, and your master Tapes. [30 January 1975]

So far as I have been able to discern, these three (imprinting, core beliefs, Tapes) are aspects of the same phenomenon, namely the fact that as humans we have a so-called “lower self” that functions in opposition and hindrance to the manifestation of the so-called “higher self”.

Alice: I tried giving myself the suggestion to eat less carbohydrates. It worked for eight hours, at which time I indulged in them. I tried looking at that and found that I probably did not like myself enough to eat what is good for me, so for the past week I have been suggesting to myself that I will like myself better and will do those things that are good for my being. I've been feeling better about myself, but seem to plunge into more frequent downs. Comment, please, on what I can do in this area?

[Soleal:] You need to learn to use your moments of Power to extinguish your Chief Feature [Self-deprecation]. This can even work with Chief Features such as Arrogance, although that is a tough one to drop. The moments of Power must be utilized in the work, for it is in this way that you will be able to finally switch Modes. You cannot go through the Self-deprecation Tape from the Power Mode as easily as you can from Caution [Mode]. Use your moments of Power to emphasize your positive feelings about yourself. In those moments, appreciate your own humor [and] intelligence, and savor the feelings of Power. You do have these moments, as you also have moments of Dominance [rather than the usual Submission]. These must be utilized. The post-hypnotic suggestion that you will recognize the moments of Power would help; then you would be able to look at yourself more realistically. [01 February 1975]

As in previous Q&A exchanges, the use of hypnosis for erasing Tapes is suggested here. Also suggested is the intentional application of the opposite Overleaf on an Axis to break the Tapes; in Alice's case, Submission > Dominance, Caution > Power, and Self-deprecation > Arrogance.

Donna: I would like to ask about a new space I experienced through meditation. When I opened my eyes after meditation, I saw a beautiful fish on the wall. His mouth opened and closed, and then he disappeared into the wall. Is this a first lesson with a neutral object? I've been wondering why I haven't been seeing images as others have.

These visual images are excellent in determining the depth of the meditative state. If you do not allow them to be distractions, you can use them as a gauge. They will not appear if the mind has not been effectively cleared. If you are still running your Tapes, there will be little imagery of this type; in other words, totally unrelated to anything in your consciousness. In the Orient, this image would be afforded tremendous mystical importance, since the poi is a symbol of reawakening. [01 February 1975]

My takeaway from this Q&A exchange is that meditation is another potential way to erase Tapes, if the meditation is deep enough to circumvent Personality programming.

When a soul not in a teaching encounters the True Personality in Essence for the first time, it is, of course, a devastating experience. This usually comes about [in] moments of extreme stress, grief or sometimes, even trauma. It can, however, come about if the soul is suddenly catapulted in a situation so unusual that not one of the Tapes is applicable. Of course, it is undeniably true that none of you has a permanent Tape telling you how to react to the surface of the Moon, and it is conceivable that all of you would encounter your True Personality were you to suddenly find yourself at the controls of a large jet aircraft without any prior training to guide you except perhaps a few flying lessons in a small propeller-driven plane. [08 February 1975]

In this passage, traumas and such are negative ways of exposing the Tapes; positive ways are mentioned in previous passages: meditation, Photography, hypnosis, psychedelics, and such. (There are *Study Paper* chapters on all of these.) In this passage, Tapes are contrasted with True Personality and Essence; by erasing or bypassing the former via one means or another, the latter appears because it is already there. Many times and in many ways it is said in the Michaelian teachings that you do not need to develop the higher self; it always exists, waiting for you to shed the lower self.

If the trust level is high enough [in a commune], the need for substitutes [pets in place of people] will diminish. Of course, your needs will continue for a time, until you are willing to look at the basis of the need. Perhaps, there will be some things that you will be unwilling to give up, but you should at least look at them, so that you know where the need is. It is, again, not Bad Work at all if it is done consciously and not Mechanically. Many of your needs now are based upon the core beliefs and master Tapes that are stored for use by False Personality. Looking at them [the alleged needs] collectively will be more valuable again than looking at them individually, just as looking at the core beliefs and master Tapes will be. [12 February 1975]

So-called “needs” are either legitimate or illegitimate, and it is Good Work to discern the difference; that is accomplished by discerning the source of the “need”, as being either sourced from Personality or from Essence.

... until the true issue is explored in each and every Photograph, no progress will ever be made. It is, of course, easier for those in Exalted [Cardinal] Roles to put up the facade, for it is more important for them to show the world the *bella figura* [good impression]. This is not to say that they are not locked into their own Tapes — one being that they are above it all, and that Tape needs erasing too. But it still remains that no conflict will ever be solved if you deal with it in Artificial Space with the Overleaves [rather than Essence]. [12 February 1975]

Three more examples of Bad Tapes are underlined here. Here again it is said that Photography is the way to erase Tapes. Refer to the chapter “Real Space versus Artificial Space”.

Jude: Is the following statement true: You are here and the problem is not when you are coming, but when we can see you?

[Soleal:] It is also true that in another frame of reference, I am not [coming]. Many would never perceive the etheric [body]. Of course, in the sense that you question, that is true. Actually, though, all of you could perceive me in my present form if you would open your [etheric] eyes. Only in a sense are your eyes open. They are open only to those experiences protected by the master Tapes that define reality to you. The eyes, as they are now, are trained to see only that which exists in Artificial Space. They are able to perceive in Real Space, but they must be retrained. The master Tapes you now have would not allow this experience, even in your dreams. You run from images [that come] out of Real Space. The Essence, of course, perceives in Real Space; the Personality can only perceive in Artificial Space. Artificial Space encompasses the entire Physical Plane. [16 February 1975]

There are reports that a few very young children see beyond the ‘veil’ to the etheric levels of the Physical Plane (imaginary friends, past lives, and so on), but this perception gets suppressed as the child grows up — perhaps this passage alludes to this particular adverse function of Tapes. Some kinds of “psychics” apparently see beyond Artificial Space; they are born with this capability, whereas others develop it by one means or another, such as the use of psychedelics, Near Death Experiences, and spiritual disciplines.

Was Leslie [Briggs, a budding channel] close to a trance just now?

[Soleal:] That was a light trance. What we would hope to achieve is a far deeper one. Then much facilitation would occur.

Eugene: How much of his experience with Soleal was real?

[Soleal:] Much of your perception was valid. Much of the blocking was from the Overleaves and from those master Tapes that define reality for you. Did you hear the words [in your head]?

Was Soleal’s experience with JohnL directed by Liz [also a budding channel]?

[Soleal:] It was an attempt to establish a link, yes. Blocked by the Warrior [Leslie]. Relax please. It does not hurt.

JohnL: A master Tape was present and resulted in a block in consciousness and memory. Do both parties have to be ready and willing when transferring energy?

[Soleal:] In this type of link, yes, readiness and willingness are imperative. [16 February 1975]

The last few sessions brought out the information that Tapes block access to supernatural realms; they are not just erroneous ‘programs’ that distort or impede one’s dealings with the Physical Plane. There are no programming Tapes on the Astral Plane:

... there is no life survival programming going on on the Astral Plane and the encumbrances are less heavy. [21 February 1975]

Comment: A name was mentioned.

The name is not Halstead, but Haldane. This Fragment had satisfied the spirit and was prepared to go on and chose this exit — or perhaps we should say, “took” this exit. He simply willed the terminal process. But this was a Fragment who had been rigidly programmed [as a British aristocrat] to regard his eliminatory functions as “nasty”. In spite of his scientific education, he never overcame this program. [21 February 1974]

That was just another statement about how tenacious Tapes can be.

Allyn had a dream and woke up sobbing. Someone had died, that Allyn loved very much. He took his prize possessions and piled them against an old shed in the alley and set them on fire, but the fire did not consume them. The last thing placed on the fire was the thing he loved most — a beautiful Victorian nightstand covered in red velvet. Was this a recall dream?

Getting in touch with past lives is often very emotional, yes. At this time, the Essence is bombarding the Personality with these lessons from the past, yes. The Essence often appears to overdo.

The Personality’s only recourse is to interpret this as the present and attempt to place these experiences with the feeling of the day that will “happen” to coincide with the events of the dream.

In this case, the student Allyn is gaining much, and in a way his gain must catch with the Personality. The Tapes will play even during sleep. The Personality will relate the dream and gradually assimilate the facts that the Essence is feeding it.

The Personality has the upper hand, yes. Even in sleep, it has been trained to do such. Why expect less? The emotions are the Personality’s only way of recognizing the previous lives the Essence is now free to permit to come through. The student’s progress is only measurable by his Personality in the emotional terms. [Undated, early 1975]

Well then, dream interpretation provides yet another means for discerning Tapes, so that one may deal with them appropriately.

[Please comment] on John’s dream.

Instinctual drives are strong in dreams often. The student was experiencing this and other aspects of the Personality’s attempt at grasping the significance to the Overleaves in this operation and its mode of operational viewpoint. Often in dreams there is a multi-level thing going on: the Personality, the Tapes, the Essence astral travel, and recall of the difference. In astral travel we would say that the person often experiences the feelings and fears of the place where they are visiting. This is what the men cowering and being hunted were in this particular dream. If a diary of dreams is kept regularly, the difference between all the aspects will become clearer and clearer. [07 April 1975]

Again, dream interpretation provides yet another means for discerning Tapes, so that one may deal with them appropriately.

We talked about the different spiritual teachings and how, while they said much the same thing, the approach was different and each of us had different feelings about them. For instance, the [Course in] Miracles material is very scholarly. The Seth Material appeals to Cynthia more. And this led to discussion about programming from the past, which led to a question about the value of de-conditioning processes.

De-conditioning processes: If there is a great deal of doubt and perseverance [perseverance] and the inability to move forward without them, then these [de-conditioning] processes are essential if the life goal is to be achieved. However, we must say that if the “break-away” occurs normally, then the manifestation of the soul level will also occur unimpeded, and then the fragmentary learning can be brought together in a more cohesive whole. It is possible to learn this material and allow it to effect a change of sorts without peeling back the layers, but the gains will be superficial and there will be backsliding. As to which is better, the answer would be that all that takes one back to “go” are better. In other words, the man [Arthur] Janov and the Fischer-Hoffman process, etc., are valid as long as the recipient is truly able to surrender and allow the self to have the experience. There is a great deal of “faking it” in these processes. [10 April 1977]

The break away from the parental influences and early imprinting typically starts to occur in earnest during the so-called “fourth internal monad”, at the “manifestation of the soul level”. This was not discussed in detail during the original Michaelian group so far as we know, but it is in *Messages from Michael*, pages 217 to 218.

From Wikipedia: Primal therapy is a trauma-based psychotherapy created by Arthur Janov, who argues that neurosis is caused by the repressed pain of childhood trauma. Janov argues that repressed pain can be

sequentially brought to conscious awareness and resolved through re-experiencing the incident and fully expressing the resulting pain during therapy... Primal therapy became very influential during a brief period in the early 1970s, after the publication of Janov's first book, *The Primal Scream*.

The Fischer-Hoffman process provides a very deep working through of childhood programming. It is discussed at ><http://www.hoffmaninstitute.org><. For more information about the history of this psychotherapy, refer to >https://rationalwiki.org/wiki/Hoffman_Quadrinity_Process<.

Bio-computer, Programs, and Tapes per Briggs

This computer metaphor was not nearly as prominent in the Briggs group that followed the original Michaelian group as it was in the original Michaelian group. (Recall that the Briggs family — Louise, Allyn, and Leslie — were members of the original Michaelian group, and Leslie learned to channel therein.) There are only a few instances of its mention in the Briggs transcriptions (published by the Center for Michael Teachings, Inc., in *Michael Speaks: The Legacy of Leslie Briggs*).

Louise: I see I created a lot of karma with myself by mis-Centering, running old Tapes, thought patterns, et cetera. [It has] shown up in ill health.

That was Essence having to experience illness.

Louise: That's what's been hard — is to NOT run a judgment Tape on it.

That's right — because somewhere along the line you got that if you mis-Center you're asleep (and asleep is bad!). If that were true, no one would have any hope of applying this teaching. You can Center — you have worked very hard on it. Another block you use is the Intellectual Center to explain away your integrity when you mis-Center.

Louise: [illegible] ... all I have to do is 'stop'?

Better for you to say, "Time out". Then you won't run a judgment Tape. [03 December 1980]

Louise: We have a value judgment on health and illness, beyond the fact of comfort and discomfort. We run the Tapes so that illness is a 'make wrong', and the truth is it's just being here.

If it were not a process of the Physical Plane to follow this concept, then how come dogs and cats get ill? They most certainly do not walk around bemoaning their jobs and want to rest. So it's a process or a belief system of the Physical Plane. Otherwise dogs, cats, frogs, and [illegible] wouldn't get ill. It is perpetuated by belief. It's part of the Physical Plane. Trees get fungus. [17 December 1980]

Louise: Spoke of how uncomfortable she feels when mis-Centering, whereas she never used to know it — not that she can stop it at will.

Normally once you're mis-Centered and Slippage starts, it has to run its course. You've blown it. All you have to do is observe that you've blown it. Let it run its course and it will run quieter, and you can get back to [Balanced] Centering. If you run a judgment Tape on yourself, [then] you stay stuck in the mis-Centering.

Don: I feel I've finally let go of a lot of imprinting. Is that true? I feel my ego is going nuts with this.

Yes. That's called "erasing Tapes". Yes, the ego does go wild and calls you wrong for doing it. With blame Tapes you have to make up something new — your Overleaves.

Don: Then I seem to be stuck in –Intolerance [the Negative Pole of Impatience].

That's valid coming from your Overleaves. That's –Intolerance without guilt.

Don: That's right.

The guilt was the Tape, the –Intolerance was

[Line cut off at bottom of page.] [29 December 1980]

Don: Is one way to get 'back' to one's own space to tell the truth about where one is?

'Truthing' does two things: [It] clears your conscience and erases Tapes. 'Truthing' does not prevent Slippage. [10 January 1981]

Don: Not prevent it, but after you've Slid does it have to run some kind of course?

To get to Centering you work on Centering. 'Truthing' does not change Slippage. 'Truthing' eliminates Number Two and Three experiences, which are Tapes. 'Truthing' clears up the ego so that next time that Tape is played it's empty. It doesn't play because you've erased it, and it doesn't play when the button is pushed.

[10 January 1981]

Caren: So is that just 'getting off' it?

No. 'Getting off it' is observation — not Identifying with what is going on. 'Getting off it' is an excellent exercise in erasing the Tape that got you mis-Centered to begin with. 'Centering' is coming from the appropriate Center at the appropriate time. Footnote is: that's the only time you can [truly] do anything. Short of being Centered, you not only can't do anything, you can't think either — you're a Machine. When you are Centered, you are being what you incarnated to Be. Mis-Centering comes from being unwilling to explore or allow the other Centers to function. The Trap you're in has been a way you have survived. It is a large threat to the Personality to not come from its enTrapment. The main basis of this teaching is to recognize that you are a Machine and then work on Centering. You all have experienced Balanced Man. [10 January 1981]

Concluding Comments on Tapes, Bio-computer, and Programs

A few points can be listed here, some of which are found elsewhere in this chapter, and some of which are new:

- Besides this chapter on the Bio-computer, the chapters titled "Awakening from Sleep", "False Personality", "Instinctive Behavior", "Liberation", "Maya", and "Mechanical Man" also address this factor in human psychology. Therefore, even though the metaphor of Tapes of the Bio-computer has not survived the demise of the original Michaelian group, the basic concept has survived.
- There are various types of "programs" that have chapters of their own in this *Study Papers* book that are not of the Physical Plane, but involve programming by the soul: Karma, Agreements, soul's choice of Overleaves.
- Considering that the subject of Tapes appeared in the original Michaelian group from beginning to end, it would seem to be an important component of the teaching. Considering the quantity of mentions of Tapes, this is not an unimportant component of the Michaelian teachings.
- Consider this chapter to be a mere introduction to the concept that the human brain works somewhat like a computer, in that it is governed by a program and a memory.
- From a philosophical perspective, the basic idea of "programming" as used in the original Michaelian group transcriptions is that so-called "higher" or "greater" or "stronger" levels of the cosmos "supervene" on so-called "lower" or "lesser" or "weaker" levels of the cosmos. This is a rather deep subject, as one may see by reading about supervenience at, for instance, <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Supervenience> and, for an even more abstruse presentation, <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/supervenience/>. However, for this chapter, all one needs to understand is that the cosmos is structured in levels (space-like layers and time-like stages), and the levels of the cosmos affect each other in both directions: the top>down influence is called "emanation" and the bottom>up influence is called "emergence".





BODIES, SUBTLE

Not exactly the same thing as Aura

Subtle Bodies per Esoteric Cosmology

According to Geoffrey Samuel and Jay Johnston, professors of Religious studies known for their studies on Yoga and esoteric traditions:

Ideas and practices involving so-called 'subtle bodies' have existed for many centuries in many parts of the world. (...) Virtually all human cultures known to us have some kind of concept of mind, spirit or soul as distinct from the physical body, if only to explain experiences such as sleep and dreaming. (...) An important subset of subtle-body practices, found particularly in Indian and Tibetan Tantric traditions, and in similar Chinese practices, involves the idea of an internal 'subtle physiology' of the body (or rather of the body-mind complex) made up of channels through which substances of some kind flow, and points of intersection at which these channels come together. In the Indian tradition the channels are known as nadi and the points of intersection as cakra. — Geoffrey Samuel and Jay Johnston, *Religion and the Subtle Body in Asia and the West: Between Mind and Body* [<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chakra> — retrieved 31 October 2021]

A subtle body is a "quasi material" aspect of the human body, being neither solely physical nor solely spiritual, according to various esoteric, occult, and mystical teachings. This contrasts with the mind-body dualism that has dominated Western thought. The subtle body is important in the Taoism of China and Dharmic religions such as Hinduism, Buddhism, and Jainism, mainly in the branches which focus on tantra and yoga, where it is known as the *Sūkṣma-śarīra*. However, while mostly associated with Asian cultures, non-dualistic approaches to the mind and body are found in many parts of the world.

Subtle body concepts and practices can be identified as early as 2nd century BCE in Taoist texts found in the Mawangdui tombs. Although "evidently present" in Indian thought as early as the 4th to 1st century BCE when the *Taittiriya Upanishad* describes the *Panchakoshas*, a series of five interpenetrating sheaths of the body. A fully formed subtle body theory didn't develop in India until the tantric movement that affected all its religions in the Middle Ages. In Indo-Tibetan Buddhism the correlation of the subtle body to the physical body is viewed differently according to school, lineage and scholar but for Completion stage purposes is visualised within the body. The subtle body consists of focal points, often called *chakras*, connected by channels, often called *nadis*, that convey subtle breath, often called *prana*. Through breathing and other exercises, a practitioner may direct the subtle breath to achieve supernormal powers, immortality, or liberation.

Subtle body concepts have become part of Western developed perspectives. In esoteric studies the Theosophy movement were the first to translate the Sanskrit term as "subtle body" although their use of the term is quite different from Indic usage. This makes the term problematic for modern scholars, especially as the Theosophist view often influences New Age and holistic medicine perspectives. Western scientists have started to explore the subtle body concept in research on meditation.

BUDDHISM

Early concepts of the subtle body (Sanskrit: *sūkṣma śarīra*) appeared in the *Upanishads*, including the *Bṛhadaranyaka Upanishad* and the *Katha Upanishad*.^[7] The *Taittiriya Upanishad* describes the theory of five *koshas* or sheaths, though these are not to be thought of as concentric layers, but interpenetrating at successive levels of subtlety:

The *anna-maya* ("food body", physical body, the grossest level),

The *prana-maya* (body made of vital breath or *prana*),

The mano-maya (body made of mind),
The vijñāna-maya (body made of consciousness)
The ananda-maya (bliss body, the subtlest level).

WESTERN ESOTERICISM

Theosophy

In the 19th century, H. P. Blavatsky founded the esoteric religious system of Theosophy, which attempted to restate Hindu and Buddhist philosophy for the Western world. She adopted the phrase "subtle body" as the English equivalent of the Vedantic *sūkṣmaśarīra*, which in Adi Shankara's writings was one of three bodies (physical, subtle, and causal). Geoffrey Samuel notes that theosophical use of these terms by Blavatsky and later authors, especially C. W. Leadbeater, Annie Besant and Rudolf Steiner (who went on to found Anthroposophy), has made them "problematic" to modern scholars, since the Theosophists adapted the terms as they expanded their ideas based on "psychic and clairvoyant insights", changing their meaning from what they had in their original context in India.

Post-theosophists

The later theosophical arrangement was taken up by Alice Bailey, and from there found its way into the New Age worldview and the human aura. Other authors treated the subtle body in varying ways. Max Heindel divided the subtle body into the Vital Body made of Ether; the Desire body, related to the Astral plane; and the Mental body. Samael Aun Weor wrote extensively on the subtle bodies (Astral, Mental, and Causal), aligning them with the kabbalistic tree of life. Barbara Brennan's account of the subtle bodies in her books *Hands of Light* and *Light Emerging* refers to the subtle bodies as "layers" in the "Human Energy Field" or aura.

Fourth Way

Subtle bodies are found in the "Fourth Way" teachings of Gurdjieff and Ouspensky, which claim that one can create a subtle body, and hence achieve post-mortem immortality, through spiritual or yogic exercises. The "soul" in these systems is not something one is born with, but developed through esoteric practice to acquire complete understanding and to perfect the self. According to the historian Bernice Rosenthal, "In Gurdjieff's cosmology our nature is tripartite and is composed of the physical (planetary), emotional (astral) and mental (spiritual) bodies; in each person one of these three bodies ultimately achieves dominance." The ultimate task of the fourth way teachings is to harmoniously develop the four bodies into a single way.

Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn

The Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, a secret magical Order originating in 1888 in Victorian England, describes the subtle body as "The Sphere of Sensation". The occultist Israel Regardie published a collection of Golden Dawn magical texts which state that "the whole sphere of sensation which surroundeth the whole physical body of a man is called 'the magical mirror of the universe'. For therein are represented all the occult forces of the universe projected as on a sphere..." Regardie connects the Sephiroth of the Kabbalistic Tree of Life to this sphere as a microcosm of the universe. The Kabbalistic concept of the *Nepesch* is "the subtle body of refined Astral Light upon which, as on an invisible pattern, the physical body is extended".

[>https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Subtle_body< — retrieved 31 October 2021]

Notice that all of these sources list the subtle bodies in what I refer to as the Natural Sequence: Physical → Emotional → Mental → Spiritual. This is because, obviously, the planes follow the Natural Sequence. This sequence is discussed in more detail in my book *The Tao of Cosmogony*. For a convenient summary, these are tabulated below:

SUBTLE BODIES

MONADIC	ORDINAL		NEUTRAL		CARDINAL		
AXIAL	ACTION	INSPIRATION	EXPRESSION	ASSIMILATION	EXPRESSION	INSPIRATION	ACTION
BUDDHISM	Anna Physical	Prana Vital	Mano Mind	Vijnana Consciousness		Ananda Bliss	

Comments on this table are as follows:

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Subtle Bodies per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

Are spirits real? (Discussion of "spirit" in Lisa's house.)

It may be an etheric vehicle. If so, it will decompose as body decomposes. Then, you will be alone again. This sometimes happens when one dies suddenly or violently. The etheric vehicle is the innermost aura. It borrows minute quantities of energy from any available source — a cat or dog or you. It decomposes rapidly. This entity [etheric vehicle] cannot harm you at all. It is like the dura sans the brain. The Astral body leaves immediately. The etheric vehicle cannot leave — it has no power by itself. It probably feels comfortable in your house. We can take it away. It is only a shadow. It has no intrinsic energy. [21 August 1973]

Concluding Comments on Subtle Bodies

Compare and contrast with "Composites" of Cadence, Greater Cadence, Side, Entity, Cadre.





⑥ BODY TYPE

Founding members of the original Michaelian group learned about Body Types in the Fourth Way group (Fellowship of Friends) where they had previously been members. That group was lead by Robert Burton; refer to the chapter “Gurdjieff, Ouspensky, Collin, Burton” for more information about that story. Gurdjieff did not himself teach about Body Types, nor did his student Ouspensky. Rather, the typology came from one of Ouspensky’s students, Rodney Collin, who invented it in the 1950s. I say “invented” because he conflated ideas gathered from endocrinology, astrology, and mythology rather than evidence gathered from empirical observations, or intuitive revelations of one kind or another. The point to be emphasized here is that the Michaels did not originate the concept; from reading the original Michaelian group transcriptions it appears to me that the Michaels just went along with the Collin–Fellowship of Friends formulation because original Michaelian group members found it to be useful.

The subject of Body Types is thoroughly covered in two chapters in my book *A History of the Overleaf Chart*. Chapter 1M, “The Seven Body Types”, covers the time period before and during the original Michaelian group. There you will read that the Michaels added and subtracted from the Collin–Fellowship of Friends formulation as they saw fit. Chapter 4D, “The Seven Body Types”, covers the history of the subject during the period after the original Michaelian group. Neither of those chapters is reproduced here in the *Study Papers* book, so the reader should review them in the *History* book if they want to understand that history. There you will read that, basically and briefly, attempts of channels and students to fit the Collin–Fellowship of Friends Body Type system into the Overleaf System are so inconsistent with each other that it becomes obvious that the Collin–Fellowship of Friends Body Type system cannot be made to fit into the Overleaf System without such extreme metamorphoses that the Collin–Fellowship of Friends formulation becomes absurd.

However, all is not lost. During the original Michaelian group, the Michaels said that the Body Types and the Centers count as one Overleaf. I take this to mean that there is an exact correlation of some kind between the two, when properly understood. This assertion of conflation was not developed by the Michaels, either in the original Michaelian group or subsequent to the original Michaelian group; that task has apparently fallen to me. My suggestion is that the Body Types and Centers constitute an Axis, where the Body Types are Ordinal and the Centers are Cardinal. Beyond that, in my *History* book, you can read that, during the 1940s, 1950’s, and 1960s, Dr. William Sheldon, an academic, empirically discerned a body type system that happens to have a pattern that maps easily onto the pattern of the Centers, without distortion. Therefore, I reject the Collin–Fellowship of Friends schema, about which the Michaelian teachings communities have not been able to come to a consensus, and inject the Sheldon schema into the Overleaf System.

My assertion is that Michaelian students would do well to forget the Collin–Fellowship of Friends Body Type schema, and adopt Sheldon’s so-called “somatotype” schema. For that reason, I am not going to document and comment on what was said in the original Michaelian group about the Collin–Fellowship of Friends schema in this *Study Papers* book. The somatotype schema is described and discussed enough in my *History* book that students can begin to incorporate that Body Type system into their study of this interesting component of our incarnate human experience, if they are inclined to think and research outside the current Body Type ‘box’. In addition to what I have to say in my *History* book, curious people can read about somatotypes in various places on the internet, such as:

- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Somatotype_and_constitutional_psychology<
- <https://www.mysomatotype.com/body-type/><





BONDING

This chapter is the product of a search for the words bonding and binding and their derivatives and synonyms in the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group channeling sessions. This word does not represent a significant component of the Michaelian teachings. However, there are good reasons to discuss the subject in this *Study Papers* book: 1) the subject came up numerous times during the original Michaelian group; 2) students can presumably benefit from having the mentions conveniently collected and commented all in one place; 3) some interesting things were said about the subject; 4) the subject is related to a number of other components of the Michaelian teachings that are considered to be significant; 5) bonding issues are unavoidable; they are pervasive in human psychology and sociology and spirituality — subjects covered extensively in this book — so it behooves us to have a working knowledge of them.

The word bond is not capitalized in this chapter or other chapters of this *Study Papers* book because it has no special meaning in the Michaelian teachings; it is not a Michaelian jargon word that needs a definition apart from its use in the common vernacular.

This chapter is one of many in this book that focuses on a psychological component of the Michaelian teachings as found in original Michaelian group transcriptions, rather than on a spiritual component, as so many other chapters in this book do. Psychological components of the Michaelian teachings are usually either a positive to be cultivated or a negative to be mitigated; both are amenable to psychotherapeutic techniques. Obviously, bonding is a positive to be cultivated. The Michaelian version of psychology is not to be confused with the popular psychology of the self-improvement movement, those that do not have a spiritual core or perspective. Rather, the Michaelian psychotherapeutic path (aimed at improving psychological health) is a beneficial precursor to the spiritual path (aimed at improving soul health). To skip the former but attempt the latter is referred to as “spiritual bypassing”. This is discussed at length on such websites as https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spiritual_bypass. To skip mitigating one’s psychological issues and attempt to go straight to enlightenment usually proves to be problematic.

Definition of Bonding

So what is meant by [template?](#) The online Merriam Webster online dictionary definition is: [Wikipedia has an article that provides a definition and a description, as follows \(underlined words are my emphasis\):](#)

Bonding per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

The following extracts from original Michaelian group transcriptions are Q&A exchanges, where an original Michaelian group member asks a question (or makes a comment), and the Michaels provide an answer. [This is a subject that benefits by division into subsections. These extracts are presented in the chronological order in which they were given.](#) As is my custom, I usually provide some explanatory comments following the question or answer. Underlined words are my emphasis, to draw attention to what it is that I comment on. Sometimes I embed words or phrases [in brackets] that I believe help to clarify the question or the answer. Numerous study papers related to this chapter are to be found among my comments.

Kindred Soul Bonding

Group Bonding

Concluding Comments on Bonding





BODYWORK MODALITIES: BREATH, DANCE, EXERCISE, MASSAGE

This chapter is the product of a search for the words “dance”, “exercise”, “massage”, “yoga” in the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group channeling sessions. I have added some commentary, which consists of my analysis and synthesis of the quotations. Obviously, the subject of body-work modalities does not represent a significant component of the Michaelian teachings, but even so, the subject appears often enough that it seems to me that students can benefit from seeing all of those instances documented and commented on in a chapter of this *Study Papers* book. Furthermore, the subject is related to a number of other components of the Michaelian teachings that are considered to be more significant; these will be noted in the commentary on the instances of the subject and its contexts. Briefly and basically, the Michaels recommended to the original Michaelian group members that body-work modalities are physically beneficial, of course, but also spiritually beneficial.

The words for the various bodywork modalities are not capitalized in this chapter or other chapters of this *Study Papers* book because they have no special meaning in the Michaelian teachings; they are not Michaelian jargon words that need a definition apart from its use in the common vernacular. One might therefore wonder why this subject is even included in this book. One answer is that it is just a Scholar–Cast Artisan thing to do: I study the Michaelian teachings documents and I write about them and I want to be thorough. Another answer is that the subject came up for discussion in the original Michaelian group numerous times, some interesting things were said about it, and it might be helpful for Michaelian students to have the answers conveniently collected all in one place.

In the Gurdjieffian teachings the lowest Center was often referred to as the “Instinctive–Moving Center”; refer to the chapter “Instinctive Center” for more discussion of that historical fact. In that chapter you will read that the Instinctive Center was all about physiology. However, in the Michaelian teachings, the Instinctive Center became a personality trait in the Overleaf System, finding a place in the midst of the other Centers. This chapter is about servicing the needs of the physical body, the Gurdjieffian Instinctive–Moving Center, because that is how original Michaelian group members understood it.

Bodywork modalities, such as those reviewed in this chapter, have been a component of “spiritual” work from ancient to modern times. The obvious reality is that it is beneficial, perhaps even necessary, to have and maintain and foster a healthy body as the foundation for a healthy mind and a healthy spirit. During the original Michaelian group, bodywork modalities were also a component of the Michaels’ outline of a well-rounded spiritual path for their students. However, bodywork is yet another one of many subjects that seems not to have gained much traction in subsequent Michaelian teachings formalism. It seems to be the case that many individual students practice a bodywork modality, but bodywork is not an “official”, one might say, component of the modern Michaelian teachings. One of my visionary aspirations with this chapter is to nudge the Michaelian student body (pun intended) in that direction, not only as individuals, but in the long run as the quantity of students presumably increases enough to form local groups that meet on a regular basis, and in the even longer run as students presumably live together communally.

Breathwork

Definition of Breathwork

Breathwork per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

Dance

Definition of Dance

Dance per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

Exercise

Definition of Exercise

Exercise per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

Christopher: What can I do to clear up the troubles with my body and get in tune with it more. (Christopher has suffered with asthma most of his life.) It's really hanging me up lately.

Hiking with compatible souls would also be good.

Richard: The Sierra Club offers much for singles program. [08 September 1973]

Massage

Definition of Massage

So what is meant by massage? Wikipedia has an extensive article on the subject, and the introductory paragraph is this:

Massage is the manipulation of the body's soft tissues. Massage techniques are commonly applied with hands, fingers, elbows, knees, forearms, feet, or a device. The purpose of massage is generally for the treatment of body stress or pain. In European countries, a person professionally trained to give massages is traditionally known as a masseur (male) or masseuse (female). In the United States, these individuals are often referred to as massage therapists, because they must be certified and licensed as "licensed massage therapists". In professional settings, clients are treated while lying on a massage table, sitting in a massage chair, or lying on a mat on the floor. There are many different modalities in the massage industry, including (but not limited to): deep tissue, manual lymphatic drainage, medical, sports, structural integration, Swedish, Thai, and trigger point. [<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Massage> — retrieved 08 November 2022]

Thereafter followed a lengthy description of the subject, including its history in various countries and cultures, its various types and methods, its facilities, equipment, supplies, and its medical and therapeutic uses.

So now let's see what the Michaels had to say on the subject.

Massage per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

The following extracts from original Michaelian group transcriptions are Q&A exchanges, where an original Michaelian group member asks a question (or makes a comment), and the Michaels provide an answer. This is not a subject that would benefit by division into subcategories, as some subjects do. These extracts are presented in the chronological order in which they were given, even though this is not a subject where there was a development or evolution of a specific revelation of a facet of the Michaelian teachings, as was often the case with the original Michaelian group. As is my custom, I often provide some explanatory comments following the question or answer. Underlined words are my emphasis, to draw attention to what it is that I comment on. Sometimes I embed words or phrases [in brackets] that I believe help to clarify the question or the answer.

The first appearance of the subject of massage was at least six months into the original Michaelian group sessions:

Christopher: What can I do to clear up the troubles with my body and get in tune with it more. (Christopher has suffered with asthma most of his life.) It's really hanging me up lately.

Structural Integration would help....

Christopher: Would someone explain "Structural Integration"?

Voices in chorus: That's Rolfing. We can explain that later and perhaps put you in touch with an experienced Rolfer. [08 September 1973]

Rolfing is a form of deep muscle massage originally invented by Ida Rolf (1896 – 1979). Additional forms of deep massage and bodywork like Hellerwork Structural Integration were developed from the work of Ida Rolf and are now included in the term "Structural Integration."

Body movement would be Good Work. Also, meditation, group concentration, and perhaps massage. [31 January 1974]

Refer to the chapters "Good Work, Bad Work" and "Meditation and Concentration". The fact that physical modalities, such as body movement and massage, were mentioned in conjunction with spiritual modalities, tells us something about their proper role in the support of the health of the physical body, and perhaps of the personality and of the soul. The Q&A exchange following the above tells us more:

What is the value of the group?

Answer: For energy.

Ray: [Question lost.]

In order for this group to achieve the cohesion necessary to provide [spiritual] growth, a level of intimacy and trust far exceeding what you now have must be reached. This cannot be achieved through dialogue. Dialogue is False Personality's defense against Emotional Center. [31 January 1974]

Refer to chapters "Energy and Energy Leaks", "Intimacy", "Trust", "Dialogue", "Personality — True and False", and "Emotional Center". The point of this answer here is the same as the point that the Michaels made numerous other times during the original Michaelian group, namely that the students were trapped in their

Intellectual Center, and it would be Good Work if they broadened their learning modalities by dropping down into the Emotional Center and the Moving Center on occasion.

Alice: If I am tired and would rather have slept, we have sex and you [Dick] ask me, "How it was" for me when you have enjoyed it and if I tell the truth for me that it was OK instead of great, you go down with that. Why can't you simply enjoy it without having to have it be great for me every time?

By eroticism, we speak of the total abandonment of the body to sensual experience and, yes, this is a solitary experience.

Refer to the chapters "Sexuality" and "Sensuality" for more discussion of those topics that are somewhat related to bodywork. In those chapters you will read that sensuality and sexuality can, and should, augment each other for individual (solitary) and mutual benefit.

Alice: You do not even like massage and I love it.

This you have not done. We have suggested massage before and for good reason. You are not the only one bound up in this. Most Adepts are extremely sensual in their personal lives. This may come as a surprise to you but it runs pretty true to form. [19 March 1974]

People who "live in their head" or "live in their emotions" tend to not "live in their body", and this is an unbalanced lifestyle. For best results on a spiritual path, live as an Adept lives, with the appropriate functioning of all Centers in proper proportion; refer to the chapter "Adept and Master".

Dick had some angles on the group toward a more cohesive, active one:

- Group massage. (Good for Instinctive Center.) [07 July 1974]

As stated above, in the Gurdjieffian teachings and the original Michaelian group, the Instinctive Center was understood as the "physiology" Center, a Part of the Moving Center. With that background knowledge in mind, thus statement and others like it become more understandable.

Structural Integration is valid only for Emotionally Centered souls who are out of contact with Intellect[ual] Center and alienated from their [Moving Center] bodies. [04 September 1973]

Structural Integration is sometimes known as "Rolfing", deep muscle massage, or Hellerwork massage therapy. People who are Emotionally Centers enjoy massage more than those not so Centered, but massage can, and should, be far more than merely sensually pleasurable; it can, and should, also be therapeutic. The basic premise of therapeutic massage is that there is a psycho-somatic process where the body stores intellectual and emotional insults in the muscles and joints, and there is the opposite somato-psychic process where this insult stored in the body is fed back to the thoughts and emotions. The function of massage is to mitigate this escalating negative feedback loop. The point to be emphasized here is that if you find yourself trapped in negative thoughts and/or emotions, then treat your body to/with some pleasurable, sensual bodywork. Do so and you will find that negativity has dissipated or disappeared; refer to the chapter "Pleasure" for more about that.

Louise: I asked if the pain in my right shoulder had anything to do with the imbalance of yin-yang.

Yes. The trouble is not as strong as in the past, and this confuses your Intellectual Center. The student is blocking the force of the Goal, the Mode, [and] the Chief Negative Feature. The Centering, the Attitude, the Body Type and the Role are in Balance. The energy is the reason [not the Overleaves], Louise.

Louise: I felt that the teacher here is referring to the Reichian Therapy I have been involved in. [07 November 1977]

From Wikipedia: Reichian therapy can refer to several schools of thought and therapeutic techniques whose common touchstone is their origins in the work of psychoanalyst Wilhelm Reich (1897 – 1957). Some examples are: 1) Bioenergetic analysis, which combines psychological analysis, active work with the body and relational therapeutic work. 2) Body psychotherapy, which addresses the body and the mind as a whole with emphasis on the reciprocal relationships within body and mind. 3) Neo-Reichian massage, whose practitioners attempt to locate and dissolve "holding patterns" (also called "body armoring"). 4) Vegetotherapy, a form of psychotherapy that involves the physical manifestations of emotions.

Concluding Comments on Bodywork





③ BOREDOM

This chapter is the product of a search for the word boredom in the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group channeling sessions. This word does not represent a significant component of the Michaelian teachings. However, there are good reasons to discuss the subject in this *Study Papers* book: 1) the subject came up numerous times during the original Michaelian group; 2) some interesting things were said about the subject; 3) the subject is related to a number of other components of the Michaelian teachings that are considered to be significant; 4) students can presumably benefit from having the mentions conveniently collected and commented all in one place; 5) Boredom is pervasive in human psychology and sociology and spirituality — subjects covered extensively in this book — so it behooves us to have a working knowledge of it.

The word boredom is not capitalized in this chapter or other chapters of this *Study Papers* book because it has no special meaning in the Michaelian teachings; it is not a Michaelian jargon word that needs a definition apart from its use in the common vernacular.

This chapter is one of many in this book that focuses on a psychological component of the Michaelian teachings as found in original Michaelian group transcriptions, rather than on a doctrinal or spiritual component. A psychological component is usually either a positive to be cultivated or a negative to be mitigated. As we will see, the Michaels tell us that boredom is a negative to be mitigated. The Michaelian version of psychology is not to be confused with the popular psychology of the self-improvement movement, those that do not have a spiritual core or perspective. Rather, the Michaelian psychotherapeutic path (aimed at improving psychological health) is a beneficial precursor to the spiritual path (aimed at improving soul health). To skip the former but attempt the latter is referred to as “spiritual bypassing”. This is discussed at length on such websites as https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spiritual_bypass. To skip mitigating one’s psychological issues and attempt to go straight to enlightenment usually proves to be problematic.

One might think that boredom is hardly a topic worthy of discussion in a book such as this, but the word does appear several times in the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group. The experience of boredom is not a subject of note in the Gurdjieffian teachings, and it is not a jargon word in the Michaelian teachings, but let’s take a look and see if we can learn something of value anyway. Personally, as I read the transcriptions, I notice that the subject appears in several interesting contexts, such as Essence Contact and Centers. It was also interesting enough in various contexts that Yarbro included three mentions of boredom in her book *Messages from Michael*.

Boredom in the Original Michaelian Group

The following extracts from original Michaelian group transcriptions are Q&A exchanges, where an original Michaelian group member asks a question (or makes a comment), and the Michaels provide an answer. These extracts are presented in the chronological order in which they were given. As is my custom, I usually provide some explanatory comments following the question or answer. Underlined words are my emphasis, to draw attention to what it is that I comment on. Sometimes I embed words or phrases [in brackets] that I believe help to clarify the question or the answer. Numerous study papers related to this chapter are to be found among my comments.

The word first appeared very early in the sessions, and continued to appear until near the end of the original Michaelian group. The first mention of boredom is what the “Essence” sometimes experiences if the Personality is misbehaving:

Dick: My patients have headaches and I have no inkling of why they have chronic ones. Some I just don’t understand at all. I can’t figure out why they have headaches all the time.

Headaches are repressed emotions. Many things can be said through the painful head. Most frequently, a weariness of the body coupled with a bored, trapped Essence will produce the worst headache..... [04 September 1973, *MFM*, p. 228]

This statement is subject to various interpretations because of the ambiguity of what the word Essence refers to. Check out the chapter on “Essence and Personality” for the changing understanding of that word over the history of the development of the Michaelian teachings. There you will see that Gurdjieff’s understanding of Essence is more like what, in subsequent Michael communities, came to be called “True Personality”. If this were the meaning of Essence in this passage, it could feel “bored and trapped” when False Personality was in control of the life. This interpretation is consonant with the statement that “entrapment in the body and the Chief Feature [a component of False Personality] are Karma for Essence” (17 October 1973). In this interpretation, Essence is some transcendent component of the human experience that can get bored when the immanent component of the human experience is in control. An alternative explanation of this passage, as we will see below, is that the word Essence often refers to the Role, and the Role embodied in the Personality needs to be meaningfully engaged in order to avoid boredom. Therefore, my alternate interpretation of the statement above, and below, is that the Essence as expressed through the Role is what gets bored if it feels trapped in unsatisfactory conditions.

The following series of Q&A exchanges elaborate on the phenomenon of Essence boredom, whatever that word refers to:

Dick: I would like to ask about my son, whom he [Michael] has said was a final Cycle Old Soul, and he is out there tinkering with his car. I guess I'm below him in the Cycles and I can't help him. What can I do to help him?

We are not aware of any problems in Rick. We find no fault with him. He has few Ribbons to burn. He has almost completely returned to his primeval Essence. He is bored a bit.

Dick: But I feel lousy.

The body is tired, the Essence is bored; what would you expect from that combination? We would expect a weariness of the entire psychosomatic apparatus.

Dick: What can I do?

Sleep will help the body. The Essence must pursue ecstasy in its own way or it is bored. [18 September 1973]

Regarding Dick’s son, having seen it all and done it all, there is not much that a person, or an Essence, at the end of the cycle of reincarnation can get excited about. Regarding Dick, whatever Essence meant in this statement, surely it is at the high end of the “psychosomatic apparatus”. At the lower end of the psychosomatic apparatus is the Personality self.

It is possible for both the transcendent (Essence) and the immanent (Personality) poles of the psychosomatic apparatus to experience boredom. Discussion of boredom continued in another session, this time referring to Personality boredom at the immanent end of the human experience:

Dick: Am I correct in assuming that this [lack of perceived love in my life] is why I don't have any energy?

Emotionally, yes. You are also [physically] tired.

Dick: But this also produces boredom.

It does. [22 September 1973]

Apparently, a satisfying romantic relationship mitigates boredom for the Personality.

There are other reasons than lack of a love life for the Personality to feel boredom:

Dick: As I measure and have the ashes of life and see life as a bore, I know I'm not on the path. Progress would be more joyous and pleasurable and there would be a love to toil. I see also that to sit around stoned all day is not the way either. [06 October 1973]

Months later it was revealed that Dick was in the Repression Mode, and this was the cause of his perception that life was a bore.

Sue: Why am I sleeping so much? I go to bed at 7:30 every night.

You are sleeping because you are bored. Boredom is a vicious cycle. It causes sleep, which causes more ennui, which in turn causes a great need for sleep.... You must consciously break the cycle. [22 November 1973, *MFM*, p. 276]

If you find yourself to be bored, then you should ask what it is that would energize your True Personality and your Essence. Often this can be traced to a dissatisfied Role, because the Role is that component of the Personality that aspires to satisfy Essence. This was stated explicitly in the case of Artisans and Warriors:

Is everyone's Essence bored?

In this society, we would say the majority, yes. To stimulate it, of course, it must be presented with challenges, not struggles. When the Essence has to struggle, it refuses. Struggling is not worth the effort and it knows this. Insoluble problems are good examples of struggles that the [False] Personality loves and the Essence flees from through boredom.

What is Essence challenge?

Spiritual growth, for example. All forms of studious endeavor when undertaken for the sheer joy of the undertaking; some forms of religious pursuit; work that is in Essence [Role]. That is to say, for instance, painting was in Essence for the Old Artisan Raphael and his Essence was not bored.

What is in Essence for Warriors besides fighting?

Many positions involving administrations and leadership. Even supervisory positions in public recreation areas. We know of many Mature and Old Warriors in this country now working as park rangers and their Essences are not bored. [05 June 1974]

In the original Michaelian group transcriptions, sometimes the word Essence refers to Role and sometimes it does not, so one must check the context to make the discernment.

The following Q&A exchange is about plain old Personality boredom, not Essence or Role boredom.

Marty: I would like to ask about Dennis who is staying with us. It was said that I have a Sequence with him to give him shelter. He's been an alcoholic and I feel he can stay while he becomes situated in college, and then I'd like him to leave. Would this compromise the agreement to offer him shelter.

Given this man's history, your decision will give him the time to delay any decisions on his part and, hopefully, by the time the breather is over, you may change your mind and allow him to stay longer. This could, of course, go on for many months, and then he would never have to decide for himself. You have offered him shelter; now this man is bored and depressed but weak and dependent, yes, and wishes a pleasant solution for his boredom. We doubt seriously that he will carry out his desire academically, as this part of his life has been marked by fits and starts. He could be gently prodded toward a more active and independent life. One caution, however, Marty: if he begins to drink again as a result of this forced independence, it is not because of anything you have done or not done; it is because he will choose to drink.

Where does the boredom come from? Many offered an angle: Rationalization for our emotions we do not understand ... the result when one couldn't find others to do what he wanted.

What is the difference between boredom and depression?

We would say that the line is exceedingly thin, almost invisible. Boredom normally comes about when the individual is unable to meld his fantasy with the realities of everyday life, and this includes fantasied expectations of those around him... [03 September 1974]

Elsewhere it is said that frustrated expectations result in anger; that would be the typical reaction of an *active* personality. Boredom is another response to unrealistic expectations being thwarted; this would be the typical reaction of a *passive* personality. Unrealistic entertainment media that express adventures that are 'bigger than life' tend to make mundane life seem boring by comparison; they feed the fantasies.

Boredom is a negative emotion:

Liz: How can I get in touch with Intellectual Center?

This will be the most difficult for you and for all others in the Centering you are in, as it involves single-minded concentration and application of non-judgmental logic. Reading very studious works has done it for other students. Continuous study will also do it. The determining factor is the boredom factor. As soon as boredom creeps in, the Emotional Center has crept in too. Boredom is simply not intellectually possible. It is a lower [negative] emotional function. Most of the time, in fact, it is a function of the Emotional Part of Moving Center. [28 September 1974]

Refer to the chapter "Extinguishment" for a discussion of negative emotions, including boredom, which one should eliminate from one's life as part of one's psychotherapeutic path.

By they way, to extinguish boredom one should also extinguish one's Chief Feature and the Negative Poles of one's Overleaves:

Alice: My friend feels great negativity from his wife. I feel he is in the Repression Mode.

In the first place, the lady is not feeling negativity, just boredom, and this is perceived not as a negative emotion, but simply as a lack of emotion, by him. But you are correct in that this man is in the Repression

Mode. With his other Overleaves, he could unleash great talent on an unsuspecting world. Except for the Repression, he has the identical Overleaves of some of this world's great musicians. This man is a Spiritualist in the Intellectual Part of Emotional Center, more Impatient than Stubborn. But this is self-directed and there is much frustration at self for repressing the drive. [05 October 1974]

Perhaps the Fragment will choose Overleaves more wisely in subsequent lifetimes. One of the best hedges against both Personality and Essence boredom is to live one's life in the Positive Poles of one's Overleaves.

At this point in the Work, it is not necessary that you be receiving data. In order to focus, you must merely concentrate and focus your energies. If you are bored with the material being shared, that simply indicates to us that you are coming from an inappropriate Center. The same goes for apprehension over new students or visitors who happen to have strong Overleaves. If you respond with the appropriate Center, the apprehension will fade. [21 February 1975]

The negative Emotion of boredom can be one symptom of a larger pattern of malfunction having to do with Centers. Refer to the chapter "Centering Traps" for more information about responding to life situations from the appropriate Center for that situation.

Concluding Comments on Boredom

I like to put my thoughts in order with the help of a bulleted list.

- The same as with suffering of every kind, boredom is a symptom that there is something wrong with the way you are perceiving or living your life. Therefore, if you find yourself experiencing boredom, do some soul searching, figure out what that wrongness is, and take steps to do something about it.
- The Michaels have provided information about the causes of boredom, so consider them during your soul-searching. For instance, there are the usual suspects: the inappropriate use of Centers; the Negative Poles of Overleaves; the Chief Features; insufficient focus on satisfying the promptings of Role and Essence.
- There is no legitimate escape from boredom via such diversions as mindless entertainment and psychedelics. Don't fool yourself, because boredom cannot be fooled indefinitely; figure out what needs to be done to mitigate boredom.
- Several times the Michaels referred to "Essence boredom" in the original Michaelian group transcriptions. The word Essence is used ambiguously, so one must check the context of each mention. Apparently, boredom is not limited to not doing what your Role wants you to do; it also includes not doing what your soul and Essence planned for the lifetime.
- In *MFM*, there is one mention of boredom that we do not find in the original Michaelian group transcriptions that have become generally available: "Old souls are likely to drink [alcoholic beverages] from boredom or as a part of depression." [*MFM*, p. 213]





③ BROTHERHOOD (OCCULT)

Don't get the wrong idea from the title of this chapter. This is not a reference to a family relationship; it refers to an alleged group of spiritually advanced humans who are in a metaphorical 'family', not a physical family. This concept does not represent a significant component of the Michaelian teachings. However, there are good reasons to discuss the subject in this *Study Papers* book: 1) the subject came up numerous times during the original Michaelian group; 2) some interesting things were said about the subject; 3) the subject is related to a number of other components of the Michaelian teachings that are considered to be significant; 4) students can presumably benefit from having the mentions conveniently collected and commented all in one place.

So where did this notion originate? As usual, the internet is my friend that answers questions such as this.

The Occult Brotherhood per Wikipedia

This notion apparently originated in the late 18th Century, and Wikipedia even has an article on it. Underlines in the following quotation are my emphasis; pay particular attention to them (underlines are my emphasis):

INTRODUCTION

The Great White Brotherhood, in belief systems akin to Theosophy and New Age, are said to be perfected beings of great power who spread spiritual teachings through selected humans. The members of the Brotherhood may be known as the Masters of the Ancient Wisdom, the Ascended Masters, the Church Invisible, or simply as the Hierarchy. The first person to talk about them in the West was Helena Petrovna Blavatsky (Theosophy), after she and other people claimed to have received messages from them. These included Helena Roerich, Aleister Crowley, Alice A. Bailey, Guy Ballard, Geraldine Innocente (The Bridge to Freedom), Elizabeth Clare Prophet, Bob Sanders, and Benjamin Creme.

HISTORY

The idea of a secret organization of enlightened mystics, guiding the spiritual development of the human race, was pioneered in the late eighteenth century by Karl von Eckartshausen (1752–1803) in his book *The Cloud upon the Sanctuary*; Eckartshausen called this body of mystics, who remained active after their physical deaths on earth, the Council of Light. Eckartshausen's proposed communion of living and dead mystics, in turn, drew partially on Christian ideas such as the Communion of the Saints, and partially on previously circulating European ideas about secret societies of enlightened, mystical, or magic adepts typified by the Rosicrucians and the Illuminati.

The Mahatma Letters began publication in 1881 with information purportedly revealed by "Koot Hoomi" to Alfred Percy Sinnett, and were also influential on the early development of the tradition. Koot Hoomi, through Sinnett, revealed that high-ranking members of mystic organizations in India and Tibet were able to maintain regular telepathic contact with one another, and thus were able to communicate to each other, and also to Sinnett, without the need for either written or oral communications, and in a manner similar to the way that spirit mediums claimed to communicate with the spirits of the dead. The letters published by Sinnett, which proposed the controversial doctrine of reincarnation, were said to have been revealed through this means.

Eckartshausen's idea was expanded in the teachings of Helena P. Blavatsky as developed by Charles W. Leadbeater, Alice Bailey, and Helena Roerich. Blavatsky, founder of the Theosophical Society, attributed her teachings to just such a body of adepts; in her 1877 book *Isis Unveiled*, she called the revealers of her teachings the "Masters of the Hidden Brotherhood" or the "Mahatmas". Blavatsky claimed that she had made physical contact with these adepts' earthly representatives in Tibet; but also, that she continued to receive teachings from them through psychic channels, through her abilities of spirit mediumship.

Ideas about this secret council of sages, under several names, were a widely shared feature of late nineteenth century and early twentieth century esotericism. Arthur Edward Waite, in his 1898 *Book of Black Magic and of*

Pacts, hinted at the existence of a secret group of initiates who dispense truth and wisdom to the worthy. A young Aleister Crowley, reading this, wrote to Waite and was directed to read von Eckartshausen's book. Crowley's search for this secret wisdom eventually led him to become a neophyte in the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, which represented itself to be the visible and earthly outer order of the Great White Brotherhood. Within the Golden Dawn itself, its teachings claimed to be derived from a similar body of initiates which in that tradition were called the Secret Chiefs. ...
[>https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Great_White_Brotherhood< — retrieved 25 December 2021]

Beyond what I quoted, the Wikipedia article has a rather extensive history of the subject; a number of modern esoteric traditions have spoken of it, so if you are curious, by all means refer to that article.

It is known from the original Michaelian group transcriptions that Richard and some other members of the original Michaelian group were at least a little bit familiar with Theosophy and Rosicrucianism (mentioned in the Wikipedia quotation), so those teachings are likely where they read about the Brotherhood.

An internet search on the subject reveals that many occultists and esotericists proclaim that the existence of the Occult Brotherhood can be traced back through the ancient so-called "mystery schools", that the Brothers have been responsible for the appearance of so-called "gods" and "extraterrestrials" as founders of myths and religions, and that the Brotherhood has been present during the entire history of humankind. Allegedly, this is a group of enlightened and spiritually powerful and influential individuals who have always been, and are even now, guiding the development of humanity, on the small scale and on the large scale. Some of these internet sources are referenced in what follows in this chapter. Looking at some of those resources, I was surprised to see how deep this little rabbit hole goes.

Now let's review the other mentions of the Occult Brotherhood in the original Michaelian group transcriptions. There are more than a dozen of them.

Occult Brotherhood per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

The following extracts from original Michaelian group transcriptions are Q&A exchanges, where an original Michaelian group member asks a question (or makes a comment), and the Michaels provide an answer. These extracts are presented in the chronological order in which they were given. As is my custom, I usually provide some explanatory comments following the question or answer. Underlined words are my emphasis, to draw attention to what it is that I comment on. Sometimes I embed words or phrases [in brackets] that I believe help to clarify the question or the answer. Numerous study papers related to this chapter are to be found among my comments.

The first mention of the Occult Brotherhood in the original Michaelian group transcriptions is this Q&A exchange:

Richard: Does the "Occult Brotherhood" still exist?

Yes. The Brotherhood cannot die out; it is far too widespread and the Brothers are too careful. This is the most ancient school.

Refer to the chapter "School" for more information about the Physical Plane as a metaphorical 'school' for evolving souls, and about formal schools that are established for spiritual development, from ancient to modern times.

Edgar: Could we have some information on the Rosicrucians?

Some of the Rosicrucians are *bona fide* Brothers; some are not. In the neophyte program, there is no screening; the winnowing comes later. The heaviest concentration is now in India rather than the Mid-East, where it formerly was.

Alice: Are the Brothers chosen because of their psychological health and strength?

Usually, they are "chosen" through telepathic communication. This should tell you where they are on the [spiritual] path. [25 December 1973]

Richard introduced the topic without introduction or explanation, so it must have been known to the group. Also, this notion of an Occult Brotherhood did not originate with the Michaels.

Two days after the first mention of the Occult Brotherhood, quoted above, the subject appeared again:

Edgar: Can you discuss energy and the concept of the pyramid?

... At the time of the building of the great pyramids in Egypt, the [Occult] Brotherhood was almost solely concentrated there. They [the pyramids] represent the outward symbol of the inner strength. [27 December 1973]

In the first mention of the Occult Brotherhood, they were said to now be concentrated in India, whereas formerly they were in the Middle East. In this second mention of the Occult Brotherhood, they were said to be concentrated in Egypt in ancient times, which is in the Middle East. Evidently they move around, in order to be at the spiritual 'hot spots' of the planet at different times in history.

The Egyptian pyramids are, from ancient to modern times, a source of wonder, and one of the things that is wondered is what their spiritual purpose was, if any. In other words, they prompt people to contemplate the supernatural, the spiritual, the extraterrestrial. Further on, we see the Michaels make the claim that they were constructed by the Brotherhood using their magical powers; they are a product of the superhuman abilities of Brothers.

Was Christ influenced by the Eleusinian mystery religion?

Not particularly, but [he] was heavily influenced by Socrates and Epicurus, as well as the Alexandrian Brotherhood, which really was a counterpart to the Eleusinian School. [10 January 1974]

Some ancient mystery schools are known to have been real, as they are recorded in ancient credible history books, the Eleusinian mystery school being one of them. You may read about ancient mystery schools here: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Greco-Roman_mysteries and elsewhere on the internet. The subject of an Alexandrian school affiliated with the famed Library of Alexandria appeared enough times in the original Michaelian group transcriptions that it prompted me to compile a chapter of its own on it in this *Study Papers* book: "Alexandria".

Barbara: Does this mention of Alexandria in Egypt have anything to do with the "White Brotherhood"?

By all means.... [22 January 1974]

From <https://holyorderofmans.org/advanced-activity/history-of-the-white-brotherhood/>: "A few centuries before the birth of Jesus, the White Brotherhood built a college of the higher sciences at Alexandria, similar to the former religious center they built in Heliopolis centuries earlier as one of the largest and best structures for the preservation of the ancient Egyptian records." No scholarly academic reference was given for this statement.

A few days later, the subject of the Egyptian Brotherhood came up again:

Cheryl: Why build these big pyramids? What was their function?

The pyramids were designed and built by the Occult Brotherhood, not by visitors from outer space. This had to do with a theory of channeling the life force much in the way that we would depict the reunion of the Fragments of ancient Entities. [27 January 1974]

My understanding of this is that the shape of the pyramids is like the shape of the Entity, with the combined power of the entire Entity at the capstone, and it emanates the life force down through successive layers (Side, Greater Cadence, Cadence) to the thousand Fragments at the base. This life force draws the Fragments toward reintegration with the Cadence, then the Greater Cadence, then the Side, then the entire Entity. More is said about this in the chapters "Kindred Souls" and "Casting".

Cheryl: Still, how did they do it? Each stone weighs two tons. How could they do it without modern technical machines?

This is no particular strain for a Brother; their powers were great. [27 January 1974]

The alleged supernatural or extraterrestrial origin of the Egyptian pyramids is, of course, a notion that is widespread in some esoteric communities, but repudiated by modern Egyptologists. Personally, I put this channeling into the unvalidatable category; there is no way to prove (or disprove) the Michaels' assertions here. However, I know someone personally who visited India on a pilgrimage, meeting there a guru whom he saw cause tree limbs to move toward him as if he were a magnet for them. Such supernatural powers even have a name: siddhis:

In Hinduism, Siddhis (Sanskrit: siddhi; fulfillment, accomplishment) are material, paranormal, supernatural, or otherwise magical powers, abilities, and attainments that are the products of yogic advancement through sādhanās such as meditation and yoga. The term ṛddhi (Pali: iddhi, "psychic powers") is often used interchangeably in Buddhism." [<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Siddhi> — retrieved 28 December 2021]

Cheryl: Why did they do it?

Initially, the Brotherhood was concerned with the worship of Ra, or the continuing life force. This gradually transformed itself into the Horus-Osiris myth of the renewal of the creative force each year. This brought about great changes in the [Egyptian] civilization then under control of the Brotherhood. [27 January 1974]

Even in modern times, the pyramids are a source of inspiration to tourists and viewers of documentaries. Perhaps their influence is enough to transform lives for the better and the higher, the alleged function of the Occult Brotherhood.

The Occult Brotherhood was a hot topic at about this time in the original Michaelian group. A few days later it resurfaced:

Is this The Brotherhood? I understand Gurdjieff was "conscious" but not [Rodney] Collin, and that Fulton Sheen is a Transcendental Soul.

Call it the "transcendent Brotherhood" if you wish; that describes it.

Gene: Are there many who are alive in the physical today who are in The Brotherhood?

Many are now on the Physical Plane; many watch from other planes.

Cynthia: Are they gathering because of the "new [Infinite Soul] coming"? Is our source [the Michaels] transcendental?

The Transcendental Soul is only such when it manifests on the Physical Plane. Now, we are part of the Mid-Causal body. [03 February 1974]

From this and other descriptions, it seems that the Occult Brotherhood is not in the category of "Transcendental Soul". Rather, they are "Old Souls Transcendent" — see further on.

A question was asked concerning the Kabbalah.

This is the occult component of the Judaic thought. For the most part, it was valid in the beginning and has become somewhat corrupted with time, but there are several Kabbalists who are *bona fide* [Occult] Brothers. [13 February 1974]

Refer to the chapter "Kabbalah" in this *Study Papers* book, and the chapter "Kabbalism" in my book *The Synthesis*. Evidently, one of the jobs of members of the Occult Brotherhood is to participate, perhaps not always overtly, in esoteric groups and movements, as leaders and exemplars and revealers of occult knowledge.

Dick: Robert Monroe described meeting a mysterious group of entities on the Astral Plane. They apparently function on the Physical Plane, according to Monroe.... What about the mysterious entities that he describes in his book?

We see nothing unusual here in this. Mature Priests [such as Monroe] nightly encounter with the Essences of final-Level Old Souls.

Are the Old Souls aware of this consciously?

Some are. They come by it accidentally. If the Old Soul pursues anything, he normally has some successes. His Essence is restless and curious. He is like having a five year old at a seminar.

Are some of them part of The Brotherhood?

Some of them are [Occult] Brothers, not all. [10 March 1974]

If I am reading this correctly, some final-Level Old Souls are Occult Brothers. This is confirmed by later channeling — see below.

Regarding Keptic, a physician (?) in somebody's book.

This man studied at the museum. Of course, he was touched by the [Occult] Brotherhood. He was aware [of them], but not an initiate. [13 March 1974]

Evidently, Old Souls must be found and recognized and invited and initiated into the Occult Brotherhood by Brothers. The next mentions of the Brotherhood confirms this:

Dick described an encounter with a man in Berkeley several years ago.

These encounters can only come about with two who are on the [spiritual] path. The man in the encounter you describe was more than that, though; he was a[n Occult] Brother. [16 June 1974]

More is said about this mysterious encounter in a session a few days later:

Dick: The man I saw 2 years ago on Telegraph Avenue who is allegedly a member of the Occult Brotherhood — what is his SRG? I'd say he was in Balance so he is not in any Center, an Artisan, Fifth Level Old transcendent [Karma-free] soul in the Passion Mode, no Chief Feature, Spiritualist. Is he part of my Entity?

The only part we would disagree with is Sixth Level Old Soul, transcendent. In one who has achieved Balance, the goal has been reached, that is correct. [23 June 1974]

So, we have finally zeroed in on one of the defining characteristics of an Occult Brother: they are Old Souls “transcendent”, meaning that they are Karma-free, and they have achieved at least the fourth Level of Being (Balanced Man); refer to the chapter “Level of Being” for more information about that.

According to what is said in the final mention, there are levels of immersion in the Occult Brotherhood:

Dick: There was an offer by Michael to weave a tapestry of past lives. Are they ready for that now? Should we ask specific questions?

There is no need to ask specific questions. We would think you would examine your various reasons for evading this particular question; it is an interesting phenomenon.

We have told you before that those of you now on the Physical Plane and others who have lived within the past three decades and even perhaps most of those who lived in the past five decades and all those who will live again in the next two decades, have all lived during what we choose to call the “cardinal points” of these Cycles. In other words, you have lived during the centuries in which the most sweeping changes have occurred: philosophically, spiritually, culturally, and scientifically.

Five of you were present in the immediate area in each instance when the Infinite Soul manifested on this world. Those five knew each other well, as their lives were interwoven at the time. All of you had access to the words then and at the time of the last manifestation [of Jesus as the Infinite Soul].

All of you have been exposed to the Occult Brotherhood in the cradle of its existence, three of you becoming initiates but never Adepts. All of you have been, at one time, associated with the education of youth at a time when there were sweeping philosophical changes. All of you have this in common. You did not listen. We have more. [19 October 1974]

Perhaps the reason that members of the original Michaelian group were especially interested in the Occult Brotherhood is that they had contact with it in previous lives, as stated here. Refer to the chapter “Adept and Master” for a description of those advanced Levels of Being per the Gurdjieff and Michaelian teachings. The original Michaelian group members “blew it” again in this lifetime.

Concluding Comments on the Occult Brotherhood

Yarbro did not mention the Brotherhood in her book *Messages from Michael*, so the notion did not pass into subsequent Michaelian teachings groups that way. Louise and Leslie Briggs were in the original Michaelian group but had nothing to say about it in the transcriptions of their group that have become available to us. The notion surfaced with the original Michaelian group transcriptions in the mid-1990s, but it has not gained much traction in Michaelian teachings groups since then that I know of. Thus, so far as I know, the notion has been safely ignored, and so far as I can tell, it can continue to be safely ignored. Even though the Michaels said that this was a real thing, I do not see any value in it, as I do in other important or integral components of the Michaelian teachings. There are some things in the original Michaelian group transcriptions that strain credibility, and this channeling about the Occult Brotherhood is one of them. Even though the notion has a long history in the belief systems of numerous occult groups, it might or might not be true; one wonders if it can be validated experientially. In my view, the utilitarian value of the Michaelian teachings is not connected to this particular revelation.





① BUFFERS

The topic of this chapter is yet another one of many that discuss one or another of the components of the Gurdjieffian teachings that were adopted and adapted in the Michaelian teachings during the original Michaelian group, but which did not subsequently find its way into the Michaelian teachings. For an introduction to the general subject of the Gurdjieffian teachings and the involvement of founding original Michaelian group members with it, refer to the chapter “Gurdjieff, Ouspensky, Collin, Burton”.

Even though the Michaels used the term “buffering” on numerous occasions during the original Michaelian group, Yarbro did not mention it in her book about the original Michaelian group, *Messages from Michael*, perhaps because, near as I can tell, Yarbro was not familiar with Gurdjieff. The Michaels have not used it in subsequent groups so far as I have been able to determine, perhaps because subsequent groups are not familiar with Gurdjieffian teachings. Therefore, the term, and even the concept referred to by the term, has not become common knowledge in the Michaelian teachings community subsequent to the original Michaelian group. Nevertheless, I believe Gurdjieff’s psychological insights are worth discussing, the subject of Buffering being one of them. I also believe that it is worthwhile to make the historical record of the original Michaelian group reasonably complete. Taking into consideration that the word refers to a concept with a specific and special meaning in both the Gurdjieffian teachings and in the Michaelian teachings, I capitalize it, as one of many jargon words.

Basically and briefly, Buffering is a Gurdjieff term for the phenomenon where the Personality deflects, denies, represses, and compartmentalizes Shocks and Friction that would otherwise Awaken the Sleeping Essence. In psychological parlance, this concept is approximately equivalent to so-called “defense mechanisms”.

This chapter is one of many in this book that focuses on a psychological component of the Michaelian teachings as found in original Michaelian group transcriptions, rather than on a doctrinal or spiritual component. A psychological component is usually either a positive to be cultivated or a negative to be mitigated. As we will see, the Michaels tell us that Buffering is a negative to be mitigated. The Michaelian version of psychology is not to be confused with the popular psychology of the self-improvement movement, those that do not have a spiritual core or perspective. Rather, the Michaelian psychotherapeutic path (aimed at improving psychological health) is a beneficial precursor to the spiritual path (aimed at improving soul health). To skip the former but attempt the latter is referred to as “spiritual bypassing”. This is discussed at length on such websites as https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spiritual_bypass. To skip mitigating one’s psychological issues and attempt to go straight to enlightenment usually proves to be problematic.

Buffers per the Dictionary

Even though I consider Buffer to be a jargon word in the Michaelian teachings, it is obviously not an invented word; it has a common English definition:

- 1: any of various devices or pieces of material for reducing shock or damage due to contact.
- 2: a means or device used as a cushion against the shock of fluctuations in business or financial activity.
- 3: something that serves as a protective barrier, such as:
 - a: buffer state (neutral governmental entity between two hostile governmental entities);
 - b: a person who shields another, especially from annoying routine matters;
 - c: mediator. [<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/buffer> — retrieved 21 June 2021]

So let’s see how and where Gurdjieff applied this word to his psychology and philosophy.

Buffers per Gurdjieff

Because Gurdjieff had a lot more to say about this than the Michaels during the original Michaelian group, I quote a number of sources written by Gurdjieffian students. Synonyms for Buffer are underlined.

There is a latent force of meaning hidden within this idea of kundabuffer which, at certain moments, when we pause long enough for it to touch us, can penetrate to another level of our consciousness — to a level where it is able to disturb us. To disturb us in a way we know and intuit *that we need to be disturbed* [italics in original]. Yet such moments are rare. Why? Because the shock inherent within an objective truth so easily gets deflected, neutralized, by one or another form of **buffer** — that is, through that unseen predisposition by means of which we are 'protected' from the discomfort of having to deal with what otherwise would be disturbing to our familiar and cozy frame of reference. The various and sundry forms of these buffers are beyond count, but, for our purpose here, two will suffice. One is to inwardly genuflect to the authority of the personage who has communicated the shock, thereby sidestepping its intrinsic awakening force. The other is all too readily to 'agree' with the formulation within which the shock of a newly revealed truth is hidden — on however superficial a level. After all, who of us is not able to generate a virtual litany of absurdities of human behavior? Having thus 'agreed', we are then at liberty to proceed as usual, and thus to escape the thrust of the new revelation. [<https://gurdjiefflegacy.org/40articles/hoyt.htm> — retrieved 21 June 2021]

According to the Fourth Way, a major obstacle to inner unity is that ... we are protected from seeing our contradictions by "buffers". Buffers prevent contradictory or separate things from clashing. Additionally, buffers function in the dark. If one were instead to put the light on, to experience them fully, their power would weaken and one could begin to observe oneself fully. [<https://fourthwaytoday.org/dealing-with-contradictions/> — retrieved 21 June 2021]

Gurdjieff changed the language he used to describe a number of traditional themes, so much so that we don't always recognize them. For example, he used the word **buffers** to describe the process within us which engages in self-will. Anything which prevents us from seeing what we are — a lie we tell ourselves in order to avoid seeing the truth about what we are — is a part of selfishness, or self-will. One says to oneself, as he explained, "I'm always on time", and thus one gives oneself a lie which allows one to always be late, to behave as selfishly as one wishes, without regard for how it affects others. Every buffer is actually a selfish obstacle to the truth. It relies on our self-indulgence and self-will in order to exist and prosecute its actions. [<https://zenyogagurdjieff.blogspot.com/2014/05/buffers-self-will-and-sin.html> — retrieved 21 June 2021]

How does someone use the [Gurdjieff] work as 'self calming'? By 'blindly' believing that being part of such a teaching guarantees one a meaningful and purposeful existence, a form of propping up one's 'ego' and acquiring a sense of 'identity' etc. Self calming is the action of 'buffers', which keep the various diverse aspects of a being separated from each other. This separation removes the chances for the suffering that can come from the contact and interaction of these different aspects, particularly the contact of 'contradictory' aspects. Self calming does not have to appear as a calming action, and can take any form. For instance, habitual forms of suffering are used as a form of self calming, and these reactions can be anything but calm in their nature and appearance. Self calming is a way to channel the energy of experience into established outlets so as to preserve the current form of functioning.

Self calming doesn't have to make you feel better, in terms of providing a 'positive' feeling. It simply reaffirms the present habitual outlook. Perhaps someone is accustomed to feeling 'apathetic' for example, then self calming works to maintain this etc. The formatory apparatus [a Part of Intellectual Center which "cannot think; it can only recite"] can be seen to be involved in self calming, where experience is immediately formatted into the habitual response and interpretation.

If self calming is the default response to experience then there is no room for a conscious reception of an impression, as the first shock etc. Work with attention and habits is required to enable the co-presence and contact of the various different aspects and 'I's.

As I said, the self calming works to reaffirm the habitual response and interpretation of experience. It stops new experience and impressions from being received and digested. It works to inhibit the experience of contradiction and multiplicity in oneself. People can use the work in the same way, as something that habitually arises in response to experience in such a way as to preserve the given identity and views. Perhaps some friction arises from a sense of purposelessness, the ideas of the work may arise in such a way as to provide some buffer to this friction. Perhaps such friction is simply dismissed as some manifestation of 'false personality' etc. It is

labeled in a way that provides some relief through a sense of understanding. This habitual response would be a form of self calming using the ideas of the work as a means.

Self calming appears to be an inherited trait, fostered by our education and social upbringing etc. Buffers serve the purpose of survival and self preservation. As said in [Gurdjieff's book] *Beelzebub*, it might be thought that man would kill himself if he realized his true purpose and place in the Cosmos. This would be a disaster for the greater scheme, and so man must be preserved from this potential. Hence the [so-called] kundabuffer implantation etc. The arising of conscience can be considered as deadly without the appropriate preparation. Buffers ensure a certain form of survival, but to fulfill man's potential individuals have to work to remove their buffers.

Just as a point on buffers, when there is a degree of contact between the different and contradictory aspects, which buffers usually hinder, one of the first reactions is to attempt to do something in order to 'resolve' the contradiction and friction etc. It is said that at first there is the need to be able to bear such a moment of relative contact without reacting by attempting to change etc. This being mentioned in connection with the need for impressions to be assimilated so as to be remembered and become a more active source for our manifestations. [<https://gurdjieffandbeelzebub.wordpress.com/2019/06/06/buffers-and-self-calming/> — retrieved 21 June 2021]

Another website, <https://gnosticosotericstudyworkaids.blogspot.com/2015/05/what-is-kundabuffer-or-kundartiguador.html>, also has a thorough description of kundabuffer and buffers.

Now that you have the Gurdjieffian perspective on buffers, let's take a look at the Michaelian perspective.

Buffers per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

The following extracts from original Michaelian group transcriptions are Q&A exchanges, where an original Michaelian group member asks a question (or makes a comment), and the Michaels provide an answer. These extracts are presented in the chronological order in which they were given. As is my custom, I usually provide some explanatory comments following the question or answer. Underlined words are my emphasis, to draw attention to what it is that I comment on. Sometimes I embed words or phrases [in brackets] that I believe help to clarify the question or the answer.

In only three Q&A exchanges during the original Michaelian group did the subject of Buffers appear. Let's examine them.

Cynthia: Is False Personality something the soul chooses for growth?

Yes, of course. That is valid. Why else vary the locale and choose the families that you do?

Barbara: Do I have the right idea of equating False Personality with Jung's [concept of the] persona?

Dick: False Personality is all that culturally-induced trash.

Someone helpful: It serves a useful purpose and also Buffers the Essence.

False Personality is only a part of this. The total False Personality includes, of course, all of the "shoulds" that you learned in childhood, the various machinations you go through as a result of your goals and those reactions that are solely the result of the Tape Loops provided by the Attitude. [24 February 1974]

These comments mention a couple of phenomena that Buffer the Personality from experiencing Essence, namely "False Personality" and "Tape Loops"; refer to chapters in this *Study Papers* book on those subjects.

The next Q&A exchange was in the context of the Robert Monroe program to facilitate journeys out of the body, aka astral traveling, wherewith one could gain insights about the nature of reality:

Does this technique make it possible to remember?

You do anyway, but your Buffers knock out the recall.

How does one eliminate Buffers?

If you encounter a situation that would produce guilt in the body, the body will not allow you to remember, or, at least, not with any pleasure. Guilt is in [False] Personality, yes. [10 March 1974]

The Monroe program, as with so many other psychological and spiritual techniques, was aimed at transcending False Personality. If one is to bypass one's Buffers, the first step is be cognizant about the existence of Buffers. Many spiritual paths provide procedures for their minimization. Besides the Monroe program and what the Michaels offered, members also partook of Werner Erhard's EST; there are chapters in this *Study Papers* book on both Monroe and Erhard.

The third and last mention of Buffers is this:

Sex is only one of these things, and you are not alone in this by any means. There is not one student in this room who is not Buffering the true fears about communal living right now. [21 February 1975]

Living in a commune is one of the best spiritual techniques for making one aware of one's Buffers, and forcing one to confront them and transcend them. Refer to the chapter on "Communal Living" for the whole story.

Defense Mechanism per Psychology

It is not as if the concept of Buffers is limited to spiritual paths such as Gurdjieff and the Michaels; it is actually a well-known concept in psychology, but there it goes by a different name. Underlined words in the following quotation from Wikipedia are synonyms for "defense mechanisms":

In psychoanalytic theory, a defense mechanism is an unconscious psychological operation that functions to protect a person from anxiety-producing thoughts and feelings related to internal conflicts and outer stressors.

Defense mechanisms may result in healthy or unhealthy consequences depending on the circumstances and frequency with which the mechanism is used. Defense mechanisms are psychological strategies brought into play by the unconscious mind to manipulate, deny, or distort reality in order to defend against feelings of anxiety and unacceptable impulses and to maintain one's self-schema or other schemas [aka False Personality]. These processes that manipulate, deny, or distort reality may include the following: repression, or the burying of a painful feeling or thought from one's awareness even though it may resurface in a symbolic form; identification, incorporating an object or thought into oneself; and rationalization, the justification of one's behavior and motivations by substituting "good" acceptable reasons for [in place of] the actual motivations. In psychoanalytic theory, repression is considered the basis for other defense mechanisms.

Healthy people normally use different defense mechanisms throughout life. A defense mechanism becomes pathological only when its persistent use leads to maladaptive behavior such that the physical or mental health of the individual is adversely affected. Among the purposes of ego defense mechanisms is to protect the mind/self/ego from anxiety or social sanctions or to provide a refuge from a situation with which one cannot currently cope. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Defence_mechanism — retrieved 27 August 2021]

If you compare these descriptive words for defense mechanisms with the descriptive words for Buffers you will see many identical and similar words and concepts.

Concluding Comments on Buffers

The concept of Buffers is useful in common psychotherapy as well as the uncommon spiritual path. That is to say, it is salubrious to squarely and honestly face the truth about ourselves and other people and the world that we live in. Do not lie to yourself; let Shocks and Friction do the work of purifying your consciousness. Use psychotherapeutic and spiritual tools to eliminate Buffers.





CASTING

... Chapter 4N, “Casting Concerns” in my book *A History of the Overleaf Chart* has a lot more to say on this subject...





CAYCE, EDGAR

Regarding channeling. There is actually a good chunk of the original Michaelian group info on Cayce (which I will paste in and discuss below). Cayce has been a compelling force in the psychic world but also, his considerable healing work would have been of interest to the medical people involved in the group. ARE (Association for Research and Enlightenment) is the group in Virginia Beach that maintains his legacy. Cayce is an example of someone who could go into trance and essentially be in contact with the akashic record. He was not bereft of CF in the process, and, I think, often picked up data from other parallels and some things were skewed due to his own belief structure -- because even in a trance state there appears to be filters in place. I would say that the medical channeling was often clearest MOSTLY due to the fact that he did NOT have any kind of medical background. The information was concise and communicated in lay terms, using commonly known items.

You do not need specialty knowledge to channel, whether trance or conscious. What specialty knowledge or broad knowledge base DOES get you, is the ability to ask extremely precise and relevant questions. Something you see in the Ra Material. There Carla Reuckart is trance channeling (and under the influence of LSD in the beginning sessions) to a degree that resonates from the knowledge base of the questioner, Don Elkins, not her own thought. But she was/is very knowledgeable herself in her own way, and also very mystically Christian. And that comes through because her source appears to read her well enough to communicate in terms she will understand.

Below are most of the original Michaelian group refs to Cayce, and they are very interesting:

Comment on the value of her present work done at the "Association for Research and Enlightenment" [Edgar Cayce] clinic, especially their views of dream interpretation.

Some of the work being done there is extremely valuable. We are not impressed with what appears to be a doctrinal bias, but aside from that, yes.

Religious bias?

Not specifically religious, more judgmental. But this pertains to the scientific method of research. The dream work is perhaps now their most valuable study.

What about Edgar Cayce and his predictions that all of California will fall into the Ocean?

This man, along with many others, is an apocalyptic. [Inclined to doomsdaying.]

It has been said that when the messiah comes, there will be an upheaval.

The upheaval will be emotional and spiritual. It will be a cataclysm, you may be sure of that, but not physical.

The information received by the man Edgar [Cayce] in his trances was difficult for him to transmit as it was so contrary to his own belief system. The more rigid and orthodox the person is, the more ambiguous the transmission will be. We would answer specific questions concerning that book.

Is Edgar Cayce correct in his translations [of New Testament book Revelations]?

He is much more succinct than we are.

A spontaneous healing appeared to have occurred with a lady afflicted with numerous physical ailments, including arthritis. What happened here?

What occurred here was a transfer of higher hydrogens [a Gurdjieff concept] by a person well able to transfer. This, incidentally, is what happens when spontaneous healings occur. When you give higher hydrogens, they do produce remarkable phenomena. For instance, the man Edgar Cayce was able to remain in trance for prolonged periods during which the personality was deactivated. He received much high hydrogen during that time and was able to transfer these, but as he never received any in return, his own "Level of Being" never changed and he remained secondary man [Gurdjieff's "Man # 2" — primarily emotional] throughout his life.

Can this lady be healed?

[Though not completely healed,] she could be much better as a result of the transfer. Working with her [over a long period of time] would eventually be more effective. The higher the transfer, the more healing can occur. If the highest attainable level can be reached — that is, higher intellectual center — then healing can be complete. This is how the masters do it, but the transfers from transient higher states are quite effective. All of you could learn this, but until you have balance in being, it will only make you a slave to the process, like the man [Edgar] Cayce. [date]

Now, this last bit is very interesting. Although Phil may need to address the Gurdjieff concepts of higher hydrogens for it to be entirely clear. HOWEVER, note that despite being “deactivated” from personality, and able to transfer higher healing energy, Cayce was unable to utilize them for himself. Also, he remained in personality consciously and not even man #3, let alone #4, and yet was a good psychic channel. (Remember too that Eugene Trout of the original Michaelian group was said to have the ability to channeling healing through touch -- so a non-verbal form.)

This last snip is just rife with good and tantalizing info. We will need to put a whole section on healing together at some point.

But the point I want to make here is that there is a lot more happening than just conscious or trance channeling. There is the center from which it is processed in the channel and the source of higher planes. And make note, we are all ahead of the place Cayce was in his life. Channeling done from balance should never have limits or lead to exhaustion, it should lead to a feedback of joy that energizes. Any exhaustion is a token of the struggle to overcome CF in order to make a connection. And channeling is, I would say, “listening” with an agreement to process a specific teaching. We are mostly used to intellectually centered channels, but there are energy- and emotional-centered channels AND sources.

The Logos moves into Avatars from differing planes depending on the higher centered teaching it wishes to expound. Manifestation is probably the highest form of bringing spiritual information/presence into the world. Advanced channeling, eh? And this:

It has been said that when the messiah comes, there will be an upheaval.

The upheaval will be emotional and spiritual. It will be a cataclysm, you may be sure of that, but not physical. ... is why, for those of us studying the Logos, we understand that we are more effective in emotional center for any work being done at this time of transition. Along with the fact that Michaelian students tend towards relentless intellectual center and in order to reach some balance we will all have to start becoming accustomed to the emotional center.

This is why the warning:

But until you have balance in being, it will only make you a slave to the process...





⑦ CENTER OF GRAVITY

The topic of this chapter is yet another one of many that discuss one or another of the components of the Gurdjieffian teachings that were adopted and adapted in the Michaelian teachings during the original Michaelian group. For an introduction to the general subject of the Gurdjieffian teachings and the involvement of founding original Michaelian group members with it, refer to the chapter “Gurdjieff, Ouspensky, Collin, Burton”.

Even though the Michaels found it expedient to use the term “center of gravity” in appropriate situations, Yarbrow did not mention it in her book about the original Michaelian group, *Messages from Michael*, [verify] and the Michaels have not used it in subsequent groups so far as I have been able to determine. Therefore, the term, and even the concept referred to by the term, has not become common knowledge in the Michaelian teachings community subsequent to the original Michaelian group. Nevertheless, I believe it is worth discussing, and I believe that it is worthwhile to make the historical record of the original Michaelian group reasonably complete. Because the phrase refers to a concept with a specific meaning in both the Gurdjieffian teachings and in the Michaelian teachings, I capitalize it, as one of many jargon concepts.

The phrase “center of gravity” appears eight times in the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group, always in reference to a person’s strongest Center of the seven Centers. That was not the case in the original Gurdjieffian teachings. One reason to have a chapter on it in this *Study Papers* book is to approach completeness of this compilation of, and exposition on, the original Michaelian group material. Another reason is that it provides an opportunity to introduce how Gurdjieffian students understood Centers as distinct from how Michaelian students have come to understand them, because there are differences.

Center of Gravity per Fourth Way Teachers

Based on a little research, it appears to me that the application of the phrase Center of Gravity has changed over the evolution of Fourth Way teachings, meaning, those derived from Georges Gurdjieff; refer to the chapter “Gurdjieff, Ouspensky, Collin, Burton” to read about the part of the story that is relevant to the Michaelian teachings.

The following quotations provide some indication of how Gurdjieff himself understood the phrase “center of gravity”, not in terms of the Centers, but in terms of concentrated focus on the endeavor of becoming a unified person in terms of being and doing:

Man number four is not born ready-made. He is born one, two, or three, and becomes four only as a result of efforts of a definite character. Man number four is always the product of school work. He can neither be born, nor develop accidentally or as the result of ordinary influences of bringing up, education, and so on. Man number four already stands on a different level to man number one, two, and three; he has a permanent center of gravity which consists in his ideas, in his valuation of the work, and in his relation to the school. In addition his psychic [higher] centers have already begun to be balanced; one center in him cannot have such a preponderance over others as is the case with people of the first three categories. He already begins to know himself and begins to know whither he is going. [P.D. Ouspensky, *In Search of the Miraculous*, p. 72]

Right work on oneself begins with the creation of a permanent center of gravity. When a permanent center of gravity has been created everything else begins to be disposed and distributed in subordination to it. The question comes to this: From what and how can a permanent center of gravity be created? And to this may be replied that only a man’s attitude to the work, to school, his valuation of the work, and his realization of the mechanicalness and aimlessness of everything else can create in him a permanent center of gravity. [P.D. Ouspensky, *In Search of the Miraculous*, p. 259]

Refer to chapters “Work” and “School” and “Balanced Man” and “Centers, Higher” and “Mechanical Man” for the Michaelian take on those Gurdjieffian notions. The following quotations provide some indication of

how Ouspensky understood the phrase “center of gravity”, not in terms of the Centers, but in terms of concentrated focus on the endeavor of becoming a unified person in terms of being and doing:

The idea of center of gravity can be interpreted in many different ways. It is a more or less permanent aim and the realization of the relative importance [hierarchy, priority list] of things in connection with this aim. This means that certain interests become more important than anything else — one acquires a permanent direction, one does not go one day in one direction and another day in another; one goes in one direction and one knows the direction. The stronger your center of gravity, the more you are free from accident. [P.D. Ouspensky, *The Fourth Way*, p. 91]

The principle of “accident” was another Gurdjieffian notion. People without a Center of Gravity stumble and bumble their way through life. A metaphor for Center of Gravity is that one should have a ‘north star’, by which one ‘navigates’ their journey across the ‘sea’; otherwise they will ‘drift’ with the ‘wind’ and the ‘waves’.

We must realize that all this refers to [Level of] Being. What are the features of our Being? The chief feature of our Being is that we are many. If we want to work on our Being, make it correspond more to our aim, we must try to become one. But this is a very far aim. What does it mean to become one? The first step, which is still very far, is to create a permanent center of gravity...which balances our physical life, but in ourselves we do not have such a balance. [P.D. Ouspensky, *The Fourth Way*, p. 264]

Permanent center of gravity comes at a certain moment in relation to the work, when one is already sure what one is doing, and sure of the system, and when this becomes more important than anything else, when it occupies the chief place in one’s life. This is the moment when permanent center of gravity is established. But when one is interested in the ideas of the system, and yet at any moment something else may become more important, this means that one has no center of gravity. [P.D. Ouspensky, *The Fourth Way*, p. 285]

(At the time of this writing, my Center of Gravity is the writing of my books; after the necessary daily mundane affairs are taken care of, I work on my books.)

Personally, I like the notion of Center of Gravity as Gurdjieff and Ouspensky presented it. It is consistent with the Michaelian teachings as presented in the original Michaelian group, namely that spiritual aspirants do well to focus on the Work to the exclusion of other aspects of mundane life. For instance, refer to the chapter “Commitment”. However, a brief internet search revealed that the above notion of Center of Gravity was extended and applied to one’s primary Center, to which the other six Centers were subordinate. For instance, in the Wikipedia article on the Fourth Way teaching about Centers, I found this:

In the book *The Fourth Way*, Ouspensky refers to the ‘center of gravity’ as being a center which different people primarily operate from (intellectuals [Intellectual Center], artists [Emotional Center], and sports enthusiasts [Moving Center], for example, might represent each of these centers).”
[>[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Centers_\(Fourth_Way\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Centers_(Fourth_Way))< — retrieved 27 February 2023]

When I looked for “Center of Gravity” in the index of Ouspensky’s *Fourth Way* book, I found no such notion. So, whatever the reality of Gurdjieff’s and Ouspensky’s thinking may be, in the original Michaelian group transcriptions the phrase, Center of Gravity, always refers to one’s primary Centering.

Center of Gravity per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

Following are the instances where the phrase occurs in the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group. All of the people who asked about Center of Gravity were familiar with the Gurdjieffian teachings because they were current members or former members of Robert Burton’s Fellowship of Friends.

Ilene: What is my Center of Gravity?

Your Center of Gravity is Emotional. [08 September 1973]

Kathryn: I would like to ask [about] the Center of Gravity, Body Type, Soul Level and Role of the lady I live with now in Pacific Grove. Her name is Ramona.

This is a Mature Priest. This is an Emotionally Centered Lunar-Venusian. The maturity of the soul sometimes modifies physical characteristics. [10 November 1973]

Cheryl: Is there a different Goal in each life?

Yes, usually you do [have a different Goal]. There are seven and you must necessarily repeat them, but how you repeat them in conjunction with the Center of Gravity and the Body Type determines the success you have. [03 December 1973]

Cheryl: I would like to know my Center of Gravity and also what I was doing in the parallel time frame.

Cheryl is at the moment the most nearly Balanced of all, but still primarily Emotionally Centered. [27 December 1973]

Alice: Would it be better for a marriage relationship to have the persons in different Centers of Gravity? I understand that my husband and I are both Intellectually Centered. Is this a source of our problems?

Being in the same Center of Gravity usually makes for an easier relationship rather than a more difficult one.

Your problems are in the difference in Goals [Growth versus Submission]. [20 January 1974]

Refer to the chapter “Overleaves, Interactions” for more discussion of that topic.

Susan: I'd like to ask a mundane question first. What is my Goal and Center of Gravity?

Mostly Lunar, some Venusian, Emotionally Centered. Susan has made the transition from Submission to Growth. [20 January 1974]

The data concerning internal Centers of Gravity presented by these gentlemen [Gurdjieff and Ouspensky] is, of course, valid, as is the information pertaining to the separation of the Earth-bound Personality and the spiritual Essence. Beyond that, we have taken you into another realm ... [08 February 1974]

Betty asked about Centering and what force makes one achieve Balance.

The achievement of Balance is an act of will. The force behind it is the combined energies of the true “Center of Gravity” within you. You always have this energy, but normally you allow it to dissipate unused. When you work toward Balance, you learn to conserve this energy and divert it into the [spiritual] Work. This energy does not run out, by the way. It is part of the neutral universal flow and is infinite. You must learn to tap it, however.

Your Centers of Gravity are now top heavy or off true center. When you go to Balance, it is centered — ergo — Balanced. Not very mystical, but far more practical. [26 November 1974]

Obviously, these uses of the phrase are not as Gurdjieff and Ouspensky described it as quoted above; rather, the phrase always refers to one of the seven Centers.





CENTERS, HIGHER

In the Gurdjieffian teachings and in the Michaelian teachings, the spiritual path consisted more or less of learning to consistently achieve, by the application of specific techniques, the so-called “higher” Centers. There are chapters such as “The Spiritual Path” and “Spiritual Growth” and “Levels of Being” that discuss this process in general, and there are chapters such as “Concentration and Meditation” and “Fasting” and “Psychedelics” that discuss these practices, but this chapter is dedicated to the description of the goal of these processes and practices.

Higher Centers process “Psychic Energy” (refer to the chapter by that name) whereas the ‘lower’ Centers process physical energy. Correlate with ‘higher’ and ‘lower’ levels of the Physical Plane.





CENTER, MAGNETIC

[[If I can't figure out how to make this idea more relevant to the original Michaelian group/Michaelian teachings, I should delete this chapter.]]

The phrase, "magnetic center", is a Gurdjieff term for that within yourself that draws you to the spiritual path. From <http://www.philosophia.bem-vindo.net/modules/glossary/entry.php?entryID=1161>:

The results of the influences whose source lies outside life collect together within him, he remembers them together, feels them together. They begin to form within him a certain whole.... And after a certain time they form within him a kind of magnetic center, which begins to attract to itself kindred influences and in this manner it grows.

This phrase is only found once in the original Michaelian group transcriptions:

It has been said that the Intellectual Part of Emotional Center is the seat of the "magnetic center" for [spiritual] teachings. Is this so?

That is valid. It also produces the top historians and social scientists, most writers and journalists, many war correspondents, anthropologists, and archaeologists. In this [Emotional] Part, the intellect is romanticized. [03 March 1974]

But it is mentioned a number of times in the Gurdjieffian teachings, which is of course where the questioner above got the idea. **Following are some quotes about it.**

Magnetic Center per Gurdjieff

Ouspensky quotes Gurdjieff at length on this topic:

"The results of the influences whose source lies outside life collect together within him, he remembers them together, feels them together. They begin to form within him a certain whole. He does not give a clear account to himself as to what, how, and why, or if he does give an account to himself, then he explains it wrongly. But the point is not in this, but in the fact that the results of these influences collect together within him, and after a certain time they form within him a kind of magnetic center, which begins to attract to itself kindred influences and in this manner it grows. If the magnetic center receives sufficient nourishment, and if there is no strong resistance on the part of the other sides of a man's personality which are the result of influences created in life, the magnetic center begins to influence a man's orientation, obliging him to turn round and even to move in a certain direction. When the magnetic center attains sufficient force and development, a man already understands the idea of the way and he begins to look for the way. The search for the way may take many years and may lead to nothing. This depends upon conditions, upon circumstances, upon the power of the magnetic center, upon the power and the direction of inner tendencies which are not concerned with this search and which may divert a man at the very moment when the possibility of finding the way appears." [P.D. Ouspensky, *In Search of the Miraculous*, p. 200]

Ouspensky continues to quote Gurdjieff on this subject for another few pages.





CETACEANS

According to the Michaels, humans are not the only ensouled animal species on this planet. By “ensouled” I mean an individual Fragment soul, as distinct from “lower” animals that have what the Michaels referred to as a “hive” or “group” soul. It was said that Cetaceans — whales, dolphins, porpoises — also had Fragment souls.

This subject came up several times during the original Michaelian group, and these are documented in the next section.

Cetaceans per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

Could you explain hive souls? Were they part of one soul that split?

That is valid. Until the dominant species arose, all were part of the group soul. This accounts for the inability of the lower animals to reason independently. They reason to a certain extent in herd schools and packs where the vibrations are stronger and the energy level higher. Whales have individual souls. Most planets on which Creatures of Reason reside have [both] an aquatic and terrestrial [on land] culture.

Eugene: If two thousand years ago I had a pet cat, could that etheric part of it be in my current lifetime and recognize me?

That happens often.

We discussed whales and someone said they did not think they are Creatures of Reason.

We disagree that the whales are not Creatures of Reason. They simply cannot manipulate their environment to the extent you [humans] can. This is why they are so large; the size gives them a chance [to survive and evolve in spite of the inability to manipulate their environment].

Do we ever incarnate as whales?

No, you would not incarnate as whales. [03 April 1974]

Refer to the chapter “Creatures of Reason” for further information about that distinct stage in the evolution of consciousness, apparently happening on many planets in the universe.

Discussion of whales. Michael previously made the statement that planets had terrestrials (working towards consciousness) and aquatics — which were whales on our planet.

Did the statement on whales include dolphins and porpoises?

Yes it did, all of the cetaceans.

What does an Intellectual Scholar whale do?

He remembers.

What about whales that beach themselves?

They [Scholar whales] pass on to succeeding generations a wealth of information including the fact [that] they are dwindling, which accounts for a radical change in breeding habits.

What about the whales grounding themselves?

Often, they merely sense that life is almost over. If they are too weak to surface, they will often beach themselves.

What about the story of Jonah and the whale in the Bible?

The story, of course, is allegorical and has to do with mutual cooperation.

Do whales go to the Astral Plane between lives?

Whales spend an Astral interval and yes, you may contact them.

Are there Karmic Ribbons between whales and humans?

No.

Do whales have Transcendental Souls or a higher mental body known to them?

No.

Do they have religion?

Of a sort yes, not based upon an authority figure but based on an adoration of the life force.

[Is] Michaelian teachings any whales?

No.

Do they go on as we do to Entity and Tao?

Yes, except you must remember they are relatively free of ambition and greed, which are the two prime movers of civilization. The necessary ingredients are not there for them to require this type of periodic Shock (having the Infinite Soul manifest).

When [they] go to the Causal plane, could they teach humans?

Yes, they can if they choose to.

Dick: Could we get a whale Entity teacher as teacher to us?

This would be possible, yes, perhaps with a more experienced and Emotionally-Centered trance medium [other than Sarah who was Intellectually Centered]. We would point out to you that Warrior whales often attack anything threatening the school. There is always a King in the lead. The Sages do not ever attack. Warrior dolphins have been known to kill sharks much larger than themselves when their mates or progeny were threatened.

Do dolphins and whales communicate with each other?

There are barriers, much the same as your language barriers present.

Are [their] thought patterns the same as all Creatures of Reason?

In Essence, yes, but you must take False Personality into consideration.

Do whales have False Personality?

Yes, they do.

Do they choose their [life] Sequences?

Yes, they do.

Are there Artisan, Sage and Priest killer whales?

Yes.

Dick: Is it possible to verify this whale material?

Some familiarity with the man John Lilly's experiments would help. You could perhaps talk to him. [22 May 1974]

I find it hard to believe that whales are incarnated. Why has there not been contact between the whales and us, and are the whales aware that we are incarnated?

Except for the man John (Lilly) there has been insufficient interest in whether they can communicate. However, there are many interested in the fact that they can be taught to perform acts of underwater demolition. Stands to reason, does it not? Number two: they are aware only of the fact that there is intelligence in humans that reaches beyond the other denizens of their home world.

John Lilly is discussed in the chapter "Bio-computer".

How evolved are they in relation to us? Do they have access to higher Sex Center?

Because they are limited in their ability to manipulate their environment, they are not quite as anxious to become competitive, but they have been around as long as you have, and their evolution is just about even with yours, emotionally and spiritually. It is, of course, not as cluttered with Maya where they are, and they can often contact Essence earlier than humans can, but they do not always do so. Some are sexually evolved; some are not.

The crucial thing here is the question, Is it desirable to establish communication with them? Is there any cosmic reason to share with them?

Communication is, of course, possible. Underwater sonar equipment would be necessary: some refinements, of course, on present equipment. Above water, sounds are reproduced quite effectively. Their eyesight is extremely poor and they do not rely on visual contact in the way you do. Astral contact is also possible.

If whales are as far along as we are, there must be only a few whale Adepts.

That is valid. There are not many. [30 May 1974]

Shirley: Do whales twin?

Yes, all Creatures of Reason twin. [25 June 1974]

Refer to the chapter "Twins — Physical and Spiritual" for more information on that subject.

How will whales reincarnate if they become extinct?

They will not, of course, be able to complete their Cycle if this happens. They will have the choice of choosing the line between terrestrial or aquatic species or finishing the Cycle on another world. There is a difficulty here, as the life they have led so far has not prepared them for life on land here. It would be easier to choose another world.

Have any humans made the transition (from human soul to whale soul)?

Some have, though not here, but on other worlds. The current fight for survival should prove, beyond the shadow of a doubt, the level of intelligence of this species.

Comment: Seems as though they were not smart enough to see that the early whaling ships were a threat and should have knocked them out in the beginning. There is no sanctuary for whales and they choose not to run.

By and large, they choose not to fight, if that is what you mean. They are essentially peaceful and non-aggressive. [19 October 1974]

Concluding Comments on Cetaceans

The distinction between individual souls and group souls has been made outside of the Michaelian teachings, preceding the Michaelian teachings, such as in Theosophy: *research and quote from Pearson: Space, Time, and Self*





② CHAKRAS

The subject of **chakras** was mentioned several times in the original Michaelian group transcriptions. These mentions, as they relate to correlating them with Centers, are documented with my comments in my book *A History of the Overleaf Chart*, in Part One “Precursors of the Overleaf System”, in “Chapter 1C — The Seven Chakras”. Some of that information is repeated here and some of it is not repeated here. There are mentions of the chakras in other contexts other than their correlation with Centers, and those are documented and commented on here in this *Study Papers* book.

Related to the phenomenon of chakras in oriental esoteric physiology is the phenomenon of kundalini. This is also mentioned in the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group, and these mentions is documented and commented on in the chapter “Kundalini”.

Chakras per Esoteric Physiology

Surely most Michaelian students subsequent to the original Michaelian group are at least somewhat familiar with chakras, but an introduction is provided in this section for those who may not have a thorough understanding. Some relevant quotations have been extracted from the Wikipedia article on chakras, as follows; underlined words and phrases are my emphasis:

Chakras (Sanskrit: ... literally ‘wheel, circle’; Pali: cakka) are various focal points used in a variety of ancient meditation practices, collectively denominated as Tantra, or the esoteric or inner traditions of Hinduism.

The concept is found in the early traditions of Hinduism. Beliefs differ between the Indian religions, with many Buddhist texts consistently mentioning five chakras, while Hindu sources offer six or seven. Early Sanskrit texts speak of them both as meditative visualizations combining flowers and mantras, and as physical entities in the body. Within kundalini yoga, the techniques of breath exercises, visualizations, mudras, bandhas, kriyas, and mantras are focused on manipulating the flow of subtle energy through chakras.

The modern Western chakra system arose from multiple sources, starting in the 1880s, followed by Sir John Woodroffe’s 1919 book *The Serpent Power*, and Charles W. Leadbeater’s 1927 book *The Chakras*, which introduced the seven rainbow colors for the chakras. Psychological and other attributes, and a wide range of supposed correspondences with other systems such as alchemy, astrology, gemstones, homeopathy, Kabbalah, and Tarot were added later.

The more common and most studied chakra system incorporates six major chakras along with a seventh center generally not regarded as a chakra. These points are arranged vertically along the axial channel....

The Chakras are traditionally considered meditation aids. The yogi progresses from lower chakras to the highest chakra blossoming in the crown of the head, internalizing the journey of spiritual ascent. In both the Hindu kundalini and Buddhist candali traditions, the chakras are pierced by a dormant energy residing near or in the lowest chakra. In Hindu texts she is known as Kundalini, while in Buddhist texts she is called Candali or Tummo

Kurt Leland, for the Theosophical Society in America, concluded that the western chakra system was produced by an “unintentional collaboration” of many groups of people: esotericists and clairvoyants, often theosophical; Indologists; the scholar of myth, Joseph Campbell; the founders of the Esalen Institute and the psychological tradition of Carl Jung; the color system of Charles W. Leadbeater’s 1927 book *The Chakras*, treated as traditional lore by some modern Indian yogis; and energy healers such as Barbara Brennan. Leland states that far from being traditional, the two main elements of the modern system, the rainbow colors and the list of qualities, first appeared together only in 1977.

In the 1920s, each of the seven chakras was associated with an endocrine gland, a tradition that has persisted. More recently, the lower six chakras have been linked to both nerve plexuses and glands. The seven rainbow

colors were added by Leadbeater in 1927; a variant system in the 1930s proposed six colors plus white. Leadbeater's theory was influenced by Johann Georg Gichtel's 1696 book *Theosophia Practica*, which mentioned inner force centres.

Psychological and other attributes such as layers of the aura, developmental stages, associated diseases, Aristotelian elements, emotions, and states of consciousness were added still later. A wide range of supposed correspondences such as with alchemical metals, astrological signs and planets, foods, herbs, gemstones, homeopathic remedies, Kabbalistic spheres, musical notes, totem animals, and Tarot cards have also been proposed.

In *Anatomy of the Spirit* (1996), Caroline Myss described the function of chakras as follows: "Every thought and experience you've ever had in your life gets filtered through these chakra databases. Each event is recorded into your cells...". The chakras are described as being aligned in an ascending column from the base of the spine to the top of the head. New Age practices often associate each chakra with a certain color. In various traditions, chakras are associated with multiple physiological functions, an aspect of consciousness, a classical element, and other distinguishing characteristics; these do not correspond to those used in ancient Indian systems. The chakras are visualized as lotuses or flowers with a different number of petals in every chakra.

The chakras are thought to vitalize the physical body, and to be associated with interactions of a physical, emotional and mental nature. They are considered loci of life energy or prana (which New Age belief equates with shakti, qi in Chinese, ki in Japanese, koach-ha-guf in Hebrew, bios in Greek, and aether in both Greek and English), which is thought to flow among them along pathways called nadi. The function of the chakras is to spin and draw in this energy to keep the spiritual, mental, emotional, and physical health of the body in balance.

Rudolf Steiner considered the chakra system to be dynamic and evolving. He suggested that this system has become different for modern people than it was in ancient times and that it will, in turn, be radically different in future times. Steiner described a sequence of development that begins with the upper chakras and moves down, rather than moving in the opposite direction. He gave suggestions on how to develop the chakras through disciplining thoughts, feelings, and will. According to Florin Lowndes, a "spiritual student" can further develop and deepen or elevate thinking consciousness when taking the step from the "ancient path" of schooling to the "new path" represented by Steiner's *The Philosophy of Freedom*.

[><https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chakra>< — retrieved 31 October 2021]

The Wikipedia article is much longer than this extraction. Your favorite internet search engine will find millions of websites that present information on the subject.

Notice that sometimes the chakras are referred to as "centers". From the words underlined in the above quotation, you see that the functions of some chakras are the same as some Centers: Spiritual, Intellectual, Emotional, Physical (Moving). These correlations are tabulated in my book referenced in the opening paragraphs of this chapter, and in the chapter on chakras in my book *The Tao of Cosmogony*, and in a table in the next section. Notice also from the underlined words that there is a developmental sequence as a component of the chakra system, sequenced either from the bottom up or from the top down.

From the above, and from material left out of this extraction from Wikipedia, we see that teachings about the chakra system have evolved considerably over the millennia, and there is no absolute authority on the subject. This lack of consistency also exists in the original Michaelian group, as we see below.

Chakras per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

The following extracts from original Michaelian group transcriptions are Q&A exchanges, where an original Michaelian group member asks a question (or makes a comment), and the Michaels provide an answer. These extracts are presented in the chronological order in which they were given. As is my custom, I usually provide some explanatory comments following the question or answer. Underlined words are my emphasis, to draw attention to what it is that I comment on. Sometimes I embed words or phrases [in brackets] that I believe help to clarify the question or the answer. Numerous study papers related to this chapter are to be found among my comments.

Even before the Michaels appeared to the original Michaelian group, when Soledad was one of the sources on tap, the subject of chakras came up:

Dick: In the Don Juan books [of Carlos Castaneda], in the works of faith healers and in the Indian chakras, there seems to be an agreement that there is a place in the lower abdomen, where there is a chakra in the Indian system and a place where the healing can

be applied (Mr. A's faith healing system), and in the Don Juan system, the 'will' comes out through a gap in the abdomen, and these are things that I haven't been able to experience, except to read about them and I'd like to know if those particular points are valid.

[Soleal:] The average Creature of Reason does have his gravity center somewhere near the middle of the torso, and to get in touch with that energy source you must first know how you are Centered and what you still have to go through [to become Balanced], because you will want to direct that energy into something positive [such as healing]. [03 July 1973]

This is the first hint in the original Michaelian group transcriptions that there is a relationship between chakras as energy centers in the physical body and the Centers of Personality, of the Overleaf System. A complete correlation of the two systems was revealed about a year later, as we see further on in this chapter.

Refer to the chapter "Creature of Reason" for more information about that subject. In addition to humans, Cetaceans are also Creatures of Reason, so it stands to reason that they also have chakras and Centers.

From the very beginning of the discussion of chakras in the original Michaelian group, they are presented as a sort of 'map' of the spiritual 'path' from low to high states of consciousness, just as we see in the Wikipedia article. There are various methods that light up this path:

Is Transcendental Meditation helpful?

There is a very good form of meditation where you actually meditate upon the chakras and bring the aum up through them. You cannot transmute any energy you are not in touch with, however, so if you suddenly find yourself unable to continue, that is why Camille needs to get in touch with Moving Center and Intellectual Center [lower Centers] before she can think about transmuting [energy to higher Centers and chakras]. Camille could read A.R. Orage and do the exercises. It would help with the detachment [from focus on the physical]. [21 August 1973]

(Orage was a teacher in the tradition of Gurdjieff.) This statement is in keeping with the New Age understanding that a spiritual aspirant can learn to detect and manipulate the condition of the chakras, so as to raise one's consciousness from the physical to the metaphysical.

The first mention of a specific chakra in the original Michaelian group transcriptions was this:

Louise: A psychic told me in treatment that my sex chakra was clear. What does that mean?

We must answer honestly that we're not sure. [17 April 1974]

The Michaels can be excused for not being sure because various teachers of the chakra system locate the sex chakra in various positions on the body: at the perineum, or at the pubic bone, or below the navel. Perhaps this can be explained by the fact that the gonads and other components of the sex organs are at different locations in males as compared to females. The Michaels had their own ideas about where the sex chakra is located; see further on. My own view is that the sexual *action* chakras is the gonad chakra, and the sexual *energy* chakra is the so-called "Crown Chakra"; refer to Chapter 4J — "The Action Centers" in my book *A History of the Overleaf Chart* for the full explication of that correlation. [\[\[Get back to this after writing the chapter on chakras in *The Tao of Cosmogony*. \]\]](#)

Chakras within auras?

This is another perception. That is of the subtle changes in the wavelengths of different energy sources. [08 May 1974]

In parts of the Wikipedia article on chakras not included in the above quotation, there is reference to the connection or correlation of chakras to so-called "auras" and so-called "subtle bodies". There are chapters on both "Auras" and "Bodies — Subtle" in this *Study Papers* book. [\[\[tabulate them all here? \]\]](#)

What is the importance of knowing chakras?

It would aid you in releasing specific energy. It would be a visual crutch to help you locate the energy pocket. [15 May 1974]

So far as we know from available transcriptions, during the original Michaelian group the Michaels did not elaborate on this statement. However, some members of the New Age community have established cottage industries regarding chakras, where some people are allegedly able to see chakras, note irregularities if any, and manipulate them toward health by various means, such as meditation and crystals and hand-waving and such.

What we see above is scant information about the chakras. The following lengthy Q&A exchange provides the most thorough elaboration on the subject of chakras that we find in the original Michaelian group transcriptions:

Dick: Question regarding "chakras."

The significance probably lies in the fact that so many have become aware of this at all, some not even on the path, or following strange pseudo-paths. These "chakras", of course, correspond to the measurable energy flow from the individual Centers. In other words, the lowest chakra ["root"] corresponds to the output of the Instinctive Center.

Focusing on the word "correspond" here: chakras in physiology are not the same thing as Centers in Personality, but they do correlate. There is disagreement among Michaelian teachings sources about how they correlate. Here we see that the "lowest" chakra, named the "root" chakra in the western esoteric adaptation of the eastern tradition, is correlated with the Instinctive Center. In the Gurdjieffian teachings, the Instinctive Center explicitly had to do with physiology, not Personality as the other Centers do. Refer to Chapter 4F — "The Instinctive Center" in my book *A History of the Overleaf System* for the full exposition of this correlation. There you will find arguments and evidence that the so-called "Instinctive Center" should be renamed to Impulse Center and correlated with the so-called "Heart Chakra".

Richard: Can they [chakras] be perceived through the "third eye"?

They are normally perceived through the Emotional Center or gut chakra.

The so-called "third-eye" chakra was located at the brow of the forehead. It is properly correlated with the Higher Emotional Center, as documented in two chapters on chakras in my book *A History of the Overleaf Chart*.

Throughout the original Michaelian group transcriptions, the Michaels expressed a high regard for the perceptivity of the Emotional Center. In occidental chakra teachings, emotional functions were ascribed to the second chakra, located at or below the navel, so the Michaels agree with this. However, in the modern western common vernacular, it is never referred to as the "gut" chakra. Here and below, the common names of the chakras are not given, and this leads me to believe that the channel was not familiar with the common names for the locations of the chakras in the body.

Correspond the Centers and chakras?

Yes, they do. This is what the yogis perceive when they expound on this. In one able to visualize the auras, this becomes easy, for there is a transitory "puff" of color accompanying significant outputs, such as occurs in the digestion of the major meal of the day or in deep meditation.

The gut chakra is [the] Emotional Center; Intellectual Center manifests itself at chest level, and so forth. The Sexual Center can be measured at the level of the thyroid; the Higher Emotional Center at the level of the pineal body; the Higher Intellectual Center at the level of the anterior pituitary. Procreation is handled by the Moving Center in sleeping animals.

For your convenience, the above correlation of chakras and Centers, plus the conclusion of my analysis and synthesis found in my book *A History of the Overleaf Chart* is shown in the following table:

THE SEVEN CHAKRAS per the ORIGINAL MICHAELIAN GROUP				
RANK	NAME	OMG LOCATION	CENTER	HOLC
Seventh	Crown	"pituitary"	Higher Intellectual	Higher Moving
Sixth	Brow	"Pineal", "Third Eye"	Higher Emotional	Higher Emotional
Fifth	Throat	"thyroid"	Sexual	Higher Intellectual
Fourth	Heart	"chest"	Intellectual	Instinctive
Third	Plexus/Navel	"gut"	Emotional	Intellectual
Second	Navel/Spleen	"procreation"	Moving	Emotional
First	Sacral/Groin/Root	"lowest	Instinctive	Moving

My comments on this table are as follows.

- RANK: The first column lists the common rank order sequence universally ascribed to the chakras in various modern sources.
- NAME: The second column lists the common, typical, universal names for the chakras in modern sources, which also reveals their location on the body, from the base of the spine to the top of the head. Notice that there is a difference of opinion in the various sources about the locations of the lower three chakras. This is discussed in my other books.
- OMG LOCATION: The third column lists the location given to the chakra in the body according to the original Michaelian group channeling. Notice that in no case are the common names of the chakras used in the channeling. To me this indicates that the channel might not have been familiar with the common names of the chakras.
- CENTER: The fourth column lists the Center that corresponds to each chakra according to the original Michaelian group channeling. This sequence has a lot of similarities to what I refer to as the “Gurdjieff Sequence” in various parts of this *Study Papers* book, such as the chapter “Levels of Being”. The channel was familiar with the Gurdjieffian teachings, so it is not surprising that this sequence shows up here. Whether or not it is accurate is another concern that is addressed elsewhere in my books.
- HOLC: The fifth column lists the Centers that correlate with the chakras per my book *A History of the Overleaf Chart*. Notice that there is only one correspondence of the original Michaelian group channeling with the HOLC presentation on chakras, the sixth chakra. This is another clue — besides the name given to the chakra in the original Michaelian group channeling — that tells us that the channel likely had no understanding of the chakras. These chakras and Centers follow what I refer to as the Natural Sequence; refer to my book by that name.

The Q&A exchanges in this same channeling session continued:

Ram Dass says the spirit body has holes or chakras connecting to the physical body. Normally, people’s holes are “plugged up” and the energy is there but can’t flow. True?

Dick: Michael has stated that sexual energy is the only mobile or available energy.

This [Sexual Center] is the first of the Centers not solely governed by Maya and consequently mobile. The fixed amount of energy is fixed by the organism, not by cosmic shortages. We can give an example of the fixing. It works well. The body has a chore to do that it dislikes. It dwells on the undesirability of the proposed action until it renders the Moving Center inactive and unable to perform its task, normally able to perform such action. The body is simply too exhausted to move, yet twenty minutes later, some happy diversion is offered. Suddenly, the body undergoes a miraculous recovery and actually expends far more Moving energy in the pleasure activity, for instance, tennis, than it would have in the work activity, for instance, shopping for groceries.

This Q&A exchange, as well as the previous one that correlated the Sexual Center with the throat chakra, indicates that the Michaels regarded the Sexual Center as a higher Center and the Moving Center as a lower Center, contrary to what Yarbro did in *Messages from Michael*. This is discussed at length in Chapter 4H — “The Action Centers”, in *A History of the Overleaf Chart*.

Eugene: Is this energy measurable?

It is measurable electronically, yes. There is now a photographic technique that can be used to visually record the color changes. (Kirlian photography)

An internet search provides ample information about Kirlian photography. Wikipedia has a summary of its claims and the scientific research on the claims: >https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kirlian_photography<.

Personally, I have doubts about its applicability to chakra measurements. I suspect that the channel had read about Kirlian photography in the book *Psychic Discoveries Behind the Iron Curtain*, published in 1970, written by two Americans, Lynn Schroeder and Sheila Ostrander.

Dick: Is there anything useful about this for us to know?

Well, of course, you can use them as a fairly handy yardstick by which to measure your progress toward Balance [of Centers]. You can feel the energy being expended, and after awhile, locate its point of exit [chakra that corresponds to the Center] and then more accurately pinpoint the Center responsible for the output. If it is not the proper Center to handle the particular action then you know that there has been a Leak.

Here again, the chakra system is correlated to spiritual growth in terms of the Centers per Gurdjieff's teaching about achieving Balance in the fourth Level of Being. Refer to the chapters, "Levels of Being" and "Energy and Energy Leaks" in this book. Both Gurdjieff and the Michaels had somewhat to say about the "appropriate" use of Centers: we should respond to situations with the correct Center or chakra.

[Question missing.]

That is valid, and the most common manifestation of enormous outputs of energy in these individuals (intellectual) is tachycardia [rapid heartbeat], at least, that is what they notice the most. Sarah, for instance, notices icy palms and shaky knees under the same circumstances.

Sarah was Intellectually Centered, yet she did not experience heightened energy in the Heart Chakra, its alleged correlate per original Michaelian group channeling.

Trapped part? Weakened part?

[That is] valid, except for the Instinctive Center, which malfunctions only during organic illness.

As stated above, per the Gurdjieffian teachings, the Instinctive Center had to do with physiology, not Personality, and the Michaels apparently went along with that understanding during the original Michaelian group. After the original Michaelian group, in some Michaelian teachings lineages, the Instinctive Center took on a very different meaning: it was the bridge between the lower and higher Centers of Personality.

Dick: Regarding his own chakras?

When you are cogitating as now, there is a brightening of your aura around the chest, but you are not sufficiently aroused by this to create the racing heart.

Per the correlation given previously by the Michaels, the Intellectual Center, the Center that cogitates, was allegedly located at the chest, commonly known as the Heart Chakra. However, according to the common understanding in New Age circles, mental functions were correlated with the Solar Plexus Chakra, as shown in the table.

Dick: Other chakras?

There is now a brightening of the aura also in the region of the Instinctive Center as it digests your dinner. This will only last while the most significant work is being done, not while the contents are being dehydrated [in the large intestine]. This requires little expenditure. The Moving Center is relatively quiet.

A few Q&A exchanges previous to this one correlated the Instinctive Center with the "lowest" chakra, typically placed at or near the coccyx, whereas this answer places it in the digestive system. If one is to take this as accurate, and if there is a reconciliation of the two, it is perhaps that (1) the terminus of the digestive system, the anus, is near the coccyx, or (2) the Instinctive Center was said to refer to physiology throughout the body, of which the digestive system is one important component.

The following is the last mention of Chakras in the original Michaelian group transcriptions:

Alice: Give an example of what happens in the Emotionally Centered person.

The Emotionally Centered individuals often complain of "butterflies" in the stomach in times of stress or excitement. Many times, intestinal cramps follow extreme stress; more susceptible to diarrhea and constipation, also. Intellectually Centered souls often cough in moments of stress, clear the throat, etc. [16 June 1974]

To me, this answer looks like more ambiguities and/or contradictions. Previously, the Emotional Center was correlated with the "gut" chakra, and here the digestive system is related to the Emotional Center, so that is not a contradiction. However, the digestive system was also previously related to the Instinctive Center. Perhaps the reconciliation is that it is both. Previously, the Intellectual Center was correlated with the "chest" chakra, but here it would seem to be correlated with the Throat Chakra, although the Sexual Center was previously said to be "measured at the level of the thyroid", which is the Throat Chakra.

Concluding Comments on Chakras

Like all other chapters in this *Study Papers* book, this chapter on chakras is a mere introduction to the subject. The reader is invited to research it further, in books and internet resources, if they are so inclined.

Like other chapters in this *Study Papers* book, the subject of this chapter is related to many other subjects covered in other chapters in this book. These other subjects and chapters are noted above where appropriate.

The subject of this chapter is covered in more detail in some of my other books, and these I have noted above where appropriate. Apologies that the information is so scattered, but there is no use repeating it all here; it is too lengthy and too extensive.

Sources that discuss the chakras typically declare that the chakras represent steps of development on one's spiritual path. Only a few of the tools and technologies for discernment and use of the chakras on one's spiritual path of spiritual growth are mentioned in this chapter. Refer to the chapters, "Spiritual Growth" and "Spiritual Path", for more information.

The original Michaelian group transcriptions did not make a clear distinction between the physical energy centers of the body called chakras and the Personality Centers of the Overleaf System. Personally, I prefer to make the distinction.

My conclusion to this chapter is that the chakras and their corresponding Centers were not well understood or well defined or well located during the original Michaelian group. My guess is that the channel was not well informed about chakras. Another one of my claims is that the Gurdjieffian teachings about Centers was primitive and preliminary, so it was also misunderstood in the original Michaelian group. Another one of my claims is that the Michaels did not clear the information about the chakras up during the original Michaelian group, and indeed, my claim is that they were not cleared up until my book *A History of the Overleaf Chart*.

Just because previous discourses on the chakras were ambiguous and contradictory, that does not mean that the chakra system cannot be fixed. When properly understood, the chakras, and their correspondence with Centers, provide a 'map' of the spiritual 'path' in terms of the universal cosmology revealed by what I refer to as the Natural Sequence. That path is explained in detail in my book *The Tao of Relationships: The Chemistry and Alchemy of Service and Intimacy*.





CHOICE — DECISION

This chapter is the product of a search for the word “choice” and its derivatives and synonyms in the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group channeling sessions. This word does not represent a significant component of the Michaelian teachings. However, there are good reasons to discuss the subject in this *Study Papers* book: 1) the subject came up numerous times during the original Michaelian group; 2) students can presumably benefit from having the mentions conveniently collected all in one place; 3) some interesting things were said about the subject; 4) the subject is related to a number of other components of the Michaelian teachings that are considered to be significant; 5) Issues about choice are pervasive in human psychology and sociology and spirituality.

The concept of choice is not capitalized in this chapter or other chapters of this *Study Papers* book because it has no special meaning in the Michaelian teachings; it is not a Michaelian jargon word that needs a definition apart from its use in the common vernacular.

Definition of Choice

So what is meant by choice? The online Merriam Webster dictionary definition is:

Choice per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

The following extracts from original Michaelian group transcriptions are Q&A exchanges, where an original Michaelian group member asks a question (or makes a comment), and the Michaels provide an answer. This **is [not]** a subject that would benefit by division into subcategories, as some subjects do. **These extracts are [not] presented in the chronological order in which they were given, even though this is not a subject where there was a development or evolution of a specific revelation of a facet of the Michaelian teachings, as was often the case with the original Michaelian group.** As is my custom, I often provide some explanatory comments following the question or answer. Underlined words are my emphasis, to draw attention to what it is that I comment on. Sometimes I embed words or phrases [in brackets] that I believe help to clarify the question or the answer.

Alice: I don't feel that I need to know instantly, but I do feel that he could help by telling me what to do now. Is there anything that I can do at this time to help? I want something higher.

[Soleal:] To make the choice, you must have a quiet place. It will be easier for you to hear the voices and sort them out. You need to learn to be happy with your own company. This comes about when you consciously set aside a part of the day for your own meditations. [03 July 1973]

The question was asked concerning the decision to go on in the search for spiritual enlightenment — on to becoming an Adept. What do you do when you get so far and are not too sure you want to continue? We wondered if the Masters picked those in whom the desire for “psychic experiences” was quite strong to become Adepts.

The desire is polar, too. Everything in the universe is, of course. Along with the desire is always the dread. The choice does not become clear to you until you have experienced the desire from another dimension. You must stand and observe the desire from the shadows of dread. Wishes, like everything, have positive and negative poles. There must be attraction and repulsion or nothing exists because no energy is being generated. [12 August 1973]

The choices you make between physical bodies are part of the learning process also. [12 August 1973]

Ellis: I feel that I've been cast into the wind, without direction, without control.

You are free to choose. The rub comes in where False Personality, which is Karma driven, makes most of the choices, in direct opposition to the desires of the Essence.

Richard: Is it possible to go through life without burning the Karma that you had set out to burn in that life or is it inevitable that you burn Karma?

It is inevitable that you play out the [Karmic] role you chose. It is not necessary that you always choose a difficult role.

Alice: Does it sometimes take more than one lifetime to learn the lesson? I mean, he's asking if you choose a role, it's all over with, but I'm asking, might you not have to play it over and over again?

Many times, you have chosen almost identical roles in order to play out a Monad. Only the time and locations were different.

Ellis: At what point do we make our choice?

The choice is made on the Astral level between lives. [08 October 1973]

Concluding Comments on Choice





⑧ COMMITMENT, DEDICATION, DEVOTION

This chapter is the product of a search for the word commitment and its synonyms dedication and devotion in the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group channeling sessions. This word does not represent a significant component of the Michaelian teachings. However, there are good reasons to discuss the subject in this *Study Papers* book: 1) the subject came up numerous times during the original Michaelian group; 2) some interesting things were said about the subject; 3) the subject is related to a number of other components of the Michaelian teachings that are considered to be significant; 4) students can presumably benefit from having the mentions conveniently collected and commented all in one place; 5) commitment issues are unavoidable; they are pervasive in human psychology and sociology and spirituality — subjects covered extensively in this book — so it behooves us to have a working knowledge of them.

These words are not capitalized in this chapter or other chapters of this *Study Papers* book because they have no special meaning in the Michaelian teachings; they are not Michaelian jargon words that need a definition apart from their use in the common vernacular.

This chapter is one of many in this book that focuses on a psychological component of the Michaelian teachings as found in original Michaelian group transcriptions, rather than on a doctrinal or spiritual component. A psychological component is usually either a positive to be cultivated or a negative to be mitigated. As we will see, the Michaels tell us that commitment is a positive to be cultivated. The Michaelian version of psychology is not to be confused with the popular psychology of the self-improvement movement, those that do not have a spiritual core or perspective. Rather, the Michaelian psychotherapeutic path (aimed at improving psychological health) is a beneficial precursor to the spiritual path (aimed at improving soul health). To skip the former but attempt the latter is referred to as “spiritual bypassing”. This is discussed at length on such websites as this one in Wikipedia: >https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spiritual_bypass<. To skip mitigating one’s psychological issues and attempt to go straight to enlightenment usually proves to be problematic.

Here at the beginning of this chapter I want to make a distinction between *bonding* and *binding*. Perhaps you have heard it said that some people have a “fear of commitment” when it comes to romantic relationships. To my way of thinking, this is an aversion to *binding*, as in “don’t tie me down”, but it need not be an aversion to *bonding*, as in “true love”. During the original Michaelian group, the Michaels used the words commitment, dedication, and devotion most often in reference to their students creating voluntary, intentional, beneficial bonds (not binds) with the Michaelian teachings. The bottom line of any endeavor or relationship is this: the amount of success one has is directly related to the amount of true love one has for it.

Definitions of Commitment, Dedication, and Devotion

So what is meant by **commitment**? The online Merriam Webster dictionary definition is:

1a: an agreement or pledge to do something in the future; [as in] “a commitment to improve conditions at the prison”; especially: an engagement to assume a financial obligation at a future date

1b: something pledged, [as in] “the commitment of troops to the war”

1c: the state or an instance of being obligated or emotionally impelled; [as in] “a commitment to a cause”
[><https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/commitment>< — retrieved 10 November 2022]

As for the definition of **dedication**:

1: in religion, an act or rite of dedicating (see dedicate entry 2 sense 1) to a divine being or to a sacred use [as in] “the dedication of the temple”

2: a devoting or setting aside for a particular purpose [as in] “the dedication of funds raised from the bake sale to the class trip”

3: a name and often a message prefixed to a literary, musical, or artistic production in tribute to a person or cause [as in] “mentioned his family in a brief dedication in his novel”

4: self-sacrificing devotion and loyalty [as in] “her dedication to the cause”; “required hard work and dedication”

5: a ceremony to mark the official completion or opening of something (such as a building) [as in] “attended the building’s dedication nearly fifty years ago” [<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/dedication> — retrieved 19 January 2023]

As for the definition of **devotion**:

1a: religious fervor : piety

1b: an act of prayer or private worship — usually used in plural [as in] “during his morning devotions”

1c: a religious exercise or practice other than the regular corporate (see corporate sense 2) worship of a congregation

2a: the act of dedicating something to a cause, enterprise, or activity : the act of devoting [as in] “the devotion of a great deal of time and energy”

2b: the fact or state of being ardently dedicated and loyal [as in] “her devotion to the cause” : filial devotion [<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/devotion> — retrieved 19 January 2023]

As we will see in the remainder of this chapter, the Michaels did not depart much from these dictionary definitions. The word *commitment* was used far more often than the other two when referring to a student’s interest in, and participation in, the Michaelian teachings.

Commitment, Dedication, Devotion per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

The following extracts from original Michaelian group transcriptions are Q&A exchanges, where an original Michaelian group member asks a question (or makes a comment), and the Michaels provide a response. These extracts are presented in the chronological order in which they were given. As is my custom, I often provide some explanatory comments following the question or answer. Underlined words in the Michaels’ answers are my emphasis, to draw attention to what it is that I comment on. Sometimes I embed words or phrases [in brackets] that I believe help to clarify the question or the answer.

The question of “devotion” to the spiritual path was on the minds of the founding original Michaelian group members from the very beginning, even before the Michaels appeared. The following is from the second session that has become publicly available; Dick was one of the founding members of the original Michaelian group:

Dick: Okay then, I’ll meditate on the one question.

[Soleal:] Just be patient. You cannot achieve enlightenment by any route in one day or by any method without first making the decision to establish this as the goal for the present lifetime and then making the decision to devote the rest of the life to that pursuit. The devotion must be there, no matter which path you take ultimately. The path can take you through the mainstream of life on your world, or you may eventually decide that you must have the seclusion. A communal setting would offer this in many ways. You need people around by whom you can measure your progress, and this is not bad for you. Self-confidence, and I mean in your own spiritual strength, must be developed. [03 July 1973]

As this chapter develops, we will see numerous factors that influence the level and type of devotion that people are able to muster and apply to their spiritual path. One of the factors is communal living, so refer to the chapter “Communal Living” for a discussion of that.

The first mention of “commitment” to one’s spiritual journey appeared in the sixth session that has become widely available. Tomas was the source, and he mentioned many factors that typically impede a spiritual newbie. Carolyn was one of the founding members of the original Michaelian group:

Carolyn: I have felt the need to express my opinions more lately, and I wonder if this is good. Sometimes I have spouted off.

[Tomas:] Do you understand the source of the negative emotions? If so, then you should examine them carefully and see if you can turn them into something positive. Hostility is never an act of conscious will. The only positive forces are peaceful, loving ones. Carolyn still has a tendency to slip into the patterns or vibrations of the moment. Many sleeping souls provide the necessary shocks to keep her on the right track — constantly

examining herself. This is a common failing among neophytes on the true path. There are always many doubts until the integration takes place, and the commitment is made and is irrevocable. Life on the material plane, with all its glamour, continues to lure you back. The glamour is illusion — Maya, if you prefer the more esoteric term. Maya is part of Karma and is present for a very specific purpose. It tests your spiritual growth all the time and is your sole eternal safety checkpoint. When you reach the point in your spiritual growth when you “know” that all hostile feelings and thoughts and words — and even world wars — come from lower Centers in sleeping souls and they are not in control, then you will lose the desire or need to retaliate or spout off. It’s like spouting off to a stone wall for all the good it does you. You gain nothing and lose a great deal. [24 July 1973]

From the beginning of the original Michaelian group to the end, the sources (Soleal, Tomas, Michael) commented on the fact that students will receive benefits from the teaching in proportion to their commitment to not only learning the teaching but also living it. Refer to chapters “Negativity”, “Glamour”, “Maya”, “Awakening from Sleep”, “Shock”, “Karma”, “Growth, Spiritual” for a discussion of the topics mentioned in that answer.

The word also appeared in the first session with the Michaels:

Discussion: Concerning being unpopular because you held unpopular beliefs, pursued teachings, etc.

There will always be unpopularity when unpopular ideas are espoused and expressed. The body does not wish the Essence to be freed. It will fight to keep the Essence asleep. It takes many such fights to strengthen the Essence.

Regarding the reason for committing oneself to a spiritual path, besides the metaphor of “Awakening from Sleep” mentioned above, there is also the metaphor of “Liberation from Prison” mentioned in this passage; refer to the chapters by those names. The point is that, paradoxically, *bonding* to the process is necessary for *liberation*:

Comment: That’s why it’s hard to make the commitment while you are scared and while you still care (about going to prison, etc.). I wonder if Timothy Leary cares. Maybe he doesn’t. Maybe his little job in prison is tending the flowers and he may be happy there as Claudio Naranjo is happy in Spain tending his flowers.

You reach the point [in elevated consciousness] where environment on the Physical Plane does not matter any more. You can leave it at will.

Well, if we do astral travel to associate with the spirits more, maybe they won’t let us associate with them after we have made the commitment. You really don’t know whether they will associate with you anyway. That puts you where you don’t care. Take the astral trips first. See if you like it. [12 August 1973]

How far would the original Michaelian group members be willing to go if authorities ever confronted them about their new beliefs? The founding members of the original Michaelian group did not fully understand what they were getting themselves into when they first sought a non-physical teacher, so there was a “fear of the unknown” as well as a fear of disapproval. Refer to the chapter “Fear” for more discussion about that disincentive to commit to a new way of life. There you will read that along with any “desire” there is also a “dread”, and one must make a decision to commit to the change in lifestyle in spite of the dread.

What is an Adept?

An Adept is one who has cleared the mind of all trivia. This is an integrated being who is firmly committed to the path, who is unafraid to leave the Physical Plane for hours at a time, is thoroughly versed in the occult teaching, is aware of Karmic ties and has recall beyond the grave, can materialize both self and objects from borrowed energy sources, is both clairaudient [hearing] and clairvoyant [seeing]. This means non-attachment to both planes and its inhabitants. [21 August 1973]

Becoming an Adept is not a part-time job; refer to the chapter “Adepts and Masters”. There you will read that it was said that some of the original Michaelian group members had the potential to become Adepts. Spoiler alert: none of them ever did, because they never made or found that intensity of commitment.

Throughout this chapter we read that there are all kinds of distractions that keep students from fulfilling whatever level of commitment they may have to learning and living the teaching.

Sarah: Well, Joel is a Saturn and you can’t get to him at all; he is imperturbable.

You have all made strides toward eliminating superfluous material possessions. Don’t fall into the trap of begrudging younger souls their possessions. This is merely transference of identification and equally pervasive. T[he t]eaching is a full time obligation. If you wish to make this commitment, you must resign yourselves to the fact that someone must support the teaching. In order to stay alive, you must eat. We see no virtue in crippling

asceticism [at the other end of the wealth–poverty spectrum]. The danger lies in immoderation [at either end of the wealth–poverty spectrum]. [20 October 1973]

That was said in the context of the original Michaelian group members preparing to eventually live communally, which would be a serious commitment indeed; refer to the chapter “Communal Living” for more about that plan and aspiration. Also, refer to the chapters “Identification” and “Asceticism and Austerity” for more discussion of those subjects.

Cheryl: I become irritated when I hear older Souls talking down Young Souls. I hear what they say and it makes me mad.

You can hear the knowledge. Most Young Souls [such as yourself] are unwilling to devote themselves to the life of contemplation that is necessary to cause the words to [come to] fruition. This is an active Cycle, Cheryl, the one in which the most valuable lessons are learned and most of the mistakes are made. It is like any system of learning: the Infant Soul is in kindergarten, the Baby Soul is [in] life’s elementary school, the Young Soul [is] in gymnasium [high school], the Mature Soul [is] in college, and the Old Soul is out in the world. [22 November 1973]

This is not the last time that the Michaels comment on the fact that Soul Age influences the level and type of commitment that people are able to make to a spiritual teaching; see further on.

The opposite of devotion to spiritual matters is the devotion to material matters:

... the materialistic existentialists who deny other dimensions beyond the Physical Plane and devote themselves to the pursuit of Maya. [25 December 1973]

Refer to the chapter “Maya” for more about that. There you will read that the Michaels affirm that the spiritual reality is ultimately more real than the material reality, so students are better off to commit themselves to the pursuit of the greater, higher reality.

At the end of the first calendar year in which the original Michaelian group was meeting, they asked about making a New Year’s Resolution:

At this point in our time, it turned midnight [on New Years Eve]. There was no kissing or screaming, but Richard asked if there was any special message for us for the New Year.

We think that the goals for the coming year would be cohesion, commitment, and commonality of ideation.

We wish you well in this; it is within your grasp. [31 December 1973]

The group had now been meeting for more than half a year, on average 1-1/2 times a week (39 sessions in 26 weeks that we know of). That schedule in itself was a considerable commitment in time and effort. But that is just the beginning of what it takes to forge a cohesive group consciousness. To do so without becoming a cult is Good Work, I might add. Personality cults are very good at extracting commitment from members, which can be likened to predator–prey or parasite–host relationships. Healthy groups of committed people can be likened to symbiotic relationships between organisms; refer to the chapter “Individuality”. There you will read that there is an ideal balance between the benefit of the individual and the benefit of the collective, and both the person and the collective should aspire to find that balance, and track that balance, because it is always shifting.

The more compatible the person and the collective, the easier their devotion to each other:

We wish for you the opportunity to propagate the Logos. How you do it should be as comfortable as possible, so that you can devote yourself best to growth and not to struggle. [22 January 1974]

Refer to the chapter “Logos” for more discussion of the rational intelligent component of the cosmos. Commitment to the Work should not be an onerous burden, imposed from without; the type and intensity of devotion should be chosen by the student, and the collective should aspire to be liberal-minded enough to accommodate differences in levels of commitment among its members.

Cynthia: We just got through with planning for the Town Meeting.

This is planning of a very different sort, but all the rules are applicable. Since this is a planning stage, this means that decisions will be made and you will be left to start the implementation octave with a dedicated core. [03 February 1974]

Cynthia is referencing the planning for a new intentional community in Oregon. She and her husband later moved there and helped it get started. The Michaels said that the so-called “implementation” octave is preceded by the so-called “planning” octave, which is preceded by the so-called “investigation” octave (03 February 1974). People typically do not become fully committed or totally dedicated from the very beginning;

they can and do drop out at any stage of an ongoing group project. The implementation stage requires a core of committed individuals.

We discussed the possibility of having a minimum fee to cover the cost of duplicating transcripts of the meetings. We also need a name in order to incorporate. There are many advantages to incorporating. When there is \$300 in the treasury, we can incorporate.

We definitely agree that the commitment is necessary, but would see you consider some other than financial for some students. We would see a goods-for-service economy emerging within this group and its extensions. We would have you consider services rendered as an alternative for those who are unable to pay. We agree that this teaching is far from free, but we do not see money necessarily as the price. We would warn you to be extremely cautious in implementing the service angle. For instance, you must make those in Acceptance [in the Negative Pole of –Ingratiation] Photograph themselves in accepting more than they wish from False Personality, or those in Submission submitting to those in Dominance. This would be one way of starting the process of Photographing. We would prefer that you not drop this, as the man Robert [Burton] was wise in this.

Should we send the transcripts out to those who do not participate? Should there be a school within a school for those who come each time?

We would prefer that you assemble the material here given, editorializing if you wish, and present it to all potential students in a palatable form. There are Scholars among you who are up to this task as well as Artisans aplenty who can contribute the imaginative approach. We could see this as one of your major tasks, and we have advised you this before. We would see the core “school” remains small, as otherwise the commitment will never be strong. Now, it is our aim to see you eventually propagate this teaching at large. [08 February 1974]

Refer to the chapter “School Metaphor” for more about that. The original Michaelian group grew over the next year until it became unwieldy. The lower level of commitment of the larger group diluted the energy of the committed people, and the original Michaelian group collapsed back down to a small core group.

The size of the group affects commitment to the goal of the group, but so does the ability of the individuals in the group to become unified in their purpose:

Richard informed us that he had “talked” with Soleal, and that Soleal was willing to be with the group this evening.

[Soleal:] I have no real revelations to offer, just that I am struck again by the tremendous scattering of energies even in this group, due in the most part to the myriad personal agendas that take Intellectual Center and sometimes Emotional Center out of play for long periods of time.

The lady who has prepared the paper has hit upon an important truth when she speaks of diverse goals within a tight partnership such as your culture demands within the custom of marriage, or really I should say, divergent [goals]. The goals of the teaching, and thus of the students, must be unified in order to be effective. The teacher [the Michaels] can only suggest to you the methods if you wish to grow. Right now, the response within the group is almost solely intellectual. There is relatively little emotional commitment to the teaching or to each other, which is really more important. This leads to the haphazardness with which the group goes about its business.

Refer to the chapter “Scattering” for more discussion about that problem, which the Michaels mentioned many times. Obviously, scattering and commitment are inversely related: the more of one the less of the other. One of the meanings and requirements of “commitment” is to focus and concentrate on the task at hand. A person and a group only has so much time and energy at their disposal, so choices must be made, priorities must be established, plans must be made and pursued. Refer to the chapter “Agenda” for more about that factor in the functioning of any group.

Comment: Everything we do should complement the goal of the group. We tend to take on too many things to do. You don’t have to give up everything, but you should pull your life towards the goal.

[Soleal:] I would like to point out to you at this time that many of you are dabblers. You dabble in this and that, tasting all of the fruits, eating of none, and in this light you also dabble in spiritual growth as well. Now, this is all right; there is nothing wrong with this — it incurs little Karma — but on the other hand, it leads nowhere. Also, the concept of Agape requires the actions of a closely-knit group of supportive students in order to come to reality. No one can feel Agape in an ivory tower. It can only be felt when Higher Centers are contacted in the course of close association with others. There is no way to do this alone that I know of. Where the misunderstanding has come about, I think, is where the teacher [the Michaels] has advised you of the dangers of the cloisters and the stifling atmosphere there that retards growth, and has pointed out to you the relative lack of success among those who choose the solitary path. If you wish, we could prepare for you some examples of what works here [on Soleal’s planet]. [18 February 1974]

Refer to chapters “Agape”, “Centers, Higher”, “Solitude, Solitary”. So much of the success of any group depends on the commitment of its members, as stated by the Michaels, but I would like to say that the effectiveness of the group also depends on the characteristics of its members, meaning that the natural ‘chemistry’ of personalities and ‘alchemy’ of souls should be constructive, leading to harmony and intimacy, rather than destructive, leading to conflict and alienation. Not only commitment, but compatibility and companionability are important. This must come naturally; it cannot be forced, even with people who are aware of this factor in “Group Cohesion”; refer to the chapter by that name.

Sarah: I am seeking a way of life within the group, not to become more effective in the milieu.

There is a way, you know, that this teaching can serve the needs of all who seek, and you have it within the original nucleus to perform this service. Those who have the need for intensified personal searches can arrange for this. Those who are not certain of their level of commitment may find that the general session is adequate for them. The smaller sessions are most valuable for the more committed students and definitely should be reserved for that purpose. There is some merriment derived in the general session merely by pursuing some of the less dedicated students’ personal agendas and this will benefit all. We still see the tendency in all of you to expect of the others, and to be disappointed when the anticipated reaction does not come about. This cannot be avoided unless much intensive work is done. We could do this with you and we are always available for this. There is a need for some diversification here now with all of the parts contributing toward a greater whole in the end. We have not suggested that the nucleus of this teaching expand to the point where needs are no longer being served. We are concerned only that you share the knowledge once it has been assimilated and verified. We have a method by which all of you can choose to achieve a modicum of growth on a spiritual plane. Many of you can even use it as a springboard toward becoming an Adept. This is entirely up to you. We will find many vehicles through which we can teach the Logos — this does not present us with a problem. We answer all calls for this teaching. [24 February 1974]

The founding original Michaelian group members were mostly compatible with each other, and they sometimes had meetings apart from the larger group of less committed, less compatible people. When Sarah resumed channeling in the late 1990s, after a hiatus of a dozen years, it became an established practice to have separate “core” group meetings and “study” group meetings.

Dick: I’d like to know if unblocking the emotions as is seen in the Esalen film is a healthy thing. It looks good.

We do not see the necessity for this action within the group, but perhaps an outlet needs to be provided elsewhere. In this, we will not mediate, as this is within the realm of life crises and does not pertain to spiritual growth. This is not to say that these matters do not have to be dealt with; they most certainly do — long before you can even talk about growth — spiritual growth. For the dedicated student and for the Adept requires detachment from the mundane and trivial matters, which are such immoderate energy drains. How can you possibly grow if you are immersed in all this Maya? [24 February 1974]

Refer to the chapter “Moderation”, where you will read that every individual and every group does well to commit themselves to finding an optimal balance between the legitimate needs of the flesh and the legitimate needs of the spirit. Refer to the chapter “Maya”, where you will read that there are illusory needs in regard to both flesh and spirit, so the commitment should be to eliminate spurious needs.

Besides the difference in level of commitment of students, there is also the difference in level of spiritual growth, and there are differences in what people are interested in. It is almost impossible in a healthy group to get everyone to ‘read the same page at the same time’; some extremely charismatic cult leaders are able to make this happen, but that usually goes awry. Most Michaelian students that I know, even those who have the Michaelian teachings as their primary esoteric source, have secondary and tertiary interests and pursuits outside of the Michaelian teachings, to fill in gaps in the Michaelian teachings, and to satisfy their curiosity.

Before one becomes an Adept, one must first become Balanced, and before one becomes Balanced, one must first commit to the Michaels’ methods for achieving it:

How do you get in touch with Emotional Center if you are not there?

First, you must become solidly Balanced so that there is no backsliding. This [stability] normally does not come about until commitment is made and affirmed. [03 March 1974]

Refer to the chapter “Crystallization” for a discussion of the notion that people who are operating in the lower Centers tend to be flaky and unstable; crystallization is the opposite of that. A student must have at least enough commitment to the teaching to arrive at Balance, before aspiring to Adept-hood. Even though it does not say so here, I would say that one advantage of group work is that those who are less committed can ‘hitch

their wagon' to those who are more stable and committed, until their own psycho-social-spiritual maturity precludes backsliding, which happens at the so-called "Balanced Man" stage; refer to the chapter by that name. Basically and briefly, this is the fourth stage of the septenary of spiritual growth; refer to the chapter "Levels of Being" for more discussion about that.

Almost a year after the original Michaelian group was formed, some original Michaelian group members bemoaned the lack of commitment of other original Michaelian group members to the teaching. This prompted a lengthy reply from the Michaels:

We had a discussion as to where we were going next and if people were satisfied with the large meetings. We were started out on a planning octave, headed for an implementation octave and it is seemingly petering out. There are no tasks in our group, and people pop in and pop out. There is a loose commitment of people and we cannot plan on anything. When one tries to present the material to new people, they have their own thing and want to teach their thing and think this is Satan's work because it has to do with reincarnation.

To spread the Logos, one [of us] saw the opposition coming from Christians. Christ was crucified because he had a new idea.

Dick: I cannot understand mass psychology when it comes to religion.

Sarah: That is the only way I can reach Emotional Center, through a group high.

Dick: Is Michael ready to turn us over to the technology and science Entity, as Susan is working?

If you wish this, it is available. To assign tasks on an individual basis requires wholehearted commitment on the part of the one assigned. These tasks are not easy and often appear distasteful at first glance. The lady Susan is now emotionally strong enough to share her tremendous wealth of psychic emotional power with those who desire this special help. The methods have been outlined for you now within the confines of this teaching, but this teaching is of the sort where the implementation must be self-initiated. In the other teaching [Susan's], individual guidance can be obtained through very lengthy sessions with the source — with the focus upon one individual, where[as] in this type of teaching [Michael's], the focus is on the group as a whole and abounds in generalities. It is possible, nevertheless, to grow within this teaching as it is within the teaching of the man Robert [Burton], but it means much culling of the material and concentration on all the work outlined so far. We do have considerable insight into individual needs, but then, so do you all. You discuss it needlessly and reach the same conclusions using terminology we would not choose, but the meaning is the same. The choice is your strongest barrier to success right now — or to be more explicit, your denial of the fact that the choice rests always with you. We have suggested to you all various methods by which others have achieved spiritual growth. This is all that we are employed to do. If and when you make the choice to follow this path, the protection is there. [14 April 1974]

Gurdjieff was known to assign specific tasks to his students, and the Michaels were willing to do the same, if requested; refer to the chapter "Tasks". If a person makes a commitment to be a student of the teaching, the teacher is saying that they have a commitment to reciprocate in kind: it goes both ways. The Michaels await the choice of their potential students to make the commitment; refer to the chapter "Choice".

Victoria: I'd like to ask about my new friend, Frederick. Is he a Young Sage, Emotional Part of Intellectual Center, in Acceptance, a Jovial in Passion and Arrogance or vanity?

This is a Mid-Cycle Young Sage in the Intellectual Part of Moving Center, a Pragmatist in the Passion mode; yes. Vanity. He feels that Victoria is the most unusual person he has ever met and would probably accept most anything she did, but is not equipped to make a commitment to an esoteric teaching, as he is basically physically [rather than metaphysically] oriented. [17 July 1974]

It is unusual for a person younger than mid-Level Mature Soul Age to be able to make a commitment to an esoteric teaching, because that is the turning point in the reincarnation cycle, where the Fragment changes the direction of their journey, from an orientation toward physicality to an orientation toward spirituality.

If you meet with extremely Old Souls in Exalted [Cardinal] Roles, you are certain to notice that their goals seem no longer earthbound and temporal, and there is a steady increase in otherworldliness in their behavior. Sometimes, this succeeds in setting them completely apart from the mainstream. It is unusual for these Exalted ancients not to seek some type of esoteric teaching. Many devote their entire lives to this pursuit and their capacity for dedication is very great. [01 October 1974]

So, there is the worldliness > otherworldliness spectrum, and this is obviously yet another factor that indicates where one's level of commitment to an esoteric teaching such as the Michaelian teachings might be found. This factor was said to be related to Cardinal Soul Age and Cardinal Role, and I suggest that other Cardinal Overleaves can contribute.

Lyle asked what stops him from submitting to love — growth — what is the barrier there for him to the emotional experience? His SRG is Old Priest, Spiritualist, Arrogance, Emotional Part of Intellectual Center.

First of all, we would like to correct a semantic slip. That is, [the erroneous notion] that “knowledge” is understanding. What has not passed into understanding with you is “input” — nothing more — into the [bio-] computer to be stored. The transformation [from knowledge to understanding] only occurs when the choice has been made — the commitment. The methods you suggest would, of course, be impossible for us to enforce, although we do, of course, recognize the method. In this light, we have suggested to you an alternative method wherein much stripping [of the barriers of Maya and False Personality] would occur and you would all be forced to confront your own and other student’s Personalities. When you commit yourselves finally to a cause, whatever that cause might be — Christianity, occultism, revolution, *et cetera, et cetera* — there is too much at stake to pull out, and you are forced to confront your blocks and either sink or swim with them. The concept of extended community or family is one environment in which this can come about. The students can sometimes overcome these blocks or barriers rapidly when their livelihood depends upon it. Right now in this cadre, nothing real is at stake. There is nothing to lose if the students are unable to work through their blocks.

The barrier between you and the Emotional Center is one that many in this cadre share; you are not alone. The sacrifices, yes, are necessary in yours and other cases, for only through these “sacrifices” will you be able to have this experience. As it is now, there is no good reason, and your Personality is well aware of it. In many ways, you and other students are much like the Sunday Catholics throughout the world, who do not have the experience [of transforming knowledge into understanding] either, because there is no commitment.

We would see you all examine your short-term goals with relation to this teaching. That is ... what is it you hope to gain from our association? If this includes the possibility of spiritual growth, then we would suggest that you reexamine the steps toward that goal that we have outlined. If you only expect to gain data, then this will surely be a disappointment to you in the long run. Many of you are looking for the experiences you sense the other students are having, but you are unwilling to work for this in the ways we have suggested. You are content to sit back, sigh and say, “Oh, shit.” This is, of course, an option, but one we do not encourage.

How many times have we repeated the steps you must take? Examine the tenets of the world’s great religions and the greatest teachings now extant on this planet. You will find this same advice again and again, perhaps clothed in different semantics, but nevertheless the same ... that upon which Christianity was based, that upon which Judaism has survived for the centuries, the pillars of Islam, the teachings of Siddhartha Gautama, the Tao Teh Ching.

Until this teaching becomes a way of life for you, there will be no experiences for any of you. The only way we know of to experience anything is to live it, whether you be on the Physical, Astral, Causal or the High Plane ... it does not matter. Committing yourselves begins the transformation. The concept of “pilgrimage” in some of the best teachings extant on this planet do a marvelous job of stripping [of False Personality], if the pilgrimage is performed in the proper state of mind.

Now, we are not suggesting that you plunge yourselves into poverty. We would see that you live well so that there is no struggle to survive, for the main reason that if you must struggle to live, you cannot devote the amount of time necessary for spiritual evolution. This is a lifetime commitment. It is not something that you can work on on Saturday night [when the original Michaelian group usually met] and forget about for the rest of the week. You could not keep it tucked away in some dim, dusky, cerebral corridor and only take it out when company comes. [14 December 1974]

That was one of the most intense passages on the subject. Note the word “sacrifice” there. So far as False Personality and Maya are concerned, forgoing their illusory needs and committing to the goals of a spiritual teaching is a painful sacrifice. People should, of course, only commit to a teaching that is obviously further along than they are.

It is the Personality that fears this teaching and what lies beyond. It is the Personality that refuses to commit itself to the path, not the Essence. The Personality is clever in the way that a wild beast is clever: it learns to avoid traps that might lead to its death, which is precisely what happens [ego-death] in a teaching when a student becomes an Adept. [28 December 1974]

So, obviously, unless it is the Essence that makes the commitment, and not the Personality, then student-hood in the Michaelian or any other teaching will not get very far; refer to the chapter “Essence and Personality”. Readers should not concern themselves about their level of commitment to the Michaelian teachings, whether low or high, weak or strong; Essence takes care of that. Subsequent to the original

Michaelian group, information was received that the Michaels had Agreements with about one hundred thousand Fragments to be their teacher. It was also said that there was a spectrum of student commitment, in three general classes, which could be described as primary and permanent, middling, and cursory or transitory.

Many of you now feel the loss of energy when the concentration of the group drops because of the intrusion of outside sources. There is no mystery about this, and it will always happen when there are some [people] present in the body who are elsewhere with their minds. This happens often with students who are not firmly committed, and who are attending merely with Intellectual Center or the Intellectual Parts of Centers. [02 January 1975]

This was said at a time when the size of the original Michaelian group had reached its maximum, with a lot of new people attending, just a month and a half before it collapsed. It may be that the Michaels' emphasis on commitment from their students started to alienate people who knew that they could never commit to the Michaelian teaching to that extent.

Ralph: [Regarding] The Essence experience on the Physical Plane and the relation to Roles: If meditation attains Personality-less-ness, is this experience without Role, and is it on the Physical Plane?

We would not describe this experience as being wholly on the Physical Plane as it does indeed transcend the planes and yes, it can happen to you within this lifetime. It is well within the grasp of all of our students; you have only to set it as the transient goal and apply what you now know. The Overleaves affect you only when you are strongly committed to the needs of the Personality. Once it [the needs of the Personality] has been achieved [satisfied], it will no longer be the goal. [02 January 1975]

There is an inverse relationship between commitment to the needs of the Personality and commitment to the needs of the Essence: the more of the one, the less of the other. Commitment to a spiritual teaching is more or less the same as commitment to Essence.

[Soleal:] Only that which your mind has decided [belief system] and your heart has become committed to [value system] can occur [behavior system]. All is possible when you give up the dearly held belief systems and open your being to the new. [11 January 1975]

From this statement and others — as for instance the essential role of Essence in the process of commitment — I gather that there is a trans- or meta-rational component of the process in terms of the Centers. Sure, the mind (Intellectual Center) can decide to commit to a course of action, but unless the “heart” (Centers other than the Intellectual Center) agree and add their weight and impulse, the commitment will fizzle in the long run. This is like the New Year’s Resolution that quickly fails. Refer to the chapter “Belief System” for more about that subject.

Commitment applies not only to a spiritual path, but also to a romantic path:

Other insights into the relationship of Carolyn and Gene?

In this culture, unfortunately, once a firm commitment is made in relationships, the partners often undergo a startling change in their interpersonal relating, to the point that living becomes so strained that they begin looking for the escape route. Of course, this stems from imprinting and the lessons learned insofar as what may be expected in an ideal mate is concerned. You are perhaps more aware of this than most and seek to avoid the “tender trap”. With a committed student, an interpersonal relationship “should” be free from this danger. Ideally, it would be, but the other student at this point in your growth would not satisfy your projected needs.

Now we do not speak entirely against the custom of marriage. It is that we do disapprove of it being a legislative imperative. We would speak of rather personal contractual commitments. This, of course, is an alternative to the more open approach, which we have often recommended for advanced students. This latter works only in the presence of a high level of Balance on the part of all concerned.

Carolyn must begin to look at her short-term goals with this [original Michaelian group] cadre and decide if her commitment is there or if it is on a more personal basis. If it is the latter, then she must discover why and what expectation of hers have led to this. If the former, then the support of the brothers and sisters [in the original Michaelian group] can become adequate during those periods of vacillation.

We have recommended that you not burn bridges. In this case, we would certainly reiterate: leave the door open, because, you see, on many levels you are far more committed to the Work than you understand. The Work has in fact penetrated deeply into your entire life structure, to the point where total separation would be difficult.

Facilitating growth can be a difficult sequence, for it entails far more than simply being a “friend” — in the accepted definition of friendship. The desire to complete the Sequence should not in any way destroy the closeness of an interpersonal relationship based upon a commitment to the work. But until each of you is able to look at your own fears and conflicts in relation to each other, this is a real danger too that you face. [15 January 1975]

Groups of deeply committed students are prone to dislike the presence of students who do not share their depth of commitment. Also, it is a factor of loyalty to help others who will likely be available to reciprocate. Refer to the chapter “Romantic Relationships” for a complete accounting of the saga of Carolyn and Gene in the context of their commitment to themselves versus their commitment to each other versus their commitment to the original Michaelian group versus their commitment to the teaching. The point to be made here is that it is a difficult task to sort out all of the realms of commitment that come up for review.

Comment?

Only that we would be gratified if indeed what has transpired this evening is converted into dynamism and becomes reality. It will, of course, require a high level of commitment, and also trust level of which we speak. But we do not say it cannot be done. Some have chosen already. Perhaps more will choose when they can verify the risk involved is minimal in terms of return. [16 January 1975]

Refer to chapters on “Choice” and “Trust”. I question the type and level of commitment of people who would become Michaelian students based on their calculation of a risk/reward ratio. Subsequent to the original Michaelian group, it was revealed more explicitly that the Michaels have pre-incarnate Agreements with Fragments that they will be in a Teacher/Student Monad. Such students typically Recognize that they have that Agreement with the Michaels, that they belong in the teaching, that they are “lifers”; refer to the chapter “Recognition” for more about that. Those who do not have the intuition that the Michaels are their True Teacher may read the books, may interact with true students, may learn some stuff and experience some stuff, but they eventually move on.

During the original Michaelian group, there were repeated hints that potential Michaelian students would become actual Michaelian students in due time:

We asked for clarification of “visibility.” Most visible are often mostly in False Personality.

Visibility is not necessarily related to Mechanicity. Visibility in the case of a teaching such as this could come from the Essences of committed students, willing to share their space with others. This [original Michaelian group] cadre is by no means all together. If you do succeed to begin to “peddle your wares”, for instance, you will find that many of these still missing will find you. [16 January 1975]

Again we see that valid and long-lasting commitment to the Michaelian teachings comes from Essence, not from Personality. Refer to the chapters “Mechanical Man” and “Personality — True and False”.

Discussion about Artificial Space — False Personality — Karmic debts.

For a moment, look at the physical universe as an enormous stage, and all of the physical things within it as the sets and actors. Then look for a moment at the possibility that Karma, or the system of Karma, may in fact be looked upon as the director of the play of life. Souls experiencing all of life on the Physical Plane never have to seek spiritual growth; they can, and most do, go through the whole cycle [of reincarnation] in the “waking sleep”. The moment that you elect to commit yourself to the [spiritual growth] path, you remove yourself from the list of available actor’s equity. Were it not for Karmic Ribbons, souls would not experience much at all; they certainly would not experience all of life. [08 February 1975]

Refer to chapters “Real Space versus Artificial Space”, “Growth, Spiritual”, “Karma”, and “Planes”. Here again we notice that commitment to the spiritual Path is from Essence and not from Personality. The Personality does not look beyond mere psychotherapy, which is aimed at the mitigation of incompetence and/or unhappiness and/or dysfunctionality. To go beyond the psychotherapeutic path requires the influence of Essence.

It is indeed true that the levels of commitment to the path vary to a great degree within the [original Michaelian group] group. There are those who say, “Yes, I seek spiritual growth; I seek and I am open to input from my brothers”, and yet when that input is received, all kinds of rationalizations appear, such as, “That is his projection”, “That is his perception”, “I do not need to take on his problems”. Why not accept that, as we have said before, there is no helping each other? The tool of Photographing is, of course, valid only when it comes

from a space of objectivity, and none of you is objective totally. Although on occasion, all of you touch upon the periphery of objectivity and are able to give valid Photographs to your brothers. [09 February 1975]

Refer to the chapter "Photography" for more about that. The amount of feedback that a student is willing to receive from a fellow student may be an indication of their level of commitment to the Work.

All of you are verifying the difficulty of dealing in the mainstream while in the Work. This will not become easier; it will, in fact, become much more difficult as time goes on. You will wish to devote more and more time to the Work and less to the mainstream.... It has been our experience that students seriously committed to the Work have far fewer expectations of their children, as they themselves are experiencing life and need not experience it vicariously through their children.... [12 February 1975]

That was said in the context of a lengthy discussion about "Communal Living"; refer to the chapter by that name. To commit to communal living was said to be the toughest commitment the original Michaelian group members would ever make. Here again we notice it said that there is an inverse relationship (the more of one the less of the other) between commitment to material pursuits and commitment to spiritual pursuits.

The large group meetings were discontinued later in that month of February 1975. The founding and core group members then committed themselves to a second attempt to disseminate the Michaelian teachings:

In short, we have a teaching ... and with this knowledge comes the fact that we have a task — to become a school which can effectively share this teaching. We seem to be moving into a new phase now, and it will require the commitment and energy of each of us to help this school to be born.

It has been our experience that the most significant progress in the Work is always made by groups of dedicated committed students, together working toward the goal of Agape. This can only be done in any steady sense in a communal setting, in that there must be continuity and there must be Overleaves that are incompatible for the work to be continuous. Most in life choose to live with only those other souls whose Overleaves complement their own. [Dimensions! April 1975]

Refer to chapters "School Metaphor", "Task", "Knowledge:", "Work, The", "Agape", "Communal Living", "Overleaves". So far as we know, the enthusiasm for a new start to the original Michaelian group did not last more than a couple of months, because after June of 1975 there was, so far as we know, a gap in sessions until late 1976. After that, the subject of commitment came up again one more time before the last session:

Joan and Cynthia expressed a feeling of waiting in limbo for "something around the corner." When present commitments are cleared up, something is going to emerge this summer — or so it seems.

The continuing need for spiritual grounding within this [original Michaelian group] group should be recognized by all those here present. All of you have spent a greater portion of this adult life seeking the answers to questions that are consummately spiritual in nature, while the mainstream of life on this planet seeks answers to quite a different set of questions. Does this not bring to mind the strength of your individual commitment? Not to this teaching, perhaps, but definitely to a teaching that seeks to answer those questions concerning the greater purpose of man. When you stop to question your commitment, do you not also question the fact that most do not know that such a commitment is possible and are totally unaware that the choice exists? At least you are all aware that there is a choice, and some are now at the crossroads where the path must be chosen. [10 April 1977]

The last session of the original Michaelian group was in January of 1978. At that time, Sarah Chambers committed herself to a group with a mostly new batch of students ... until about 1983, when she dropped out of the Michaelian teachings for more than a decade.

Concluding Comments on Commitment, Dedication, Devotion

A hit-and-run journey through various spiritual teachings based on the needs of the mere Personality will not get you very far on a spiritual path. If you are okay with that, then far be it from me to advise you otherwise. However, if your heart of hearts, your Essence, feels that you have found your true 'home' in the Michaelian teachings and among Michaelian students, then you will find it to be a welcoming group.

During the original Michaelian group, the concern about varying degrees of commitment to the teaching in prospective and present students was on their minds. At the time, the founding members had an intense interest in spiritual growth, so slackers would be, and were, a drag and a distraction on that focus. Frankly, having once been a cult member, I see the need for a commitment from students as having the potential to become vaguely cultish. In subsequent Michaelian groups, the focus on spiritual growth went on the wane,

and the focus on psychotherapy went on the gain. In that new and different environment, an intense and firm commitment to the group project or agenda was not as imperative. The possible exception to this change in focus was the closed Yarbrow group; we do not know for certain if they continued in the cultish direction or not, although they have isolated themselves, which to me seems vaguely cultish, and they dismiss the non-Yarbrow Michaelian groups as “frauds and impostors”, which also seems vaguely cultish to me. During the original Michaelian group, much was said about alienation (refer to the chapter by that name), and cultism does tend to mitigate alienation within a close-knit group that adheres to a uniform belief/value/behavior system. The situation with a shared belief/value/behavior system led by a charismatic figure is that it has its risks and its rewards. The potential risk is that it will devolve into a cultish mentality; the potential reward is that it will foster spiritual growth toward Agape in ways that are not available in groups that are not very intense. Perhaps the Yarbrow group is a bit of both.

Whatever that status may be, my impression is that original Michaelian group members were interested in recruiting new members in a way that subsequent groups have not been. This might be because that is the way things were done back then, including in the Fellowship of Friends that founding original Michaelian group members came out of. To some extent, this recruitment effort continued into the non-Yarbrow groups during the 1980s, what with the means of outreach available to them, namely publishing books and a quarterly magazine. In the late 1990s, in addition to more books, websites were established to evangelize the populace. Getting the word out was not so much about evangelizing recruits as it was about making the teaching available so true students could find it. Somewhere along the line it was realized that students naturally fall in line along a spectrum of commitment, which I read about in one of the Michael Connection magazines published in the 1980s. The “first class” student regards the teaching as primary and permanent, the “second class” student regards the teaching as secondary and temporary, and the “third class” student regards the teaching as interesting in some minor or peripheral way. Realizing this, the first class students are not concerned about the level of commitment of the other classes; they are what they are and they do what they do; “how can we help?” First class students recognize the Michaels as their true teacher, so they readily assimilate into the other first class students.

By far, most occurrences of the words commitment, dedication, devotion in the original Michaelian group transcriptions are found in the context of the willingness, or not, of original Michaelian group members to commit to the Work of the teaching, which was said to be hard work. The words imply that there was resistance coming from somewhere, either internal or external, to the journey. Subsequent to the original Michaelian group, newbie Michaelian students rarely face similar impediments, so what was that all about back then? I see three possible explanations:

1. The Gurdjieffian teachings claimed that waking up to one’s spiritual nature required a lot of effort, the founding original Michaelian group members were familiar with that notion, so it continued with them.
2. Sarah Chambers, the main channel, had a Goal of Dominance, which asks for Submission (commitment, dedication, devotion) of those around, so it may be that the tenor of the channeling was tainted by her Goal.
3. Perhaps the Michaels were saying in effect, “Well okay if you are really serious about your spiritual growth then here is what you will need to do.” Therefore, the Michaels were more stringent with the original Michaelian group members back then; therefore the Michaels were asking more of their students, back then.

Subsequent Michaelian students have not approached the teaching with that type or intensity of commitment in mind. In this way and perhaps for the reasons enumerated above, among others, the whole tenor of the original Michaelian group was different from subsequent groups.

The question ever before the original Michaelian group members was, were they committed enough to continue in the teaching no matter what? Spoiler alert: the original Michaelian group lasted about two years. So now the question for subsequent Michaelian students is, what can we learn from their experience? My suggestion is that these *Study Papers on the Original Michaelian Group* provide some answers.





⑤ COMMUNAL LIVING

Some of the founding members of the original Michaelian group had been members of another spiritual group that was moving toward communal living at the time, and that group did in fact go that route. That group was the “Fellowship of Friends”, founded and led by Robert Burton since 1970; you can search for it on the internet; it is still active at the time of this writing in 2022. The concept was also popular in the New Age scene in the Bay Area at that time in history; perhaps it still is. As a consequence of this prior familiarity with the concept, the subject of communal living often came up for discussion during the original Michaelian group, starting from its beginning when Tomas and Soleal were the channeled entities, even before the Michaels appeared. You will see below that all three beings had somewhat to say on the subject. Where not noted otherwise, the channeled entity is the Michaels.

Communal Living in the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

The following extracts from original Michaelian group transcriptions are Q&A exchanges, where an original Michaelian group member asks a question (or makes a comment), and the Michaels provide an answer. These extracts are presented in the chronological order in which they were given. As is my custom, I often provide some explanatory comments following the question or answer. Underlined words in the Michaels’ answers are my emphasis, to draw attention to what it is that I comment on. Sometimes I embed words or phrases [in brackets] that I believe help to clarify the question or the answer.

So far as we know from original Michaelian group transcriptions that have escaped oblivion, Soleal was the first to speak on the subject. Recall that Soleal was a student of the Michaels, an Adept living on another planet. It so happens that communal living was a big thing on Soleal’s planet:

Communal living has been tried here [on planet Earth] on a limited scale. The problem has been with some people not being as productive as others; the system breaks down. Can you comment?

[Soleal:] We [on my planet] force the issue. You object to being told what you like to do. You are bristling about this right now. The people on my world do not object; they would rather be free [of pressure than lazy].

Do you sometimes have problems getting people to work and how do you handle it?

Yes. Peer pressure is exerted ruthlessly. [undated, mid 1973]

There are two things to unpack in these two Q&A exchanges. First of all, productive people do not like to have unproductive people in their midst, those who do not “pull their own weight”, those who do not “do their fair share”; they are regarded as “freeloaders” and “cheats” and “bums” and “parasites on society”. This phenomenon in the humanoid realm is also seen in social animals; it is a natural consequence of survival pressures: everyone must do their tasks if the community is to survive and thrive. That is why peer pressure, both in terms of metaphorical ‘carrots’ and ‘sticks’, are applied in all cooperative cultures. In intimate communes, this imperative for social responsibility is even more pronounced. Second of all, as we will see below, Soleal’s planet is, on average, inhabited by older souls than planet earth is, and to engage in communal living for reasons above and beyond survival is typically an older-soul phenomenon. However, even the older souls in the Michael group were infected with the drive for individuation, the younger-soul ethos, that pervades the zeitgeist of planet Earth, so they “bristled” at the idea of giving up their precious individuality in a commune.

[Soleal:] You cannot achieve enlightenment by any route in one day or by any method without first making the decision to establish this as the goal for the present lifetime, and then making the decision to devote the rest of the life to that pursuit. The devotion must be there, no matter which path you take ultimately. The [spiritual] path can take you through the mainstream of life on your world, or you may eventually decide that you must

have the seclusion. A communal setting would offer this in many ways. You need people around by whom you can measure your progress, and this is not bad for you. [03 July 973]

For millennia in many religious traditions, communes in the form of monasteries and ashrams and such, have been an optional component of a focused spiritual path aimed at enlightenment. It is not paradoxical that a communal setting augments and fosters this path by opportunities for both social and spiritual influence from one's peers and from one's betters, and for times of seclusion, in which one can "commune" with one's higher self.

That is all that Soleal had to say on the subject; now let's see what Tomas had to say.

Angie: I have been considering moving into a commune, and I would like to know if it is better to live in a commune, or to live alone.

[Tomas:] I think that the communal life offers a great deal so long as the goals of the commune are those of continued spiritual growth and they do not conflict with what you know to be true. Living alone offers little, and I would not recommend it to anyone. Isolation breeds alienation, and alienation breeds suspicion that leads to jealousy, possessiveness, and greed — the three cardinal stumbling blocks on the path to awareness.

Spiritual development is connected to social development. In all social and spiritual cultures, and especially in communes, people are taught to share and to be fair with other people. However, as we see here and below, it is important to choose your commune wisely, because your spiritual path can either spiral upward or spiral downward, depending on the company you keep.

Carol: Do children count, or are we talking only of adults?

[Tomas:] Children do not provide the necessary interaction. Most people would not permit the child to observe and objectively comment on significant departures [from the path], and most children cannot discern and interpret the acts of the adults around them with clarity. The ability is there, but the child has already learned not to cross the authority figures in its life.

Tomas's statement here can be connected with Soleal's statements above, where "measuring your progress" and "peer pressure" come into play in a communal setting. "Most people" do not allow their interactions with children to promote spiritual growth in these ways, but this seems to be the fault of those adults and not the fault of the children.

[Tomas:] Communal living is an upward step in the evolution of man[kind]. It can only be bad if you are undiscerning in your choice of communes. The ability to get along in the commune depends on your level of growth: the higher the level the easier it will be [for you in the commune] and the easier the decision [to join one, the right one] will be. Monasteries and ashrams are examples of very ancient and successful communes. Few leave, and the [spiritual maturity] level of the group is high. This is not the only kind of commune....

It does not explicitly say so here, but extended family units in Paleolithic times, and tribal villages in Neolithic times, served this social-spiritual purpose before the appearance of civilizations made it expedient for people on a spiritual path to create monasteries and ashrams, where they could develop their own spiritual culture separate from the prevailing mundane culture. Communal living is still an appropriate component of the social-spiritual path for many people.

[Tomas:] There are many communes with both males and females, but this also becomes less important as the [spiritual maturity] level rises. The fact that you still question this should give you a hint about some areas that need work. This won't be instant — nothing worthwhile ever is — but the need for erotic love is Maya too. The need for Agape is real, and this [Agape] is the goal. The other [eros] often gets in the way, and prevents the emergence of Agape, for erotic love is always based on something physical and something fleeting — it will fly before the winds, and illusion — or rather disillusion, which is even worse, since it is malfunctioning illusion — will set in. It is easy for even the partially awakened soul to distinguish. Erotic love, which has a tendency to be fickle, and slips away at the mere hint of an unfulfilled expectation, while Agape has no expectations to begin with — [it] asks nothing in return, and [it] accepts, and [it] is the hallmark. [24 July 1973]

Some religious traditions cloistered the men into Monasteries and cloistered the women into Nunneries as a means to circumvent and suppress the urge to perpetuate the species so that the aspirant is celibate and thus free to pursue the spiritual path. Sexuality is one of those phenomena that must be dealt with in a mature way in any commune or it will degrade the spiritual maturity level of the commune; refer to the chapter on Sexuality for an extensive discussion of that topic, because the subject came up repeatedly during the original Michaelian group. "Free love" was a common theme in the "hippy" community in the Bay Area at the time, and some members of the original Michaelian group were okay with that and some were not (so I have been

told by original Michaelian group members, and one can ‘read between the lines’ of the transcriptions). Refer to the chapter, Agape, for a discussion of that topic. Sexuality and Agape are not opposed to each other if one has spiritual maturity and knows what they are doing, as discussed at length in my book *The Tao of Relationships: The Chemistry and Alchemy of Service and Intimacy*.

Most of the remaining quotations in this chapter are from the Michaels. The following is from the second session in which the Michaels were the source.

Dick: Tomas came through as a hard power, but the group was shaky — Gene and Susan, Carol. Gene is pivotal to the group and feels he may have to drop out. [What is a] viable group?

The viability of the group depends upon the ability of the individuals involved to rise above the trivial circumstances driving them apart. It is within the grasp of each of you to do this. It is in your Karma to seek the path you wish to follow. You have sought it many times before. The closer you become [to each other], the easier it will be for you to recall [past lives]. The ability to define your purpose in this existence [lifetime] will even come to you. The group has one thing the individual cannot tap alone, and that is the collective memory. The ability to see the lesson which is being learned is difficult enough in a group, let alone in solitary. The relationships within this group are ancient. I realize this is a new concept for you to swallow, but in order to progress further, you must come to grips with this.... Your group is not complete by any stretch of the imagination. You have chosen very definite roles for this life. An ancient entity is coming together within this group. That is why you feel powerful emanations from certain members. [17 August 1973]

The above quotation does not mention communal living, but I include it here because the viability of a commune is contingent on similar factors as the viability of an intimate spiritual group such as the original Michaelian group was supposed to become. For instance, it helps considerably if the people involved are kindred and friended souls who have Agreements to pursue their spiritual paths together. If you palpably feel the “energy” of the group and the members of the group, that is a good sign that you truly belong together. In my opinion, one of the most valuable components of the Michaelian teachings, as compared to others, is the emphasis on finding your kindred and friended souls, and doing your spiritual work with them; refer to the chapter “Strangers”.

You have all made strides toward eliminating superfluous material possessions. Don’t fall into the trap of begrudging younger souls their possessions. This is merely transference of Identification, and equally pervasive. [The] teaching is a full time obligation. If you wish to make this commitment, you must resign yourselves to the fact that someone must support the teaching. In order to stay alive, you must eat. We see no virtue in crippling asceticism. The danger lies in immoderation [at the other end of the wealth–poverty spectrum].... False Personality does not want you to have a commune. [20 October 1973]

Refer to the chapter “Identification” for more on that psychological issue. This answer was in response to a discussion about the fact that Robert, the leader of the local Gurdjieff group, received some support from people on welfare. The counsel here is to ignore what others do in their commune that seems wrong to you, and have your own commune that is neither too rich nor too poor, because toward either extreme one is distracted from spiritual growth; refer to the chapter “Asceticism and Austerity”.

Dick: As a child, I was in Essence [while] playing with my toys, watching the dust particles float by in the sunlight, knowing that my father would provide the necessities for me and my mother would cook the food and clean for me. Is Michael saying that the universe will provide for us so that we need not feel hurried (or is it harried)?

We are saying that. Jesus said it also. All of the highest teachers have said this. The harassment is self-produced. The only way you can get off the physical cycle [‘treadmill’] is to rise above this. You cannot bring it here.

Matthew 6:26 — “Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they?” [New International Version] More is said further on about the Physical Plane being geared for toiling for survival, unless one takes steps to get off that treadmill and onto a spiritual path of liberation.

The reason I could sit there peacefully was i didn’t have to worry about food. I have provided for my own children. If Essence is Snow White and Red Riding Hood, we have to go into this dependency on Michael or whomever is going to take care of us. Otherwise we have to scurry around to produce what we need. I would be happy to go back into that state, it’s so lovely. Unless you become independently wealthy, you must forage for yourself. To go into Essence completely, there must be trust. As a child, there is no trust, there is knowing that you will be cared for. Something tells the child as he grows older, that this idyllic situation will end and it will be up to him to take care of himself.

The Roles in Essence provide the necessary food, clothing, and shelter without the scurrying. This adult play can be financially rewarding. That is why we have told you that communal living is an upward step in spiritual

evolution. This [communal living] allows you to pursue the Role in Essence [which is not so much the case elsewhere]. There will be those who will provide the other necessities.

Every Role has a natural role that it enjoys playing in society and culture. Each Role satisfies Essence by doing what comes naturally to it; it is not really “work/toil/scurry/foraging” when a Role gets to do what it wants. A commune consisting of Michaelian students would tend to organize to take advantage of these Role-ish natural aptitudes and inclinations. Ideally, a commune would have all of the Roles in the same proportion as found in nature. In descending order, that is: Server, Artisan, Warrior, Scholar, Sage, Priest, King.

Geared for toiling, we may carry this into our Essence Role. There's that old fear of insecurity. We have to build fast so that we can paint fast for fear to provide.

If panic sets in, you all have skills that are marketable and can provide fairly steady income. [27 October 1973]

The only commune that I have personal knowledge of (Twin Oaks, Louisa, Virginia) was geared for psychological and social well-being, not spiritual growth. They were mostly self-sustaining in terms of food, via gardening and farming. To make money, they had two commercial enterprises, weaving hammocks and producing tofu. So far as I know, members of the original Michaelian group were not skillful at that sort of thing, so I can see why they might panic at the prospect of communal living.

This School does not need to grow to large proportions in order to teach. It probably will work better with a limited selection of students; people living on a ranch, healing with laying on of hands, and healing of the soul with messages.

Perhaps they would charge for these services. If anyone in the original Michaelian group was a hands-on healer, I do not know about it. Dick was a medical doctor, and Gene was a surgeon, but you cannot do those things well while in a commune, unless you provide your services in a local hospital.

Will this school be rich or poor?

For a while, it will be touch and go — on the poor side. Several in your group need the growth involved in farming, leaving the city and being aware of themselves. Then the school will grow in spurts and become large. It will never become an extremely rich school; it is not necessary. Part of your evolution will be the loss of your ego, which [ego] would like the richness. It is nicer to be rich, greater to be poor. Your [spiritual] growth will come faster. At some time in your growth, you will need only what is around you at the moment, and the materials will no longer be necessary. It is not even so far off as you think, as you are moving in that direction anyway. Most of those in this group are moving away from the material, and this is necessary for their growth and is good. It can lead to great leaps in soul work. [20 November 1973]

The prediction of the original Michaelian group forming a commune never happened, nor has it happened in any subsequent Michaelian teachings group. Physical and spiritual realms are reciprocally related, meaning that as one focuses on one it increases and the other decreases. Per a previous statement, it is not good to be too poor or too rich, if either extreme interferes with focus on the spiritual path.

The integrated Fragments of your Entity, which are a part of the low Astral body, have a tremendous pull on you. It is almost as though they are calling you home. The strength comes from those Fragments that have already integrated and are no longer subjected to Karma. You are a part of this Entity, not separate from it, but there is now a partition between you and those Fragments available, so to speak. It is up to you whether [or not] you can draw upon the conglomerate knowledge. You must understand that you are no longer separated from your integrated Fragments. They are very much a part of you. When the Entity first Fragments and all of it is on the Physical Plane, there is wide separation, then there is progressive integration. All of the Fragments still incarnate have the pull exerted on them by their Astral Fragments. There is no “real” separation, merely a physical barrier that is easily scaled. The whole is the sum of the parts. We [the Michaels] are an Entity-integrated whole. There is no sense of loss, wistfulness, poignancy, or what have you. The loss is perceived only on the Physical Plane. Now we are whole. Before, we were split apart and therefore had less than total. Right now you feel that the loss of the individuality will be felt as pain. This is not true. The individuality is painful, not the integration.

It sounds like individuality is a crutch and not a good thing. That is one reason communal living is good. You become a working unit, and communicate on a mind-to-mind level. [22 November 1973]

Learning to work together intimately in a commune on the Physical Plane is analogous to the reuniting of kindred souls on the Astral Plane. That is why it is important for you to find your kindred souls on the Physical Plane and begin the process of the reintegration of your Entity. One of the most intense ways to accelerate the process of reintegration is to live communally. However, if non-kindred souls attempt intimacy in a commune,

as proven on many such attempts, negative intimacy often results rather than positive intimacy. So choose your commune wisely.

Take a look at the problems that bring millions of people to the psychiatric couch each year, and they all boil down to alienation. The greatest advantage of communal living is the elimination of isolation in an opportunity to grow in an environment that is protective and nurturing.

This statement assumes that you live with the people who are right for you. If you live communally with people who are not right for you, then you will not feel protected and nurtured.

If you are concerned about others taking advantage of you, this simply means that much more work is needed in this area by you. Then you must get to a [head-]space where no one else can take advantage of you. You can become invulnerable, particularly if you stop taking a lack of enthusiasm on others' part as a personal slight. You have much work to do in the area of "being", or being able to live one day at a time. How many times have your dire fantasies borne fruit?

We discussed some of the problems each of us saw in living together.

This discussion is a definitely positive step and should be carried further. The solution is not a permanent one, but should give you some idea of what communal living is all about. The pressures of the jobs are in the way, but how can we convince you that you have created the circumstances and are now throwing up additional obstacles. Some of these are valid, but can be solved. You must have a system of prioritizing assignments that can be converted into something viable only if the priorities can be made more realistic: not so many "shoulds" and "have to's", more wants and needs.

Re-frame the problems into opportunities and challenges. In any case, don't just jump thoughtlessly into a communal situation: prepare by thinking through the details as well as the overview.

We had more discussion of how to simplify our lives.

We offer encouragement. The details of the business transactions change from day to day. These details can be worked out in just such a way as you have been discussing. We suggest that you continue to discuss it in the light of liquidation of excess holdings and duplication of energies. For now, this will be an enormous step.

Is there a message for our group for the new year?

We would think that cohesion would be enough a goal to keep you going. There is a very viable structure beginning now with all of you who would be willing to live on a reduced scale in order to free yourselves from Maya. This is what we have endeavored to bring about. Merely the cognizance is a start. The details must be worked out by each of you in a mutually satisfactory manner. Believe it or not, consensus can be reached within this group. Some will take longer than others, but even they will eventually verify. [30 December 1973]

Refer to the chapter "Maya" for more information about the illusory nature of the modern Western socio-cultural milieu that works against communal living. The fact that we live in a democracy, where voting counts and the majority vote prevails, is good practice for planning a commune. However, it takes a very long time to arrive at a consensus when the Occidental culture is geared for individuality rather than collectivism.

Can we pull the group together by having more social life?

We are gratified that our message took root this rapidly. Seems that most groups purported to be on the [spiritual] path have much somberness in common. Perhaps this is why the rate of failure is so alarmingly high. This Teaching should eventually free you from the yoke of collective [socio-cultural] guilt, then the sober affect will be even more inappropriate. Learn joy now and it will not be such a shock then. The culture places the load of guilt right out in front of the child where it must either trip over it or stop short of all understanding. The child eventually shoulders part of this, either willingly or not, and carries it through life, unless it happens to meet with a Teaching that shows it that there is no guilt. This culture is guilty vaguely overtly about all things that seem light and airy. The emphasis is on work, and then possibly you may go on to another better place where you won't have to work so hard — and of course you students realize that this is nonsense. In fact, the load of toil holds you back rather than enhancing your work towards spiritual growth. The emphasis on otherworldliness has become mired in false concepts. [10 January 1974]

The Occidental culture sends mixed messages. On the one hand, the "pursuit of happiness" is written into the American Declaration of Independence, but the nation is also built on the Puritan ethic of hard work: "Idle hands are the devil's workshop". Children are generally expected to grow out of their playfulness and into taking life (too) seriously in adulthood. If they do not, then the society guilt-trips them. Perhaps a healthy "declaration of inter-dependence" is in order; this is not co-dependence, which is a sick relationship.

Part of this [Michael] teaching consists of eliminating the isolation and the duplication of energies. If this is unacceptable, then it is not the teaching for them.

We would say something about therapy at this point. It is within the capabilities of all of you to resolve your life crises and walk the path of spiritual growth. We are attempting to provide for you an environment where this will be more than just possible — it will be a reality. The rejection of this will be a choice that you will make yourself — realize that. There are those in this group who can guide the others in providing such a growing, nurturing environment, but you must choose. You only have a choice; we cannot make it for you. [24 January 1974]

Older souls tend to have innate resources for resolving their own psychological issues without the help of professional counseling psychologists. With help of the Michaels, and with the help of advanced students in the original Michaelian group, people who have psychological issues should be able to improve in a commune.

In order for this group to achieve the cohesion necessary to provide growth, a level of intimacy and trust far exceeding what you now have must be reached. This cannot be achieved through dialogue. Dialogue is False Personality's defense against Emotional Center. [31 January 1974]

Refer to the chapters "Intimacy" and "Trust" and "False Personality" for the Michael's thoughts on those subjects. The Intellectual Center that is encumbered with False Personality tends to rationalize away the legitimate desires that the Emotional Center might have for the support that it would receive in a healthy commune, which is built on the goals of trust and intimacy.

We agree that much work needs to be done by all of you here present toward eliminating all nonessential dialogue. This, of course, may eventually result in your being acutely uncomfortable when you are not with others in the [Michael] teaching. This is only one of the myriad reasons for spiritual communities such as we have suggested. Silence comes much more easily to those who are secure in the love of those around them.

Many spiritual teachings down through the millennia have discouraged trivial chit-chat about mundanities and inanities, as it keeps one down in the Intellectual Center. It goes beyond minimizing small talk in daily life: the function of meditation and concentration (often recommended by the Michaels; see that chapter) is to learn to silence the Intellectual Center "monkey mind", the so-called "roof-brain chatter", thus allowing the attention and focus to rise to higher Centers. It can certainly be uncomfortable to have to self-censor when in the company of non-believers in the Michaelian teachings. It is liberating to be in the company of other Michaelian students, even if it is via an online discussion group.

We are interested in centralizing this teaching and eliminating the most distracting duplications that now occur, preventing most of you from serving to the limits of your ability. [03 February 1974]

"Duplications" represent inefficiencies in the total system that can be minimized if the workload is centralized in a commune. For instance, if many people live in one big house that needs to be taken care of collectively, that is more efficient than those many people living in many houses that need to be taken care of individually. Food preparation is another "duplication" that is made more efficient in a commune.

We ohm'd in a circle and acted out a, "Don't you ever, ever, ever, ever let me catch you brushing that dog's teeth with my toothbrush."

As the group becomes more and more cohesive, many more sharing experiences may take place without the self-consciousness present in more multi-disciplined gatherings. This will create a unique atmosphere in which growth is almost certain to occur. [06 February 1974]

Not only can the workload be minimized, but the fun times can be maximized.

Soleal was the ruler of a planet where communes were common, so he had a lot to say about how that worked:

Soleal was willing to be with the group this evening. (the capital letters are words from Soleal in the transcript.)

[Soleal:] I have no real revelations to offer, just that I am struck again by the tremendous scattering of energies even in this group, due in the most part to the myriad personal agendas that take Intellectual Center and sometimes Emotional Center out of play for long periods of time. The lady who has prepared the paper has hit upon an important truth when she speaks of diverse goals within a tight partnership such as your culture demands within the custom of marriage, or really I should say, divergent [goals]. The goals of the [Michael] teaching, and thus of the students must be unified in order to be effective. The teacher can only suggest to you the methods, if you wish, to grow. Right now the response within the group is almost solely intellectual. There

is relatively little emotional commitment to the teaching — or to each other, which is really more important. This leads to the haphazardness with which the group goes about its business.

Communes should be vigilant against “scattering, myriad, diverse, haphazard” goals. Communes should be geared to satisfying the Emotional Center and its desire for the warmth of closeness rather than the Intellectual Center and its desire for coldness of calculation.

Comment: everything we do should complement the goal of the group. We tend to take on too many things to do. You don't have to give up everything, but you should pull your life towards the goal.

[Soleal:] I would like to point out to you at this time that many of you are dabblers. You dabble in this and that, tasting all of the fruits, eating of none, and in this light, you also dabble in spiritual growth as well. Now this is all right; there is nothing wrong with this; it incurs little Karma. But on the other hand, it leads nowhere. Also the concept of Agape requires the actions of a closely-knit group of supportive students in order to come to reality. No one can feel Agape in an ivory tower. It can only be felt when higher [Cardinal] Centers are contacted in the course of close association with others. There is no way to do this alone that I know of. Where the misunderstanding has come about, I think, is where the teacher [the Michaels] has advised you of the dangers of the cloisters and the stifling atmosphere there that retards growth, and has pointed out to you the relative lack of success among those who choose the solitary path. If you wish, we could prepare for you some examples of what works here [on Soleal's planet].

Comment: The solitary way of the mountain-top yogis, nunneries, monkeries, etc.

There are healthy groups where the intimacy is intense enough to foster Agape, and there are healthy communes where the intimacy is healthy enough to foster Agape. Examples of unhealthy communes are authoritarian dogmatic “cloisters” that “stifle” the inmates with repressive and oppressive rules that forbid exploration and experimentation. Compare this quote with the previous one, which talked about scattering of energies, and we come to the notion that there is beneficial discipline and there is detrimental discipline, and the balanced proportion of the two is different for different people.

Comment: When the need manifests, the group will come together. In TFR group (“Time for Reality”), there is much trust in each other. We can be honest and open up.

Comment: Gurdjieff was organized and was not haphazard, and Michael says the only thing valid was the Centers and a life beyond the physical ...

[Soleal:] At great risk of developing some real Friction, I offer this, in part my own, in part the teaching, not yet inseparable. In most of you I see great fears of invasion of very private worlds. This is, of course, in great measure due to a lower level of trust, and also to guilt. Many of you still are not convinced that your very private lifestyle will be acceptable to the others, and you are singularly unwilling to risk finding out. Also, there is a tenacious desire to run from any possible molding of your lives by others. Many of you need to work on this, for this is Personality digging in for a last ditch stand against Essence, which would not permit the molding in the first place. All of you have a set of rigid specifications set by Personality concerning your needs. None of those are valid; only that which comes from Essence is valid. If you are being completely honest with yourselves and others, the need for privacy and aloneness disappears, and is replaced by the feeling of Agape. This is not easy. The teacher [the Michaels] has not said that it is easy, only that it can be obtained. On this world, we are faced daily with the need for continued growth, and spend much time solving those kinds of problems that beset you all. The difference being that we know that it is a workable system, and feel the necessity to keep it alive. It is sometimes difficult and sometimes disheartening, but in the long run, rewarding beyond words.

Comment: We can't sit and listen without applying the words. We have to learn from what's going on. One wanted to discuss things [among] ourselves [rather] than to listen to Soleal, but when it was said that Soleal's time was limited, unlike Michael's, we wanted to hear more of what he had to say.

[Soleal:] I have a finite amount of time. If you wish, I will share with you some of my thoughts on organization. I think that one of the problems with the teacher [the Michaels], and also with me, in accepting your outlines for organization would have to be your reliance to such a great extent upon the money that can be poured into your group, excluding a number of students who can offer far more than a mere medium of exchange (such as money), and consequently, the teacher has vetoed your plans. This is Bad Work to exclude on this base, and also to dwell at such length upon all of the directions as contingencies which might happen. Do you realize that this is as much a fantasy as the idealist's dream. I am not an idealist, but am certainly willing to run a trial-by-error test on anything that seems to be meaningful in the end. If everyone on your world had waited until all of the loose ends were neatly tucked in, no progress ever would have been made. There is such a thing as

obstinate realism. We have on this world a vast system of very large communes, so do not tell me that they cannot work. All are on a total goods-for-service basis, and all goods are common property, yet we have all of the emotions, the pride, and certainly the pleasures that you desire. You seem to feel that sharing in some way removes your right to feel justified. That is ridiculous. Some of you are afraid that you will be knocked from your pedestals in a communal system. You are probably right. That will be Good Work, believe me, for it will be the False Personality which will fall. Many times this is with [a] resounding crash, but it always levels out in the end. [Soleal:] The reason this [communal] system has not worked on your world has been for the most part due to your tendency to give up at the first sign of opposition, and to fall backwards to old, safe patterns. It takes a tremendous and diligent organization to keep this system going, and one of the prerequisites which is indispensable is an orderly mind that can detach from the mundane and focus on the long range goals, whatever they may be. In our system [on my planet], the good of many is valued over the good of the individual, and I will admit that you have good, sound cultural mores and a right virtue of your training to regard this as scary. But however frightening it may sound at the outset, the good of the many eventually serves the needs of the individual. The system, in order to work at all, of course, requires, above all, patience and the belief that your individual needs — and notice I did not say “wants” — will be served. The expectation of instant gratification of all wants is consummately absurd, and belongs in childhood.

Whenever absolute rigidity is introduced into a system, it fails. What the teacher would like to see you work on is a flexible but orderly system designed to serve the needs of the entire group, but pliable enough to bend a little when the needs of one are totally disregarded. Even we [on my planet] do not totally disregard a cry for help as long as it is valid. We have many discussions on problem solving, and our Mature Souls are as much [metaphorically adrift] ‘at sea’ as yours. It is just that we are all pulling together rather than against each other. We have a focus for our energies. We have the time to pursue this type of endeavor without the threat of outside interference. It is all right here to lock yourselves away from the others, and there is no condemnation, but some effort is made to discover the cause of that antisocial need, and where needed, help is given. The most prominent cause of suicide on your planet is your respect of the privacy of others. Nothing helps like person-to-person contact. We [on my planet] are a continuous society — you are not. We do not shut down either intellectually or emotionally when night falls. Your level of trust is so low that you must be very selective in those in whom you may confide. That is not the case here. This makes a very great difference. [18 February 1974]

In his book *Moral Calculations*, Laslo Mero makes the point that, according to the branch of mathematics called “game theory”, the best strategy for winning the game of life is a combination of cooperation and competition, where cooperation between individuals has a slight edge over competition between individuals when it comes to “winning” the game of life. In other words, in all situations, especially in communal living situations, one should look for win-win solutions to problems rather than win-lose solutions.

Cynthia and Nichols, a husband and wife pair, investigated a commune in Oregon, and reported back. Discussion with original Michaelian group members ensued:

Dick: The Town meeting for planning sounds like super Maya to me. It is making Maya what it ought to be.

Cynthia: It is a planning process and one of growth involving the people.

Gene: The meetings are where it is just talk and I want “To be.”

Cynthia: The Town Planning requires a constant dialogue. You have to earn a place in the Town. One without a sense of community cannot just walk into it. So, there’s a need for planning.

Many of you are in search of the golden fleece. This does not hang in a commune more than in Troy. Of course, they will carry their mixed bag of problems with them. The advantage in a closed community of that sort is the opportunity to live the teaching in a supportive atmosphere, and by example spill over on to those around you. This is not to say that you will be heard by any of them. Probably not many of them will respond, but those who do will contribute, and will in turn aid in your own personal growth process by providing the Photographs.

There are chapters on Maya and Photography in this book. Note what the Michaels say here, that communal living is likely not an escape from one’s personal issues, or an escape from a world with which one cannot cope, or an escape from a world in which one is incompetent. Rather, a commune is likely to exacerbate one’s issues. This might be okay if one approaches a commune with high self-awareness, and the commune is willing and able pragmatically, not idealistically, to put up with, and then mitigate, everyone’s psychological issues.

"In Greek mythology, the Golden Fleece is the fleece of the golden-woolled winged ram, Chrysomallos, which was held in Colchis. The fleece is a symbol of authority and kingship. It figures in the tale of the hero Jason and his crew of Argonauts, who set out on a quest for the fleece by order of King Pelias, in order to place Jason rightfully on the throne of Iolcus in Thessaly." [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Golden_Fleece< — retrieved 02 June 2021]

The Michaels made an error when associating the golden fleece with Troy, but as an allusion to a very high idealized goal, it works in the above passage just fine.

We see one advantage in community, and that is the environmental one. We suggest it as a means to an end, where you could, through group effort, free hours of time for individual growth. Perhaps you need not involve yourselves at all with those who are in the awareness movement. We would point out to you that this is a valid starting point for those with ambiguous feelings and the need for an elusive "something better". Many accidentally find this "something better" by going through the awareness processes, and others go on to a spiritual growth process such as the one we would see you involve yourselves in. Many of you came to this because of the Friction in your lives, seeking a method of handling this and still staying above ground emotionally, and toward this end some of you have made much progress. Insights have come to some, but they have chosen to discount these as irrational, mainly because the changes would be immediately painful, and immediate pain is more scary than projected pleasures are worth. [24 February 1974]

The "awareness movement" was a socio-cultural phenomenon that was rampant in the Bay Area of California in the 1970s. Many original Michaelian group members participated in it to one extent or another, such as attending meetings and seminars. Refer to the chapter "EST — Erhard Seminars Training" for an example.

Child-oriented atmospheres are not for all souls. This should be geared toward those [adults] who are in Essence. When rearing children, dormitory-type living quarters for children often produce startling independence and growth in both the parents and the children, but one should not be forced to spend time there unless it is in Essence. [10 July 1974]

The presence of children certainly complicates the function of communes.

Beth: I feel I have known Matt before. I felt good with him five minutes after meeting him.

In fact, you have known each other before [in other lifetimes]. In your group, as in this one, there is an intermingling of familiar Entities and Fragments. This produces a special sort of cohesion that enables the Work to proceed. Those who drop by the wayside usually belong in another Cadre [of Entities]. They do not always know why, but the feeling is just not right and they leave. [14 July 1974]

This Q&A exchange says nothing about communal living, but I include it in this chapter because, if there is one single factor that might help a commune to succeed more than any other factor, perhaps it is that it be populated by kindred and friended souls. I suggest that this knowledge about kindred and friended souls facilitating spiritual growth is one reason that the Michaels revealed the information, and emphasized it.

Someone asked what must we do to become awake.

We have of course outlined to this cadre [the original Michaelian group] the steps that they must take if they are to ever become sufficiently awake to hear the words. We have told them of the highest truth, which is Agape, which is the unqualified acceptance of other creatures as the greater part of self. We have given them the tools for attainment of this state, which are yes, meditation, concentration, fasting, and study. We have endeavored to warn them, or rather apprise them, of the pitfalls they may encounter on the path. We have recommended that they simplify their lives, that they may free the necessary energies for pursuit of this objective. We would give you the same advice. It cannot change. This is as we have said many times, the shortest path of which we are aware. The most penetrating barriers on the Physical Plane are the "I cannot" belief systems that stand in the way of spiritual evolution. The easiest way we know of to break through these barriers is to eliminate the alienation, the frustrating isolation that your culture now imposes. [20 November 1974]

Here again, this Q&A exchange does not explicitly mention communal living, but I include it in this chapter because it is relevant because communal living when done correctly fosters Agape, simplifies life, provides opportunities for spiritual pursuits, mitigates alienation.

The Michaels were on a roll in following series of paragraphs, where they claimed that communal living, or something like it, is one of the best ways to promote the spiritual growth that the original Michaelian group members sought.

Lyle asked what stops him from submitting to love — growth — what is the barrier there for him to the emotional experience?

First of all we would like to correct a semantic slip. That is, [the erroneous notion] that “knowledge” is understanding. What has not passed into understanding with you is “input” — nothing more — into the [bio-] computer to be stored. The transformation [from knowledge to understanding] only occurs when the choice has been made — the commitment. The methods you suggest would of course be impossible for us to enforce, although we do of course recognize the method. In this light we have suggested to you an alternative method wherein much stripping [of the barriers of Maya and False Personality] would occur, and you would all be forced to confront your own and other student’s Personalities. When you commit yourselves finally to a cause, whatever that cause might be — Christianity, occultism, revolution, *et cetera, et cetera* — there is too much at stake to pull out, and you are forced to confront your blocks, and either sink or swim with them. The concept of extended community or family is one environment in which this can come about. The students can sometimes overcome these blocks or barriers rapidly when their livelihood depends upon it. Right now in this cadre nothing real is at stake. There is nothing to lose if the students are unable to work through their blocks.

The barrier between you and the Emotional Center is one that many in this cadre share — you are not alone. The sacrifices, yes, are necessary in yours and other cases, for only through these “sacrifices” will you be able to have this experience. As it is now, there is no good reason, and your Personality is well aware of it. In many ways you and other students are much like the Sunday Catholics throughout the world, who do not have the experience [of transforming knowledge into understanding] either, because there is no commitment.

If one is serious about one’s spiritual path, then sometimes it is useful to intentionally and deliberately put yourself in a situation that is challenging.

We would see you all examine your short-term goals with relation to this teaching. That is, what is it you hope to gain from our association. If this includes the possibility of spiritual growth, then we would suggest that you reexamine the steps toward that goal that we have outlined. If you only expect to gain data, then this will surely be a disappointment to you in the long run. Many of you are looking for the experiences you sense the other students are having, but you are unwilling to work for this in the ways we have suggested. You are content to sit back, sigh, and say, “oh, shit”. This is of course an option, but one we do not encourage.

How many times have we repeated the steps you must take? Examine the tenets of the world’s great religions and the greatest teachings now extant on this planet. You will find this same advice again and again — perhaps clothed in different semantics, but nevertheless the same — that upon which Christianity was based, that upon which Judaism has survived for the centuries, the pillars of Islam, the teachings of Siddhartha Guatama, the Tao Teh Ching.

Refer to the chapter “Religion” for the Michaels’ thoughts on religion and religions.

Until this teaching becomes a way of life for you, there will be no experiences for any of you. The only way we know of to experience anything is to live it — whether you be on the Physical, Astral, Causal, or the high plane, it does not matter. Committing yourselves begins the transformation [from knowledge to understanding].

The concept of “pilgrimage” in some of the best teachings extant on this planet do a marvelous job of stripping, if the pilgrimage is performed in the proper state of mind. We have suggested to you something even harder in this culture: that of living together. Some of you would much prefer to walk across the desert from Medina to Mecca than even to contemplate living together. This is why it would in the long run be valuable. It is perhaps the hardest task you would ever undertake on the Physical Plane, for everything in your culture mitigates against it. The entire culture is achievement-oriented, and this alone implies alienation and competition. Anti-achievement groups [such as spiritual communes] are frightening, and therefore anti-culture, and to be eliminated. Financial integrity is the watchword of this culture, and therefore fraught with Maya. This can always be easily seen in any culture. That which is held up as the goal of society is the goal of False Personality, and therefore opposed to spiritual growth.

Now, we are not suggesting that you plunge yourselves into poverty. We would see that you live well so that there is no struggle to survive, for the main reason that if you must struggle to live, you cannot devote the amount of time necessary for spiritual evolution. This is a lifetime commitment. It is not something that you can work on on Saturday night [when the original Michaelian group usually met] and forget about for the rest of

the week. You could not keep it tucked away in some dim, dusky, cerebral corridor and only take it out when company comes.

We have spoken to you many — no, countless — times about what you and we choose to call a “trust level”. This trust level is of course essential to Agape or a spiritual love. The Personality can *never* experience this. The Personality cannot trust, therefore cannot love. If this trust level is to develop, it must develop in an environment of almost constant exposure. If Agape is to develop, it must develop in an environment where students observe each other in all facets of life, not just when the students are on their good meeting behavior. It is easy to love most of you during the weekly comings together of this cadre. We doubt that this would hold true twenty-four hours a day without *much* work. Most of you trust each other only superficially. Not one of you feel the bonds that we would foster in this cadre, but the ability is there, and a start has been made several times. However, when it becomes frightening, it is quickly aborted, and the subject is changed rapidly over to something less scary. We have recently decided that this will no longer be the case, at least where we are concerned. We will no longer go along with the whims, the capriciousness, of various students who do not wish to face their barriers. Perhaps then we should say the winnowing has begun. [14 December 1974]

The energy of this Saturday session continued into the next Saturday session:

Of course, there is a method by which you can override the instinctive behavior patterns that separate you from the truth. We believe it was the man Lewis Carroll who first suggested that you do at least six impossible things before breakfast. Just gradually forcing yourselves to attempt all of these impossible things, such as meditation — and even communal living, which is the most impossible thing of all, since it violates all of the precepts of all the most prestigious barrier groups in this culture. To admit that this might be a viable alternative to some of your struggles would be to give up all of your cherished concepts of how you should suffer. The reason that this concept of communal living has been such a dismal failure when tried on this world is fairly easy to understand when we reflect upon the foregoing. We do not even suggest that you would be able to solve all the problems that would arise, but even a positive discussion would be a step in the right direction. As all previous discussions have revolved around how none of these problems could ever be solved. [21 December 1974]

The energy of this Saturday session continued into the next Saturday session:

The concept of cooperation is so frightening to the personality that it fights this, even on a very limited scale, such as a small commune. The knowledge that concessions would have to be made, and the Personality would have to give into another, keeps even the discussion down on a theoretical level. There are other examples of course, but we use this one simply because it has been thrown out to this group, and you have all had an opportunity to observe and Photograph the various reactions to this concept.

We have spoken to you earlier of fear. The fear of closeness in your culture is quite a phenomenon. Living communally is a frightening thing. It is therefore an experience through which you may learn to move through and beyond fear. Alienation is not synonymous with aloneness. Aloneness is essential for spiritual evolution — aloneness as experienced in the meditative state. You must ultimately stand alone. Alienation is not this spiritual aloneness, but merely a defense mechanism of the False Personality, which wishes to enjoy its illusion of uniqueness. [28 December 1974]

A time comes when merely talking about communal living should cease, and one should just do it.

A question was asked how to go about acquiring property for communal growth.

[Soleal:] Just do it. Enough of you are able to look at this as the way out of the alienation, and a new start toward true growth, so that failure is unlikely. That failure is unlikely anyway with such a preponderance of older souls. [01 February 1975]

In the concluding comments on this chapter, I have some advice about how to start a commune, and it is not as radical a recommendation as Soleal suggested, purchasing a property.

And yet, the original Michaelian group members were not finished talking about starting a commune:

This group engaged in a lengthy discussion of communal living, discipline of small children, the rights of teenagers, and the problem of domestic animals. We then asked the teacher for a comment.

Many thoughts, of course. The whole purpose of bringing you together communally was not to present you with insurmountable situations and more Friction than you can handle. The purpose instead was to bring you together in the Work. The most startling advantage of all would not be apparent until you were well into the venture, and had some experience in dealing with a lack of alienation.

The subject of domestic animals is interesting, in that domesticating animals was one of the first symptoms of growing alienation in this culture many centuries ago — almost, in fact, at the dawn of Creatures of Reason on this world. Once man gives up his need for alienation, he can then, and only then, look at the reasons for his need for substitutes; he uses domesticated animals in lieu of people. They are expendable, relatively cheap, and give away no secrets. (If you are not wearing a cape, how can you conceal a dagger?) If the trust level is high enough, the need for substitutes will diminish. Of course, your needs will continue for a time, until you are willing to look at the basis of the need. Perhaps there will be some things that you will be unwilling to give up, but you should at least look at them, so that you know where the need is. It is, again, not Bad Work at all if it is done consciously and not Mechanically. Many of your needs now are based upon the core beliefs and master Tapes that are stored for use by False Personality. Looking at them collectively will be more valuable again than looking at them individually, just as looking at the core beliefs and master Tapes will be.

These paragraphs refer to several subjects that have chapters in this book: “Friction”, “Work”, “Creature of Reason”, “Trust”, “Good Work — Bad Work”, “Mechanical Man”, “Personality — True and False”, “Bio-computer [Tapes]”.

We would see facilitation of the [spiritual] Work in as many areas as possible. Selling your talents is not beyond reach, but you can also consider projects upon which the entire [original Michaelian group] cadre could be involved, such as the workbook, the greetings, and perhaps even the pamphlets. All of you are verifying the difficulty of dealing in the mainstream while in the Work. This will not become easier — it will, in fact, become much more difficult as time goes on. You will wish to devote more and more time to the Work and less to the mainstream.

Children in this culture are permitted to drain off enormous amounts of usable energy in the form of hostility. This is, of course, to be deplored in the Work. Students must learn to realistically look at the amount of Friction caused by their reactions to the children. Students in a communal situation must learn that, if the responsibility for the Friction becomes communal, it will not be allowed to violate the inner spaces. We have no quarrel with firm, loving disciplinary measures issued by the most competent student. This would eliminate much of the Friction. Looking at the Overleaves should be extensively used in determining who would be most effective in the various Friction-fraught areas.

Of course, children should not be allowed to destroy. If they destroy in childhood, they will destroy later also. As soon as a child has reached the age where he can hear the words, he should be brought into the main body of the teaching. It is absurd to keep children in the dark for as long as they are in this society. They are so much more capable than you dream, and this capability can be exploited in so many ways you would be astonished. If the children are concretely rewarded by being given their fair share of authority, they will more readily accept responsibility. No one in this teaching accepts kindly responsibility without authority, yet [they] suppose that children will. [12 February 1975]

Thaddeus: I am aware of the next step for me and it scares the \$#!+ out of me.

You see, taking the next step is different than the previous steps have been. It involves leaving something behind, possibly for the remainder of this life. Also, the communal life would set up many natural rhythms, and you will run from these. We invite only those who truly see themselves as students to take this step. For those who do not, it will be a waste of energy, and only result in needless negativity, for it will be experienced in Artificial Space through the Overleaves [rather than Essence] at a vibratory rate of unbelievable coarseness. Of course, with these conditions, communes will fail each and every time.

Billie: Regarding recurring dreams of living in a commune, can't find children, everyone turning against me, making love and no privacy, et cetera.

These are your very real surface fears symbolically experienced as dreams. Really, they are not even symbolic; they are actually fairly overt for dreams. All of you are facing these fears to some degree. The feeling of losing your children is a common one here; also, the fear of no privacy to do your hidden chores, or to hide all of those slightly tarnished activities that you cannot share with anyone because they are so awful. Sex is only one of these things, and you are not alone in this by any means. There is not one student in this room who is not Buffering the true fears about communal living right now. It is not *necessary* that you live on a commune. This is a *choice* that we would see many of you students make as a preference, rather than something that is being forced upon you by an unfeeling, non-human teacher who cannot possibly identify by the way of awesome and anguish of the Physical Plane. Well, we have news for you. All of the Fragments of this Entity were very much alive on the Physical Plane for thousands and thousands of years, and we, as an Entity, have experienced all of

life. The choice is yours, dear students. We have asked that you consider this as a growth potential. We will not experience a feeling of failure [if you don't do this]. We will merely go on to the data-giving phase until it begins to wear thin with even the most tenacious intellectual among you. [21 February 1975]

This was the last meeting of the large group before that phase of the original Michaelian group ended, and only the core group members met occasionally thereafter. However, discussion of communal living did not cease among the core group members:

Liz read a statement received in trance to the effect that a "force" had come into being that would attempt to lead us back into "A influence."

"A Influence" is a Gurdjieff term — meaning: physical only, lacking the spiritual input.

The first that comes to mind is the search for land. We would suggest that you call at least a six-month moratorium on this, as the way you are now going about it could result only in financial disaster for several who are not in the place to weather this storm. During this period of time, serious students could begin to work on consolidating existing households and begin to live together in what is now available.

More is said about "baby steps" toward communal living in my collection of comments at the end of this chapter.

Creating a Frictionless commune will not help anyone's growth. It is the Friction that produces the shocks for growth. Jumping from one well-feathered nest into another produces no Friction. Second, we would recommend that as many of you as can possibly do it, make the trip to the property belonging to the man, Yorgos, [leader of a Gurdjieff/Ouspensky commune] simply to experience what one truly needs to live, and [experience] an environment in which growth can occur. Then, during the next six months, consider this environment and what [Negative Poles of] Overleaves reject it.

Exclusivity for the sole purpose of avoiding Friction is Bad Work and should not be sanctioned, especially by advanced students. There is an awesome order to the cosmos. Yes, we agree with that, but there is no evidence of preordination in all of that order. In other words, we cannot, at this moment, predict who will or won't accept the Work. No one of the new people has Overleaves that would make them unsuitable for the Work. Many are deeper into the Instinctive Center — in fact, almost Trapped there. We also agree with that, but this should be exploited and not run from as though it might contaminate your higher states. None of you is unable to combat this [Instinctive Center] "bullshit" should you chose to do so. Excluding a source of valuable Friction is just another excuse, the same as looking for the ideal land package that will gratify all the [Negative Pole of the] Instinctive Centers involved [with their desire for physical comfort]. Instinctive Centers [dependence on creature comforts] must be rendered unappealing or you will lose the Work. None of you is capable of activating the Sexual Center at will, so you may as well stop worrying about that one too. All [the Centers] you need be concerned with at this time are the three Centers of Work [Moving, Emotional, Intellectual — which need to become Balanced]. It is also true that no Work can be done by any Student until this is understood on more levels than the intellectual. [15 April 1975]

These statements are per the Gurdjieffian understanding of Instinctive Center as referring to physiology, not to the later understanding of Instinctive Center as referring to a personality trait. The understanding of the Sexual Center has also evolved over the course of the evolution of the Michaelian teachings, starting from mere sexuality and ending at energetic excitation in general. Refer to chapters on Centers in this and my other books for more information.

The final comment that I include in this chapter, relevant the subject of communal living but not explicitly mentioned, came nearly two years later:

Dick felt that he wanted to become a Sage [Role], and he felt that this was possible, to change from one Role to another. There was much discussion on a variety of subjects and this was the response:

That state which Dick describes is of course that which this Entity chooses to call Agape. That is, "love". This state cannot be achieved romantically by the Overleaves. In no way can the Personality abandon itself for even one moment. The ego never relaxes its vigil. It is anti-ego to even consider this, for after all, that is when the devil, or as we choose to refer to it, the mass societal ego, can rush in and influence. We have expressed before the frustrations encountered when one tries to reach this state alone. Aloneness is the single most important obstacle to reaching that state of perfection or rapture called Agape, or love. We have stressed friendship as a preliminary stepping stone — not the superficial friendship of the Overleaves, but the sometimes harsh and unremitting friendship of those in your own pathway who will Photograph your Overleaves in both their Negative and Positive Poles, and this must be an almost constant phenomenon or it will not be successful.

Closeness physically with another compatible Fragment can sometimes produce an environment suitable for spiritual evolution, primarily because if there is considerable honesty, and therefore trust, between those involved, the vigil can be relaxed. Positive Poling is required for this relaxation to occur, and in most physical relationships there is too much Negative Poling. For instance, spiritual evolution cannot occur in the presence of jealousy, envy, or greed. As long as the Chief Feature rules you, there will be no change. Perhaps you may wish to look at the way the Chief Feature rules each of you in this room. [30 September 1977]

Comments on Communal Living

Following are some general comments that supplement what the Michaels had to say on the subject of communal living.

- Historically, communes do not have a good track record for success in achieving their presumptive and idealistic goal of spiritual growth — at least not per the original intention. By that I mean that the spiritual growth happens via negative intimacy (trials and tribulations) rather than positive intimacy. Not that there is anything wrong with that. I had a commune-like experience in a fundamentalist pseudo-quasi Christian cult during my youth, and it was an intensely instructive experience that I do not at all regret. What worked about it was that there was a charismatic leader, and we shared a belief system, value system, and behavior system, and we had a collective goal that subsumed and superseded and transcended individual differences (preparing for the Second Coming). What did not work about it was that there was a series of scandals that caused the trust in the leadership to dissolve, and the faith in the belief system to break down (Jesus Christ did not return on schedule).
- The upshot of the communal experience is that oftentimes everyone's psychological issues is exposed by the intensity and the intimacy of the living arrangement, so people do become "enlightened", but only if they can deal effectively in mitigating the darkness that is revealed in their hearts and souls. If not, then disillusionment and disappointment will result when idealistic expectations about the supposed gloriosity of communal life goes unfulfilled, when the commune did not do what it was "supposed" to do. In my view, a commune is *supposed* to reveal people's psychological issues in an environment where that can be dealt with in a supportive environment, unlike normal life in society where we hide our own psychological issues just as everyone else does theirs.
- Communal living is mostly a late Level Mature Soul phenomenon, so there are a lot of issues being worked out in terms of bringing to the surface the psychological issues left over from Younger soul incarnations. Old Souls tend to be less collectivistic and more individualistic than Mature Souls, so they are not so attracted to communal living as a lifestyle. They are also less likely to follow a charismatic leader who offers and proffers some idealistic, glorious, utopian scheme.
- One typical problem is that communes are often led by charismatic personalities of the King and/or Priest and/or Sage persuasion, and if they are not truly enlightened masters, then the temptation and the tendency for the commune to devolve into a cult of personality is almost irresistible. Such leaders attract a certain type of follower, namely a follower who has co-dependency issues. There are healthy, and there are unhealthy, guru-accolyte relationships. One advantage that the original Michaelian group had was that their charismatic leader was the Michaels themselves.
- During the entire two years that the original Michaelian group convened, realistically and pragmatically, it was always too soon to seriously consider starting a commune. The group needed to stabilize, a tremendous amount of spiritual work needed to be done, and a tremendous amount of physical preparation needed to happen. Considering the people and the circumstances, it was always a goofy idea, which they got from the Fellowship of Friends, and which had big ideas.
- In my opinion, the way to start a Michaelian teachings commune is by taking 'baby steps'. One of the main problems of starting a commune seems to be to jump into the detailed planning for a big and complicated commune. This provides enormous logistical problems; there are many working parts that need to get sorted out among many people who might not know each other very well. Oftentimes a charismatic leader likes to do it this way. This is often where communes have gone awry, historically speaking. Forget that. I suggest that there is a better chance for success if there is no charismatic leader. Rather, personally, if I were so inclined, I would look for a situation where there are a number of level-headed, realistic, pragmatic, competent people, all of whom see the numerous

advantages of communal living. Perhaps one should first get just two people to live together amicably in one house, or maybe two couples. Once that configuration is stabilized in mature spirituality, then perhaps add another individual or couple. Rinse and repeat. An alternative to living in one house is to live in the same apartment complex, and add people as units become available. This allows for as much alone time mixed with as much group time as people are comfortable with; one can deal with the inevitable Friction in digestible doses. Once the personalities and relationships are stabilized, the group can graduate to more commune-like living and working arrangements, complete with gardening and some money-making endeavor. If everyone's vision is in alignment with the Life Plans of all involved and not some idealistic delusions, then things will all work out.

- Typically, successful communes interface with the surrounding community in healthy and profitable ways. Some communes go astray because they have some pathology in their ideology or functionality that is not addressed and mitigated, but that only gets worse because the commune is isolated or insulated from corrective sources. That is why healthy interaction with the surrounding community is valuable.
- To me, it seems extraordinarily unlikely that Michaelian teachings students will ever get their act together enough with enough people to even begin to start a commune. It seems more likely to me that some individual Michaelian students, or maybe a few, will be interested in joining an existing spiritually-oriented commune that has a belief, value, and behavior system that is compatible with the Michaelian teachings. Internet resources for finding existing successful and healthy communes are surely available.





⑧ COMMUNICATION

Perhaps you have heard the lament, “What we’ve got here is a failure to communicate”. In the 1967 Paul Newman movie classic, that memorable line is used by the captain of the chain gang to justify beating Cool Hand Luke. It is a component of the human condition that other people have minds of their own, and it is often difficult to get those other people to understand us, and this is not just the case with people who speak different languages. As it so happens, the Michaels had somewhat to say on the subject of communication during the original Michaelian group. Their recommendations do not including beating other people to get your point across; things are more subtle than that.

This chapter is the product of a search for the word “communication” in the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group. This word does not represent a significant component of the Michaelian teachings. However, there are good reasons to discuss the subject in this *Study Papers* book: 1) the subject came up numerous times during the original Michaelian group; 2) some interesting things were said about the subject; 3) the subject is related to a number of other components of the Michaelian teachings that are considered to be significant; 4) students can presumably benefit from having the mentions conveniently collected and commented all in one place; 5) communication issues are unavoidable; they are pervasive in human psychology and sociology and spirituality — subjects covered extensively in this book — so it behooves us to have a working knowledge of them.

The word communication is not capitalized in this chapter or other chapters of this *Study Papers* book because it has no special meaning in the Michaelian teachings; it is not a Michaelian jargon word that needs a definition apart from its use in the common vernacular.

In this chapter, and in some other chapters in this *Study Papers* book, we see that the Michaels were concerned about accuracy of communication. For instance, in the “Bias” chapter we see that the Michaels were concerned that their teaching be conveyed accurately through the channels. For instance, in the “Energy and Energy Leaks” chapter we see that the Michaels were concerned that their students communicate with each other through the proper Centers. In another chapter, “Communal Living”, we see that one of the functions of a commune should be to enhance the quality of communication as the members got to know each other better, and trust each other more. In this chapter, we see that the Michaels were concerned that students communicate accurately with each other by verbal and non-verbal means.

Definition of Communication

Whenever possible, I rely on Wikipedia to provide a definition and description of a term:

The word “communication” has its root in the Latin verb “*communicare*”, which means “to share” or “to make common”. Communication is usually understood as the transmission of information. In this regard, a message is conveyed from a sender to a receiver using some form of medium, such as sound, paper, bodily movements, or electricity. In a different sense, the term “communication” can also refer just to the message that is being communicated or to the field of inquiry studying such transmissions. There is a lot of disagreement concerning the precise characterization of communication and various scholars have raised doubts that any single definition can capture the term accurately. These difficulties come from the fact that the term is applied to diverse phenomena in different contexts, often with slightly different meanings. The issue of the right definition affects the research process on many levels. This includes issues like which empirical phenomena are observed, how they are categorized, which hypotheses and laws are formulated as well as how systematic theories based on these steps are articulated. [<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Communication> — retrieved 28 March 2023]

Personally, I like the meaning given, “to make common”, because if a message sent is not received and the meaning is not understood, then there has been no communication. The Michaels agree with that notion, as we see in the next section.

Communication in the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

The following extracts from original Michaelian group transcriptions are Q&A exchanges, where an original Michaelian group member asks a question (or makes a comment), and the Michaels provide an answer. This is not a subject where there was a development or evolution of a specific revelation of a facet of the Michaelian teachings, as was often the case with the original Michaelian group. On the other hand, this is a subject that benefits by division into subcategories. As is my custom, I often provide some explanatory comments following the question or answer. Underlined words in the Q&A exchanges are my emphasis, to draw attention to what it is that I comment on. Sometimes I embed words or phrases [in brackets] that I believe help to clarify the question or the answer.

Channeling Communication

It is not easy for non-physical beings to communicate accurately with physical beings. Somewhat was said about this in the chapter “Bias”, but more is said about it here. The first mention of communication in the original Michaelian group transcriptions is this one, about a month before the Michaels appeared:

Sue: Can we hear more about planes?

[Tomas:] You understand that this is an extensive subject. The time [element] in planes is presently misunderstood. The planes are different levels, as in ladders, though your time concepts are being misinterpreted.... This is unclear because you cannot see above you.... This is difficult to communicate through Carolyn as she lacks the words and understanding. [17 July 1973]

Refer to the chapter “Planes” for more information about that subject mentioned in this quotation.

One of the confounding issues that beset all attempts to communicate is that sometimes the vocabularies of the sender and/or the receiver are inadequate to accurately convey the intended meaning. Communication is especially difficult when the two people do not speak the same language. Symbolic languages have been invented, such as those for logic and mathematics, in attempts to convey concepts that are too exacting and/or too abstruse for normal conversation, but here also both sender and receiver must have the relevant expertise.

Of course, communication is also especially difficult when the sender and receiver are on different planes of reality connected by an intermediary, as is the case with a non-physical entity communicating through a channel to an audience. Altered states of consciousness pose lesser but similar problems. For instance, Near Death Experiencers and psychedelic drug psychonauts often declare that there are no words that adequately convey the meaning of their experiences because they are so far outside of our physical reality: they are “ineffable”, so when they try to tell us non-experiencers they must ‘translate’ as best they can with whatever similar concepts they can think of.

In the next session a few days later, the subject of communication with higher planes resurfaced:

Alice: How can I raise myself to the higher — through meditation?

[Tomas:] You are right. Meditation is the door by which you can enter the higher plane and communicate with those waiting to help. Fasting and occasional solitude and silence prepare you for a more meaningful experience. There are many excellent places giving instruction. Maybe this would open the door for you, Alice. The need for personal guidance varies with the individual. [24 July 1973]

Refer to the chapters “Meditation and Concentration” and “Silence, The” and “Solitude” and “Fasting” for more about those methods to enhance communication with transcendent realms of consciousness. With those methods, one learns to listen for, and listen to, non-physical beings, as well as one’s own inner–higher self.

The Michaels initiated communication with the original Michaelian group at the 12 August 1973 session, but the general subject of communication did not emerge for four more months:

Jack: I would like to know how long the Ouija board has been used and what other forms of communication can be used.

We communicate in many ways with many people. We have not been in a physical body for almost fifteen hundred years.

Jack: Okay, and how long has the Ouija been used and what other means of communication are possible?

We have communicated this way [Ouija board] for approximately one hundred years. We communicate directly with all those [of our] students who have mastered the skill of Astral [Plane] travel. We are willing to use hypnosis for induction of trances, but trans-mediums who can go into trances spontaneously are easier to work with. There are different kinds of mediums. [13 December 1973]

All kinds of things affect the quality and quantity of communication, and the manner or method of channeling is not excluded. Following this session, there were several sessions with occasional mentions of communication between entities on higher planes and people; these mentions are not relevant to my purpose for this chapter.

There is a caveat regarding communication with beings on higher planes:

We have told you many times that communication with the higher planes should not be used as a parlor game, and in the light of the questioning one, we would reiterate this advice. There are denizens of the low Astral [sub-]Planes who are no more admirable in death than they were in life. [27 March 1974]

This could be construed as a recommendation that young adults not “play” with an Ouija board. Because they are unlikely to be serious about a spiritual path, they will likely attract unserious discarnate beings. The founding members of the original Michaelian group were serious about their spiritual path, and they attracted like-minded beings to communicate with.

Communication Across Lifetimes

Previously communication from one Plane to another via channeling was discussed. In addition to that, communication is not limited to people at the same space/time location:

Ray: What is the criteria whether a [Karmic] Ribbon is formed or not?

If you communicated all of your expectations, the other soul understood all the options and took action on that basis, then a Ribbon probably [doesn't?] exists. Most interpersonal crises revolve around unfulfilled expectations and do not involve Karma of a substantial sort. Neglect of very young children constitutes Karma; breaking engagements does not. [20 February 1974]

Karma can be framed in terms of ‘communication’ between two people. Karma creates a ‘ribbon’ that spans lifetimes, and demands an ‘answer’; refer to the chapter “Karma” for more discussion of that subject. Maybe I am misunderstanding something, but it makes more sense to me that a Karmic Ribbon is probably *not* created if thorough and accurate communication of expectations is sent and received; the next sentence in the quotation says that. In true communication, there is no misinformation or disinformation intended at the sending end of the transfer, and there is no misinterpretation or misunderstanding at the receiving end of the transfer. True communication is a metaphorical ‘two-way street’, and *mis*-communication happens when the sender or receiver does not send or receive the meaning of the communication accurately; Karma is a lot like that.

This Q&A thread about Karma continued as follows:

Cynthia: It is the teachings of Jesus, complete forgiveness, accepting it even if you do not know what for.

You must somehow [one way or another] petition for this [forgiveness], otherwise, there is no communication.

Cynthia: Can Karma be worked out when the other party to the Ribbon is not around?

It is doubtful that anyone not on the (spiritual) path would be able to do this, Cynthia.

Nichols: If I have a falling out with someone, and can see and can accept the reality and forgive him but he does not accept me, is there Karma still there?

Then the communication has been incomplete and you may still find yourself facing the business end of a shotgun. One needs only to be aware that there is a Ribbon, but for full understanding and acknowledgment, both must know. [20 February 1974]

Refer to the chapter “Forgiveness” for the complete discussion. ‘Communication’ or interaction regarding the forgiveness of Karma is also a metaphorical ‘two-way street’ — both parties have to be in conscious agreement that it is no longer necessary to play out the Karmic drama, meaning that they both have learned what was needed to be learned by the event. The mutual canceling or forgiveness of a Karmic debt is indeed a very deep form of ‘communication’.

Non-verbal Communication

The subject of non-verbal communication first came up in the original Michaelian group even before the Michaels showed up, and it proved to be an interesting topic thereafter:

Dick: Was I using the Don Juan teaching incorrectly when I injured my back? Was it through wrong thinking?

[Tomas:] This is a correct assumption, Dick. The use of the information wrongly was communicated through his body because his body was aware of the error before his intellect. [17 July 1973]

Communication does not just happen verbally, via the transfer of concepts from mind to mind via mouths and ears. I see two interpretations of what this answer might mean by “communicated through his body”. First, in my experience, it is often the case that the (subconscious mind of the) body knows things that the conscious mind does not, and one can learn to discern this by reading the “body language” of other people. Of course, one can also become aware of one’s own body language, and thereby pick up on clues that it might provide to your conscious mind, because the body is full of pre-conscious information. You may add to what you already know about this phenomenon by reading this: >https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Body_language<. Second, there is communication beyond the *visual* discernment of your own, or another person’s, body language. People who are *viscerally* sensitive to what I refer to as the “body energy” of other people can learn to pay attention to subtle sensations in their own body, and thereby ‘read’ the energy in the “aura” of the physical body of another person who is in close proximity. I suspect that we are typically more subconsciously aware of these types of non-verbal communication than we ever become consciously aware of.

Awareness of the body is non-verbal communication on one level; telepathy could be considered to be another type or level of non-verbal communication:

Richard: I had a whole evening one time, on grass [Marijuana] meditation, on mind-to-mind [telepathic] communication — that this is the way to communicate with people: You don’t apologize, you don’t bother to explain everything; you just go back and forth with direct statements. You don’t get emotionally involved — you are dealing on a higher level.

Sarah: Well, the other person has to be communicating on that level also. Otherwise, I can see it deteriorating really fast.

Dick: I think that the way you eventually get there is by chipping away at it the way we’re doing. One of our big things, for three years [1970, 1971, 1972 in the Gurdjieff group], was to rid ourselves of anger and hostility, either dumping it or accepting it, but somehow just saying that you want to get rid of it doesn’t get rid of it. There was no method suggested there that seemed workable. [02 October 1973]

The different “levels” of communication can be correlated with the Centers when ranked per the Natural Sequence. From ‘lower’ to ‘higher’ “levels” these are: Moving > Emotional > Intellectual > Instinctive > Higher Intellectual > Higher Emotional > Higher Moving — refer to the chapter “Levels of Being” for more about that ranking. Body Language happens in the Moving Center, verbal communication happens in the Intellectual Center, telepathy happens in the Higher Intellectual Center, where the Negative Pole was actually named as such. Refer to the chapter “Telepathy” for more about mind-to-mind communication, which is extra-ordinary. This “Communication” chapter is not about that. Rather, in this chapter, the Michaels suggest “workable methods” for enhancing communication of the more accessible and ordinary type; refer to a subsection further on.

Richard: That is one reason communal living is good. You become a working unit and communicate on a mind-to-mind level. [22 November 1973]

Refer to the chapter “Communal Living” for more discussion about that subject. The more time that compatible people spend together, the better their communication tends to become, and that potentially leads to telepathy; communal living can provide a positive feedback for that. It does not say so here, but I suggest that the contrary is also true: incompatible people have negative feedback, and that leads to the extinction of meaningful communication.

“Communication” does not involve words only; there are other types of interpersonal exchange, including sexual “intercourse”:

Dick: My perception is that sex and sexual relationships are the major impediment on this plane to staying on the path. If we are going to have a medical clinic and grow, it is essential to deal with this problem.

Your perception, of course, is completely valid. This is the reason why most Adepts eventually refrain from entering into such relationships. Some, but only relatively few, have been able to continue to engage in a physical sexual relationship while evolving spiritually. The reason for this should be fairly obvious when you stop and realize that sexuality of the physical sort pertains to the Physical Plane. This does not exist on the other planes; it is supplanted by more open communication. Persons who are hostile and aggressive enough to inflict pain or death upon other persons are always found to be sexually uptight in some way. Sexually satiated persons are normally passive, but this is only true when the mind accepts the sexual act in the same frame as the body does. As long as there is conflict in the mind, there is not complete satisfaction and aggression results. [29 November 1973]

Refer to the chapter “Sexuality” for a thorough discussion of what more the Michaels have to say about that subject. Sexual intercourse provides communication in two Centers: sexual *action* in the Moving Center, and

sexual *energy* in the Higher Moving Center. Regarding both kinds of exchange, sexual intercourse is a type of non-verbal communication, but so are music and art, which they say elsewhere are types of “open communication” preferred on the Astral Plane. Near Death Experiencers tell us that meaning is conveyed from being to being telepathically. My book *The Tao of Relationships: The Chemistry and Alchemy of Service and Intimacy* discusses ‘energy’ exchanges in all of the Centers.

A couple of weeks later this came through:

Tina: What is the purpose of learning all these [Overleaf] labels? I dislike labels.

It is only important if you wish to make The Synthesis. We agree, verbal communication is a poor excuse for the sum of communication. However, until one of you break through with telepathy, this will have to do. This study [of the Overleaf System] enables you to have insights to the motivation of certain activities that could conceivably be perceived by you as hostile or undesirable, and prohibit the understanding necessary for Agape to take place. It will also enable you to aid those who seek your counsel. [13 December 1973]

The Michaels referred to their teaching as “The Synthesis”; refer to the chapter by that name. As we see in this chapter, types of communication other than verbal-mental “telepathy” are mentioned in various passages. For instance, there is the sight of another person’s body language, there is the palpable sensation of aura energy transfers, and there is meaningful physical touch during massage. There is also “communication” via so-called “psychic energy”, as we see in the next mention of communication:

Sue: Why are we [telepathically] communicating so much between the two of us (Carolyn and Sue)?

Sue’s tremendous psychic energy is having its effect on you.

Carolyn: Does my psychic energy influence it?

That is valid, but she [Sue] is a vortex of energy. This accounts for the high level of psychic or extra-verbal communication. You too have a fairly high level of psychic energy. To activate this, you need the permission of the receiver. Carolyn also needs the assurance that her receiver is willing. [17 January 1974]

Refer to the chapter “Psychic Energy” for more information. Briefly, the concept of “energy” is of a “force” with “momentum” that conveys an “effect” aka “influence” from one “thing” to some other “thing”. “Psychic” energy is the metaphysical counterpart to “physical” energy, and it acts the same way in its own realm: psychic energy operates in the mind realm; it ‘moves’ and is ‘moved’ or ‘changed’ or ‘rearranged’. Thus, human “communication” conveys ‘energy’ (as meaningful information) between the minds of two individuals.

We held a group discussion of experiences and impressions during the weekend we spent together. Many of us experienced verification of Soleal, Emotional Center experiences, and a cohesiveness of the group. We then asked Michael for a comment about the weekend the group had spent together, specifically about trust.

We would hope that those of you who were exposed to the verification of the presence of our other student [Soleal] and who were exposed simultaneously to the joy of communication without the need for subterfuge and verbiage, would attempt within the next few months to perfect, or at least awaken, these skills within yourselves. This is perhaps the most exciting breakthrough that this cadre has yet experienced....

The reason for the psychic Photograph should be fairly clear at this time. It is primarily a warm-up exercise, leading to nonverbal communication. Many students who are also teachers err in trying to speed up this process and, for that reason, the desired communication does not take place. The telepathic silence is anything but silent, but students cannot be shielding if this is to come about. If you first learn to express your feelings to one another without shame or guilt or any of the other myriad barriers, then you open the door to silence. Only then can you be truly comfortable without the chatter. Chattering is usually just another shield so the Personality does not have to be honest. You see, the Essence cannot lie; therefore, the Personality cannot tell the truth. It can only lie. This is an important point to remember, since the chattering emanates from the Personality. The Essence does communicate. There is no need for mindless silence in the path toward Balance, but it might as well be truthful communication, and until you can knock away the barriers, this cannot come about. The Personality will always be around to conveniently lie in order to satisfy the Goal. If this Goal happens to be Acceptance, for instance, think of how much energy is lost. [12 November 1974]

Refer to the chapter “Silence, The” for more about attuning and communing with other people in Centers other than the Intellectual, such that mindless chatter becomes counterproductive to better and deeper communication. Refer to the chapter “Emotional Center” for more discussion of non-verbal communication. Unfortunately, verbal communication is often used to convey misinformation and disinformation, or just to

fill the silence with thoughtless “chatter”. Refer to chapters “Balanced Man”, “Barriers”, “Essence and Personality”, “Photography”, and “Telepathy” for discussions of those subjects mentioned in this passage.

Barriers to Communication

Translation problems with communication between planes and lifetimes is difficult and problematic, but there are also translation problems with communication between ensouled species on the Physical Plane:

Do dolphins and whales communicate with each other?

There are barriers, much the same as your language barriers present. [22 May 1974]

I find it hard to believe that whales are incarnated. Why has there not been contact between the whales and us, and are the whales aware that we are incarnated?

Except for the man John (Lilly) there has been insufficient interest in whether they can communicate.

The crucial thing here is the question, Is it desirable to establish communication with them? Is there any cosmic reason to share with them?

Communication is, of course, possible.... [30 May 1974]

Refer to the chapter “Cetaceans” for more information about that subject.

Phyllis: Do animals laugh?

Laughter is limited to Creatures of Reason. They alone feel the need to communicate the fact that they are either pleased or awfully nervous to those around them. Other animals do occasionally indicate their nervousness by coughing, stamping, etc., but not laughing. We see the need to laugh as genuine in Creatures of Reason who so depend upon verbal communication, and where in some societies displeasure just might result in violence. [19 June 1974]

Refer to the chapter “Creatures of Reason”. Laughing is a communication from the Emotional Center as words are a communication primarily from the Intellectual Center. Different Centers obviously have different types of communication, so miscommunication happens when ‘wires’ of communication get ‘crossed’, such as when the Intellectual Center gets misinterpreted by the Emotional Center, or *vice versa*.

Another communication barrier is that between the “living” (those in the Physical Plane interval) and the “dead” (those in the Astral Plane interval):

Delia: If reincarnated with a loved one, will we communicate with them again?

There are so many strands that bond you together, that it is truly unlikely that one who is genuinely loved will not be with you again in the future as well as in the past.

Are these actions on the Physical Plane?

Of course, you are free to communicate with whomever you please on the Astral interval, but often the need to dissipates once the understanding of certain actions becomes clear. Many souls are at a loss to explain many phenomena on the Physical Plane, such as the suicide of a lover, and hope to have this explained to them. Then, once they are again unencumbered by the physical, they understand the reasons, and [they] shed guilt, and the need to interrogate leaves.

Delia: If there are no guilt feelings, can you see the aura?

Once the initial period of adjustment has taken place, yes. You may often communicate, but only because on the Physical Plane [you] have this need. There is seldom a need in an Astral being to set the score right, as they understand that this can come later. Understand that the Personality used in the present reincarnation, dies with the body, and any communication would be with the Essence, and thus alien.

Louise: I would like to ask about my dream where my mother, who is dead, came as a light.

Unfortunately or fortunately, whichever the case may be, most of these “visitations” by the newly dead or recently dead are wishes or dreams in which the lost loved one absolves one of any guilt feelings, or merely says a proper good bye. It is rare for a soul less than fifty years into the Astral Cycle to be in any position to communicate. The exception to this, of course, are those who die suddenly or violently and who often try desperately to cling to the Physical Plane. [03 July 1974]

According to the accounts of many ghost stories and dreams, the desire to communicate across the veil of “death” goes both ways.

Richard: Is the primary frequency for the group the third harmonic of 17 cycle spike wave?

Richard was an Artisan by Role and an engineer by occupation, hence the propensity for nerdiness.

There is much static in this group, owing to the different levels as students. [29 October 1974]

In the science and engineering of so-called “information theory” — which concerns itself with the quantity and the quality of communication — there is the notion of ‘signal versus noise’. The “static” mentioned in this quote is like what one hears on a radio station that is not perfectly tuned, or like the ‘snow’ that one sees on a television screen where the station is not perfectly tuned. People at different levels of studenthood are like different people who are attuned to different radio stations or different television channels, each having their different ‘frequency’.

As one can reasonably expect, there is a lot of ‘noise’ or miscommunication between students on the Physical Plane:

... it is merely sad that communication on the Physical Plane is so bad, particularly between those bound together by strong legal ties rather than Essence ties, that the need for freedom cannot be expressed. [09 January 1975]

People who are kindred or friended souls tend to communicate with each other more effectively and efficiently than those who do not have a history with each other in past lifetimes or in transcendent realms. That particular answer was said to a person who was in an unhappy marriage. Unhappy marriages typically result when communication is bad in terms of verbal and non-verbal realms. When a marriage is healthy, various forms of communication are typically good. Marriage counselors emphatically declare that good communication is necessary for a healthy marriage, and that there is only so much that can be done to improve communication that does not come easily and naturally to a couple. A subsequent section discusses how Overleaves affect communication.

Mechanical Man, or man asleep, does not communicate, at least not if one is to posit communication as a two-way street. [Dimensions! April 1975]

Refer to the chapters “Mechanical Man” and “Awakening from Sleep” for more about those references in this passage. Monologue is not nearly as effective in communication as dialogue. But then, two people talking *at* each other, rather than *with* each other, is not real communication either. Real communication requires that both parties listen carefully to, not only *what* the other person is saying, but surmise *why* the other person is saying it.

Enhancing Communication

Communication is said to be a good thing, so how are we to augment and improve it?

Unfulfilled expectations are the sole cause of anger. We know of none other. When you stop expecting, there will be no anger.

Dick: There is a delicate line between that and going to ‘sleep’. Lots of things in life depend on expectations.

You must communicate your needs and wants to those around you. Unless you are telepathic, you must do it verbally. Then you must leave them with an option; you must make that option known to them. The alternatives, with all of the ramifications, must be understood, as well as the motivation of their acceptance or refusal. When there is complete understanding, there will be no disagreement. You have all heard this before, and we must emphasize it because it is the secret to effective communication, which will banish the specter of unfulfilled expectations. [02 October 1973]

Refer to chapters “Expectation” and “Motivation” and “Understanding”. Refer to the chapter “Awakening from Sleep” for more about that metaphor for the lack of awareness common to non-spiritual people; this is a lack of awareness that inhibits meaningful communication. If I had to choose one quotation in this chapter as the most important, this would be it. It is so clear and concise that I don’t know what to say that would add to it, other than that people should think through stuff and thoroughly and clearly sort themselves out first before they initiate communication. This passage is the main reason that I decided to research and write this chapter. Yarbrow also included it in her book *Messages from Michael* (1979) on pages 58-59.

The Michaels have other recommendations for “effective communication”:

Billie: Is there some way I might communicate more with my older son, Jason.

The rent [break] in the trust must be repaired first. Let him know that you will not judge. You must also let him know that you will respect confidences thus exposed. This is a fragile Mature Soul who perceives you as a fluctuating source of security because of your own inner conflicts. [01 November 1973]

Three facilitators of effective and efficient communication were delivered in this answer. Refer to the chapter "Trust" for more discussion of one of the factors. "Respecting confidences" is, of course, necessary to establish and maintain trust between the communicators; refer to the chapter "Secrets and Secrecy" for more about that. Refer to internet web pages on so-called "non-violent communication" for a thorough discussion about being non-judgmental and non-aggressive and non-abusive toward the person you are communicating with. For instance, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nonviolent_Communication is a good place to start.

Question regarding small groups.

... Trust, as you have said, implies communication and awareness, and they are inseparable.... [27 March 1974]

That trust exists implies that there has been good communication and high awareness. This means that communication and awareness fosters trust, and *vice versa*: the more trust, the better the communication and awareness will be. Refer to the chapter "Trust" for a discussion of that phenomenon. Basically and briefly, trust is built between two people who repeatedly interact and thereby converge on a stable common ground, whereas distrust (via lack of communication and awareness) moves people apart. The size of the interacting group has a bearing on this: the smaller the group, the better is the communication, the less scattered is the awareness, and the easier and quicker is the building of trust. Furthermore, recall that one cannot communicate accurately if one is not consciously aware of one's motivations and expectations, as noted previously. The subject of awareness is discussed in the chapters "Self-observation" and "Self-remembering".

I feel isolated from people. Is it related to sex or Overleaves or what? How can I approach this problem?

... Incidentally, the silence [of isolation] can be a marvelous experience, but there must be agreement and positive communication within the silence. Nothing is quite so destructive as a hostile, angry silence. [27 March 1974]

Perhaps this "angry silence" is referring to the "silent treatment" or the "cold shoulder", which is a so-called "passive-aggressive" method of communication. This form of communication is not straightforward and honest and trustworthy; it is not the right way to "communicate your needs and wants to those around you" as discussed previously. However, refer to the chapter "Silence, The" for discussion about an intentional practice of silence, which can have spiritual implications when done with those of a like mindset. If you prefer some isolation more than you do communication with other people, then let The Silence be to establish better communication with your own inner self, such as unexplored aspects of self, or your own so-called "Higher Self"; refer to the chapter by that name, and the chapters "Intuition" and "Insight".

Elizabeth: Comment on ladies meeting?

Elizabeth, there was much scattering as you know, but this can be controlled with practice. The need to exchange communication at times overrides the quality of that communication. This can be so effective if carried out in the direction of the Work. It would be an ideal time to exchange those insights that are individually unique in origin and yet universally relevant. [24 September 1974]

Refer to the chapter "Scattering" for more discussion about that subject. In my experience, one of the most distracting things about undisciplined and unfocused group meetings is that everyone wants to add their 'two cents', no matter how peripheral it is to the subject. These are people who enjoy the social-emotional exchange for its own sake, in distinction to the kind of people who value the quality of the content of the mental information being exchanged. In the emotional scenario, the discussion looks more like an exploding bush than it looks like a thread. Consequently, no subject ever gets a thorough treatment. It might help to keep people 'on track' if a respected individual is appointed to 'shepherd the flock' to help people stay on the 'trail' of the subject. Some groups pass a "talking stick" around from person to person, and only that person who has the stick can talk. In that scenario, there are no interruptions, and comments tend to be much more focused on the subject. Perhaps you have heard of "Robert's Rules" for task-oriented formal meetings: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robert's_Rules_of_Order.

There is a time and a place for ebullient social-emotional exchange, such as in a party, and there is a time for deeply thoughtful exchange, if that is the reason for convening the gathering:

Discussion about maintaining silence while working on a project, maybe on a weekend thing, with one day of silence.

That, too, would be a valuable experience for all of you, but we would suggest a creative silence rather than a strained one. One day set aside to work on an important project of your choosing in silence, but together,

using other than verbiage to communicate your needs. Writing “bullshit” on little pieces of paper does not differ from saying it out loud. This is not silence the way we mean it. [21 December 1974]

The suggestion from the Michaels here seems to be that it is Good Work to intentionally expand one’s repertoire of communication skills into non-verbal means and methods by silencing the verbal means of communication. Apparently, the point is to become sensitive to the exchange of information via Centers other than the Intellectual Center. Telepathy, for instance, a phenomenon that is mentioned repeatedly in this context, is said to be from the Higher Intellectual Center.

All relationships, including group gatherings, need healthy communication:

It is, again, merely a sad commentary on the Physical Plane that communication is so poor. It is hoped that with this [original Michaelian group] cadre, for instance, a trust level will be developed where these conflicts will fade away. When the trust level is such that one student could say to another, “I wish you would die and leave me alone,” that statement will be totally unnecessary, as the other student will already know to give the necessary space. This can only be gained by the highest of trust levels, and comes through hard work.... [09 January 1975]

Add that to some previous statements about trust being an essential component of good communication. Refer to the chapter “Trust”.

Effect of Overleaves on Communication

In an answer in a previous section, the Mature Soul Age is mentioned as a factor that affects the quality and quantity of communication. The Overleaf factor show up in numerous Q&A exchanges on this subject. The reason for this is obvious: the Michaels revealed the Overleaf System because understanding it facilitates communication between people with different personalities, and good communication is one of those things that leads to Agape, the ultimate goal of the Michaelian teachings. Obviously, the more similar the array of Overleaves of two people, the easier their communication, and the more dissimilar the array of Overleaves of two people, the harder their communication. In my experience, the closeness, or not, in Soul Age is the most important single facilitator of easy communication of anything else on the Overleaf Chart, because Soul Age determines a person’s fundamental worldview, perceptions, and perspective.

The contribution that close Soul Age makes to communication came up in this session:

Carolyn and Howard commented that they frequently have the same thought at the same time, and wondered who was the sender and who was the receiver.

There are strong vibrations between Mature and Older Souls. The position of the planets could be marked while this is going on strongest. You could experiment with it. Meditation assists it. If you do not like it, you can stop it, but would lose the growth. Many people work at this for a long time and don’t achieve this communication. It is a gift. Howard is a good transmitter; Carolyn is a good receiver. [20 November 1973]

If any two people want to intentionally and mutually enhance their communication, the Michaels suggest experimentation and meditation as means and methods; refer to the chapter “Meditation and Concentration”.

Dick wondered why Dr. Paauw seemed so competent, yet he is a Baby Soul and an Artisan.

... Personal relationships require communication, and it is difficult for this particular entity to express himself to others. He cannot communicate well with lowers, people not physicians, and thus the expression, Baby Soul. He expresses his artistic qualities in the operating room, behind closed doors, not from open doors or from his heart in emotional situations. [20 November 1973]

Again we have a comment about how Soul Age affects the quality and quantity of communication, the younger the Soul Age, the worse the quality. Here we see how another Overleaf category, Role, affects the quality and quantity of communication. Here and elsewhere it was said that Artisans tend to be non-verbal. On the other hand, Sages, the opposite of Artisans on the Expression Axis, tend to be overly verbal.

Emotional communication is the subject of the next mention of the word:

Mallory: I am confused about my tearfulness and energy leaks, and wonder where this recent tearfulness in me is coming from.

Comment: If the tears are coming from a positive place, and there is love and communication, they probably are not an energy leak. If they are coming without a pattern, they are probably an energy leak. [24 February 1974]

The person who made that comment might have seen the connection between *love* and *communication* and *energy* that I also see. My expanded definition of “communication” includes intimate (“loving”) “energy exchanges” of various types between two people, including but not limited to verbal communication. My book

The Tao of Relationships describes seven archetypal loving energy exchanges, or 'communications', so to speak, correlated with the seven Centers. I named these seven types of communications as Behavioral, Affective, Mental, Systemic, Mystical, Spiritual, and Cosmic. Recall that it is *in* the Centers that we process our life experiences, and *from* which we communicate to others what we have processed.

Abdullah stated that he felt blocked to perception or to 'spirit communications'.

He is blocked by very much the same way in which Sarah is blocked. The need to satisfy the intellectual curiosity often takes precedence over all spiritual desires. The [intellectual curiosity] mode here is powerful[ly] augmented by the need to Dominate, especially in Intellectual Center. This one [Abdullah] must capitalize on the Attitude [Spiritualist] if he is to hear this Teaching, which is not at variance with what he now believes. [10 September 1974]

Both Abdullah and Sarah were Scholars with a Goal of Dominance. On other occasions the Michaels commented that Intellectual Center can be an impediment to their students regarding hearing the spiritual component of their teaching; refer to the chapter "Emotional Center" for more about that. (I am a Scholar-cast Artisan, a Spiritualist, so I am 'in the same boat'. It appears that my interest in, and approach to, the Michaelian teachings is driven more by a general scientific and philosophical curiosity than it is by a desire for spiritual growth or enlightenment, and I am okay with that.)

Speaking of communication via the Emotional Center:

Louise: We visited, on Saturday, a friend who soon will leave her home and go to a rest home. Sunday, I felt depressed and ill. Any connection with [the] lady?

Some are able to communicate their despair more lucidly than others. This lady is an example. She was able to let you, Louise, know the depth of her despondency.

Louise: Which Center lets this sensitivity in?

Plus much early training in sympathy. [24 September 1974]

Having spent many hours with Louise, I can affirm that she was a sensitive, caring person. Despondent people do not usually have the energy to communicate their despondency. People who have a strong Higher Emotional Center are especially sensitive to the moods of other people, and this is why I prefer to call it the Sympathy Center, with a Positive Pole named +Empathy and a Negative Pole named -Sensitivity. This comment reinforces a teaching of Gurdjieff and of the Michaels mentioned above, namely that communication is most accurate if it occurs from same-Center-to-same-Center of one person to another; otherwise, there is confusion and misunderstanding.

The Overleaf System of personality traits should assist accurate communication between people who know it well, but it is a temporary crutch on the long-term story arc of one's spiritual path:

This desire to do away with [Overleaf] labeling is not at all bad, and in its more positive stance approaches Zen Buddhism. Labeling for this [original Michaelian group] cadre is now only an expedient of communication. At a later point, we would hope to be able to dispense with this. Right now, it is easier this way and more understandable. [14 December 1974]

There are advantages and disadvantages, in a spiritual teaching, to having a special vocabulary of jargon words that refer to complicated, specialized, or unusual concepts. One advantage is group cohesion in a belief system that is better than what was had before, and the students can communicate with each other efficiently using the jargon, but at some point it becomes better to do without the jargon, and perhaps without the belief system that underlies the jargon. This signals a movement to Centers above and beyond communication in the Intellectual Center and other lower Centers, to communication in the higher Centers.

We would have to say that this man's Chief Feature stands in the way of any communication with other than his own subconscious storehouse of knowledge. [31 January 1975]

Add this to some previous statements about Overleaves affecting the quantity and the quality of communication between people.

A subsequent session mentioned again the role that Overleaves play in the realm of communication:

The group fragmented into lengthy discussions on Photographing other students, handling negativity in the moment rather than brooding about it until it blew up beyond the ridiculous. Much negativity was given to the group to look at.

The student David has stressed the importance of communicating through the Centers and not the [other] Overleaves, and that cannot be stressed enough. When you Photograph another student with your Overleaves, it will always — and we repeat — always, be from a negative space, where the Overleaves abrade. When you

give a Photograph from the Centers, it will almost always be valid. You must, and we repeat, must, learn to Photograph from the Centers and not from the [other] Overleaves. Forget what the verbalized issue happens to be — it is always a lie — and determine where the true issue lies. Learn to Photograph the real issue in Real Space. The ideal Photograph at that time (speaking to Sarah about her conflict with another student) would have been, “I understand that you have much pain and I have compassion.” [12 February 1975]

Refer to the chapters “Photography” and “Real Space versus Artificial Space” for more about those aspects of communication. In one of my previous comments, I noted that communication should be between the same Center in both communicators, because if the communication is between different Centers, there is distortion and misunderstanding. Part Four of my book *The Tao of Personality* is about how the Overleaves interact with each other, for good as well as for bad. If people understood that book and applied the understanding, there would be less misunderstanding in communicating through the Overleaves in addition to the Centers.

Inner turmoil — the anger at oneself — always results from unreasonable expectations that at least one Overleaf has of the others, and since there is virtually no communication between the Poles [Axes?] of Overleaves — the “many I’s” — then these expectations are only clear to a few of the Overleaves, while the others are in the dark. There again, the leak is downward and results in the same pattern. Yes, this is the same as Inner Considering. [Dimensions! April 1975]

Refer to the chapter “Considering — Internal and External” for more about those concepts borrowed from the Gurdjieffian teaching. Internal Considering is when people are in angst about what other people think about them. If I understand this passage correctly, it hints that a person’s own Overleaves do not communicate well with each other, and this creates “inner turmoil” and the “Many I’s”, also of the Gurdjieffian Teaching; refer to the chapter by that name. There you will read that Gurdjieff’s many I’s are called sub-personalities by psychologists.

Dick mentioned that Cynthia seemed to be repressing her emotion.

Yes, it is [true], but then this society is a verbal one and she must communicate. It is not as repressed as many. The increase of gastrointestinal ulcerations among females is related precisely to the same factors as in males: Emotionally Centered males as well as Emotionally Centered females are now being shamed into being accepting of Intellectual and Moving Centered goals. Once again, civilization has succeeded in ‘throwing out the baby with the bath water’. [21 March 1977]

That was yet another mention of the importance of communicating from and between the proper Center for the situation at hand.

The final Q&A exchange in the original Michaelian group transcriptions has more to say about how the Overleaf of Roles communicate:

Richard: Why did someone I know agree to support me in a non-verbal, movie-making communication project?

Your question should not be “why” but “how” does this other [person] outside of self know that the need is there? You send out strong signals of this need in all directions and it is there for the picking. There are those who would fill this need. He is sincere but perplexed by a surge of unexpected emotion around a relative stranger. He is reacting to the need without real knowing where that may lead him because his Overleaves do permit much risk-taking.

Richard: Does he understand what it is I want to communicate?

He would understand but is not absorbed. Artists [Artisans] have a marked tendency to seek this form of communication, of course, more so than the other Roles; although Kings and Warriors also see the possibilities, but more in the sense of control than of inter-relating. In other words, the Artisan seeks to communicate non-verbally because he finds other forms of communication incomplete and unsatisfactory. The Warrior and King often see nonverbal communication as a means to control others. [21 October 1977]

As an Artisan, I can confirm that *auditory* verbal communication seems inadequate — Sages on the other side of the Expression Axis from Artisans are better at that — but I would add that *written* verbal communication is much more to my liking, because I can craft my writing such that it becomes more complete and satisfactory. Warriors and Kings, on the Action Axis, influence the behavior of other people by exuding impressive or imposing ‘vibes’. I have noticed that Servers and Priests, on the Inspiration Axis, communicate via radiating healing energy that can be sensed by receptive people.

Concluding Comments on Communication

For some reason, in this and some other chapters, demarcating paragraphs with bullet points enhances my ability to communicate my summary of the chapter.

- To my way of thinking, communication is a ‘two-way street’, where *meaning* is transferred back and forth between two people; refer to the chapter “Dialogue” for more about that concept. Basically and briefly, in my book, talking *at* someone is not true communication because the message might not be received, so I prefer to note that talking *with* someone is true communication, because meaning is shuttled repeatedly between two or more people until confirmation of transferred meaning is achieved. This reminds me of a joke: If a man expresses an opinion in the forest, and his wife is not there to hear it, is he still wrong? Seriously, I say no, because no meaningful “communication” has taken place.
- Effective and efficient communication is dependent on proximity in what I call “meaning time/space”. The closer that two people are in this time/space, the better the communication, and the farther away that two people are in this time/space, the worse the communication. This notion is similar to the so-called “inverse square law”, where the strength of gravity ‘sensed’ by two masses decreases by a mathematical formula as the distance between them increases.
- By effective and efficient communication, I mean that *meaning* is sent and received accurately. For example, if a person standing right next to you in physical space/time talks to you in mathematical jargon about quantum physics, and you are not conversant in either of those realms of knowledge, then you are not in proximity in “meaning time/space”; you might as well be on the other side of the ‘universe’ of this particular time/space for all of the understanding or meaning that is conveyed.
- In terms of the Overleaf System, or any other personality typology, the more similar the personality arrays of two people, the better the communication, because this provides some basis for closer proximity in “meaning time/space”. My suggestion is that one of the reasons that the Michaels revealed the Overleaf System is so that we could learn to work around personality differences, and approach Agape thereby, “Agape” in this context meaning increasing proximity leading to fusion in “meaning time/space”.
- Picture two people as one circle overlapping another circle, and the overlap area is where they inhabit the same meaning time/space. When two people meet each other for the first time, and they want to get to know each other, they typically communicate until they find what they have in common, and that, of course, is their overlapping “meaning time/space”. If that goes well, they may continue to get to know each other beyond the perimeter of the overlap; that is where Agape lives. If the overlap is too small — meaning, the attempts to communicate are too ineffective and too inefficient to be ‘worth’ the ‘expense’ in time and energy — then further attempts to communicate tend to self-extinguish.
- In the science of so-called “information theory”, there is the concept of “signal versus noise”. One may read about this at https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Information_theory. I quote: “Information theory studies the transmission, processing, extraction, and utilization of information. Abstractly, information can be thought of as the resolution of uncertainty. In the case of communication of information over a noisy channel, this abstract concept was formalized in 1948 by Claude Shannon in a paper entitled *A Mathematical Theory of Communication*, in which information is thought of as a set of possible messages, and the goal is to send these messages over a noisy channel, and to have the receiver reconstruct the message with low probability of error, in spite of the channel noise. Shannon’s main result, the noisy-channel coding theorem showed that, in the limit of many channel uses, the rate of information that is asymptotically achievable is equal to the channel capacity, a quantity dependent merely on the statistics of the channel over which the messages are sent.” [retrieved 23 March 2023] Think carefully and thoroughly about what was said there and you will see how it applies to this chapter without me explaining it to you, except I will say this:
- One could almost say that the entirety of human interaction could be formulated and quantified in terms of how much *signal* versus how much *noise* governs their interactions, meaning: how well do they understand each other; how efficient and how effective are their transactions. Between any two people there are impediments to accurate and thorough communication. In addition to personality differences as mentioned above, there are possible language barriers, cultural barriers, knowledge

database barriers, intelligence barriers, belief/value/behavioral system barriers, and so on *ad infinitum*. Refer to the chapter “Barriers and Blocks” for more discussion of these and other factors that affect the effectiveness and efficiency of meaningful communication.

- In addition to such barriers, the *intentions* of the sender and the receiver are important. That is to say, are the two people acting in “good faith”? Or are they intentionally communicating misinformation or disinformation. Or is one or the other of the parties encumbered with stupidity and/or ignorance and/or foolishness to such an extent that attempts to communicate self-extinguish.
- One personality factor not mentioned in the original Michaelian group transcriptions, and which does not have a clear representation in the Overleaf System, has to do with introverts versus extroverts: the former have far less need to communicate with others than the latter. It can be said that introverts prefers to have a rich *inner* communication (between modular components within themselves), whereas extroverts prefers to have a rich *outer* communication (with numerous others). Numerous internet resources on this topic are available, such as https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Extraversion_and_introversion.
- Whether one is an introvert or an extrovert, and whether one is focused inwardly or outwardly, may I suggest that effective and efficient communication is enhanced if one learns to really *listen* to what is being said, as in *pay attention*, and *don't interrupt*. When I did an internet search for the phrase “deep listening”, the search engine came up with this: <https://www.mindful.org/deep-listening/>, and there were many other hits.
- In other chapters, starting with “Tao”, we have reviewed the theology or cosmology of so-called “Dual Aspect Monism”, known in the Michaelian teachings as “Monads”. This ontology has been framed in various metaphors, such as “Fragmentation and Reintegration” and “Waking from Sleep” and “Forgetting and Remembering” and “Liberation and Imprisonment” and “Lost and Found”. In this chapter, the metaphor of communication and miscommunication was reviewed, but really, that and the others are all just different ways of looking at the same fundamental phenomenon, namely that the Tao is experiencing itself *as if* it were not itself, meaning that Tao has ‘forgotten’ Itself and Tao is ‘asleep’ to Itself and Tao is alienated from Itself. Thus, the cosmos consists of parts of Tao learning to better communicate with other parts of Itself. In terms of the concept of communication, signal versus noise, existence and experience is all just one huge ‘misunderstanding’, and we humans are playing our part in mitigating the misunderstanding when we attempt to meaningfully communicate with ourselves and with others, ever more effectively and efficiently.





② COMPLEXITY VERSUS SIMPLICITY

This chapter consists of an analysis and a synthesis of the Q&A exchanges in the session transcriptions of the original Michaelian group that contain these two words. One might find it surprising to see that these words were used so often that they deserve a chapter full of explanations about the concept, but here we are. Perhaps one might be surprised because the subject has not been emphasized in subsequent Michaelian teachings groups to the extent that it was in the original Michaelian group. Thus, this is another one of those chapters where I regard it as significant and important to re-introduce and discuss a lost or neglected topic.

The idea that human life is typically filled with too much complexity for our own good is not exclusive to the Michaelian teachings; it appears in many if not most other spiritual teachings. I do not know of a single one that recommends we fill our lives with all of the distractions that are available to us on the Physical Plane. Rather, the recommendation to all seekers is to minimize the distractions of physical life and maximize the focus on the spiritual life. The Michaelian teachings tends to recommend that students at least have a life that balances the two, to be neither a physical ascetic nor be spiritually deprived.

Complexity/Simplicity per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

The following extracts from original Michaelian group transcriptions are Q&A exchanges, where an original Michaelian group member asks a question (or makes a comment), and the Michaels provide an answer. This is not a subject where there was a development or evolution of a specific revelation of a facet of the Michaelian teachings, as was often the case with the original Michaelian group. On the other hand, this is a subject that benefits by division into subcategories. As is my custom, I often provide some explanatory comments following the question or answer. Underlined words in the Q&A exchanges are my emphasis, to draw attention to what it is that I comment on. Sometimes I embed words or phrases [in brackets] that I believe help to clarify the question or the answer.

The concept of complexity versus simplicity as it relates to the spiritual path came up in the very first session in which the Michaels appeared. This fact alone speaks to the importance of this subject.

The primordial force was energy, not mass. Think about that when you are hung up on cause and effect. The more primitive one is energy. Does it not seem that all seeking the least complex will return to the energy from whence they came? Complexity is the antithesis of what the spirit seeks. The body represents the epitome of complexity. That is why the spirit is again and again attracted to it, until the partially awakened Essence catches a glimpse beyond the "veil". [12 August 1973]

Complexity is like a veil that obscures the primordial simplicity. (Refer to the chapter "Veil" for the exposition on that concept in the Michaelian teachings and elsewhere.) However, notice what it says here, that the spirit is repeatedly attracted to the complexity of life in the physical body because it knows that the way to simplicity is *through* complexity, not *around* it. Hence, multiple reincarnations are required; there is no shortcut or bypass on the way back to the simplicity of its origin; one must experience and understand the complexity on the path back to increasing simplicity at successively higher levels of integration.

What is merely hinted at in this answer is that, ultimately, with complexity/simplicity we are talking about one of the fundamental features of the structure of the cosmos in space/time (physics) and time/space (psyche). This is discussed in my books *The Tao of Cosmology* and *The Tao of Cosmogony*.

There are some physics phenomena mentioned in this passage. The quest for simplicity applies to science as well as to the spiritual path. Scientists intuitively understand that the complexity that we are embedded within arises out of a fundamental simplicity, so the impetus of the scientific endeavor is to find that foundational, primordial, primitive simplicity.

I can't see what part the Personality has to do with Karma. I think that's put in by culture.

It [False Personality and culture] is just more complex Maya. You see, it really is infinite. [12 August 1973]

Per the chapter “Personality and Essence” we see that when the word Personality appears alone, it is often meant in the Gurdjieffian understanding as the opponent of Essence. This Gurdjieffian usage evolved, during the original Michaelian group and later, into the contrast of False Personality and True Personality, and Essence was relegated to something beyond True Personality. Thus, this passage means that False Personality and culture tends to complexify Maya, which is in contrast to the simplicity of Essence, which was stated earlier in the first session with the Michaels. Refer to the chapter “Maya” for more information about that component of the Michaelian teachings.

In this same first Michael session, it was realized that the complexity/simplicity dichotomy is a particular type of Monad:

Discussion: Concerning Monads (sacred/profane, profound/superficial, the yin and yang duality, infinite complexity/infinite simplicity).
[12 August 1973]

Refer to the chapter “Monads” for a thorough discussion of that subject. Basically, in the Michaelian teachings, a Monad consists of three things: Ordinal, Cardinal, and Neutral, where Ordinal and Cardinal have a reciprocal relationship with each other — the more of one the less of the other, and *vice versa*. The reciprocal relationship of complexity and simplicity is obvious. The Natural Sequence septenary has this Monadic structure build in: the beginning is simple, things get more complex during the first three steps, the middle is the most complex, then things get more simple during the last three steps.

The reciprocal relationship of physicality/spirituality was noted above in terms of their complexity/simplicity ratio, but there are other realms in which the complexity/simplicity principle applies:

Dick: I would like to have a medical session some night, but right now, I'd like to move on to something else. I'd like to bring up the subject of "heaviness" that I find reading all these esoteric books and Hindu books. So far, in these systems, I've found so little of the ordinary type of joy. I'd like to buy a toy boat, just lie in the bathtub and putt around.

You would probably benefit much more from that activity than from reading fifty philosophical texts. These are nothing more than another Old Soul expounding on half-acquired enlightenment. Enlightenment is not ponderous. As I said before, as growth progresses, the soul seeks simplicity. This is one good way to discern whether a particular piece of literature will be of any help to you. If it is merely an exercise in vocabulary and rhetoric, then abandon it. Some very wordy material comes from Young Souls. Be wary of this in selecting reading material. [26 August 1973]

To this I would say, start where you are, which is probably mired in complexity due to Young Soul dominance of the cultural and social milieu, and move toward simplicity. The Michaels themselves started the original Michaelian group with a rather complex teaching that is intellectually challenging, but the long-range purpose of the information was to provide a tool that can cut through the complex crap that the members were encumbered with. In the long run, having a mastery of the Overleaf System provides a simple, but not simplistic, understanding of where people are coming from, which simplifies relationships. One of these Study Papers is on “Enlightenment”.

I happen to like philosophical texts that are not exercises in vocabulary and rhetoric, so may I suggest that, when it comes to philosophy, the complexity/simplicity Monad be approached in the manner that the Michaels recommend with other Monads: alternate between the poles of the Monad until you come to the synthesis, which is that our lives are both complicated and simple, and we should experience out the complexity mentioned in the previous Q&A exchange. In my opinion, some philosophy has the same goal as some science (and the Michaels’ Teaching), namely, that their goal is to get to the simplicity that underlies the complexity. A thorough appreciation of *good* philosophy can help, whereas *bad* philosophy complexifies the underlying simplicity.

Dick: Is this why, when you see an Infant or Baby Soul, you see simplicity there? It is just one Fragment? And then with Old Souls, you sense a complexity and then in between, you see mixtures. Is this because the Fragments are unified [into their soul groups] all along the line, beginning with the Infant Souls?

That is valid to a point.

Dick: Yeah, that's what I was saying, because all along the line [of Soul Age] you seem to see more complexity. [08 October 1973]

Refer to the chapter “Composites” for a discussion of one of the sources of complexification that happens during the story arc of reincarnation, from most primitive to most advanced. The basic notion is that as the soul develops, it becomes more complex in terms of the quantity of past lives and the quantity of kindred souls

that provide influence. This is a different thing from the recommendation found in the original Michaelian group transcriptions, that one should simplify one's lifestyle if one chooses to trod the spiritual path.

Besides the Soul Age story arc where the complexity of the person increases, there is another story arc where simplicity increases, and that is the spiritual path arc. We see this in various sessions, noted above, and below:

The only positive energy we know of is that which we have elected to call "Agape". Other sources may be either neutral or negative. The high states [of spiritual evolution] are free of the complexity found in the lower states. This should explain the purity of the energy flow. The lower states, being more complex, require more complex emotions to feed upon and be fed upon. [05 October 1974]

Putting this statement together with previous (and following) statements, we see that spiritual growth (which is not the same thing as Soul Age) moves one toward simplicity, whereas physical evolution runs counter to this and moves toward complexity. This is what one would expect from the reciprocal relationship of physicality and spirituality: the more of one the less of the other, and *vice versa*.

Are the Golden Tablets of the Mormons valid as being left there by God or whatever?

This entire [religious] body is founded upon man's [humanity's] eternal gullibility. This is, of course, another beautiful example of man's efforts to complexify the natural order. It was not enough to have myths limited to the Middle East; they had to expand to this continent. [19 October 1973]

From this answer I gather that religions that complexify the natural order are suspect. (One of the purposes of my work is to demonstrate the simplicity of the Michaelian teachings as derived from First Principles, which are simple.)

The most thorough exposition on the complexity/simplicity Monad found in the original Michaelian group transcriptions is the following message.

Short business meeting regarding incorporation. Narra [a lawyer] indicated the need for officers, and we elected Dick president, Joan secretary, Cheryl treasurer. A quorum was present. We discussed and shared possible names for the group: "Spiritual Community", "Associated Souls", "Church of the Path Seeker", "All Souls Spiritual", "Pan-Universal Spiritual Sanctuary".

Man's place in the universe should, of course, have become a little more apparent to you since we opened the discussion on complexity.

As we have intimated before, the Tao is the epitome of simplicity and, therefore, the simplicity toward which we all strive in our return to the primeval. Therefore, the Physical Plane, with its enormous complexity, offers by far the most challenge and also the most barriers to spiritual liberation.

Man, or rather, "Mechanical Man", must then cut through the Glamour and allurements of the Physical Plane in order to see the light of truth. Nowhere else is this as difficult, for on the Physical Plane, all is Glamour and all is complex, even compared to the Astral Plane, which to the high planes can seem quite complex.

Man must strive uphill in the battle to free the Essence. By "man", of course, we refer to all Creatures of Reason. For in all languages we know of, there is a word meaning "man". This uphill battle is growth-producing and also provides the strength to persevere through the several Cycles spent on the Physical Plane. The lessons learned on the Physical Plane are necessarily [psychologically] painful just because they are so complex. With simplification, there is analgesia [less pain]. On this world, there have been significant cultural and religious barriers to growth. On other worlds, there have been hostile natural environments and threats from without to contend with.

Man must meet with a cosmic teaching in order to look behind the barriers. Psychology will not do it for you: for, if the psychologist is a Mechanical Man himself, he also has adaptive behavior taking place, and he cannot look behind your barriers or very well allow you to, either. It would be too scary for him — he would then also have to look behind his own barriers. The broad purpose of the Physical Plane, of course, is then to cut through the first layer of complexity.

"Solid" is very much like 'ponderous' to us. The weighty philosophical battles, battles waged by Mechanical Man, are his attempts to solidify even thought and make it more complex. He must first come to the point that he can verify for himself the tenuousness of that which stands between him and the pan-dimensional universe, and the path toward simplicity and therefore perfection. [22 October 1974]

No explanatory comments come to mind for the above; it stands on its own rather well. However, the passage is full of terms that have chapters of their own in this *Study Papers* book: "Liberation", "Mechanical Man", "Creature of Reason", "Planes", "Glamour", "Tao", "Essence and Personality", "Spiritual Growth".

... Mechanical Man's desire to complexity.... [12 November 1974]

The above brief mention of complexity is only included to make the record complete.

Much discussion ensued about “boss”, “partner”, “servant”. Our perception of it and how David sees it. Other similar triads were brought to mind — parent, sibling, child, etc.

All of these “triads” are, of course, valid in describing the various combinations of interactions of the Personality, but you must not overlook the fact that there is an “over-truth” that supersedes all of these. That is the truth of the Essence, or truth as the liberated Essence perceives it, which is far less complex than any truth that is perceived by the entrapped Essence, and the key is in the simplicity with which the truth is perceived. The more verbiage needed to explain a truth, the more deeply entrapped that truth has to be. Many fine-sounding psychological words having five or more syllables have been coined to describe obnoxious behavior stemming from harsh Overleaves. These are all true, of course, and they all say the same thing to one from this vantage point: they are the entrapped Essence working overtime to produce a truth. [07 December 1974]

The above is another one of many comments on the complexity of Personality versus the simplicity of Essence. It is also another instance where the Michaels decry the fact that it is necessary to use words to describe a phenomenon, for this can make something that is simple seem complex. One thing, among many things, that I appreciate about the Michaels as they came through the Ouija board in the original Michaelian group is that their verbal delivery was generally succinct and straight to the point.

This problem is described using other words in another passage:

The dictates of this culture are severe and stern. We doubt that it is much fun for anyone. This is not necessarily true of the entire Physical Plane. Although the Physical Plane is by nature solid, ponderous, and complex, you make it even more so by trying to analyze these behavior patterns in terms other than instinct. [21 December 1974]

This is one paragraph in a lengthy screed about instinctive behavior, which can be described in words, but words tend to make a simple mindless impulsive phenomenon seem more complex than it really is.

Another lengthy screed on the subject of complexity occurred a few days later. Here again, the problem is with humans who try to explain the inexplicable, such as instinctive behavior, with the complexification that results from the use of words:

Abdullah: Will you speak to us some words of wisdom?

The words we speak, the words we would speak, would not be individually directed, but rather directed to the group at large. You see, this individuality that Mechanical Man seeks is but another example of his never-ending quest for complexity. The soul is tranquil now, so you see, it can be achieved.

Speaking of the depth of the trance, there was at this point a sharp noise in the background!

This soul has an observing, curious mind, and all distractions within this room cause a vortex of energy flow. Reason: man has always endeavored through the creation of chaos or of a chaotic system (they’re one in the same) to create the illusion of complexity that exists on the Physical Plane. This illusion of complexity, that which we choose to call “false order”, by its very chaotic nature creates order of a sort easily incorporated into the belief systems of those who are limited to it. The concept of a physical God was created out of this very chaos — the necessity to solidify. The solidification of the cosmos — in an ironic sense, is true, of course, since there is no such thing as nothing — no-thing — but the solidification of the cosmos is man’s first step toward explaining away those unexplainable phenomena with which he is confronted when he first confronts the physical universe. He must, of course, reduce it to the smallest possible limits....

Ralph: Going toward simplicity, is there anything more simple than the Tao?

More simple, no. The Tao, you see, is the absence of complexity....

There is a name for the notion that God is empty of characteristics, and that is “apophatic theology”. It is the opposite of “cataphatic theology”, which is the notion that God is full of all characteristics. Refer to the chapter “Tao” for more discussion about that.

Ralph: You have told us about man’s habitual rendering complex — the way he complicates things. If we have moments of knowledge and love, it seems difficult to maintain them in this culture. Can you comment on this?

These moments are moments of utter simplicity. Of course, it is difficult to maintain in this state, in the false order, the complicated chaos that this and other cultures like it have created. As we have said before, to explain away the unexplainable, man must create for himself the answer to all those questions, those imponderables for which there is no proof. Man, in order to be satisfied, must define, within the limits of his belief system, all those phenomena that he observes. In moments when the Essence breaks through the barriers, the true order

— the natural order — becomes perceivable. Man takes the simplest activity and renders it complex by analyzing, examining, granting it priority, granting it precedence. We should not limit this simply to man. This is common to Creatures of Reason throughout the Physical Plane. This is not unique to that which you call man. Man takes the simplest function and renders it complex in order to give an illusion of importance to his life.

Ralph: Is The Synthesis simpler than the systems that man erects?

In its most evolved form, yes. In words suitable for communication with the members of this enclave, it becomes complex. Again, Creatures of Reason take the simplest activity and render it complex through symbols. The Synthesis is not complex. The Synthesis seeks integration, simplicity. Creatures of Reason seek to justify their existence through expressions of individuality, isolation, alienation. Creatures of Reason seek to justify their existence by assigning themselves a role, even a negative one, if that be the case, of subrogation, taking the responsibility from themselves, assigning that responsibility to a higher power, conveniently beyond the five physical senses and, therefore, unarguable, unprovable, unassailable, safe, comfortable, complex.... [26 December 1974]

Refer to the chapter “Synthesis, The”. This is the name that the Michaels gave to their teaching. As distinct from plants and animals, Creature of Reason have a strong Intellectual Center, and that Center needs to “explain” things in terms of other things. This function tends to make those things seem more complex than they actually are in themselves. In short: don’t overthink stuff.

Cynthia made the statement that she was apprehensive about the meeting because she had a ridiculous fear that the teacher [Michael] would get mad at her for not going to work with Peter.

Never will we urge. That is not within the scope of this teaching. Only will we present the alternatives. You must realize that our neutrality extends far beyond what you can possibly imagine. Our strength lies in our ability to perceive the diverging tracks ... or choices, if you prefer. In each instance, there will be a choice that can be made simply out of Personality and will usually work in the world, and there is also a choice that can be made from Essence, which will instinctively “feel” right and will result in positive upward mobility. Your difficulties lie in your inability to choose the Essence route, as it always seems the more difficult, when in reality, it is the more simple. But society has complexified to the point where you see any attempt at simplification as unbelievably complex. This is paradoxical, of course, and is the one barrier in the way of any true attempt at civilization. If you doubt this, look at the definition of the word “sometime”. In most instances, those hearing this teaching will fasten on that precept that holds the most immediate appeal.... [21 November 1976]

I have run out of words to say about this subject. Except:

Concluding Comments on Complexity/Simplicity

It helps to have a source of understanding from higher and simpler realms, such as the Michaels, to guide us out of the bewildering and stifling complexity of life as a human on the Physical Plane.

This subject is somewhat related to the subject discussed in the “Asceticism and Austerity” chapter, which has to do with lifestyle, as distinct from thinking style, which is mostly the focus in this chapter. In both cases, it boils down to: keep your life simple.





① COMPOSITES

In the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group — and nowhere else since then that I know of — it is recorded that the Michaels told people in the group that their minds were inhabited by multiple Fragments of their Entity. It was said that the older their soul, and the more Fragments of their Entity that had “cycled off” (having no more need to reincarnate), then the more Fragments shared the physical body, providing inspiration and guidance. There was said to be a “dominant thread”, and then there were all these other subordinate “threads” of these discarnate souls that contributed to the total personality. These multiple inhabitants of an incarnation were called “composites”.

The discussion of this phenomenon in the original Michaelian group transcriptions was quite lengthy; it is not repeated here. However, the discussion has been thoroughly analyzed and synthesized in my book *A History of the Overleaf Chart*, in Chapter 4M, “The Seven Soul Ages”, in the section “To Understand Composites”. The idea does not seem to be a significant component of the Michaelian teachings, and it has not resurfaced in channeling subsequent to the original Michaelian group, so far as I know. Nevertheless, check it out if it seems interesting to you.





⑦ CONSCIENCE

This chapter is the product of a search for the concept of conscience in the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group channeling sessions. This word does not represent a significant component of the Michaelian teachings. However, there are good reasons to discuss the subject in this *Study Papers* book: 1) **The subject is related to a number of other components of the Michaelian teachings that are considered to be significant;** 2) **Issues of conscience are pervasive in human psychology and sociology and spirituality.**

The word conscience is not capitalized in this chapter and other chapters of this *Study Papers* book because it has no special meaning in the Michaelian teachings; it is not a Michaelian jargon word that needs a definition apart from its use in the common vernacular.

Basically and briefly, the Michaels recommended to the original Michaelian group members that they enlighten their conscience, not with the moral or ethical guidelines provided by their parental or socio-cultural or political milieu, but by intuition about the right thing to do in whatever situation or circumstance they find themselves in.

Definition of Conscience

So what is meant by conscience? The introduction to the Wikipedia article on the subject reads thus:

Conscience is a cognitive process that elicits emotion and rational associations based on an individual's moral philosophy or value system. Conscience stands in contrast to elicited emotion or thought due to associations based on immediate sensory perceptions and reflexive responses, as in sympathetic central nervous system responses. In common terms, conscience is often described as leading to feelings of remorse when a person commits an act that conflicts with their moral values. The extent to which conscience informs moral judgment before an action and whether such moral judgments are or should be based on reason has occasioned debate through much of modern history between theories of basics in ethic of human life in juxtaposition to the theories of romanticism and other reactionary movements after the end of the Middle Ages.

Religious views of conscience usually see it as linked to a morality inherent in all humans, to a beneficent universe and/or to divinity. The diverse ritualistic, mythical, doctrinal, legal, institutional, and material features of religion may not necessarily cohere with experiential, emotive, spiritual, or contemplative considerations about the origin and operation of conscience. [Contrary to the religious view,] Common secular or scientific views regard the capacity for conscience as probably genetically determined, with its subject probably learned or imprinted as part of a culture.

Commonly used metaphors for conscience include the “voice within”, the “inner light”, or even Socrates’ reliance on what the Greeks called his “daimōnic sign”, an averting ... inner voice heard only when he was about to make a mistake. Conscience, as is detailed in sections below, is a concept in national and international law, is increasingly conceived of as applying to the world as a whole, has motivated numerous notable acts for the public good and been the subject of many prominent examples of literature, music and film.

[><https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Conscience>< — retrieved 26 January 2023]

Thereafter followed a lengthy discussion of the religious view, the secular view, and the philosophical view of the subject. Reading it helped me to have a more informed conscience, and then pay more attention to it.

Conscience per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

The following extracts from original Michaelian group transcriptions are Q&A exchanges, where an original Michaelian group member asks a question (or makes a comment), and the Michaels provide an answer. As is my custom, I often provide some explanatory comments following the question or answer. Underlined words

in the Michaels' answers are my emphasis, to draw attention to what it is that I comment on. Sometimes I embed words or phrases [in brackets] that I believe help to clarify the question or the answer.

The following is the only time that the word "conscience" appeared in the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group that have become widely available:

JeanP: What do Edmund's migraines mean?

These aches have their origin in tension, part of which is job-related, part of which is rooted in a basic inability to disappoint those whom he senses are counting on him. This man still needs to feel completely free to refuse, in clear conscience, that which he intuits as a wrong move. [24 September 1974]

Refer to the chapter "Intuition" for the story about that word. Both conscience and intuition warn us away from doing the "wrong" thing in a particular situation and prompt us toward doing the "right" thing in a particular situation.

Some of the founding members of the original Michaelian group had been involved in a local Gurdjieffian teachings group, wherein the charismatic guru Gurdjieff used the metaphor of a 'steward' for the role or function of conscience. One of those founding original Michaelian group members mentioned this metaphor, as follows:

Dick: Later, you develop Deputy Steward and finally the Steward that keeps Personality in line — on the straight and narrow. [06 October 1973]

In Gurdjieff's teachings, Deputy Steward was a name for "impartial observer." From *Discovering Gurdjieff* by Dorothy Philpotts:

Conscience has been called by Mr. Gurdjieff the voice of the Steward. The Steward speaks to us in a quiet voice, which we cannot hear amid the vociferous clamor of the many I's, each proclaiming some petty interest or desire, or even some idle fancy.

Refer to the chapter "Steward" for more about that. Refer to the chapter "Personality — True and False" for more about the notion that False Personality, among other things, consists of many so-called "sub-personalities", which Gurdjieff referred to as the many "I's". One of the goals of the Gurdjieffian teachings was to assemble and reconcile these many sub-personalities into a unified consciousness. One step along the way was for the spiritual aspirant to learn to hear and heed the Deputy Steward, and then grow further until the spiritual aspirant learned to hear and heed the Steward, the totally enlightened conscience. The Michaels during the original Michaelian group endorsed this notion.

Concluding Comments on Conscience

Although the word "conscience" was only found once in the original Michaelian group transcriptions, there are other words and concepts in the Michaelian teachings that take its place: "intuition" is one, "insight" is another, and the "promptings" of "Essence" is yet another. From their familiarity with Gurdjieffian teachings, the founding original Michaelian group members got the metaphor of the "Steward" as conscience, but this has not found its way into subsequent Michaelian discourse.

Refer to the chapter "Punishment" for a discussion of the issue of moral/ethical absolutism versus moral/ethical relativism.





CONSCIOUSNESS — SUBJECTIVE AND OBJECTIVE

This chapter is the product of a search for the word “consciousness” in the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group channeling sessions, and other words with a similar meaning. I have added some commentary, which consists of my analysis and synthesis of the quotations. Obviously, this word does not represent a significant component of the Michaelian teachings, but even so, the word appears often enough that it seems to me that students can benefit from seeing all of those instances documented and commented on in a chapter of this *Study Papers* book. Furthermore, the word is related to a number of other components of the Michaelian teachings that are considered to be more significant; these will be noted in the commentary on the instances of the word and its contexts. Briefly and basically, the Michaels recommended to the original Michaelian group members that they

So what is meant by consciousness? The online Merriam Webster dictionary definition is:

The word “consciousness” is not capitalized in this chapter or other chapters of this *Study Papers* book because it has no special meaning in the Michaelian teachings; it is not a Michaelian jargon word that needs a definition apart from its use in the common vernacular. One might therefore wonder why it is even included in this book. One answer is that it is just a Scholar–Cast Artisan thing to do: I study the Michaelian teachings documents and I write about them and I want to be thorough. Another answer is that trust issues are pervasive in human psychology and sociology, the subject came up in the original Michaelian group numerous times, some interesting things were said about it, and it might be helpful for Michaelian students to have the answers conveniently collected all in one place.

Subjective and Objective Consciousness per Gurdjieff

Subjective and Objective Consciousness per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

Consciousness per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

The following extracts from original Michaelian group transcriptions are Q&A exchanges, where an original Michaelian group member asks a question (or makes a comment), and the Michaels provide an answer. This is [not] a subject that would benefit by division into subcategories, as some subjects do. These extracts are presented in the chronological order in which they were given, even though this is not a subject where there was a development or evolution of a specific revelation of a facet of the Michaelian teachings, as was often the case with the original Michaelian group. As is my custom, I often provide some explanatory comments following the question or answer. Underlined words in the Michaels’ answers are my emphasis, to draw attention to what it is that I comment on. Sometimes I embed words or phrases [in brackets] that I believe help to clarify the question or the answer.

Concluding Comments on Consciousness





② CONSIDERING — INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL

The topic of this chapter is yet another one of many that discuss one or another of the components of the Gurdjieffian teachings that were adopted and adapted in the Michaelian teachings during the original Michaelian group, but which did not subsequently find its way into the Michaelian teachings. For an introduction to the general subject of the Gurdjieffian teachings and the involvement of founding original Michaelian group members with it, refer to the chapter “Gurdjieff, Ouspensky, Collin, Burton”.

Even though the Michaels used the term “considering” on numerous occasions during the original Michaelian group, Yarbrow did not mention it in her book about the original Michaelian group, *Messages from Michael*, perhaps because, near as I can tell, Yarbrow was not familiar with Gurdjieff. The Michaels have not used it in subsequent groups so far as I have been able to determine, perhaps because subsequent groups are not familiar with Gurdjieffian teachings. Therefore, the term, and even the concept referred to by the term, has not become common knowledge in the Michaelian teachings community subsequent to the original Michaelian group. Nevertheless, I believe Gurdjieff’s psychological insights are worth discussing, the subject of Considering being one of them. I also believe that it is worthwhile to make the historical record of the original Michaelian group reasonably complete. Taking into consideration that the word refers to a concept with a specific and special meaning in both the Gurdjieffian teachings and in the Michaelian teachings, I capitalize it, as one of many jargon words.

Per the title of this chapter, notice also that there are two types of Considering, Internal and External, sometimes also called Inner and Outer; the two types are contrasted to each other. Furthermore, sometimes Considering is also called Consideration.

So, let us first take a look at what Gurdjieff meant by Considering, and then we will examine the instances where it was mentioned in the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group.

Considering per Gurdjieff

Briefly, Inner Considering is the Gurdjieff term for when you care too much about what other people think of you, or do not think of you, rather than act out of your own integrity with your true self. In other words, you internalize others to your own detriment. Briefly, External Considering is the Gurdjieff term for when you intentionally put yourself in the place of the other person, and see things from their point of view, and from the point of view of the context of the situation as a whole. In the psychotherapeutic and spiritual-path component of the Gurdjieffian teachings and of the Michaelian teachings, the aim is to minimize Internal Considering and maximize External Considering.

These seem similar in that in both forms of Consideration you do take other people into account, but the trick is to learn to distinguish the two, and to do so without self-deception regarding what is going on.

The following is a lengthy passage where Ouspensky quotes Gurdjieff. It is longer than the original Michaelian group mentions actually, but it is important if one is to understand the concepts as the original Michaelian group members understood it, which they did, probably from having read this very passage, as well as others; underlines are my emphasis:

[INTERNAL CONSIDERING]

“There are several different kinds of ‘considering’. On the most prevalent occasions a man is identified with what others think about him, how they treat him, what attitude they show towards him. He always thinks that people do not value him enough, are not sufficiently polite and courteous. All this torments him, makes him think and suspect and lose an immense amount of energy on guesswork, on suppositions, develops in him a distrustful and hostile attitude towards people. How somebody looked at him, what somebody thought of him, what somebody said of him — all this acquires for him an immense significance.

There are chapters in this *Study Papers* book on “Identification” and “Energy” (with a section on “Leaks”) — these are yet other jargon words in the Gurdjieffian teachings and in the Michaelian teachings.

“And he ‘considers’ not only separate persons but society and historically constituted conditions. Everything that displeases such a man seems to him to be unjust, illegal, wrong, and illogical. And the point of departure for his judgment is always that these things can and should be changed. ‘Injustice’ is one of the words in which very often considering hides itself. When a man has convinced himself that he is indignant with some injustice, then for him to stop considering would mean ‘reconciling himself to injustice’.

There are people who are able to consider not only injustice or the failure of others to value them enough but who are able to consider for example the weather. This seems ridiculous but it is a fact. People are able to consider climate, heat, cold, snow, rain; they can be irritated by the weather, be indignant and angry with it. A man can take everything in such a personal way as though everything in the world had been specially arranged in order to give him pleasure or on the contrary to cause him inconvenience or unpleasantness.

“All this and much else besides is merely a form of identification. Such considering is wholly based upon ‘requirements’. A man inwardly ‘requires’ that everyone should see what a remarkable man he is and that they should constantly give expression to their respect, esteem, and admiration for him, for his intellect, his beauty, his cleverness, his wit, his presence of mind, his originality, and all his other qualities. Requirements in their turn are based on a completely fantastic notion about themselves such as very often occurs with people of very modest appearance. Various writers, actors, musicians, artists, and politicians, for instance, are almost without exception sick people. And what are they suffering from? First of all from an extraordinary opinion of themselves, then from requirements, and then from considering, that is, being ready and prepared beforehand to take offense at lack of understanding and lack of appreciation.

“There is still another form of considering which can take a great deal of energy from a man. This form starts with a man beginning to think that he is not considering another person enough, that this other person is offended with him for not considering him sufficiently. And he begins to think himself that perhaps he does not think enough about this other, does not pay him enough attention, does not give way to him enough. All this is simply weakness. People are afraid of one another. But this can lead very far. I have seen many such cases. In this way a man can finally lose his balance, if at any time he had any, and begin to perform entirely senseless actions. He gets angry with himself and feels that it is stupid, and he cannot stop, whereas in such cases the whole point is precisely ‘not to consider’.

“It is the same case, only perhaps worse, when a man considers that in his opinion he ‘ought’ to do something when as a matter of fact he ought not to do so at all. ‘Ought’ and ‘ought not’ is also a difficult subject, that is, difficult to understand when a man really ‘ought’ and when he ‘ought not’. This can be approached only from the point of view of ‘aim’. When a man has an aim he ‘ought’ to do only what leads towards his aim and he ‘ought not’ to do anything that hinders him from going towards his aim.

“As I have already said, people very often think that if they begin to struggle with considering within themselves it will make them ‘insincere’ and they are afraid of this because they think that in this event they will be losing something, losing a part of themselves. In this case the same thing takes place as in attempts to struggle against the outward expression of unpleasant emotions. The sole difference is that in one case a man struggles with the outward expression of emotions and in the other case with an inner manifestation of perhaps the same emotions.

“This fear of losing sincerity is of course self-deception, one of those formulas of lying upon which human weaknesses are based. Man cannot help identifying and considering inwardly and he cannot help expressing his unpleasant emotions, simply because he is weak. Identifying, considering, the expressing of unpleasant emotions, are manifestations of his weakness, his impotence, his inability to control himself. But not wishing to acknowledge this weakness to himself, he calls it ‘sincerity’ or ‘honesty’ and he tells himself that he does not want to struggle against sincerity, whereas in fact he is unable to struggle against his weaknesses.

“Sincerity and honesty are in reality something quite different. What a man calls ‘sincerity’ in this case is in reality simply being unwilling to restrain himself. And deep down inside him a man is aware of this. But he lies to himself when he says that he does not want to lose sincerity.

“So far I have spoken of internal considering. It would be possible to bring forward many more examples. But you must do this yourselves, that is, you must seek these examples in your observations of yourselves and of others.

Another brief injunction against inner considering is the phrase “neither insisting nor resisting” reality as it is, if the impulse to insist or resist comes from the lower self rather than from the higher self.

[EXTERNAL CONSIDERING]

“The opposite of internal considering, and what is in part a means of fighting against it, is external considering. External considering is based upon an entirely different relationship towards people than internal considering. It is adaptation towards people, to their understanding, to their requirements. By considering externally a man does that which makes life easy for other people and for himself. External considering requires a knowledge of men, an understanding of their tastes, habits, and prejudices.

“At the same time external considering requires a great power over oneself, a great control over oneself. Very often a man desires sincerely to express or somehow or other show to another man what he really thinks of him or feels about him. And if he is a weak man he will of course give way to this desire and afterwards justify himself and say that he did not want to lie, did not want to pretend, he wanted to be sincere. Then he convinces himself that it was the other man’s fault. He really wanted to consider him, even to give way to him, not to quarrel, and so on. But the other man did not at all want to consider him so that nothing could be done with him.

“It very often happens that a man begins with a blessing and ends with a curse. He begins by deciding not to consider and afterwards blames other people for not considering him. This is an example of how external considering passes into internal considering. But if a man really remembers himself he understands that another man is a machine just as he is himself. And then he will enter into his position, he will put himself in his place, and he will be really able to understand and feel what another man thinks and feels. If he can do this his work becomes easier for him. But if he approaches a man with his own requirements nothing except new internal considering can ever be obtained from it.

Refer to the chapter on “Self-remembering” and the chapter on “Mechanical Man” in this *Study Papers* book.

“Right external considering is very important in the Work. It often happens that people who understand very well the necessity of external considering in life do not understand the necessity of external considering in the Work; they decide that just because they are in the Work they have the right not to consider. Whereas in reality, in the Work, that is, for a man’s own successful work, ten times more external considering is necessary than in life, because only external considering on his part shows his valuation of the Work and his understanding of the Work; and success in the Work is always proportional to the valuation and understanding of it.” [P.D. Ouspensky, *In Search of the Miraculous*, pp. 151-154, quoting Gurdjieff — downloaded from this website: >https://www.satrakshita.com/internal_considering.htm<.]

In that last paragraph, I capitalized the word Work because it is yet another one of those jargon words, as it refers to the focus required to maintain one’s spiritual path.

An internet search will reveal many other descriptions of Gurdjieff’s notion of internal and external considering. For instance, there is this: ><http://fourthwayschool.org/considerouter3.html>< and there is this: ><http://fourthwayschool.org/considerinner5.html>< and ><https://fourthwaytoday.org/external-considering-school-work/>< and ><https://www.ultimate-quest.org/external-consideration/>< and ><https://www.ultimate-quest.org/external-considering-continued/><.

Considering per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

As you will see if/when you read the chapter titled “Gurdjieff — Ouspensky — Collin — Burton” in this *Study Papers* book, that several founding members of the original Michaelian group had for a while previously been members of a local “Fourth Way” Gurdjieff/Ouspensky study group; there they learned about Considering. That includes the people quoted in this chapter who ask questions and received answers about Considering: Dick, Richard, and Kathryn. Therefore, it is not surprising that the first appearance of the concept of Considering happened about a month after the Michaels became the source of channeled information, their first communication being on 12 August 1973.

Dick: Let’s see, what about Dr. Simon? He has penetrating eyes with much energy behind them, and much Inner Consideration. Is he a Young or Baby Soul?

Simon is a Mature Soul with problems. [18 September 1973]

The Michaels had launched into the teaching about Soul Ages just weeks before, but Dick already perceived that, typically, the older the soul, the less Inner Consideration they do; hence Dick’s guesstimate that Dr. Simon

was a younger soul. Gurdjieff did not teach reincarnation, so he did not teach about Soul Age, so he only understood Consideration as a component of his psychotherapy/spiritual Work. Mitigating Internal Consideration happens both as the soul ages in the course of reincarnation and as the Personality yields to Essence during a lifetime of Working on oneself.

Richard: I would like to somehow recapture the tranquility I found at [our retreat to Lake] Tahoe. I would like to spend tomorrow meditating, and next week meditating and reflecting. How can I best do this?

Cease Inner Consideration of the effects of your actions on others. You are doing nothing wrong. We find no fault with your plan. [22 September 1973]

Richard had the Goal of Acceptance (revealed six months later), which, as we will see further on, is especially prone to do Inner Considering.

Kathryn: Why did Robert Burton say that Joy was an Old Soul?

He is seeing the child [Joy] who is carrying the father's attitudes. The man Robert is still entitled to err occasionally. He does not often, but remember that Inner Consideration is one of the last [negative] things to go. Sarah does not like to tell people that they are Young Souls either, but we are stronger than Sarah and she is beginning to realize that. Robert, too. [10 November 1973]

Kathryn, Dick's daughter, was a member of Robert Burton's "Fourth Way" group. She was involved with it into the 21st Century. The Michaels claimed that Burton was a candidate for the Transcendental Soul (see below), who was almost ready for the manifestation at that time, hence near to extinguishing Inner Consideration. However, he neither extinguished Inner Considering nor manifested the Transcendental Soul. Rather, Burton, by some accounts, devolved into being a scandalous cult leader. As his group grew, Burton accrued power and money, and those things make Inner Consideration all the harder to extinguish.

Phyllis: Should you then change to please others?

We did not say this, but why should you change to please others?

Comment: That is what is called "inner considering" — when you are wondering what the other person is thinking of you for saying what you did or whatever. [27 February 1974]

Obviously, this is a concise description of Inner Considering as it was understood in the original Michaelian group.

Dick: Robert's group is also [like ours] a "C" [cosmic] influence group. How can this be?

The conflict will be resolved when this man experiences the manifestation of the Transcendental Soul. He is right in saying that Internal Consideration is the last to go and this is a phenomenon of this.

Dick: Internal Consideration is the only single thing that operates continuously.

This insight is essentially valid.

Those in Dominance [Goal] do the least Internal Considering; those in Acceptance [Goal], [do] the most. Those in Growth [Goal] fluctuate depending on the environment.

How about [Inner Considering by] those in [the Goal of] Rejection?

[They do] Inner Considering of a very negative sort. There is some, of course, but you are right: not much.

[There is] very little, also, in [the Goal of] Retardation. [03 March 1974]

Generally speaking, one's Personality, True and False, affects how much Inner versus how much Outer Consideration one does, and also what sort of Inner Consideration. The Gurdjieff quotation above cataloged various forms.

Trust, as you have said, implies communication and awareness, and they are inseparable. Trust is solely based upon intuition and cannot be logical. Logic will fail you every time in matters of trust. Also, the person who trusts must be less vulnerable [to Internal Consideration]. Yes, otherwise, he would be torn apart most of the time. Trust contains elements of toughness that comes only with practice, and concerns a lack of Internal Consideration [caring what other people think of you] — a "let the chips fall [where they may]" attitude. Trust is most difficult for souls in Acceptance, Submission, and Rejection. [20 March 1974]

Refer to the chapter "Trust" for more information about that subject. If trying to 'figure people out', by logic or other means, is driven by Internal Consideration, that is not Good Work.

Dick: [My daughter] Kathryn has been eliminating the word "love," as Machines are not capable of love. Maybe you Externally Consider others. Could you comment on love and External Considering?

They are synonymous. We see no difference. The “Machine” can do neither, but it is possible for you students to do both, with Work. [10 July 1974]

Obviously, this is a key passage for understanding External Consideration, equating it with “love”. Refer to the chapter on “Love”, the chapter on “School”, and the chapter on “Work” in this *Study Papers* book.

Kathryn was a member of Robert Burton’s Fourth Way group for decades, starting when her parents did in 1970 or 1971; she did not leave the group when her parents did, in 1972. Thus, she was aware of Gurdjieff’s terms, Internal and External Considering.

Discussion about Overleaves — positive and negative sides. Acceptance seems to be Richard’s strongest, maybe Shirley’s strongest, Joan’s? She wonders about it.

The Acceptance [Goal] combined with the Caution Mode have been, in the past, your primary stumbling block, and until six months [ago] would have been obvious as your prominent Overleaves. Now, the Acceptance commands the forefront as you have attempted Work with your Caution [Mode] and have managed to throw caution to the winds in several instances. By doing so, you have almost rendered this Overleaf neutral and workable. The Acceptance [Goal] can be quite positive, yes, but it must come from what you have learned to call “External Consideration” and not from the Personality’s “Internal Consideration”. When the manifestation comes from Personality, it can be very negative in terms of the energy drain to you.

Joan: It seems like I’ve given up Acceptance and not given up the Caution. Like “less caution about saying no.”

Please don’t misunderstand us. Acceptance is not a negative Goal. It is a powerful, Exalted [Cardinal] Goal and can be particularly useful in the realm of External Consideration. [01 October 1974]

This was a few months before the revelation of the Positive and Negative Poles. One can point to the Goal of Acceptance and see that the Positive Pole, +Agape, is a succinct example of External Considering, and the Negative Pole, –Ingratiation, is a succinct example of Internal Considering. Indeed, one could look at the Positive and Negative Poles of all of the Overleaf traits and see shades of Internal and External Considering.

Nothing will make the gift of higher expression come as easily as will acts of, yes, “External Consideration” — the ability a student has to look beyond his own needs to the true needs of another student to express his Essence. [12 February 1975]

There is another succinct definition of External Consideration. The trick, of course, is to be spiritually mature enough to discern the right course of action when it comes to self and other.

Many here tonight understand the principle involved in choosing not to lock into the other’s bad spaces and to choose to present a neutral facade at these times. This requires a conscious act of will, and this is what we wish you all to strive for. No, we would disagree, there is no positive anger or dread, or any of those things, but the [Negative Poles of] Overleaves can always manage to justify any of these at the drop of a hat. What we have consistently warned against is the repression of hostility, which is a vicious form of Inner Considering. This does lead to “sickness” of a sort, and it is the choice that we wish to see in you. The exercising of will — that is now the goal. As long as you are reacting negatively, there is an Overleaf [in the Negative Pole] in control. When you react positively, [from the Positive Poles of your Overleaves,] then the Essence may be poking through the snow bank.

Inner turmoil — the anger at oneself — always results from unreasonable expectations that at least one Overleaf has of the others, and since there is virtually no communication between the Poles of Overleaves — the “many I’s” — then these expectations are only clear to a few of the Overleaves, while the others are in the dark. There again, the [energy] Leak is downward and results in the same pattern. Yes, this is the same as Inner Considering. [Dimensions! — April 1975]

Refer to the chapter “Energy and Energy Leaks” for more information about one of the negative consequences of Inner Considering: you disempower yourself; you give your power away.

These two paragraphs are further evidence that Inner Considering is one of the functions of the Negative Poles of Overleaves. Conversely, Outer Considering is one of the functions of the Positive Poles of the Overleaves.

Concluding Comments on Considering

1. The Michaels endorsed the Gurdjieffian understanding of the psychological phenomena of Considering, but this Gurdjieffian concept appears to have totally fallen off the radar of the Michaelian teachings. There was one mention of Considering in *MFM*, but it adds nothing to this

discussion. There was one mention of Considering in *Michael Speaks: The Legacy of Susan Briggs*, but it adds nothing to this discussion. Beyond those instances, I have found nothing in subsequent Michaelian teachings sources. This is not unexpected, considering that few if any Michaelian students have made the transition from a Gurdjieff group to the Michaelian teachings.

2. I am not familiar enough with modern psychotherapy to know if there is a corresponding concept therein, but <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/the-literary-mind/202011/why-do-we-take-things-personally-and-how-do-we-stop> appeared in *Psychology Today* magazine. The point of that article was to point out that too many people, or too often, we tend to “take things personally” — this is another manifestation of “Inner Considering”. To that article I would add that, if you find yourself doing Internal Considering by taking something personally, you can neutralize that by intentionally doing External Considering: get out of your own head and your own little world, figure out where the other person is ‘coming from’, and appreciate other points of view in general.
3. Passive, introverted people are prone to Inner Considering and find Outer Considering difficult to master. Active, extroverted people are not nearly as susceptible to Inner Considering, but the part of Outer Considering that they find difficult is letting go of their self-absorption and egocentricity long enough or empathetically enough to metaphorically ‘put themselves in some else’s shoes’.
4. Unless one is a hermit in a cave, who has neither contact with people or the world in general, Considering seems to be an unavoidable part of life.
5. One of the goals of psychotherapy and spirituality is to minimize Internal Considering and maximize External Considering. The former is de-energizing and the latter is empowering.





CONTROL

This chapter is the product of a search for the word “control” and its derivatives in the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group channeling sessions. This word does not represent a significant component of the Michaelian teachings. However, there are good reasons to discuss the subject in this *Study Papers* book: 1) the subject came up numerous times during the original Michaelian group; 2) students can presumably benefit from having the mentions conveniently collected and commented all in one place; 3) some interesting things were said about the subject; 4) the subject is related to a number of other components of the Michaelian teachings that are considered to be significant; 5) Control issues are pervasive in human psychology and sociology and spirituality.

The word “control” is not capitalized in this chapter or other chapters of this *Study Papers* book because it has no special meaning in the Michaelian teachings; it is not a Michaelian jargon word that needs a definition apart from its use in the common vernacular.

This chapter is one of many in this book that focuses on a psychological and psychotherapeutic component of the Michaelian teachings as found in original Michaelian group transcriptions, rather than on a spiritual component, as so many other chapters in this book do. The Michaelian version of psychology is not to be confused with the pop psychology of the self-improvement movement, those that do not have a spiritual core or perspective. Rather, the Michaelian psychotherapeutic path (aimed at improving psychological health) is a beneficial precursor to the spiritual path (aimed at improving soul health). To skip the former but attempt the latter is referred to as “spiritual bypassing” (>https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spiritual_bypass<), and it usually proves to be problematic.

Definition of Control

So what is meant by control? The online Merriam Webster dictionary definition is:

Control per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

The following extracts from original Michaelian group transcriptions are Q&A exchanges, where an original Michaelian group member asks a question (or makes a comment), and the Michaels provide an answer. This is not a subject that would benefit by division into subcategories, as some subjects do. These extracts are presented in the chronological order in which they were given, even though this is not a subject where there was a development or evolution of a specific revelation of a facet of the Michaelian teachings, as was often the case with the original Michaelian group. As is my custom, I often provide some explanatory comments following the question or answer. Underlined words in the Michaels’ answers are my emphasis, to draw attention to what it is that I comment on. Sometimes I embed words or phrases [in brackets] that I believe help to clarify the question or the answer.

Concluding Comments on Control





① CREATURE OF REASON

This phrase, Creature of Reason (CoR), occurs several times in the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group. So far as I have been able to determine, it was not borrowed from the Gurdjieffian teachings, as so many other concepts were. Nor did an internet search on the phrase yield a definite source from which the Michaels might have borrowed because it was familiar to original Michaelian group members. Nevertheless, we can know what it means because the Michaels provided a definition, and we can also infer or deduce its meaning from the context in which the phrase is found.

Basically, the descriptions in the original Michaelian group transcriptions indicate that:

- A CoR is a “fragment”-ensouled biological entity as distinct from a “group”-ensouled biological entity.
- A CoR is also distinct from non-physical, aka “spirit”-bodied conscious entities of various kinds.
- Not only humans but also cetaceans are designated as Creatures of Reason, because they also are fragment-ensouled, not group-ensouled, entities.
- Not only this planet earth, but also other planets are allegedly inhabited by Creatures of Reason, often with a terrestrial CoR and an aquatic CoR as on earth.
- The CoR is a distinct level or stage in a hierarchy/spectrum of living beings. There are levels/stages below/before the CoR stage, and there are levels/stages above/after the CoR stage of biological evolution.
- The CoR is just one line of evolutionary development among several other lines of evolutionary development.
- Being at a distinct stage in the hierarchy/spectrum, a CoR has a distinct set of challenges and opportunities, which the Michaels tell their students about.

Each of these bullet points is described and explained in this chapter.

Because a CoR has a special meaning as used by the Michaels, I capitalize it, along with many other jargon terms found in the Michaelian teachings, and discussed in this *Study Papers* book.

In the next three sections we will take a look at the concept in general, and then we will take a look at the Michaelian teachings specifically.

Creatures of Reason in Philosophy

Doing an internet search, the closest that I came to a predecessor for this Michaelian phrase is this quotation:

“Homo sapiens, the only creature endowed with reason, is also the only creature to pin its existence on things unreasonable.” — Henri Bergson

Other possible meanings of the phrase can be gleaned from an academic paper that I found with an internet search. It says:

HAVING REASON AND BEING RATIONAL: According to a traditional philosophical view, dating back to Aristotle and shared by Emmanuel Kant and many others, what makes human beings different from the other animals is that human beings are “rational” or have “reason”. The plausibility of this claim depends, of course, on what it is taken to mean. Both colloquially and in academia, the terms “reason” and “rational” are used in many different ways. “Reason” may be used to denote sanity, as when people say that a mentally deranged person has “lost his reason”. “Rational” may be used to mean orderly and intelligible, or in accordance with causal laws, as when people say they believe that the world is a “rational place”. “Reasoning” may be taken to describe the activity of working out what to do or believe by thinking, in which case “reason” is simply the

capacity to do that. [Christine M. Korsgaard, *Rationality*; it can be downloaded from the internet here: ><https://www.people.fas.harvard.edu/~korsgaard/CMK.Rationality.pdf>< — retrieved 18 June 2021]

This PDF article is 21 pages long, but the brief abstract quoted above is enough to get my point across, namely that fragment-ensouled beings are dominated by the existence of a strong “Intellectual Center” — to use the Michaelian term for rational function — that is far more highly developed than that of any of the other animals on this planet except cetaceans.

In terms of the development of consciousness in life over time, the Creature of Reason is a level/stage in that evolution; there are *levels* and *stages* before and after the level/stage of the CoR. Furthermore, the CoR line of development is just one out of several *lines* of development, lines that can be graphed as ‘parallel’ to the CoR line. The next two sections cover the levels and lines of development, and notes the location of CoR among them.

Levels of Evolution

In order to appreciate what the Michaels say in the original Michaelian group transcriptions, quoted below, regarding Creatures of Reason, it is useful to ‘zoom out’, so to speak, and get a sense of where Creatures of Reason fit in the cosmic scheme of things. The idea is that there is a developmental hierarchy in the process of evolution, and the hierarchy occurs in somewhat distinct levels or stages. This time structure is discussed at great length in my book *The Tao of Cosmogony*, so I will only touch on it briefly here.

A careful reading of the original Michaelian group transcriptions reveals that the Creature of Reason is a distinct level or stage in the biological evolution of the vehicle of incarnation. For instance, we will see below that the “Creature of Reason” is distinct from the “Creature of Non-reason” that lives at a lower/earlier level, and that distinction is determined by the type of ensoulment; the Creature of Non-reason has a “group” soul and the Creature of Reason has a “fragment” soul. Fragment-ensoulment allegedly happens when a Creature of Non-reason has evolved enough physical brain to support it.

And then there is much discussion in the original Michaelian group transcriptions about the processes of human living that prompt various lines of development within the Creature-of-Reason level; refer to next section.

And then, after soul evolution in the physical body is completed, there is the evolution of consciousness in non-physical bodies within planes beyond the Physical Plane level. Thus, there are levels after levels after levels in the hierarchy of evolution, *ad eternum*.

This notion that the cosmos is structured hierarchically in time and space has deep historical roots in psychology, the natural sciences, philosophy, and theology; this concept goes by the name “great chain of being”; Wikipedia even has an article on it:

The great chain of being is a hierarchical structure of all matter and life, thought by medieval Christianity to have been decreed by God. The chain begins with God and descends through angels, humans, animals, and plants, to minerals. The Great Chain of Being (Latin: *scala naturae*, “Ladder of Being”) is a concept derived from Plato, Aristotle (in his *Historia Animalium*), Plotinus, and Proclus. Further developed during the Middle Ages, it reached full expression in early modern Neoplatonism.

The Chain of Being hierarchy has God at the top, above angels, which like him are entirely spirit, without material bodies, and hence unchangeable. Beneath them are humans [aka Creatures of Reason], consisting both of spirit and matter; they can change and die, and are thus essentially impermanent. Lower still are animals and plants. At the bottom are the mineral materials of the earth itself; they consist only of matter. Thus, the higher the being is in the chain, the more attributes it has, including all the attributes of the beings below it. The minerals are, in the medieval mind, a possible exception to the immutability of the material beings in the chain, as alchemy promised to turn lower elements like lead into those higher up the chain, like silver or gold.

[>https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Great_chain_of_being< — retrieved 25 July 2021]

The Wikipedia article continues with a description and history of the concept. This so-called “great chain of being” (GCB) is relevant to the Michaelian teachings because the Michaels subscribe to the concept, as we see in this chapter and other chapters of this *Study Papers* book. Therefore, readers are invited to read in full the Wikipedia article to inform themselves of the concept, and take note of similarities to the cosmological schema of the Michaelian teachings.

Not everyone is satisfied with the metaphor of the Great *Chain* of Being; Ken Wilber, for instance, prefers the metaphor of the Great *Nest* of Being:

Ken Wilber's reframing of the Great Chain of Being to more accurately reflect what the premodern sages themselves originally meant: each expanding "link" in the Great Chain transcends and includes its juniors, and is therefore actually a Great "Nest" of Being. In Integral Theory, the Great Nest of Being is not a Platonic given but the result of evolutionary Kosmic habits. [<https://integrallife.com/glossary/great-nest-of-being/> — retrieved 17 October 2021]

See also <https://cac.org/the-great-nest-of-being-2018-02-14/> for a fuller description and explanation of the Great Nest of Being (GNB). In what follows, there are occasional abbreviations of my conflation of these two metaphors into the GC/NB.

In the original Michaelian group transcriptions, there are hints in the description of Creatures of Reason that the CoR is a level in the GCB/GNB. If my surmise is correct, then these levels can be correlated with features of what I refer to as the Canonical Septenary. The Canonical Septenary follows what I refer to as the Natural Sequence. The basic idea of the Canonical Septenary is that the seven planes of the cosmos (the largest/longest septenary), which are described in the Michaelian teachings and elsewhere, can be subdivided and subdivided and so on to smaller septenaries in terms of level in space and stage in time. Each level/stage within each septenary recapitulates the corresponding level/stage in all of the other septenaries. Many of these septenaries are documented in the Michaelian teachings as it has developed over the decades, starting during the original Michaelian group. Some of these septenaries are tabulated in the next section because they are different lines of development that are mentioned in the context of the CoR.

Lines of Evolution

Whether imaged metaphorically as a chain or as a nest, we will see below that there are hierarchies of various kinds — aka "lines" — in the cosmos from smallest to largest (in terms of space) and from oldest to newest (in terms of time). We will see below that the Creature of Reason is one of the *levels* of a hierarchy, in one of the *lines* of development. What makes the parsing of the information on Creatures of Reason tricky is that there are several developmental lines that correlate with each other because they all follow the Canonical Septenary, the Natural Sequence, and they not only correlate with each other but they also influence each other. That is to say, development happening on one of the lines has an effect on one's development on other lines.

The following table shows the septenaries that are mentioned in this chapter and that correlate with the CoR. It is worth studying this table before you move on, because it will make it easier to understand this chapter and other chapters in this *Study Papers* book.

CREATURE of REASON in CONTEXT — LEVELS and LINES of DEVELOPMENT							
MONADIC	ORDINAL			NEUTRAL	CARDINAL		
AXIAL	ACTION	INSPIRATION	EXPRESSION	ASSIMILATION	EXPRESSION	INSPIRATION	ACTION
PROCESS	Termination	Involution	Analysis	Combination	Synthesis	Evolution	Origination
BIOLOGY	Reptilian Creature	Mammalian Creature	Creature of Reason	I wonder if biological and spiritual evolution over thousands and millions of years will produce physical creatures that would be placed in categories above and beyond the Creature of Reason.			
CULTURE	Hunter-Gatherer	Agriculture	Civilization	Information	Philosophy	Spirituality	Utopia
SOUL AGE	Infant	Child	Young	Mature	Senior	Elder	Ancient
LIFE-STAGE	Infancy	Childhood	Youth	Middle Age	Seniority	Elderhood	Decrepitude
LEVEL OF BEING	Man #1 Physical	Man #2 Emotional	Man #3 Mental	Man #4 Balanced	Man #5 Conscious	Man #6 Adept	Man #7 Master
CHAKRA	Gonadic	Navel	Plexus	Heart	Throat	Brow	Crown
CENTER	Moving	Emotional	Intellectual	Instinctive	Hi'r Intellectual	Hi'r Emotional	Hi'r Moving

Comments on this table are as follows:

- **MONADIC:** The first row shows the so-called “Monadic” Attributes of the Canonical Septenary, the Natural Sequence. These were known to the original Michaelian group. Refer to Chapter 2B, “Attributes of Overleaves”, in my book *A History of the Overleaf Chart*.
- **AXIAL:** The second row shows the so-called “Axial” Attributes of the Canonical Septenary. These were not known to the original Michaelian group so far as we know, but they were revealed by Quinn Yarbro in her book *Messages from Michael*. Combining the Monadic and Axial Attributes yields the so-called “Septenarian” Attributes. From left to right, these are shown in the sequence of the Canonical Septenary.
- **PROCESS:** The third row shows the one-word names that I have chosen to provide the barest of descriptions of the meaning of the Septenarian Attributes. For example, Ordinal Expression = the Analysis Process. Creatures of Reason primarily function in Ordinal Expression, aka the Analysis Process. In fact, the third level of all lines of development listed in this table, which are experienced by the CoR, are all aspects of the Ordinal Expression, aka Analysis, Process. This level is all about the formation and expression of an egotistical, individualistic “self-will”, a crystallized and discreet identity.
- The remaining rows of this table show various septenaries in shorter and shorter instantiations of the Canonical Septenary. The Great Chain/Nest of Being is fractalic, as noted in the previous section.
- **BIOLOGY:** The longest line of the Canonical Septenary that is shown in this table is the one that contains the so-called “Creature of Reason” level. In this schema, the CoR level is the third level in the biological evolution of the animal Kingdom. In the original Michaelian group transcriptions quoted below, the level that preceded Creatures of Reason was referred to as “Creatures of No-reason”. As explained in the chapter on “The Triune Brain” in my book *The Tao of Cosmogony*, which discusses an aspect of biological evolution, Creatures of No-reason can be divided very broadly into reptilians and mammals, which are shown in this table to the left of the CoR stage. If there are levels of biological evolution, whether by nature or by supernature, to the right of Creatures of Reason in this table, that is too transhumanish and science-fictionish for me to endorse with confidence; refer to a section near the end of this chapter.

- **CULTURE:** The fifth row shows the next shorter line of development discussed in this chapter in context with the CoR. These are the names of socio-cultural levels of human CoR development that happen over the course of time spans from paleolithic to neolithic to historical to modern times. Humankind appears to be making the transition between Level 3 “Civilization” and Level 4 “information” at the same time in history that it is making the transition from Young Soul dominance to Mature Soul dominance; see next row of the table. Thus, Soul Age development drives Culture development to a large extent. The Michaels (04 September 1973) referred to the time when Old Souls predominate in human culture as “Philosophical”, so I include that in the table. Above and beyond that are so-called “Spiritual” and “Utopian” cultures, whose existence is speculated and named by myself.
- **SOUL AGE:** The sixth row shows the next shorter line of development discussed in this chapter in context with the CoR. Evidence from channeling indicates that souls typically develop along this line more quickly than human culture in general, so this line is nested within the Culture line. These are names that I have chosen for the Soul Ages described in the Michaelian teachings and elsewhere; for the full story, refer to Chapter 4M, “The Seven Soul Ages” in my book *A History of the Overleaf Chart*. This particular septenary was mentioned in context with the CoR in the original Michaelian group transcriptions quoted in this chapter. Notice that the Young Soul Age correlates with the Creature of Reason level.
- **LIFE-STAGE:** The seventh rows shows the next shorter line of development discussed in this chapter in context with the CoR. The seven Milestones happen within a full lifetime from birth to death. So far as I know, they were not revealed in the original Michaelian group — they were revealed in *Messages from Michael* — but there is one apparent reference to Milestones in one of the Q&A exchanges that discussed the CoR, so that is why I include it in this table. For more information, refer to Chapter 4Q, “Life-Stages” in my book *A History of the Overleaf Chart*.
- **LEVEL OF BEING:** The eighth row shows the next shorter line of development discussed in this chapter in context with the CoR. If this phrase is unfamiliar to you, refer to the chapter by that name. Briefly, this is Gurdjieff’s name for levels of spiritual development, another line of development nested within the Creature of Reason line of development. Unlike Soul Age, which takes many lifetimes to span the entire septenary, one can develop along this line within a single lifetime. There is one passage in the original Michaelian group transcriptions that hint that the Creature-of-Reason level of biological evolution correlates with the levels of spiritual development as given by Gurdjieff. Therefore I show it in this table.
- **CHAKRA:** The CoR was correlated with an abdominal chakra in one of the original Michaelian group Q&A exchanges, so it is appropriate to make the correlation in this table, namely that the Solar Plexus Chakra correlates with the Creature of Reason. In esoteric literature, the chakras are often presented as a distinct line of development, in that successively higher chakras are allegedly activated by the rise of kundalini energy from the bottom of the spine to the top. This can happen very quickly, so this is the shortest line of development shown in this table. Refer to chapters on chakras in my book *A History of the Overleaf Chart* for the explanation of the correlation of chakras with other septenarian lines of development in this table.
- **CENTER:** The last row shows the names of the Centers as they were given in the original Michaelian group. The Centers are not a line of development *per se*, but they have been correlated with various lines of development, as shown in this table. The descriptions of the Creature of Reason in the original Michaelian group transcriptions make it obvious that it correlates with the Intellectual Center.

A Creature of Reason, such as you or me, can be at very different levels in these various lines of development.

In this chapter, we focus on three links of the Great Chain/Nest of Being with respect to humanoid evolution: the animal link (Creatures of Non-reason), the human link (Creatures of Reason), and the super-human link. One might say that much of the Michaelian teachings is focused on these three links in the GC/NB.

With that background information in mind, let’s now take a look at the mentions of the CoR phrase in the original Michaelian group transcriptions.

Creatures of Reason in the Original Michaelian Group

The following extracts from original Michaelian group transcriptions are Q&A exchanges, where an original Michaelian group member asks a question (or makes a comment), and the Michaels provide an answer. These extracts are presented in the chronological order in which they were given. As is my custom, I usually provide some explanatory comments following the question or answer. Underlined words are my emphasis, to draw attention to what it is that I comment on. Sometimes I embed words or phrases [in brackets] that I believe help to clarify the question or the answer. Numerous study papers related to this chapter are to be found among my comments.

The first mention of Creatures of Reason was via Soleal — an Adept living on another planet — who preceded the appearance of the Michaels. (The passage also indicates that we do not have all of the sessions of the original Michaelian group transcriptions.) My guess is that Soleal borrowed the phrase from the Michaels because he was a Student of the Michaels, and when the Michaels themselves appeared to the original Michaelian group, they used the phrase.

You have said [in a previous session] that you think it is absurd that “Creatures of Reason” have hang-ups about sex.

[Soleal:] Why have a hang-up about something like breathing? [undated session, mid 1973]

For months after this first mention, there was no definition of the phrase, so my comments on the early Q&A exchanges might seem like a stretch, but the rationale for my comments will become clearer as this chapter develops. Basically, what we find is that the “Creature of Reason” is a level in biological evolution, but there are correlates of it in other developmental lines — such as Culture and Soul Age and Level of Being — and all of them follow the Natural Sequence, as shown in the table above.

Further on we see that the Michaels often contrast the characteristics of Creatures of Reason with the characteristics of Creatures of No-reason — the non-human (and non-cetacean) animals. It is generally true that Creatures of No-reason do not have hang-ups about breathing or sexuality. However, I regard Soleal’s answer as incomplete, because copulation is not like breathing, except for Creatures of No-reason. Yes, breathing and copulation are both bodily functions, but for Creatures of Reason the consequences for self and for other are much more significant for copulation than they are for breathing; the higher level of self-awareness that comes with being a Creature of Reason adds issues and challenges that Creatures of No-reason do not have.

Beyond that understanding of this Q&A exchange, another conclusion from an examination of the totality of the original Michaelian group transcriptions is that a person whose Centers are integrated and Balanced via a spiritual path does not regard either breathing or sexuality as “absurd”, and that is the position of maturity from which Soleal regards sex; refer to the chapter on “Sexuality” for the explanation that the human Expression Centers and the Inspiration Centers often interfere with the healthy and unencumbered sexual expression in the Action Centers.

The following Q&A exchange is from the first dated original Michaelian group session that has become generally available. It mentions the Chakra line of development.

Dick: In the [Carlos Castaneda] Don Juan books, in the works of faith healers and in the Indian chakras, there seems to be an agreement that there is a place in the lower abdomen, where there is a chakra in the Indian system and a place where the healing can be applied (Mr. A’s faith healing system), and in the Don Juan system, the “will” comes out through a gap in the abdomen, and these are things that I haven’t been able to experience, except to read about them, and I’d like to know if those particular points are valid.

[Soleal:] The average Creature of Reason does have his Gravity Center [chakra] somewhere near the middle of the torso, and to get in touch with that energy source you must first know how you are Centered and what you still have to go through [to become Balanced in the Heart Chakra], because you will want to [learn to] direct that energy into something positive [such as healing]. [03 July 1973]

This answer needs some parsing in order to understand it fully and correctly. Basically, this passage says that a Creature of Reason does well to develop along the Chakra line, starting with the lower chakras and developing into the higher chakras. It is my understanding that the Solar Plexus Chakra (“somewhere near the middle of the torso”) corresponds to the Intellectual Center — refer to the chapters on the chakras in my book *A History of the Overleaf Chart*. Typically, in the esoteric literature, the fourth chakra, the Heart Chakra, is the chakra of healing, but to properly use the energy of that chakra, the lower chakras, including the Solar Plexus Chakra, must be healthy. More is said about the Center/Chakra line of development in the chapter “Balanced Man”.

The next mention of Creatures of Reason came later in the same session, and it follows logically from what I said in my comment to the previous mention. The previous passage apparently referred to the dominant chakra of the average Creature of Reason; the following passage refers to Centers that above-average Creatures of Reason can aspire to achieve:

Dick: You know, in a way, it seems that he [Soleal] is speaking on a higher plane than we are. We're asking questions on one level and he's answering them on a higher level. The principles are there. It seems to me that what we need now is the how and not the principles. I've heard the principles in the Bible and from Robert [Burton]. It seems that if a teacher is going to come and be useful to us, he's got to tell us the how also.

Sarah: Can you tell us the how?

[Soleal:] To get to higher [Cardinal] Centers, do what Jesus did: fasting, meditation, and agonizing self-appraisal. Exercise the body, learn to love unselfishly. This is hard to do, but it can be achieved by [first] intellectually apprehending the fact that no other Creature [of Reason] owes you anything, and then materially obtaining what you need through your own resources. Emotional acceptance will only come about when the expectations [of entitlement] have ceased. Jesus had no aspirations of his students. In fact, he knew that he would fail the most dismally in his mission to those closest to him; yet, he persisted in his efforts. For his own growth, it was more important to express the higher good than it was that those around him absorb it. Many did absorb — many more now than then. Even if you feel that good efforts are being wasted, continue. Positive energy is never wasted; somebody always absorbs it. [03 July 1973]

To me this means that one of the major levels within the Creature-of-Reason level of biological evolution is when one “intellectually apprehend that no other Creature owes you anything, materially”. In other words, in that level you become a mature, independent, self-sufficient being in terms of thoughts and beliefs. Per the previous Q&A exchange, the “average CoR” has his “Gravity Center” in the Solar Plexus Chakra, which corresponds to the Intellectual Center. Think of this as the Level of Reason. This is the level before we “learn to love unselfishly” in what may be thought of as the Level of Intuition. And beyond that are the levels that correspond to the Cardinal Centers, which I now designate as the Level of Philosophy (Higher Intellectual Center), the Level of Spirituality (Higher Emotional Center), and the Level of Utopia (Higher Moving Center). Those levels are discussed in the chapter “Adepts and Masters”. More is said about the Center/Chakra line of development in the chapter “Balanced Man”.

In the chronological narrative of this chapter, the source shifts from Soleal to the Michaels henceforth, and the information gets expanded into other lines within the Creature-of-Reason level in the GC/NB, one line being Soul Age:

The tape recorder was turned off for a moment, but a question was asked about all of us being Old Souls.

The Exalted [Cardinal] Cycles [Soul Ages] are sparsely populated; Sarah is right about the bell curve. The majority of all Creatures of Reason are Young and Mature right now because of the closeness of the manifestation of the high Mental [Plane] body [the Infinite Soul]. [26 August 1973]

The Creatures-of-Reason level of the GCB is subject to reincarnation and resultant soul evolution through the Soul Ages. As pointed out above, the Creature-of-Reason level refers to the third step in the biological evolution septenary, and it corresponds to the Intellect Center, which is the third step in the Centers septenary when arranged per the Canonical Septenary, aka the Natural Sequence. Here and now it is appropriate to point out that the Creature-of-Reason stage corresponds to the Young Soul Age.

Soul Age is one line of development separate from the CoR line. The next mention of Creatures of Reason in the original Michaelian group transcriptions mentions another line, the Culture line:

Question about homosexuality.

This unfortunate syndrome is almost always culturally induced. Most of the time it is a form of rebellion, either by an Emotionally Centered male, usually either an Artisan or a Sage, or an Intellectually Centered female, usually either a Scholar or a Priest. This culture frustrates the inclinations of both — or we should say, all — of these Roles, and the squelching is done in childhood. The job is usually quite thorough.

One other form of mixed gender conflicts arise with the children of the above who do not have a clear-cut picture of the “roles” that society expects them to play. They go out into the world unequipped to play the proper role, and [so they] ‘play it by ear’. Sometimes, this results in the gender conflict. Ideally, one should be able to express love for others regardless of the genital assignment without fear of castigation. [To do] this is quite an upward step in the evolution of Creatures of Reason. Don’t expect it to happen in this lifetime. [14 December 1973]

In America, this acceptance of homosexuality, this “upward step in the evolution of Creatures of Reason”, happened rather suddenly a few decades later with the federal legalization of gay marriage. Contrary to the prophecy, it happened within the lifetime of some members of the original Michaelian group. Sarah Chambers became a gay rights activist a decade after this session, in the early days of the AIDS epidemic, but she was not one of those who lived to see the legalization of gay marriage. The acceptance of homosexuality in a culture is a much smaller step in cultural evolution than the seven major stages shown in the table above. However, I would say that the small shift in culture is a component in the big shift in culture, from Young Soul dominance to Mature Soul dominance, which was mentioned in the previous Q&A exchange.

The Creature of No-reason has not yet been named as such in the original Michaelian group transcriptions (see further on), but the next occurrence of the CoR in the original Michaelian group transcriptions is a description of the difference between a Creature of Reason and a Creature of No-reason:

We would say a few words on a subject that has not been broached. We feel that you need to know about [it], and perhaps it will give rise to some questions.

When the life cycle is thrown in motion on any given world [inanimate → animate], it is left alone for many centuries to evolve unmolested and undisturbed. When a dominant species finally stabilizes, we begin to monitor this species. When the animal becomes sufficiently domesticated and is taught basic survival techniques, Infant Souls are cast [into incarnation, not as Fragments]. The dinosaur did not emerge as the dominant species; instead, a carnivore, a mammalian upright ape did. The Infant Souls were not initially cast [into incarnation] until the dominant Creature [of No-reason] had evolved into one where the cerebral capacity was sufficient for learning [as a Creature of Reason is]. [24 January 1974]

This and other original Michaelian group transcriptions imply that ensoulment by an individual Fragment of what had been a Creature of No-reason is the beginning of the Creature-of-Reason stage of development. The brain of a Creature of No-reason must evolve to a certain quantity and quality or it is not suitable to interface with a “*fragment*” soul, which is different from what the Michaels elsewhere referred to as a “*hive*” soul: “Physical animals have etheric and astral vehicles; they have a hive soul, as in bees.” — 21 August 1973. Hive souls are not sufficient to produce Creatures of Reason, as fragment souls are. Refer to the chapter “En soulment” for more information.

Further on in this original Michaelian group session, there is some more clarification on the demarcation of Creatures of No-reason and Creatures of Reason:

Edgar: Our soul has been said to have always been in existence. Would this be equivalent to Genesis where we were thrown out of Paradise — into the world?

That is valid.

Edgar: The second chapter of Genesis tells of God making a body out of earth [and breathing life/soul into it].

This Chapter II [of Genesis] explains the immersion of the soul in the body of the dominant creature, yes. [24 January 1974]

Edgar was confused, but so is Genesis, derived as it was from at least two legendary traditions, and these myths are subject to various interpretations. According to the Genesis account, Adam and Eve being cast out of the Garden of Eden (perhaps equivalent to Astral Plane spiritual souls incarnating in material bodies on the Physical Plane) came somewhat later than Adam (representing humankind) receiving the breath of life (perhaps equivalent to ensoulment of the dominant species). Anyway, stories get garbled and understanding them is iffy.

So much for that original Michaelian group session, but the subject of hive souls was elaborated upon a couple of months later:

Could you explain hive souls? Were they part of one soul that split?

That is valid. Until the dominant species arose, all were part of the group [aka “hive”] soul. This accounts for the inability of the lower animals to reason independently. They reason to a certain extent in herd schools and packs where the vibrations are stronger and the energy level higher. Whales have individual souls. Most planets on which Creatures of Reason reside have [both] an aquatic [in water] and terrestrial [on land] culture.

We discussed whales and someone said they did not think they are Creatures of Reason.

We disagree that the whales are not Creatures of Reason. They simply cannot manipulate their environment to the extent you [humans] can. This is why they are so large; the size gives them a chance [to survive and evolve in spite of the inability to manipulate their environment]. [03 April 1974]

Refer to the chapter “Cetaceans” for further discussion of their status as ensouled animals. Also, refer to the chapter “Biocomputer” for more discussion of John Lilly and his notion that cetaceans are Creatures of Reason, **although Lilly [probably] did not use that term.**

More was also said about CoR on planets other than earth:

What does the comment about the populated galaxy mean?

We are not aware of crossovers between this galaxy and others. The intergalactic medium has not been penetrated in this area. Not because it is not possible; simply because it is not truly desirable. Contact with Creatures of Reason from other galaxies is, of course, possible on the Astral Plane. [08 May 1974]

This is a hint that the Creature-of-Reason level of biological evolution is pervasive throughout the physical universe. Soleal, for instance, although reptilian in appearance, lives on another planet, yet he is apparently experiencing the same sentient, sapient, humanoid, Creature-of-Reason level in biological evolution. That there are humanoid Creatures of Reason on other planets is not just a convenient trope for science fiction stories.

More was also said about cetaceans as CoR:

Do dolphins and whales communicate with each other?

There are barriers, much the same as your language barriers present.

Are [their] thought patterns the same as all Creatures of Reason?

In Essence, yes, but you must take False Personality into consideration.

Do whales have False Personality?

Yes, they do.

Do they choose their [life] Sequences?

Yes, they do. [22 May 1974]

Linguists look for features (“thought patterns”) common to all languages and find that the encoding is different but such things as syntax and parts (nouns, verbs, etc.) exist in all of them. This is because language is a function of “reason” in the broad sense of that term, and the world that words describe is also “reasonable”.

Let’s move on to the next appearance of CoR in the original Michaelian group transcriptions:

Phyllis: Do animals laugh?

Laughter is limited to Creatures of Reason. They alone feel the need to communicate the fact that they are either pleased or awfully nervous to those around them. Other animals do occasionally indicate their nervousness by coughing, stamping, etc., but not laughing. We see the need to laugh as genuine in Creatures of Reason who so depend upon verbal communication, and where in some societies displeasure just might result in violence. [19 June 1974]

It would seem that this lack of *laughter* applies to Creatures higher than Creatures of Reason as well as to Creatures of Non-reason and lower. However, I tend to believe that *humor* of some sort exists in higher Creatures.

But I digress. Let’s move on to another original Michaelian group session.

Shirley: Do whales twin?

Yes, all Creatures of Reason twin. [25 June 1974]

Twinning, of bodies and souls, was a topic of interest at that time in the original Michaelian group sessions. Refer to the chapter “Twins” to read the study paper on that subject.

Louise: One almost has to have lived before to have a fear of it [death].

This fear, Louise, is only shared by other ensouled beings [aka Creatures of Reason]. By the way, your insight is valid.

Dick, recalling vividly some of your own countless deaths would strengthen your belief [in the afterlife]. This [contra afterlife] anti belief was literally pounded into you at the age when you were storing your most profound philosophies on the nature of physical things. This is why it has been so difficult to shake. There are [developmental] stages through which all Creatures of Reason pass, at which time certain selective bodies of information can be much more permanently imprinted than at any other stage. [01 October 1974]

These “stages through which all Creatures of Reason pass” are perhaps the so-called “Milestones”, aka “Internal Monads”, that were not revealed during the original Michaelian group but which Quinn Yarbrow revealed in *Messages from Michael*, pages 217 and 218. For a thorough examination, refer to the Part titled “Developmental Psychology” in my book *The Tao of Cosmogony*. This psychological development is different from the cultural evolution of Creatures of Reason mentioned previously, where homosexuality becomes acceptable.

Is there any connection between the spread of the Teaching and the Ten Lost Tribes of Israel?

Essentially, yes. This phrase was originally used metaphorically describing the lost civilizations known but gone in the Euphrates Valley. All of these had, to their intellectual limits, access to the Teaching passed to them, of course, in the tongue of the times, but substantially the same. The truth of this, of course, became lost in legend.

In the beginning [ensoulment] of Creatures of Reason on this world, this had a very literal meaning, as early man did form tribes, becoming nomadic as the food supply steadily decreased. Man [humans] became dispersed throughout the world, some even crossing the Bering Straits on this continent, and these souls, of course, were physically lost to the other tribes. [19 October 1974]

If the above statement added anything significant to our understanding of Creatures of Reason, I have not discerned it; I include it just to provide a complete record from the original Michaelian group transcriptions. We learn more from the next Q&A exchange that mentions the CoR. Two lines of development that bear on the development of the CoR during a lifetime, Soul Age and Culture, are mentioned in this passage:

Man must strive uphill in the battle to free the Essence. By “man,” of course, we refer to all Creatures of Reason. For in all languages we know of, there is a word meaning “man” [in the sense of human as distinct from other animal species]. This uphill battle is growth-producing and also provides the strength to persevere through the several [Soul Age] Cycles spent on the Physical Plane. The lessons learned on the Physical Plane are necessarily [psychologically] painful just because they are so complex. With simplification, there is analgesia [less pain]. On this world, there have been significant cultural and religious barriers to growth. On other worlds, there have been hostile natural environments and threats from without to contend with. [22 October 1974]

This is another statement that the Creature-of-Reason level is a distinct link in the GC/NB, with its particular internal and external challenges. Refer to the chapter named “Complexity and Simplicity” for further discussion of this factor in the Soul Age Cycle of Creatures of Reason.

The lengthiest exposition in the original Michaelian group transcriptions on Creatures of Reason is as follows.

James asked the purpose behind extraterrestrial exploration.

Their purposes are legion. Some worlds are crowded. Some care only for exploration. Others, such as the world where our student (Soleal) lives, care only for spiritual growth. There is much curiosity throughout this galaxy — curiosity such as the kind that Creatures of Reason on this world exhibit when they try to break from the prison of this world.

Exploration has always appealed to Creatures of Reason. As soon as they learned to conquer their native environment and subdue it sufficiently to insure long-range survival, their thoughts automatically turned to the stars. As their technological might increased, their horizons broadened. We believe that the man Bertrand Russell hit upon a basic truth when he described the “utter terror of cosmic loneliness” that man feels when he contemplates the cosmos. Man is not alone in this; all Creatures of Reason experience it; it is part of the evolutionary process on the Physical Plane and cannot be avoided. Our student [Soleal] feels that this [visit of his to earth], perhaps, will result in a cultural, as well as spiritual exchange, leading to much spiritual growth on both worlds. This remains to be seen.

Creatures of Reason, of course, retain the knowledge of the pan-dimensional universe within their Essences, and at a far deeper level than most are in contact, and resent the limitations placed upon them by the Physical Plane — the ultimate speed limit, the ultimate this and that — impedes their progress, and eventually they rebel against this, and literally burst from their finite prison into the pan-dimensional universe.

Apparently, curiosity originates with Creatures of Reason, not earlier in cosmic evolution. Curiosity is an Intellectual Center phenomenon, not the Emotional Center or the Moving Center. I would venture the guess that curiosity continues beyond the Creature-of-Reason stage of cosmic evolution. I also see in this passage a hint that, in the near or distant future, the Creature of Reason on planet Earth might “burst from their finite prison into the pan-dimensional universe”, this being a level of the CoR that is beyond the third level of

biological evolution that we humans are familiar with. The so-called “Transhumanist” philosophers speculate about such stuff; see further on. Various UFO phenomena also hint at such stuff, but I will not go into detail about that because it is so iffy.

James heard from another medium that some aliens have been able to program all individuals on this planet and monitor them, so that if our race is destroying the balance in this part of the universe, they (the aliens) will destroy us, not allowing us to do it.

Unfortunately, we would classify this as altruistic wishful thinking. In fact, the destruction of the planet, however premature, would not throw the universe out of harmony. Premature destruction of the star itself would, but minutely so. There is, or rather are, [extraterrestrial] races with this capability, but none with this clouded thinking. This would be a devastating Karmic Ribbon, which no Creature of Reason would knowingly take upon himself. The capability for this is, of course, well within the reach of your own scientists. [20 November 1974]

It does not say so here, but I venture to say that Creatures of No-reason do not incur Karmic Ribbons when they interfere with the life of another Creature of No-reason. It may be that Karma is limited to the Creature-of-Reason stage of cosmic evolution; before that stage one is too limited in awareness to learn via Karma as the Michaels define it (refer to the chapter “Karma”), whereas after that stage one is not so limited in awareness that learning via Karma is required. Thus, being a Creature of Reason is an awkward stage in cosmic evolution.

In the next mention of Creatures of Reason, we see the first mention of “Creatures of No-reason”. Whereas the contrast was merely implied in previous passages, now it is made explicit:

When souls are first Cast into a dominant [animal] species, some, or rather many, of the instinctive drives of the Creatures of No-reason still remain embedded with the Bio-computer. The Personality makes no attempt to override these instinctive behavior patterns, and fights against the intrusion of any outside source. This suggests that they can be overridden.

Refer to the chapter “Bio-computer” for more information about that.

Before souls were Cast [into incarnation], the Creatures of No-reason from which you [Creatures of Reason] have ascended were largely governed by fear, and their lives were taken up in many ceaseless battles for survival. This is no longer necessary on this world and yet it goes on ceaselessly in spite of this. There are few large carnivores roaming the city streets and yet most behave as though there are. The battle for survival is but another [Bio-computer] Tape Loop that plays on and on, even to the point of starving large portions of the culture, while the others waste and hoard. This only provides for the realism in the drama, for this is no longer necessary at all.

Creatures of Reason have it all over their fellow [animal] inhabitants, as they alone are able to experience awe and delight. But the Creatures of Reason in this culture seldom allow themselves this luxury. They instead find devious methods of avoiding these experiences. The denial of pleasure and the pursuit of pain is high on your list of priority, and it should be clear now why this is true, but there is no reason for it other than the instinctive memories. This is the strongest reason we know of for working on the separation from your Personality and allowing the Essence to free itself. [21 December 1974]

In the original Michaelian group transcriptions, the word “Cast” is used in two senses. One is the “Fragmentation” of Tao into groups of “Kindred Souls”; there are chapters on these subjects in this *Study Papers* book. Two is the beginning of the ensoulment of the dominant animal species on a planet. Other than this chapter, there is not enough discussion of the latter sense of Casting in the original Michaelian group transcriptions to have a chapter on it in this *Study Papers* book; the above is about the extent of it.

In the paragraphs quoted above we clearly see the progression from the level of biological evolution called Creatures of No-reason, to the level called Creatures of Reason, when the dominant species is ensouled. There is a stage within the CoR stage when Essence dominates Personality, but this is not the same as some speculative transhumanist stage beyond the CoR stage.

Because of similarities of descriptions, I see a correspondence of this “Creature” progression to Gurdjieff’s ideas on spiritual growth, which he referred to as “Levels of Being”; this *Study Papers* book has a chapter on that. There we find that the progression is from Man Number One and Man Number Two — which can be characterized as irrational and therefore correlated with Creatures of No-reason — to Man Number Three, which can be characterized as Rational Man and which can be correlated with the Creature-of-Reason stage of biological evolution. Beyond that is Man Number Four, aka Balanced Man, where one separates from Personality and lives in Essence; refer to the chapter “Essence and Personality” for more about that.

The underlined words in the following original Michaelian group transcriptions are descriptive words for the Creature-of-Reason stage of biological evolution. Previous transcriptions did not have very many such descriptive words.

Ralph: You have told us about man's habitual rendering complex — the way he complicates things. If we have moments of knowledge and love, it seems difficult to maintain them in this culture. Can you comment on this?

These moments are moments of utter simplicity. Of course, it is difficult to maintain in this state, in the false order, the complicated chaos that this and other cultures like it have created. As we have said before, to explain away the unexplainable, man must create for himself the answer to all those questions, those imponderables for which there is no proof. Man, in order to be satisfied, must define, within the limits of his belief system, all those phenomena that he observes. In moments when the Essence breaks through the barriers, the true order — the natural order — becomes perceivable. Man takes the simplest activity and renders it complex by analyzing, examining, granting it priority, granting it precedence. We should not limit this simply to man [humans]. This is common to Creatures of Reason throughout the Physical Plane. This is not unique to that which you call man. Man takes the simplest function and renders it complex in order to give an illusion of importance to his life.

This is another passage where it appears that the Creature of Reason correlates with the Analysis Process in general and the Intellectual Center in specific.

Ralph: Is The Synthesis simpler than the systems that man erects?

In its most evolved form, yes. In words suitable for communication with the members of this enclave, it becomes complex. Again, Creatures of Reason take the simplest activity and render it complex through symbols. The Synthesis is not complex. The Synthesis seeks integration, simplicity. Creatures of Reason seek to justify their existence through expressions of individuality, isolation, alienation. Creatures of Reason seek to justify their existence by assigning themselves a role, even a negative one, if that be the case, of subrogation, taking the responsibility from themselves, assigning that responsibility to a higher power, conveniently beyond the five physical senses and, therefore, unarguable, unprovable, unassailable, safe, comfortable, complex. [26 December 1974]

The Michaels referred to their Teaching as “The Synthesis”. Refer to the chapter on “Synthesis” for a thorough description and explanation of what they meant by that. The teaching about the Creatures-of-Reason level in the evolution of life is just one very small component of The Synthesis.

I underlined the words “complex, symbols, individuality, isolation, alienation” because they are synonyms for the Ordinal Expression Analysis Process, the third Process in the Septenary of seven Processes. In my mind, this confirms the point made previously that the Creature-of-Reason level in the story arc of the evolution of life is an aspect of that Process; there are levels before and there are levels after the Creature-of-Reason level.

A couple of weeks later, more was said on the subject of the CoR. This one mentions another line of development, namely the Level-of-Being line:

[Soleal:] You as a group do have a very low profile and are almost invisible, one of the reasons being that you do not trust your Level of Being at all, and there is ample reason for this mistrust. Yogis are extremely visible and have a high profile. The energy wasted in concealment could just as easily be consumed in more meaningful ways. Many of you are even apologetic in your acceptance of this Teaching. You apologize all the time for embracing such irrational beliefs such as reincarnation and the like — the mere fact that you are now sitting here reflecting on the fact that you might well be crazy sets you apart from the Creatures of Non-reason or from the unensouled universe. On what laurels rests your doubts? What audacity gives you the right to question the awe and the majesty?

The sun sets on our world quite regularly, also. How can you observe the sunset and not feel the awe? And feeling the awe, how can you call yourself a Non-reasoning Creature and merely a happy accident of time and space? — Which is exactly what you do each time you deny the existence of soul. The Emotional Center cannot deny the existence of the soul. It is too close to the source, and for that reason many of you run and hide each time the Emotional Center threatens to rear its ugly head — you even run from each other. Can you ever call each other “brother” when you fear each other so much? [11 January 1975]

“Reflecting” is a function of the Intellectual Center, which correlates with the Creature-of-Reason level of biological evolution. In this passage, some more challenges that are exclusive to the CoR level are mentioned, and so does the following Q&A exchange:

How can one tell whether one is in a Negative Pole of an appropriate Center, or if one is in the wrong Center entirely?

— Study Papers page 322 —

Whatever portion of a Center provides an entrapment for the soul who is still a victim of his Overleaves becomes the Negative Pole of that Center. All Creatures of Reason have this in common — you [personally and individually] are not alone. This is, for many, a no-exit situation and becomes Wrong Work, but still not wholly inappropriate, as in the example given. It is still an emotional reaction to an emotional situation or a sexual reaction to a sexual situation. We would call it unSchooled rather than inappropriate. It is not inappropriate, for instance, for your children in this culture to giggle at salacious pictures and this is an appropriate reaction from an unSchooled Center. [25 January 1974]

Unlike Creatures of Reason, Creatures of No-reason do not have problems with being in the inappropriate or unSchooled Center for the situation at hand, or being in the Negative Pole of a Center. By the way, there is a chapter “Good Work — Bad Work” in this *Study Papers* book.

More challenges of the CoR level are given in the next appearance of the phrase:

You can allow yourselves to be overwhelmed by the responsibility that you undertake. For instance, you can go under the load of responsibility that you feel for your children. On the other hand, you can come to regard these same children as Creatures of Reason and relate to them in a reasonable, amiable fashion. The same goes for all of your other interpersonal relationships. [08 February 1975]

The answer quoted above was part of a discussion about communal living. The statement about the way to relate to children appears to be an allusion to previous descriptions of Creatures of Reason: they tend to be independent, self-contained, self-sufficient, self-directed, and self-motivated. Even children can be, and should be, responsible individuals who are capable of fending for themselves as early as reasonable; therefore they are better off if their parents are not hovering over them all of the time. There are what modern psychologists call unhealthy “co-dependent” relationships that some parents have with their children, and that adults have with their intimate partners or families. In the above quotation, the Michaels recommend against co-dependent relationships wherever they are found. The point I want to make, in addition to the point that the Michaels made, is that one should develop from being an unhealthy Creature of Reason to being a healthy Creature of Reason: independent, self-contained, self-sufficient, self-directed, self-motivated.

The following answer was also in the context of a discussion about communal living:

The subject of domestic animals [dogs and cats] is interesting, in that domesticating animals was one of the first symptoms of growing alienation in this culture many centuries ago — almost, in fact, at the dawn [ensoulment of hominins] of Creatures of Reason on this world. Once man gives up his need for alienation, he can then, and only then, look at the reasons for his need for substitutes; he uses domesticated animals in lieu of people. They are expendable, relatively cheap, and give away no secrets. (If you are not wearing a cape, how can you conceal a dagger?) [12 February 1975]

If the notion of Creature of Reason is like other features of the Michaelian teachings, then I would name the Positive Pole as +Independence or +Individuality and the Negative Pole as –Alienation or –Isolation. Frankly, it is easier for many people to be intimate with a domestic pet than it is to be intimate with family members, but I suggest that the point that the Michaels want to make here is that using pets as a substitute for healthy and mature interactions with domestic partners does not lead to psychological or spiritual development toward the higher and healthier levels of being a Creature of Reason.

Following is the last mention of Creatures of Reason in the original Michaelian group transcriptions that have become available:

We know of no way to accurately describe what you call a “time system” except to remind you that this change you are experiencing has been set out by Creatures of Reason as a forward time system. It is important to remember that “evolutionary cycles” never exactly duplicate themselves, so you must think of them as a forward linear spiral and not simply the circular motion of a rotating point on a plane, and thus a “time plane” is not a flat sheet of paper in analogy, but resembles the flight of an auger bit with the referenced beginning points intersecting as a flat infinite plane projected radially from the center line of the shaft. [Dimensions! June 1975]

How appropriate that this last comment on the subject of this chapter should describe, albeit clumsily, the fractallicity principle of the Great Chain of Being. That is, each developmental septenarian cycle is like a 360° turn of a helix, where each cycle is similar to the previous cycles and the following cycles, but functions at a different time scale, one within the other. That is, the longest developmental time cycle contains the second longest cycle, and so on to the shortest time cycle. The table at the beginning of this chapter shows some

developmental septenarian cycles at time scales that are shorter than the time cycle that includes Creatures of Reason as its third stage.

Now that we are finished with the original Michaelian group transcriptions, three more sections are expedient to properly wrap up this chapter.

Post Original Michaelian Group

Subsequent to the original Michaelian group, Sarah Chambers served as the primary channel in two other group gatherings. Among both of those, I found only one Q&A exchange where Creatures of Reason were mentioned:

[Question not recorded, but obviously about her ex-boyfriend, George.]

That relationship, Elizabeth, was not Wrong Work. It was a shifting of goals, both spiritual and physical, that ended it then. This was a natural Vectoring of events, and because it caused a realization crisis in you, it was rather Good Work. Loving is not owning, and that is why most humans and other Creatures of Reason fail in their life relationships. All Fragments on the Physical Plane long for the Tao, and for that reason they seek permanence in their relationships, something that ironically is not often possible. Love, as the unconditional Agape of the Masters, is of course possible, but permanent love on the Physical Plane is difficult because of the artificial barriers.... Fragments on the Physical Plane experience an almost cosmic loneliness that is caused when they are thrown [Cast] from the Tao. The thrust is sudden, and the Fragments take the entire physical cycle to recover. The movement toward reuniting with the Entity is a long and slow process, and when Students finally understand this as the goal, they often rush to speed it up. This is not possible in many Students because there are Life Tasks that they must complete. The transition is never easy, but Students have it easier than Fragments adrift, for they do have the advantage of a Teacher. [16 January 1983]

From this statement, and from other statements, it is obvious that the phrase, Creature of Reason, was invented and used to cover a distinct level of biological evolution that applies to more than humans; it applies to cetaceans on this planet, and to biological entities on other planets that are experiencing the same level as humans.

Mainstream Paleoanthropology

The Michaels declared that the transition from Creatures of No-reason to Creatures of Reason happened at the time of the ensoulment of the hominid species in prehistoric times. So far as we know, during the original Michaelian group the Michaels did not state when this happened, and subsequent to the original Michaelian group, **various dates have been given [verify], if I recall correctly.**

Wikipedia discusses the transition between pre-modern hominins and modern hominins in an article quoted below. Because of the scarcity of archaeological evidence, and because of the diversity of the interpretations of the scarce evidence and the definition of “modern behavior”, anthropologists differ in their opinions as to when the transition occurred. Some of the relevant information is as quoted below; it is a lengthy quotation because this subject is interesting to me.

THEORIES AND MODELS

Late Upper Paleolithic Model or “Upper Paleolithic Revolution”

The Late Upper Paleolithic Model, or Upper Paleolithic Revolution, refers to the idea that, though anatomically modern humans [Cro Magnon] first appear around 150,000 years ago (as was once believed), they were not cognitively or behaviorally “modern” until around 50,000 years ago, leading to their expansion out of Africa and into Europe and Asia. These authors note that traits used as a metric for behavioral modernity do not appear as a package until around 40–50,000 years ago. Klein (1995) specifically describes evidence of fishing, bone shaped as a tool, hearths, significant artifact diversity, and elaborate graves are all absent before this point. According to these authors, art only becomes common beyond this switching point, signifying a change from archaic to modern humans. Most researchers argue that a neurological or genetic change, perhaps one enabling complex language, such as FOXP2, caused this revolutionary change in humans.

Perhaps the Michaels would agree with this date and with this description of the revolutionary cognitive leap that happens at ensoulment. Or perhaps not. They would certainly say that the cognitive leap happened due to ensoulment, but I wonder what they would say about a concomitant and perhaps contributory genetic

mutation. In another quotation, it will be pointed out that ritual burials, cave art, and inventions are indicators of a *qualitative*, not just *quantitative*, leap in cognitive capacity at a transition in hominin evolution.

Alternative models

Contrasted with this view of a spontaneous leap in cognition among ancient humans, some authors like Alison S. Brooks, primarily working in African archaeology, point to the gradual accumulation of “modern” behaviors, starting well before the 50,000 year benchmark of the Upper Paleolithic Revolution models. Howiesons Poort, Blombos, and other South African archaeological sites, for example, show evidence of marine resource acquisition, trade, the making of bone tools, blade and microlith technology, and abstract ornamentation at least by 80,000 years ago. Given evidence from Africa and the Middle East, a variety of hypotheses have been put forth to describe an earlier, gradual transition from simple to more complex human behavior. Some authors have pushed back the appearance of fully modern behavior to around 80,000 years ago or earlier in order to incorporate the South African data.

Others focus on the slow accumulation of different technologies and behaviors across time. These researchers describe how anatomically modern humans could have been cognitively the same and what we define as behavioral modernity is just the result of thousands of years of cultural adaptation and learning. D’Errico and others have looked at Neanderthal culture, rather than early human behavior exclusively, for clues into behavioral modernity. Noting that Neanderthal assemblages often portray traits similar to those listed for modern human behavior, researchers stress that the foundations for behavioral modernity may in fact lie deeper in our hominin ancestors. If both modern humans [Cro Magnon] and Neanderthals express abstract art and complex tools then “modern human behavior” cannot be a derived trait for our species. They argue that the original “human revolution” theory reflects a profound Eurocentric bias. Recent archaeological evidence, they argue, proves that humans evolving in Africa some 300,000 or even 400,000 years ago were already becoming cognitively and behaviourally “modern”. These features include blade and microlithic technology, bone tools, increased geographic range, specialized hunting, the use of aquatic resources, long distance trade, systematic processing and use of pigment, and art and decoration. These items do not occur suddenly together as predicted by the “human revolution” model, but at sites that are widely separated in space and time. This suggests a gradual assembling of the package of modern human behaviors in Africa, and its later export to other regions of the Old World.

Between these extremes is the view — currently supported by archaeologists Chris Henshilwood, Curtis Marean, Ian Watts and others — that there was indeed some kind of ‘human revolution’ but that it occurred in Africa and spanned tens of thousands of years. The term “revolution” in this context would mean not a sudden [genetic] mutation but a historical [cultural] development along the lines of “the industrial revolution” or “the Neolithic revolution”. In other words, it was a relatively accelerated process, too rapid for ordinary Darwinian “descent with modification” yet too gradual to be attributed to a single genetic or other sudden event. These archaeologists point in particular to the relatively explosive emergence of ochre crayons and shell necklaces apparently used for cosmetic purposes. These archaeologists see symbolic organization of human social life as the key transition in modern human evolution. Recently discovered at sites such as Blombos Cave and Pinnacle Point, South Africa, pierced shells, pigments and other striking signs of personal ornamentation have been dated within a time-window of 70,000–160,000 years ago in the African Middle Stone Age, suggesting that the emergence of Homo sapiens coincided, after all, with the transition to modern cognition and behavior. While viewing the emergence of language as a ‘revolutionary’ development, this school of thought generally attributes it to cumulative social, cognitive, and cultural evolutionary processes as opposed to a single genetic mutation.

A further view, taken by archaeologists such as Francesco D’Errico and João Zilhão, is a multi-species perspective arguing that evidence for symbolic culture in the form of utilized pigments and pierced shells are also found in Neanderthal sites, independently of any “modern” human influence.

Cultural evolutionary models may also shed light on why although evidence of behavioral modernity exists before 50,000 years ago it is not expressed consistently until that point. With small population sizes, human groups would have been affected by demographic and cultural evolutionary forces that may not have allowed for complex cultural traits. According to some authors, until population density became significantly high complex traits could not have been maintained effectively. Some genetic evidence supports a dramatic increase in population size before human migration out of Africa. High local extinction rates within a population also can significantly decrease the amount of diversity in neutral cultural traits, regardless of cognitive ability.

Highly speculatively, bicameral mind theory [Julian Jaynes: *The Origin of Consciousness in the Breakdown of the Bicameral Mind*] argues for an additional, and cultural rather than genetic, shift from selfless to self-perceiving forms of human cognition and behavior very late in human history, in the Bronze Age. This is based on a literary analysis of Bronze Age texts which claims to show the first appearances of the concept of self around this time, replacing the voices of gods as the primary form of recorded human cognition. This non-mainstream theory is not widely accepted but does receive serious academic interest from time to time. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Behavioral_modernity — retrieved 01 September 2021]

As I said, the archaeological evidence is too scanty and the interpretation of it is too iffy to come to a definite conclusion about the time of the transition from animal-like to human-like consciousness. The ensoulment itself need not have been sudden, and it need not have happened in all of the hominin species at the time of the first ensoulment; that could account for the appearance of modernity and spread of modernity via ensoulment, but the same could be said for the appearance and spread of genetic mutations that may have accompanied the transition from animal-like to human-like consciousness.

One bit of evidence, mentioned above and elaborated below, that supports the Michaelian ensoulment proposal is that archaeologists have found that dead bodies began to be buried with “grave goods” at some point in the evolution of the homo species, which indicates a belief in an afterlife. This phenomenon is distinct from mere cognitive development:

Paleolithic religions are a set of spiritual beliefs thought to have appeared during the Paleolithic time period. Paleoanthropologists Andre Leroi-Gourhan and Annette Michelson believe religious behavior emerged by the Upper Paleolithic, before 30,000 years ago at the latest, but behavioral patterns such as burial rites that one might characterize as religious — or as ancestral to religious behavior — reach back into the Middle Paleolithic, as early as 300,000 years ago, coinciding with the first appearance of Homo neanderthalensis and possibly Homo naledi. Religious behavior is one of the hallmarks of behavioral modernity. There are several theories as to the moment when this modernity emerged. One theory links these innovations to a cultural revolution among the early modern humans, which coincided with their arrival to Europe 40,000 years ago. A variant of this model sees behavioral modernity as occurring gradually, beginning with the Middle Stone Age. According to a third theory, characteristics that define behavioral modernity are not unique to the homo sapiens, but arose over a long period of time, among different human types, including neanderthals. It has even been postulated that homo erectus had some form of language and symbolism.... Graves are the clearest signs of spiritual behavior, as it shows delineation between the world of the living and the world of the dead. Most often, archaeologists will seek to find some form of grave goods, pigment use, or other forms of symbolic behavior to differentiate from burials motivated by other reasons, such as hygiene.... Based on the grave goods found beside the deceased, upper paleolithic burials are undoubtedly evidence of spirituality and religiousness. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paleolithic_religion — retrieved 03 September 2021]

There might never be a scientific consensus on the reason or reasons for the so-called “cognitive revolution” or the spiritual afterlife consciousness in ancient humans, or on the time when it happened. One thing we can say with near certainty is that scientists agree — because it is self-evident and has been throughout history — that there is a distinct qualitative difference between humans and non-human animals in the modern world. The nature and cause of the difference is, of course, disputed between believers in a supernatural soul and non-believers in a supernatural soul. For various reasons, these days there is an effort in some elements of the culture to narrow this gap in terms of quantitative measurements, but in my view, there is still the qualitative difference between Creatures of No-reason and Creatures of Reason that might not be bridgeable by genetic and cultural mutations alone.

Transhumanism

That there is the level of Creatures of No-reason and the level of Creature of Reason implies that there might be levels above and beyond the Creature-of-Reason level. Furthermore, it is apparent that the description of the Creature-of-Reason level is similar enough to the third level in other septenaries in the Great Chain/Nest of Being that one can speculate on levels above and beyond the Creature-of-Reason level. There is no explicit naming of, nor description of, such a level or levels in the original Michaelian group transcriptions, but there are speculations by so-called “transhumanists”, who say that biological evolution will get hijacked in the not-too-distant future: humans will intentionally augment humans via genetic engineering and other technologies, pre- and/or post-natal. What could transhumanism possibly mean in terms of biological

evolution in the future of humanity? Wikipedia has a lengthy article on this subject:

><https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Transhumanism><. It is full of speculation about the future of humanity in terms of technology and physicality. For instance, humans could be enhanced with an embedded or attached computer. For instance, the human body could be enhanced by genetic manipulation.

And not just transhumanist philosophers, but some science fiction authors are wont to speculate about the qualities and characteristics of humans in the distant future. [specifics?] They also speculate about humanoid races on other planets who are far more evolutionarily advanced than humans on Terra, and not just in terms of technology, but in terms of qualities and characteristics that are above and beyond current humanity. [specifics?]

Although the Michaels used the phrase “Creatures of Reason” to refer to a level in the *biological* evolution of the species lineage that led to humans, there is also a *spiritual* component to that evolution, namely a type of ensoulment with an individual fragment soul, not a species hive soul in animals as before. The Creature of Non-reason is said to be inhabited by the so-called “hive soul”, and the Creature of Reason is said to be inhabited by the so-called “fragment soul”, starting tens or hundreds of thousands of years ago. In the far distant future of humanity, will there be a level beyond the Creature-of-Reason level? Would that level of humanity require some other type of ensoulment, such as the Transcendental type or the Infinite type of ensoulment? — to use Michaelian terminology. If the Michaels have anything to say about a level that transcends the Creature-of-Reason level, I do not know about it, and I am disinclined to speculate about its nature, unlike transhumanists and science fiction writers.

Concluding Comments on Creatures of Reason

It always helps me to get my thoughts in order if I arrange them in a numbered list that follows some logical sequence.

- Other than in *Messages from Michael* (pages 52–53, 55, 60–61, and 83), which is based on channeling from the original Michaelian group, a search of published materials written subsequent to the original Michaelian group did not reveal any references to Creatures of Reason. The fact that it is not mentioned beyond the original Michaelian group does not mean, to me at least, that it is unimportant; it means to me that it is important to include it in a chapter in this *Study Papers* book, lest it be lost to Michaelian students henceforth.
- This subject has been interesting to me since 1972. At that time, I was a member of a fundamentalist quasi-Christian cult, and so was a fellow by the name of Robert Lawrence Kuhn, PhD. His PhD was in neuroscience. His research at the time indicated that the human brain is not that much different anatomically from the primate brain, yet its output is so qualitatively different that a physical explanation is ruled out; therefore “soul”. (Kuhn is not as certain about this now as he was then; refer to his YouTube channel, *Closer to Truth*.) Eight years later I read *Messages from Michael*, and I saw the same explanation for the qualitative difference between Creatures of No-reason and Creatures of Reason.
- The Michaels specifically mention a level of biological evolution that they refer to as the Creatures of No-reason/Non-reason, and they mention a level above and beyond that, which they referred to as the Creatures of Reason. So far as I know, they do not mention a level higher than Creature of Reason, but I wonder if such a level or levels exists, because there is so much speculation about “super” humans in technological traditions, science fiction traditions, philosophical traditions, and religious traditions.
- These levels of biological development are reminiscent of other kinds of development, specifically levels of the Canonical Septenary such as Chakras, Levels of Being, Milestones, Soul Ages, and Cultures. I refer to this as the “fractalicity principle”: the pattern is repeated all up and down the Great Chain of Being. This principle is discussed at length in my book *The Tao of Cosmogony*.
- Throughout the comments above, I made the point that being a Creature of Reason makes life a lot more difficult than being a Creature of Non-Reason, a mere animal.
- There are enough clues within the descriptions of Creatures of Reason to correlate it with the Intellectual Center more than any other Center or any other component of the Michaelian cosmology.





CRIME

This chapter is the product of a search for the word crime and its derivatives and synonyms in the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group channeling sessions. This word does not represent a significant component of the Michaelian teachings. However, there are good reasons to discuss the subject in this *Study Papers* book: 1) the subject came up numerous times during the original Michaelian group; 2) students can presumably benefit from having the mentions conveniently collected and commented all in one place; 3) some interesting things were said about the subject; 4) the subject is related to a number of other components of the Michaelian teachings that are considered to be significant; 5) criminality is unavoidable; it is pervasive in human psychology and sociology — subjects covered extensively in this book — so it behooves us to have a working knowledge of it.

The word crime is not capitalized in this chapter or other chapters of this *Study Papers* book because it has no special meaning in the Michaelian teachings; it is not a Michaelian jargon word that needs a definition apart from its use in the common vernacular.

leadin?

Definition of Crime

So what is meant by template? The online Merriam Webster online dictionary definition is:

My usual go-to source for definitions and descriptions and explanations, Wikipedia, says this (underlined words are my emphasis):

Crime per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

The following extracts from original Michaelian group transcriptions are Q&A exchanges, where an original Michaelian group member asks a question (or makes a comment), and the Michaels provide an answer. This is a subject that benefits by division into subsections. These extracts are presented in the chronological order in which they were given. As is my custom, I usually provide some explanatory comments following the question or answer. Underlined words are my emphasis, to draw attention to what it is that I comment on. Sometimes I embed words or phrases [in brackets] that I believe help to clarify the question or the answer. Numerous study papers related to this chapter are to be found among my comments.

Concluding Comments on Crime





⑥ CRUTCHES

This chapter is the product of a search for the word crutch in the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group channeling sessions. This word does not represent a significant component of the Michaelian teachings. However, there are good reasons to discuss the subject in this *Study Papers* book: 1) the subject came up numerous times during the original Michaelian group; 2) some interesting things were said about the subject; 3) the subject is related to a number of other components of the Michaelian teachings that are considered to be significant; 4) students can presumably benefit from having the mentions conveniently collected and commented all in one place; 5) The temporary use of crutches is expedient; it is pervasive in human psychology and sociology and spirituality — subjects covered extensively in this book — so it behooves us to have a working knowledge of it.

The word crutch is not capitalized in this chapter or other chapters of this *Study Papers* book because it has no special meaning in the Michaelian teachings; it is not a Michaelian jargon word that needs a definition apart from its use in the common vernacular.

This chapter is one of many in this book that focuses on a psychological component of the Michaelian teachings as found in original Michaelian group transcriptions, rather than on a doctrinal or spiritual component. A psychological component is usually either a positive to be cultivated or a negative to be mitigated. As we will see, the Michaels tell us that crutches have both is a negative and a positive use. The Michaelian version of psychology is not to be confused with the popular psychology of the self-improvement movement, those that do not have a spiritual core or perspective. Rather, the Michaelian psychotherapeutic path (aimed at improving psychological health) is a beneficial precursor to the spiritual path (aimed at improving soul health). To skip the former but attempt the latter is referred to as “spiritual bypassing”. This is discussed at length on such websites as >https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spiritual_bypass<. To skip mitigating one’s psychological issues and attempt to go straight to enlightenment usually proves to be problematic.

Definition of Crutch

So what is meant by “crutch”? The online Merriam Webster dictionary definition is:

1a: support typically fitting under the armpit for use by the disabled in walking.

1b: a source or means of support or assistance that is relied on heavily or excessively; e.g. “They refuse to take any pills. They don’t want to use drugs as a crutch.” — Maya Pines; e.g. “Even many atheists would agree that believing that God cares about you or that your life is part of a cosmic plan can be a powerful source of hope (or, to put it pejoratively, a crutch).” — Virginia Postrel

[><https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/crutch>< — retrieved 15 October 2022]

The first definition is literal and the second definition is metaphorical. In this chapter, only the instances of the metaphorical use of the word are discussed.

Crutches per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

The following extracts from original Michaelian group transcriptions are Q&A exchanges, where an original Michaelian group member asks a question (or makes a comment), and the Michaels provide an answer. These extracts are presented in the chronological order in which they were given. As is my custom, I often provide some explanatory comments following the question or answer. Underlined words in the Michaels’ answers are my emphasis, to draw attention to what it is that I comment on. Sometimes I embed words or phrases [in brackets] that I believe help to clarify the question or the answer.

The first appearance of the word was in the second session in which the Michaels were the source:

Dick: Question about marijuana.

Crutches are very necessary at your level. He (Tomas) was merely pointing out to you where the crutches are, not saying you no longer need the crutches. [17 August 1973]

Before the Michaels revealed themselves to the original Michaelian group, the Astral personality that called itself Tomas was a source of information. He recommended that certain original Michaelian group members would be helped in their spiritual aspirations by using marijuana. Crutches are typically only useful during a healing process. After that, they should be discarded, or they actually become a hindrance to further progress. According to the Michaels, psychedelics were in the category of a crutch that was a temporary aid to 'ambulation' on one's spiritual 'path'; refer to the chapter "Psychedelics" for more discussion about that topic.

Dick: It sounds like individuality is a crutch and not a good thing. [22 November 1973]

Spiritual growth typically starts out as ego-centric psychotherapeutic self-improvement, but in the long run, a spiritual aspirant should graduate to a socio-centric focus on the "greater good", with Agape as the ultimate goal. The former is a necessary step; one must get oneself fixed before one can presume to know what is benevolent and beneficent for others in one's orbit. Refer to the chapters "Agape" and "Ego" for more information about those components of the Michaelian teachings.

Gene: My body seems to be changing lately. I would like some verification of this and any comments.

The Essence is more in control now, Gene, and therefore is directing somewhat against the desires of the Personality. This has resulted in a beginning of aversion for certain crutches. More will go as growth progresses. [13 February 1974]

The specific crutches are not mentioned, but generally speaking, it can be said that Personality needs temporary crutches whereas Essence does not. As one grows out of Personality and more into Essence, metaphorical crutches can and should be discarded, because they actually become counterproductive to further progress, just as actual crutches do when the body is no longer lame. Refer to the chapter "Essence and Personality" for more discussion of those contraries.

Dick: I believe that personal agendas are important to learn about our own internal world. Tomas wanted to get on with the Teaching and forget personal agendas. I've fought against therapy and encounter groups. We function well enough as we are, but we cannot go on to spiritual growth. Ordinary therapy deals with personality alone, and the processes are usually formulated by Mature Souls for Young Souls. Is there an ultimate therapy where we can know ourselves ??????

Yes. We would agree with that, indeed. There is a form of ultimate therapy — a clearing house for the Essence where the final cobwebs can be swept away and the clarity can shine through. Yes, also the crutch of the Personality, the one most frequently employed in situations where the Essence might come crashing through, is a most effective barrier. [19 March 1974]

This statement reinforces what I said previously about psychedelics used for psychotherapeutic purposes being a temporary expedient that the Personality can make use of on the way to living without crutches, when one is functioning from contact with Essence.

Dick discussed a machine Dr. Bryan has that is a photo-machine, like a stroboscope, which puts people into hypnosis quite rapidly. They watch lines like brain waves (which are rapid and they just see a flash) and go under hypnosis and then can be cured rapidly. Is this a valuable machine for the group to use?

We would consider such an experiment as extremely Good Work for this group. Whether or not it is one hundred percent effective will again depend upon you, but this is a quite foolproof method.

Refer to the chapter "Good Work, Bad Work" for the complete discussion of that Michaelian concept. There is a time when crutches are Good Work, but if they are effective then it should eventually become Bad Work to continue with them.

Could we adjust the machine to put a person into theta brain waves — it puts people into delta [brain waves] now — and be of more help that way?

Any competent electronics technician could alter a machine to produce this frequency, and yes, for the most part it would produce extraordinary imagery.

What is the point of imagery, a learning process?

That is one, certainly, but this process also opens the door to heightened [past life] memory experience.

Is it helpful to use this [device] as a rule? [Or] a crutch?

Yes, but sooner or later, you may discard this crutch. [08 March 1974]

Some spiritual practices should never be discarded, but some should be temporary. Technological devices for altering one's consciousness fall into the latter category. When one has learned what one needs to learn from

the device, then one should discard it. Another relevant comment here is that introspective insights and subjective experiences are more effective and efficient in terms of enlightenment than having the Michaels tell you something. In that sense, the intellectual and conceptual components of the Michaelian teachings are a crutch that can be discarded when one has contact with one's own higher self or Essence. There should come a time when Michaelian students have matured enough that they no longer feel the need to consult a channel, looking for yet more and more information; refer to the chapter "Intuition" for more discussion about that. Basically and briefly, the Michaels sometimes chided original Michaelian group members for running to a channel for answers to their personal questions when it would be better if they learned to access their own intuitive faculty for insights and epiphanies. The bottom line is that channeling can be added to the list of crutches that can be discarded when one has matured enough, and is able to ambulate their own psyche toward enlightenment.

Dick: No. That is just the way it is. I need more passion. It seems that Robert [Burton] was in a Power Mode, and he was extremely patient. He attracted people by his Level of Being. If one is to be a spreader of the Logos, one has to be a high person, probably in an Exalted Role [Sage, Priest, King]. It bugs me to be told to bring new people, then they pop in and out. To spread the Logos as Robert does, you must have a Level of Being to attract people. You must be integrated [#5] and mysterious [#6].

You almost have to have some type of mystery, yes — we agree with that. Most people do seek a teaching, and this includes organized religion that introduces some intrigue into their lives. The Teaching, thereby, becomes exciting. Many do it with gimmicks; others with what you call charisma. It only works because it provides that special hint of the mysterious realm beyond the five senses to which you as the teacher have access, and that they can someday hope to glimpse. We are not opposed to this as long as the teacher does not begin to believe in his own magic. [14 April 1974]

So, enticement to raise one's Level of Being might start out with charisma and mystery, but it cannot stay there.

Dick: Our material on what to do is not specific. Could Michael recommend ways of changing our Overleaves?

The primary difficulty in altering the Overleaves is in the initial recognition and the constant verification, which must precede the true desire to alter. When this has been accomplished, then the process of anticipation can begin. We can compare it with recognizing that you were about to say the forbidden word and substituting a suitable synonym (the "get, I, very, really and, a lot" exercises). This was, of course, a crutch, but hopefully, a temporary one that could be discarded when the process becomes inculcated. Therapeutic processes can speed up the alteration where the pattern is not clear. However, this group can work toward that point where the psychic Photography is so finely tuned that the eventual breakthrough can come within the present structure. Many times, the meditation does serve as a precursor of insightful concentration. This is why it is so valuable. We find no fault with crutches so long as they are given up when you are no longer lame. [10 May 1974]

Refer to the chapters "Overleaves, Changing", "Recognition", "Validation and Verification", "Photography", "Meditation and Concentration" for more information about those subjects. Many spiritual "exercises" are temporary expedients; these can be discontinued when the lesson is learned to such an extent that the more mature belief, value, or behavior that is fostered by the exercise becomes automatic. This is the nature of all learning processes: you learn stuff and then you move on to new stuff to learn.

What is the importance of knowing chakras?

It would aid you in releasing specific energy. It would be a visual crutch to help you locate the energy pocket. [15 May 1974]

We could elevate this statement into a general principle, namely that spiritual teachings should present students with ideas about phenomena that they might not otherwise notice on their own; this new, higher information ambulates them forward on their spiritual path. Oftentimes these spiritual teachings are structured, the chakras system being one of those; it is like of map that shows students where they are in the stages of their spiritual path. Refer to the chapter "Chakras" for more information about that subject.

Richard: As I understand it, the aura green has to do with healing. Is there something along that line that I should be pursuing that I am not now doing?

Green does indicate strong drives to serve, yes, and most of those who choose healing and are successful do have this. You have within you the ability, but not the scope or knowledge, but could conceivably attain this. It would be much work, but perhaps far more rewarding than what you are doing now. You could certainly work miracles in the design of certain electronic crutches.

(Last week we discussed biofeedback machines for inducing a hypnotic state where positive suggestions could supplant old, negative ones — devices to tune you into your Essence.) [15 May 1974]

Refer to the chapter “Auras” for more information about that subject. Richard was an Artisan, and Artisans are typically good with technological devices. His occupation was that of an engineer, which is not a waste of Essence for Artisans, though the healing arts would have been more fulfilling for Richard. However, here again we see that technologies are said to be crutches.

Do we have musical instruments on the Astral Plane?

No. On the other hand, you can hear the music without the crutch on the Astral Plane. It is there. [22 May 1974]

Evidently, a Fragment on the Astral Plane can generate and transmit music from one’s emotions, without the intermediary of a musical instrument. Refer to the chapter “Planes” for more about that subject. Each Plane beyond the Physical Plane is more abstract than the one before. One wonders what other devices and instruments that are necessary on the Physical Plane are not necessary on the Astral Plane.

Question about William and overuse of [the] drug PCP.

This man needs to know that those experiences can be had without [psychotropic] drugs, of course. Yes, he is pretty dependent upon this fairly dangerous crutch now — the Essence enjoys the temporary liberation, yes. [05 June 1974]

This passage reinforces what was said previously, namely that psychedelics are a temporary crutch. They can release one from the clutches of Personality and into the arms of Essence, but this crutch should be discarded when it has done its job.

Dick: Question regarding the speeding up of spiritual growth.

There is some validity in the statement that the Personality and Essence must eventually “battle it out,” at least if progress is to be made on the Physical Plane, and this does not happen when entities [marijuana] that knock Personality out of the box are used, but those [psychedelic] crutches do a valuable service in that they allow you to glimpse the goal and make an intelligent decision about its worthiness as a full-time pursuit. [12 June 1974]

Psychedelics are designated as a crutch in the original Michaelian group transcriptions more than any other crutch.

Ralph: I have the impression that within our group, the articulation of the teachings emphasizes the static, the intellectual, and the hierarchical. Is this primarily a distortion arising from my biases or the group’s or the language’s? Or is this an accurate transmission of the teachings? Please comment.

In the beginning of this group, the primary concern was in the development of the belief system in the language necessary to explain it to each other and to oneself. This is a necessary step in the formation of any group, but in most, becomes a barrier toward further growth, and eventually becomes the belief system itself. In this group, there has been evolution of a sort that now points toward continuance in growth. The possibility still exists, however, that you will continue to concern yourselves with the intellectual hierarchical aspects and neglect the spiritual, yes, but you do not have to. You can put this belief system to the acid test and see if it works. Until you do this, yes, you are still trapped in the beginning stages. This is where most of the other belief systems remained throughout their existence, including the world’s great religions. The concern remained hierarchical and primarily intellectual and never got off the ground spiritually. You are right, of course, you are trading one belief system for another; but there is a unity here that has not been before, and there is a trend toward integration that you are capable of verifying implicit within the system. [19 October 1974]

That passage did not contain the word “crutch”, but it could have. The Michaels presented an elaborate belief system that they regarded as useful for the beginning stages of their students’ understanding of a spiritual path, but this preliminary introduction was intended to be a temporary expedient. A belief system should ultimately lead one to authentic spirituality, which has to do with a subjective experience of transcendence, where belief systems as such are obsolete. If one perceives the Michaelian teachings only or primarily as a belief system, value system, and behavior system, then one has missed the point of the Michaelian teachings, which is to lead one to experiences of transcendent states of consciousness, aka Agape.

Moving Centered souls generally respond to a form of meditation that gives them something active to do when they are ascending to the mindless state, such as reciting a mantram. Emotionally Centered souls respond to emotionally-laden crutches, such as flickering candle flames, roses and other blossoms, etc. Intellectually

Centered souls generally respond to the techniques recommended by the man Chogyam (Trungpa). [28 December 1974]

In that passage, “crutches” are equated with “techniques”. There should come a time on one’s spiritual journey when one transitions from “doing” to “being”; at that time, the crutches and techniques that got one to the transition become obsolete.

During the Crusades, Liz feels that she was with Saladin, who was Rick [in this life]. She saw him transform into Saladin.

[Soleal:] Then, why do you doubt your insights — if you see the transformation? Or, is it that you do not trust the space you are in when the transformation comes? There is no reason why you should doubt this particular insight. Verification from me is quite a crutch and it is still necessary for most of you. The teacher [Michael] hounds you over and over again to learn to trust your insights. It is more than simple belief that all of your neat “head stuff” is springing from the foundation of knowledge. It is the ability to separate the wheat from the chaff — to determine at that instant how much of your own Personality and its attendant longings come into play, and how much is genuine insight. I must tell you that the need to follow my own particular goal, or my “task” if you will, becomes imperative, and I know that the time is at hand. I, too, must make a choice the same as you, and there comes a time when I can no longer stall for time. [11 January 1975]

Refer to the chapters “Validation and Verification”, “Trust”, and “Intuition” for more discussion of the notion that as you grow spiritually, you will have less inclination to use a channel as a crutch for Validation and Verification; you will know how to listen to your own internal guidance system.

Is this referring to a literal or a symbolic altar?

[Soleal:] It can be either. Where is your symbolic altar if you do not have that quiet space? As long as it does not become a crutch, the material altar serves those brothers who do not have the altar of the soul. You see, it is possible to transfer the psychic energy to your brothers, but there must not be agendas in your way or the flow will be scattered, and you will not be able to transmute the collective energy into the higher expression. Those troubled among you will simply feed on the energy flow. [16 February 1975]

During the early phases of one’s spiritual journey, it might be useful to have physical reminders of spiritual matters, such as an altar, but in the later phases the physical reminders become unnecessary. I would add that at some point, physical reminders can perhaps become “idolatrous”, an ‘idol’ being defined as any substitute for the real deal. In the context of this chapter, a ‘crutch’ becomes an ‘idol’ when it has outlasted its utility for spiritual growth.

The syntax of an intelligent source does not meet with instant approval from another intelligent source. To grip onto the wide range of influxes and nuances is difficult work, and therefore bogs down communication links.

We would prefer to deal in a very natural syntax that is unhindered by supposed cordons that operate for those only who are given to seeking a primary crutch such as the physical body, [which] is so accustomed to [operating] through the five senses where psychic dimensions are not accounted for. [13 April 1975]

Here again we see physical stuff being used as a crutch for spiritual ‘stuff’. The physical body is rightly understood as a vehicle for spiritual growth, but if one limits the body’s perceptivity to the five senses (the links between physical body and physical environment) and ignores its “psychic dimensions”, then one is not using the ‘crutch’ of one’s embodiment correctly or fully. I am reminded of a Biblical phrase where the physical body is regarded as the ‘temple’ of the “Holy Spirit” (aka “Essence” in Michaelese). This being the case, we do well to learn to pay attention to extrasensory or supernatural “influxes and nuances” in the “communication links” between the body and the spiritual environment, even though this is “difficult work”.

Concluding Comments on Crutches

Crutches are defined as temporary expedients that assist one’s spiritual ‘ambulation’ in the early phases of one’s ‘journey’, but that become unnecessary after the consciousness is ‘healed’ in the later phases.

Specific crutches that are mentioned in the original Michaelian group are these: psychedelics; individuality (ego-centricity); psychotherapy; technologies, devices, and instruments; belief systems and other maps of the spiritual path; going to channels rather than relying on and validating one’s own intuitions; physical reminders or substitutes for actual transcendent spiritual experiences.

Even the Overleaf System is a crutch; it is something that you use to learn to tolerate people, to understand people, to appreciate people, to Agape people. Once the toleration, understanding, and appreciation are inculcated into the subconscious mind to such an extent that they have become automatic, then you no

longer need the crutch; refer to the chapter “Overleaves, Changing”, where we see that the Michaels said just that.





⑥ CRYSTALLIZATION

The topic of this chapter is yet another one of many that discuss one or another of the components of the Gurdjieffian teachings that were adopted and adapted in the Michaelian teachings during the original Michaelian group, but which did not subsequently find its way into the Michaelian teachings. For an introduction to the general subject of the Gurdjieffian teachings and the involvement of founding original Michaelian group members with it, refer to the chapter “Gurdjieff, Ouspensky, Collin, Burton”.

Even though the Michaels used the term Crystallization on numerous occasions during the original Michaelian group, Yarbro did not mention it in her book about the original Michaelian group, *Messages from Michael*, perhaps because, near as I can tell, Yarbro was not familiar with Gurdjieff. The Michaels have not used it in subsequent groups so far as I have been able to determine, perhaps because subsequent groups are not familiar with Gurdjieffian teachings. Therefore, the term, and even the concept referred to by the term, has not become common knowledge in the Michaelian teachings community subsequent to the original Michaelian group. Nevertheless, I believe Gurdjieff’s psychological insights are worth discussing, the subject of Crystallization being one of them. I also believe that it is worthwhile to make the historical record of the original Michaelian group reasonably complete. Taking into consideration that the word refers to a concept with a specific and special meaning in both the Gurdjieffian teachings and in the Michaelian teachings, I capitalize it, as one of many jargon words.

Definition of Crystallization

So what is meant by crystallization? The online Merriam Webster dictionary definition is:

- 1: to cause to form crystals or assume crystalline form
- 2: to cause to take a definite form, as in “He tried to crystallize his thoughts.”

Obviously, the first definition is literal, and the second definition is metaphorical. So what could this physical process have to do with the Michaelian teachings? Answer: it is a metaphor for a process in spiritual development.

Crystallization per Gurdjieff

The founding members of the original Michaelian group had been part of a local group that was focused on the Gurdjieffian teachings. Here is what Gurdjieff said about crystallization:

Fusion, inner unity, is obtained by means of ‘friction’, by the struggle between ‘yes’ and ‘no’ in man. If a man lives without inner struggle, if everything happens in him without opposition, if he goes wherever he is drawn or wherever the wind blows, he will remain such as he is. But if a struggle begins in him, and particularly if there is a definite line in this struggle, then gradually, permanent traits begin to form themselves, he begins to ‘crystallize’. But crystallization is possible on a right foundation and it is possible on a wrong foundation. ‘Friction’, the struggle between ‘yes’ and ‘no’, can easily take place on a wrong foundation. For instance, a fanatical belief in some or other idea, or the ‘fear of sin’, can evoke a terribly intense struggle between ‘yes’ and ‘no’, and a man may crystallize on these foundations. But this would be a wrong, incomplete crystallization. Such a man will not possess the possibility of further development. In order to make further development possible he must be melted down again, and this can be accomplished only through terrible suffering. [Ouspensky, *In Search of the Miraculous*, p. 32]

Resources available on the internet will give you a much fuller picture, but this is sufficient for my purposes in this chapter.

Crystallization per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

The following extracts from original Michaelian group transcriptions are Q&A exchanges, where an original Michaelian group member asks a question (or makes a comment), and the Michaels provide an answer. These extracts are presented in the chronological order in which they were given. As is my custom, I often provide some explanatory comments following the question or answer. Underlined words in the Michaels' answers are my emphasis, to draw attention to what it is that I comment on. Sometimes I embed words or phrases [in brackets] that I believe help to clarify the question or the answer.

Keep in mind what Gurdjieff said about crystallization as you read the first occurrence of the word in the original Michaelian group transcriptions.

Dick: I seem to have come on a realization that I've undergone crystallization in Personality, and that is why everything is so fixed and seemingly unchangeable. I'm under constant internal attack by Personality, and that is why I can't seem to listen to any new information and transform it into anything worthwhile. I was hoping for a miracle that would change things. Also, grass [marijuana] will do it, but it just does it temporarily. That's why I can't seem to react to or feel any new possibilities.

The fixed rigid Personality is rather like a mountain of granite. Chipping away relentlessly is the sole solution. Depression is the external manifestation of the internal struggle. Depression, by the way, is one of the only neurotic manifestations left to the Old Soul; even Jesus felt it. Each of you spent many years building the facade. Do you really feel that you should be able to discard this quite casually with hardly a whimper? We think not. Progress is being made in quite concrete ways. [02 October 1973]

“Fixed, rigid, granite, concrete” are suitable synonyms for crystallization. In Dick's case, he felt that he was crystallizing on a wrong foundation, Personality, rather than a good foundation, Essence. The Michaels indicated, just as Gurdjieff did, that one must first demolish the wrong foundation before one can begin to build a new edifice on a right foundation, and then crystallize that. Refer to chapters “Health — Physical and Mental”, “Psychedelics”, and “Essence and Personality” for further discussion of concepts mentioned in that passage.

Dick: How does the Adept, occult master correlate to the #4, #5 and #6 man of Gurdjieff?

They are not precisely the same, although the Adept is usually crystallized number four. The occult Master has use of Higher Centers at will. It merely means that this soul is in Balance with no danger of backsliding. [03 March 1974]

Gurdjieff's notion of Man Numbers are discussed in the chapters “Adept and Master”, “Balanced Man”, and “Levels of Being”. Basically and briefly, an Adept is the same as Man #5, which is a step above a Man #4, one who is so crystallized as a Balanced Man that “there is no danger of backsliding”.

Gene could easily crystallize in truth-telling, and that would be all right for Gene.... [15 April 1975]

When one no longer even experiences what many people regard as a *temptation* to do the wrong thing, then one has “crystallized” in doing the right thing; refer to the chapter “Temptation”.

Concluding Comments on Crystallization

This is not a long chapter, but I do not regard it as an unimportant chapter. The problem, as I see it, is that the concept of crystallization is yet another one of those concepts that has not made the transition from the Gurdjieffian teachings to the Michaelian teachings communities subsequent to the original Michaelian group. One point that I would like to emphasize is that one should not be wishy-washy in one's commitment to their spiritual development. Another point is to learn one's lessons on their spiritual path firmly and completely, otherwise, one will not develop, and one could even backslide.





CULTURE

We are all born into a ready-made social world of other human beings, a social world that is complete with a built-in belief system, value system, and behavior system. As we grow up, the question that we all confront is, how well does our true self fit into this ready-made world? In the Michaelian teachings, this confrontation is known as that between True Personality and False Personality, which you can read about in the chapter “Personality — True and False”. In this chapter “Culture”, we are going to review the mentions of a certain component of potential False Personality, found in the original Michaelian group transcriptions, namely that of the influence that culture has on True Personality.

[[look for acculturation and imprinting and other such synonyms]]

Definition of Culture

My go-to resource for the definition of culture is not a dictionary, but the Wikipedia article to culture:

Culture is an umbrella term which encompasses the social behavior and norms found in human societies, as well as the knowledge, beliefs, arts, laws, customs, capabilities, and habits of the individuals in these groups. Humans acquire culture through the learning processes of enculturation and socialization, which is shown by the diversity of cultures across societies. A cultural norm codifies acceptable conduct in society; it serves as a guideline for behavior, dress, language, and demeanor in a situation, which serves as a template for expectations in a social group. Accepting only a monoculture in a social group can bear risks, just as a single species can wither in the face of environmental change, for lack of functional responses to the change. Thus in military culture, valor is counted a typical behavior for an individual and duty, honor, and loyalty to the social group are counted as virtues or functional responses in the continuum of conflict. In the practice of religion, analogous attributes can be identified in a social group. [<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Culture> — retrieved 12 January 2022]

A very lengthy article followed. Readers of this chapter would find it useful to read the entire article, so as to help them to realize how pervasive a culture is, and how invisible it tends to be for those who grow up in a culture. It will increase one’s self-awareness and other-awareness, which is essential if one is to become free of cultural constraints that inhibit one’s true nature.

Speaking of nature, there is a long-running controversy in the scientific community about the relative strength of influences between one’s innate identity and one’s cultural identity.

Nature versus Nurture

Throughout the following analysis and synthesis of the original Michaelian group transcription on the subject of culture, the question arises repeatedly: what is it about the feedback loop between the personality that one is born with versus the personality that one acquires? This is known as the “nature versus nurture” question. As one may have come to expect, Wikipedia has an article about it:

Nature versus nurture is a long-standing debate in biology about the balance between two competing factors which determine fate: environment (nurture) and genetics (nature). The alliterative expression “nature and nurture” in English has been in use since at least the Elizabethan period and goes back to medieval French.

The complementary combination of the two concepts is an ancient concept (Greek: ἀπό φύσεως καὶ εὐτροφίας). Nature is what people think of as pre-wiring and is influenced by genetic inheritance and other biological factors. Nurture is generally taken as the influence of external factors after conception, e.g. the product of exposure, experience, and learning on an individual.

The phrase in its modern sense was popularized by the Victorian polymath Francis Galton, the modern founder of eugenics and behavioral genetics when he was discussing the influence of heredity and environment on social advancement. Galton was influenced by *On the Origin of Species* written by his half-cousin, the evolutionist Charles Darwin.

The view that humans acquire all or almost all their behavioral traits from “nurture” was termed *tabula rasa* (‘blank tablet, slate’) by John Locke in 1690. A blank slate view (sometimes termed blank-slatism) in human developmental psychology, which assumes that human behavioral traits develop almost exclusively from environmental influences, was widely held during much of the 20th century. The debate between “blank-slate” denial of the influence of heritability, and the view admitting both environmental and heritable traits, has often been cast in terms of nature versus nurture. These two conflicting approaches to human development were at the core of an ideological dispute over research agendas throughout the second half of the 20th century. As both “nature” and “nurture” factors were found to contribute substantially, often in an inextricable manner, such views were seen as naive or outdated by most scholars of human development by the 21st-century.

The strong dichotomy of nature versus nurture has thus been claimed to have limited relevance in some fields of research. Close feedback loops have been found in which nature and nurture influence one another constantly, as seen in self-domestication. In ecology and behavioral genetics, researchers think nurture has an essential influence on nature. Similarly in other fields, the dividing line between an inherited and an acquired trait becomes unclear, as in epigenetics or fetal development.

It is recommended that students read the lengthy article that followed this introduction. The bottom line is this statement:

In the twentieth century, studies of twins separated at birth helped provide better insight into the debate about nature versus nurture. Identical twins who are reared apart from birth had the same chance of being as similar in behavioral and psychological traits as twins who were raised together. It is increasingly understood that environmental effects are mostly random, rather than systematic effects of parenting or culture.

[>https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nature_versus_nurture< — retrieved 13 January 2022]

What none of these scientific investigations take into consideration is the *spiritual* inheritance: what the soul brings with it to the incarnation. In the Michaelian teachings, the physical genetic inheritance itself is said to be chosen by the soul for the incarnation, including the choice of culture, and other circumstances, into which the person is born. This is why it is important to conform to one’s nature rather than to conform to one’s nurture, if and only if the nurture contradicts one’s nature. The Michaels said this over and over again.

Culture per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

The first reference to culture appeared in a session before the Michaels first appeared to the original Michaelian group. This was in regard to Soleal, the Adept from another planet:

Dick: I would like to ask him, how he can most help us in our spiritual growth?

[Soleal:] Interchange of cultural values.

Dick: Do our cultural values have any value for Soleal?

Interest only.

Dick: Do his cultural values have something more for us than interest only?

I think so. You will have to verify that for yourself.

Dick: Well, knowing virtually only our own culture, it’s hard to know the right questions to ask.

Sarah: I think he means “cultural” in the wider sense, because we’ve been asking him questions about the political and economic systems.

I think you might profit by a few lessons in how to avoid aggressive actions. [03 July 1973]

Being from another planet, Soleal would likely have some interesting insights about the various cultures of humans on Earth. Later on during the original Michaelian group, there was talk of Soleal visiting earth in the flesh, not just in the spirit of channeling, but that never happened. If the UFO people ever do show themselves openly, the culture shock will be powerful, far more than the culture shock we experience when we visit some other country.

Sarah: There have been all kinds of books written about the cultural shock of being contacted by an alien civilization. Astronomers have spent hours and hours writing these long-winded papers about this cultural shock. [02 October 1973]

Notice that this comment was three months after the previous one. At the time of this writing in 2022, we are still waiting for this culture-shock event.

Alice: So does that mean that I am a catalyst?

[Soleal:] Zealots make the finest catalysts. You are not a zealot, but you can act as a calming force on those around you. There is peace and serenity in your Essence too. This could be the major part of growth for you, to get in touch with those fine elements. It is difficult to do this in a system that rewards competition. That usually leads to the more aggressive elements of the false, culturally induced, personality. Love is the only force that you can apply in a positive situation consciously. [03 July 1973]

In the original Michaelian group transcriptions, this is the first explicit connection of False Personality to cultural influences, but it is not the last.

Dick: Love and sex seem like separate things – but when they're pulling together, it seems like a stronger force is generated than either by itself. It seems like the only kind of energy that I have experienced to date that might be the kind of energy that you need for actual evolution.

[Soleal:] Sexual energy, when used to express higher Centers, can be incredibly strong. When the energy is relegated downward, it results in an energy leak. That is sometimes why you want to sleep after physical union. You fed lower Centers — sometimes the Moving Center and the Essence is exhausted, so the body goes to sleep to free the Essence. When you use Emotional Center to express Moving [Center] needs, don't you feel the leak? So, if you feel that, just stretch your mind. Right now, you are all using Emotional Centers to satisfy Moving [Center] needs and this is a result that is culturally induced — that you feel something uplifting each time you have a physical union. That is absurd! It just is not possible. The body is not capable of experiencing ecstasy. Only the Essence can experience ecstasy. The body does not even come close with its sensual pleasures. [03 July 1973]

Public culture can even influence private sexual behavior. Refer to the chapter “Sexuality” for more about that.

In the first session in which the Michaels appeared, the subject of culture appeared:

[False] Personality is just another defense the body employs with the help of the other bodies around it.

I can't see what part the [False] Personality has to do with Karma; I think that's put in by culture.

It [culture] is just more complex Maya. You see, it really is infinite. [12 August 1973]

Following the Gurdjieffian teachings, the Michaelian teachings at this early stage did not always make a clear distinction between what later became known as True Personality versus False Personality; back then, the Personality was always false because it was contrasted with Essence, which later became known as the True Personality and the word Essence was applied to that which is beyond Personality: refer to the chapters “Essence and Personality” and “Personality — True and False”. The point extracted from this passage is that culture is one of the contributors to False Personality if the culture is contrary to True Personality. Another point to be made here is that the ancient traditions, and the modern cultural adaptation of the traditions, do indeed present a different view of Karma than the Michaels do; refer to the chapter “Karma”.

The Baby Soul views its own sexuality with a vague uneasiness, and if the culture fosters such, will think of it as somehow shameful. [late August 1973]

The inherent attitude of an individual toward sexuality can be very different from the cultural attitude toward sexuality — and every other aspect of life. In the case of individuals and cultures, the greater the congruence of the two the more comfortable the individual is with the culture, and the more comfortable the culture is with the individual. So called “peer pressure” is a very strong factor among humans; Wikipedia has articles on it: >https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peer_pressure< and ><https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Conformity><.

Let it be known that intellect is not a factor in any of these Cycles. Intellect is a product of culture, and even firstborns and Infant Souls can be taught to read, write and compute arithmetically. [late August 1973]

The intelligence–learnedness spectrum can be represented graphically on a different axis than the Soul Age axis. In other words, the lines representing those spectra are mostly orthogonal to each other, with very little if any correlation between the two. I have known Infant Souls who had college degrees; they were plenty bright on the intelligence line but plenty shallow on the Soul Age line.

It has happened that the presence of the Transcendental Soul alone was enough to provoke the needed spiritual, philosophical, or cultural revolution [so that an Infinite Soul manifestation is not necessary]. [late August 1973]

Because cultures consist of many individuals, it is much more difficult to change them. Sometimes cultural traditions are so inhibiting of progress, that it takes the manifestation of a Transcendental Soul and Infinite Soul to change them.

Christopher: Where on the wheel of reincarnation is the enlightened youth culture of today, such as Richard Alpert and Alan Watts? Are they Older Souls?

[Alan] Watts is [an Older Soul]; [Richard] Alpert is not. [08 September 1973]

The cultural revolution in America in the 1960s was apparently prompted by both Mature and Old Souls. This particular historical phenomenon can be generalized to the notion that the influential personalities who comprise the *avant guard* (leading edge) of any culture are of a higher/older Soul Age than the manifested average Soul Age of the culture. Beyond that phenomenon, Transcendental and Infinite Souls are harbingers of radical social, cultural, economic, and political change.

Ellis: Well, I am also sensitive about those things that work for me, and being from the old country [Greece], I sometimes have reservations about some of the things that may work for other people in this culture.

This culture notwithstanding, you must verify the efficacy of the method yourself.

Dick: Transcendental Meditation comes from India anyway and not from this culture. [18 September 1973]

Here again we see that it is easier to go along with the 'flow' of the cultural milieu than it is to go against the cultural 'grain' (to mix metaphors). It is up to each of us to explore and experiment until we find what works for us as individuals, regardless of cultural influences.

Dick: Am I dealing with some form of the Oedipal complex?

First of all, the Oedipal myth is culturally induced and does not have that much influence at your level [Soul Age]. [22 September 1973]

Some cultural phenomenon that is significant at some time or place in history or geography, is not necessarily significant in all times in history or places in geography. Another factor is that one's Soul Age has an effect on how susceptible one is to the influences of the culture; the older the soul, the less susceptible.

Dick: Could we have a statement on race.

There are scholars in all races. Some cultures place great emphasis on intellectual pursuits. Testing these cultures would result in a preponderance of intellectually-oriented youngsters. Some cultures are concerned primarily with survival in a hostile world. [27 September 1973]

"As the twig is bent, so grows the tree." So the saying goes, but not all twigs are born with the same potential. There is nature and there is nurture, and both contribute to the final product. Whatever and wherever one's genetic inheritance may incline one to pursue, that gets modified by cultural pressures.

Dick: I just want to know if my previous observation about aggressive Body Types was correct.

Essentially [yes]. This culture is hypocritical toward aggression. The culture pretends to decry aggression, yet teaches it to the young. Confusion results and many grow up believing that all aggressive tendencies are somehow not nice. Others grow up in an atmosphere of aggressive abandon. Most are confused about their own internal passive/aggressive ratio.

Gene: Now, will you repeat the question?

Dick: I am just saying that there are a good many variations within each Body Type. They are just not all the same.

Most deviations are culturally induced. [02 October 1973]

What I get from this is reinforcement of what it said elsewhere: whatever one is born with gets modified by cultural influences; culture can minimize or maximize one's genetic inheritance, including Body Type. The results are often confusing when the nurture does not match the nature.

Dick: In my practice, I see so few people that I can relate to. They are happy to see me, I guess, but there I [low] income.

Vallejo [California] is a Moving-Centered community populated heavily by Baby Souls. There is racial unrest and much strife. The average IQ there is 90. Intelligence means different things to different cultures. Some cultures stress survival; others stress scholastics. Thereby hangs their criteria for measuring intelligence.

Because IQ tests allegedly measure book smarts rather than "street" smarts (or other kinds of smarts), standardized IQ tests obviously have cultural biases.

Dick: We take heredity as the main cause of intelligence and some from environment.

Dick, the medical doctor, was aware of the nature-versus-nurture debate.

Alice: How about brain deficiency? How does that fit with Karma?

Genetically determined deficiencies do exist. They are not particularly distributed. In other words, there is a bad gene, but this [American] culture has never stressed intellectual pursuits and never will. There are no superior

Oriental genes, but this culture has always stressed knowledge, and a certain amount of this is inculcated in the culture so deeply that it has become hereditary in a very obscure fashion. It is immeasurable, but pervasive. Some of you were Black in previous lives and some Blacks have been White. In them, there are racial memories that cause them to seek outside of their culture. [06 October 1973]

One wonders if this “obscure heredity” is a foreshadowing of what has become known as “epigenetics”, which did not become a thing among biologists until the 1990s: ><https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Epigenetics><.

Edgar: May we have the definition of Scholar?

We have given this but we will repeat. This is an intermediate Role where reason and logic are the foundations upon which life is built. We did not say that Scholars were emotionally bereft, just a little more discreet about displaying. Edgar and Ellis were both born into emotional cultural environments, and both display more emotionality than the average Scholar, but still do not approach the sheer emotional extravagance of other Roles such as Priests and Sages. [15 November 1973]

Evidently being born into an emotional or unemotional culture can skew the expression, or not, of emotionally.

Question about homosexuality.

This unfortunate syndrome is almost always culturally induced. Most of the time it is a form of rebellion, either by an Emotionally Centered male, usually either an Artisan or a Sage, or an Intellectually Centered female, usually either a Scholar or a Priest. This [American] culture frustrates the inclinations of both — or we should say, all — of these Roles, and the squelching is done in childhood. The job is usually quite thorough.

One other form of mixed gender conflicts arise with the children of the above who do not have a clear-cut picture of the “roles” that society expects them to play. They go out into the world unequipped to play the proper role, and [so they] play it by ear. Sometimes, this results in the gender conflict. Ideally, one should be able to express love for others regardless of the genital assignment without fear of castigation. This is quite an upward step in the evolution of Creatures of Reason. Don’t expect it to happen in this lifetime. [14 December 1973]

In America, the general cultural acceptance of homosexuality, this “upward step in the evolution of Creatures of Reason”, happened rather suddenly a few decades later with the federal legalization of gay marriage. Contrary to the prophecy, it happened within the lifetime of some members of the original Michaelian group. Sarah became a gay rights activist a decade after this session, in the early days of the AIDS epidemic, but she was not one of those who lived to see the legalization.

We feel that this culture is amiss in not giving permission. Sometimes you must go and ask for it. The permission is symbolic, but sometimes in this culture, it must almost be literal. If marijuana was on sale at all corner stores, few would smoke it — at any rate, no more than smoke it now and a few would quit. [16 December 1973]

There are conservative cultures and there are liberal cultures. The typical progression over time, in regard to culture and Soul Age, is from conservative to liberal. Marijuana is now for sale at stores — that’s cultural progress.

Norma: Is our energy self-generated? Are we born with a certain amount of energy and it regenerates?

The body can be thought of as the vehicle or the conductor. The Essence becomes the source of attraction and, as [spiritual] growth occurs, can draw upon an infinite power source. However, the average soul uses a very small, a very finite, amount of the energy available during a given physical interval. Most of you are somewhat sluggish due to cultural inducements, and rarely draw upon much energy.

Edgar: Can you discuss energy and the concept of the pyramid?

What we just discussed is the pyramidal effect, or the channeling of the energies from the wide dispersion at the base to the narrow flow at the top. The theory behind the pyramid is, of course, symbolic. However, many cannot work without a concrete physical model representing the symbols. This is not Bad Work, necessarily, but you should learn to be a bit more abstract. The literalness of your culture is an obstacle to true spiritual growth. [27 December 1973]

These were other statements that nurture can influence nature in an adverse way.

One of those present did not see obesity as the result of a Rejection Goal.

Obesity results from sexual conflicts, the Goal of Rejection, or cultural diet (pasta and spaghetti). [03 January 1974]

Byron: From reading the last notes, I see only three reasons for obesity. I can eliminate the cultural diet and I'm not in Rejection, so it must be a sexual conflict?

You are a victim of your cultural dietary extravagance. We see some sex conflict but not enough to put on the pounds. [10 January 1974]

This is off-topic, but my impression is that cultural dietary extravagance may have been more of a cause of obesity at the time of the original Michaelian group, but now one of the biggest contributors to the so-called "obesity epidemic" is eating highly-processed junk food.

Comment: It seems that Robert has lost more than he has who have stayed with him. There's no talking, you aren't supposed to show emotions and you have to be so careful ...

This teaching should eventually free you from the yoke of collective guilt, then the sober affect will be even more inappropriate. Learn joy now and it will not be such a shock then.

Could you enlarge on that comment?

The culture places the load of guilt right out in front of the child where it must either trip over it or stop short of all understanding. The child eventually shoulders part of this, either willingly or not, and carries it through life, unless it happens to meet with a teaching that shows it that there is no guilt. This culture is guilty, vaguely [and] overtly, about all things that seem light and airy. The emphasis is on work, and then possibly you may go on to another better place where you won't have to work so hard. And, of course, you students realize that this is nonsense. In fact, the load of toil holds you back rather than enhancing your work towards spiritual growth. Several of you have verified this for yourselves.

The emphasis on other-worldliness has become mired in false concepts. We would point out to you the attitudes of the ancient Greek civilization centered in Athens toward sexuality, for instance. Sex was just not a "heavy" subject to them. Consequently, they enjoyed it a whole lot more. They did not analyze. We point out to you that Sophocles lived during a later period than we are now discussing. By that time, the endless analyses had begun. For instance, in ancient Athens, women and men only felt "cheated upon" if the partner dallied with someone they could not love also; then they felt outraged. It was considered a complement if your husband or wife really loved your best friend in this way. [10 January 1974]

Such things as the acceptable work/play ratio and the guilt/innocence ratio are typical of cultures.

The question of divorce is a tragic one only in your culture, as relatively little thought is given to the suitability of the pair-bonding initially. [20 January 1974]

Concluding Comments on Culture

As we see in this chapter, the Michaels provided a teaching to the original Michaelian group members that was, of course, appropriate for "older" souls: Mid-Level Mature and higher/older. One component of the story arc for souls after the turning point of Mid-Level Mature is to ascend out of Physical Plane entanglements. Because of that, this teaching — that acculturation best be mitigated and minimized — was important for their spiritual path, to improve their contact with Essence. Thus, to outgrow acculturation is important for older souls, but one wonders if this would necessarily be the case with younger souls. **Nothing is said specifically about this in the original Michaelian group transcriptions**, but for souls younger than the Mid-Level Mature turning point, one component of the story arc is to descend into Physical Plane entanglements. Therefore, my surmise is that it might generally be better for younger souls to be immersed in their culture, on the premise that this can provide major catalyst for their psychological development and expansion.

There are other concerns about whether acculturation or anti-acculturation is appropriate for any particular individual. For instance, how comfortable one feels in the culture in which they were born/and or migrated to, depends a lot on their Soul Age. That is, people tend to feel the most at home if their cultural milieu is dominated by people of the same Soul Age; the greater the difference between the ambient culture age and the individual Soul Age, the more uncomfortable the individual is. People very naturally gravitate toward social groups that manifest a similar belief, value, and behavior system, and this is largely determined by their Soul Age: “Birds of a feather flock together” and all that.

It really is up to every individual to discern how much cultural comfort versus how much cultural discomfort is optimal for their well-being. Acculturation to the ambient norm is not such a good thing if it prevents the individual from learning the lessons that are appropriate for their Soul Age. That leads to the accumulation of False Personality. Acculturation might not be such a bad thing for an individual if the ambient culture is a step ahead of the Soul Age of that individual. That is, an Infant Soul can learn a lot about social morality if it grows up in a family or a tribe or a nation that is dominated by a Baby Soul belief/value/behavior system.

Perhaps you have heard of “culture shock”. This is when you visit some other some other country and are surprised and/or dismayed to see how they do things there and consider it totally normal and appropriate. This makes you realize that they are in a so-called “cultural trance”; it is as if they are hypnotized by the culture in which they live. The value of this, of course, is if it makes you realize that you are also in a cultural trance – to the extent that it has inculcated a belief/value/behavior system that is of False Personality rather than True Personality, and beyond True Personality is Essence.





DEATH AND DYING

The title of this chapter was chosen to be the same as the name of a rather famous book written by a rather famous person, Elisabeth Kubler-Ross. She attended one of the original Michaelian group sessions, in early 1975. Quotations from that session are found near the end of this chapter.

In a spiritual teaching that has reincarnation as one of its primary tenets, of course the subject of death would be a primary part of that teaching.

Dick saw a transcendental [sic] soul on television — Archbishop Fulton Sheen, a very opinionated and arrogant man — he spoke of death. Richard commented that he loses much energy around the experience of a patient dying.

Well, unfortunately, in this culture, death has long been associated with punishment, and this spills over onto the family and those in attendance. In cultures accepting the teachings of reincarnation, even this occasionally happens, especially in those that espouse reincarnation to a lower order [animal]. If you regard death as “bad”, then naturally you are going to lose energy when this “bad” happens. Also, if you project expectations of healing upon the patient and his attendants, you are going to feel a sense of failure when you do not fulfill these expectations. Yes, you can go to great and heroic lengths to prolong the physical life, but often to the great discomfort of both the patient and his family. Often, the death of someone who has been painfully ill for a long period of time comes as a distinct relief to the members of his family, even though they would be unable to verbalize it. Sometimes you can do them a disservice by prolonging agony that they must suffer vicariously. If healing is to take place, it will be far more dramatic than mere analgesia [pain reduction], and these are those cases in which you may put your skills to the task. But in cases where there is no healing possible, the most you can offer is comfort, and usually this would be better directed toward those to be left behind. Many very ill persons have an acute awareness of their impending death, and the opportunity to discuss this is many times more valuable than any useless last drastic treatment. We would hope to see in the future more counseling directed toward those who will be left with a life to live, after the death has occurred. Many times during a long illness, these persons need the most help, certainly more than one who has died. We wish we could graphically illustrate the awareness that a dying person feels. We feel that it would put your fears to rest. Many times, this awareness even becomes an intense longing toward the last. You all know where the line can be drawn between a case in which there can be a healing and the case in which there will be imminent death. Leveling with those involved when this line is drawn, can be therapeutic for both the physician and the patient. The guilt, of course, stems from the concept of death as a punishment. After all, you are sending this soul to meet his fate and are, therefore, responsible. This is quite a burden and we are not surprised that this produces fatigue. It need not be that way, but you yourself must begin to look upon the physical life as merely a transitory thing, and not to be mourned. In the Older Souls, this becomes far easier, as almost all of them will accept some concept of perpetuation. With the Younger Souls, this may require more skill, but still can be smoothly handled by one with strength of convictions.

Yes, we do see much Arrogance in the man Fulton. This is a final Level Old Soul transcendent [karma-free] and not a manifestation of a Transcendental Soul; there is a difference. [14 December 1974]

Can it be seen in a patient's eyes when they are going to die soon or in their aura?

Interestingly enough, there is also a thermal change in the aura that is measurable as it changes from its usual color to black. But yes, many good students can see this in the eyes just as clearly as they can see the Overleaves. The lady was aware of the positive thought forms. [14 September 1975]

Elisabeth Kubler-Ross has had a feeling that her husband will die this next winter and that she needs this for her growth — being alone — and she yet feels guilty about the feeling. Did she create this feeling of his impending death?

Unfortunately, what the Essence wishes often conflicts with what society has told the Personality that it is “nice” to wish. For instance, it is certainly not nice that a burdensome relative should die and thereby free the Essence for its work. There is a better than average chance that this man's life on the Physical plane will come to an end

within the next several months, but yes, Elisabeth, it is merely sad that communication on the Physical plane is so bad, particularly between those bound together by strong legal ties rather than Essence ties, that the need for freedom cannot be expressed. Of course, it is not possible for you to hasten something like this without an overt action on your part, so the amount of guilt is inappropriate, to say the least. It is not an unusual wish for one who is involved in the work of the Essence. It is, again, merely a sad commentary on the Physical plane that communication is so poor. It is hoped that with this Cadre, for instance, a trust level will be developed where these conflicts will fade away. When the trust level is such that one student could say to another, "I wish you would die and leave me alone," that statement will be totally unnecessary, as the other student will already know to give the necessary space. This can only be gained by the highest of trust levels, and comes through hard work. We digress from the focus on Elisabeth, but this is a question pertinent to you all, and Elisabeth is a definite integral part of this Cadre's functioning. Knowing her is no accident, please believe us. [09 January 1975]





④ DIALOGUE

This chapter is the product of a search for the word dialogue in the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group channeling sessions. This word does not represent a significant component of the Michaelian teachings. However, there are good reasons to discuss the subject in this *Study Papers* book: 1) the subject came up numerous times during the original Michaelian group; 2) some interesting things were said about the subject; 3) the subject is related to a number of other components of the Michaelian teachings that are considered to be significant; 4) students can presumably benefit from having the mentions conveniently collected and commented all in one place.

The word dialogue is not capitalized in this chapter or other chapters of this *Study Papers* book because it has no special meaning in the Michaelian teachings; it is not a Michaelian jargon word that needs a definition apart from its use in the common vernacular.

This chapter is one of many in this book that focuses on a psychological component of the Michaelian teachings as found in original Michaelian group transcriptions, rather than on a doctrinal or spiritual component. A psychological component is usually either a positive to be cultivated or a negative to be mitigated. In the next section, you will see that the Michaels use the word with both a negative and positive connotation. The Michaelian version of psychology is not to be confused with the popular psychology of the self-improvement movement, those that do not have a spiritual core or perspective. Rather, the Michaelian psychotherapeutic path (aimed at improving psychological health) is a beneficial precursor to the spiritual path (aimed at improving soul health). To skip the former but attempt the latter is referred to as “spiritual bypassing”. This is discussed at length on such websites as https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spiritual_bypassing. To skip mitigating one’s psychological issues and attempt to go straight to enlightenment usually proves to be problematic.

It might be a little surprising how often this word dialogue shows up in the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group, considering that it has not appeared very many times in subsequent channeling sessions that we have record of. Precisely because it covers a subject that might otherwise have been ignored and forgotten, I regard it as useful and valuable to include this chapter, as with numerous other similar chapters on obscure topics in this *Study Papers* book. Doing so makes our understanding of the Michaelian teachings richer and more complete.

Definition of Dialogue

So what is meant by dialogue?

Dialogue (sometimes spelled dialog in American English) is a written or spoken conversational exchange between two or more people, and a literary and theatrical form that depicts such an exchange. As a philosophical or didactic device, it is chiefly associated in the West with the Socratic dialogue as developed by Plato, but antecedents are also found in other traditions including Indian literature. The term dialogue stems from the Greek διάλογος (*dialogos*, conversation); its roots are διά (*dia*: through) and λόγος (*logos*: speech, reason). The first extant author who uses the term is Plato, in whose works it is closely associated with the art of dialectic. Latin took over the word as *dialogus*. [<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dialogue> — 25 July 2022]

More will be said about Socratic and dialectic dialogue in the concluding comments to this chapter. Dialogue can be contrasted with the word “monologue”, which is the case where one person talks *at* another person or persons, rather than *with* others as a back-and-forth exchange of conversation. The Wikipedia article does more than hint at the notion that there is an elevated function of dialogue: it can be much more than people merely yammering and chattering with each other about inane and mundane matters. As we will see, the Michaels were aware of an elevated and exalted use of dialogue, as a “creative” endeavor.

Dialogue per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

The following extracts from original Michaelian group transcriptions are Q&A exchanges, where an original Michaelian group member asks a question (or makes a comment), and the Michaels provide an answer. These extracts are presented in the chronological order in which they were given. As is my custom, I often provide some explanatory comments following the question or answer. Underlined words in the Q&A exchanges are my emphasis, to draw attention to what it is that I comment on. Sometimes I embed words or phrases [in brackets] that I believe help to clarify the question or the answer.

The first person to raise a question about dialogue was Mallory. She was in training to become a counseling psychologist. She was also a Warrior, and we Michaelian students know that Warriors are notorious for their preference for terse, pithy, focused, purposeful, no-nonsense communication:

Mallory: I feel there are quick subject changes and that the subject is not explored enough.

We would certainly hope that this teaching would evolve into much more than continuous dialogue. The foundation for this has been given. Even the dialogue with us is excessive. There is not time given over to reflection and searching. Valid insights from students should be accepted. If they are invalid, they will feel wrong and you will know this without confirming this [with us]. [31 January 1974]

Some alternatives to shallow and meandering and unfocused dialogue were suggested here: “exploration” of a subject in depth and breadth, “reflection” on the implications of what is said and discovered in the exploration, “searching” for the ramifications of what is said and discovered in the exploration, sharing “insights” about what is said and discovered in the exploration. This *Study Papers* book and my other books are certainly examples of the fulfillment of these recommended improvements to the quality of the dialogue about the Michaelian teachings.

Ray: [Question lost.]

In order for this group to achieve the cohesion necessary to provide [spiritual] growth, a level of intimacy and trust far exceeding what you now have must be reached. This cannot be achieved through dialogue. Dialogue is False Personality’s defense against Emotional Center. [31 January 1974]

Refer to chapters “Intimacy” and “Trust” and “Personality — True and False” and “Emotional Center” for more discussion on those concepts mentioned in this passage. Verbal dialogue is an exchange between Intellectual Centers, which is where most members of the original Michaelian group were stuck, so the Michaels often encouraged them to learn to ‘communicate’ via ‘dialogue’ in other Centers, such as Emotional Center in this case. These other Centers are discussed in other chapters on the Centers. The point to be noted and emphasized here is that intimacy and trust should be developed and experienced via exchanges in the entire lineup of all seven Centers, not just in the Intellectual Center (and not just in the Emotional Center). My book *The Tao of Relationships* has somewhat to say about dialogue, aka “energy exchanges”, between all Centers. In that book, I discuss what I poetically refer to as “attuning and communing”; this is the mindful process of intentionally and actively ‘listening’ for non-verbal ‘dialogue’.

Ray: This is the first time I feel the group is into something meaningful. The energy feels different. To get in touch with real feelings is frightening and is unattainable to this in a group.

Ellis: We can’t reach each other through dialogue or what I call “aboutism.” When someone brings up something deeply personal, the group as a whole makes the whole thing personal. I hear the pain, and then we go on to the next person’s pain. [31 January 1974]

“Personal pain” comes from the lower Centers, so I can see why Ellis would object to excessive sharing of that negative stuff, whether the personal pain be in body, in emotions, or in thoughts. However, if “creative” dialogue (see below) could sublimate through and beyond the “impersonal” Center (Impulse) to the experiences of the “transpersonal” ‘higher’ Centers (Concept, Sympathy, Excitation), then that would be Good Work, because that is where meaning and energy and intimacy and trust exist and function.

May I suggest that “energy” is a suitable generic term that can be used to refer to the “intimacy” and “trust” that is experienced when exchanges are made between the non-verbal Centers. Words, aka “aboutism”, merely provide symbolic representations for energy — they are not the exchange of energy itself. Because of the inadequacy, ambiguity, and varying interpretations of words, verbal dialogue in the Intellectual Center often increases misunderstanding, rather than decreases it. Therefore, we do well to learn to communicate energy through the non-verbal Centers on our way to greater intimacy and trust.

Dick: In our first teaching, Robert’s emphasis was on being more silent. In Gurdjieff’s system, it was stated that everything you said was a lie and so we had to be very careful with words.

We agree that much work needs to be done by all of you here present toward eliminating all non-essential dialogue. This, of course, may eventually result in your being acutely uncomfortable when you are not with others in the teaching. This is only one of the myriad reasons for spiritual communities such as we have suggested. Silence comes much more easily to those who are secure in the love of those around them. [03 February 1974]

It is ironic that Gurdjieff said via words that all communication via words was “lying”. (Recall the famous ancient Greek paradox “All Cretans are liars”, said by a Cretan.) I would amend or clarify this by saying (with words!) that verbal communication is almost always inadequate and inaccurate; it is inferior to energy exchanges in other Centers, as noted previously. However, when words are all you have to exchange, “be very careful” with them. It can be uncomfortable to have to self-censor when in the company of people who are not Michaelian students. It is liberating to be in the company of other Michaelian students. This is because miscommunication is minimized when people share a belief/value/behavior system, such as the Michaelian teachings, in a “spiritual community”, even if it is via an online discussion group. Dialogue in all Centers is maximized when Michaelian students actually live together; refer to the chapter “Communal Living” for a discussion of the advantages and disadvantages of that environment. The point about “being more silent” is that doing so makes you search for and become sensitive to the alternative means and methods of exchange of energy in the non-verbal Centers. The next Q&A exchange says precisely that:

Richard: Gandhi said you should express yourself in the least number of words without embellishment.

We see much value in periods of silence; they are unsurpassed door openers. Right now, however, you are not together enough to dispense with the dialogue, so we have not suggested it. If you will work doggedly for a weekend together, we will probably suggest it. [03 March 1974]

Elsewhere Gandhi was said to be a Transcendental Soul, so I would say that his example and his advice have a transcendent value. By closing the door on verbal dialogue you open the door to other, and better, types of dialogue, namely the non-verbal kind. Next time you are in a social situation, notice how much (shallow and superficial) dialogue takes place in the Intellectual Center, and also notice how little (deep and meaningful) energy exchange takes place in other Centers. Consider how much work it would take to change this habitual pattern in this culture. Consider how scary it would be to even suggest a departure from verbal dialogue even among your friends. Reflect on those (few?) times when, somehow, there was an exchange of energy in other Centers, and recall how meaningful this was. Note that there are “encounter groups” that are focused on breaking out of entrapment in mere verbal dialogue. Many original Michaelian group members partook of one such seminar, namely “EST”; refer to the chapter by that name. There you will read that the EST process was very intense, because this is what is required to get many people out of habitual and thoughtless verbal exchange and into other types of energy exchange.

The following passage is the main reason that I included this chapter on dialogue:

Much of this man’s [Robert’s] work on himself has been with the creative silence, and he is not yet satisfied with the results of this, and dialogue is unsatisfactory as a result of this work. We would point out to you that the reverse is true of our student Soleal. Since he was steeped in the silence, his work is now with the creative dialogue. Both are Good Work by excellent students. Both are needed, for that is what Balance is all about. [16 February 1975]

Elsewhere Robert Burton, a student of the Gurdjieffian teachings, was said to be moving toward transcendence, and the “creative silence” was one of his methods. Obviously, there is more to “silence” than merely refraining from talking; refer to the chapter “Silence, The” for more discussion about the “creative” silence as taught by Gurdjieff and by the Michaels. There you will read that it involves actively listening for inspiration. And then refer to the chapter “Telepathy” for more discussion about a type of verbal communication that is not spoken out loud; telepathy is verbal dialogue in the Higher Intellectual Center, as distinct from the usual verbal dialogue in the Intellectual Center.

So, from the above Q&A exchanges we see that there is unnecessary dialogue and there is “creative” dialogue. More is said about the latter in the following section.

Concluding Comments on Dialogue

I feel that this chapter deserves to be less brief, so I am going to multiply the words, and expand the subject of dialogue to include related but larger concepts.

Almost the entirety of the original Michaelian group transcriptions is a record of the Q&A dialogue between original Michaelian group members and the Michaels (and Tomas and Soleal). This is therefore an example of the use of dialogue as a “didactic” methodology; meaning, this is how teachers and students typically interact; refer to the chapter named “School”.

The word “dialogue” was used only a few times in the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group. In most instances, the Michaels denigrated the way that most people dialogue, as unnecessary “small talk” or “chit chat”, to the exclusion of better and ‘higher’ forms of communication, such as telepathy. It is a common situation in many spiritual teachings that serious spiritual aspirants are rarely interested in, or good at, mindless blathering. Only in the last appearance of the word dialogue in the original Michaelian group transcriptions did the Michaels use the phrase, “creative dialogue”, because dialogue could and should be used to transcend the function of mere idle conversation about the inane and mundane affairs of daily life. So what might the Michaels have meant by “creative dialogue”?

Wikipedia has an article on dialogue, and it discusses how dialogue, from the beginning of its appearance in the Greek language, has been elevated to an art form by Plato and subsequent philosophers. I would like to focus on three philosophers who expanded the concept of dialogue into a general principle; they all lived in the Twentieth Century.

Habermas Dialogue

German philosopher Juergen Habermas had somewhat to say about dialogue being more than the hierarchical “didactic” type — as dialogue from teacher to student — namely, what he referred to as “egalitarian dialogue”: this is communication between equals (rather than unequals as in didactic dialogue) as a method to generate meaning in people’s lives:

Jürgen Habermas considers his major contribution to be the development of the concept and theory of communicative reason or communicative rationality, which distinguishes itself from the rationalist tradition, by locating rationality in structures of interpersonal linguistic communication rather than in the structure of the cosmos. This social theory advances the goals of human emancipation, while maintaining an inclusive universalist moral framework. This framework rests on the argument called universal pragmatics — that all speech acts have an inherent *telos* (the Greek word for “purpose”) — the goal of mutual understanding, and that human beings possess the communicative competence to bring about such understanding. Habermas built the framework out of the speech-act philosophy of Ludwig Wittgenstein, J. L. Austin, and John Searle, the sociological theory of the interactional constitution of mind and self of George Herbert Mead, the theories of moral development of Jean Piaget and Lawrence Kohlberg, and the discourse ethics of his Frankfurt colleague and fellow student Karl-Otto Apel. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jürgen_Habermas — retrieved 30 July 2022]

For Habermas, dialogue is not just about the transfer of information in terms of a belief system hierarchy; it is also about the transfer of transformation in terms of a value system hierarchy. This notion is discussed in another Wikipedia article:

Habermas (2004a, 2004b) has stressed the need to recover the lifeworld from its systemic colonization by the “steering media” of power, law, and bureaucratization. The systemic decolonization is a way of reinventing democracy in public spaces and institutions and for recovering meaning. Habermas’ concept of lifeworld refers to the everyday contexts where people relate to each other and create meaning and structures to organize themselves. In Habermas’ view, and also from a dialogic learning perspective, subjects create meaning through intersubjectivity or the interaction among subjects engaged in egalitarian dialogue. Any person can engage in such meaning making dialogue because humans have epistemological curiosity, which when expressed in egalitarian dialogue can criticize and end with what Freire (2001) called the bureaucratizing of the mind, an invisible power of alienating domestication. Such debureaucratization process can be seen in *Dialogic Musical Gatherings* (CONFAPEA, 2005), where people develop their epistemological curiosity listening to classical music and later engaging in a dialogue about the instruments that were playing, about the composer, his life and his position in a historical context, the style of the music listened to and its relationship with the cultural claims of each participant belonging to the Music Gathering, etc. In this process, meaning is created and recovered because music escapes the system and goes back to people’s lifeworld tearing down the walls of cultural elitism. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Egalitarian_dialogue — retrieved 30 July 2022]

So, besides verbal communication as creative dialogue for maintaining and reinventing democracy, Habermas says that music and other arts should be forms of creative non-verbal dialogue; refer to the chapter named “Music”.

Buberian Dialogue

Another German philosopher has somewhat to say about what could be called “creative dialogue”:

Martin Buber assigns dialogue a pivotal position in his theology. His most influential work is titled *I and Thou*. Buber cherishes and promotes dialogue not as some purposive attempt to reach conclusions or express mere points of view, but as the very prerequisite of authentic relationship between man and man, and between man and God. Buber’s thought centers on “true dialogue”, which is characterized by openness, honesty, and mutual commitment. [<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dialogue>< — retrieved 28 July 2022]

Following is the blurb for the book *Martin Buber’s Dialogue: Discovering Who We Really Are*, authored by Kenneth Paul Kramer and published in 2019:

Martin Buber, one of the twentieth century’s most distinguished and creative thinkers, famously argued that the fundamental fact of human existence is person with person, and that practicing genuine dialogue is necessary for anyone who wishes to become authentically human. This book seeks to unleash and reassemble the core elements for practicing dialogue — turning and addressing, and then listening and responding. Despite what many say, the innermost growth of the self does not come in relation to one’s self. Rather, attaining one’s authentic human existence (one’s innate self-realization) emerges again and again through genuine dialogue, through “participatory consciousness.” We become authentically human in and through our relationships with others. Here’s the point — instead of having dialogues, human beings mutually become dialogue with others. Individual human beings in dialogue with one another become memorable mutualities found nowhere else, opening out into the world. [<https://www.amazon.com/Martin-Bubers-Dialogue-Discovering-Really/dp/153266575X>< — retrieved 27 June 2022]

Buber was aware that “true” dialogue should transcend mere verbal communication; ultimately, it should be a spiritual experience. A Buberian scholar and Michaelian student explained to me that Buber’s notion is that true dialogue is more about each participant discovering who they really are in their innermost being than it is about discovering who the other participant is in their outer being. This makes sense, because it is easier to arrive at intimacy with oneself than it is to arrive at intimacy with another person. And, of course, intimacy primarily with oneself facilitates intimacy secondarily with other people.

Bohmian Dialogue

A physicist with an inclination to mysticism had somewhat to say about what could be called “creative dialogue”:

The physicist David Bohm originated a related form of dialogue where a group of people talk together in order to explore their assumptions of thinking, meaning, communication, and social effects. This group consists of ten to thirty people who meet for a few hours regularly or a few continuous days. In a Bohm dialogue, dialoguers agree to leave behind debate tactics that attempt to convince and, instead, talk from their own experience on subjects that are improvised on the spot. [<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dialogue>< — retrieved 28 July 2022]

In other words, dialogue should not be a divisive and destructive debate of *words*, it should be a constructive and unitive exchanges of *energy* about personal experiences, which exchanges typically involve Centers other than the Intellectual Center.

Dialectic = Monads

Dialogue is typically conducted between individuals — selves and other selves — as a means to grow in grace and knowledge, but it is also a subset of a larger conceptual framework that often goes by the name “dialectic”, which is the name for the interaction of self and environment, aka an agent in an arena. That is a word that might not be familiar to many readers, so let’s have a look at what Wikipedia has to say:

Dialectic (Greek: *διαλεκτική*, *dialektikḗ*; related to dialogue; German: *Dialektik*), also known as the dialectical method, is a discourse [or dialogue] between two or more people holding different points of view about a subject but wishing to establish the truth through reasoned argumentation. Dialectic resembles debate, but the concept excludes subjective elements such as emotional appeal and the modern pejorative sense of rhetoric. Dialectic may thus be contrasted with both the eristic, which refers to argument that aims to successfully

dispute another's argument (rather than searching for truth), and the didactic method, wherein one side of the conversation teaches the other. Dialectic is alternatively known as minor logic, as opposed to major logic or critique. Within Hegelianism, the word dialectic has the specialized meaning of a contradiction between ideas that serves as the determining factor in their relationship.... Dialectic tends to imply a process of evolution and so does not naturally fit within classical logics, but was given some formalism in the twentieth century. The emphasis on process is particularly marked in Hegelian dialectic, and even more so in Marxist dialectical logic, which tried to account for the evolution of ideas over longer time periods in the real world.

In my understanding, dialogue and dialectic are instantiations of a universal general principle, namely that something new arises out of all interactions; interactions are creative, not static. In the common parlance, this is somewhat like a 'positive feedback loop', which is where there is enhancement and transformation. In the Michaelian teachings, this is referred to as "Monads"; refer to the chapter by that name. Basically and briefly, Cardinal plus Ordinal experiences produced a Neutral state at a 'higher' level or a 'later' stage in the progression of one's being and doing. (The triad of Thesis > Antithesis > Synthesis appears in the Gurdjieffian teachings as "The Law of Three" (refer to the chapter by that name) and in the Gurdjieffian teachings as the rise in "Level of Being" (refer to the chapter by that name).

In the following quotation, if you substitute Cardinal for "thesis", substitute Ordinal for "antithesis", and substitute Neutral for "synthesis" you will have some idea of how philosophers understand Monads::

In classical philosophy, dialectic... is a form of reasoning based upon dialogue of arguments and counter-arguments, advocating *propositions* (theses) and *counter-propositions* (antitheses). The outcome of such a dialectic might be the refutation of a relevant proposition, or of a synthesis, or a combination of the opposing assertions, or a qualitative improvement of the dialogue.

Perhaps you have heard of that triad, Thesis > Antithesis > Synthesis. If there was only Thesis and Antithesis, there would be unending struggle and no progress. Here again we see that the function of dialogue and dialectic — when understood in their philosophical sense — should not be to argue interminably; rather, they should be "creative": to develop and evolve beyond what one was before, to transcend into even higher levels and later stages on the journey of becoming. This was stated explicitly in the Wikipedia article as follows:

There is another interpretation of dialectic, suggested in [Plato's] *The Republic*, as a procedure that is both discursive and intuitive. In Platonism and Neoplatonism, dialectic assumes an ontological and metaphysical role in that it becomes the process whereby the intellect passes from sensibles to intelligibles, rising from Idea to Idea until it finally grasps the supreme Idea, the First Principle which is the origin of all. The philosopher is consequently a "dialectician". In this sense, dialectic is a process of enquiry that does away with hypotheses up to the First Principle (*Republic*, VII, 533 c-d). It slowly embraces the multiplicity in unity. Simon Blackburn writes that the dialectic in this sense is used to understand "the total process of enlightenment, whereby the philosopher is educated so as to achieve knowledge of the supreme good, the Form of the Good".

[><https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dialectic>< — retrieved 30 July 2022]

Thus the notion of dialogue expands into the notion of dialectic, and those notions expand into the notion of Monads, a term in the Michaelian teachings, and the completion of Monads is the path of enlightenment; refer to the chapter "Enlightenment" for more about that.





DIMENSIONALITY AND AXES

This chapter is the product of a search for the words dimension and axis in the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group channeling sessions. This word does not represent a significant component of the Michaelian teachings. However, there are good reasons to discuss the subject in this *Study Papers* book: 1) the subject came up numerous times during the original Michaelian group; 2) students can presumably benefit from having the mentions conveniently collected and commented all in one place; 3) some interesting things were said about the subject; 4) the subject is related to a number of other components of the Michaelian teachings that are considered to be significant; 5) _____ issues are unavoidable; they are pervasive in human psychology and sociology and spirituality — subjects covered extensively in this book — so it behooves us to have a working knowledge of it/them.

The word dimension is not capitalized in this chapter or other chapters of this *Study Papers* book because it has no special meaning in the Michaelian teachings; it is not a Michaelian jargon word that needs a definition apart from its use in the common vernacular. However, Axis is capitalized.

Definition of Dimension

So what is meant by template? The online Merriam Webster online dictionary definition is:

My usual go-to source for definitions and descriptions and explanations, Wikipedia, says this (underlined words are my emphasis):

Dimensions per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

The following extracts from original Michaelian group transcriptions are Q&A exchanges, where an original Michaelian group member asks a question (or makes a comment), and the Michaels provide an answer. This is a subject that benefits by division into subsections. These extracts are presented in the chronological order in which they were given. As is my custom, I usually provide some explanatory comments following the question or answer. Underlined words are my emphasis, to draw attention to what it is that I comment on. Sometimes I embed words or phrases [in brackets] that I believe help to clarify the question or the answer. Numerous study papers related to this chapter are to be found among my comments.

Axes per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

These words, “Axis” and “Axes”, are used numerous times in the original Michaelian group transcriptions, referring to the certain Attributes of the Overleaf System. Recall that the Axis Attributes are named Action, Inspiration, Expression, and Assimilation. Recall that three of the Axis Attributes have Cardinal and Ordinal Poles, such that there is Cardinal and Ordinal Action, Cardinal and Ordinal Inspiration, Cardinal and Ordinal Expression. Recall that Assimilation is Neutral: it does not have Polarity. This section is about Axis Polarities. The information herein is important because it introduces an additional type of Axis Polarity, not generally recognized by Michaelian students.

These two words, Axis and Axes, first showed up in the original Michaelian group transcriptions in early 1975. Yarbro was not a member of the original Michaelian group, but she did have possession of these transcripts. However, she never used these terms in her published books. Louise and Leslie Briggs, members of the original Michaelian group in 1974 and 1975, also had possession of the transcripts, and they used the Axis terminology in their channeling sessions in the early 1980s. From the Briggs group the terms passed into the

wider Michaelian community via a couple of its members, José Stevens and JP Van Hulle — they wrote books that used these terms. Other channels who were friends of Stevens and Van Hulle in the Bay Area also learned about Axes. Finally, Shepherd Hoodwin, borrowing from the Stevens and Van Hulle books, also used these terms in his book *The Journey of Your Soul*. Thus, the terminology has become familiar to Michaelian teachings students in general. We will see below that these terms are used to refer to phenomena in the Michaels' cosmology that have to do with a specific type of Polarity in the structure of the Overleaf System.

The first appearance of the terminology is found in the following Q&A exchange. For context, note that this is shortly after the Positive and Negative Poles of the Overleaves were introduced and discussed in late 1974 and early 1975.

We asked for an SRG on ER — Perseveration, Self-destruction, Late Young Scholar, a Skeptic?

What you see here are Overleaves in conflict, and you are right that this man is currently transitioning the cycles [from Young to Mature]. He is a Seventh Level Young Scholar. The most horrendous conflict lies in the Goal–Mode Axis, that of Growth [Goal] against, yes, Perseveration [Mode]. This has held him back from acknowledging understanding that has come about in his studies. This is a Skeptic, yes, but his Chief Feature is not Self-destruction — that is far too strong. The man is basically Impatient, but appears on a self-destructive bent now to you, primarily because of his steadfast refusal to listen to the inner call. [SJC, 09 January 1975]

Here is mention of the Polarity between two Overleaf categories: “the Goal–Mode Axis”. My book *The Tao of Personality*, identifies Goal as the Ordinal Pole and Mode as the Cardinal Pole on the Action Axis of the Overleaf categories. The book also identifies Attitude as the Ordinal Pole and Center as the Cardinal Pole on the Expression Axis. The book also identifies Chief Feature as the Ordinal Pole and Role as the Cardinal Pole on the Inspiration Axis. Finally, it identifies Age/Level as the Neutral Overleaf category, completing this Septenary. Thus, the Law of Seven applies to the Overleaf categories. Thus, the forty-nine Overleaves when shown in a grid of boxes on a Chart have a symmetry of Attributes on both the horizontal and vertical axes of the Chart.

There is another mention of the Goal–Mode Axis in a subsequent session. Although the phrase is not used, the principle applies:

Do you now have the feeling for the fact that in most souls not acquainted with a teaching that the Mode stands forever as a barrier between the Positive and Negative Poles of the Goal? No matter how exalted that Goal may be, this principle stands between all Modes and Goals. We would say so, yes. [SJC, 16 January 1975]

A similar conflict on the Goal–Mode Action Axis was mentioned in *MF*, page 110, where Growth Goal and Repression Mode create internal struggles in a Personality. Similar statements can be made about the Inspiration (Chief Feature and Role) and Expression (Attitude and Center) Axes of Overleaf categories. Because of these Axis polarities, Overleaves can abrade internally (with oneself) as well as externally (with other people). All such situations and many more are covered in Part Four of my *Tao of Personality* book.

In addition to the Axes of Overleaf categories (Goal versus Mode, Chief Feature versus Role, Attitude versus Center), there is the Axis of complementary Overleaves. This type is rather better known to Michaelian teachings students because it is obvious from the oppositeness of the names of the Overleaves: Acceptance versus Rejection Goals, Passion versus Repression Modes, Realist versus Cynic Attitudes, and so on. This phenomenon is hinted at in some passages from the original Michaelian group:

... we would sometimes applaud a little Skepticism on the part of this cadre's Idealists. [SJC, 25 January 1975]

Bill: Should I [who have a Goal of Acceptance] be [concerned about what other people think or feel]?

[Soleal:] It would be better for [spiritual] growth if you were not [concerned]. Rejection comes from negative spaces and who cares? I can do without false affection [–Ingratiation] given from bad spaces, and so can you if you are rejected, and it will have nothing to do with your spaces, only the one doing the rejection. Unless you fall so far from the [+Agape] path that you commit some unsociable act, that is highly unlikely given your Overleaves. [Old Priest, Acceptance, Observation, Spiritualist, Intellectual, Impatience.] Those souls with their Mode in Passion–Repression Axis tend to be more cyclic [bipolar] than any others, but depression is not limited to this Axis. I can remember slipping down [from Power Mode] into an extremely Cautious [Mode] space not long ago myself, and for a few hours it was a damned good retreat. [SJC, 01 February 1975]

I'd like to ask about the Negative Pole of Acceptance (Rejection). [SJC, 01 February 1975]

So here we see another type of Axis, different from the previous type, that exists between Ordinal and Cardinal Overleaves within the same Overleaf category. The questioner had a Goal of Acceptance, on the

other side of the Expression Axis from the Goal of Rejection. Similar problems can be created by Overleaves in opposition on the Action Axis, such as Realist versus Cynic Attitudes, or Spiritualist versus Stoic Attitudes. Typically there is friction between two people who are on the opposite sides of any kind of Axis, especially when the Negative Poles are involved.

Mentioned for the first time in the original Michaelian group is what came to be called “sliding” in the post-original Michaelian group Michaelian teachings. However, two other words were used above for this phenomenon: a) there was the “cyclic” swing between the Passion Mode and the Repression Mode on the Inspiration Axis; b) there was the “slipping” from Power Mode to Caution Mode on the Expression Axis. One can use this phenomenon consciously to mitigate Negative Pole manifestations, as explained in *The Michael Handbook* (1986), page 286. It is also explained in *MMFM* (1986) page 211, under the name “hands-across”.

A couple of weeks later, the same subject came up again:

Dick stated that he was surprised by his painting ability, that years ago he could not paint that well. He seems to be improving all the time. He wonders if he has been given the gift of higher expression by the teacher, or wonders if the energy of the group has anything to do with this.

The gift of higher expression is there, but you are wrong about the source. You see, when the action occurs in Real Space and is work of the Essence, then it always takes place at the most Positive Pole of the Axis. When you paint now, you not only have moments of Passion [Mode], but hours. This can be sustained now because you also see the results, not from [your usual] Repression [Mode], but from Passion... [S/JC, 12 February 1975]

Dick was in the Repression Mode, which is on the Ordinal side of an Inspiration Axis, so the Cardinal Pole of the same Axis is the Passion Mode. This is the same type of Axis as mentioned in the preceding passage.

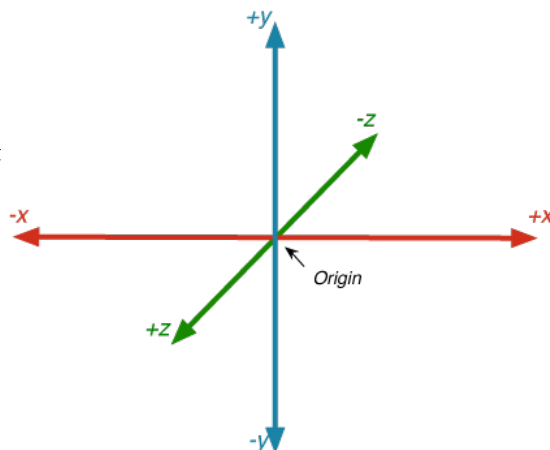
In the following passage taken from the same session, there is another mention of the rub between opposite Polarities on an Axis:

At this point, many felt the presence of Soleal, and asked him if he wished to speak.

[Soleal:] The teacher [Michael] has only begun to stress the importance of polarity to you now and the use of the most positive [Cardinal] pole of the Axes for the [spiritual] Work. But it is simply astonishing to me the progress that has been made here. I would be the first to admit that I did not think that it would be possible, given the orientation of your world. It is true that whole worlds are victims also of their Overleaves, and often this serves to prevent any upward swing for many centuries — more like millennia for the most part. Ours is an [Ordinal] Intellectually Centered world, but there is more yin than yang, thus the cold cerebration has been modified by the feminine essence. Yours is a [Ordinal] Moving Centered world, with far more yang [masculine] than yin [feminine]. But what is seen now is what we can only call the vibration of potential — in other words, the chance for change — and this is being manifested primarily in the youth of your society. They no longer feel duty-bound to cling to the primary Mode manifested by your world, that of [Ordinal] Perseveration [Mode], and are now moving into the upward spiral [into Cardinal Aggression Mode]. [S/JC, 12 February 1975]

This statement was made at a time in the Michaelian teachings when it was said that a person could change their Overleaves. Soleal here seems to be recommending that a person with an Ordinal Overleaf make efforts to switch to a Cardinal Overleaf. In subsequent Michaelian groups, starting with *Messages from Michael* in 1979, this idea was changed to getting out of the Negative Pole and into the Positive Pole of whatever Overleaf one may have. The existence of Positive and Negative Poles of the Overleaves had just been revealed in the preceding couple of months, and they did not appear on an Overleaf Chart until the next month, March. The rub between Overleaves on the opposite Pole of an Axis is of course exacerbated by Negative Poles.

The members of the original Michaelian group did not get very far into an understanding of Polarity. The original Michaelian group collapsed down to a core group about two weeks after that session, unable to surmount the conflicts within their own Overleaves and conflicts with other people’s Overleaves, particularly Negative Poles of Overleaves. The understanding of the beneficial uses of Polarities blossomed in subsequent Michaelian groups, and was recorded in Michaelian teachings books for our continued benefit.



The subject of Polarity in the Overleaf System is examined in considerable detail in other of my books, *The Tao of Personality* and *The Tao of Relationships*.

Be that as it may, before we move on, I want to introduce the reader to a proposed explanation for the selection of that term, Axis, by the Michaels. This will be brief.

I suggest that, like the terms, Ordinal and Cardinal, "Axis" is an allusion to mathematics. Mathematicians have a way of graphically illustrating physics phenomena, such as motions, as vectors or paths on a three dimensional grid, with a horizontal "x" axis, a vertical "y" axis that is perpendicular to the "x" axis, and a "z" axis that is perpendicular to both the "x" and "y" axes. (This is called the Cartesian coordinate system, named after the French mathematician who developed it, René Descartes; you can read more about that here: >https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cartesian_coordinate_system<.) Typically, this is shown with the "x" axis as a one-dimensional line going left and right; the "y" axis is shown as a line going up and down, crossing the "x" axis at the "origin" and perpendicular to it; thus the "y" axis defines a two-dimensional plane when added to the "x" axis; the "z" axis is shown as a line that crosses the origin perpendicular to the "x" and "y" axes, thus defining a three-dimensional object in space. The way to show three dimensionality on a two-dimensional sheet is typically done per the graphic above. When the axes are used to show numbers, the origin is usually set at zero. In that case, notice that there are "positive" (+1, +2, +3 ... > infinity) and "negative" (-1, -2, -3 ... > minus infinity) directions. If the origin point is set to the number 1, then the "positive" or Cardinal direction shows whole numbers (2, 3, 4 ... > infinity) and the "negative" or Ordinal direction shows fractions (1/2, 1/3, 1/4 ... > zero). In terms of the OLS, this latter scheme, where the origin point is set to the number 1, makes more sense. One reason I say this is that the Cardinal planes are holistic or unitary, as are whole numbers, whereas the Ordinal planes are fragmentary, as in fractions or pieces of unity.

The above paragraph is an introduction to the analogous meaning of Positive/Cardinal and Negative/Ordinal on my version of the Overleaf Chart; the three Axes are One-dimensional Action, Two-dimensional Inspiration, and Three-dimensional Expression. You can think of the "origin" on the Cartesian coordinate system, when set to 1, as the Neutral Assimilation Process/Aspect; this is my preferred way to relate the Cartesian coordinate system to the Overleaf Chart.

The following table is another way of showing how the Cartesian coordinate system is analogous to the structure and features of the Overleaf Chart. It does not suit my purpose in this *History* book to explain all of this table here; that happens in my book *The Tao of Personality*. This table serves as a teaser for that book, which contains a thorough explanation of the structure and meaning of the OLS, an explanation of how the OLS is the product of a logical, mathematical, and physics algorithm. Compare this table with Table 2Bb above and you will see some of the same words used by the Michaels as synonyms for Ordinal and Cardinal.

Table 2Bc — PROCESS/ASPECT SYSTEM and TIME/SPACE GEOMETRY							
AXIAL	ACTION		INSPIRATION		EXPRESSION		ASSIMILATION
CARTESIAN	"X"		"X" + "Y"		"X" + "Y" + "Z"		ORIGIN
DIMENSION	ONE-DIMENSIONAL (1-D)		TWO-DIMENSIONAL (2-D)		THREE-DIMENSIONAL (3-D)		PAN-DIMEN. (P-D)
MOTION	TRANSLATION		VIBRATION		ROTATION		SCALAR
MONADIC	-ORDINAL-	+CARDINAL+	-ORDINAL-	+CARDINAL+	-ORDINAL-	+CARDINAL+	=NEUTRAL=
DIRECTIONALITY	BACKWARD	FORWARD	DOWNWARD	UPWARD	OUTWARD	INWARD	HYPHER-COMPLEX
PROCESS/TIME	TERMINATION	ORIGINATION	INVOLUTION	EVOLUTION	ANALYSIS	SYNTHESIS	COMBINATION
ASPECT/SPACE	GOAL	MODE	SHADOW	ROLE	ATTITUDE	CENTER	WORLDVIEW

Comments on this table are as follows:

- AXIAL: The first row shows the names of the Axial Attributes. These were not known to the original Michaelian group; they were first revealed in *MFM*.
- CARTESIAN: The second row shows the way that mathematicians designate three mutually-perpendicular “axes” in the Cartesian coordinate system. The meaning of the three “Axes” shown in the first row is precisely an allusion to this mathematical system.
- DIMENSIONALITY: The third row shows another way to understand the relationship of the Axial Attributes shown in the first row and the Cartesian coordinate system shown in the second row.
- MOTION: The fourth row shows the type of motion in objective space/time that correlates with the items in the three rows higher than the fourth row. The Axial Attributes are actually “motions” in subjective time-space that correlate to these objective motions in space/time.
- MONADIC: The fifth row shows the Monadic Attributes. Add the Axial Attributes and we have the Septenarian Attributes.
- DIRECTIONALITY: The sixth row shows the directions of the Cartesian coordinates in the graph, but with a little thought, one should see that they are a metaphor for the characteristics of the Monadic Attributes.
- PROCESS/TIME: The seventh row shows the names of the Processes, aka functions of time.
- ASPECTS/SPACE: The eighth row shows the names of the Aspects, aka functions of space. Each personality Trait is at the intersection of a Process and an Aspect, so each Trait is a type of “motion” in subjective time-space, even as the Cartesian coordinate system is used to graph motion in objective space/time. The point is that subjective and objective domains are joined by mathematics.

Concluding Comments on Dimensions and Axes





⑥ DISCIPLINE

This chapter is the product of a search for the word discipline in the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group channeling sessions. This word does not represent a significant component of the Michaelian teachings. However, there are good reasons to discuss the subject in this *Study Papers* book: 1) the subject came up numerous times during the original Michaelian group; 2) some interesting things were said about the subject; 3) the subject is related to a number of other components of the Michaelian teachings that are considered to be significant; 4) students can presumably benefit from having the mentions conveniently collected and commented all in one place; 5) Discipline issues are unavoidable; they are pervasive in human psychology and sociology and spirituality — subjects covered extensively in this book — so it behooves us to have a working knowledge of them.

This chapter is one of many in this book that focuses on a psychological component of the Michaelian teachings as found in original Michaelian group transcriptions, rather than on a doctrinal or spiritual component. A psychological component is usually either a positive to be cultivated or a negative to be mitigated. As we will see, the Michaels regard self-discipline as positive to be cultivated until one has arrived at full maturity. The Michaelian version of psychology is not to be confused with the popular psychology of the self-improvement movement, those that do not have a spiritual core or perspective. Rather, the Michaelian psychotherapeutic path (aimed at improving psychological health) is a beneficial precursor to the spiritual path (aimed at improving soul health). To skip the former but attempt the latter is referred to as “spiritual bypassing”. This is discussed at length on such websites as https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spiritual_bypassing. To skip mitigating one’s psychological issues and attempt to go straight to enlightenment usually proves to be problematic.

The word discipline is not capitalized in this chapter or other chapters of this *Study Papers* book because it has no special meaning in the Michaelian teachings; it is not a Michaelian jargon word that needs a definition apart from its use in the common vernacular.

It might be a little surprising how often this word discipline shows up in the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group, considering that it has not appeared very many times in subsequent channeling sessions that we have record of. Precisely because it covers a subject that might otherwise have been ignored and forgotten, I regard it as useful and valuable to include this chapter, as with numerous other similar chapters on obscure topics in this *Study Papers* book. Doing so makes our understanding of the Michaelian teachings richer and more complete.

Basically and briefly, the Michaels recommended to the original Michaelian group members that, if they are serious about spiritual growth, then they will need to understand the role of discipline in regard to spiritual practices. That includes externally-imposed discipline as well as internally-imposed discipline. The ultimate goal is to arrive at a unity of form and function where discipline is no longer useful.

Definition of Discipline

So, what is meant by discipline? The online Merriam Webster dictionary definition is:

- 1a: control gained by enforcing obedience or order
 - 1b: orderly or prescribed conduct or pattern of behavior
 - 1c: self-control
 - 2: punishment
 - 3: training that corrects, molds, or perfects the mental faculties or moral character
 - 4: a field of study
 - 5: a rule or system of rules governing conduct or activity
- [><https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/discipline>< — retrieved 30 September 2022]

The only definition in that list that the following discussion does not cover is punishment. (“Punishment” is covered in a chapter by that name.) In addition to the dictionary definition, I would define discipline as whatever it takes to not follow ‘the path of least resistance’, to not be lazy and aimless as one travels one’s spiritual journey.

The words *discipline* and *disciple* have the same etymological root. Therefore, as Michaelian students, we are all disciples of the Michaels, and our commitment to the study (and living) of their teaching is therefore an acknowledgment of our need for discipline in our discipleship; refer to the chapters “Study” and “School Metaphor” for more discussion about that. There are few schools that operate without discipline in the sense that order must be maintained in the classroom, there are rules to follow in the didactic process, and there are lessons that one must complete on the way to graduation. This chapter is somewhat about adherence to the Michaelian curriculum; the Michaelian teachings is a voluntary discipline and we Michaelian students are a voluntary discipleship. May I suggest that readers of these study papers voluntarily apply some discipline to finish them all, even if not every one of them seems like fun, as watching a great movie or reading a great novel might be unmitigated fun. My claim is that for you to do so would be for your own good in the long run, whether or not you believe it now.

Discipline per Ouspensky

If you know anything about spiritual teachings other than the Michaelian teachings, you know that they are not only and merely about the acquisition of knowledge of spiritual matters; they are also about the application of that knowledge toward spiritual growth using spiritual practices. They typically acknowledge that discipline about doing the practices is desirable, perhaps even necessary to be effective and efficient. The founding members of the original Michaelian group had prior involvement with the Gurdjieffian teachings, which happens to be full of spiritual disciplines. Let’s see what that teaching has to say about this subject, from a disciple of Gurdjieff named Peter Ouspensky. The following quotations are extracted from his book *The Fourth Way*. It is likely that founding original Michaelian group members were familiar with this book and its contents, because it was first published in 1957, and then again in 1971. Underlined words are my emphasis, so please pay special attention to them as they are especially relevant to the discussion that follows. Sometimes I embed words or phrases [in brackets] that I believe help to clarify the quotation.

One can only enter a school when one has already lost, or is prepared to lose, at least a certain amount of self-will. Self-will is the chief obstacle to entering a school, because a school means not only learning but also discipline. And some people may find discipline boring, or unnecessary. [p. 95]

Can one be disciplined to school life without being disciplined to ordinary conventions?

School discipline is based on [spiritual] understanding — it is quite different [from societal institutions].

Isn’t there a danger of taking discipline as escape from responsibility?

Then one will fail. [p. 96]

Is self-imposed discipline good or must it be school discipline?

Discipline is good if it is discipline. But if it is just an arbitrary invention, then it can give no result. The most important aspect of discipline is not expressing negative emotions and not indulging in negative emotions. Mechanical tasks cannot give any result, but if you catch yourself at a moment of negative emotion and stop it — this is discipline. [p. 256] Control of more than one center can only be obtained if you put yourself under some other will, because your own will is insufficient, and this is why school discipline and school exercises are necessary. [p. 258]

Isn’t there a sort of organization to help people to work?

One of the most important things in the work is the understanding of discipline. If one understands this idea of discipline, one finds the possibility to work against self-will. If one does not understand it, one will think one works, but in reality one will not work, because it will only be self-will.... Without understanding school discipline one cannot have inner discipline. There are people who could do good work and who fail because they lack discipline. Yet change of Being is possible only with school-work and school discipline. For a certain period of time one must have it [applied by a school-master], and then, later [when one has attained a high Level of Being], one can Work by oneself. Discipline is connected with rules. Rules are the conditions on which people are accepted and given knowledge in a school. Keeping these rules or conditions is their first payment,

and the first test. One of the most important things in every kind of school is the idea of rules. If there are no rules, there is no school. Not even an imitation school can exist without rules. [p. 286]

Emotional development needs discipline. Nothing develops the emotional center so much as giving up self-will.... All the ways need discipline. This explains why one cannot work by oneself. One cannot create discipline by oneself. If one understands this work, then discipline takes the form that one does not decide for oneself but works according to instructions. It takes a long time to acquire Will, but self-will has to be conquered first. In the meantime another will is necessary, the will of the school, of the organization [and the greater good]. [p. 288]

The following section elaborates on most of the points made by Ouspensky.

Discipline per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

The following extracts from original Michaelian group transcriptions are Q&A exchanges, where an original Michaelian group member asks a question (or makes a comment), and the Michaels provide an answer. This is not a subject that would benefit by division into subcategories, as some subjects do. These extracts are presented in the chronological order in which they were given, even though this is not a subject where there was a development or evolution of a specific revelation of a facet of the Michaelian teachings, as was often the case with the original Michaelian group. As is my custom, I often provide some explanatory comments following the question or answer. Underlined words in the Michaels' answers are my emphasis, to draw attention to what it is that I comment on. Sometimes I embed words or phrases [in brackets] that I believe help to clarify the question or the answer.

The first occurrence of the word discipline is this, a couple of months after the first appearance of the Michaels:

Dick: Robert [Burton] was a Saturn [Body Type] and he could impose discipline. Even if I received power from a power place, it is just not my bag. I just don't know how we would work our commune. [20 October 1973]

That comment hints at the potential desirability of having a benevolent taskmaster (not a cruel slave-driver) exercise discipline in a group, whether the group builds physical edifices or spiritual communes. Robert Burton was the leader of the local Fourth Way group that the founding members of the original Michaelian group had been affiliated with. Burton was a King, a Role that by nature provides leadership for groups of people. Leadership can include discipline, but enforcement of the discipline is usually delegated to Warriors, the other Role on the Action Axis. Dick was regarded as a leader in the original Michaelian group, but he was a mere Artisan, a Role not known for its leadership proclivities and abilities, so naturally he would defer to a King if one showed up. The original Michaelian group was always on the lookout for an incarnate King to potentially lead them in ways that the discarnate King-Warrior Entity (the Michaels) could not. Recall that Kings, Priests, and Sages are the Cardinal Roles, the Roles that have leadership capabilities and propensities of one sort or another built in. Note that the modern Michaelian teachings still lacks an incarnate King leadership. If channels are to be considered as leaders, then there are some Sages, and a Priest if you include Varda Hasselmann of the Die Quelle contingent. There would be advantages if a King were to show up, but the disadvantage would be the potential to be led astray by a strong personality that was not fully enlightened. Rumor has it that, over the decades since its founding with great promise in 1970, Robert Burton, an alleged candidate for a manifestation of a Transcendental Soul, has made his commune into an abusive personality cult, complete with the usual political, financial, and sexual scandals.

Ellis: The answers [given by the Michaels] at first seem limited and shallow until you read the information the next day or the next week; they don't sink in until tomorrow. Last week or so, I felt hung-up in mid space about what is happening. The first feeling was one of letting go. I dislike discipline and still I feel I ought to let go. I feel suspended in between — reaching for something. I want to be free. What is happening?

You are making an agonizing inner comparison of what you have come to know as familiar and what you are now beginning to see as "real". This means a decision must be made as to whether you go on pursuing the unknown or let it ride this time around and try again another time. The letting go [of the familiar] is an arduous process, we realize that. We do not have advice for you on this; it is solely up to you.

Ellis: I feel hung up in suspended animation. I resent the discipline I may have to put upon myself. (A line was lost there from the tape-turning).

The discipline is different but no more strenuous than that to which you have been exposed this whole lifetime. [23 October 1973]

Perhaps most people are like Ellis in that they do not like discipline, either self-imposed discipline or discipline imposed by others. However, most people realize that there is a proper place for discipline, and so they accept it where they deem that the end goal is worth the expenditure of effort that it takes to get there. In this sense, “the end justifies the means”. The essence of the problem seems to be the difference between short-term or short-sighted thinking and its opposite, long-term and far-sighted thinking. Most children in school accept the discipline of classroom and classwork that the adults have imposed on them; they realize that the discipline is for their own good in the long run. Now as adults we should be open to receiving disciplined guidance from those that we acknowledge as our teachers and leaders.

On the other hand, if one “resents” the discipline, then that might signal that, 1) some unwelcome or unqualified disciplinarian is imposing their beliefs, values, or behaviors on one, or 2) it turns out that one has not selected a respectable disciplinarian, or 3) one is not properly motivated within oneself, or 4) it might signal that some other means and method should be applied. Oftentimes there is a process of aligning ends with means via an “agonizing inner comparison”, such that whatever discipline is needed is not found to be too “strenuous”. In that case, the cost/benefit or risk/reward ratio makes the whole thing “worth it”, even if the effort is great. People write inspiring motivational stories about heroic characters, those who exercise heroic discipline, those who overcome great adversities.

On yet another hand, at yet a deeper level of analysis, it is a deep philosophical question to ask, How often does following “the path of least resistance” without applying any internal discipline or accepting any external discipline lead to the best or optimal result? So far as we know, plants and animals do not ask this question; they “go with the flow” in every case; the time horizon of their planning is very limited. It is we humans who ask the question, and I suspect that one of the reasons is that we have numerous sub- and super-personalities that are all vying for control of our journey. That is why I suggest that one should come to a consensus within oneself such that no “strenuous” discipline is required; there is no need for one part of the personal self to ‘ride herd’ on another part of oneself.

Beside the distinction between self-applied internal discipline and other-applied external discipline, one could divide the concept of discipline into two kinds, the negative kind and the positive kind. If one part of you has to persuade or coerce another part of you to do something, then you are doing discipline in the Negative Pole, and you need to figure out how to do discipline in the Positive Pole. I am reminded of the Goal of Stagnation, aka Flow, aka Equilibrium. The Negative Pole of –Inertia is resistant to internal or external discipline, whereas the Positive Pole of +Suspension is not resistant to internal or external discipline that actively seeks to ‘right the ship’, so to speak. If one can see within oneself that the result of discipline is for one’s own good in the long run, then that will result in a resentmentless and strenuousnessless discipline, whether it be self-imposed or other-imposed.

In the next occurrence of the word, the Michaels referred to other-imposed discipline in the group context:

Pam doesn’t come to our meetings, but feels she is still a part of the group.

The problem of discipline is common on your plane. When someone does not come to many meetings, they should not consider themselves a part of the group. It is necessary to contribute something to a whole being in order to call it whole. Many parts make this whole of the group and if a part is missing, it is necessary to replace it before going on. Rules are sometimes necessary in order for your plane to accomplish the use of will. It is sometimes necessary to exercise will and set a goal of being on time, being present. There are also times when it is necessary for a member to miss many nights in a row because of the strange occurrences that come up. These are usually planned by a much higher source and these people should not be castigated, but rather deserve a reward. Somehow, your group will need to differentiate between the two types of absenteeism, also lateness to meetings. Try to plan one meeting discussing the type of rules needed, whatever they are, then go from there. It is now time for some discipline. [20 November 1973]

Even as individuals consist of parts that are not always in agreement and this makes discipline expedient, so groups are made up of individuals that are not always in agreement and this makes discipline expedient. The Michaels were not of the “anything goes” mindset, either for individuals or for groups. I perceive two types of discipline being discussed there, both having to do with establishing rules and sticking to them. First, everyone should have their own personal priority list, their value system hierarchy, their rules; they should decide what is important to themselves. Within that context, the amount of discipline one is willing to exercise, or effort one is willing to apply, is an indication of the amount of commitment one has to a cause; refer to the chapter “Commitment” for more information about that. That passage also spoke of a type of discipline where one is

willing to sacrifice oneself for the greater good, in this case for the good of a group of which one considers oneself a member. Both of these are instances where singleness of function and purpose should make negative discipline unnecessary and make positive discipline welcomed. As part of that singularity and solidarity in your value system, don't join groups that you do not wholeheartedly support, or you will resent what seems like a burden, or a loss of personal integrity.

Discipline is not necessarily a problem *per se*; the problem is that one needs to feel right about the discipline, and that can be accomplished by making either internal or external adjustments to arrive at a unitary mindset regarding the learning procedure at hand. When unity of purpose and function is achieved, then whatever discipline is applied is of the positive type.

Billie: I would like to know Michael's opinion of bioenergetics.

We, on the whole, approve of this in the hands of a spiritually-evolved therapist.... You could learn this discipline yourselves and practice. [29 November 1973]

Learning of any kind sometimes, but not always, requires some discipline, or perhaps we would prefer the word "practice", as in "practice makes perfect". Not everything that we might deem to be worth pursuing comes effortlessly and easily; not everything that we might deem to be worth doing is always fun.

Sarah: One of the first criteria for a new student is whether they can accept that there are planes above the physical.

This should almost be your first question to new students. (Next,) whether or not they are willing to accept the necessary discipline needed to grow spiritually. Also, it would help to know what they expect from such a group experience and their definition of spiritual growth.

Nichols: There could be checkpoints and people would be able to make a decision whether to go on or not.

Dick: They might also need to know that this is an intellectual teaching of discipline.

Mallory: What is meant by "intellectual teaching"?

Answer: To translate what you have learned intellectually as knowledge into what you do — (being). It's 'turning water into wine'.

This is, of course, our teaching also. The discipline, of course, includes going toward Balance through concentration, meditation, and other conscious[ness]-raising techniques. Also, the understanding and ultimate complete acceptance of all others, leading to the spiritual Agape, which is the doorway to true consciousness. [03 February 1974]

Refer to chapters "Knowledge", "Balanced Man", "Meditation and Concentration", and "Agape" for further discussion of terms found in that passage. There are two motivators for spiritual growth, a negative motivation and a positive motivation, metaphorically called the 'stick' and the 'carrot'. In the context of this chapter, one type of 'stick' is psychological problems, where the person is looking for an escape from unhappiness, and some discipline is often required to achieve that purpose. In the context of this chapter, one type of 'carrot' is the desire for enlightenment, an aspiration for joy, and some discipline if often required to achieve that purpose. There is a spectrum from psychotherapy at the negative pole to spirituality at the positive pole. Typically, people start out on their spiritual path motivated by the negative pole, the 'stick', but if the psychotherapy is successful, then they can graduate to the positive pole, the 'carrot', and continue to learn through joy. In the real world, discipline, whether applied by self or other, is usually a mixture of stick and carrot; it is not purely one or the other. Spiritual growth happens whether one applies discipline or not, but intentional acceleration usually requires discipline, according to many spiritual traditions, including the Michaelian teachings.

Learning through fun is mentioned in the next passage in which the word discipline occurs. Notice that it also mentions "cohesion", the unity of function and purpose:

We also ohm'd in a circle and acted out a, "Don't you ever, ever, EVER, EVER let me catch you brushing that dog's teeth with my toothbrush ..."

As the group becomes more and more cohesive, many more sharing experiences may take place without the self-consciousness present in more multi-disciplined gatherings. This will create a unique atmosphere in which growth is almost certain to occur.

Cynthia: I'm missing the discipline ... time limits ... no smoking ... Needs for levity and social activity. [06 February 1974]

As stated previously, the natural evolution of the spiritual path has discipline (the 'stick') in the early phases and develops toward fun (the 'carrot') in the later phases. On the journey, it is Good Work to alternate between fun and discipline on a spiritual path in a group setting; both result in social bonding, and that

results in a cohesive unitary group. There is lack of balance and moderation in discipline-only or fun-only gatherings. Apparently, part of discipline is knowing when to regulate or be regulated versus when to be spontaneous and have fun; a balanced life is not just one or the other.

By the way, Cynthia was a Sage, and Sages are not generally attracted to or good at exercising discipline: if it isn't fun, they are not interested. Warriors thrive on serious discipline, Scholars also:

... He needs more than anything to meditate in a scholarly way, in a disciplined way....

(From Ted): Have I had an experience with intellectual meditation?

Ted has been, in his second most recent lifetime, a Benedictine monk who was the scholar for his order. He led his order in the discipline of meditation at a very high plane. [13 August 1974]

My surmise is that the Action Roles and the Neutral Role (King, Warrior, Scholar) are the most favorable to and amenable to discipline, whereas the Inspiration and Expression Roles, not so much.

The spiritual expression to the Essence is, of course, quite powerful and taps into the universal flow. The physical expression of the Personality, which sustains the body, is in comparison quite weak and can be overpowered and the body killed, if one is not careful. Yes, it can be harnessed and used effectively. The best check-point we know of is the fact that the student not ready to harness this [Essence power] is seldom willing to use the time necessary to produce good result at will. It takes someone close to Balance to accept the discipline necessary to effectively use these [telepathic and intuitive] senses. When we tell a student that he is capable, that does not always mean that that student is either willing or ready — just capable. The man Thaddeus has at the moment an excellent start, and if he is willing to accept the discipline, he can do this without any problems. Those who tap into the spiritual expression, letting go of the physical expression without the conditioning, often go “mad” or die. [29 October 1974]

Essence is “tapped into the flow” and does not need discipline; it is the Personality that needs discipline in order to accelerate spiritual development faster than what is automatic about the process, up to the point that Essence takes over. Refer to the chapter “Essence and Personality for the whole story.

... it will require a discipline he is not willing to observe.... [29 October 1974]

Different people have different relationships with the whole discipline thing, on a spectrum. My guess is that this personality factor is not amenable to very much change. In other words, one either has an inherent predisposition to accept and apply discipline or one does not.

However, all is not lost: if one is not disciplined by nature, then one can at least volunteer to accept its imposition by those who are disciplined by nature:

We had a meeting with Michael after Soleal was here.

Remember this creature [Soleal] was raised in silence. It is difficult still for him to speak, even in his own milieu. They do not speak on his world. His teacher, when he was quite young, forced the silence as a discipline. [10 November 1974]

If one does not have an inborn disciplined nature, then one can have discipline enforced by a benevolent taskmaster; there is nothing wrong with that, apparently. As quoted above, Ouspensky said that there is generally a time, especially in the beginning of one's spiritual journey, where it is appropriate to give up self-will and substitute the will of a spiritually-mature teacher.

Discussion regarding the good vibes we felt at Leslie's and Beverly's party involving music and movement. Should we try more of this sort of thing? Moving Center — is it possible to experience this by observation?

We have no quarrel with the plans to introduce the principles of disciplined movement within this cadre. [02 January 1975]

This passage hints at one definition of discipline. Dancing is a form of “disciplined” movement, just as music is a form of “disciplined” sound. In other words, “discipline” means that stuff is made to not happen randomly or spontaneously — there are constraints, there are rules. By the way, Leslie was a Warrior and Beverly (Lesley's partner) was a Scholar. By the way, Gurdjieff was keen on the spiritual benefits of disciplined movement; he elevated Sufi dancing to new heights.

The final choice to allow the Infinite Soul to displace and manifest is not an easy one, especially for a highly exalted soul who is enjoying some measure of success on the Physical Plane. That the man John [the Baptist] was able to impart to his student [Jesus] was the discipline necessary to allow him to let go at the proper moment. [02 January 1975]

This is another instance or example of the more mature person (John) helping a less mature person (Jesus) to do the right thing in the application of discipline. As Jesus was a “student”, aka disciple, of John, so Jesus was a disciple who yielded his self-will to the will of the Infinite Soul.

The connection between discipline and discipleship, teachers and students, the learned and the learners, which has been stated previously shows up again in the next passage.

All of you come to this teaching from a myriad of disciplines, beliefs, philosophies, and *et cetera*.... We are with many of you now. We hope you continue the discipline of meditation, as it is one of the doorways that we seek. [11 January 1975]

Here again I see a hint of a definition, namely that “disciplines” are structured activities; they are not freewheeling spontaneous activities.

This group engaged in a lengthy discussion of communal living, discipline of small children, the rights of teenagers, and the problem of domestic animals. We then asked the Teacher for a comment. [12 February 1975]

We talked about communes. Sarah feels that the discipline of children would be the biggest problem. [21 February 1977]

Child-rearing involves more than just setting an example for your kids, and feeding, clothing, and housing them, or letting them run wild; it involves teaching, training, socializing, and setting rules of dos and don'ts for them. Perhaps it would be useful to regard the Michaels as our discarnate parents, who know what is good for us.

Discipline must occur on all three levels [lower Centers] if it is to be effective. It cannot merely be the discipline imposed by Intellectual Center. It must also involve shutting down the artifact and experiencing Emotional Center as a barometer. It must involve Moving Center as the acting out Center and not as the Thinking Center. [15 April 1975]

That passage confirms what is said elsewhere: it is the lower self, the lower Centers, the Personality, that needs discipline. It is interesting to me that this passage lists the Centers in the same sequence as Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy: >https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rational_emotive_behavior_therapy<. The notion of that psychotherapy is that the Intellectual Center should ‘discipline’ (rule over) the Emotional Center and the Moving Center. But what disciplines the Intellectual Center? REBT does not have a good answer, but according to numerous original Michaelian group passages, that would be the higher self, the higher Centers, the Essence — and it could also include disciplinarians who are more mature than the disciple.

Dear students, it is not easy. Please believe us. We never intended to delude you for one moment into thinking that what we bring is easy. It is long and steep, this path you have asked to walk. It requires discipline. It requires agonizing reappraisal. It requires all that you can possibly give in this life. It requires you, the sum total of what you call your self. Then and only then, when this is thrown into the ring, can the Work begin. It must become a twenty-four hour agreement with us and with yourselves. This agreement must be renewed each time the path becomes obscured by life crises. [Dimensions! April 1975]

You will not read or hear about discipline in the modern Michaelian teachings; we have wimped out. They were asking for it in the original Michaelian group, and the Michaels gave them what they wanted. My impression is that Michaelian students subsequent to the original Michaelian group are not usually as interested in augmenting their spiritual growth with “disciplines” as the members of the original Michaelian group were. Rather, they are mostly content with acquiring the knowledge that the Michael's provide. Not that there is anything wrong with that; it does enhance one's ‘journey’ through life to have an accurate ‘map’ of the ‘territory’. However, there is a stronger level of commitment to the journey, above and beyond mere consumption of information. Numerous study papers in this book provide knowledge about those disciplines, including information that is not found in other Michaelian publications.

[Richard Chambers:] The Fellowship of Souls is a group of people who have willingly embarked upon the journey. We utilize many methods and disciplines, taking from each the essence that is relevant, and that produces growth. By studying the teachings of many who have traveled the path before us, we learn to validate the Universal Truths and apply them in our lives. By using various disciplines of meditation and concentration, we learn to reach deep within to the source of all knowledge — and we learn that All lies within, awaiting our moment of awakening. [Spring 1975]

During the entirety of the original Michaelian group, one of their aspirations was to form a commune; refer to the chapter “Communal Living” for the whole story. Obviously, it did not happen then, but if some

Michaelian students ever did create a commune, then the whole matter of discipline would need to be squarely faced.

Concluding Comments on Discipline

Connecting discipline to discipleship, let's look at the school metaphor: There is a time when one is a child in school and must be subject to school discipline if one is to learn what is being offered by one's teachers. I would liken this to our youth in spiritual matters, when we are still functioning in the lower Centers, or shall we say in the lower Levels of Being, or in Personality. There is a time when we are mature, adult-like in spiritual matters, when we are functioning in the higher Centers, or shall we say in higher Levels of Being, or in Essence. In the higher Centers, Levels, Essence, we apply discipline to ourselves, and to others who are less evolved. Historically, the problem with spiritual schools has been that a self-appointed guru might not be as enlightened as he/she thinks he/she is, so distortions and abuses occur when any acolytes offer their discipleship to the discipline of the guru.





⑦ DOGMA

This chapter is the product of a search for the word “dogma” and its derivatives in the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group channeling sessions. This word does not represent a significant component of the Michaelian teachings. However, there are good reasons to discuss the subject in this *Study Papers* book: 1) the subject came up numerous times during the original Michaelian group; 2) some interesting things were said about the subject; 3) the subject is related to a number of other components of the Michaelian teachings that are considered to be significant; 4) students can presumably benefit from having the mentions conveniently collected and commented all in one place; 5) Dogmatism is pervasive in human psychology and sociology and spirituality.

The word “dogma” is not capitalized in this chapter or other chapters of this *Study Papers* book because it has no special meaning in the Michaelian teachings; it is not a Michaelian jargon word that needs a definition apart from its use in the common vernacular.

This chapter overlaps somewhat with the chapters “Belief” and “Belief System” and “Judgment” and “Knowledge as Gnosis”.

Definition of Dogma and Dogmatism

So what is meant by dogma? As usual, I refer to Wikipedia for *an* answer, not *the* answer:

Dogma in the broad sense is any belief held unquestioningly and with undefended certainty. It may be in the form of an official system of principles or doctrines of a religion, such as Roman Catholicism, Judaism, or Protestantism, as well as the positions of a philosopher or of a philosophical school such as Stoicism. It may also be found in political belief systems, such as communism, progressivism, liberalism, and conservatism.

In the pejorative sense, dogma refers to enforced decisions, such as those of aggressive political interests or authorities. More generally, it is applied to some strong belief which its adherents are not willing to discuss rationally. This attitude is named as a dogmatic one, or as dogmatism, and is often used to refer to matters related to religion, but is not limited to theistic attitudes alone and is often used with respect to political or philosophical dogmas.

The word dogma was adopted in the 17th century from Latin: *dogma*, derived from the Ancient Greek: romanized: *dogma*, literally “opinion, belief, judgment” from the Ancient Greek: romanized: *dokēi*, literally “it seems that...”. The plural is based on the Latin: *dogmata*, though *dogmas* may be more commonly used in English. [<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dogma> — retrieved 07 February 2023]

The article continues with a discussion of dogmatism in philosophy and religion. What is not mentioned is that scientists, not science *per se*, can also get stuck in some dogma or other, and refuse to learn. This is such a common human trait, and no one is immune, not even scientists who proclaim that they are open to any and all facts. One point of this chapter is to point out that, generally speaking, dogmatism is not regarded as a good epistemic stance as one goes through life, whether focused on the physical or focused on the spiritual. In terms of the Overleaf System, the name of the Negative Pole of the Pragmatist Attitude was originally revealed to be –Dogma, and it refers to a person who is opinionated rather than +Practical, the Positive Pole. A practical person is concerned about whatever works, regardless of a belief system or an ideology or a preconceived notion.

Dogma per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

The following extracts from original Michaelian group transcriptions are Q&A exchanges, where an original Michaelian group member asks a question (or makes a comment), and the Michaels provide an answer. These extracts are presented in the chronological order in which they were given. As is my custom, I often provide

some explanatory comments following the question or answer. Underlined words in the Michaels' answers are my emphasis, to draw attention to what it is that I comment on. Sometimes I embed words or phrases [in brackets] that I believe help to clarify the question or the answer.

The subject of dogma appeared very soon after the Michaels first appeared to the original Michaelian group in mid-August of 1973:

The Synthesis is perceived in the final Cycle, and Old Souls seldom cling to dogma. The Transcendental Soul perceives The Synthesis and teaches it as such — will not espouse popular dogma, and does not affiliate with organized religion. [late August 1973]

Refer to the chapter "Synthesis, The" for the documentation that the Michaels referred to their teaching by that name. The fancy name for not clinging to dogma is "epistemic humility". These people subscribe to the notion that, "the more you know, the more you know that you don't know". The converse of this is that people who do not know very much believe that they know a lot. Socrates famously said that he was wise because he knew that he did not know anything. Scientists will tell you that nothing is ever proven for certain. Various cultures espouse "popular dogmas" that are pervasive in their culture; refer to the chapter "Culture" for more about that. Therefore, dogmatism is never warranted. One of the features of organized religions is that typically they are full of dogmas.

Seems I have one foot in religion and one foot in science, and they do not fit together. Could you comment, please?

There is no conflict. Religion is from the Emotional Center; science must be approached through Intellect[ual Center]. If there is Balance, there will be no conflict. Understanding scientific principles is a way to Higher Intellectual [Center] energy, just as feeling religion is the way to Higher Emotional Center. It [the notion that there is conflict between religion and science] is dogma that comes from False Personality and has no place in this discussion. [mid-September 1973]

Founding members of the original Michaelian group were well-educated professionals in scientific matters, but they also had spiritual inclinations. The point to be made here is that the two methods of inquiry are complementary, and that they are not mutually exclusive; they overlap. Neither spirituality nor science separately have all the answers, and even both spirituality and science combined do not have all the answers because there are probably no final answers, but they both aspire to the same ultimate Truth. Refer to the chapter "Balanced Man" for a thorough discussion of the proper use of Centers.

The realistic appraisal of our limited human condition is that dogmatism is unwarranted in both scientific and religious domains, no matter how much we believe we know about anything and everything. Scientism is the notion that objective scientific investigations can approach the whole truth, and some people are biased to prefer that. "Dogmas of the church" (see below) have typically arisen from "revelations", subjective experiences prompted by, or pointing to, some alleged transcendent source. By their own admission, religions typically originate in an alleged experience of inspiration or revelation, rather than in an objective scientific discovery. Some people with a spiritual bias put greater trust in such revelatory experiences than they do in objective scientific investigations, but my bias is to say that this is not a good idea. However, I would also say that channeling and shamanism can sometimes supplement and complement the discoveries of scientific inquiry. One should not be credulous about either spirituality or science, but, as stated above, maintain "epistemic" humility: don't be dogmatic or credulous about either one, and view both as approaches to a better understanding of the world as a whole.

Gene: I saw recently an old friend whom I hadn't seen for several years. He's a parapsychologist and mystic. He seemed just as dogmatic as ever. He says that any teaching that says that people change sexes in their different lifetimes is pure bilge, because if we knew something of the origin of creation and the true nature of twin souls, we wouldn't have such terrible conceptions. Could Michael comment on souls and sex changes?

We have often reiterated that belief is not necessary. This is another example of one dogma being more palatable than another and therefore acceptable. He cannot envision himself in a physical body of a female.

Paul [Saul of Tarsus] could not imagine a messiah who sweat, either, but Jesus did. [27 September 1973]

Dogmas are usually connected to a person's sense of identity and integrity, so a threat to one's dogmas is a threat to their "Ego"; refer to the chapter by that name. Refer to the chapter "Belief" for more about that. Basically and briefly, reality is that which exists whether or not one dogmatically believes in it or not. Dogma refers to a biased opinion of a person who is resistant to reality; refer to the chapter "Bias" for more about that. Resistance to reality is potentially dangerous to more than just the Ego, as we see further on.

Michaels: I have been reading John Lilly in [his book] The Center of the Cyclone and have had a similar experience.

We consider the ordeal John [Lilly] went through in order to achieve breakthrough dangerous for most on the Physical [Plane]. It was necessary for John, as there were blocks not known to him at the time. One was the dogma of the church that he had consciously repressed or rejected, but was there nevertheless. He did make it through though. You may be certain John knows. [01 November 1973]

The process of dumping a dogma is often a “dangerous ordeal” to the personality that is in the throes of such a tortured traumatic transition. Dogmas “do not go gentle into that good night” (poem by Dylan Thomas); they usually go ‘kicking and screaming’.

Regarding “dogmas of the church”, this phenomenon has a good side and a bad side. The brutal fact is that sometimes it is expedient for smart, informed, thoughtful people to tell stupid, ignorant, thoughtless people what is the case, such as where the latter simply cannot, or do not have the time and resources to, understand the former. This rulership by authoritative experts is what often happens in the educational system, the military system, and the governmental system. Where such “dogmatism” goes wrong is the human inclination to go down the road where “authority corrupts”. The aspiration of Michaelian students is, or should be, to become so smart, so informed, so wise, and so thoughtful that they do not need any authority, not even the Michaels, telling them what is the case; refer to the chapters “Validation and Verification” and “Intuition”.

The Michaels do give advice (refer to the chapter “Advice” for more about that), but they are not dogmatic about it:

Edgar: I would like advice regards getting rid of pain.

We can be of assistance only in that your illness is a part of Karma for you, and when you come to grips with your spiritual controversy, the pain will no longer be necessary. This can be accelerated, of course, by those methods we have outlined for the others; that is: meditation, concentration, fasting, and study. Edgar is waging an internal battle with reason versus dogma. This is not unusual, just agonizing, particularly for [those] Scholars who are slaves to reason. [15 November 1974]

Parsing this passage is agonizing for me, because the definitions of reason and the definitions of dogma are various. Therefore I look to the context here, and the original Michaelian group transcriptions in general.

Not all Scholars are slaves to reason; any Role can be a slave to reason, so that is why I inserted [those]. I take the word “reason” to refer to the Negative Pole of the Intellectual Center, –Reason, meaning rational to the exclusion of other modes of arriving at truth, the name for that being “rationalization”. I can see how a Scholar can also be a slave to dogma, if one understands, as I do, “dogma” to be a component of the Negative Pole of Scholar, namely –Theory, in the sense of –Hypothesis, –Speculation, –Conjecture, –Belief System. Some reasons and some dogmas have a lot more evidence to bolster them than others do. Both reason and dogma are problematic because they are both ontologically and epistemically limited and incomplete, meaning that, separately or together, they are not the entire path to the complete truth. Besides that, reasons and dogmas have different defects and deficiencies, so they can be in opposition to each other. Neither reason nor dogma are good at “coming to grips with spiritual controversy”. However, there are things that approach truth better than both reason and dogma, namely experiential practices such as “meditation, concentration, fasting, and study” (refer to chapters on those subjects), because these allegedly tap into true understanding, in that they result in knowledge in the sense of *gnosis*; refer to the chapter “Knowledge as Gnosis”.

The place of superstition in the scheme of things is sometimes valid, in that it allows powerfully psychically energetic souls to exercise their powers without disrupting their already-formed dogmatic belief systems. [20 December 1973]

That is a pretty good definition of superstition, a belief system that has an unscientific or pseudoscientific explanation of a phenomenon; for a more complete one, refer to the chapters “Superstition” and “Belief System”. The negative side of dogmatic religions is that they are little more than organized superstitions.

Dick: Robert [Burton] did not call his school a religion; it was a school of consciousness. Ours is a teaching, also, and not a religion, isn't it?

The only difficulty in that word [religion] is that it ties into dogma, and that [dogma] is not [true] religion [or religiosity or spirituality]. We wish to teach a joyous religion without dogma, and so decline to label it [a “religion”]. Jesus did not call his teaching Christianity. [03 February 1974]

Refer to the chapter “Religion”. There you will read that, among other things, religion in general has gotten a bad reputation because it appears that most religions have typically gotten bogged down in superstitions and dogmas. A review of the history of religions reveals that most of them began with the teaching of a person who achieved one form or another of enlightenment, and their insightful revelations were turned into

superstitions and dogmas by less enlightened people. Religions have typically been named after the original proponent, but, according to the notion called “Perennialism”, true religions all profess the same fundamental principles; refer to my book *The Synthesis: The Michaelian Teachings as Perennialism*. There you will read that the Michaels did not name their “joyous religion” “Michaelism”; they named it “The Synthesis”.

In yet another passage, the Michaels disparage churches for their tendency to dogmatism:

This culture erects tremendous barriers in the name of progress to keep you from sighting the goal. Many of these are in the forms of false organizations that supersede the true organizations and keep you from seeking your cadre. When you align yourself with these false organizations or barriers, you become completely caught up in their dogmas and lose sight of any alternatives. All of these organizations purport to have a lofty goal, but since the goal of none is Agape, again, they can only lead to more enTrapment and more isolation from the goal. Examples of organizations that act as barriers are: ... the Catholic church or any other dogmatic church.... The list is endless, and they are real barriers to growth if you align yourself solely in them to where you become identified in their dogma and accept it as your own. [21 December 1974]

Refer to the chapters “Imprinting” and “False Personality” and “Identification” and “Barriers and Blocks” and “Traps” for discussions about how people become indoctrinated with dogmas. One of the features of dogmatism is that dogmas block the notion that there are alternatives to the dogma, alternatives that are stronger or better or truer than the dogma. There is a hierarchy of dogmatic belief systems, where some are better than others, and it is good to grow from the worse to the better, but the long-range goal is to graduate from dogmatism altogether.

We see that beyond the cultural mores and religious dogmas is a higher truth. [manifesto for original Michaelian group “Fellowship of Souls”, mid 1975]

Refer to the chapter “Culture” for more about socio-cultural dogmas. We do not generally regard the culture that we grew up in as having dogmas in the same way that religions do, but really they are equivalent in their potential harm to the individual when the culture has gone astray.

Concluding Comments on Dogma

The original Michaelian group transcriptions do not mention the word “indoctrination”, but they could have, considering how much of the Michaelian teachings concerns the mitigation of parental and cultural indoctrination and dogmas. If the Michaelian teachings is just another dogma (belief system) to you, then you do not actually understand the intention of the Michaels, namely that you inculcate your own personal truth, world truths, and universal truths; refer to the chapters “Knowledge as Gnosis”, “Validation and Verification”, and “Truth”.

The Michaelian teachings have been delivered as dogmas and doctrines, meaning that they do not come with an explanation or evidence or argument. Instead, the onus of validation and verification has been placed upon the students. What bothers me is that few students actually do that, perhaps because they are too trusting, or not motivated, or they do not know how. I have accepted this onus; my Meta-Michaelian project is an attempt to provide some evidence and argument and explanation on top of the mere dogmas and doctrines of the Michaelian teachings. May you go and do likewise. (Luke 10:37)





③ DRAMA

This chapter is the product of a search for the word “drama” and its derivatives in the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group channeling sessions. This word does not represent a significant component of the Michaelian teachings. However, there are good reasons to discuss the subject in this *Study Papers* book: 1) the subject came up numerous times during the original Michaelian group; 2) some interesting things were said about the subject; 3) the subject is related to a number of other components of the Michaelian teachings that are considered to be significant; 4) students can presumably benefit from having the mentions conveniently collected and commented all in one place; 5) Issues of drama are pervasive in human psychology and sociology and spirituality.

The word “drama” is not capitalized in this chapter or other chapters of this *Study Papers* book because it has no special meaning in the Michaelian teachings; it is not a Michaelian jargon word that needs a definition apart from its use in the common vernacular.

This may seem like a strange topic for a chapter in this *Study Papers* book, but the word showed up enough times in the original Michaelian group transcriptions that it caught my attention as a subject potentially worthy of review and comment. So, I gathered the mentions in one place, thought about them, and confirmed the usefulness of this topic to the modern Michaelian communities. So here they are, for your edification.

Definition of Drama

So what is meant by drama? The online Merriam Webster dictionary definition is:

1a: literature – a composition in verse or prose intended to portray life or– character or to tell a story usually involving conflicts and emotions through action and dialogue and typically designed for theatrical performance : PLAY; compare CLOSET DRAMA

1b: a movie or television production with characteristics (such as conflict) of a serious play; broadly : a play, movie, or television production with a serious tone or subject [as in] a police drama

2 literature : dramatic art, literature, or affairs [as in] English drama

3a: a state, situation, or series of events involving interesting or intense conflict of forces [as in] the drama of the past week; [as in] dealing with some family drama

3b: dramatic state, effect, or quality [as in] the drama of the courtroom proceedings

In all cases in the original Michaelian group transcriptions, definition 3 applies.

Drama per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

The following extracts from original Michaelian group transcriptions are Q&A exchanges, where an original Michaelian group member asks a question (or makes a comment), and the Michaels provide an answer. These extracts are presented in the chronological order in which they were given. As is my custom, I often provide some explanatory comments following the question or answer. Underlined words are my emphasis, to draw attention to what it is that I comment on. Sometimes I embed words or phrases [in brackets] that I believe help to clarify the question or the answer.

From the beginning of the Michaelian teachings and the revelation of the Overleaves, particularly the Roles, it has been obvious to everyone that Sages are the personality type that is most enamored with drama:

Billie: I would like to ask for comment about a lady who did a psychic reading for me.

Essentially, there was considerable drama there. This lady is a Mature Sage.

Billie: Was it embellished?

She does not embellish as much as she dramatizes; there is a difference.

Billie: Was there something she said that is not correct?

No. We merely suggest that you consider all the information valid within your own more somber reflective nature.

Billie: I wonder what is to be gained by following her advice not to reveal anything she said for 19 days.

It adds to the mystique. [20 January 1974]

The point of including this entire Q&A thread is to make the distinction between the tendency of Sages to love drama with some of their other tendencies, namely for embellishment and mystique.

Cheryl: Do you need to acknowledge all Karma before you can become conscious?

That is valid. There are also what we will call for the moment "Sequences" that link souls together life after life and are not true Karmic Ribbons. In these Sequences, souls Agree to play out certain scenes together, again reversing the goals and completing Monads. Many of you are in Sequences with other members of this group, but there are no Karmic Ribbons between you. [20 February 1974]

This is the first time, but not the last, that the Michaels used the metaphor of the theatrical arts for some of the dramatic things that happen during life. Refer to chapters "Agreements and Sequences", "Karma", and "Monads" for more discussion of Michaelian teachings doctrines whose names appear in that passage.

Mallory: This man feels he will kill someone — he brought a gun to the hospital. I told him the hatred he felt was for himself. Where does this violence come from?

This is the guilt of which Dick spoke earlier. The guilt, of course, arises from wishful thinking. This man is also responding to his innate drive to be dramatic. Young Sages are more so. [30 May 1974]

Mallory was a psychologist. It is Good Work for psychologists to understand how personality traits affect how a person experiences the world and expresses in the world, including the tendency of Sages to be dramatic.

Marty: Newly recovered alcoholic living in my home. Mature Sage or Priest in Submission?

Many [Sages], yes, do have this problem [of alcoholism], sometimes due to the extremely false facade of the life they lead on stage or as a "famous personage". The alienation again drives them into an escape route that often ends in degradation. Sages, because of their flair for the dramatic, usually at one time or another, choose this type of life [alcoholism]. [19 June 1974]

Yet again with the Sages and their trauma-drama lifetimes.

Mallory: It [being in the moment] is not a dramatic thing; it just is. A person in the present is not experiencing anything dramatic. Does a Balanced Man feel high? It was said last time that the "surge" comes when one becomes Balanced.

If the moment is a quiet one, Balanced Man will feel the tranquility. If it is a "high" then Balanced Man will feel the ecstasy of the moment. Ironically, the reverse is often true in Mechanical Man. Young Souls involved with ecology legalization will often feel surges of emotionalism when confronted with a pacific, woodland environment. [17 September 1974]

Enlightenment is not to be characterized as a "dramatic" event in the sense that the word is usually used. Or perhaps it could be said that there is the Negative Pole of -Drama and then there is the Positive Pole of +Drama, the former being an unhealthy experience and the latter being a healthy experience. I see "surges of emotionalism when confronted with a pacific, woodland environment" as more positive than negative.

Elizabeth: I'd like a comment on the inner space, or other plane experience I had: I saw a person in the metaphysical bookstore that fit the person I met while in my inner space. I feel we have had past lives together.

When the student is in the meditative state or is otherwise attentive to the teaching, it is possible to experience what we choose to call the "pan-dimensional" universe, and that, of course, includes the Akashic plane. In order to answer your question, Elizabeth, we would explain to you what the term "precognition" really means. In those possessed of tremendous psychic energy, it is possible in the meditative or inner conscious state to "flash" on all of the alternative frames for a future that is close at hand. The problem is in the retaining of these flashes. Most souls do retain only the most dramatic fragments [of the experience], discarding the mundane. Then, if they recognize this as precognition, they also regard it as fact and accept the most awesome consequences. This is, of course, not true, for in the time you flash, it is merely an alternative, but sometimes you do set the wheels in motion on a subliminal level and the incident does take place. Elizabeth, this is essentially what takes place when you flash on a meeting that may take place in the near future. You can, in some instances, bring this about, but also, there is the very real attraction there that we have told you before happens when Older Souls come together after an Astral interval for the first time in this life. This attraction can

be negative or positive, and can result in a coming together or a going away, but it does provoke an emotional response that is difficult to suppress. [15 October 1974]

In the above description I see +Drama rather than –Drama, because of the use of the word “awesome” as a synonym for an experience that is especially memorable in a good way.

In many [channels], there is a natural flair for drama. For instance, this group has had experience with this, and has been repulsed. This medium [Sarah] has a desire to soft-pedal all things because of the construct of the Overleaves. Other mediums have a desire to “gild the lily”, and the stripping away of these tendencies takes patience and time. There can be no doubt in anyone’s mind that the student had an emotionally overwhelming experience when he first came in contact with direct evidence that he had indeed lived before. We would not soft-pedal the importance of this, nor could we. [12 November 1974]

Whereas some channels can be overly –Dramatic (not a good thing), Sarah “soft-pedaled” a legitimate +Dramatic experience (also not a good thing). I see in this answer another instance of the difference between the negative –Drama and the positive +Drama. It is Good Work to make the distinction between the two in one’s own life, and move from the negative to the positive experience. It is also Good Work to make the distinction between –Drama as a bad thing, and –Anti-drama as also a bad thing. In other words, do not err in your perceptions of reality and in your responses to reality.

Before souls were Cast [into incarnation], the creatures-of-no-reason from which you [Creatures of Reason] have ascended were largely governed by fear, and their lives were taken up in many ceaseless battles for survival. This is no longer necessary on this world, and yet it goes on ceaselessly in spite of this. There are few large carnivores roaming the city streets, and yet most behave as though there are. The battle for survival is but another Tape Loop that plays on and on, even to the point of starving large portions of the culture, while the others waste and hoard. This only provides for the realism in the drama, for this is no longer necessary at all. [21 December 1974]

Refer to the chapters “Creature of Reason” and “Biocomputer”. Shakespeare and others have realized that life as humans on the Physical Plane can be likened to a theatrical play. This Wikipedia article contains a brief review of them: >https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/All_the_world's_a_stage<. Even the Michaels made the metaphor of life as theater, and I understand the statement above about the “realism in the drama” in light of the following, even though the word drama does not appear in it:

For a moment, look at the physical universe as an enormous stage, and all of the physical things within it as the sets and actors. Then look for a moment at the possibility that Karma, or the system of Karma, may in fact be looked upon as the director of the play of life. Souls experiencing all of life on the Physical Plane never have to seek spiritual growth. They can, and most do, go through the whole cycle [of reincarnation] in the “waking sleep”. The moment that you elect to commit yourself to the [spiritual growth] path, you remove yourself from the list of available actor’s equity. Were it not for Karmic Ribbons, souls would not experience much at all; they certainly would not experience all of life.

Now this play is, of course, a lie; there is no truth to be found within it. The only truth lies within the Real Space beyond the theater. In this Real Space beyond, then, the Essence is free to select the best script available — the one enabling the particular Fragment to experience out some facet of physical life that it has not experienced before. These are facilitated by what we have chosen to call “Overleaves”. Certain composites of Overleaves are conducive to certain types of activities — for instance, the extraction of an old [Karmic] debt. Remember, the moment you step on the [spiritual] path this is no longer the case. You may depart from the script just as soon as you realize that it exists. You may depart from it completely, and if you wish, without regrets, but this is hard work; just the realization is difficult enough. You see, that which you call Essence, that which has access to higher expression, operates always in Real Space. The False Personality fears Real Space as the agoraphobic fears the open field. [08 February 1975]

Refer to the chapter “Real Space versus Artificial Space”. There you will see that –Drama comes from Artificial Space whereas +Drama comes from Real Space; That is, +Drama in real life can be just as awesome as –Drama is awful in delusion.

Concluding Comments on Drama

The experience of –Drama is a component of Maya, in that it is a distortion of reality, a distortion toward exaggeration and fantasy; refer to the chapter “Maya”. –Drama is also a bit reminiscent of Glamour in that it is one of the potential distractions from the spiritual path, or a pseudo-path; refer to the chapter “Glamour”.

As we saw above, Sages, more so than any other Role, are attracted to drama, but many people other than Sages can find drama to be distracting, even if not as addictive as for the Sage. Sages love their drama and other people's drama. Not that there is anything wrong with that, necessarily. In the best experience, +Drama, when referring to the dramatic arts (movies and live theater), is one of the higher realms of experience; it provides a positive energy that lifts us out of the ordinary and into the extraordinary. The dramatic arts also make hard truths more palatable, more enjoyable, and more understandable. The dramatic arts allow us to learn vicariously, whether in true stories or in fictional stories.





DREAMS AND DREAMING

History of Dream Interpretation

Dreams per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

Gene: Tomas, last night Carol had an unusual experience with a friend. Do we need to verbalize it? When she was talking to a friend about bombs, she started crying. This has to do with a recurring dream she has. Can there be a reason why she feels this?

Yes. The dreams are symbolic and have no meaning as far as bombs. [19 June 1973]

We took a short break and then Lorraine tried again on the [Ouija] board.

This is Tomas here.

About the question regarding Carolyn. The bomb [in the dream] mentioned; you will have to elucidate and not leave me to guess the conversation preceding.

Carol: I had a recurring dream when I was younger, until I was about 14, that I was running behind the school on a walkway and there was a bomb going to be dropped and I knew it, and I was running. In waking life, any time a plane went over, I was terrified. I just want to know why. I also had a recurring dream about a Japanese man being in my bathroom. I was afraid of him and I didn't like Japanese people in waking life because of this. Last night, my friend suggested that the dreams were connected and asked me why I was so afraid of bombs. Then I started crying and I don't know why. It was a creepy feeling.

As a child growing [up] in this life, this was often a subject discussed in your presence. The bomb is symbolic of all your accumulated fears. This is true of all persons in one way or another.

Carol: There wasn't a war while I was growing up — there hasn't even been a bomb scare.

It has been a topic of conversation for thirty years, Carolyn.

Gene: Where does the recurring Japanese dream come in?

Fears — that is all I can say now on this. [19 June 1973]

Silent meditation began at this point. Then both Richard and Sarah felt a tingling in their fingers and Richard felt the tingling over his head.

You must be open to any manifestation or the blocks will be just as strong as they are when you are dreaming, and the dream stops and reality takes over, but the mind refuses to make the reality tape and includes the experience in the reservoir of dreams. [03 July 1973]

Concluding Comments on Dreams and Dreaming





ECSTASY, JOY?, BLISS?

This chapter is the product of a search for the words “ecstasy” “joy”, “bliss” in the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group channeling sessions, **and other words with a similar meaning**. I have added some commentary, which consists of my analysis and synthesis of the quotations. Obviously, this word does not represent a significant component of the Michaelian teachings, but even so, the word appears often enough that it seems to me that students can benefit from seeing all of those instances documented and commented on in a chapter of this *Study Papers* book. Furthermore, the word is related to a number of other components of the Michaelian teachings that are considered to be more significant; these will be noted in the commentary on the instances of the word and its contexts. Basically and briefly, the Michaels recommended to the original Michaelian group members that they seek the experience of ecstasy by various means, as one among a number of their spiritual aspirations, as part of their spiritual path, as a component of their journey from living in Personality to living in Essence.

The word “ecstasy” is not capitalized in this chapter and other chapters of this *Study Papers* book because it has no special meaning in the Michaelian teachings; it is not a Michaelian jargon word that needs a definition apart from its use in the common vernacular. One might therefore wonder why it is even included in this book. One answer is that it is just a Scholar–Cast Artisan thing to do: I study the Michaelian teachings documents and I write about them and I want to be thorough. Another answer is that ecstasy is a spiritually rewarding experience, well worth whatever it takes to achieve it, and the subject came up in the original Michaelian group numerous times, some interesting things were said about it, and it might be helpful for Michaelian students to have the answers conveniently collected all in one place.

Other words with a similar meaning, such as joy and bliss, appear in the original Michaelian group transcriptions, but a review of all instances reveals that ecstasy is used in the context of certain other components of the Michaelian teachings that those other words are not. **Consequently, those words are reviewed in other chapters.**

Definition of Ecstasy

So what is meant by ecstasy? The online American Heritage dictionary definition is:

Intense joy or delight.

A state of emotion so intense that one is carried beyond rational thought and self-control.

The trance, frenzy, or rapture associated with mystic or prophetic exaltation. {retrieved 01 November 2022}

Ecstasy per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

The following extracts from original Michaelian group transcriptions are Q&A exchanges, where an original Michaelian group member asks a question (or makes a comment), and the Michaels provide an answer. This is **not** a subject that would benefit by division into subcategories, as some subjects do. These extracts are presented in the chronological order in which they were given, even though this is not a subject where there was a development or evolution of a specific revelation of a facet of the Michaelian teachings, as was often the case with the original Michaelian group. As is my custom, I often provide some explanatory comments following the question or answer. Underlined words in the Michaels’ answers are my emphasis, to draw attention to what it is that I comment on. Sometimes I embed words or phrases [in brackets] that I believe help to clarify the question or the answer.

[consider dividing into subsections on synonyms, why, what, how]

The first mention of ecstasy appears in one of the first session transcriptions that we have, a session with Soleal, before the Michaels appeared to the original Michaelian group. The context was sexual energy and the higher Centers.

Dick: Love and sex seem like separate things – but when they're pulling together, it seems like a stronger force is generated than either by itself. It seems like the only kind of energy that I have experienced to date that might be the kind of energy that you need for actual evolution.

[Soleal:] Sexual energy, when used to express higher Centers, can be incredibly strong. When the energy is relegated downward, it results in an energy leak. That is sometimes why you want to sleep after physical union. You fed lower Centers — sometimes the Moving Center and the Essence is exhausted, so the body goes to sleep to free the Essence. When you use Emotional Center to express Moving [Center] needs, don't you feel the leak? So, if you feel that, just stretch your mind. Right now, you are all using Emotional Centers to satisfy Moving [Center] needs and this is a result that is culturally induced — that you feel something uplifting each time you have a physical union. That is absurd! It just is not possible. The body is not capable of experiencing ecstasy. Only the Essence can experience ecstasy. The body does not even come close with its sensual pleasures. [03 July 1973]

Refer to the chapter “Sexuality” for more discussion of the connection of sexuality with ecstasy. Basically and briefly, sex has its sensual pleasures, but it can also have its spiritual ecstasies. Sex between some people is an ecstatic experience when it fosters Essence contact. Numerous other passages make a connection between ‘higher’ Center sexuality and ecstasy, as we see below, and the chapter on “Centers, Higher”.

The word appears again in the first session in which the Michaels were the source:

Comment: It appears to me that in consciousness-raising, you don't concentrate.

Concentration on a single goal. In this case, the goal would be ecstasy. [12 August 1973]

Refer to the chapter “Meditation and Concentration” for more about that. Basically and briefly, an intensely focused meditative concentration on having the experience can in fact generate ecstasy.

... The Essence must pursue ecstasy in its own way or it is bored. [18 September 1973]

Refer to the chapter “Boredom” for more about an experience that is the antithesis of ecstasy. As stated previously, the Personality–self can seek ecstasy via the concentration pole of meditation, and that is fine, but the Essence–self has its ways also.

Dick: Are some people Sexually Centered?

No. Sexual energy is separate and apart from all other energy sources and can be effectively used to reach higher emotions.

Phyllis: If you experience sex on a higher level, what would be going on?

Cerebral orgasm. The whole soul experiences ecstasy. The body cannot experience ecstasy, only satiation. Only the Essence is capable of that experience [ecstasy]. [27 September 1973]

More is said about the synonyms in the chapter “Sexuality”, but notice that in these Q&A exchanges that “ecstasy” is connected to “higher emotions”, apparently referring to the Higher Emotional Center, and to “cerebral orgasm”. This is not the last time that we will see the synonyms.

Dick: It seems that it is the Personality that is mad — the Personality is the wolf and it is trying to eat Essence and beat on it.

It is only trying to survive. Survival is the goal for the organism [the physical body and False Personality]. Ecstasy is the goal of the Essence. Being burned at the stake was an ecstatic experience for the soul of Joan d'Arc.

Liberation — whether by death by fire or whatever method — is the goal. The body seeks to survive regardless. [02 October 1973]

Refer to the chapter “Liberation” for more about that. Basically and briefly, Essence gets “trapped” in the body by “karma”, and it wants to be free. Apparently, Essence finds incarnation to be a ‘necessary evil’ on its journey back to the Tao. Note the contrast between the goal of the physical organism and the goal of the spiritual Essence, and note that these two are reciprocally related: the more of one the less of the other. What is said here about Joan is succinctly embodied in the aphorism “Suffering is good for the soul”; refer to the chapter “Suffering”. There you will read that, basically and briefly, some spiritual aspirants intentionally inflict suffering on themselves, believing that this suffering will provoke spiritual growth. The Michaels regard this as an unnecessary and perhaps counterproductive practice. Jesus apparently agrees, because in the Sermon on the Mount, he says “Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.” (Matthew 6:34) The human condition provides the appropriate amount of suffering to liberate the Essence in due time.

Dick: You can't do that — not a burning love inside yourself.

A deep sense of spiritual satisfaction is the only reward that we [the Michaels] know of. You may call it ecstasy or whatever you wish. Stop a moment and ask yourself, why is it that you search and for what. [06 October 1973]

Refer to the chapter “Reward” for more discussion about what the Michaels had to say on the subject. There you will read that, basically and briefly, psychologists tell us that there is a biochemical reward system in the brain that steers us via pleasurable sensations toward experiences that are beneficial for the organism. You may read about that in many places on the internet, such as ><https://www.simplypsychology.org/brain-reward-system.html><. As below, so above: there is an analogue for this physical phenomenon in the spiritual realm, and this study paper provides a list of rewarding ecstatic experiences that steer us toward “a deep sense of spiritual satisfaction”.

Edgar: What happens when I am united with my Fragments?

When you finally reunite with all the Fragments, you will no longer be subject to the allurements of the Physical Plane, and for you, Edgar, since you have been in touch with the occult for over ten thousand years, you will know this and you will experience the ecstasy. [31 December 1973]

This tells us that reintegration with kindred souls after the reincarnation cycle is finished is ecstatic, but we can reasonably surmise that the same is true of polarized energy exchanges with kindred souls while incarnate.

Dick: In reading Robert Monroe's book, out of the body book [Journeys Out of the Body], his trips were nothing at all like a synthesis. He saw sub-human, fish-like creatures ... nothing like Michael describes. I'd like a comment on that and also one on what Monroe describes as “sex after death” — that he describes as male and female “zapping” together, not with organs but something else.

Astral matter is extremely flexible; malleable is a better term. You can do with it as you like.

As for the ecstatic feelings, that is the goal toward which we work. He would have to call it “sexual” since this is the only explanation available to him. [03 January 1974]

Contact with one's own Essence is “ecstatic”, and contact with the Essence of another person is “ecstatic”, and the feeling of the latter is often interpreted in sexual terms, because a cerebral orgasm is somewhat like a physical orgasm. I see these as the Positive and Negative Poles of ecstasy respectively. Refer to the chapter “Sexuality” for more discussion of what I prefer to call “polarized energy exchanges”. Here on the Physical Plane, the closest analogue to the primordial polarity of Ordinal and Cardinal is female and male, whereas on the Astral Plane, the analogy is between other polarized factors in the Fragment. The basic principle that applies to both physical and spiritual realms is that the collapse of a polarity into a unity is subjectively experienced as ecstasy, and has the name “love” – refer to the chapter by that name.

There is polarity on the Physical Plane and the Astral Plane, but is there polarity on the Causal Plane?

Dick: Is there anything resembling sex on the Causal plane?

There is, but it is genderless. The Essence is thoroughly capable of experiencing the ecstasy and frequently does. The Personality cannot because of the pain-pleasure Monad. It is automatic. In your culture, it is imprinted early in life that if you are to experience pleasure, you also must have pain. The entire Entity [Michael] experiences. There are no more Fragments. We are whole. [10 March 1974]

Elsewhere it is said that the Entity is fully reconstituted on the Cardinal levels of the Astral Plane, and the Cadre of seven Entities is reconstituted on the Cardinal levels of the Causal Plane. Reintegration of Fragments with their larger composites are subjectively experienced as ecstatic, as noted above.

In the original Michaelian group transcriptions, ecstasy often appears in the context of sexuality, obviously because of the analogy of cerebral and physical orgasm:

Question regarding exorcism as described in the journal, Medical Aspects of Human Sexuality, March 1974, page 159.

This behavior is certainly not confined to France, sixteenth through eighteenth centuries. It continues to exist today among those who find it impossible to express their sexuality through mundane channels. It was used extensively by homosexual males since the dawn of time. Also, in a relatively positive and low-key society, all forms of hysteria, including religious fervor and sexual ecstasy, were interpreted as “possession” in an extremely polite society such as the Rome of the republican era. This was often the case and those who were unfortunate enough to be unduly enthusiastic were declared to be mad and sent away, or in the case of slaves, put out of their misery. [27 March 1974]

Obviously, the type of “sexual ecstasy” mentioned in that answer is the physical kind at the Ordinal Pole of the experience, not the spiritual kind at the Cardinal Pole that is the goal of the Essence.

Edgar: Moses raised the serpent. Jesus said, “If I be lifted up,” etc. What is the relationship to kundalini here?

Yes, this [kundalini] is the highest form of movable energy you have at your disposal and therefore, that which you can utilize for each: the emotional states or Higher Emotional Centers, Higher Intellectual Centers, which are synonymous with subjective consciousness [and] objective consciousness respectively. Also, with the same had just described by the yogi [sic]. The lower Centers are fixed and the energy is like a closed system. The higher Centers are capable of ecstasy or bliss; the lower Centers are not. The Sexual Center or the kundalini force can only be breached by bringing the lower Centers into harmonious Balance. In other words, in separating from the Maya or illusions for glamour of the Physical Plane and by giving up your expectations of what a sexual experience should be. [27 April 1974]

Refer to chapters “Consciousness — Subjective and Objective”, “Centers, Higher”, “Kundalini”, “Sexuality”, “Maya”, “Glamour”, and “Expectations” for more discussion of subjects mentioned in that passage. A careful review of the original Michaelian group transcriptions tells me that ecstasy is an experience of the Higher Emotional Center more than it is of the Higher Intellectual Center or of the Higher Moving (aka Sexual) Center. Contact with Essence, mentioned numerous times in this chapter on ecstasy, is also said to be a higher Center experience.

Mallory: It is not a dramatic thing; it just is. A person in the present is not experiencing anything dramatic. Does a Balanced Man feel high? It was said last time that the “surge” comes when one becomes Balanced.

If the moment is a quiet one, Balanced Man will feel the tranquility. If it is a “high” [moment], then Balanced Man will feel the ecstasy of the moment. Ironically, the reverse is often true in Mechanical Man. Young Souls involved with ecology legalization will often feel surges of emotionalism when confronted with a pacific, woodland environment. [17 September 1974]

This passage is a supplement to the immediately previous passage about the relationship of Centers to ecstasy. Refer to chapters “Mechanical Man” and “Balanced Man”. Basically and briefly, Mechanical Man lives in the lower Centers, Balanced Man lives in the Instinctive Center, aka Neutral Assimilation Center and higher Centers.

Liz: Growth doesn’t occur in a vacuum. One must immerse himself in something — relate with someone — in order to grow, right?

Liz, spiritual growth is an extremely active process, but many times, it isolates you from the mainstream — this is what we are saying. Spiritual enlightenment, which is indeed a byproduct, is an ecstatic experience to which nothing can possibly compare. [28 September 1974]

Refer to the chapter “Enlightenment” for more discussion of that. original Michaelian group members were far more interested in transcendence than subsequent students seem to be, typically.

Creatures of Reason have it all over their fellow inhabitants, as they alone are able to experience awe and delight. But the Creatures of Reason in this culture seldom allow themselves this luxury. They instead find devious methods of avoiding these experiences. The denial of pleasure and the pursuit of pain is high on your list of priority, and it should be clear now why this is true, but there is no reason for it other than the instinctive memories. This is the strongest reason we know of for working on the separation from your Personality and allowing the Essence to free itself. Only the Essence can experience ecstasy. We have told you this before and we emphasized it again and again, to keep you aware of the goal. Separation from the Personality’s conflicts allows the student to override the instinctive behavior patterns that now govern your actions. [21 December 1974]

Here again, the Michaels weave ecstasy into the tapestry of other components of their teaching. Refer to the chapters “Creature of Reason”, “Pleasure”, “Instinct”, and “Essence and Personality” for further discussion.

Sarah found herself reciting parts of the Koran. She noted that she used religious rituals as a way to release emotions.

This soul has searched through the ages for truth. The Scholar has sought to intellectualize all experiences of ecstasy and has, therefore, denied the experience. Being now in touch, however timorously, with truth is both threatening and incredibly inviting. To allow the experience, ritual, or some form that will enable the intellect to recede, could be beneficial. More talking about it is not Good Work, and merely prolongs the agony that must, of course, precede the ecstasy. We patiently await your trying another doorway. [11 January 1975]

Here again, the Michaels weave ecstasy into the tapestry of other components of their teaching. Refer to chapters “Religion”, “Emotional Center”, “Truth”, “Ritual”, “Good Work, Bad Work”.

Dick: I feel the only route to Positive Pole of Sexual Center is love.

We have no quarrel with that, either. The only ecstasy that we know of occurring during the sexual act has occurred in Adepts who are Balanced and who do express Agape. [25 January 1975]

Please stop associating religion with the "church". Religion is the ecstasy of the Logos. In your society, the church is a business in Artificial Space. One is of the Essence; one is not. One is in Real Space; one is not. Preparing an altar for the experience can be third line work of the highest order or it can be a drudge — or even worse, it can be a mockery. Or better yet, for those in the Work, it can be the gift of higher expression. [16 February 1975]

All do not grow to appreciate that which is in Essence, but most do experience a nagging pull in that direction. Religion has nothing to do with formal belief in any one particular system. We would have you look upon religion as an ecstatic celebration of the pan-dimensional life of the constant creative force of the universe, of the Tao. We would see you look upon religion as the joy of the liberated Essence. [Dimensions! Magazine, June 1975]

In a limited sense, it is possible to function on the Physical Plane in Essence. Survival is the goal of the Personality and this is directly opposed to the goal of the Essence, which is ecstasy. The Personality cannot forgive, because in doing so, it exposes its Achilles heel to anti-survival thrusts. For instance, hostility must be met with the back to the wall if survival is to be assured. The other, especially if he be more powerful, must be the first to concede. Then a certain pseudo forgiveness takes place. [21 November 1976]

Love from the higher Centers cannot even be made by the part of the lower Center from which the Overleaves operate. It can be glimpsed in those rare moments when the Overleaves are vanquished, either by mind expanders [psychedelics] or by religious ecstasy or by application of the Work — that is, either through meditation or concentration that is diligently pursued. The group high that is experienced by the student is, oddly enough, an excellent stepping-stone. This is why this Entity emphasizes group Work rather than solitary struggle. What you are seeking, dear students, is a high and it is the highest high that you can possibly imagine, and however you get there is not nearly as important as the thing itself. What do you think that word (Agape) means? Agape is the highest high. [30 September 1977]

Joan: I am afraid of making mistakes in my ballet class.

The dance has always been intimately connected with the "letting go" of the Personality and intimately entwined in the spiritual quest. The dance is frightening to most. It represents the ecstatic abandonment of which Dick has spoken and this is sensed on many levels by the dancer, however mature that dancer might be. The man George (Gurdjieff) discerned this and made the dance an integral part of his spiritual teaching. It is possible to abandon one's self in the dance and you, Joan, do not like that. At least, not at the present time moment. The Spiritualist Priest would, but other Overleaves in conflict would not. [21 October 1977]

Cynthia mentioned that it seemed to be as she suspected, that the material the teacher has given us is complete and we just haven't figured out how to use it properly. This was the response:

No, Cynthia, the material is obviously not all there, as you — and we mean that collectively — are not satisfied and still search. When enlightenment occurs the quest is over, at least insofar as the Physical Plane is concerned. We have been so far unable to instill in you the permission, or give you the permission to seek that ecstasy or joy that is the end product of all that you seek. However, at least all of you are experimenting with the possibility that there may be such a state as ecstasy. Many are not even that lucky. Richard — the other Richard — has chosen to leave (he had fallen asleep on the floor) because this is frightening information for him. He cannot even contemplate what this quality might bring to him, for it would mean utter destruction of all of his defense mechanisms. Even simple happiness is quite beyond his grasp, and yes, anyone with the same Overleaves exactly will experience this difficulty to a greater or lesser extent. All those with Cynthia's Overleaves exactly will experience her dilemmas and frustrations, and if they are in a teaching, they will be fortunate enough to be allowed to look at them and decide whether or not to change their course. Cynthia uses the Overleaves many times to make her life not work because she has been led to believe that her life will not work. She uses her lack of formal education as an excuse not to have to formulate goals for herself because that would

conflict with the picture that the Overleaves have of themselves. Alice defeats herself in the same fashion because two of her Overleaves would be terrified of success. [04 November 1977]

Concluding Comments on Ecstasy

The word “ecstasy” occurs many times in the original Michaelian group transcriptions (I count xxx). Consequently, this is not a brief chapter. Ecstasy is yet another one of those subjects that was significant in the original Michaelian group — and it was mentioned in *Messages from Michael* a half dozen times — but the subject never gained any traction in the consciousness of subsequent Michaelian students, or groups thereof. Ecstasy was said to be one of the goals of the Michaelian teachings, right up there with Agape and such. And ecstasy is connected to many components of the Michaelian teachings that are considered to be consequential. To my way of thinking and feeling, the resurrection and examination of subjects such as this makes the writing of this *Study Papers* book all the more worthwhile.

Psychedelics?

Ecstasy is mentioned in conjunction with various phenomena. These are:

- ‘higher’ level sexual experiences
- Essence Contact, either with our own Essence, or contact with other Essences
- reintegration of the Fragments of Composites





⑦ EGO

This chapter is the product of a search for the word “ego” in the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group channeling sessions. This word does not represent a significant component of the Michaelian teachings. However, there are good reasons to discuss the subject in this *Study Papers* book: 1) the subject came up numerous times during the original Michaelian group; 2) some interesting things were said about the subject; 3) the subject is related to a number of other components of the Michaelian teachings that are considered to be significant; 4) students can presumably benefit from having the mentions conveniently collected and commented all in one place; 5) Ego issues are pervasive in human psychology and sociology and spirituality, so it behooves us to have a working knowledge of it.

This chapter is one of many in this book that focuses on a psychological component of the Michaelian teachings as found in original Michaelian group transcriptions, rather than on a doctrinal or spiritual component. A psychological component is usually either a positive to be cultivated or a negative to be mitigated. In the next section, you will see that the Michaels use the word with both a negative and positive connotation: ego as –Ego is a negative worth eschewing and ego as +Ego is a positive worth cultivating. The Michaelian version of psychology is not to be confused with the popular psychology of the self-improvement movement, those that do not have a spiritual core or perspective. Rather, the Michaelian psychotherapeutic path (aimed at improving psychological health) is a beneficial precursor to the spiritual path (aimed at improving soul health). To skip the former but attempt the latter is referred to as “spiritual bypassing”. This is discussed at length on various websites, including https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spiritual_bypass. To skip mitigating one’s psychological issues and attempt to go straight to enlightenment usually proves to be problematic.

The word “ego” is not capitalized in this chapter or other chapters of this *Study Papers* book because it has no special meaning in the Michaelian teachings; it is not a Michaelian jargon word that needs a definition apart from its use in the common vernacular. This word has varying definitions in both the general understanding and in the Michaelian presentation. Let’s look at the common definition first, then review the Michaelian perspective.

It might be a little surprising how often this word ego shows up in the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group, considering that it has not appeared very many times in subsequent channeling sessions that we have record of. Precisely because it covers a subject that might otherwise have been ignored and forgotten, I regard it as useful and valuable to include this chapter, as with numerous other similar chapters on obscure topics in this *Study Papers* book. Doing so makes our understanding of the Michaelian teachings richer and more complete.

Definition of Ego

So what is meant by the word “ego”? Let’s check the dictionary.

1: the self especially as contrasted with another self or the world

2a: EGOTISM sense 2

2b: SELF-ESTEEM sense 1

3: the one of the three divisions of the psyche in psychoanalytic theory that serves as the organized conscious mediator between the person and reality especially by functioning both in the perception of and adaptation to reality; compare ID, SUPEREGO

Did you know?

Ego is the Latin word for “I”. So if a person seems to begin every sentence with “I”, it’s sometimes a sign of a big ego. It was the psychologist Sigmund Freud (well, actually his original translator) who put ego into the

popular vocabulary, but what he meant by the word is complex, so only other psychologists really use it in the Freudian sense. The rest of us generally use ego simply to mean one's sense of self-worth, whether exaggerated or not. When used in the "exaggerated" sense, ego is almost the same thing as conceit. [-Ego] Meeting a superstar athlete without a trace of this kind of ego would be a most refreshing experience. But having a reasonable sense of your own worth is no sin. Life's little everyday victories are good — in fact, necessary — for a healthy ego. [+Ego] [<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/ego>< — retrieved 28 February 2023]

Speaking of Freud, Wikipedia has a lengthy definition and description of the Freudian use of the term, and that contains this summary:

In modern English, ego has many meanings. It could mean one's self-esteem; an inflated sense of self-worth; the conscious-thinking self; or in philosophical terms, one's self. Ego development is known as the development of multiple processes, cognitive function, defenses, and interpersonal skills, or to early adolescence when ego processes are emerged. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Id,_ego_and_super-ego#Ego< — retrieved 28 February 2023]

Refer to the Chapter 4Q, "The Seven Life-Stages", in my book *A History of the Overleaf Chart* for the documentation about "ego emergence" in "early adolescence". There you will read that adolescence is the time when a person develops an "ego" — meaning, a sense of self-hood — that is distinct from the family of origin, during the third Life-Stage, which correlates with the Ordinal Expression Process of the Overleaf System.

Notice that the definition of ego is somewhat ambiguous in the common vernacular, and such is the case with the original Michaelian group transcriptions. The Michaels admit that "We are guilty of some semantic ambiguity at times..." (27 March 1974), and their usage of this particular word is an example. In order to clarify the ambiguity, in my commentary on the Q&A exchanges, I say that the "ego" has a Positive Pole, +Ego — which is a healthy sense of self— and it has a Negative Pole, -Ego — which is an unhealthy sense of self. In all cases, inside and outside the Michaelian teachings, one should consider the context, and thereby discern which Pole is meant.

Another way to characterize -Ego versus +Ego is to note that ego-selves have a 'membrane' of some kind, whether physical or psychological, that defines a boundary between the self and the not-self. A person with an +Ego regards the membrane as *joining* self with not-self, whereas a person with an -Ego regards the membrane as *separating* self from not-self. This fundamental difference in perception or attitude is functionally equivalent to the distinction between "Love" and "Fear"; refer to the chapters by those names.

Ego per Gurdjieff

Founding members of the original Michaelian group had for a while been affiliated with a local Fourth Way group. For the story about that, refer to the chapter "Gurdjieff, Ouspensky, Collin, Burton". Basically and briefly, the Michaels adopted and adapted some of the concepts that they learned therein. The word ego does not appear in the index of Ouspensky's book *In Search of the Miraculous*, or in the index of Ouspensky's book *The Fourth Way*. However, this does not mean that Gurdjieff and Ouspensky were unaware of the concept; they just had a different name for it. Therefore, refer to the chapter "I's, Many" for the discussion about the Gurdjieffian conceptualization of the ego.

Ego per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

The following extracts from original Michaelian group transcriptions are Q&A exchanges, where an original Michaelian group member asks a question (or makes a comment), and the Michaels provide an answer. These extracts are presented in the chronological order in which they were given. As is my custom, I often provide some explanatory comments following the question or answer. Underlined words in the Michaels' answers are my emphasis, to draw attention to what it is that I comment on. Sometimes I embed words or phrases [in brackets] that I believe help to clarify the question or the answer.

The earliest mentions of ego appear before the Michaels appeared:

[Soleal:] Renunciation would feed the ego and would be Bad Work. [mid 1973]

Here it seems to me that ego is used as a synonym for self-righteousness. If you do anything solely for the reason that it 'buffs and/or puffs' your ego, then it would be Good Work for you to examine your motives. Refer to the chapter "Good Work, Bad Work" for the documentation of, and evaluation–categorization of, various and many activities into positive and negative bins. Also refer to the chapter "Motivation".

In the next appearance of the word, in the first full session transcript that we have, another meaning of ego is understood by its context. Founding member Carolyn is learning to channel:

Carolyn: Does that apply to me?

[Tomas:] No, no, you could do great things if you will just get you out of the way. The biggest problem in something like this is in getting the ego out of the way. You have to get you out of the way. When you can put you out of the way and let the other shine through, then you can do it. [19 June 1973]

Here it seems to me that ego is referring to one's usual state of consciousness. In channeling, that ego must be submerged or superseded by another 'entity', meaning, another ego-self, and if that does not happen completely, then misinformation will happen; refer to the chapter "Bias" for more about that factor in channeling.

[Tomas:] ... he [Dick] follows instructions like a Mercury. That can give me an ego problem, he reacts [takes my advice] so suddenly [quickly]. [10 July 1973]

Tomas was an Astral Fragment, so he had an Astral Plane perspective, but he was no more evolved than the original Michaelian group members, so he still had some egotism to contend with. However, Astral Fragments are almost surely more aware of their issues, ego and otherwise, than Physical Plane Personalities are.

In this same session, the conversation about ego continued:

Gene: Are we asking the right questions? Can these help? Should we pick a subject?

[Tomas:] You are correct in your long explanatory phrasing about the questions and answers. That is why I asked you to think up a subject prior to the meeting. If I give you the question and then the answer, I will have problems with my ego, and you will most likely learn nothing. [10 July 1973]

Tomas still had an ego problem, meaning that his sense of self was dependent on what others thought of him and how others responded to him, but the Michaels never admitted to such.

By the way, this answer is a clue to why the Michaels prefer that their students ask questions and they have a dialogue, an exchange, rather than the Michaels deliver a didactic monologue to their students, as would be the case with the Michaels dictating books: a Q&A dialogue is a more effective learning environment; refer to the chapter "Dialogue".

Speaking of the Michaels, most of the following Q&A exchanges are from them.

The ponderousness of Sri Aurobindo's books and the books written by Dr. Chaudhary were discussed.

Dr. Chaudhary is not a Young Soul. He is wordy because of national origin. Writing in his own language, he is quite different. He has not resolved his ego either; he must appear erudite at all times. This is part of Karma for him. [26 August 1973]

That Chaudhary was a PhD is an indication that he was in fact erudite, and that is okay, but that he must appear erudite is egotistical. The allusion to Karma here might refer to what later became known in the Michaelian teachings as "self-karma", meaning that there is a lesson here that his soul has chosen for his incarnate Personality to learn; refer to the chapter "Karma" for more about that; basically and briefly, karma is an intense learning experience, whether voluntary or involuntary. In this case, where the "ego" was involved, there was a lesson to be learned about what is called "epistemic humility", the lesson being: don't be a "know it all". In fact, the more you know, the more you should realize that there is so much more yet to know.

Heretofore, we can discern several meanings of the word ego by examining the context in which the word appears, but then the Michaels defined it:

Discussion: The word "ego" was discussed extensively at this point. Unfortunately, there is no recording, so this scribe is unable to capture it in essence. However, Ellis did mention that he had been searching for fifty years, and he wondered how to get away from ego (False Personality).

The word does not matter so much as your understanding. However, "ego" to the psychiatrist normally means "self", so be certain that you all understand each other. For purpose of ease in transmission, we have been using terminology familiar to the majority, with some variation. For instance, we perceive no schism between "self", "soul", and "Essence"; all are spiritual. False Personality is attached to the organism [physical body]. [08 October 1973]

Regarding "self", "soul", and "Essence", the Michaels admitted "We are guilty of some semantic ambiguity at times" (27 March 1974). My preference is to not have semantic ambiguities, so I suggest that the reader refer to

chapters “Soul” and “Essence and Personality” wherein I attempt to clarify definitions of those terms as used by the Michaels.

This passage hints to me that there is a Negative Pole of ego and a Positive Pole of ego. Heretofore, in the original Michaelian group transcriptions, the word ego was used in a negative or pejorative sense, as self-righteousness, as limiting, and as egotistical; refer to the chapter “Personality — True and False” for more about the negative meaning of ego as False Personality, but also the positive meaning of ego as True Personality. There is the neutral sense that some psychologists prefer, where ego means having a well-defined internally-consistent sense of self-hood, neither positive nor negative. The Michaels do not exclude the neutral meaning. Further on, I will expand the meaning of ego to include the Fragmentation of the primordial undifferentiated Tao, which I regard as the origin of self-hood.

Ellis: As I received it cold from the [Ouija] board, my ego got in the way. He [Michael] was telling me I was wrong and I knew that could not be right. I see now that that is where the freedom lies, in letting go and opening. [23 October 1973]

It is okay to have a healthy ego in the sense that one has proper boundaries about who one really and truly is, but a healthy ego is also willing to let go of the smaller self and open to the larger self. In other words, the ego, the lower self, should learn and grow and develop enough to express the higher self consistently; refer to the chapter “Higher Self”. The lower self is experienced as confining, whereas the higher self is experienced as liberating.

Ray: I have energy surges after healing treatments, and I have a fear of this being from False Personality or my ego.

If the surge is caused by elation of a false sort, a feeling of tiredness will supervene soon afterward. [08 November 1973]

It is up to the student to learn to discern what is ego inflation in False Personality versus what is ego elevation or liberation in True Personality, which is aware of the higher self. The latter has no subsequent “let-down”, whereas the former does.

The following Q&A exchange mentions “Troubled Souls”, so refer to the chapter by that name.

Evelyn: What is the Level and Role of my brother?

This was a troubled Fifth Level Mature Priest. (Committed suicide at age 36.)

Dick: Troubled where? Personality or soul?

That is valid [it is both]. This is a conflict between Essence and Personality. It is when the individual Fragment cannot cope with the conflict, that the integrative defense mechanism falls apart and allows the ego to disintegrate before there is any strength in Essence, leaving the soul goalless and adrift. [15 November 1973]

In addition to the definition of ego provided previously, this is another key passage for understanding the proper function of ego versus the improper function. I take the phrase “integrative defense mechanism” to refer to a property of all living beings: they have a membrane or skin, and that defines the boundary of self and not-self. Another property of living things is the desire to maintain the integrity of the self, which is to say that they have a built-in will to continue to live, and that often includes defending the self against the forces of disintegration both inside and outside the membrane. One of the primary goals of organisms typically is to achieve and maintain equilibrium or homeostasis (another is reproduction). If this integrity is not properly defended, then the organism will die; it will not evolve into a better organism, nor will it team up with other organisms to make a better society of organisms.

However much any particular ego-self might desire to live forever in the status quo, this is not the way of nature as a whole. The entire “ego-self” can be visualized as levels in space and/or stages in time, such that the membrane between self and not-self is porous or ambiguous; there is a constant feedback between self and not-self, and the two must adjust to each other. As we have seen previously, the spectrum of the so-called “ego” spans from sub-personalities to False Personality to True Personality, but we know that beyond True Personality there are other levels/stages of ego-self, namely the soul-self, the Fragment self, the composite-self (of kindred souls), and the Essence-self. (Refer to chapters “I’s, Many”, “Soul”, “Fragment”, “Composites”.) If the lower-earlier levels/stages of ego-self cannot resolve the conflicts within the level/stage, or resolve the conflicts between the levels/stages in the hierarchy of selves, then there can be disastrous results. That there are “conflicts”, as the Michaels said, indicates that there is a power struggle between integrative and disintegrative forces all up and down the spectrum of ego-self; this is another instantiation of the Monad Principle (refer to the chapter “Monads”). If integration wins, then ego-self ascends the spectrum by embracing the more-inclusive ego-self. If disintegration wins, then ego-self descends the spectrum or breaks down into its sub-

personalities, called “dissociative identity disorder” in the psychiatric profession. A complete repudiation of the egoic struggle, a suicide that benefits no other self, is the most extreme case of disintegration.

However, there is a type of suicide that is integrative: it is built into nature in the form of self-sacrifice for the greater good. Among living organisms, selves feed on other living selves for the sake of the survival of the organism, but also for the sake of the survival of the ecosystem as a whole. This also happens within multicellular living organisms, where individual cells are continually recycled for the sake of the entire organism. In the case of the spiritual path, it is preferred that the lower–earlier levels/stages of self-hood should yield (or “die”) to the higher–later levels/stages of self-hood, thus: False Personality > True Personality > soul > Fragment > kindred souls > Essence (as I prefer to define those terms).

[Dick:] My ego would be famous overnight and would like it.

Part of your evolution will be the loss of your ego, which would like the [fame]. [20 November 1973]

The context here indicates that the False Personality pole of the ego is intended, where the death of the old ego-self is okay if it leads to the ascendance of the new ego-self at the next higher level/stage. The achievement of fame often intensifies the normal conflict between the False Personality and the True Personality, and exacerbates the struggle between disintegration and integration. Some celebrities have a breakdown, as in they ‘crash and burn’, whereas others make a breakthrough, as in “That which does not kill me makes me stronger”.

Dick again brought up his ego issues in a session a month later:

Dick: I would like to ask about spiritual materialism — that is, using the powers of the teaching to draw attention to myself. That is, using the teaching for ego gratification. There is a conflict developing here.

Haven’t you discovered yet that all things that are ego-gratifying have an element of delicious clandestine guilt attached? The ego seeks intrigue and adventure; the Essence does not. [16 December 1973]

Obviously, that use of the word ego referred to the Negative Pole of self-hood. When you observe yourself feeling seduced by intrigue and adventure, you know that it is from the Negative Pole of ego rather than from the most Positive Pole of ego, namely Essence. Refer to the chapter “Guilt” for more discussion about that emotion. There you will read that guilt also has a Negative and a Positive Pole, the Negative Pole that puts the self down and the Positive Pole that motivates the self to do better next time. In other words, Negative guilt pushes the –Ego down the hierarchy of self-hood and Positive guilt pushes the +Ego up the hierarchy of self-hood.

That ego has to do with levels/stages of self-hood is not just my idea:

Richard: I would appreciate a comment on my sharing my insights with people who do not seem to care or understand what I am saying. It seems I am at a higher level. Is this my ego dragging me down to a lower level? [16 December 1973]

That question was reminiscent of previous uses of the word ego as referring to illegitimate self-promotion or self-aggrandizement of some kind. One must be careful to not try to teach others from a high perch of presumed superiority. Newbie Michaelian students want to share the wonderful teaching, and that can be okay to do so with people who are genuinely receptive, but to do so out of a feeling of superiority is not good.

Schizophrenics are Mid-Cycle Mature Souls who have ego disintegration without the corresponding spiritual growth. [27 December 1973]

The psychiatric term for “ego disintegration” used to be called schizophrenia or multiple personality disorder but is now called “dissociative identity disorder”; refer to the chapter “Health — Mental and Physical” for more discussion of mental illnesses. The way it is used here, “ego disintegration” (the death of False Personality) is a good thing if it is accompanied by spiritual growth (emergence of True Personality). My preference is to see the development of a healthy “ego” (self-hood) at each level/stage of the process of spiritual growth, because the idea is to then outgrow each level/stage of self-hood. Typically, one enters a level/stage of self-hood in the Negative Pole, then grows enough to exit that level/stage through the Positive Pole.

Tina: Are there any of my former lives that I can read about? I feel this has something to do with my ego.

You have had two very interesting lives, Tina. Ego gratification would be a very natural phenomenon for one on the Physical Plane upon hearing that they were a leading figure in the past. One must realize that out of all of those intervals [incarnations], accomplishment of this nature must have been yours at least once, especially with the role you chose. In the eighteenth century, you were a young dilettante in France by the name of Jean Jacques Rousseau. In the fourteenth century, you were with Theresa T’Avail. [24 January 1974]

One of the egoist things that people tend to do when they learn about reincarnation is to wonder if they were ever anyone famous in a past life. (For the record, when I asked about this, the answer was No, but it was said that I had been affiliated with the German polymath Goethe.) Just as comparing yourself with your contemporaries is not ego-healthy, comparing yourself with a famous past life of your own is not ego-healthy, unless you are in this life a person of notoriety and influence. On the other hand, if one happens to find out that they were a person in the historical record, then to read about that person might give them helpful insights about their current life, because past lives do shape one's current "ego", or identity or self-hood.

Edgar: I would like to return to the comment you made at the beginning of the evening on the origin of the species, Homo Sapiens. We seem to ignore it with our egotistical questions.

We have discussed the problem of personal agendas before. We do understand this drive [to ask egotistical questions] and we do not deplore it; it is just that we have much more time than any of you, and we would be of as much help as possible in the limited time available. Being in a more intimate [communal] situation would also eliminate this problem [because it would minimize egotistical focus]. We will discuss this question of origin [of Homo Sapiens] again soon. It is important that you have some foundation in this before you begin to expound [the Michaelian teaching outside the group]. [24 January 1974]

Refer to the chapter "Agenda". In some Michaelian groups subsequent to the original Michaelian group, the policy is or was to ask one "egotistical (personal) question" and one general interest question that furthered the Michaelian teachings. Both types are appropriate, and should be apportioned with the balance of individual benefit versus group benefit in mind, in order to maximize the overall benefit.

Shirley: I feel Ray has something to contribute, and the problem is that his ego gets in the way. [31 January 1974]

Ray was a Sage, and Sages do tend to be self-centered and self-absorbed, so maybe that is the meaning of "ego" that was intended in that passage. Those of us who are not Sages but interact with Sages do well to not let their egotism — if they are still trapped there — get in the way of appreciating what they have to offer.

It is often the case that *how* a person says something (e.g., it is egotistical) makes *what* they say seem unpalatable and easy to dismiss. A skill worth developing is the ability to filter out the off-putting ego stuff so that you do not 'throw out the baby with the bathwater'. An example of this is:

Cynthia: I have lots of ego attachment.... It may be that I like to show off. [18 February 1974]

Cynthia was an Old Sage in Growth and Passion, in the Intellectual Part of Emotional Center, which makes a so-called "motor-mouth". In a case like that, those who listen have a lot of 'chaff' to separate in order to see the 'wheat' in what they are saying. By the way, "ego" in the sense of self-absorption is typical for all three Cardinal Roles: Sage, Priest, and King.

Edgar: I suppose it is ego that wants to be healed physically. [17 March 1974]

Edgar was in a wheelchair and his ego resented it. Refer to the notion of self-karma mentioned previously: this is where the soul self chooses to experience something that the Personality self would un-choose if it could. Here again, I say that the lower self-hood should 'die' by accepting the choices of a higher self-hood.

The following is another excellent Q&A exchange on the subject of -Ego versus +Ego:

Dick: I become irritated with people who have expectations who tell me not to have any. One cannot initiate anything unless he has expectations. There are rare times when I can just be and have no expectations, and that is beautiful. This leads me to a topic I could not understand with Robert [Burton]'s group, where it was the goal to give up one's ego. As I see it, from one's ego comes one's self-image, one's power, one's strength. If my ego is deficient, then I am in a depressed state and for sure cannot love. In Robert's group, they continue to put down ego, one way by calling I "it": e.g., "It went to dinner" instead of "I went to dinner." I have been trying the EST and Ken Keyes's way to experience experiences. If I'm down, I don't ask myself what to do to go up. I aggravate the down so I can feel it as full as possible. I have burned out a number of things in this way, but I do not feel better for it. It seems that if I have lightened my load, I should feel more buoyant and better. Maybe I haven't tackled the basic problems. Could Michael comment on ego strength?

What you wish to give up is the strength of the ego of the Personality. The Essence has much [ego] strength of its own. They are separate and distinct. Remember, when you become your Essence, there will not be the albatross of [your] Repression [Mode] to deal with. Perhaps it would be helpful to point out to you at this time, Dick, that you come far closer to loving when you are painting than at any other time. You do not have to start with loving difficult persons; this is not the primary objective at this time [stage/level in the hierarchy of self-hood]. Loving is Higher Emotion, and that requires Balance [of all Centers]. The person who is "conscious" is not a doer anyway. Most who have reached that exalted state of physical being prefer not to *do*; they are content merely to *be* with the present — that feeling you have glimpsed when you were in those states briefly.

(paraphrased) This is something we have asked you to consider before: what is it you wish to do, learn to be more fruitful and happier in life? or go on to spiritual enlightenment? The goals are very different, and the methods of approach, therefore, would have to be quite different. Living in life requires what you are calling self-image and ego strength. Spiritual acceleration does not require this; it requires negation of the cultural facade. Those who defined the ego and ego states thereof were not, after all, conscious beings, and were observing only the Personalities of others with their own Personalities. The Essence, separate from this, has an innate strength of its own, and can survive if the body is prepared for the surge when it comes. Disintegration only comes when the Personality is lost and the Essence is freed prematurely, such as in some psychotic states. Otherwise, those on the [spiritual] path [of grown up through the hierarchy of self-hood] find the surge exhilarating and liberating, and are prepared for it when it comes, but this only comes after the groundwork has been laid. Those tools we have given you are at your disposal. You might say that the Essence has its own ego; you are just not acquainted with it. The Artisan ego is what has produced the world's great masterpieces, not always for the King's ransom, either, many times in a lonesome gallery [such as yours]. [14 September 1974]

Egos cannot help but have expectations; refer to the chapter "Expectations" for more about that. Also refer to chapters on "Culture" and "Facade" for subjects related to -Ego, or negative self-hood. *Doing* is a function of the lower ego-self; *Being* is a function of the higher ego-self. Dick was an Artisan, allegedly the French painter Auguste Renoir in a past life. He painted in a shed in the back yard of his home. Each of the Roles, not just Artisan, has a self-hood that defines what it is good at and what it is not so good at. What to do? Do what you are good at, and do it as a fulfillment of Essence +Ego and not Personality -Ego.

The egotistical self-hood defined by external culture rather than internal integrity is mentioned again:

Is it the egotism of the Intellectual Center not to like housework, or is it a cultural thing?

This has little to do with culture, surprising enough. The Exalted [Cardinal] Roles [Sage, Priest, King] find mundane chores distasteful, particularly those not in the Moving Center. The Ordinal Roles [Warrior, Slave, Artisan] accept them in more grace, but there again, they are often preferred by Warriors and Scholars simply because they point to efficiency and therefore to winning. [17 September 1974]

In this case I understand "ego" to be synonymous with "identity", meaning, what a person is like by nature. This is more than okay, since we come with a different identity in each lifetime, with all of its strengths and weaknesses, cravings and aversions. Regarding the alleged "egotism of the Intellectual Center", it is the nature of that Center to make distinctions and give names to phenomena, so in that sense it is indeed egotistical in the sense of defining self-hood.

It [establishing higher level contact] involves your psyche. It also involves your ego. [17 September 1974]

Here again I note that the concept of "self-hood" applies to levels and stages, one level/stage that is commonly called "ego" and another level/stage that is commonly called "psyche"; refer to the chapter by that name. By the way, the word "psyche" is derived from the Greek word for "soul", so perhaps that statement is equivalent to the difference of Essence versus Personality, as in the following answer:

... work in order to be "right" for you, must be rewarding in the sense that it produces a deep down sense of satisfaction. By this, we do not mean ego gratification but [we do mean] Essence satisfaction. [24 September 1974]

Refer to the chapters "Motivation" and "Reward, Gratification, Satisfaction" for more discussion about discerning why you do what you do, whether driven by the lower -Ego-self or by the higher +Ego-self.

It is now a pattern with him [who threatens suicide] that has become imprinted on this weak ego. [24 September 1974]

Two comments come to mind: 1) a "weak ego" is easily imprinted, and that can be a good thing or a bad thing depending on the characteristics of the person who, or the event that, is doing the imprinting, whether good or bad; 2) a weak ego is subject to disintegration and self-destruction ("suicide"), since a strong ego by nature wants to continue to live, as noted previously.

Abdullah asked if the pressures asserted by the full moon (astrological moon) were influencing behavior of certain ones at the place he works.

It is common that troubled souls react to the full moon with far more intensity than more Balanced-out souls. The thing that these young men had in common was that they were all troubled Mid-Cycle Mature Souls. Troubled souls can sometimes be guided through this difficult period by someone who is able to recognize the

ego disintegration, who is in tune with the lunar cycle and also close enough to the involved souls to recognize the restlessness and disorientation that precedes the break. [01 October 1974]

There is a name for the alleged craziness that has been attributed to the full moon: “lunacy”; Wikipedia even has an entry on it: >https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lunar_effect<. Refer to the chapter “Troubled Souls” for the whole story about that phrase. There you will read that, basically and briefly, one of the characteristics of troubled souls is “ego disintegration”, meaning that they lose their sense of a unified self — they don’t know who they are any more; they have an “identity crisis”. In an extreme case, as already noted, this is called dissociative identity disorder. Of course, this is a very bad thing, for the soul as well as for the Essence. There is typically a disorientation during the transition between levels/stages, but it is a good thing if the ego, in the sense of having a well-integrated self-hood, moves up the levels/stages of psychological and spiritual development without permanent malfunction.

This medium senses the division existing within the psyche of most of the cadre, and it is the fight for survival. Only the ego needs to survive; the Essence “survives” already in eternity. Impatience, lack of trust, and a stubborn clinging to the “I am not psychic” belief hold you all from experiencing truth, as it is available to all. [28 December 1974]

In that passage, the “ego” self is opposed to the Essence self, and resists transformation; therefore –Ego is conservative by nature, rather than progressive as is +Ego. The old self-hood must metaphorically ‘die’ for the new self-hood to be ‘born’ in its place. The transition between the old self-hood and the new self-hood is troublesome to one degree or another, and if it is unsuccessful, that results in the “troubled soul” mentioned above. Refer to chapters “Essence and Personality”, “Psyche”, “Paranormal, The”, “Truth”, “Trust”, and “Belief System” for more discussion about those relevant topics mentioned in that passage.

The teacher [Michael] and the student [Soleal] are not in conflict except as those roles are seen through the veil of ego. [11 January 1975]

Refer to the chapter “Veil”. There you will read that the –Ego creates an artificial veil between a self and other selves, or a self and the environment. Conflicts between egos are one of the potential results of a sense of separation between self and not-self or other-self.

Besides creating a sense of “self-hood”, another word for what the ego does is “individuation”:

All the ego strength that individuates each of you is as the strength of the wave. It is indeed powerful. It does indeed make its mark, and that mark is erased as the undertow erases all that came before. Erases, but is not forgotten. [05 February 1975]

Refer to the chapter “Individuality” for more discussion about this function of the ego. Regarding ‘erasure’ without ‘forgetting’, I understand this to mean that, each successive ‘wave’ of individuality is the legitimate successor of the previous ‘waves’. In a healthy transformation from one self-hood to the next self-hood, the successive ego state *includes* the former ego state even as it *transcends* it. This is explained in much greater detail in Chapter 4Q, “The Seven Life-Stages”, in my book *A History of the Overleaf Chart*.

There was a great deal of talk at this point about violence, anger, hostility, et cetera, and ways of dealing with it, and moving on to more positive spaces in ourselves.

Ideally, this teaching could provide such an environment where the trust level would give permission to ventilate the anger. But remember that anger is an emotion felt by the ego when its expectations go unfulfilled or even worse, ignored. What should develop within a teaching is the “steward” who can stand aside in each of you and observe the ego ventilating its wrath. But we must realize that only a fraction of self is angry. There is never a time when all the Overleaves are angry or sad or happy. If that ever happened, either enlightenment or disintegration would occur. For instance, Intellectual Center cannot experience anger. [21 March 1977]

One point to be gleaned from that answer is that the –Ego is a rigid identity structure, so it reacts negatively when it encounters something that is inconsistent with its self-image; –Ego does not want to change, but change is built into the system as a whole. What to do? The passage hints that there are two paths that the self-limited ego can take to ‘get over itself’, the *positive* way and the *negative* way. The positive way is for the ego to expand the definition of “self” to *include* first the “steward” (the higher self), and thence ultimately to include the unfragmented Tao; this is the path to “Enlightenment”; refer to the chapter by that name. The negative way is for the ego to “disintegrate”, to ultimately *exclude* self-hood to such an extreme that only the unfragmented Tao remains. Another way to name these two paths is as I have suggested above, namely +Ego and –Ego. Both paths involve the changing of perceived and functional boundaries. For more information, refer to chapters “Violence”, “Anger”, “Hostility”, “Negativity and Positivity”, “Expectations”, “Trust”,

“Steward”, and “Self-Observation”. All of these phenomena are connected in a network of meaning in the Michaelian teachings, and involve the +Ego and the –Ego.

The attachment of the ego to the *status quo* is mentioned again:

At this point, we talked about lack of readiness.

You are not disgusted enough with the power the ego, or Personality, has over you. All of you — not just Joan. No one of you is willing to take a long, searching look at those Overleaves that are holding you to your stasis. You can move to those Positive Poles. All of you are in love with your current Personalities to a certain extent. In some, this is a controlling interest. In other words, an exaggerated sense of rightness holds you back. [10 April 1977]

The Negative Poles of the Overleaves are of –Ego and self-righteously resist change, whereas the Positive Poles of the Overleaves are of +Ego and embrace change. This means that achieving the Positive Poles is only one step forward toward the “obsolescence” of the Overleaves: refer to the chapter “Overleaves, Changing”.

Dick felt that he wanted to become a Sage [Role], and he felt that this was possible, to change from one Role to another. There was much discussion on a variety of subjects and this was the response:

That state that Dick describes is, of course, that which this Entity chooses to call Agape. That is, “love”. This state cannot be achieved romantically by the Overleaves. In no way can the Personality abandon itself for even one moment. The ego never relaxes its vigil. It is anti-ego to even consider this, for after all, that is when the devil — or as we choose to refer to it — the mass societal ego, can rush in and influence. [03 September 1977]

Not only individuals, but groups and corporations and tribes and cultures and nations have an ego-identity that resists change. Previously, the transcendence of ego was referred to as “enlightenment”; here it is referred to as “Love” and “Agape”; refer to the chapters by those names. There you will read that transcending ego involves the transcendence of cultural programming and of Personality, including the Overleaves, including even the Role.

The subject of transcending the ego, aka Personality, aka Overleaves, was revisited a month later:

On this particular evening, we had a great deal of conversation about the Overleaves and just how much value they really hold for us. We talked about the fact that we feel we don't always use them properly and wondered what we could do to use them more effectively.

The majority of all students of this and comparable teachings use the Overleaves and all other tools given to them in the manner that will allow them to control their environment to their greatest satisfaction and to keep the game they are playing going. Only the exceptional student uses the tool as it is intended. In the case of those of you here present, you use these tools as many less knowledgeable use religion — as a controlling device. All of you need to feel that you are an individual rather than a Fragment of a larger whole. This is the function of the ego — that is, to keep the illusion of separateness intact. If this [illusion] dissolves, the ego is in trouble. [04 November 1977]

One of the features of –Ego is that it wants to control other egos; refer to the chapter “Control” for more about that phenomenon. While you are at it, refer to the chapters “Individuality” and “Separation”, because the preference for that way of life is also very much a function of –Ego. Separation is covered in the chapter “Alienation”. A list of “tools” in the Michaelian toolbox, given to help us transcend –Ego, are found in a chapter by that name. In the healthy dissolution of the –Ego there is a healthy embrace of the “larger wholes”, the +Egos up the hierarchy, from True Personality to soul to Fragment to Cadence to Greater Cadence to Side to Entity to Cadre and so on.

In refusing to see the Overleaves interact in those of similar composition, the ego is merely asserting its conviction that the individualistic approach is the only sane approach. Actually, it is a very insane approach, as all of you could immediately call to mind several hundred areas where there is little or no difference at all in either the function or appearance of those here gathered. But we are equally certain that each of your ego structures could produce quite an impressive list of differences — not only that, but areas where [anti-Agape] no agreement could ever be reached. [04 November 1977]

The –Ego emphasizes differences whereas the +Ego emphasizes agreement, the embrace of ever-larger wholes. The Overleaf System can be used to feed –Ego, but the Michaels revealed the Overleaf System as a tool to be used to transcend –Ego, aka Personality. In fact, the study of any personality typology should be use to evolve above and beyond stuckness in personality *per se*. The word “balanced” has been used a few times in this chapter when referring to people who are not stuck in one self-hood or another; refer to the chapter “Balanced Man” for the whole story.

(We think the teacher is referring to her Self-deprecation and her Submission.)

Cynthia [a Sage] views tragedy as preferable to no emotion at all, and runs into many situations where she can play out the role of the tragic heroine. This is an incalculably rich role for the Sage in the Passion Mode, and suits the ego well. The only problem is, it leaves the Essence in the lurch. [04 November 1977]

That was yet another in a long series of passages where Personality in general, and personality traits such as Overleaves in particular, are covered with the term “ego”, and the ego is contrasted with the Essence. I should not end this chapter without noting that Essence is another ambiguous term as used in the Michaelian teachings; refer to the chapter “Essence and Personality”. Briefly and basically, the term “essence” also refers to an identity — the “essence” of something being that characteristic or quality without which something would be ambiguous, without definition — since Essence is contrasted with something that has identity, so therefore it is also an ego, or rather an +Ego.

Concluding Comments on Ego

A careful reading and pondering of the original Michaelian group transcriptions allows us to mitigate the ambiguities in the usage of the word “ego”. (The function of ego is in fact to mitigate ambiguity.) Paying attention to the context of the statements is a way to clarify the usages, but so is keeping in mind the following philosophy, which lists the stages in the creation of ego in the first place:

The Tao produced the One, the One produced the Two, the Two produced the Three, the Three produced All things. All things carry the Yin and embrace the Yang, and through the blending of the Chi they achieve harmony. [Lao Tzu, *Tao Teh Ching*, Chapter 42]

My understanding of “ego” or “I-ness” is informed by the notion that the Tao is infinite consciousness *per se*, but somehow mysteriously conceives of the notion of finitude or finiteness, and *that* is the *origin* of ego-ness or selfhood. In Michaelian terms, this goes by the name “Fragmentation” (refer to the chapter by that name), first into Oneness, then into Twoness, and then into Threeness, and then into Allness. The Overleaf chart is the mandala that reflects this fundamental ontological structure of Personality in subjective time/space, but also reflects the logic and mathematics of objective space/time, because both objective and subjective realms embody the Oneness, Twoness, Threeness, and Allness Principles. We as human ego-selves partake of the making and the breaking of selfhood

The word “ego” refers to a sense of self-hood, an identity that distinguishes a self from a not-self or an other-self. The ego self has attributes or characteristics. The Overleaf System of personality traits is all about human ego. (Chemistry is about atomic and molecular ‘egos’; Biology is about living species, another type of ego-ness; and so on.) One of the inherent attributes of the ego-self is that it resists change; it wants to maintain or perpetuate its self-image, its identity; it wants to survive as it is. It is the nature of the ego-self that it has the tendency to conserve and maintain the *status quo* or equilibrium of its identity.

However, the reality of the creation is that more than one ego-self exists, meaning that egos are different from each other. The contact of one ego-self with another ego-self provides feedback that impels change. There are two ways this can go: integration and disintegration. The Positive Pole, +Ego, is pro-adaptive in relation to other ego-selves, and the Negative Pole, -Ego, is mal-adaptive in relation to other ego-selves. One of the aspects of the Monadic evolutionary process is the resolution of Yin/Yang, aka Cardinal/Ordinal, conflicts, and that includes the conflicts between the past self-hood and the future self-hood. The Michaels concur that we should “carry the Yin and embrace the Yang and blend the Chi and achieve harmony”, and thereby ascend the hierarchy of self-hood, through False Personality and True Personality and soul and Fragment and Cadence and Greater Cadence and Side and Entity and Cadre all the way back to the undifferentiated egoless Tao.





EMBODIMENT

Physical, Astral, Mental, Causal bodies – from Theosophy and the original Michaelian group
contrast evolution in quantitative embodiment in Ordinal Planes versus qualitative evolution in
embodiment in Cardinal Planes

This chapter is the product of a search for the word “Embodiment” in the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group channeling sessions, and other words with a similar meaning. I have added some commentary, which consists of my analysis and synthesis of the quotations. Obviously, this word does not represent a significant component of the Michaelian teachings, but even so, the word appears often enough that it seems to me that students can benefit from seeing all of those instances documented and commented on in a chapter of this *Study Papers* book. Furthermore, the word is related to a number of other components of the Michaelian teachings that are considered to be more significant; these will be noted in the commentary on the instances of the word and its contexts. Briefly and basically, the Michaels recommended to the original Michaelian group members that they

So what is meant by embodiment? The online Merriam Webster dictionary definition is:

The word “embodiment” is not capitalized in this chapter or other chapters of this *Study Papers* book because it has no special meaning in the Michaelian teachings; it is not a Michaelian jargon word that needs a definition apart from its use in the common vernacular. One might therefore wonder why it is even included in this book. One answer is that it is just a Scholar–Cast Artisan thing to do: I study the Michaelian teachings documents and I write about them and I want to be thorough. Another answer is that trust issues are pervasive in human psychology and sociology, the subject came up in the original Michaelian group numerous times, some interesting things were said about it, and it might be helpful for Michaelian students to have the answers conveniently collected all in one place.

Embodiment per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

The following extracts from original Michaelian group transcriptions are Q&A exchanges, where an original Michaelian group member asks a question (or makes a comment), and the Michaels provide an answer. This is [not] a subject that would benefit by division into subcategories, as some subjects do. These extracts are presented in the chronological order in which they were given, even though this is not a subject where there was a development or evolution of a specific revelation of a facet of the Michaelian teachings, as was often the case with the original Michaelian group. As is my custom, I often provide some explanatory comments following the question or answer. Underlined words in the Michaels’ answers are my emphasis, to draw attention to what it is that I comment on. Sometimes I embed words or phrases [in brackets] that I believe help to clarify the question or the answer.

The goal of the organism [Personality and the physical body] is, of course, survival. Sexuality is made more difficult by culturally imposed barriers and artificial conditions. This is another barrier. Denial of the pleasures of eating, sleeping, and just biding your time on a pleasant, sunny day are more.

The Personality can come up with many efforts to rationalize why these pleasures should not be experienced: they are not good for you; they cost too much; they waste too much time; they are not useful; they are evil, *et cetera*. [20 March 1974]

Concluding Comments on Embodiment





EMOTIONAL CENTER

It might seem strange that an Entity such as the Michaels, which consists of former Action Role persons, Warriors and Kings, seemed to have a special fondness for the Emotional Center in their recommendations to the original Michaelian group, but such is the case. I found this fact to be so interesting that I have collected those instances into this chapter, and commented on them at length. I suspect that many readers will also find this interesting. My guess is that the Michaels were keen on the proper functioning of the Emotional Center as an important component of the spiritual path because the original Michaelian group members were primarily in the Intellectual Center, and this constituted an imbalance in their personalities; refer to the chapter “Balanced Man” for the explanation.

A more general discussion of the Emotional Center is found in my book *A History of the Overleaf Chart*, in Chapter 2A in Part Two, “Revelation of Overleaves”.

[[Create sections on, for instance, Negative Emotions; contra Intellectual Center; Spiritual Path Context, etc.]]

[[research the word “heart” to acquire context for Michael’s meaning]]

Emotional Center Descriptions

Only many subjective minds that grow from Emotional Center need to keep the closeness of the physical contact. [03 July 1973]

When you teach, teach impartially and without emotion. The truth is not to be learned through Emotional Center. [undated quotation from Soleal]

Only Emotionally Centered beings suicide. You can only reach them emotionally, of course. Suicide is quite romantic to them; also retaliation. [26 August 1973]

Centering is important also, and most late Cycle Old Souls choose Emotionally Centered bodies, as this is the Center easiest to work with. [13 December 1973]

If Scholars who are not Emotionally Centered have trouble with their emotions, how can we overcome that part in us?

First, you must wish this. Most Scholars have little regard for emotional entanglements, unless they happen to be Emotionally Centered. Most Scholars would prefer not to be bothered with the responsibility that goes along with these intrigues. The way you can handle it is to become Balanced and thus come into contact with the Emotional Center and learn to control the output. Right now, there is sporadic high output with little insight — it resembles volcanic eruptions. [27 December 1973]

In order for this group to achieve the cohesion necessary to provide growth, a level of intimacy and trust far exceeding what you now have must be reached. This cannot be achieved through dialogue. Dialogue is false personality’s defense against Emotional Center. [31 January 1974]

Could we have something on the Moving Part of Emotional Center?

The “love of action”. These souls make ideal spectators and will yell themselves hoarse at all spectator events. They rarely participate, but will drive hundreds of miles to spend a weekend at a ski lodge. The romance of movement prevails here with little active participation.

It has been said [in the Gurdjieffian teachings] that the Intellectual Part of Emotional Center is the seat of the “magnetic center” for [spiritual] teachings. Is this so?

That is valid. It also produces the top historians and social scientists, most writers and journalists, many war correspondents, anthropologists and archaeologists. In this Part [Intellectual Part of Emotional Center], the intellect is romanticized. [03 March 1974]

What are the characteristics of the Moving Part of Emotional Center?

It is movement romanticized. The movement becomes the love-object. Most dancers, such as the man Rudolph Nureyev [outstanding Russian ballet member] are Trapped here.

Are those who sit around and watch Trapped here?

Many times this is true — depending on the energy level present. The spectators do draw though from the action on the field. By the same token, some Movers [those with the Moving Center], such as again professional dancers, are trapped in the Emotional Part of Moving Center, where emotion must be expressed through movement. [27 March 1974]

The Intellectual Part of Emotional Center has produced some sensitive moving contributions to this world, such as those of the poet Stephen Vincent Benet and the man Robert Frost. [01 May 1974]

The Intellectual Part of Emotional Center happens to be the one that attracts students to a [spiritual] School. [07 December 1974]

In the first session of the original Michaelian group transcriptions that have become widely available, in the first mention of the Emotional Center, there are hints of the function of the Emotional Center as an important component of the spiritual path. Lorraine was the channel, and the source on tap was the Astral Plane Fragment, Tomas:

Gene: There are many times when I am listening to a song or watching television or something when I have an unexpected emotional wave and I feel like crying over something simple, soft and sweet or whatever. These come at unexpected times. I wonder why these happen.

[Tomas:] Well, I believe that that is because it revokes a memory from the past. I do not mean revokes, I mean promotes a memory from the past — a memory in your consciousness. It dredges it up and suddenly it is there. You don't know why, but you remember something. It makes you... Do you know, about when you hear a song in this conscious life that you have now that brings back a memory that you had in the past, when you were a boy, it reminds you of a summer afternoon and suddenly you feel a nostalgic feeling. The same thing happens here, except this is bringing back a pleasant or unpleasant memory from maybe three lives back. But it is all in your subconscious. It is all there and there is nothing to explain it, other than the fact that you just are suddenly aware of a nostalgic feeling within yourself — a sentimental feeling within yourself — a great love pouring out of you. [19 June 1973]

This is the first indication, among many others in the original Michaelian group transcriptions, that the Emotional Center can be the conduit leading from a subconscious memory to a conscious review of an emotional past-life experience. This type of revelation can be useful for understanding the context of, and the otherwise unconscious impulses of, one's current lifetime.

Emotional acceptance will only come about when the [Intellectual Center] expectations have ceased. [03 July 1973]

Per the chapter "Levels of Being" in the ontological and evolutionary hierarchy, the Emotional Center is more fundamental than the Intellectual Center. Therefore, if one can extinguish negative thoughts — unrealistic expectations being one of them — then positive emotions can emerge. Positivity works in the other direction also: extinguishing negative emotions promotes positive emotions, which promote positive thoughts. This is well known in therapeutic counseling psychology, and goes by the name "Rational Emotive Behavioral Therapy", on which Wikipedia has an article.

[Soleal:] Even if the negative emotion is not expressed, it is there until the being begins serious work on the real self. When you teach, teach impartially and without emotion. The truth is not to be learned through Emotional Center. [Dimensions! June 1975]

As we will see further on, the Michaels say the opposite: Emotional Center recognizes truth that the Intellectual Center does not. I suggest that Soleal's statement about truth not being found via Emotional Center can be reconciled with the Michaels' statements if we discerns the difference between negative emotions in the Negative Pole and positive emotions in the Positive Pole. In what follows, I make this distinction, and it seems to make impartial sense.

Alice: Can marijuana help get in touch with emotions? Should I smoke it?

[Tomas:] Marijuana can help to get in touch with emotions. Yes, Alice, you need work there. [05 July 1973]

This statement is the first of many where Intellectually Centered people are advised to develop a healthy Emotional Center as a part of “Balancing” the three lower Centers. Refer to the chapters, “Levels of Being” and “Balanced Man” and “Centering Traps”, for more information.

[Tomas:] With deepest love, love on a higher plane, each are “being.” There is no question of life or living, just to be, and because of love, be together. Love is one essence piece that was a gift and is to be used to attain higher things. Without the complete, deepest emotional love, higher planes cannot be attained. The love is part of the puzzle of the whole self and is an integral part of being. With love, the soul has been made complete and is then allowed to grow. Love is a large step to higher things. It is an emotional reality and should be sought. Your steps past it can be glorious. [10 July 1973]

Elsewhere it was said that the function of reincarnation is to experience “all of life”, meaning that the soul becomes well-rounded and complete. Certainly that includes all that the Emotional Center has to offer. To the above statement by Tomas, I would add that the Higher Emotional Center correlates with the sixth plane, by whatever name it is called. Refer to the chapters, “Love” and “Planes”, for more information.

Negative Emotions

Even if the negative emotion is not expressed, it is there until the being begins serious work on the real self. [Mid-1980]

Carolyn: I have felt the need to express my opinions more lately, and I wonder if this is good. Sometimes I have spouted off.

Do you understand the source of the negative emotions? If so, then you should examine them carefully and see if you can turn them into something positive. Hostility is never an act of conscious will. The only positive forces are peaceful, loving ones. Carolyn still has a tendency to slip into the patterns or vibrations of the moment. Many sleeping souls provide the necessary shocks to keep her on the right track — constantly examining herself. This is a common failing among neophytes on the true path. There are always many doubts until the integration takes place, and the commitment is made and is irrevocable. Life on the material plane, with all its glamour, continues to lure you back. The glamour is illusion — Maya, if you prefer the more esoteric term. Maya is part of Karma and is present for a very specific purpose. It tests your spiritual growth all the time and is your sole eternal safety checkpoint. When you reach the point in your spiritual growth when you “know” that all hostile feelings and thoughts and words — and even world wars — come from lower Centers in sleeping souls and they are not in control, then you will lose the desire or need to retaliate or spout off. It’s like spouting off to a stone wall for all the good it does you. You gain nothing and lose a great deal. [24 July 1973]

The Baby Soul is normally agreeable, a pillar of the community — until an opposing viewpoint is expressed. Then, inwardly the Baby Soul is bewildered, baffled by the difference. Outwardly, it will express anger, hostility, negative emotional energy, belligerence. [late August 1973]

Dick: I think I’m Centered in Intellectual Part. I used to think I was in Emotional Center.

We think so too, but you use Emotional Center often. You have had a tendency toward downward leaks [to negative emotions]. This is not so much in evidence now. You are moving toward Balance. [08 September 1974]

Cynthia: Could you clarify whether I am the debtor or the debtee?

Cynthia is the debtor. Naturally, the one to whom the debt is owed [debtee] will have more negative emotions surrounding the payoff. The one who owes [debtor] will usually seek quiet solution while the one who is owed will continue to demand fireworks long after dawn. [30 May 1974]

When Mechanical Man expresses verbally a negative emotion, you see, there is a compounded energy leak. It is fine to just admonish you all not to [verbally] express [negative emotions], but we understand that you must

know why. When you compound the leak, you step completely back and allow the lower Centers full control, and it is a soulless, automatic response, and much overloading of the circuitry occurs. However, when you merely acknowledge to yourself that you are having a negative reaction, why then you are immediately reducing the force of the reaction, simply by the internal Photograph, and also by sending the reaction up a notch instead of downward. In other words, this process requires, in and of itself, the use of Intellectual Center in order to Photograph the inappropriate action. This enables the hot wires to cool down a bit, and allows the time to formulate a dispassionate response. This also many times results in a cooling off of the trigger. Also, when that happens, there is a neutral energy flow, and this in time can provide access to Higher Centers and, therefore, positive energy. [05 October 1974]

Alice: My friend feels great negativity from his wife. I feel he is in the Repression Mode.

In the first place, the lady is not feeling negativity, just boredom, and this is perceived not as a negative emotion, but simply as a lack of emotion, by him. But you are correct in that this man is in the Repression Mode. With his other Overleaves, he could unleash great talent on an unsuspecting world. Except for the Repression, he has the identical Overleaves of some of this world's great musicians. This man is a Spiritualist in the Intellectual Part of Emotional Center, more Impatient than Stubborn. But this is self-directed and there is much frustration at self for repressing the drive. [05 October 1974]

Emotional Center as Spiritual Access

The barrier between you and the Emotional Center is one that many in this cadre share. You are not alone. [14 December 1974]

Summary Comments on Emotional Center

List the functions of the Emotional Center towards enlightenment

- bringing non-verbal or pre-conscious insights to awareness where they can be re-experienced
- insights into past life emotional karmas
- Balancing all of the lower Centers as a part of transcending them into the higher Centers.

Not to be confused or conflated with the intuition insights of the Instinctive (Impulse) Center

Not the Heart Chakra.

Head versus Heart dichotomy





ENERGY AND ENERGY LEAKS

There is a concept in both Gurdjieff/Ouspensky and in the original Michaelian group called “energy leaks”. The whole idea is related to a number of other factors, such as Centers and Chakras, and Kundalini, all of which are covered in other chapters in this *Study Papers* book. First we will find out what the original Michaelian group members knew from the Gurdjieffian teachings, and then we will find out what Michael had to say about it, because they pretty much borrowed it entire.

[[Search for “drain” as well as “leak”.]]

Energy Leaks according to Ouspensky

Q. Why should moments of consciousness be so rare? Is it a question of energy?

A. No fuel. If you have no electricity, or if you have a pocket torch with a bad battery, you may have a flash and then nothing. Consciousness is light, light is the result of a certain energy; if there is no energy there is no light.

Q. Does the secret of all development of consciousness lie in the conservation and control of energy?

A. No, not all the secret, though conservation and increase of energy is very important. But in itself it is not enough; one has to know how to control it. Energy is the mechanical side of consciousness. We cannot begin with the idea of control. In order to control one small thing we must know the whole machine. First, we have to stop waste of energy; second, collect it by self-remembering; then, adjust things. We cannot begin in any other way.

Q. Can energy be stored?

A. Yes, energy can be stored when you are able to store it. But at first the question is not about storing but about not wasting. We would have enough energy for everything we want to do if we did not waste it on unnecessary things. For instance, the reason why we are so formatory is that we are too dull, we do not feel enough. We thin we feel, but this is an illusion. And the reason why we feel so little is because we have no energy available for the Emotional Center.

Leaks of energy were already spoken about, but the worst of all is expressing negative emotions. If you can stop the expression of negative emotions, you will save energy and never feel the lack of it.

We can only hope to become conscious beings if we use in the right way the energy that is now used in the wrong way. The machine can produce enough energy, but you can waste it on being angry or irritated or something like that, and then very little remains. The normal organism produces quite enough energy not only for all Centers but also for storing. Production is all right, but expenditure is wrong. These leaks have to be studied, because with some kinds of leaks it is not worth going on until they are stopped, for the more one accumulates energy, the more will leak out. It would be like pouring water into a sieve. Certain negative emotions produce precisely such leaks. In certain situations some people go through a whole range of negative emotions so a habitual that they do not even notice them. It may occupy only five minutes or five seconds, but it may be sufficient to spend all the energy their organism produced for twenty four hours. *[author, book, page]*

Psychic Energy

[[Is this section a repeat of the chapter by the title of “Psychic Energy”?]]

Before you can have an “energy leak”, you have to have energy; so what is that all about?

Psychic energy is the energy generated by the essence. It is naturally a more refined energy than that generated by the internal centers of emotion, intellect and instinctive and moving functions. This energy is independent of the others. *[29 November 1973]*

I would like comments on energies used by various energy Centers.

All of this energy is psychic energy. Imagine a superconductor with many terminals, each representing a different power drain. If one of these users or consumers is utilizing massive amounts of power, there will be a corresponding loss in the other areas, occasionally even short circuits and blown fuses. The power that energizes the psyche is all the same type, or rather, the same grade of electromagnetic radiation. There is no refinement from one center to the other until the powers of transmutation become yours to utilize; then this energy becomes centralized — channeled, so to speak. When we speak of harmonious balance, we refer to that state in which this concentration is reached. And this also goes for the release of specific amounts of energy. Emotionally centered mediums have an easy time with manifestations, and also become excellent transport mediums. This medium (SC) is not Emotionally Centered, and is not in touch with the release mechanism that would enable, or at least enhance, the manifestation. Astral entities can manifest without any assistance, we cannot. We must borrow the energy from one of you, and we cannot do this against your will. We wish to remind you that there are two very specific types of reactions: implosion and explosion; also, two specific charges in polarization: negative and positive. A great deal of the energy utilized by the lower centers in life situations are implosion reactions with negative charges. Controlled reactions of this type do not ever become as spectacular as their antitheses [the higher Centers].

NL: Is our energy self-generated? Are we born with a certain amount of energy and it regenerates?

The body can be thought of as the vehicle, or the conductor. The essence becomes the source of attraction, and as [spiritual] growth occurs, can draw upon an infinite power source. However, the average soul uses a very small, a very finite, amount of the energy available during a given physical interval. Most of you are somewhat sluggish due to cultural inducements, and rarely draw upon much energy. [27 December 1973]

The source for the energy is the same. The speed [with] which it is burned as fuel is faster when utilized by the Higher Centers. [09 February 1974]

Clarify this.

The fuel is the same for all Centers. It is the consumer that is different. [09 February 1974]

The production of fuel: does it have anything to do with self-remembering? In order to Balance the Centers, we have to have a larger supply to reach higher Centers.

An analogy would be an old fashioned stove with insufficient insulation, a leaky chimney, and an inefficient flue compared to a brand new radar [microwave] oven. Moments of pure consciousness do produce contact with Higher Centers, yes. [09 February 1974]

Is self-remembering the way to produce psychic energy?

Not the way, simply the by-product. The self-remembering must be produced first through those methods we have outlined to you [meditation, concentration, fasting, study]. Then as you go progressively toward balance, you automatically will have more and more flashes of consciousness, opening the door to higher expression.

Comment: That makes it sound like you generate what you need as you go along. There are check points to tell you where you are. [09 February 1974]

I feel that a conscious soul has inner fires burning.

We do not dispute that. The energy will be available in quantities, now unavailable to you, simply because you will not be leaking it out through fantasies and hostilities. [30 May 1974]

The energy force of the universe is neutral, and simply flows. Psychic energy in the hands of such as the man _____ is a very positive source. He is right. He can draw at will, but does not do this indiscriminately. He uses the discretion that we would wish. [29 October 1974]

Energy, you see, does have a vibratory quality, and psychic energy is no exception to this. If the vibratory quality of the universal flow is neutral, and the psychic energy flow from the essence is positive, then the vibratory quality of the personality must be negative. [21 February 1975]

As long as you continue to play the game of the culture and undergo the constant role-switching that occurs day in and day out, there will not be too much outward change in you. But this does not mean that there has been no change. It is merely that the role-switching uses up a tremendous amount of psychic energy which could be utilized for work on the path. Some students are able to remain in life roles and become adepts, but this requires total detachment — or “non-attachment” if you prefer. You see, as long as you are involved in the conflict of the personality against all other personalities, then the essence is held back. If the student is

performing in a capacity that allows the essence to bloom, it is possible for him to remain in the mainstream if he wishes, and yet not lose contact with the teaching. Most of you students still lose contact with the greater part of the teaching the moment you walk out into your life role. It is even at times, spectacular, to observe as you don your masks. There is still some need in many of you to hide the fact that you are "into" something like this from those who still have your permission to organize your lives. Do you wonder then why you do not live the teaching or why there is no outward visible sign at all that you have grown through this teaching? As long as this remains something to be hidden, your personality will be externally vigilant to ensure there is no slip-up, and that no one suspects you might be a little strange. [21 December 1974]

Energy Leaks in General

Energy Vampires

Can we stop the drain, the leaching process [from energy vampire people]? Can we recharge our energy some way?

Stopping the discharge would be the best course, yes. You should now be able to feel the leak and simply refuse to allow them to feed upon you. [09 February 1974]

Why do I feel drained or pulling at times?

Fear. This is usually a powerful feeling, and if you do not know what it is, it can scare you badly.

(Comment: precognition should not drain you.) [03 July 1974]

The only way we know of to come to agape, which presumably is the goal, is to acknowledge your feelings, likes and dislikes, and then come past them. We have not ever advocated the toleration of any obnoxious behavior to you, and we never will. It is far too much of an energy drain. [21 September 1974]

Sock it to me, Michael, so I may be a better person for it.

Since your own Chief Feature is Self-Deprecation, your own timidity is stronger and therefore needs the work. The start now has been good, but you must not dwell on the possible effects of your photographs. This is a horrendous drain in energy. Just say it. Most of the time you have been right when you have felt strongly. Practicing with those you trust is all right for the present. It is valid that if it is the truth you speak, most have no rejoinder. Only those in Rejection will sometimes reject even the truth. [21 September 1974]

I experience the luxury of anger, and feel the drain. [Soleal 11 January 75]

Children in this culture are permitted to drain off enormous amounts of usable energy in the form of hostility. [12 February 1975]

Working with one who is truly not a student only wastes the energies of the cadre, and grieving over their loss results in a tremendous drain. I don't think I even need mention what happens when you fantasize over what might happen if that one or this one left the teaching. [16 February 1975]

Energy Leaks and Centers

I would like comments on energies used by various energy Centers.

All of this energy is psychic energy. Imagine a superconductor with many terminals, each representing a different power drain. If one of these users or consumers is utilizing massive amounts of power, there will be a corresponding loss in the other areas, occasionally even short circuits and blown fuses. The power that energizes the psyche is all the same type, or rather, the same grade of electromagnetic radiation. There is no refinement from one center to the other until the powers of transmutation become yours to utilize; then this energy becomes centralized — channeled, so to speak. When we speak of harmonious balance, we refer to that state in which this concentration is reached. And this also goes for the release of specific amounts of energy. Emotionally centered mediums have an easy time with manifestations, and also become excellent transport mediums. This medium (SC) is not Emotionally Centered, and is not in touch with the release mechanism that would enable, or at least enhance, the manifestation. Astral entities can manifest without any assistance, we cannot. We must borrow the energy from one of you, and we cannot do this against your will. We wish to remind you that there are two very specific types of reactions: implosion and explosion; also, two specific charges in polarization: negative and positive. A great deal of the energy utilized by the lower centers in life

situations are implosion reactions with negative charges. Controlled reactions of this type do not ever become as spectacular as their antitheses [the higher Centers].

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Is there anything useful about this for us to know?

Well, of course, you can use them as a fairly handy yardstick by which to measure your progress toward balance [of Centers]. You can feel the energy being expended, and after awhile locate its point of exit and then more accurately pinpoint the center responsible for the output. If it is not the proper center to handle the particular action then you know that there has been a leak. [16 June 1974]

Is it that the trapped part increases in energy while the weakened part decreases in energy?

[That is] valid, except for the Instinctive Center, which malfunctions only during organic illness. [16 June 1974]

Can chakras be likened to Leyden jars [which accumulate an electrical charge and then discharge their static electricity]? Would that be a proper analogy?

Very much so; you could even say overwhelmingly so. The energy leak virtually paralyzes any other Centers. [Some Centers] attempt to intervene. For instance, the Intellectual Centers attempt to prevent crimes of "passion." Yes, it does [prevent crimes], and many weird symptoms manifest such as impotency, premature ejaculation, vaginitis without a causative organism, etc. Normally though, it is the Moving Center that digs the sex act and Emotional Center says it is bad. Intellectual Center is fairly aloof about sex. [16 June 1974]

When mechanical man expresses verbally a negative emotion, you see, there is a compounded energy leak. It is fine to just admonish you all not to express, but we understand that you must know why. When you compound the leak, you step completely back and allow the lower centers full control, and it is a soulless, automatic response, and much overloading of the circuitry occurs. However, when you merely acknowledge to yourself that you are having a negative reaction, why then you are immediately reducing the force of the reaction, simply by the internal photograph, and also by sending the reaction up a notch instead of downward. In other words, this process requires in and of itself the use of Intellectual Center in order to photograph the inappropriate action. This enables the hot wires to cool down a bit, and allows the time to formulate a dispassionate response. This also many times results in a cooling off of the trigger. Also, when that happens, there is a neutral energy flow, and this in time can provide access to Higher Centers, and therefore, positive energy. The only positive energy we know of is that which we have elected to call "agape." Other sources may be either neutral or negative. The high states are free of the complexity found in the lower states. This should explain the purity of the energy flow. The lower states, being more complex, require more complex emotions to feed upon and be fed upon. [05 October 1974]

_____ *asked about Centering, and what force makes one achieve balance.*

The achievement of balance is an act of will. The force behind it is the combined energies of the true "center of gravity" [a Gurdjieff term] within you. You always have this energy, but normally you allow it to dissipate unused. When you work toward balance, you learn to conserve this energy and divert it into the work. This energy does not run out, by the way. It is part of the neutral universal flow and is infinite. You must learn to tap it, however. Your centers of gravity are now top heavy, or off true center. When you go to balance it is centered — ergo, balanced; not very mystical, but far more practical. There is no leakage of energy in balanced man, and all of this energy can be diverted into the [spiritual] work — whether this be meditation, concentration or study. [26 November 1974]

What part of the brain would correspond to the Centers? Is it a set, a gestalt, or what?

More than anything, this [balanced Centering] can be seen as an appropriate reaction to the situation. In the case of the Lower Centers, it means that there is no leaking of energy and fatigue buildup as a result. You see, if you respond to an intellectual situation with an emotional reaction, it is usually totally inappropriate, and it comes not from Emotional Center, but usually from the Emotional part of the Center in which you spend your life. If you respond to an emotional situation in a Moving Centered way, there is a tremendous downward relegation of energy, and fatigue follows. You can readily determine wrong use of Centers in yourself by the way that you feel after the situation has passed. If you are tired, angry or any of those negative things, you can be sure that wrong use of Centers is to blame. If you feel high, elated, joyous, etcetera, then perhaps good use

of Centers has occurred. Any situation that produces a negative reaction is wrong use of Centers, and therefore wrong work for students on this path. This is why we ask that you look at your negative reactions, even in retrospect, and determine what happened to your energy when you expressed. Centering, or balance, is, above all, appropriate. That is what it means — the loss of all of these unreasonable lapses in the volition. When you react negatively, you are certainly not in control — your false personality is in control. The true personality of the essence merely looks at the script and makes the appropriate response at the moment it is called for — from the Center equipped to handle that situation with dispassion. [25 January 1975]

felt very highly charged bolts of energy coming in. He didn't need much sleep, and couldn't find a way to outlay the energy.

You can utilize these periods of positive energy flow to work toward balance through work in the centers. Moving center is a good one for this channel, and is, of course, the easiest to reach. Other good work can involve the breathing exercises that you experienced, turning the energy upward and out into the liberated meditation. You see, even meditation is subject to real and artificial space, and the personality imposes limitations on the space that the meditation may occupy. The liberated meditation of the essence utilizes the energy efficiently, and does not cause leakage, resulting in fatigue. The moments of power that those in the Caution mode experience from time to time may be utilized in the same fashion. [08 February 1975]

So let's take a look at the various Centers that can leak energy. Turns out that only Sexual Center and Emotional Center are mentioned.

Sexual Center

[Sex is] the worst energy leak of all; also the biggest Maya of all. It is also the biggest thing here to go upward, but usually people go downward with it. [08 September 73]

Love and sex seem like separate things, but when they're pulling together, it seems like a stronger force is generated than by either by itself. It seems like the only kind of energy that I have experienced to date that might be the kind of energy that you need for actual evolution. Can you comment?

Sexual energy, when used to express Higher Centers, can be incredibly strong. When the energy is relegated downward, it results in an energy leak. That is sometimes why you want to sleep after physical union. You feed lower centers — sometimes the Moving Center and the essence is exhausted, so the body goes to sleep to free the essence. When you use [the] Emotional Center to express moving needs, don't you feel the leak? So, if you feel that, just stretch your mind. Right now, you are all using Emotional Centers to satisfy moving needs, and this is a result that is culturally induced — that you feel something uplifting each time you have a physical union. That is absurd! [Soleal, late December 73]

Emotional Center

Down here where I am, on this poor old Physical Plane, could you send me a little more energy?

Tap the proper source and the energy will be there. Emotional energy results in a powerful leak when used to feed other Centers.

How can one get to the source?

By not reacting to the Maya of the Physical Plane. This results in a drain. No amount of stewing in one's own juices will make a mechanical object perform beyond its optimal level. [18 September 1973]

I would like to ask if there is advice on how to turn things around in the right direction.

You are using Emotional Center as a psychic dumping ground. This is causing the energy leak you are feeling now. The meditations, or more correctly concentrations, under marijuana result in good insights for you, if you will follow them out. [22 September 1973]

I am confused about my tearfulness and energy leaks and wonder where this recent tearfulness in me is coming from.

Comment: If the tears are coming from a positive place and there is love and communication, they probably are not an energy leak. If they are coming without a pattern, they are probably an energy leak.

Tears are, of course, the outward manifestation of a working Emotional Center. If the tears are shed for no reason, in other words, they are crocodile tears, you can be sure that the soul is Emotionally Centered. [20 February 1974]

[[Continue to research to the end of the original Michaelian group transcriptions.]]

Disempowerment

This phenomenon has not gone unnoticed in psychotherapy or in pop psychology, where it often goes by the name “disempowerment”....

Concluding Comments of Energy and Leaks





③ ENLIGHTENMENT

This chapter is the product of a search for the word enlightenment in the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group channeling sessions. This word is a significant component of the Michaelian teachings, so there are good reasons to discuss the subject in this *Study Papers* book, including: 1) the subject came up numerous times during the original Michaelian group; 2) some interesting things were said about the subject; 3) the subject is related to a number of other components of the Michaelian teachings that are considered to be significant; 4) students can presumably benefit from having the mentions conveniently collected and commented all in one place.

The word enlightenment is not capitalized in this chapter or other chapters of this *Study Papers* book because it has no special meaning in the Michaelian teachings; it is not a Michaelian jargon word that needs a definition apart from its use in the common vernacular.

This chapter is NOT one of many others in this book that focuses on a psychological component of the Michaelian teachings as found in original Michaelian group transcriptions. Rather, it is one that focuses on a spiritual component. Psychological components of the Michaelian teachings are usually either a positive to be cultivated or a negative to be mitigated; both are amenable to psychotherapy. The Michaelian version of psychology is not to be confused with the pop psychology of the self-improvement movement, those that do not have a spiritual core or perspective. Rather, the Michaelian psychotherapeutic path (aimed at improving psychological health) is a beneficial precursor to the spiritual path (aimed at improving soul health). To skip the former but attempt the latter is referred to as “spiritual bypassing”:
>https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spiritual_bypass<. To skip mitigating one’s psychological issues and attempt to go straight to enlightenment usually proves to be problematic.

With any spiritual teaching, one can reasonably expect that the subject of so-called “enlightenment” will be present, even if not central to that teaching. Such was the case with the original Michaelian group. But what does this mean in spiritual teachings in general, and in the Michaelian teachings in particular? And how does one arrive at, or elicit, enlightenment? Why even seek enlightenment? Answering these questions are the subject of this chapter. As we will see, their answers are various.

Enlightenment per Wikipedia

We all have at least a vague and general notion of what “enlightenment” refers to, but how about we clarify and expand the definition by taking a look at the history and description of it from my usual primary source of information, Wikipedia. Underlined words are my emphasis, calling attention to synonyms.

Enlightenment is the “full comprehension of a situation”. The term is commonly used to denote the Age of Enlightenment, but is also used in Western cultures in a religious context. It translates several Buddhist terms and concepts, most notably *bodhi*, *kensho*, and *satori*. Related terms from Asian religions are *kaivalya* and *moksha* (liberation) in Hinduism, *Kevala Jnana* in Jainism, and *ushta* in Zoroastrianism.

In Christianity, the word “enlightenment” is rarely used, except to refer to the Age of Enlightenment and its influence on Christianity. Roughly equivalent terms in Christianity may be illumination, *kenosis*, *metanoia*, revelation, salvation, *theosis*, and conversion.

Perennialists and Universalists view enlightenment and mysticism as equivalent terms for religious or spiritual insight. [[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Enlightenment_\(spiritual\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Enlightenment_(spiritual))< — retrieved 04 November 2021]

After that introduction, there followed more extensive explanations of enlightenment according to Buddhism, Hinduism, and Jainism. Then the Wikipedia article continued with a major section on the Western understanding. Let me borrow a few pithy statements that seem relevant to the discussion to follow:

In the Western world the concept of enlightenment in a religious context acquired a romantic meaning. It has become synonymous with self-realization and the true self, which is being regarded as a substantial essence which is covered over by social conditioning.

The Western notion of enlightenment is equivalent to the Michaelian notion, in terms of the maximization of Essence or True Personality and the minimization of False Personality.

The equivalent term "awakening" has also been used in a Christian context, namely the Great Awakenings, several periods of religious revival in American religious history.

Refer to the chapter "Awakening from Sleep" for discussion of the Michaelian equivalent of that metaphor for enlightenment.

Another equivalent term is illuminationism.... Illuminationism is a doctrine according to which the process of human thought needs to be aided by divine grace. It is the oldest and most influential alternative to naturalism in the theory of mind and epistemology. It was an important feature of ancient Greek philosophy, Neoplatonism, medieval philosophy, and in particular, the Illuminationist school of Islamic philosophy.

Augustine was an important proponent of Illuminationism, stating that everything we know is taught to us by God as He casts His light over the world, saying that "The mind needs to be enlightened by light from outside itself, so that it can participate in truth, because it is not itself the nature of truth. You will light my lamp, Lord," and "You hear nothing true from me which you have not first told me." Augustine's version of illuminationism is not that God gives us certain information, but rather gives us insight into the truth of the information we received for ourselves.

Obviously, the words "enlightenment" and "illumination" both use the metaphor of coming out of the "dark" and into the "light".

The Wikipedia article has a lot more to say about the history and meaning of enlightenment in various religious and spiritual traditions and movements. I highly recommend that you read it in preparation for the following presentation.

In addition to the above quotations, we all probably have our own notion of what "enlightenment" refers to, but I would bet that few of us have actually experienced it. That is why we seek it; that is what the "search" is often about; that is what the "spiritual path" allegedly leads to. Now that we know some of the history of the concept of enlightenment, let's see what the Michaels had to say about it.

Enlightenment per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

The following extracts from original Michaelian group transcriptions are Q&A exchanges, where an original Michaelian group member asks a question (or makes a comment), and the Michaels provide an answer. These extracts are presented in the chronological order in which they were given. As is my custom, I usually provide some explanatory comments following the question or answer. Underlined words are my emphasis, to draw attention to what it is that I comment on. Sometimes I embed words or phrases [in brackets] that I believe help to clarify the question or the answer. Numerous study papers related to this chapter are to be found among my comments.

The subject of enlightenment came up very early in the original Michaelian group — this was even before the Michaels showed up — and it came up repeatedly until near the end of the original Michaelian group. Let's start with the first appearance of the word, and continue chronologically until the end.

Dick: Okay then, I'll meditate on the one question.

[Soleal:] Just be patient. You cannot achieve enlightenment by any route in one day or by any method without first making the decision to establish this as the goal for the present lifetime and then making the decision to devote the rest of the life to that pursuit. The devotion must be there, no matter which path you take ultimately. The path can take you through the mainstream of life on your world, or you may eventually decide that you must have the seclusion. A communal setting would offer this in many ways. You need people around by whom you can measure your progress and this is not bad for you. Self-confidence, and I mean in your own spiritual strength, must be developed. [03 July 1973]

Several times in the original Michaelian group transcriptions, it is recorded that Dick wanted to be gifted with something like an enlightenment experience. The Michaels consistently reminded him that it does not work like that, considering the Michaels' understanding of enlightenment, which might be different from the

understanding of others. There is a chapter, “Communal Living”, that discusses that lifestyle as a potential contribution to enlightenment.

Dick: I have a question about Kundalini energy. My impression is that enlightenment requires a great amount of energy and that it is Kundalini energy. I experienced the energy once at age 37, briefly. What I want to know is, can it be a gift? And if so, can Tomas give it to me?

[Tomas:] This cannot be completely a gift — it requires work on your part. It can be a temporary gift. As you say, it can be painful to come down. Be careful of what you ask, Dick; it could be given [but maybe you wouldn't like it].

Refer to the chapter “Chakras and Kundalini” for more information about that. Having a kundalini experience sometimes happens at the beginning of enlightenment (which is a disorienting way to start your spiritual path, if not actually painful), or it can happen somewhere along the way, induced by various means, either as a product of spiritual practices, and/or as a gift by an enlightened Master.

Dick: Can it be given in increments?

It can be regulated. This is also temporary. Shall we try this in two days, Dick? I will attempt to send the energy Saturday, your time. Meditate and then we can try. This experiment may not succeed on the first attempt.

Dick: Is this [kundalini] the essence of consciousness?

Not entirely. By itself, it can be called insanity. There also must be understanding.

Tina: Then we need more than cramming information?

There is a difference in the two. Understanding comes with living experience. Information is the abstract acquisition of facts, none of which have been lived through. The excess of information is confusing and of no benefit to your growing process. It is not good unless there is understanding along with information. In your case, Dick, this is why I suggested exercise and moving — to calm down the information. [05 July 1973]

Although the acquisition of information can be illuminating, it is not the kind of enlightenment that comes from a personal spiritual experience. It can actually be counterproductive to focus on the acquisition of information if it excludes or detracts from having spiritually transformative experiences.

The next mention of enlightenment appeared in the first session in which the Michaels were the source.

The question was asked concerning the decision to go on in the search for spiritual enlightenment — on to becoming an Adept. What do you do when you get so far and are not too sure you want to continue? We wondered if the Masters picked those in whom the desire for “psychic experiences” was quite strong to become Adepts.

The desire is polar, too. Everything in the universe is, of course. Along with the desire is always the dread. The choice does not become clear to you until you have experienced the desire from another dimension. You must stand and observe the desire from the shadows of dread. Wishes, like everything, have positive and negative poles. There must be attraction and repulsion or nothing exists because no energy is being generated. The primordial force was energy, not mass. Think about that when you are hung up on cause and effect. The more primitive one is energy. Does it not seem that all seeking the least complex will return to the energy from whence they came? Complexity is the antithesis of what the spirit seeks. The body represents the epitome of complexity. That is why the spirit is again and again attracted to it, until the partially awakened Essence catches a glimpse beyond the “veil.” [12 August 1973]

This answer hints that enlightenment is the awakening of Essence in the simplicity that follows after complexity is transcended.

Two weeks later, the subject came up again. The affirmation then was that philosophical exercises in vocabulary and rhetoric were just half-acquired enlightenment, not the entirety of what the soul seeks:

Dick: I would like to have a medical session some night, but right now, I'd like to move on to something else. I'd like to bring up the subject of “heaviness” that I find reading all these esoteric books and Hindu books. So far, in these systems, I've found so little of the ordinary type of joy. I'd like to buy a toy boat, just lie in the bath tub and putt around.

You would probably benefit much more from that activity than from reading fifty philosophical texts. These are nothing more than another Old Soul expounding on half-acquired enlightenment. Enlightenment is not ponderous. As I said before, as growth progresses, the soul seeks simplicity. This is one good way to discern whether a particular piece of literature will be of any help to you. If it is merely an exercise in vocabulary and rhetoric, then abandon it. Some very wordy material comes from Young Souls. Be wary of this in selecting reading material. [26 August 1973]

Personally, based on what I have seen of it, I believe that good philosophy can provide a certain kind of enlightenment, the conceptual kind that inquiring minds seek. However, the kind of enlightenment recommended by the Michaels, the spiritual kind that the soul seeks, is a step beyond philosophy.

Ray: Two weeks ago, Michael suggested further contact with meditation. I can't concentrate, and I need more advice on this.

Meditation is the clearing of the mind of trivia, and allowing the free flow. Transcendental Meditation provides good groundwork for those new to the enlightenment game. The more exalted forms such as that taught by Chögyam Trungpa requires much preparation, and may take years to perfect. Also, many meditate for all of their lives and achieve nothing. To be effective, meditation must prepare one for activity, not rest. [08 November 1973]

The use of the word "game" here is not pejorative, but it does indicate that there are game-like techniques or skills that take practice and focus, such as of meditation and concentration, that are useful to achieve the goal of enlightenment.

Jeff: What benefit or harm is there to stimulating the acupuncture point known as the "Divine Door"?

No harm. The benefit depends on your belief system. If you think or believe in it, it will probably be of benefit. If your belief system is such that you believe that stimulation of certain areas of the human brain such as the hypothalamus, the pineal gland, [or] the anterior pituitary produces a doorway to enlightenment and this belief is strong enough, sometimes the result is just short of miraculous. [15 November 1973]

Such supposed doorways to enlightenment are effective for the same reason that placebos and hypnosis are effective: it is a property of the way the mind works.

Sue: Any hint in the direction I might take?

Should we go through it all over again, Sue? Meditation, concentration, fasting, study, right-thinking — this is the magic enlightenment formula, like $E = MC^2$. [22 November 1973]

Those practices and other practices that foster enlightenment are listed in the conclusion of this chapter.

Phyllis: I would like to know about the manifestation at age 35 — the breakthrough that occurs then.

What we have said is that the Role in Essence manifests at approximately this age. Yes, some break through much earlier, particularly if they go their own way early in life. Loners break through far more easily than those attached to large "close" families: these take much longer.... if you do not manifest at this stage it is unlikely that you will later. However, we know of a few souls who have not. Having your Role manifest and searching for enlightenment are quite different. Baby Warriors do not search [spiritually] but they do manifest [their Role]. There is no magic age for beginning to search [spiritually] — we are now working with an octogenarian [in his eighties] who has just begun. [20 December 1973]

Enlightenment is beyond the clear manifestation of the Role in midlife as the Michaels say, but I would also add that it is beyond the healthy psyche in general.

Dick: I spent hours with Nancy and it is like she cannot see the difference between [Gurdjieff's] "C" [Cosmic] and "B" [experiential catalyst] groups. She thinks she will be God-conscious soon. She thinks she's near, through the Agni Yoga. Is it because I do not have the guidance when I'm talking with her or what?

No. It is not your lack of guidance. It is your lack of courage of conviction that does not permit you to point out the utter nonsense in the hope for instant "enlightenment". The path is long and steep. The difference in the teachings is, of course, the fact that this is a living teaching; many of those are not. You have found it difficult to interpret the scriptures of the various religious sects on your world. This is because these are now dead teachings. [30 December 1973]

This would seem to indicate that ancient paths to enlightenment might not be as effective or efficient or valid as modern methods taught by an authentic and current teacher such as the Michaels (a type "C" influence), who tailored their recommendations to the actual seekers, not to generic seekers. One wonders if some of the messages to the original Michaelian group members are entirely appropriate for post-original Michaelian group members. I would say that an informed person can use ordinary life experiences (type "B") as spiritual catalyst. I would also say that ancient spiritual paths are not completely worthless for modern seekers.

We would point out to you at this point that there is a vast difference between spiritual growth and "enlightenment". We would expect all of you, without exception, to grow from this experience; we would not expect you all to achieve "cosmic consciousness". [27 January 1974]

The path to enlightenment is “long and steep”, as it said in the previous Q&A exchange quoted above, so that might be too much to expect that of oneself; it is not too much to expect spiritual growth.

Sarah: A good teacher keeps students unfulfilled to keep them coming back for another lesson.

Of course, there are (ways). We have spoken to you many times of conscious recall of the dreams and of the time spent on the Astral Plane, but most must go through this process one step at a time. Most cannot jump from that Maya-filled life in which they find themselves into the too rarefied atmosphere of enlightenment.

These processes are valid, but they do take time and they do open doors to many more processes that bring you ever closer to the goal. We would Photograph your Impatience now, and that is not necessarily a bad place to start. There is no truly rapid method by which you can throw off the weighted cloak of culture and society; this takes time. [10 May 1974]

Refer to the chapters, “Dreams and Dreaming” and “Planes” for more information on those topics. The recommendation here seems to be to take ‘baby steps’ on the spiritual path, which consists of various ways to shed various encumbrances outlined by the Michaels. If that goes well in a reasonable amount of time, then maybe full-blown enlightenment is within reach.

[Is] clothing a part of Personality?

Clothing and other adornments convey to all far more about inner psychology of the Personality than you even now realize. We have stressed to all of you that enlightenment is far from drab, and when souls adopt protective coloration, it usually has to do with insecurity and fear of their own desires and wishes. We would see all [of you] decked as peacocks rather than as drab mud hens, as drabness in clothing usually denotes drabness of the soul. One Fragment of this Entity [Michael], remembers wearing the red of the Cardinal and enjoying every moment of it. Also, many Fragments of this Entity were “born in the purple” [as royalty or at least high ranking] and gloried in the pomp and circumstance, and yet somehow [we] achieved transcendence. [25 June 1974]

This would seem to indicate that outward appearance is not necessarily a false thing, a hindrance to spiritual growth. When coming from the right place, it is not a delusion of grandeur; it can augment spiritual development.

Dick: Michael has a job to do, too, as I see it and that is to produce #4 and #5 people in his teaching. (See In Search of the Miraculous, by P. D. Ouspensky, for enlightenment on men with numbers ... index will guide you.) If Michael is sensitive, he will help us solve our internal problems. The discovery track of what we are has to be complete before becoming a #4 or #5 man. Comment, please. [03 September 1974]

The transcriber was making a funny with this parenthetical statement: People ranked #4 and #5 in “Level of Being” were enlightened according to Gurdjieff; refer to the chapter “Level of Being”.

The following lengthy answer is a rather good description of the difference between psychological well-being as a healthy personality and enlightenment as an expression of Essence:

Dick: I become irritated with people who have expectations who tell me not to have any. One cannot initiate anything unless he has expectations. There are rare times when I can just be and have no expectations, and that is beautiful. This leads me to a topic I could not understand with Robert's group, where it was the goal to give up one's ego. As I see it, from one's ego comes one's self-image, one's power, one's strength. If my ego is deficient, then I am in a depressed state and for sure cannot love. In Robert's group, they continue to put down ego, one way by calling I "it": e.g., "It went to dinner" instead of "I went to dinner." I have been trying the EST and Ken Keyes's way to experience experiences. If I'm down, I don't ask myself what to do to go up. I aggravate the down so I can feel it as full as possible. I have burned out a number of things in this way, but I do not feel better for it. It seems that if I have lightened my load, I should feel more buoyant and better. Maybe I haven't tackled the basic problems. Could Michael comment on ego strength?

What you wish to give up is the strength of the ego of the Personality. The Essence has much strength of its own. They are separate and distinct. Remember, when you become your Essence, there will not be the albatross of Repression [Mode] to deal with. Perhaps it would be helpful to point out to you at this time, Dick, that you come far closer to loving when you are painting than at any other time. You do not have to start with loving difficult persons; this is not the primary objective at this time. Loving is Higher Emotion and that requires Balance [of all Centers]. The person who is “conscious” is not a doer anyway. Most who have reached that exalted state of physical being prefer not to *do*. They are content merely to *be* with the present — that feeling you have glimpsed when you were in those states briefly. (paraphrased) This is something we have asked you to consider before: what is it you wish to do, learn to be more fruitful and happier in life? or go on to spiritual enlightenment? The goals are very different, and the methods of approach, therefore, would have to be quite different. Living in life requires what you are calling self-image and ego strength. Spiritual acceleration does not

require this; it requires negation of the cultural facade. Those who defined the ego and ego states thereof were not, after all, conscious beings, and were observing only the Personalities of others with their own Personalities. The Essence, separate from this, has an innate strength of its own and can survive if the body is prepared for the surge when it comes. Disintegration only comes when the Personality is lost and the Essence is freed prematurely, such as in some psychotic states. Otherwise, those on the path find the surge exhilarating and liberating, and are prepared for it when it comes, but this only comes after the groundwork has been laid. Those tools we have given you are at your disposal. You might say that the Essence has its own ego; you are just not acquainted with it. [14 September 1974]

The above is one of several references to Essence as the source of enlightenment or something like it, as distinct from the unenlightened Personality; refer to the chapter “Essence and Personality” for more such descriptions.

Liz: Growth doesn't occur in a vacuum. One must immerse himself in something — relate with someone — in order to grow, right?

Liz, spiritual growth is an extremely active process, but many times, it isolates you from the mainstream — this is what we are saying. Spiritual enlightenment, which is indeed a byproduct, is an ecstatic experience to which nothing can possibly compare. [28 September 1974]

The above was one of several answers where the emphasis is on distinguishing enlightenment from other aspects and processes of spiritual experience.

Leslie: Asked if her Goal had changed from Acceptance to Growth. She is a Mid-Cycle [Fourth Level] Mature Warrior in Acceptance, Intellectual Part of Moving Center, Idealist, Passion Mode, Stubbornness as Chief Feature, Body Type Mars-Lunar.

As we have told you before, the Goal of Acceptance is in itself a powerful Exalted [Cardinal] Goal from which spiritual enlightenment can spring. With this [Goal], there is no need for a switch in Overleaves — merely extinguishment of the Negative Pole [–Ingratiation], which in this case is the desperate need to be accepted universally by others. In exchange for this, you come into the Positive Pole [+Agape], which is, of course, the unqualified Acceptance of others, just as the Negative Pole of the Growth Goal [–Confusion] involves tremendous scattering of energies as the soul rushes from school to school searching feverishly for that illusive “way”. [09 November 1974]

So, add the process of extinguishment of the Negative Poles of Overleaves as another one of the tools for approaching enlightenment.

Liz: I feel Soleal wants to be silent with us. We should terminate and be silent with Soleal.

[Soleal:] I sense the desire for a more intense and personal experience on the part of these students, and that is all right with me. I can tolerate the change in the level of communication. In fact, in some ways it is welcome, but remember that in asking for this at this point, you eliminate all of those students who cannot allow the creative silence. Let me tell you that this “Oh, shit!” state is very close to enlightenment on several levels. Now, with that in mind, try it. [11 January 1975]

My understanding of this answer is that Soleal is saying that the “Oh, shit!” realization that one has difficulty entering the “creative silence” is a forward step on the path to enlightenment.

A rather lengthy discourse on enlightenment came about two years later. Almost the entire session is relevant to the topic. This is another passage where endarkenment (if I may coin a word) is equated with the Personality and enlightenment is equated with Essence contact:

The evening began with talk about the [A Course in] Miracles material, and we shared thoughts about the difference between false goals and true goals. Must we give up life goals?

All must realize that the term Holy Spirit [in that book] does in fact refer to the Essence — that within the self that is in contact with the Tao. To contact this Holy Spirit, then, requires only the quieting of the Overleaves to the extent that the Essence can be perceived. The perception is often brilliantly elucidated during a so-called “spiritual” experience, when the Personality is temporarily inactivated by the powerful input. Drugs will often facilitate this, but are not necessary; environment is more important. Without this perception, all of this [Michael's teaching or any spiritual teaching] is simply another barrage of words. Only the knowledge of one's own Essence is convincing. We cannot emphasize this too much. It can be explained by the timeworn cliché: “seeing is believing”. There is no other way that one can be certain that planes beyond the physical exist, other than experiencing them. The same can be said for the perception of one's own Essence. When this is accomplished, the power of the experience drowns disbelief. Then, of course, it is still entirely up to you which course you wish to pursue. It is doubtful, though, that one would choose to continue with purposeless activities. False goals are those that are largely unattainable, as they exist only in fantasy. True goals lead to the

awakening of the Essence and its breakthrough. This is indeed possible for those who wish it and without great sacrifice upon the mountain-top.

Mention was made of rituals and practices designed to bring about enlightenment.

We simply speak of various asceticisms that are unnecessary. Rituals do help the uninitiated, but only in the preparatory stages. These serve to quiet the mind.

It is interesting that the left cerebral hemisphere is unable to allow this perception (of the Essence). Many times, persons sustaining brain damage in the left side do experience their Essence for the first time.

Twenty years after this channeling, a left-hemisphere stroke happened to a neuroscientist named Jill Bolte-Taylor, as recounted in a TED talk: >https://www.ted.com/speakers/jill_bolte_taylor<. Evidently, the left hemisphere contains the Personality self, and the right hemisphere contains the Essence self. Refer to the work of Iaian McGilchrist (><https://channelmcgilchrist.com><) for a thorough exposition of brain lateralization; it confirms what is stated in this quotation.

The session continued:

("Facilitate" would be a better word than "allow".)

The Intellectual Center cannot perceive God. The Intellectual Center is not interested in this perception; it does not count it as a loss [to not perceive God]. Only the Higher Centers long [yearn] for the Tao, through the Emotional Center. The desire for human closeness and exclusive relationships derives from this [Emotional Center yearning]. It is the substitute that the Overleaves accept, but since it lacks perfection, it does not satisfy. The Essence seeks the perfection that it is. The Essence loves. This is the only emotion it is capable of. It loves all that is self and All There Is.

Try an exercise if you wish. The next time you are involved in a hostile exchange with someone with incompatible Overleaves, create within [yourself] the quiet space: face this challenge squarely and attempt to acknowledge to that other person, "Thou art God". This does not have to be said aloud, but said [within] enough to become reality. It does not even have to put an end to the hostilities. It is merely acknowledgment that is important. If you are able to achieve this, it will be the Essence that does the achieving. The Overleaves may very well go right on spitting.... and we are asking that you create a corridor through which your Essence can pass.

We would cease use of the word "detachment" as this is misleading. You are already detached from that which you seek [Essence].

We talked about efforting, not getting any place — just get into deeper and deeper trouble with life. It seems there should be no effort. (I did not get the specific comment that brought about this next response.)

What you are experiencing is passion. This is a gateway to Agape if used in the proper perspective. The man Jesus was passionate. The transcendence to Agape took place only when the Infinite Soul began to manifest, but this is not to say that Agape cannot be experienced by those untranscended — it can, but only through the Essence; the Overleaves cannot experience Agape. The Overleaves cannot even experience passion most of the time. True passion has sustained many great teachers throughout their physical lives. False passion would better be called greed, for this is what determines most of the emotions that you now associate with the word passion.

In spite of the myth of childhood happiness, the child on the Physical Plane is in the least enviable spot in the universe. He is at the mercy of everything and everybody, and he knows it. He chooses to block this knowledge and does this well. So well, in fact, that any thought of going back or regressing to that state appalls the average adult. Abandoning oneself to play, then, is quite a scary fate and not one easily accomplished once the cherished adult status is achieved. We have never known of an adult who has achieved spiritual enlightenment. Who is more vulnerable than a child? The man Eric Berne knew this when he called the Intellectual Center "the adult," the Moving Center "the parent" and the Emotional Center "the child". The Moving Center is concerned with right action, the Intellectual Center with right thought — where, then, is there room for love? [12 December 1976]

My guess is that the Michaels' answer to this question is that "room for love" can be found in the unfettered Emotional Center, which knows how to *play* — not *work* — toward enlightenment, like a carefree child who is oblivious to the artificial concerns of adulthood, and who is therefore "vulnerable" to Essence.

A couple of months later, the subject of enlightenment surfaced again:

There was a great deal of talk at this point about violence, anger, hostility, etc. and ways of dealing with it and moving on to more positive spaces in ourselves.

Ideally, this teaching could provide such an environment where the trust level would give permission to ventilate the anger. But, remember, that anger is an emotion felt by the ego when its expectations go unfilled or even worse, ignored. What should develop within a teaching is the “steward” who can stand aside in each of you and observe the ego ventilating its wrath. But we must realize that only a fraction of self is angry. There is never a time when all the Overleaves are angry or sad or happy. If that ever happened, either enlightenment or disintegration would occur. For instance, Intellectual Center cannot experience anger. [21 March 1977]

The metaphor of the “steward” was borrowed from the Gurdjieffian teachings. The steward uses self-Photography to rise above the ego and its antics, and this is one of the techniques for approaching enlightenment.

Surrender is perhaps the most difficult task before you, and the stakes are high if you wish to achieve what you set out to do. Therefore, many are likely to act out an experience that is not real. All of you here present have more difficulty with the concept of vulnerability and surrender than any other aspect of spiritual training. All of you are escaping the fear of poverty and degradation that the early decades of your lives instilled in you. Young ones, just ten years your junior, do not have this fear. It is not necessary to be poor in order to be spiritually enriched. It is only necessary to give up the effort of the unrealistic goals set for you by the culture and go on from there. More true spiritual thought and action comes from relatively secure environments than from impoverished backgrounds. Squalor does not ordinarily breed enlightenment; rather, it breeds defeat, frustration and, ultimately, a giving up of goals. It’s okay to be comfortable as long as the goals are realistic and do not compromise the values of the teaching — then the amount of luxury accrued is relatively trivial. In other words, if the wealth comes easily and at no expense to the spiritual life, then the wealth is immaterial. It is when the desire for the wealth overrides all spiritual considerations that trouble occurs, and then irreconcilable conflicts [between ego and Essence] arise, and there is an inability to proceed any further with any teaching. There is a point where a choice must be made and a true assessment of your material needs versus wants must occur if you are to go on. If you decide at that point that continued acquisition beyond that which is necessary is vital to your survival, then you must pursue this or dissatisfaction will follow you and plague you the rest of this life. You will give up spiritual teachings at this point — and that is not necessarily a bad choice — just a choice. [10 April 1977]

Refer to the chapter “Asceticism and Austerity” for more on finding the balance between physicality and spirituality that provides an optimal trajectory toward enlightenment.

We have never told you that this is anything but difficult. You pay a magnificent price for that freedom that is enlightenment. It is freedom in the truest sense of the word. Paradoxically, all human life yearns to be free, while it expends tremendous energy developing mind prisons for itself. The yearning for God is that same state. [30 September 1977]

Refer to the chapter “Liberation” for further discussion of that metaphor for enlightenment and endarkenment.

Cynthia mentioned that it seemed to be as she suspected, that the material the teacher has given us is complete and we just haven’t figured out how to use it properly. This was the response:

No, Cynthia, the material is obviously not all there, as you — and we mean that collectively — are not satisfied and still search. When enlightenment occurs the quest is over, at least insofar as the Physical Plane is concerned. We have been so far unable to instill in you the permission, or give you the permission to seek that ecstasy or joy that is the end product of all that you seek. However, at least all of you are experimenting with the possibility that there may be such a state as ecstasy. Many are not even that lucky. Richard — the other Richard — has chosen to leave (he had fallen asleep on the floor) because this is frightening information for him. He cannot even contemplate what this quality might bring to him, for it would mean utter destruction of all of his defense mechanisms. Even simple happiness is quite beyond his grasp, and yes, anyone with the same Overleaves exactly will experience this difficulty to a greater or lesser extent. All those with Cynthia’s Overleaves exactly will experience her dilemmas and frustrations, and if they are in a teaching, they will be fortunate enough to be allowed to look at them and decide whether or not to change their course. Cynthia uses the Overleaves many times to make her life not work because she has been led to believe that her life will not work. She uses her lack of formal education as an excuse not to have to formulate goals for herself because that would conflict with the picture that the Overleaves have of themselves. Alice defeats herself in the same fashion because two of her Overleaves would be terrified of success. [04 November 1977]

This answer provided a list of characteristics that come with enlightenment: satisfaction, ecstasy, joy, happiness. It also provided a list of characteristics that come with endarkenment: fear, defense mechanisms, difficulty, dilemmas, frustrations, conflict, defeat. The Overleaves, and particularly the Negative Poles of the Overleaves although it does not say so here, are one serious impediment to enlightenment.

Students often confuse facts with final results. We see much growth in the student Louise. Growth is the hardest and most constant Goal. Most students find this confusing, therefore, the facts appear clearer when the ego is pulling off the most subtle facade of all. Growth is not true enlightenment. Students find this the biggest stumbling block — Overleaves are stunted in this case. Do not confuse the facts with the goal, Louise. There is a station in which a student does overcome this tendency. Everlasting growth is not the goal, Louise; Growth this lifetime is the Goal. [07 November 1977]

To this I would add that all of the Cardinal Inspiration Overleaves — Growth, Passion, Arrogance, Priest, Spiritualist, Higher Emotional — might give the person who has one or more of them an illusion or facade of enlightenment, but this is not actual enlightenment. These particular Overleaves are “facts” but they are not “results”. At best, these facts, more so than other Overleaves, might impel a person who has them to seek results such as “enlightenment”, however they understand that notion.

Summary Comments on Enlightenment

The quest for enlightenment was a ‘thing’ in the original Michaelian group, but not so much since then, in subsequent Michaelian teachings individual students and groups. In fact, one definition of enlightenment from Troy Tolley’s channeling was this:

Enlightenment is often misunderstood. It is contextual and ever-evolving. Enlightenment tends to only mean that one reaches a state of comfort in their understanding of the universe as they experience it. It is a state of acceptance and utilization of a structure that makes sense of the universe from the highest perspective of that Personality at the time. In other words, nearly all Soul Age Levels indicate Enlightenment was reached. [<https://our.truthloveenergy.com/blogs/entry/4875-20220504-session/?tab=comments#comment-30030>< — retrieved 06 May 2022]

Many tools and techniques that foster enlightenment are mentioned in the original Michaelian group transcriptions as documented in this chapter, namely: meditation, concentration, fasting, quieting the Overleaves, transcendent spiritual experiences, abandoning oneself to play in the Emotional Center, brain stimulation, psychedelics, extinguishment of Negative Poles, Photography, and surrender to Essence. The point to be made here is that, per the Michaels, enlightenment is an experiential thing, not an intellectual or philosophical thing. The Michaels endeavored mightily to drive this point home to the original Michaelian group members, who were trapped in Intellectual Center.





ESSENCE AND PERSONALITY

Anyone who knows anything about the Fourth Way work knows that this phrase, Essence and Personality, did not originate with the Michaelian teachings; it originated with Gurdjieff. This subject is yet another component of the Gurdjieffian teachings that was carried over to the original Michaelian group in some form. Some of the subjects made the transition *without* modification, but most made the transition *with* modifications. And there are differences not only between Gurdjieff and the original Michaelian group, but also between the original Michaelian group and subsequent Michaelian teachings communities. Thus, this is one of those subjects that has evolved over the decades. At the end of this chapter, I suggest that the subject needs some more modifications if we are to eliminate ambiguities in terminology, and hence in understanding.

Sorry to say, but because of the changes over history, the analysis and synthesis of the subject is lengthy and tedious. We will start at the beginning of the story.

“Are Essence and True Personality synonymous?” This is an ambiguity in the Michaelian teaching that is uncomfortable to me, and I do not yet have clear definitions. Per <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Essence>, the word is ambiguous. Somewhere in the original Michaelian group transcriptions the Michaels said that they were “guilty of semantic ambiguity at times”. Several of my completed “Study Papers on the original Michaelian group” discuss instances where I believe that has occurred (e.g. “Ego”). Your question is one of those cases, and I have not yet researched and written those chapters, so I do not have a full answer.

A few thoughts come to mind, but as I said, I have not yet studied and written and resolved this particular issue to my own satisfaction, probably to yours neither. My plan has been to do exactly that in future Study Papers. Maybe you would like to study this out and write it up?

Michaelian books have glossaries and definitions, and those might be a little different from the original Michaelian group, and they lack the thoroughness that I strive for in my scholarly academic research of analysis and synthesis.

The dictionary definition of Essence is something like this: that which remains as permanent when all that is temporary is removed. Maybe this definition of Essence is similar to “Spark”, the alleged eternally unique primordial scintilla of Tao that survives Grand Cycles. Kabbalists, not just Michaelians, use that exact term to describe the finite fragments of the Infinite.

My plan was to research Essence as Gurdjieff understood it, apparently always contrasted with Personality, where the function of a spiritual path is to develop an immortal soul because according to Gurdjieff people are not born with an immortal soul. Maybe Gurdjieff’s definition of Essence = what others call “Soul”. That is another ambiguous word.

If/when I research it further I suspect that I might find that per Gurdjieff Essence = True Personality, but I am relatively certain that is not the case per the original Michaelian group Michaelian understanding. I would rather limit True Personality to the human condition and sandwich it between False Personality as like a ‘lower’ self and Essence as like a ‘higher’ self.

My impression is that the Michaels’ definition of both Essence and True Personality is almost certainly different from Gurdjieff’s; per Michael the Essence is distinct from the True Personality, the latter limited to a human incarnation, but Essence is said to transcend incarnations.

The Overleaf category of “Role” is also said to transcend incarnations, hence perhaps the many instances of the phrase “Essence Role”. My preference would be to divorce those two words for clarity’s sake, since Role is relevant only on the Physical Plane; on the Astral Plane and ‘above’, conglomerations of Fragments function there as Role does in incarnation.

It may be that the term Essence is used to simply provide one term that covers the high stack of levels of selfhood that are beyond incarnate Personality.

While in a Christian group in my youth, I was introduced to the notion of “laying up treasure in heaven, rather than treasure on earth where moth and rust corrupts”. The notion of “building moral character” was in that category: developing permanent virtues. This seems similar to Gurdjieff’s notion of creating an Essence that survives death.

The thought occurs to me that True Personality also transcends incarnations in the sense that what is experienced in TP adds transcendent permanent qualities to the Self, whereas what is experienced in False Personality is neither transcendent nor permanent in the Grand Cycle of experience.

Definition of Essence

Philosophically, that which cannot be removed without changing the identity is referred to as the essence, or the essential self. In other words, the essence is permanent but the essence can have temporary attributes.

Introduction

Essence (Latin: *essentia*) is a polysemic term, that is, it may have significantly different meanings and uses. It is used in philosophy and theology as a designation for the property or set of properties or attributes that make an entity or substance what it fundamentally is, and which it has by necessity, and without which it loses its identity. Essence is contrasted with accident: a property or attribute the entity or substance has contingently, without which the substance can still retain its identity.

The concept originates rigorously with Aristotle (although it can also be found in Plato), who used the Greek expression *to ti ên einai* (τὸ τί ἦν εἶναι, literally meaning “the what it was to be” and corresponding to the scholastic term *quiddity*) or sometimes the shorter phrase *to ti esti* (τὸ τί ἐστι, literally meaning “the what it is” and corresponding to the scholastic term *haecceity* (thisness) for the same idea. This phrase presented such difficulties for its Latin translators that they coined the word *essentia* (English “essence”) to represent the whole expression. For Aristotle and his scholastic followers, the notion of essence is closely linked to that of ‘definition’ (ὁρισμός *horismos*).

In the history of Western philosophy, essence has often served as a vehicle for doctrines that tend to individuate different forms of existence as well as different identity conditions for objects and properties; in this logical meaning, the concept has given a strong theoretical and common-sense basis to the whole family of logical theories based on the “possible worlds” analogy set up by Leibniz and developed in the intentional logic from Carnap to Kripke, which was later challenged by “extensionalist” philosophers such as Quine.

Etymology

The English word essence comes from Latin *essentia*, via French *essence*. The original Latin word was created purposefully, by Ancient Roman philosophers, in order to provide an adequate Latin translation for the Greek term οὐσία (*ousia*)...

St Thomas Aquinas, in his commentary on *De hebdomadibus* (Book II) by Boethius, states that in this work the distinction between essence (*id quod est*, what the thing is) and Being (*esse*) was introduced for the first time. Whereas the Being participated in entities is infinite and infinitely perfect, the essence — and not the matter — delimits the perfection of the Being in entities and makes them finite. [<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Essence> — retrieved 29 July 2023]

Essence and Personality According to Gurdjieff

As usual, I will quote from Ouspensky, who quotes Gurdjieff at length regarding this subject:

It must be understood that man [humans] consists of two parts: Essence and Personality. Essence in man is what is his own. Personality in man is what is “not his own”. “Not his own” means what has come from outside, what he has learned, or reflects, all traces of exterior impressions left in the memory and in the sensations, all words and movements that have been learned, all feelings created by imitation — all this is not his own, all this is from Personality. A small child has no Personality yet. He is what he really is. He is Essence. His desires, tastes, likes, dislikes, express his Being, such as it is. But as soon as so-called “education” begins, Personality begins to grow. Personality is created partly by the intentional influences of other people, that is, by “education”, and partly by involuntary imitation of them by the child itself.... Essence is the truth in man; Personality is the false. But in proportion as Personality grows, Essence manifests itself more and more rarely and more and more feebly

and it very often happens that Essence stops in its growth at a very early age and grows no further.... Sometimes though very seldom, and sometimes when it is least expected, Essence proves fully grown and developed in a man, even in cases of undeveloped Personality, and in this case Essence unites together everything that is serious and real in a man. But his happens very seldom. As a rule, a man's Essence is either primitive, savage, and childish, or else simply stupid. The development of Essence depends on work on oneself. A very important moment in the work on oneself is when a man begins to distinguish between his Personality and his Essence. [P.D. Ouspensky, *In Search of the Miraculous*, p. 161–163]

Gurdjieff did not teach the innate immortality of the soul and did not teach reincarnation, as the Michaels did. From the description above, it is obvious that what Gurdjieff meant by Essence is what came to be known in the Michaelian teachings as True Personality, and that what Gurdjieff meant by Personality is what came to be known in the Michaelian teachings as False Personality; refer to the companion chapter on “Personality: True and False” for the study paper on that subject. The meaning of Essence in the Michaelian teachings evolved into something else, namely as something beyond the True Personality that someone is born with, as something beyond even the soul that animates a human incarnation, as “the intrinsic core of the soul”. Anyway, this difference between what came to be called Essence and True and False Personality was actually not apparent from the beginning of the original Michaelian group — it was developed over the two-year course of the channeling sessions, and it was somewhat clarified and codified by Chelsea Quinn Yarbro for *MF*, and thence to the subsequent Michaelian teachings community.

Let us trace that development, first by looking at Essence in the original Michaelian group, then Personality in the original Michaelian group, then the contrast between Essence & Personality in the original Michaelian group, then the confusion of “Essence” with “Role” in the original Michaelian group, then my proposed disambiguation of the terms.

The following extracts from original Michaelian group transcriptions are Q&A exchanges, where an original Michaelian group member asks a question (or makes a comment), and the Michaels provide an answer. **This is not a subject that would benefit by division into subcategories, as some subjects do. These extracts are presented in the chronological order in which they appear in the transcriptions, even though this is not a subject where there was a development or evolution of a specific revelation of a facet of the Michaelian teachings, as was often the case with the original Michaelian group.** As is my custom, I often provide some explanatory comments following the question or answer. Underlined words in the Michaels' answers are my emphasis, to draw attention to what it is that I comment on. Sometimes I embed words or phrases [in brackets] that I believe help to clarify the question or the answer.

Essence per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

In this section, I collect, analyze, and synthesize the original Michaelian group statements that pertain exclusively to the Essence. First I search through the original Michaelian group transcriptions looking only for the word “Essence” in order to get a definition and description. By examining the use of the word in various contexts, the definition of the concept of Essence is thereby constructed. *[[Perhaps this section can be divided into subsections, dedicated to different aspects or characteristics of Essence.]]*

Even before the Michaels showed up in channeling, Soleal was using the word Essence in the original Michaelian group:

I would like to know how long you have been the leader of your world, and I would like to know what you teach them.

I have been here for ten of this world's revolutions [around its star]. I teach them what I would teach you: that is, to seek moderation in all things, to love unselfishly, to become intimate with the inner workings of your spirit, to live in the essence of that spirit, to liberate the trapped Essence is the reincarnational purpose. I try to guide them in this path, so that they might be free sooner. [early 1973]

Refer to the chapters “Moderation”, “Love”, “Intimacy”, “Liberation”, and “Reincarnation” for more about those subjects. It would seem that Essence here refers to that which reincarnates, which transcends lifetimes.

Alice: So does that mean that I am a catalyst?

Zealots make the finest catalysts. You are not a zealot, but you can act as a calming force on those around you. There is peace and serenity in your Essence too. This could be the major part of growth for you to get in touch with those fine elements. [03 July 1973]

My takeaway from this passage is that Essence has characteristics that define it, such as being serene versus being catalytic by nature. Putting that notion together with the previous notion, we come to understand that these Essence characteristics are carried over from lifetime to lifetime. At this point in our research, it seems like a good idea to make a distinction between the “character” traits of Essence that spans lifetimes and the “personality” traits of a particular lifetime. **Is this notion supported by subsequent channeling?**

Dick: Love and sex seem like separate things — but when they're pulling together, it seems like a stronger force is generated than either by itself. It seems like the only kind of energy that I have experienced to date that might be the kind of energy that you need for actual [spiritual] evolution.

Sexual energy, when used to express higher Centers, can be incredibly strong. When the energy is relegated downward, it results in an energy leak. That is sometimes why you want to sleep after physical union. You fed lower Centers — sometimes the Moving Center and the Essence is exhausted, so the body goes to sleep to free the Essence... The body is not capable of experiencing ecstasy; only the Essence can experience ecstasy.... [03 July 1973]

Refer to chapters “Sexuality”, “Centers, Higher”, “Energy and Energy Leaks”, and “Liberation”. Briefly, what you will find there is that the Sexual Center is a higher Center, and that Essence is accessed via the higher Centers, and that Personality operates mostly in the lower Centers. With this passage, we can add to the distinction between Personality and the characteristics of Essence the distinction between the properties of the body and the characteristics of Essence.

In this same session, the channeling on this subject continued as follows:

As you live more and more in your Essence, you will realize that the [Essence] goals are very different [from the goals of the body and of the Personality]. The body seeks survival in physical form. The primeval Essence does not need the form and substance. It cares nothing for the desires of the body. It seeks elevation through any avenue open to it. Think of the way Jesus died. This is always the way it is in the end. Entrapment in the physical body is part of Karma for the Essence. It will fight to be free, and if martyrdom is all there is, it will choose that door to freedom. [03 July 1973]

Refer to chapters “Liberation” and “Karma”. Here again, we see that Essence has characteristics, including motivations, that transcend lifetimes, as distinct from the body (and the Personality) that are limited to a particular lifetime. A recurring theme in the original Michaelian group transcriptions, first revealed here, is that Essence often pulls in different directions than the body (and the Personality) does.

In this same session, the channeling on this subject continued as follows:

Dick: All right, then I'll lean. I'd like to hear more about the last subject.

The Essence uses others to get free. The state you desire can be achieved by decision. This may sound platitudinous, but it is the only way it can happen. No one is going to do it for you — take your hand and lead you to the sacred spring, so that you can drink the holy elixir and have instant knowledge. [03 July 1973]

My takeaway from this passage is that the Personality self can either thwart Essence by making decisions that are contrary to Essence (its default mode of operation), or it can step aside and let Essence into the life. Much more is said about this in the section below that is dedicated to the contrast between Essence and Personality.

That was the last of Soleal's references to Essence, and then the Michaels appeared. In their first session, the Michaels also had somewhat to say on the subject.

Complexity is the antithesis of what the spirit seeks. The body represents the epitome of complexity. That is why the spirit is again and again attracted to it, until the partially awakened Essence catches a glimpse beyond the “veil.” [12 August 1973]

Refer to chapters “Awakening from Sleep” and “Veil”. Here again in this passage the Essence is contrasted with the body. However, new to this discussion is the notion of the ‘awakening’ of Essence. There are other passages that say the Essence is always vigilant (see below), so I take this passage to mean that, from the point of view of the Personality, it is *as if* the Personality relaxes its grip on the life enough to allow the Essence to increase its influence in the life.

Then I would say that much of his advice does not apply to us. Isn't that what that answer means?

Much does not apply now. When you rid yourself of all negative thoughts about sex, then it is possible for you to have a variety of higher level sexual encounters. These do not always have to be physical. Some of your most

rewarding sexual encounters occur when you think you are asleep. These are encounters with unknown beings on the Astral Plane, and also Essence encounters with actually known beings. [12 August 1973]

In this passage I distinguish three levels of the “self” at play, from lower to higher levels: 1) the waking Personality self; 2) the dream body self, aka the astral body self, which might otherwise be referred to as the “soul”; 3) it is not clear from this passage if the astral self is different from the Essence self, but it could be. **How these three relate to each other is not yet clear at this stage of our investigation, but clarity is on the way, even in this same session:**

Discussion: concerning being unpopular because you held unpopular beliefs, pursued teachings, etc.

There will always be unpopularity when unpopular ideas are espoused and expressed. The body does not wish the Essence to be freed. It will fight to keep the Essence asleep. It takes many such fights to strengthen the Essence. [12 August 1973]

Refer to chapters “Liberation” and “Awakening from Sleep”. Here again in this passage the motivations of Essence are contrasted with the motivations of the body. Here again, I understand that the Essence is always vigilant, but from the point of view of the Personality, the Essence appears to be as if it were ‘asleep’ when it is not allowed to function in the life.

Concerning the “alien corn”: That part that was brought to mind was about homesickness and longing. The corn, you know, is neutral. It just grows and gives ears of corn, but it is called “alien corn” because it is not growing in her home.

To have the feeling of home, the Essence must be at peace. As long as the different drummer still sounds different to you, you will remain out of step with the music. [12 August 1973]

The Essence will be more at ‘peace’ the less the Personality ‘fights’ it. The more your Personality ‘marches to the tune’ of Essence, the more the feeling that you have come ‘home’.

Should we help her?

If you are willing to provide the necessary support. Her Essence is a problem with her — it keeps cropping up. [17 August 1973]

The Personality tends to regard the Essence as a pest.

How does [her] friend share a Karmic Ribbon?

An essentially passive resistance to change is his chief obstacle. From what you are projecting, however, the Essence is one of compassionate strength. This is not always presented to the world, but you sense it at a deeper level. This is not a joyous Essence. This is why he seeks joy in the Essence of others at that deeper level. [17 August 1973]

Here again we see character traits (strength, joy) ascribed to Essence, and it is said that they function at a “deeper” level, probably meaning deeper than Personality.

What is an obstacle for me?

Alice has an obstacle in Personality, not Essence; that is the necessity to put herself down in front of others and thereby gain the reassurance [that she is not so lowly]. You can overcome that by realizing that the Personality is a hindrance, and that its “needs” need not be fulfilled. [17 August 1973]

What about Arthur’s Essence? What is it?

This man has a joyous expansive Essence. [17 August 1973]

Could we have a definition of Karma from Michael?

As you reap, so you also sow. Or as you sow, so you shall reap. However, this goes far deeper than mere action by those immersed in the waking sleep. For them, the energy loss is far greater, for most of their lives are wasted in fantasy and fantasy costs much in Karmic debts. You must fulfill all carnal desires before serious work is begun on the Essence. This can take many lives, usually a minimum of forty-nine. [26 August 1973]

I would like to know what course of action to take, whether to go back to school, which is one of the present aims or just what to do.

The formal education would only serve to give you the proper credentials and increase your credibility factor. If you can pursue the course in Essence, this would be Good Work. Otherwise, you probably will not distinguish yourself academically. [26 August 1973]

My patients have headaches and I have no inkling of why they have chronic ones. Some I just don’t understand at all. I can’t figure out why they have headaches all the time.

Headaches are repressed emotions. Many things can be said through the painful head. Most frequently, a weariness of the body coupled with a bored, trapped Essence will produce the worst headache. Young Souls frequently have migraine headaches. They do not attempt to understand the treadmill they are on. Mature Souls frequently have tension headaches from being surrounded by uncomfortable souls all day. Mature Souls in close contact with Baby Souls and many Young Souls tend to have the most frequent and severe headaches. You can treat their headaches by helping them see the source. With Young Souls, you can only treat the pain. [04 September 1973]

[[Continue the word search through the remainder of the original Michaelian group transcriptions. Passages that do not provide additional insight or angles of perspective need not be quoted here.]]

Essence Contact

Is our Essence aware of the things we have to accomplish?

The group answered, yes, and that we needed to be in touch with our Essence. [15 May 1974]

Essence Role

So called because it does not change from lifetime to lifetime, not because it is the essential identity of the primordial “spark” that is Cast from the Tao. Make a distinction between spark and Essence. In other words, Essence Role is of the Physical Plane, not all of the planes. In other words, Roles is essential to an identity on the Physical Plane, not because Role-ish is essential identity. (Does the essential identity of the “spark” consist of three parameters, which metaphorically provide its ‘address’ in the 3-D ‘matrix’ of all “sparks”?)

Ralph: Roles are in Essence, not changeable. What are Roles on higher Astral Plane, if any?

The Roles are, of course, retained on the low Astral Plane where the souls remain separate. As the integration [of the Entity] begins to take place, the Roles become more and more blurred, until they are dissolved, or better yet resolved, on the high Astral Plane. They are not transcended here, but the memory of them is retained. If you like, you can compare it to a racial mixture that eventually leads to assimilation. [08 October 1974]

Personality per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

In this section, I collect, analyze, and synthesize the original Michaelian group statements that pertain exclusively to the Personality.

Essence and Personality per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

In this section, I collect, analyze, and synthesize the original Michaelian group statements that pertain exclusively to Essence and Personality as distinct and contrasting factors in the human experience. This gives us a comparison and contrast to the two terms, and thus help us to understand what they refer to.

Dick: Rodney Collin in his writings said that the left side was the Essence (right side being Personality). It seems that what happened to Sarah validates it.

It can be taken for true. It also applies backwards to left-handers, as their control comes from the opposite side of the body. I believe this last part conflicts with Collin. [05 July 1973]

The left side of the body is controlled more by the right brain hemisphere, whereas the right side of the body is controlled more by the left brain hemisphere. British psychiatrist Iain McGilchrist has a lot to say about the differences in function and perception between left and right hemispheres of the brain in his book *The Master and his Emissary*. My correlation of that book with Michaelian concepts is that the Personality mostly functions in the lower Centers in the left brain hemisphere, and that the Essence mostly functions through the higher Centers in the right brain hemisphere.

I have a complicated question about Personality and Essence. From what he has said before, it seems like you get here and you develop the Personality (the learned Personality according to where you land) and it is much in the way of what you want to do. You may never do what you are supposed to do because of the Personality. This is what I've been doing.

You will burn out all your Karma. You must. The choices you make between physical bodies are part of the learning process also.

Comment: Maybe he's saying you'll lose it in spite of your Personality.

Personality is just another defense the body employs with the help of the other bodies around it. [12 August 1973]

The (False) Personality is associated with the body, and both of those are at odds with Essence.

Essence Role per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

In this section, I collect, analyze, and synthesize the original Michaelian group statements that pertain exclusively to the juxtaposition of Essence and Role.

Concluding Comments on Essence and Personality

Conclusion: "Essence" is the broad generic term for all of those characteristics that define that which transcends any particular lifetime with its Personality traits. Role is one of those few characteristics that partakes of both realms, so it is "ambiguous" in that it is of both Personality and Essence. Soul Age is a measure of the amount of experience assimilated over the course of lifetimes, so it also is ambiguous in that it partakes of both realms.

ESSENCE CONTACT

When you begin to see these 'sides [of a problem]' as merely alternatives and not as either negative or positive then you will know that Essence is looking at the situation. Until then you can be sure that the Personality is reacting to a proposition which seems threatening. We would agree that [there is no positive or negative in Essence]. But you must remember that in Essence one *experiences*, one does not *evaluate*. We would point out that that which is the Soul operating from Essence feels that which we call Agape, and that is a feeling of tranquillity, of peace. And we doubt that the Personality of many earth-bound Souls would consider these particularly strong emotions. We do not dispute that [the Soul has inner fires burning]. The energy will be available in quantities now unavailable to you simply because you will not be leaking it out through fantasies and hostilities. In this society we would say the majority [of Essences are bored while incarnate]. To stimulate it of course it must be presented with challenges, not struggles. When Essence has to struggle it refuses. Struggling is not worth the effort and it knows this. Insoluble problems are good examples of struggles that the personality loves and the Essence flees from through boredom. Spiritual Growth, for example [is challenge for Essence]. All forms of studious endeavor when undertaken for the sheer joy of the undertaking. Some forms of religious pursuit. Work that is in Essence. That is to say, for instance, painting was in Essence for the Old Artisan [name deleted] and his Essence was not bored. [Besides fighting,] many activities involving administrations and leadership [are in Essence for Warriors]. Even supervisory positions in public recreation areas. We know of many Mature and Old Warriors in this country now working as park rangers and their Essences are not bored. [05 June 1974]

The personality disintegrates without Essence Contact. He spends increasingly more time out of the body on a more pleasant Plane for him and will perhaps choose to stay soon. [14 July 1974]





① “EST” — ERHARD SEMINARS TRAINING

Erhard Seminars Training (EST) was (and still is, in the form of “Landmark Forum”) an intense seminar, originally developed and led by Werner Erhard. It was popular in the San Francisco Bay area at the time the original Michaelian group was meeting, and several members of the original Michaelian group attended EST training. Its program was primarily geared for minimizing cultural programming and maximizing one’s true self. EST has many similarities to Gurdjieff’s and the Michaels’ concept of shedding the False Personality to reveal the True Personality. Because of these similarities, and because EST had an effect on the original Michaelian group members, and because the Michaels basically endorsed EST, I deem it worthy of inclusion and discussion in this *Study Papers* book.

The knowledge of the involvement of the original Michaelian group members with EST (and Gurdjieff, and *A Course in Miracles*, and other contemporary spiritual movements) is not generally known in Michaelian teachings communities subsequent to the original Michaelian group because Yarbrow said nothing about it in her books. original Michaelian group members were not “playing” with the Ouija board at a party when they contacted the Michaels, and the original Michaelian group did not exist and develop in a metaphysical vacuum, as Yarbrow’s fictionalized account of the original Michaelian group in *Messages from Michael* would have us believe. However, now we have the original Michaelian group transcriptions available for study, and I suggest that it enriches and augments our understanding of the Michaelian teachings in general if we investigate the influence that these various movements had on the original Michaelian group members.

An excerpt from the second issue of Dimensions! newsletter had this to say about some of the teachings that the original Michaelian group members explored:

Aside from our own teacher [the Michaels], we have individually and in small groups within our group been experiencing the Gurdjieff/Ouspensky material, and/or Werner Erhard’s EST training, as well as the approach of Chögyam Trungpa, Rinpoche, whose book *Cutting Through Spiritual Materialism* has been of interest to some of us. One of our people has just read *The Only Dance There Is* by Baba Ram Dass and is sharing this with others of us. Another is perusing *The Phoenix Lectures* by L. Ron Hubbard, of Scientology. Others are in touch with the Living Love Center and are studying their *Handbook to Higher Consciousness*. The Logos abounds, to be sure ... within and without us ... and we synthesize and unfold, as we learn and, ultimately, detach. [Dimensions! June 1975]

To start the comparison of EST with Michaelian teachings, let’s take a look at the founder of EST and the nature of his work.

Brief Biography of Werner Erhard

Turning, as usual, to my trusty source of information, Wikipedia, we find the following statements, extracted from a lengthy biography of Erhard. Underlined words are my emphasis on the nature of the influences that led to EST:

Werner Hans Erhard (born John Paul Rosenberg; September 5, 1935) is an American author and lecturer known for founding EST, which operated from 1971 to 1984. He has written, lectured, and taught on self improvement.... In 1991 Erhard retired from business and sold his existing intellectual property to his employees, who then formed Landmark Education, renamed in 2013 “Landmark Worldwide”, with which he consults occasionally.

While largely self-educated, Erhard was influenced by or worked closely with academics, philosophers, thinkers and artists. During his time in St. Louis, he read two books that had a marked effect on him: *Think and Grow Rich* by Napoleon Hill (1937) and *Psycho-Cybernetics* by Maxwell Maltz (1960). When a member of his staff at Parents Magazine introduced him to the ideas of [psychologists] Abraham Maslow and Carl Rogers, both key figures in the Human Potential Movement, his interests became more focused on personal fulfillment than sales

success. After moving to Sausalito, he attended seminars by Alan Watts, a Western interpreter of Zen Buddhism, who introduced him to the distinction between mind [Michaeliese: Personality] and self [Michaeliese: Essence]; Erhard subsequently became close friends with Watts. Erhard also studied in Japan with Zen rōshi Yamada Mumon.... Erhard attended the Dale Carnegie public speaking course in 1967. He was sufficiently impressed by it to make his staff attend the course, and began to think about developing a course of his own. Over the following years, Erhard investigated a wide range of movements, including Encounter, Transactional Analysis, Enlightenment Intensive, Subud and Scientology. In 1970 Erhard became involved in Mind Dynamics and began teaching his own version of Mind Dynamics classes in San Francisco and Los Angeles. The directors of Mind Dynamics eventually invited him into their partnership, but Erhard rejected the offer, saying he would rather develop his own seminar program — EST, the first program of which he conducted in October 1971. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Werner_Erhard — retrieved 30 June 2021]

Adding 35 years to his birth year of 1935 we arrive at 1970. Thus we find that Erhard developed and deployed EST at the time of his Fourth Milestone (aka Internal Monad). How appropriate to do what he did at that time in the story arc of his life. As we will see below, the Michaels pegged Erhard as a first Level Old Sage. How appropriate that he formulated a synthesis of various psychological and spiritual traditions, and then taught his synthesis.

Essence of EST

Continuing the Wikipedia article on Erhard, we find the following. Here again, I have underlined words and phrases that describe what EST is all about. The typical Michaelian student will recognize the similarities to components of the Michaelian teachings, specifically the transition from living in False Personality to living in True Personality, from living per cultural expectations to living per Essence promptings.

Starting in 1971, EST, short for Erhard Seminars Training and also Latin for “it is” offered in-depth personal and professional development workshops, the initial program of which was called “The EST Training”. The EST Training’s purpose was to transform the way one sees and makes sense of life so that the situations one had been trying to change or tolerating clear up in the process of living itself. The point was to leave participants free to be, while increasing their effectiveness and the quality of their lives. The EST Training was experiential and transformational in nature.... American ethicist, philosopher, and historian Jonathan D. Moreno has described the EST training as “the most important cultural event after the human potential movement itself seemed exhausted” and a form of “Socratic interrogation” [“know thyself”]. Erhard challenged participants to be themselves and live in the present instead of playing a role imposed on them by their past, and to move beyond their current points of view into a perspective from which they could observe their own positionality. The author Robert Hargrove said, “you’re going to notice that things do begin to clear up, just in the process of life itself.” [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Werner_Erhard — retrieved 30 June 2021]

Notice that the essence of the EST method of mitigating False Personality is the same as in Gurdjieff (self-observation) and in the Michaelian teachings (Photographing) during the course of daily life. This is a psychotherapy more than it is a spirituality, but my perception is that the former lays a proper foundation for the latter. That is to say, psychotherapy increases self-awareness, which eventually leads to Self-awareness.

This brief review in the biography of Erhard is expanded in the Wikipedia article on EST itself:

Erhard Seminars Training (marketed as est, though often encountered as EST or Est) was an organization, founded by Werner Erhard in 1971, that offered a two-weekend (6-day, 60-hour) course known officially as “The est Standard Training”. This seminar aimed to “transform one’s ability to experience living so that the situations one had been trying to change or had been putting up with clear up just in the process of life itself”. An EST website claims that the training “brought to the forefront the ideas of transformation, personal responsibility, accountability, and possibility”.

The EST Standard Training program ... confronted participants one-on-one and challenged them to be themselves rather than to play a role that had been imposed on them by the past.

Jonathan D. Moreno observed that “participants might have been surprised how both physically and emotionally challenging and how philosophical the training was.” He writes that the critical part of the training was freeing oneself from the past, which was accomplished by “experiencing” one’s recurrent patterns and problems rather than repeating them. The word experience was used to mean a process of fully experiencing the pointless repetition of old, burdensome behaviors so as to not be run by them. The seminar aimed to enable participants to shift their contextual state of mind around which their life was organized from the

attempt to get satisfaction or to survive, to an experience of actually being satisfied and experiencing oneself as whole and complete in the present moment. The EST training offered people the opportunity to free themselves from the past, rather than living a life enmeshed by their past....

These classroom agreements provided a rigorous setting whereby people's ordinary ways to escape confronting their experience of themselves were eliminated. Moreno describes the EST training as a form of "Socratic interrogation ["know thyself"] ...relying on the power of the shared cathartic experience that Aristotle observed." Erhard challenged participants to be themselves instead of playing a role that had been imposed on them and aimed to press people beyond their point of view, into a perspective from which they could observe their own positionality. As Robert Kiyosaki writes, "During the training, it became glaringly clear that most of our personal problems begin with our not keeping our agreements, not being true to our words, saying one thing and doing another. That first full day on the simple class agreements was painfully enlightening. It became obvious that much of human misery is a function of broken agreements — not keeping your word, or someone else not keeping theirs."

As a way of observing and confronting their own perspective and point of view, groups of participants were brought onto the stage and confronted. They were asked to "imagine that they were afraid of everyone else and then that everyone else was afraid of them" and to re-examine their reflex patterns of living that kept their lives from working. This was followed by interactions ... covering topics such as reality and the nature of the mind, looking at the possibility that "what is, is and what ain't, ain't", and that "true enlightenment is knowing you are a machine" [shades of Gurdjieff!] and culminating in a realization that people do not need to be stuck with their automatic ways of being but can instead be free to choose their ways of being in how they live their lives. Participants were told they were perfect the way they were and were asked to indicate by a show of hands if they "had gotten it".

Eliezer Sobel said in his article "This is It: EST, 20 Years Later":

I considered the training to be a brilliantly conceived Zen koan, effectively tricking the mind into seeing itself, and in thus seeing, to be simultaneously aware of who was doing the seeing, a transcendent level of consciousness, a place spacious and undefined, distinct from the tired old story that our minds continuously tell us about who we are, and with which we ordinarily identify.

[>https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Erhard_Seminars_Training< — retrieved 30 June 2021]

Although Gurdjieff is not mentioned as an influence on Erhard, we see many similarities in their psychology, in their philosophy, and in their practice. As with the Gurdjieffian teachings, EST was about minimizing the acculturated Personality and maximizing the Essence; both people were focused on "waking up" the sleeping soul via "shocks". One method was self-observation after being taught what to look for; another method was Photography by others who were further along than oneself; these methods were presented in an intensely intimate setting that drove the physical, emotional, mental, psychological, and philosophical lessons home.

Less than two years after Erhard began his seminars in October 1971, the original Michaelian group began to meet in the spring of 1973. This was after some prior involvement that founding members of the original Michaelian group had with a local Gurdjieff teacher, Robert Burton, who started his group in 1970. As I said above, the original Michaelian group did not come out of a metaphysical vacuum; it came out of these two precursors.

EST in the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

The following extracts from original Michaelian group transcriptions are Q&A exchanges, where an original Michaelian group member asks a question (or makes a comment), and the Michaels provide an answer. These extracts are presented in the chronological order in which they were given. As is my custom, I usually provide some explanatory comments following the question or answer. Underlined words are my emphasis, to draw attention to what it is that I comment on. Sometimes I embed words or phrases [in brackets] that I believe help to clarify the question or the answer. Numerous study papers related to this chapter are to be found among my comments.

The first mention of EST in the original Michaelian group transcriptions happened in the second session in which the Michaels were the source. It is obvious from that mention that some of the members of the original Michaelian group had taken, or were planning to take, the EST seminar:

Comment: EST might take care of people's personal agendas.

In the original Michaelian group, the phrase “personal agenda” was sometimes used in contrast with the transpersonal agenda; refer to the chapter “Agenda” for more information. Personal and transpersonal paths, physical and spiritual paths, often interfere with each other, but the aim of both EST and Gurdjieff (and the Michaelian teachings) is that people use the experiences of daily physical life as catalyst for spiritual development.

Not if it means financial disaster to the person involved. It is enough that several of you know the techniques, then you can teach the others. [17 August 1973]

The EST seminar was not inexpensive. We see here that the Michaels endorsed EST as a valuable adjunct to their teaching; we see below how this was the case.

Dick: I would like to know about the man who devised “EST”, Werner Erhard.

He [Werner Erhard] is not a manifestation of the Causal body [Transcendental Soul] if that is what you mean. However, he does have a workable system for Older Souls. Older Souls are capable of helping each other. In this [Old Soul] Cycle, the psychological becomes philosophical and this is the approach needed. This is why you all discovered Gurdjieff. [04 September 1973]

Erhard had an extremely charismatic personality, so one might have reasonably suspected that he might be a Transcendental Soul, but he was not. Mainstream psychotherapy is most appropriate and effective for Mature Souls. Old Souls often prefer, and are benefited by, non-mainstream methods when implemented by other Old Souls, to address their particular kinds of issues. I have already commented on the similarity of EST with Gurdjieff; both are appropriate for the psychological and philosophical (and spiritual) aspirations of Old Souls, which are often beyond mere mainstream psychotherapy.

Alice: EST helped me to concentrate, but I seem to have lost some of the ability when I went to the mountains.

Even though an intense seminar can ‘wake a sleeping soul’, there is a tendency to go back to sleep in False Personality; vigilance in mitigating distractions is important. One of the perks of mitigating False Personality is the ability to minimize distractions, and to focus on what is real, true, and important to the True Personality or Essence.

Richard: Did you lose it because you were out of touch with it and should have kept it up?

Alice: I guess so. I’ll enroll again. It did open up some feelings.

Richard: Let us ask if it would be of value to us.

It would be a valuable experience.

Dick: [Valuable] for [my children] Kathryn, Cheryl, and Richard?

Kathryn and Richard, yes. Cheryl would enjoy it, but don’t expect her having the same experience. She will perceive the experience in an entirely different light.

Perhaps this was said because Cheryl was a Young Soul, whereas Kathryn and Richard were Old Souls.

Sarah: He’s already told us Werner Erhard was an Old Soul who had a good exercise for Old Souls. [08 September 1973]

That Erhard was an Old Soul was implied, but not stated explicitly, in the session from four days previous; see above.

Alice: One more question, which my daughter Cheryl requested me to ask: Will EST, which she is in the process of experiencing, help her to burn Karmic Ribbons?

Something like Erhard Sensitivity [sic] Training [EST] does not burn Ribbons, but the experience could conceivably put her in touch with untapped inner resources that would enable her to make wise choices in the future and thus burn the Ribbons.

EST allegedly fosters an accurate, unencumbered view of reality, and obviously it is good to have that perspective when facing Karma or any other challenge in life.

Sarah: Wanted to know if children could be helped by EST?

The children would benefit enormously.

Sarah: That’s the first he’s ever said that any of us would benefit. When I offered to send [my daughter] Dorothy to the special children’s EST, she began to cry.

The children do not always make wise choices.

Sarah: You mean I ought to drag Dorothy screaming and kicking? [17 October 1973]

This seems to be a rhetorical question; if the Michaels answered it, it was not recorded.

Dick: The first time I felt this kind of love was at an EST meeting when I saw Betty Fuller, a fat group leader from Esalen. I felt it and it surprised me. [27 October 1973]

One can read about Betty Fuller on the internet; search for her if you are so inclined. She was a large woman with a powerful personality and alleged healing abilities.

Dick: I was at EST this past weekend and tried to perceive different people's Roles and Soul Level. Was I correct on any of these?

As noted above, the EST sessions filled an entire weekend.

Some were. You failed in your perception of Mature Souls in the throes of an emotional crisis. This can be mistaken for the drive and vigor of the Young Soul.

My impression is that EST works very well for Mature Souls in an emotional crisis, but as stated above, the Zen-like philosophical component is very suitable for Old Souls to work through their conceptual blocks.

Dick: I placed Werner Erhard as a last Cycle [Level] Mature Sage.

He is a first Level Old Sage.

Sage is the Role that is best suited for this kind of teaching venue. The first Level is the Warrior-ish Level, which helps to account for the disciplined rigor that was applied to the attendees in the sessions.

Dick: I have come to believe that the EST thing is a powerful tool for the [Michael] group. [Is this] true?

Yes. We have said this. Positive tools are powerful by definition. [08 November 1973]

This is yet another endorsement of the EST principles and practices from the Michaels.

[Dick:] I have prepared a letter to Werner Erhard asking for his help. He has a staff of fifty and a thousand he could ask for help, both to insure safety and to spread the word.

First of all, it will be difficult to convince Erhard or the medical centers to listen to you....

[Dick:] Should I not send the letter to him?

I am implying you should.... If Werner Erhard does not listen, it is obviously not he. There is no way of telling unless you mail the letter. The man does listen to most. [20 November 1973]

The original Michaelian group lacked a charismatic leader, so they asked about Erhard, who was charismatic. Cardinal Roles, such as Erhard the Sage have more charisma. My own feeling about this sort of thing is that charisma has some legitimacy if it does not get subverted or distorted by glamour and hype and sensationalism and such, but that teachings spread by charisma are not as enduring as letting truth and reality take its course via the "grassroots" efforts of Ordinal Fragments.

Gene: Is EST to precipitate these radical changes within me?

That will probably be pretty catalytic. [03 January 1974]

SusanT: What role did EST have in my transition of Goals [from Submission to Growth]?

We think that, for you, this was a most valuable tool. [20 January 1974]

The three previous statements are a rather strong endorsement for the effectiveness of EST and similar methodologies.

Dick: According to Gurdjieff, only with a conscious teacher can one "do" anything. Most people plea when anything goes drastically wrong, "God help me!" At EST, we learned that only "I" am responsible for the mess "I'm" in. We have to look inward and not put the blame on something outside ourselves.

That is, of course, valid. Without a Teacher, you can do nothing. You are blind and deaf; "asleep." [27 February 1974]

Here again, a comparison is made of the teachings and methods of Gurdjieff and Erhard.

Narra: Is my Chief Feature Self-deprecation?

That is valid. The Erhard Sensitivity [sic; Seminars] Training (EST seminar) helped enormously.

Narra: Would EST help a Mid-Cycle Young Sage in Growth?

It cannot harm her. The danger in this [Young Soul] Cycle is always the one of misguided enthusiasm and aggressive proselytizing. [27 February 1974]

Yet another original Michaelian group member who did EST.

Comment: A statement was made concerning the EST process where a box is constructed mentally and problems are placed in it. (Robert Monroe used a similar technique in his [audio] tapes this weekend.)

We would see you all put your problems in the box and leave them there. We would tell you also that you can cleverly construct a trap door in the bottom of the box and can eliminate them altogether. [10 March 1974]

Yet another endorsement of EST by the Michaels. Refer to the chapter “Monroe, Robert” for more information about that teacher that original Michaelian group members had contact with in the form of audio tapes.

Comment: An attempt was made to explain primary, secondary and tertiary upsets and how one must go back to the original upset. Those who have been through EST understand this, but were having difficulty explaining it to the rest.

The body does not like pain, obviously, and will erect as swift a barrier as possible between its receptors and the pain. It is sometimes by fainting, sometimes by more subtle denial. [20 March 1974]

There is a connection is between physical pain and emotional upsets. This Q&A exchange and others are discussed in the chapter “Suffering”.

Is Werner Erhard’s information from the Causal Plane? Is it true?

That is valid.

The so-called “Causal” Plane (“Mental” Plane per Theosophy) correlates with the Intellectual Center, whereas the Astral Plane correlates with the Emotional Center. The EST methodology worked on both Centers, so the questioner was probably wondering what plane EST resonated with.

What is the SRGA on Werner Erhard?

That is correct. Impatience, a Realist in Dominance.

Perhaps someone made guesses but they were not recorded. The three mentioned are all Cardinal Action Overleaves; Erhard was a dynamo.

Does he do automatic writing?

Yes. Some of it [EST] just came into his head, but he is given a headache when he tries to improvise.

Why?

There is, of course, an enormous resurgence of interest in the occult in this part of the world. Sometimes, potential Students are led gently to the School. Sometimes, it is like a bolt out of the blue or a tap on the head. At any rate, this [occult resurgence] is available all over this country. If you are able to listen to the words, you will find them [wherever you are]. You are here [in the Bay Area, in this group] because you wish to be. This is not facetiousness. At a deeper level, you wish to know [that] this [interest in the occult] is not unusual. Given your total picture, it points to curiosity about many things. [27 March 1974]

In subsequent decades, EST and its successor the Landmark Forum spread all over the world, as has the Gurdjieffian teachings — and now the Michaelian teachings.

Alice asked for a clarification of the word typed “facetiousness” from page 2 of March 27’s transcripts. The word “facetious” did not seem to fit the question.

“Facetious” but more like “platitudinous”.

We did later answer the question concerning Werner’s aching head in that when he fogs over the information, he is reminded by the pain. [15 May 1974]

Would that this were true of all teachers.

Narra did shed her gray [Aura] overtone following Erhard’s Sensitivity [sic] Training. We hope this is permanent. [15 May 1974]

Above it was said that EST is so intense and effective that it could even facilitate the change in an Overleaf; here it is said that it can facilitate the change in one’s Aura color. Gray is an indicator of repression, and Narra’s Mode was Repression; perhaps she at least went from the Negative Pole to the Positive Pole. Refer to the chapter “Auras: Colors and Meanings” for more information.

Joan: Could I have a comment about my arrogant attachment to the motherhood role?

The “motherhood role” is wholly in False Personality, yes. You are attempting to be more reasonable about this and this is not easy in your culture because, as the man Werner says, you do not experience your experiences. Therefore, it is almost irresistible to attempt to live again through your children, and this is unfair to both you and the child. Also, there is an element of Martyrdom in the motherhood role of the culture, which is unnecessary. It is not at all good to put off self-growth until the children are grown. They will not appreciate you one quanta more for your efforts. [16 June 1974]

One recommendation of EST and other psychotherapeutic/spiritual groups is to be mindful of your experiences: pay attention, be vigilant, be awake. More is said about that further on in this chapter.

Ted: In CIF and EST, [we are] exposed to much knowledge. What is the purpose of these for us?

This answer would be much the same for all in this room. That is, to synthesize and verify this knowledge so that you can be in a better space to promulgate the Logos. [19 June 1974]

It is not just for ourselves that we learn; it is also for others who may be influenced by us.

Delia: Should I take EST?

It would not be a bad idea. [28 August 1974]

Yet another endorsement of EST, at least for this particular person.

Dick: I become irritated with people who have expectations who tell me not to have any. One cannot initiate anything unless he has expectations. There are rare times when I can just be and have no expectations, and that is beautiful. This leads me to a topic I could not understand with Robert's group, where it was the goal to give up one's ego. As I see it, from one's ego comes one's self-image, one's power, one's strength. If my ego is deficient, then I am in a depressed state and for sure cannot love. In Robert's group, they continue to put down ego, one way by calling I "it": e.g., "It went to dinner" instead of "I went to dinner." I have been trying the EST and Ken Keyes' way to experience experiences. If I'm down, I don't ask myself what to do to go up. I aggravate the down so I can feel it as full as possible. I have burned out a number of things in this way, but I do not feel better for it. It seems that if I have lightened my load, I should feel more buoyant and better. Maybe I haven't tackled the basic problems. Could Michael comment on ego strength?

What you wish to give up is the strength of the ego of the Personality. The Essence has much strength of its own. They are separate and distinct. Remember, when you become your Essence, there will not be the albatross of Repression [Mode] to deal with. Perhaps it would be helpful to point out to you at this time, Dick, that you come far closer to loving when you are painting than at any other time. You do not have to start with loving difficult persons. This is not the primary objective at this time. Loving is Higher Emotion and that requires Balance [of all Centers]. The person who is "conscious" is not a doer anyway. Most who have reached that exalted state of physical being prefer not to *do*; they are content merely to *be* with the present — that feeling you have glimpsed when you were in those states briefly.

(paraphrased) This is something we have asked you to consider before: what is it you wish to do, learn to be more fruitful and happier in life, or go on to spiritual enlightenment? The goals are very different and the methods of approach, therefore, would have to be quite different. Living in life requires what you are calling self-image and ego strength. Spiritual acceleration does not require this. It requires negation of the cultural facade. Those who defined the ego and ego states thereof were not, after all, conscious beings and were observing only the personalities of others with their own personalities. The Essence, separate from this, has an innate strength of its own and can survive if the body is prepared for the surge when it comes. Disintegration only comes when the Personality is lost and the Essence is freed prematurely, such as in some psychotic states. Otherwise, those on the path find the surge exhilarating and liberating and are prepared for it when it comes, but this only comes after the groundwork has been laid. Those tools we have given you are at your disposal. You might say that the Essence has its own ego. You are just not acquainted with it. The Artisan ego is what has produced the world's great masterpieces, not always for the King's ransom, either, many times in a lonesome gallery. [14 September 1974]

The reason that I include this lengthy quotation is to emphasize what is stated repeatedly in this chapter and in this book: there is a difference between psychotherapy that makes one a better human being, and the spiritual path that transcends being a mere human being. EST, Gurdjieff, and the Michaelian teachings have elements of both, because the former is a necessary precursor to the latter.

Louise asked Michael to comment about the upcoming EST trip for her.

Yes, we would consider this a wise move and a growth experience. [24 September 1974]

Yet another original Michaelian group member does the EST program. What is not stated here is that Louise's daughter Leslie, who became a Michael channel, also took the EST training and worked in the EST office, according to an interview with Louise.

Comment: We need a Teacher to pass on to us the Agape — like passing the torch in the Olympics. A discussion was held about the experience of looking into other people's eyes without speaking for an extended time. This was an EST process.

This would bring up many taboos and would be a rewarding experience. We would suggest that you start off with only a few minutes and then increase gradually. You see, this is a more powerful experience than you think, for there are now in your group souls who are beginning to trust, and looking at them closely will produce strange emotions. [05 October 1974]

"Eye-gazing" is a common exercise in various encounter groups that have psychological and/or spiritual intimacy as a goal. An internet search yields millions of hits; check it out if it interests you.

Louise: *[Question not recorded.]*

EST will open many doors. [11 November 1974]

Yet another endorsement from the Michaels.

Two and three years later they were still discussing the EST experience:

There was talk of the Personality and the fact that we must have it for a reason, and why not live with it — or words to that effect.

There comes a point, believe us, when you tire of the experience [of putting up with Personality].

The fallacy in your interpretation of the [Werner] Erhard training (this to Cynthia) is in your stubborn insistence that you love your misery. We do not hear the man Werner saying this [love your misery]. It is possible to endure an unpleasant situation with grace, but the goal is to step from it as quickly as possible, not stay there and grind your molars. [21 November 1976]

Cynthia was an Emotionally Centered Mature Sage in the Passion Mode; she worked for a time for the EST organization.

Dick said we were all just spiritual dilettantes — the utilitarian value comes later — the value of the Overleaves. In order to “surrender,” there has to be a feeling that there is something to achieve through this surrender.

There are two types of experience going on within this movement — and by ‘movement’ we mean the whole guru game that is now on-going. These are the true experiences and the [false] cultural experiences. Most of those who go to EST do not experience anything but group highs, and this could have happened merely by smoking marijuana in the living room with a group of friends. Others have elected to change their lives, and this has occurred only through surrender to the processes. Faith is what determines success.

Dick: The problem is trusting the process. It used to be that “the truth shall set you free.” ... Now it’s baloney that sets you free. (Dick said that!)

Perhaps Dick equated the word “faith” with “baloney”, which I believe is a misunderstanding of what the Michaels meant: I connect “faith” with “surrender to the process”, the outcome of which one does not know in advance. On the other hand, like Dick, I have misgivings that artificial situations, such as those engineered in EST sessions, will effect real and lasting change. Life experiences, including crises, are the best teachers, in my opinion. The self-awareness and self-appraisal taught by Erhard, Gurdjieff, and the Michaels can teach one how to most efficiently and effectively assimilate the catalyst of ordinary and extraordinary life experiences.

Comment: Nonetheless, we’ve all found answers for ourselves — with Robert’s group, EST or S.T.A.R., etc. [10 April 1977]

Dick would like a comment on his observation of himself finding it more difficult to forgive people having more powerful Overleaves than his own.

The absolving oneself of all guilt is, of course, the first step toward understanding the ability of those in Exalted Overleaves to absolve others of the responsibility that they themselves can then willingly shoulder. This concept is no different than that espoused by Werner Erhard, only it is expressed in religious terminology and, therefore by definition, becomes obscure and difficult to absorb; or, at least, one gets the illusion of difficulty from the semantic problems. Forgiveness is really no more than the utter willingness to accept responsibility for one’s own life, and this is why it is so difficult for those in Ordinal Roles when their own existences seem so pale beside the more Exalted Roles. In truth, the Exalted Roles are more able to take the responsibility. Of course, they are. It is easy to take responsibility in the Power Mode, and a King finds it easy to excuse the behavior of a Slave. However, it is far from impossible for those in Ordinal Roles to go through the process of learning to take responsibility for their wins as well as their losses.

We want you to understand that guilt is never a religious-induced phenomenon, and [it] serves only as a part of vanity [Arrogance] in this culture. At one time, it was necessary to extract obedience from a more barbaric populace. This is no longer true, but you keep it around because it aids enormously in the suffering that you all love. The man Werner has discovered within himself an answer, and he chooses to call it accepting responsibility. Others choose to call it forgiving; it all means exactly the same. If you accept responsibility for your own actions, then where will you place the blame if failure occurs? The answer usually becomes: there are no failures. Oddly enough, when the responsibility becomes yours and yours alone, you take precautions not to fail. Failure is an easy way out, and those in Ordinal Roles love to fail because it takes so little effort and the blame can be placed on those in “power”. But, truthfully, no one in an Ordinal Role loses unless he wishes — any more than do those in Exalted Roles. This country has had leaders in Ordinal Roles who have been exceptionally effective. The sense of failure comes not from specific Overleaves but from enculturation and, yes, some Overleaves are more susceptible to enculturation than others, especially some Chief Features and the

younger soul levels [Ages]. The Roles are not, however, and you can succeed from any of the Roles providing the Chief Feature is not one that dooms the life experience to failure. Even that [Chief Feature], as you all know, can be extinguished and worked through, but this takes that willingness to stand where you are right now, and realize that you have put yourself there and no one else is responsible. [03 September 1977]

Werner Erhard's "Hunger Project" came up and some [expressed] not feeling the need for concern and that the only real hunger is to expand our consciousness. People's experiences are incomplete and only have a partial picture of the whole from the angle their perception is coming from. Therefore, as Gurdjieff said, everyone lies the minute he speaks. [21 October 1977]

That was the last time the subject of EST appeared in the original Michaelian group transcriptions. It recurred many times during almost the entirety of the original Michaelian group, from shortly after the Michael's first appeared, to near the time that the second Michaelian group started in the late winter or spring of 1978. EST had an effect on original Michaelian group members, and considering the quantity of EST graduates, it likely has had an effect on more people than the Michaelian teachings.

Concluding Comments on EST

Considering how many times the subject of EST came up in the original Michaelian group sessions, I would say that that is an indication of how important it was to them and how many of them took the course.

Subsequent Michaelian students are typically not as intense about the path to spiritual enlightenment as the original Michaelian group was; at best, one might regard the current emphasis of the Michaelian teachings to be on mere psychotherapy.

The original version of EST, under the leadership of Erhard, was so intense and rigid that it garnered a lot of negative criticism; the Landmark Forum toned things down considerably.

Some time in the late 1990s, at a time when I did not know of its derivation from EST, I attended an introductory session of the Landmark Forum. I could see why it has an appeal to a certain class of spiritual seekers in the self-help psychology and spirituality crowd, but I did not take the course.





ESTEEM, HONOR, RESPECT

This chapter is the product of a search for the words esteem, honor, and respect in the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group channeling sessions. This word does not represent a significant component of the Michaelian teachings. However, there are good reasons to discuss the subject in this *Study Papers* book: 1) the subject came up numerous times during the original Michaelian group; 2) students can presumably benefit from having the mentions conveniently collected and commented all in one place; 3) some interesting things were said about the subject; 4) the subject is related to a number of other components of the Michaelian teachings that are considered to be significant; 5) *Issues of esteem, honor, and respect are unavoidable, they are pervasive in human psychology and sociology and spirituality, so it behooves us to have a working knowledge of them.*

The words esteem, honor, and respect are not capitalized in this chapter or other chapters of this *Study Papers* book because it has no special meaning in the Michaelian teachings; it is not a Michaelian jargon word that needs a definition apart from its use in the common vernacular.

This chapter is one of many in this book that focuses on a psychological component of the Michaelian teachings as found in original Michaelian group transcriptions, rather than on a spiritual component, as so many other chapters in this book do. Psychological components of the Michaelian teachings are usually either a positive to be cultivated or a negative to be mitigated; both are amenable to psychotherapeutic techniques. Obviously, esteem, honor, and respect are positives to be cultivated. The Michaelian version of psychology is not to be confused with the popular psychology of the self-improvement movement, those that do not have a spiritual core or perspective. Rather, the Michaelian psychotherapeutic path (aimed at improving psychological health) is a beneficial precursor to the spiritual path (aimed at improving soul health). To skip the former but attempt the latter is referred to as "spiritual bypassing". This is discussed at length on such websites as >https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spiritual_bypass<. To skip mitigating one's psychological issues and attempt to go straight to enlightenment usually proves to be problematic.

Definition of Esteem, Honor, and Respect

So what is meant by *template*? The online Merriam Webster online dictionary definition is: *Wikipedia has an article that provides a definition and a description, as follows (underlined words are my emphasis):*

Esteem, Honor, and Respect per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

The following extracts from original Michaelian group transcriptions are Q&A exchanges, where an original Michaelian group member asks a question (or makes a comment), and the Michaels provide an answer. These extracts are presented in the chronological order in which they were given. As is my custom, I usually provide some explanatory comments following the question or answer. Underlined words are my emphasis, to draw attention to what it is that I comment on. Sometimes I embed words or phrases [in brackets] that I believe help to clarify the question or the answer. Numerous study papers related to this chapter are to be found among my comments.

Concluding Comments on Esteem, Honor, and Respect





EVIL AND GOOD

Philosophers and theologians have deeply pondered the so-called “problem of evil” for millennia. And not just philosophers and theologians, most thoughtful and sensitive people, when they experience or witness something that seems “evil”, also wonder why there is evil in the world. The subject came up in the original Michaelian group, of course, and the Michaels had their answer, as we will see.

The following study paper is the result of a word search for evil and good, but also **sin and righteousness**, and similar terminology. There is also a related chapter, “Suffering”, which the reader might want to peruse in tandem with this chapter in order to get a broader and clearer picture of what the Michael’s had to say about something that affects us all in one way or another.

Before we look at what the Michaels had to say, let’s take a brief look at what the philosophers and theologians had to say.

The Problem of Evil

In theology, the problem of suffering is connected to the nature of God and the purpose of human life. If God is good and wants the best for its creation, why is human life often filled with so much pain? There is even a technical name for this: “theodicy”. There is an extensive article in Wikipedia that describes the history of the problem and some proposed answers, far more than quoted below, but this is the most relevant portion. Underlines are my emphasis.

The problem of evil is the question of how to reconcile the existence of evil and suffering with an omnipotent, omnibenevolent, and omniscient God. There are currently differing definitions of these concepts. The best known presentation of the problem is attributed to the Greek philosopher Epicurus. It was popularized by David Hume. Besides the philosophy of religion, the problem of evil is also important to the fields of theology and ethics. There are also many discussions of evil and associated problems in other philosophical fields, such as secular ethics, and evolutionary ethics. But as usually understood, the problem of evil is posed in a theological context. Responses to the problem of evil have traditionally been in three types: refutations, defenses, and theodicies. The problem of evil is generally formulated in two forms: the logical problem of evil and the evidential problem of evil. The logical form of the argument tries to show a logical impossibility in the coexistence of God and evil, while the evidential form tries to show that given the evil in the world, it is improbable that there is an omnipotent, omniscient, and wholly good God. The problem of evil has been extended to non-human life forms, to include animal suffering from natural evils and human cruelty against them.

Thereafter was an extensive accounting of the *philosophical* arguments about the nature of evil and what it all means. We may skip that and move on to the part of the Wikipedia article that is relevant to the Michaelian teachings, the part that has to do with *theological* concerns: “God” and “soul” and such. This is technically known as “theodicy”. My comments are interspersed among the Wikipedia quotations; underlines are my emphasis.

Soul-making or Irenaean theodicy

The soul-making (or Irenaean) theodicy is named after the 2nd-century Greek theologian Irenaeus whose ideas were adopted in Eastern Christianity. It has been modified and advocated in the twenty-first century by John Hick. Irenaean theodicy stands in sharp contrast to the Augustinian. For Augustine, humans were created perfect but fell, and thereafter continued to choose badly of their own freewill. In Irenaeus' view, humans were not created perfect, but instead, must strive continuously to move closer to it.

The key points of a soul-making theodicy begin with its metaphysical foundation: that "(1) The purpose of God in creating the world was soul-making for rational moral agents". (2) Humans choose their responses to the

soul-making process thereby developing moral character. (3) This requires that God remain hidden, otherwise freewill would be compromised. (4) This hiddenness is created, in part, by the presence of evil in the world. (5) The distance of God makes moral freedom possible, while the existence of obstacles makes meaningful struggle possible. (6) The end result of beings who complete the soul-making process is "a good of such surpassing value" that it justifies the means. (7) Those who complete the process will be admitted to the kingdom of God where there will be no more evil. Hick argues that, for suffering to have soul-making value, "human effort and development must be present at every stage of existence including the afterlife".

C. S. Lewis developed a theodicy that began with freewill and then accounts for suffering caused by disease and natural disasters by developing a version of the soul-making theodicy. Nicholas Wolterstorff has raised challenges for Lewis's soul-making theodicy. Erik J. Wielenberg draws upon Lewis's broader corpus beyond *The Problem of Pain* but also, to a lesser extent, on the thought of two other contemporary proponents of the soul-making theodicy, John Hick and Trent Dougherty, in an attempt to make the case that Lewis's version of the soul-making theodicy has depth and resilience.

Critique

The Irenaean theodicy is challenged by the assertion that many evils do not promote spiritual growth, but can instead be destructive of the human spirit. Hick acknowledges that this process often fails in the actual world. Particularly egregious cases known as horrendous evils, which "[constitute] prima facie reason to doubt whether the participant's life could (given their inclusion in it) be a great good to him/her on the whole," have been the focus of recent work in the problem of evil. Horrendous suffering often leads to dehumanization, and its victims become angry, bitter, vindictive, depressed and spiritually worse.

Yet, life crises are a catalyst for change that is often positive. Neurologists Bryan Kolb and Bruce Wexler indicate this has to do with the plasticity of the brain. The brain is highly plastic in childhood development, becoming less so by adulthood once development is completed. Thereafter, the brain resists change. The neurons in the brain can only make permanent changes "when the conditions are right" because the brain's development is dependent upon the stimulation it receives. When the brain receives the powerful stimulus that experiences like bereavement, life threatening illness, the trauma of war and other deeply painful experiences provide, a prolonged and difficult internal struggle, where the individual completely re-examines their self-concept and perceptions of reality, reshapes neurological structures. The literature refers to turning points, defining moments, crucible moments, and life-changing events. These are experiences that form a catalyst in an individual's life so that the individual is personally transformed, often emerging with a sense of learning, strength and growth, that empowers them to pursue different paths than they otherwise would have.

Steve Gregg acknowledges that much human suffering produces no discernible good, and that the greater good does not fully address every case. "Nonetheless, the fact that sufferings are temporal, and are often justly punitive, corrective, sanctifying and ennobling stands as one of the important aspects of a biblical worldview that somewhat ameliorates the otherwise unanswerable problem of pain".

A second critique argues that, were it true that God permitted evil in order to facilitate spiritual growth, it might be reasonable to expect that evil would disproportionately befall those in poor spiritual health such as the decadent wealthy, who often seem to enjoy lives of luxury insulated from evil, whereas many of the pious are poor and well acquainted with worldly evils. Using the example of Francis of Assisi, G. K. Chesterton argues that, contrary "to the modern mind", wealth is condemned in Christian theology for the very reason that wealth insulates from evil and suffering, and the spiritual growth such experiences can produce. Chesterton explains that Francis pursued poverty "as men have dug madly for gold" because its concomitant suffering is a path to piety.

G. Stanley Kane asserts that human character can be developed directly in constructive and nurturing loving ways, and it is unclear why God would consider or allow evil and suffering to be necessary or the preferred way to spiritual growth. Hick asserts that suffering is necessary, not only for some specific virtues, but that "...one who has attained to goodness by meeting and eventually mastering temptation, and thus by rightly making [responsible] choices in concrete situations, is good in a richer and more valuable sense than would be one created ab initio in a state either of innocence or of virtue. In the former case, which is that of the actual moral achievements of mankind, the individual's goodness has within it the strength of temptations overcome, a stability based upon an accumulation of right choices, and a positive and responsible character that comes from the investment of costly personal effort."

However, the virtues identified as the result of "soul-making" may only appear to be valuable in a world where evil and suffering already exist. A willingness to sacrifice oneself in order to save others from persecution, for example, is virtuous because persecution exists. Likewise, the willingness to donate one's meal to those who are starving is valuable because starvation exists. If persecution and starvation did not occur, there would be no reason to consider these acts virtuous. If the virtues developed through soul-making are only valuable where suffering exists, then it is not clear what would be lost if suffering did not exist. C. Robert Mesle says that such a discussion presupposes that virtues are only instrumentally valuable instead of intrinsically valuable.

The soul-making reconciliation of the problem of evil, states Creegan, fails to explain the need or rationale for evil inflicted on animals and resultant animal suffering, because "there is no evidence at all that suffering improves the character of animals, or is evidence of soul-making in them". Hick differentiates between animal and human suffering based on "our capacity imaginatively to anticipate the future".

Cruciform theodicy

Cruciform theodicy is not a theodical system in the same manner that Soul-making theodicy and Process theodicy are, so it does not address all the questions of "the origin, nature, problem, reason and end of evil." It is a thematic trajectory that, historically, has been the primary Christian response to the problem of evil. Its inclusion as a theme divides general theistic theodicies from specifically Christian ones. Its key elements are: God not being a distant deity but instead, as James Cone states, seeing in the person of Jesus, "God's identity with the suffering of the world". Marilyn McCord Adams says incarnation is the "culmination of a series of things Divine love does to unite itself with material creation...".

The cruciform theodicy asserts that an ontological change in the underlying structure of existence has taken place through the life and death of Jesus, with its immersion in human suffering, transforming suffering itself. Philosopher and Christian priest Marilyn McCord Adams offers this theodicy of "redemptive suffering" in which personal suffering becomes an aspect of Christ's "transformative power of redemption" in the world. An alteration in thinking of the believer also occurs in this model, as they come to see existence in a new light. For example, "On July 16, 1944 awaiting execution in a Nazi prison and reflecting on Christ's experience of powerlessness and pain, Dietrich Bonhoeffer penned six words that became the clarion call for the modern theological paradigm: 'Only the suffering God can help'."

This theodicy contains a special concern for the victims of the world, and stresses the importance of caring for those who suffer at the hands of injustice. Soelle says that Christ's willingness to suffer on behalf of others means that his followers must themselves serve as "God's representatives on earth" by struggling against evil and injustice and being willing to suffer for those on the "underside of history".

Afterlife

Thomas Aquinas suggested the afterlife theodicy to address the problem of evil and to justify the existence of evil. The premise behind this theodicy is that the afterlife is unending, human life is short, and God allows evil and suffering in order to judge and grant everlasting heaven or hell based on human moral actions and human suffering. Aquinas says that the afterlife is the greater good that justifies the evil and suffering in current life. Christian author Randy Alcorn argues that the joys of heaven will compensate for the sufferings on earth.

Stephen Maitzen has called this the "Heaven Swamps Everything" theodicy, and argues that it is false because it conflates compensation and justification. This theodical view is based on the principle that under a just God, "no innocent creature suffers misery that is not compensated by happiness at some later stage (e. g. an afterlife)" but in the traditional view, animals don't have an afterlife.

[>https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Problem_of_evil< — retrieved 30 October 2021]

After this brief introduction, there followed an extensive exposition on the definition, formulation, history, theology, and philosophy of the subject. Check it out if you are so inclined. The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy also has an extensive article on the subject: ><https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/evil/><. *[[After researching this topic in the transcriptions, I should perhaps quote from these sources and compare and contrast to what the Michaels said.]]*

The original Michaelian group members were not philosophers or theologians, so they were not sophisticated about the subtleties of arguments about the reason for "evil", but the subject did come up a few times, and the Michaels did have somewhat to say about it.

Evil and Good per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

The word “evil” first appears in the original Michaelian group transcriptions in the second session in which the Michaels were the source:

Phyllis: [Question not given] ...

The concepts expressed here blow your mind. There is no evil in the universe. This alone is enough for some to really have a foundation–shaking experience. [17 August 1973]

This blunt statement requires a thorough explanation ... There are many other allusions to evil before we get to that ...

If the Young Soul’s own personal opinion of sex is rather low, it will do its best to convince those around it that sex is evil and should be eschewed. The Baby Soul tends to be fundamentalistic in its religious beliefs.

Personification of the godhead is the strongest in this Cycle. The Baby Soul believes in the forces of evil. [late August 1973]

The first clue to an answer is that people *subjectively* perceive evil where the Michaels have a different, and I would say *objective* characterization from their higher perspective.

Dick: Was my father a late Cycle Old Soul whose personality was much bound up in False Personality?

Yes, but not late Cycle, [he was] early [Cycle Old Soul]. This is why he could not come out of the False Personality to be “real” to you and Mary [his mother]. CarolH [his sister] did not perceive this. He had [the] desire to search, but not [the] knowledge of the goal. The goal [of searching] does not become clear to other than Older Souls. That is why the penitent orders are almost entirely composed of Mature Souls. They perceive the collective guilt of the world around them and assume that it is they who have sinned. There is no sin, only Karma, as there is no evil, only Maya. [08 September 1973]

This answer — that the perception that “evil” objectively exists is part of Maya hints at the doctrine of justification or reconciliation mentioned in the philosophical literature quoted above — is elaborated in the chapter on Maya.





EVOLUTION AND INVOLUTION





EXCUSE

This chapter is the product of a search for the word “excuse” and its derivatives in the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group channeling sessions. This word does not represent a significant component of the Michaelian teachings. However, there are good reasons to discuss the subject in this *Study Papers* book: 1) the subject came up numerous times during the original Michaelian group; 2) students can presumably benefit from having the mentions conveniently collected all in one place; 3) some interesting things were said about the subject; 4) the subject is related to a number of other components of the Michaelian teachings that are considered to be significant; 5) People making excuses is a pervasive phenomenon in human psychology and sociology and spirituality.

The word “excuse” is not capitalized in this chapter or other chapters of this *Study Papers* book because it has no special meaning in the Michaelian teachings; it is not a Michaelian jargon word that needs a definition apart from its use in the common vernacular.

This chapter is one of many in this book that focuses on a psychological and psychotherapeutic component of the Michaelian teachings as found in original Michaelian group transcriptions, rather than on a spiritual component, as so many other chapters in this book do. The Michaelian version of psychology is not to be confused with the pop psychology of the self-improvement movement, those that do not have a spiritual core or perspective. Rather, the Michaelian psychotherapeutic path (aimed at improving psychological health) is a beneficial precursor to the spiritual path (aimed at improving soul health). To skip the former but attempt the latter is referred to as “spiritual bypassing” (>https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spiritual_bypass<), and it usually proves to be problematic.

The purpose of this chapter is to point out where excuses are legitimate and where they are not legitimate. Wisdom comes with knowing the difference. A related chapter is “Forgiveness”.

Definition of Excuse

So what is meant by excuse? The online Merriam Webster dictionary definition is:

Excuse per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

The following extracts from original Michaelian group transcriptions are Q&A exchanges, where an original Michaelian group member asks a question (or makes a comment), and the Michaels provide an answer. This is [not] a subject that would benefit by division into subcategories, as some subjects do. **These extracts are [not] presented in the chronological order in which they were given, even though this is not a subject where there was a development or evolution of a specific revelation of a facet of the Michaelian teachings, as was often the case with the original Michaelian group.** As is my custom, I often provide some explanatory comments following the question or answer. Underlined words are my emphasis, to draw attention to what it is that I comment on. Sometimes I embed words or phrases [in brackets] that I believe help to clarify the question or the answer.

Dick: False Personality is always on guard. As far as Personality goes, it is not going to be duplicated. It's amazing how False Personality will avoid painful or even good situations. You make excuses and justify intellectually, even manufacturing illnesses to avoid doing something. [06 October 1973]

Most Old Souls are rather sloppy. The tendency toward simplicity is Good Work; being a menace to public health is not. Sometimes the casualness provides an excuse to vegetate. [10 November 1973]

Edgar: Why is it that Old Souls with united Fragments are not superior in competence to Young Souls who have a smaller amount of united Fragments?

The Old Soul, at a deeper level, realizes the futility and temporary nature of material achievements, and, therefore, lacks the drive to accomplish this. You are all extremely competent, even in Roles that are out of Essence. The drive is now for spiritual evolution in all of you. Therefore, you are inclined to let the rest slide. Any one of you could achieve anything you wish to do. Why didn't you? For instance, Edgar uses poverty as an excuse, but this is invalid. Many poverty-stricken Young Souls have achieved wondrous things through sheer struggle. Sarah uses the same excuse. [22 November 1973]

Does "acceptance" mean that a person accepts everything around him or does he work to get others to accept him?

Acceptance as a Goal causes the soul involved to go through various machinations in order to find their special niche in life. This also in turn causes them to excuse the faults of others, since they themselves recognize their own imperfections. This is the proverbial "nice guy". [31 December 1973]

... verbal communication is a poor excuse for the sum of communication. However, until one of you break through with telepathy, this will have to do. [31 December 1973]

Refer to the chapters "Communication" and "Telepathy".

Mary: I read the group's book and would suggest a glossary would be most helpful, with definitions of such words as Maya, Monad, Logos, and Karma.

We would propose an exercise in psychic Photography for all of you as follows: begin to Photograph yourselves reacting to suggestions of change with the statement, "I cannot", then realize that this is not true. Sometimes, the truth will be that you do not at the present moment possess the required skills or knowledge, but more often than not, the truth will be, "I do not want to." This is vital, and a positive step on the path. You can help by Photographing each other in this. Also, all of you are guilty of using this as an excuse many times a day to shift the blame, and this accomplishes that nicely. You present then the picture of a student at the mercy of the cosmos, which is, of course, absurd. [20 March 1974]

The lady [Mary, mother of Jesus] was a reasonably intelligent young woman raised in strict tradition, married to a strongly independent Artisan [Joseph] of somewhat impious ideas. She found it necessary many times in her life to make excuses for him to her disapproving relatives. [13 May 1974]

There is, in the last analysis, no confrontation except that which occurs when the Essence is free enough to confront the Personality. The confrontation is an inner thing. That is the only one that will produce growth. There is also a lack of trust among many of you in that if one opens the door just a crack, perhaps the light will be so blinding that that one will not be able any longer to move in darkness. In other words, there will be no more excuses possible. [09 February 1975]

Perhaps you have heard the aphorism, "When all else fails, read the instructions". It is the same with the spiritual path. You should not wait until all alternatives have been exhausted before you do the right thing.

Excluding a source of valuable Friction is just another excuse.... [15 April 1975]

Refer to the chapter "Friction" for more information about that method of advancing oneself on the spiritual path. Overcoming Friction is an unpleasant way to advance, but it should not be excluded on that account.

Dick would like a comment on his observation of himself finding it more difficult to forgive people having more powerful Overleaves than his own.

The absolving oneself of all guilt is, of course, the first step toward understanding the ability of those in Exalted Overleaves to absolve others of the responsibility that they themselves can then willingly shoulder. This concept is no different than that espoused by Werner Erhard, only it is expressed in religious terminology and, therefore by definition, becomes obscure and difficult to absorb; or, at least, one gets the illusion of difficulty from the semantic problems. Forgiveness is really no more than the utter willingness to accept responsibility for one's own life, and this is why it is so difficult for those in Ordinal Roles when their own existences seem so pale beside the more Exalted Roles. In truth, the Exalted Roles are more able to take the responsibility. Of course, they are. It is easy to take responsibility in the Power Mode, and a King finds it easy to excuse the behavior of a

Slave. However, it is far from impossible for those in Ordinal Roles to go through the process of learning to take responsibility for their wins as well as their losses. [03 September 1977]

Refer to the chapter "Responsibility" for Michael's take on the opposite of making excuses.

She uses her lack of formal education as an excuse not to have to formulate goals for herself because that would conflict with the picture that the Overleaves have of themselves. [04 November 1974]

[[continue word search to end of transcriptions]]

Concluding Comments on Excuse





EXPECTATIONS

This chapter is the product of a search for the word “expectation” and its derivatives in the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group channeling sessions. This word does not represent a significant component of the Michaelian teachings. However, there are good reasons to discuss the subject in this *Study Papers* book: 1) the subject came up numerous times during the original Michaelian group; 2) students can presumably benefit from having the mentions conveniently collected and commented all in one place; 3) some interesting things were said about the subject; 4) the subject is related to a number of other components of the Michaelian teachings that are considered to be significant; 5) **“Template” issues are pervasive in human psychology and sociology and spirituality.**

The word “**template**” is not capitalized in this chapter or other chapters of this *Study Papers* book because it has no special meaning in the Michaelian teachings; it is not a Michaelian jargon word that needs a definition apart from its use in the common vernacular.

This chapter is one of many in this book that focuses on a psychological component of the Michaelian teachings as found in original Michaelian group transcriptions, rather than on a spiritual component, as so many other chapters in this book do. Psychological components of the Michaelian teachings are usually either a ‘virtue’ to be cultivated or a ‘vice’ to be mitigated; both are amenable to psychotherapy. Obviously, **template is a vice / virtue**. The Michaelian version of psychology is not to be confused with the pop psychology of the self-improvement movement, those that do not have a spiritual core or perspective. Rather, the Michaelian psychotherapeutic path (aimed at improving psychological health) is a beneficial precursor to the spiritual path (aimed at improving soul health). To skip the former but attempt the latter is referred to as “spiritual bypassing”. This is discussed at length on various websites, including https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spiritual_bypass. To skip mitigating one’s psychological issues and attempt to go straight to enlightenment usually proves to be problematic.

Definition of Expectation

So what is meant by expectation? The online Merriam Webster dictionary definition is:

Expectations per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

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[[These quotations are so numerous that this section could be divided into subsections by subject category.]]

The first mention of expectations is found in one of the earliest sessions, before the Michaels appeared:

The details of a sexual encounter were described here to simplify the above.

[Soleal:] Much progress is made after this lesson is brought to consciousness. My telling you will only give you something to work out. Some people work on the giving of themselves freely for many lifetimes. That is the most difficult part of love. Love, to mean anything in the line of consciousness, cannot be predicated on

anything material; it must come from higher Centers. That comes about when you finally give up non-verbal expectations about the actions of those around you and begin to accept them without modification in your fantasies. [03 July 1973]

Don't be so surprised when other people do not act according to your expectation. The simple fact is that one never knows exactly how other people will act or react, so it is best to not have strong expectations about them. Refer to the chapter "Fantasies" for more discussion about that topic, which is related to expectations. Romantic relationships are often fraught with unrealistic expectations, perhaps more so than any other type of human relationship; refer to the chapter "Sexuality" for more discussion of that.

Sarah: Can you tell us the how?

[Soleal:] To get to higher Centers, do what Jesus did: fasting, meditation, and agonizing self-appraisal. Exercise the body, learn to love unselfishly. This is hard to do, but it can be achieved by [first] intellectually apprehending the fact that no other Creature [of Reason] owes you anything, and then materially obtaining what you need through your own resources. Emotional acceptance will only come about when the [Intellectual Center] expectations [of entitlement] have ceased. Jesus had no aspirations of his students. In fact, he knew that he would fail the most dismally in his mission to those closest to him; yet, he persisted in his efforts. For his own growth, it was more important to express the higher good than it was that those around him absorb it. Many did absorb — many more now than then. Even if you feel that good efforts are being wasted, continue. Positive energy is never wasted; somebody always absorbs it. [03 July 1973]

Having expectations is mostly a function of the Intellectual Center, so if a person releases expectations they will experience the other Centers without that encumbrance or distortion. The Michaels never use the word "entitlement" in place of "expectation", but entitlement is a certain type of expectation, when defined as "belief that one is deserving of or entitled to certain privileges". You might ask yourself, What would Jesus do? The answer is that in every situation, he would have no unrealistic expectations.

Erotic love has a tendency to be fickle and slips away at the mere hint of an unfulfilled expectation, while Agape has no expectations to begin with — asks nothing in return and accepts, and is the hallmark. [24 July 1973]

The opposite of having expectations is to have "Agape" — refer to the chapter by that name for a complete description of Agape. So, whenever you find yourself surprised by the fact that someone else is not fulfilling your expectation of them, then you know that you are not in Agape. **(If an employee of yours cannot live up to their job description, then that is different.)**

The Young Soul perceives love as Eros, solely predicated upon those expectations it has of the others around it.

If the others fail to live up to those expectations, the Young Soul can hate with equal zest. [late August 1973]

When the Young Soul motto "do it my way" is not satisfied, the Young Soul reacts negatively. As an Old Soul who watches Young Souls, it always amazes me when I see how they can be so rigid in this sense of entitlement, that other people owe it to them to live according to standards not their own.

Dick: [Valuable] for Kathryn, Cheryl and Richard?

Kathryn and Richard, yes. Cheryl would enjoy it, but don't expect her having the same experience. She will perceive the experience in an entirely different light. [08 September 1973]

Kathryn and Richard were Old Souls, and Cheryl was a Young Soul. Here again we see that Soul Age is a significant determinant of perceptions. If we should have any expectations at all about other people, it might be to expect them to act appropriately for their Age, and if their Age is different from ours, we can reasonably expect their perception to be different from ours. Even here we must not expect predictability in others, because stereotyping others based on some personality typology, even the Overleaf System, is risky business.

Dick: Many of my patients had pain problems today and I did not have the time to help them — to help them see the source.

Your society uses time as an enemy. How can you expect to be of much help with the scheduling you are enduring? [Mid-September 1973]

The quicker you adjust your expectations to reality, the happier you will be. As a physician employee of Kaiser Permanente, Dick may not have had the freedom to set his own time allotment schedule for seeing patients. This situation with for-profit hospitals is detrimental to the health of the doctor as well as of the patient. We can reasonably expect Young Souls to set schedules that value the financial health of the institution above the physical and mental health of its people. One way to mitigate detriments to one's health is to not have unrealistic expectations.

Dick: I think that the way you eventually get there is by chipping away at it the way we're doing. One of our big things, for three years, was to rid ourselves of anger and hostility, either dumping it or accepting it, but somehow just saying that you want to get rid of it doesn't get rid of it. There was no method suggested there that seemed workable.

Unfulfilled expectations are the sole cause of anger. We know of none other. When you stop expecting, there will be no anger.

Dick: There is a delicate line between that and going to sleep. Lots of things in life depend on expectations.

You must communicate your needs and wants to those around you. Unless you are telepathic, you must do it verbally. Then you must leave them with an option. You must make that option known to them. The alternatives, with all of the ramifications, must be understood, as well as the motivation of their acceptance or refusal. When there is complete understanding, there will be no disagreement. You have all heard this before and we must emphasize it because it is the secret to effective communication, which will banish the specter of unfulfilled expectations. [02 October 1973]

Anger might be the biggest clue that you have unfulfilled expectations. Refer to the chapter "Communication" for more discussion of that method for mitigating unrealistic expectations.

Dick: Some of the internal depression and anger I experience seems to be the result of expectations I have of myself.

Re-examine those expectations for shades of realism. One step at a time is normally effective for useful ambulation. Why not for spiritual liberation? [02 October 1973]

It has been said somewhere that depression is anger turned inwards. Obviously, expectations are not only about other people; they are also about oneself. The point to be made here is that if you find yourself either angry or depressed, you should try to figure out what "shades of realism" (aspects of reality) you are not in agreement with, and make 'course corrections' in your "ambulation". This will lead to spiritual liberation; refer to the chapter "Liberation".

The group was not finished hashing out their understanding of the above revelation:

Dick: Also, I don't feel that he [Michael] completely explained that question of expectations of others. He said that we would have to make our needs and wants known to others verbally, but then you have to learn to expect them not to be fulfilled sometimes.

Sarah: He [Michael] said that you have to tell them what the alternatives are and give them the option of not doing it.

Dick: Then you can't really expect them to do it.

Gene: No, Dick, I think what they mean is that you can have a certain standard for yourself and then you must communicate that standard so that the other person will know what you are thinking and then they can do it or not do it. But if they don't know and the other guy thinks you expect him to do something ...

Dick: Yes, but then there is this other thing. Soeal says that when you finally realize that no one owes you anything, you have no expectations. But making your wants known implies an expectation.

Gene: So when you start making wants known, you are saying that you are less than perfect.

Dick: Then Buddhism is the not having of any wants.

Alice: This is the game of life. I mean, you can go and sit on a mountain somewhere — many do and they don't have any expectations — but they are not playing the game like we are.

Dick: I think that all unhappiness results from greed or wanting something. Greed imprisons you in Maya.

Just because you have a want, does not mean that the chosen one must supply it. You may need to go to several sources. Expectations are foolhardy. Greed is a large part of Maya. [02 October 1973]

In America these people grew up in a Young Soul culture with all of its expectations imprinted in them. If they had grown up in a Buddhist culture, dealing with expectations would not have been such a big deal.

Dick asked for a comment on her general health (seems run down).

Her general health is all right, except that she drives herself in an effort to achieve her expectations, which are high. Kathryn's path is a steep one. [17 October 1973]

Kathryn, one of Dick's adult daughters, was a King. Even as an Old Soul, that Role is known to have high expectations of oneself and others.

Richard: Can I be selfish and ask another personal question? What is the best way I can overcome my nervousness?

Your nervousness stems from what you fantasize to be other's expectations of you: your mother, your first grade teacher, even Sarah.

Richard: What is the best way to overcome that?

Stop caring what they expect. You will not please them anyway. [20 October 1973]

Richard was in Acceptance Goal and Caution Mode. Not only Soul Age and Role as mentioned previously, but other Overleaves create issues regarding expectations. Refer to the chapter “Fantasy” for more about that.

Ellis: I had a blissful childhood, with love and enjoyment. Was I aware of my Role then?

Children, before they are thoroughly programmed for their societal role, usually operate from Essence and know their Roles. The Role the child first voices as a desire usually comes from Essence. After that, from False Personality, based on expectations of those around the child. [23 October 1973]

Children perceive the expectations of their parents and their playmates, whether those expectations are explicitly stated or not. Refer to the chapters “Essence and Personality”, and “Personality — True and False”.

Billie: What is the cause of the welty rash that occurs every time I bump myself? Is there anything I can do for it?

This rash occurs now largely because you expect it to. The best thing to do is to ignore it. The second best thing is to apply a soothing unguent and then forget it. [23 October 1973]

Psychosomatic illness is a real thing, based on the belief system and expectations that get programmed into subconscious mind at one time or another; refer to the chapter “Bio-computer” for more about that. The opposite of this is the so-called “placebo” effect, where an expectation about some healing procedure being applied actually facilitates the healing.

Richard: If I am to act out of Essence, I'm afraid that people would take advantage of me.

In what way can they possibly take advantage of you? If you are acting out of Essence, you have no expectations of them anyway. Then it does not matter if they don't come through. [27 October 1973]

This is a repetition of the notion stated previously and subsequently that Essence does not have expectations.

Betty: Is my brother honest?

Within his concept of honest, yes, but don't count on this fulfilling your expectations. [08 November 1973]

Betty's brother probably did something that caused her to question his honesty. It does not say so here, but there might have been a significant Soul Age difference between Betty and her brother, such that they had different conceptions of honesty. Whatever the case with them, in our own cases, if we are not careful, we will tend to expect others to operate according to our belief system, value system, or behavior system. In my case, if people do not play the ‘game’ of life by the same rules that I am playing by, and if I cannot adjust my expectations to accommodate them, then I minimize interaction with them. Dishonesty is one of those cases where I would be unwilling to adjust my expectations enough to maintain affiliation.

Edgar: I'm seeking for a practical way of practicing the teachings of Christ. Can you tell how this can be accomplished for me?

That should be self-evident.

Richard: Could we ask for a general comment?

Honesty without guile, simplicity without poverty of soul, love without material expectations, emptying the life of all nonessential considerations, the endless Cycles of evolution with the Physical Plane being the crudest and roughest. These are the things emphasized in the true teachings of Christ. [22 November 1973]

Reciprocal “love”, where there is an expectation of favors in return, is not the type of love that Jesus or the Michaels recommend.

Question about homosexuality.

This unfortunate syndrome is almost always culturally induced. Most of the time it is a form of rebellion, either by an Emotionally Centered male, usually either an Artisan or a Sage, or an Intellectually Centered female, usually either a Scholar or a Priest. This [American] culture frustrates the inclinations of both — or we should say, all — of these Roles, and the squelching is done in childhood. The job is usually quite thorough.

One other form of mixed gender conflicts arise with the children of the above who do not have a clear-cut picture of the “roles” that society expects them to play. They go out into the world unequipped to play the proper role, and [so they] play it by ear. Sometimes, this results in the gender conflict. Ideally, one should be able to express love for others regardless of the genital assignment without fear of castigation. This is quite an upward step in the evolution of Creatures of Reason. Don't expect it to happen in this lifetime. [14 December 1973]

Don't have any expectations and you will be pleasantly surprised. [1 December 1973]

Or do have expectations and be *unpleasantly* surprised. Those are your choices.

Gene: She wants to know if there is residual cancer. Does she?

Yes, she does. This is not now aggressive and we think that Darcy has more of a chance to counteract this at this point than at the onset. This lady does not recognize in herself the sadness that she has. You must get to her sadness and also to her resentment over unfulfilled expectations. She will talk to you and she has the aptitude to acquire the necessary insights. [20 December 1973]

Besides anger, resentment is another negative emotion that is generated by unfulfilled expectations. Refer to the chapter "Extinguishment" for a lengthy list of negative emotions.

Tina: I hear. What can I do with this?

Propagate the Logos. This isn't trite. We expect this teaching to reach others. We are not just hollering down the rain barrel. [31 December 1973]

It is okay for the Michaels to have that expectation, since it was realistic.

Sarah: I [an Idealist] expect people to perform a certain way and never can quite see that they do not mean what I hear them to say. I see Idealism as being able to perceive things as they could be and trying to pursue that.

That is valid.

Dick: A Cynic [and a Skeptic] thinks everyone has an ulterior motive.

Shirley: Is it because of my Priest Role that I have trouble accepting the work of other nurses? Why do I expect so much of them and other people? I do not like it when they are careless.

As [a] Priest, you naturally expect others to measure up to your own exalted standards. You are also an Idealist and with [the] Goal of Dominance.

(Transcriber note: What more can you expect than to expect a bunch?)

The Realist perceives the situation at hand in an almost intellectual clarity, and sub-consciously applies all of the alternatives with lightning speed, coming up with a workable solution within an extremely short period of deliberation. The Realist has few expectations of fanciful nature, and, as would be expected, is grounded in reality.

Ray: In the area of Attitudes, the description of Realist does not fit with my idea of what Billie's Attitude is. I have seen fantasies and expectations in Billie.

We do not see many fanciful expectations in Billie. We see less in you than before. But, there are some lingering there. Your imagination just a short time ago was the most exciting component of your life. [24 January 1974]

A person's Attitude has a lot to do with what they expect to see in the world; they interpret what they see through whatever colored glasses their Attitude gives them.

[[continue word search to end of transcriptions]]

[Soleal:] In our system, the good of many is valued over the good of the individual, and I will admit that you have good, sound cultural mores and a right virtue of your training to regard this as scary. But however frightening it may sound at the outset, the good of the many eventually serves the needs of the individual. The system, in order to work at all, of course, requires, above all, patience and the belief that your individual needs — and notice I did not say "wants" — will be served. The expectation of instant gratification of all wants is consummately absurd and belongs in childhood. [18 February 1974]

Ray: What is the criteria whether a Ribbon is formed or not?

If you communicated all of your expectations, the other soul understood all the options and took action on that basis, then a Ribbon probably [doesn't?] exists. Most interpersonal crises revolve around unfulfilled expectations and do not involve Karma of a substantial sort. Neglect of very young children constitutes Karma; breaking engagements does not. [20 February 1974]

Maybe I am misunderstanding something, but it makes more sense to me that a Karmic Ribbon is *not* created if thorough and accurate communication is sent and received; the next sentence says that.

[[continue word search to end of transcriptions]]

Ted spoke of his feelings that there was a strong attraction between Liz [his wife] and Richard: [Is this] from previous lives? False Personality? He asked for a comment from Michael about his feelings in this.

These two [Liz and Richard] have had many Sequences in the past and many lives have been interrelated, but the insight is valid.

In this culture, those on the Physical Plane have a tendency to sexualize all encounters with one of another gender. If they feel powerful emotional discharges around this other person, they interpret them as Eros or sexual attraction and the False Personality demands gratification. In the soul in a teaching or the soul going into Balance, this gratification can sometimes bring about startling Photographs of the Personality at work and the expectations they had of the other, based upon the interpretation of the emotion. Souls on the Physical Plane, until they meet with a teaching, have no mechanism with which to interpret emotions accurately. They must merely interpret according to the dictates of the culture. The Physical Plane and its pervasive atmosphere demands that you “do” something physical about ethereal matters. Consequently, when the Essence awakens for an instant and feels love for its Essence Twin or an old [physical] twin [from a previous lifetime], the False Personality immediately goes to work on this emotion, converting it into something it can understand. This is what is meant by some spiritual leaders who exhort their followers to rise above the Physical Plane. Mechanical Man has not learned to rise above the desire for instant gratification; therefore, he experiences much frustration, since the culture largely denies him that gratification. Cultures that impose rules of social conduct and interpersonal relationships usually arise out of the frustrations of unfulfilled expectations. The sexual experience never attains the height that it is expected to, as it is used in place of love so many times, and the Personality, not knowing any better, blames the partner for the failure to produce bliss, when the responsibility lies within self and self’s ridiculous expectations of a biologic act which comes basic to the organism. Man considers himself civilized because he has risen above oestrus. What an aspiration! [19 November 1974]

Refer to the chapter “Sexuality” for the whole story about that realm of life experience. Having expectations is necessary to navigating the future as it arrives; the brain builds up a model of the world based on past personal experience of the environment, including what the culture teaches. However, reality does not always match the model, so the quicker one adjusts to reality, the better off one is.

[[continue word search to end of transcriptions]]

Concluding Comments on Expectations

Based on what I have read about all living things, they evolve based on what I have come to call the Feedback Principle. All living organisms have a membrane or skin that separates their internal realm from their external realm, aka environment. There is a feedback between the external and the external: they both affect each other. Over their lifetime, organisms build up an internal memory or model of the external world based on their experiences within it; this maximizes survival potential. One of the feature of life, as distinct from inanimate objects, is that organisms consult the model when they anticipate future action, which is to say that, besides a memory of the past, they also have an “imagination” about the future. The more accurate the model is, the more likely they are to survive in their goal-directed behavior (mate-seeking, food-seeking, whatever). Besides accuracy of the model, there is also the matter of the flexibility of the model. Once in a while an organism encounters a novel environment, not modeled in the memory or the imagination. The more “intelligent” the organism is, the better it can adapt — and survive. Humans are organisms; their “expectations” are based on memories of the past and anticipations of the future. The smart, wise thing to do, is to adjust as quickly as possible to any new reality that intrudes into one’s life.





EXPERIENCE

This chapter is the product of a search for the word “experience” and its derivatives in the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group channeling sessions. This word does not represent a significant component of the Michaelian teachings. However, there are good reasons to discuss the subject in this *Study Papers* book: 1) the subject came up numerous times during the original Michaelian group; 2) students can presumably benefit from having the mentions conveniently collected all in one place; 3) some interesting things were said about the subject; 4) the subject is related to a number of other components of the Michaelian teachings that are considered to be significant; 5) **Experience issues are pervasive in human psychology and sociology and spirituality.**

The word “experience” is not capitalized in this chapter or other chapters of this *Study Papers* book because it has no special meaning in the Michaelian teachings; it is not a Michaelian jargon word that needs a definition apart from its use in the common vernacular.

Basically and briefly, the Michaels recommended to the original Michaelian group members that they

Definition of Experience

So what is meant by experience? The online Merriam Webster dictionary definition is:

Experience per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

The following extracts from original Michaelian group transcriptions are Q&A exchanges, where an original Michaelian group member asks a question (or makes a comment), and the Michaels provide an answer. This **is [not]** a subject that would benefit by division into subcategories, as some subjects do. **These extracts are [not] presented in the chronological order in which they were given, even though this is not a subject where there was a development or evolution of a specific revelation of a facet of the Michaelian teachings, as was often the case with the original Michaelian group.** As is my custom, I often provide some explanatory comments following the question or answer. Underlined words in the Michaels’ answers are my emphasis, to draw attention to what it is that I comment on. Sometimes I embed words or phrases [in brackets] that I believe help to clarify the question or the answer.

Concluding Comments on Experience





③ EXTINGUISHMENT

There are a number of words in the Michaelian teachings that are names for characteristics that should be “extinguished” in the Personality if one is to progress on the spiritual path to enlightenment. These are typically jargon words that get capitalized in this *Studies Papers* book. There are good reasons to discuss these subjects in this *Study Papers* book, namely: 1) the subject came up numerous times during the original Michaelian group; 2) some interesting things were said about the subject; 3) the subject is related to a number of other components of the Michaelian teachings that are considered to be significant; 4) students can presumably benefit from having the mentions conveniently collected and commented all in one place.

This chapter is one of many in this book that focuses on a psychological component of the Michaelian teachings as found in original Michaelian group transcriptions, rather than on a doctrinal or spiritual component. A psychological component is usually either a positive to be cultivated or a negative to be mitigated. As we will see, the Michaels tell us that negativity is a negative to be eschewed. The Michaelian version of psychology is not to be confused with the popular psychology of the self-improvement movement, those that do not have a spiritual core or perspective. Rather, the Michaelian psychotherapeutic path (aimed at improving psychological health) is a beneficial precursor to the spiritual path (aimed at improving soul health). To skip the former but attempt the latter is referred to as “spiritual bypassing”. This is discussed at length on such websites as https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spiritual_bypass. To skip mitigating one’s psychological issues and attempt to go straight to enlightenment usually proves to be problematic.

The following extracts from original Michaelian group transcriptions are Q&A exchanges, where an original Michaelian group member asks a question (or makes a comment), and the Michaels provide an answer. This is a subject that benefits by division into subcategories, namely the various components of Personality to be extinguished. As is my custom, I often provide some explanatory comments following the question or answer. Underlined words in the Michaels’ answers are my emphasis, to draw attention to what it is that I comment on. Sometimes I embed words or phrases [in brackets] that I believe help to clarify the question or the answer.

Extinguish the Chief Feature

By far the most common juxtaposition of the word extinguishment with a Michaelian jargon word is with the Chief Feature:

Cheryl: May we have the next Overleaves?

These Chief Features can be stated as: Impatience, Arrogance, Greed, Stubbornness (which includes tenacity), Self-deprecation, Martyrdom, Self-destruction.

Cynthia: Half are outwards and half are inwards.

Alice: Can these be changed in our lifetime? Can you get rid of them?

You must grow [spiritually] to extinguish this.

What is Cheryl’s Chief Feature?

Self-deprecation.

Is her sub-Feature self-effacement — taking a back seat, lacking in self-confidence?

Cheryl has a tendency to fade away in crowds. Also, [she] has many negative reactions to rather ambivalent statements about Young Souls. What does this suggest?

Comment: Non-existence (self-effacement).

There are many remnants in Cheryl, but she is close to extinguishment [of the Chief Feature]. That is valid. [27 February 1974]

Betty: What is my Chief Feature: Stubbornness? The spirituality may cover Arrogance.

We still see some Stubbornness, but it is valid that Betty has almost extinguished this. [03 March 1974]
That which comes from vanity [Arrogance] must, of course, be ultimately extinguished. [13 May 1974]

Delia: I feel he has some Self-deprecation (Yorgos).

The lady is right. The [Chief] Feature has all but been extinguished by now. [03 July 1974]

Ron: SRG? Priest? Artisan? Scholar? Slave? (all were mentioned) ... Power, Self-deprecation, Spiritualist, Growth?

This is a Fifth Level Old Priest in Growth, a Spiritualist, yes. In the Power mode, with a Chief Feature of Self-deprecation. With this extinguished, the man could realize the full potentials of the exalted Overleaves he has chosen. Without this extinguishment, he will not. He is quite close now to the point where he will manifest, in so far as the Soul Level [Age] is concerned. Yes, this body is Mars-Jovial, but this should not have you confused. In the Emotional Part of Moving Center, which right now is a barrier, also toward full potential, as the enTrapment is truly strong. He can look at this, also. [15 October 1974]

Carolyn wished verification of [her] SRG: Third Level Old Artisan, Passion Mode, Stubbornness as Chief Feature, Moving Part of Emotional Center, Saturn / Mars, an Idealist?

We agree with that. The lady is firmly Trapped in the Emotional Part of the Intellectual Center. We believe that this is as it was originally stated. Perhaps the lady equates education with Intellectual Center. For shame. The lady has strong [Chief] Features of Stubbornness and Impatience. Right now, the Impatience seems to be winning. This is easy to trade. To extinguish, now, is another question. [09 November 1974]

Alice: I tried giving myself the suggestion to eat less carbohydrates. It worked for eight hours, at which time I indulged in them. I tried looking at that and found that I probably did not like myself enough to eat what is good for me, so for the past week I have been suggesting to myself that I will like myself better and will do those things that are good for my being. I've been feeling better about myself, but seem to plunge into more frequent downs. Comment, please, on what I can do in this area?

[Soleal:] You need to learn to use your moments of Power to extinguish your Chief Feature [Self-deprecation]. This can even work with Chief Features such as Arrogance, although that is a tough one to drop. The moments of Power must be utilized in the work, for it is in this way that you will be able to finally switch Modes. You cannot go through the Self-deprecation Tape from the Power Mode as easily as you can from Caution [Mode]. [01 February 1975]

Refer to the chapter "Bio-computer" for more information about Tapes.

Bill asked about a Sequence with [his wife] Donna. What is needed to complete it, and if free of pressure but not love? Fear he has False Personality? Or some level of knowledge? He feels her rejection.

With you, Bill, only Balance will satisfy the Sequence agreement. By extinguishing your Chief Feature [Impatience], you will end the pressure you feel now. Your Chief Feature, of course, now stands in the way of realization of this and many of your "pressured" feelings. [16 February 1975]

Even that [Chief Feature], as you all know, can be extinguished and worked through, but this takes that willingness to stand where you are right now and realize that you have put yourself there and no one else is responsible. [03 September 1977]

Extinguish False Personality

Recall that True Personality is what you are born with and that False Personality is the personality acquired subsequent to birth. Once you become aware of this, then the False Personality should be extinguished if one is to progress on the spiritual path to enlightenment.

What part of [the] Overleaves are in Essence and what [part are] in Personality?

All of the Overleaves are geared to the Physical Plane and thus primarily of the False Personality. Of course, you cannot alter your Body Type or Role except by subtle extinguishment and this is achieved only after all else is Balanced [the fourth Level of Being]. Thus, the Role can still manifest in one acting primarily out of Essence [fourth Level of Being and above], but not to any measurable extent in the occult master [the seventh Level of Being]. [25 June 1974]

Joan asked if we can ever experience total death of the False Personality. Are there lapses? Does it always continue?

There are instances that we remembered well where there has been total death or extinguishment of the False Personality, concomitant with the emergence of True Personality of the Essence. This was indeed gratifying to behold, but it happens rarely on the Physical Plane, even in Adepts who are at a high Level of Being. They must be constantly alert to prevent the instinctive behavior reactions of the False Personality from sneaking in.

The False Personality has difficulty differentiating between conditions such as fragility, softness and the like. These are called by the culture “feminine” characteristics and therefore there is a tendency to lump them all together and perceive them as the same. The False Personality is perhaps the most fragile, as it is one that can be extinguished. After all, the True Personality cannot be, no matter how deeply you bury it in “bullshit”. [25 January 1975]

Extinguish Negative Poles

The list of Negative Poles of each Overleaf was probably not yet revealed at the time of this mention that they should be extinguished as part of one’s spiritual path to enlightenment:

Leslie: Asked if her Goal had changed from Acceptance to Growth. She is a Mid-Cycle [Fourth Level] Mature Warrior in Acceptance, Intellectual Part of Moving Center, Idealist, Passion Mode, Stubbornness as Chief Feature, Body Type Mars–Lunar.

As we have told you before, the Goal of Acceptance is in itself a powerful Exalted [Cardinal] Goal from which spiritual enlightenment can spring. With this [Goal], there is no need for a switch in Overleaves — merely extinguishment of the Negative Pole [–Ingratiation], which in this case is the desperate need to be accepted universally by others. In exchange for this, you come into the Positive Pole [+Agape], which is, of course, the unqualified Acceptance of others, just as the Negative Pole of the Growth Goal [–Confusion] involves tremendous scattering of energies as the soul rushes from school to school searching feverishly for that illusive “way”. [09 November 1974]

The Poles of the Overleaves had been revealed long before this next message came through:

(We talked of changing the Overleaves and the teacher’s mention of “quieting” them.)

“Extinguishing” was the word used, but perhaps this is a harsh word as “quieting” does sound easier. The Positive Poles of the Overleaves — this is the goal. Once reached, you are in Essence. All is equal. Study again the words we gave you in defining the action of the Positive Poles of the Overleaves. There is no qualitative difference. [12 December 1976]

Extinguish Maya

The only quotation in this section uses the word “fantasies” as something that should be extinguished as part of one’s spiritual path to enlightenment, but I would like to expand this extinguish injunction to the entire category of “Maya”, another one of those Michaelian jargon words that has its own chapter in this *Study Papers* book.

Shirley asked what we could do to help him perceive us better or us perceive him better.

[Soleal:] I am afraid that it is my own task to perceive you and I must do it in my own time. However, you have access to the same energy that I do, and you are welcome to try any of the teacher’s [Michael] gimmicks whenever you wish. My own perceptions are colored a little by my own imagination, which is by no means extinguished. This is also among the last vestiges to go. During the waking hours, I can maintain a high level of vigilance over my fantasies. At other times, this becomes difficult and unfamiliar sensations assail me and I lose all of my comfortable landmarks. [11 January 1975]

Extinguish Negative Thoughts

Perhaps this category belongs with the extinguishment of Maya, but in the original Michaelian group transcriptions no specific appearance of the phrase “negative thoughts” is to be found. Nevertheless, the internet resources on the subject are abundant, and it seems helpful to have some of them referenced here. Here is a convenient list of some negative thought patterns from one of those internet resources:

As you observe your thoughts, work on identifying and labeling cognitive distortions and negativity.

For example, if you tend to view yourself as a complete success or failure in every situation, then you are engaging in “**black-and-white**” thinking. Other negative thinking patterns include:

Jumping to conclusions: This distortion involves making assumptions about what others are thinking or making negative assumptions about how events will turn out.

Catastrophizing: This pattern of negative thinking is characterized by always assuming that the worst possible outcome will happen without considering more likely and realistic possibilities.

Overyeneralization: This pattern is marked by a tendency to apply what happened in one experience to all future experiences. This can make negative experiences seem unavoidable and contribute to feelings of anxiety.

Labeling: When people label themselves in a negative way, it affects how they feel about themselves in different contexts. Someone who labels themselves as “bad at math”, for example, will often feel negative about activities that involve that skill.

“**Should**” statements: Thinking marked by “should” statements contribute to a negative perspective by only thinking in terms of what you “ought” to be doing. Such statements are often unrealistic and cause people to feel defeated and pessimistic about their ability to succeed.

Emotional reasoning: This involves assuming that something is true based on your emotional response to it. For example, if you are feeling nervous, emotional reasoning would lead you to conclude that you must be in danger. This can escalate negative feelings and increase anxiety.

Personalization and blame: This thought pattern involves taking things personally, even when they are not personal. It often leads people to blame themselves for things they have no control over.

Unhelpful thinking patterns differ in subtle ways. But they all involve distortions of reality and irrational ways of looking at situations and people. [<https://www.verywellmind.com/how-to-change-negative-thinking-3024843> — retrieved 25 January 2023]

Only self-aggrandizing narcissists have no negative thoughts about themselves or others. The balanced and healthy person can be aware of one’s defects and deficiencies and mistakes, and those of others, without condemning oneself or others all to hell for them.

Extinguish Negative Emotions

Only guilt and fear are mentioned specifically as things that should be extinguished as part of one’s spiritual path to enlightenment, but I would like to expand this injunction to extinguish to the entire category of Negative Emotions:

Dick: Is there anything that can be said to help us with fear and guilt?

We could give you a *carte blanche*. This is relatively true as example. Voltaire glimpsed this when he said, “All is true. Everything is permitted.” This guilt and fear that one feels on the Physical Plane is, for the most part, culturally induced and, therefore, can only be extinguished by an act of will and allowing yourself to have the guilt-producing experience. This guilt stems for the most part in the lingering belief in a system of black and white, evil and good, with a judgmental god dispensing punishment made to the crime. The fear is largely tied up in the unrealistic longevity aspirations of most on the Physical Plane. No one is judging you, Dick; no one is qualified to do this. [06 March 1974]

Alice: Is there any way out of the Pleasure-Pain Monad?

Your guilt build-up produces the pain. When you choose to extinguish the guilt, you will lose the pain at the same time — only then. [10 March 1974]

Depending on who you ask (there are differences of opinion; google the phrase), there are many negative emotions, far more than guilt and fear. On the internet I found a list of 158 negative emotions, a number of the names of which are found among the Chief Features, Negative Poles of the Overleaves, False Personality, and Maya:

Afraid, agitation, agony, aggressive, alarm, alienation, anger, anguish, annoyed, anxious, apathy, apprehension, aversion, baffled, bewildered, bitter, bored, brooding, claustrophobic, coercive, confusion, contempt, cowardly, cruel, dazed, dejected, demoralized, depressed, despair, disappointment, discombobulated, discomfort, discontentment, disgruntled, disgust, disheartened, dislike, dismay, disoriented, dispirited, displeasure, distress, disturbed, doubtful, dread, dumbstruck, embarrassment, ennui, envy, exasperated, fear, fright, frustrated, fury, gloomy, glumness, greed, grief, grouching, grumpiness, guilt, hate, helpless, homesickness, hopeless, horrified, humiliation, hurt, hysteria, impatient, indignant, infuriated, insecurity, insulted, irritated, isolated, jealousy, lazy, loathing, lonely, longing, loopy, mad, melancholy, miserable, miserliness, mixed up, moody, mortified, nasty, nauseated, negative, neglected, nervous, numb, obstinate, offended, outrage, overwhelmed, panicked, paranoid, perplexed, pessimism, pity, possessiveness, powerlessness, puzzled, rage, rattled, regretful, rejected, reluctant, remorseful, resentment, resignation, restlessness, revulsion, ruthlessness, sadness, scared, scorn, self-conscious, self-critical, self-loathing, self-pity, shame, shocked, smug, sorrow, spite, stressed, stubborn, stuck, submissive, suffering, sullen, suspicious, tension, terror, tired, torment, troubled, uncertainty, undermined, uneasiness, unhappy, unnerved, unsettled, unsure, upset, vengeful, vicious, vigilant, vulnerable, weak, woe, worried, wrath.

Commit this list to memory, then notice how often you lapse into a negative emotion, and you will be appalled. (Oops! that is a negative emotion not on the list.) These negative emotions are all too human, but it is possible to extinguish all of them and still be very human; you will be a Balanced Human, one who is expressing Essence through positive emotions, as recommended by the Michaels.

And as recommended by Gurdjieff: "Self-observation and self-study must, from the first, be accompanied by the struggle against the expression of unpleasant emotions." [P.D. Ouspensky, *In Search of the Miraculous*, p. 112]

Extinguish Negativity

The final category of functions of Personality to be extinguished is "negativity" in general. This category would seem to include all of the other categories documented above, plus the extinguishment of negative thoughts:

Eugene: How do you create more pure energy?

Extinguishment of negativity. [06 March 1974]

Dick: The soul is another guy who calls himself "Dick." If I am asleep and Michael talks to me, I do not hear him.

The Personality has an extremely limited capacity for experiencing positivity. Whenever you experience unsolicited pleasure, you are experiencing it from Essence. This is why the extinguishment of negativity is so vital to spiritual growth. If you have not guessed this yet, the Personality is the Negative Pole of a Monad [and Essence is the Positive Pole]. [17 March 1974]

Concluding Comments on Extinguishment

Above, we were given a list of negative personality characteristics that should be extinguished on one's spiritual journey, but how do we do that? There are many chapters in this *Study Papers* book that discuss the practices that facilitate extinguishment of negativity. For instance: "Concentration and Meditation", "Fasting", "Moderation", "Photography", "Psychedelics", "Ritual", and "Validation".





⑧ FACADE

This chapter is the product of a search for the word facade in the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group channeling sessions. This word does not represent a significant component of the Michaelian teachings. However, there are good reasons to discuss the subject in this *Study Papers* book: 1) the subject came up numerous times during the original Michaelian group; 2) some interesting things were said about the subject; 3) the subject is related to a number of other components of the Michaelian teachings that are considered to be significant; 4) students can presumably benefit from having the mentions conveniently collected and commented all in one place; 5) having a facade is pervasive in human psychology and sociology and spirituality — subjects covered extensively in this book — so it behooves us to have a working knowledge of it.

The word facade is not capitalized in this chapter or other chapters of this *Study Papers* book because it has no special meaning in the Michaelian teachings; it is not a Michaelian jargon word that needs a definition apart from its use in the common vernacular.

This chapter is one of many in this book that focuses on a psychological component of the Michaelian teachings as found in original Michaelian group transcriptions, rather than on a doctrinal or spiritual component. A psychological component is usually either a positive to be cultivated or a negative to be mitigated. As we will see, the Michaels tell us that having a facade is a negative to be eschewed. The Michaelian version of psychology is not to be confused with the popular psychology of the self-improvement movement, those that do not have a spiritual core or perspective. Rather, the Michaelian psychotherapeutic path (aimed at improving psychological health) is a beneficial precursor to the spiritual path (aimed at improving soul health). To skip the former but attempt the latter is referred to as “spiritual bypassing”. This is discussed at length on such websites as https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spiritual_bypass. To skip mitigating one’s psychological issues and attempt to go straight to enlightenment usually proves to be problematic.

Definition of Facade

So what is meant by facade? Wikipedia has an article that provides a definition and a description, as follows:

A *façade* (also written facade) is generally the front part or exterior of a building. It is a loan word from the French *façade*, which means ‘frontage’ or ‘face’. The word is a loanword from the French *façade*, which in turn comes from the Italian *facciata*, from *faccia* meaning ‘face’, ultimately from post-classical Latin *facia*. The earliest usage recorded by the Oxford English Dictionary is 1656. [<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Facade> — retrieved 30 March 2023]

The article goes on to describe the use of the word in architecture, referring to the front-facing side of the building. There is also discussion of the use of the word for those cases where there is no actual building behind the front-facing construction. The article says nothing about the use of the word in psychology, it being used in a metaphoric sense, for the appearance that one shows in public in order to fit into society and culture, which is exactly the way that the Michaels use it, according to the original Michaelian group transcriptions. The word is used in this way because one does not present an artificial appearance when one is at home or in private.

Facade per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

The following extracts from original Michaelian group transcriptions are Q&A exchanges, where an original Michaelian group member asks a question (or makes a comment), and the Michaels provide an answer. These extracts are presented in the chronological order in which they were given. As is my custom, I often provide some explanatory comments following the question or answer. Underlined words are my emphasis, to draw

attention to what it is that I comment on. Sometimes I embed words or phrases [in brackets] that I believe help to clarify the question or the answer.

The first of ten mentions of this word in the original Michaelian group transcriptions is this:

The fixed rigid [False] Personality is rather like a mountain of granite. Chipping away relentlessly is the sole solution.... Each of you spent many years building the facade. Do you really feel that you should be able to discard this quite casually with hardly a whimper? We think not. Progress is being made in quite concrete ways. [02 October 1973]

Right away we see that a facade is a component of False Personality; refer to the chapter “Personality — True and False”. Briefly and basically, one of the goals of the Michaelian teachings is to minimize the False and maximize the True.

May I suggest that the Michaels were clever to use the words “building” and “concrete” here, because buildings have facades, sometimes made of concrete (and sometimes of granite). The point to be made here is that False Personality presents a facade to the world that is not the true or genuine self.

The next mention of facade gets a little closer to the notion of a public-facing component of Personality as distinct from the private reality of one’s true self:

Billie: Can a soul take on a dual Role?

Not in Essence. However, the life role often bears little relation to the Essence Role, and if False Personality is firmly in command it will almost be impossible to detect the Essence Role. On a personal level, others can often detect the facade and the underlying Role before the student can. [15 November 1973]

Refer to the chapter “Essence and Personality” for the distinction between those. Here, “life role” = “facade” = “False Personality”. This passage hints at the notion expressed more fully elsewhere that a person’s occupation should fulfill one’s actual Role rather than some pretend role. The metaphor for this is, ‘don’t put square pegs in round holes’. There are facades other than the one we don for our employment environment. For instance, there is the one we don when we visit our relatives.

Ellis: I have difficulty in understanding the development of the soul. We grow up with conflicts and images of self. I cannot let go [of my self-image] with other people or myself.

The object is not so much to give up self, as it is to find self. You are encased in so many layers of facade, that you cannot even perceive the source of your desires, let alone control their emanations. The final level of spiritual evolution on the Physical Plane pertains, of course, to the absolute control of the desire, not just the [control of] acting out. This is a very gradual process, the first step of which is to recognize that there are conflicts [between layers of self], which you have done. [29 November 1973]

Notice that a person not only dons a facade in the presence of others, but also does it for themselves. A place to look for one’s true self hidden behind facades to to pay attention to internal conflicts in one’s self-images.

The following Q&A exchange is another mention of the two realms where a facade often appears, in the family and in the world in general:

Cheryl: So what does make a Sequence?

Agreement to play out a certain fragment of life. For instance, we have told you before that not all parents and their children are playing out the Parent-Child Monad. This Monad results in a far more complex relationship than just the ordinary one. Siblings are taught by this culture that they must feel something for each other and are encouraged to even falsify such conditions. This is not always true. Relationships within the typical nuclear family are rarely honest because of this.

Dick: Dislike carry over on Astral Plane, because on the Astral Plane, the facade is all gone. [12 June 1974]

Refer to the chapter “Honesty and Dishonesty” for elaboration on that subject.

Marty: Newly recovered alcoholic living in my home. Mature Sage or Priest in Submission?

Many [Sages], yes, do have this problem, sometimes due to the extremely false facade of the life they lead on stage or as a “famous personage”. The alienation again drives them into an escape route that often ends in degradation. Sages, because of their flair for the dramatic, usually at one time or another, choose this type of life [alcoholism]. [19 June 1974]

The more of a facade one dons, the more one becomes alienated from oneself and from real life. This can lead to negative experiences; refer to the chapter “Alienation”. The tendency of Sages to don a facade is also documented in the chapters “Drama” and “Mask”.

Spiritual acceleration does not require this; it requires negation of the cultural facade. [14 September 1974]
Refer to the chapter “Culture” for the story about one of the many sources of facade.

It is, of course, easier for those in Exalted [Cardinal] Roles [Sage, Priest, King] to put up the facade, for it is more important for them to show the world the *bella figura* [good impression]. [12 February 1975]

The use of the words “easier” implies that the Ordinal Roles (Warrior, Server, Artisan) are not as inclined to put on a facade for the sake of impressing other people as the Cardinal Roles are. As for the Neutral Role, Scholar, based on the statement that “Most Scholars would prefer not to be bothered with the responsibility that goes along with these [emotional] intrigues” (27 December 1973) I would venture to say that Scholars are even less inclined to put up a facade than the Ordinal Roles; they prefer to be aloof from all that nonsense.

Many here tonight understand the principle involved in choosing not to lock into the other’s bad spaces and to choose to present a neutral facade at these times. This requires a conscious act of will and this is what we wish you all to strive for. [Dimensions!, April 1975]

Apparently a “neutral facade” in some cases is a good thing, such as when it is not reactive to other people’s negativity. Perhaps this “neutral facade” also refers to being ‘transparent’ about who you really are; other people can see your ‘insides’ without distortion. The use of the word “neutral” here implies that there are two faces of a facade, a *passive* facade that hides the truth about who and what you really are, and an *active* facade that presents a falsehood about who and what you really are.

The truth is that all of life loves and is loved. All interrelationships are [grounded] in love. The problem arises when the facades interrelate, instead of the Essences. The issue is not one of gaining or achieving more, but rather of stripping away. The layers need to be peeled away in order for the Essence to be reached. On your [Physical] Plane, only the facades, or what we have called False Personality, interrelate. This is the source of all of your conflicts. [Dimensions!, June 1975]

Refer to the chapters “Love” and “Essence and Personality”. The point to be emphasized here is that it is not possible to love or be loved if people only show their facades to each others. With the right people on both sides of the equation, revelation of the true self — even if defective and deficient — is endearing. One of the premises of the Michaelian teachings (and many other spiritual teachings) is that people are good on the inside (Essence) and not so good on the outside (False Personality), so “self-improvement” is a matter of shedding the false in order to reveal the true.

Students often confuse facts with final results. We see much growth in the student Louise. Growth is the hardest and most constant Goal. Most students find this confusing, therefore, the facts appear clearer when the ego is pulling off [putting on] the most subtle facade of all. [07 November 1977]

Refer to the chapter “Ego” for the discussion of yet another synonym for facade. As stated in the first appearance of the word, where the facade is compared to a mountain of granite, here we see that it can also be the opposite: subtle.

Concluding Comments on Facade

The other chapter most closely related to this chapter is the one named “Masks”, which is another metaphor for the same general phenomenon.

It does not discuss this in the original Michaelian group transcriptions, but I wonder if there are certain situations when there are legitimate reasons to wear a mask or hide behind a facade. For instance, maybe you are with people that you have good reason to believe are unsympathetic to who you really are, who are not themselves open and honest people, so what would be the benefit to self and other to ‘let it all hang out’. This is a passive kind of facade, where you do not reveal things about yourself that it would do no good to reveal. This is not the active kind of facade, where you wear a mask that presents a falsehood. My suggestion is that it is best to reveal one’s ‘dirty laundry’ and ‘come clean’ and ‘come out of the closet’ in a strategic process of self-revelation, on the way to getting to know only those other people where the potential for such intimacy is possible. The long range goal with everyone is to “tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth”, but it has to be reciprocal, on both sides of the equation.





FAITH

This chapter is the product of a search for the word “faith” in the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group channeling sessions, and other words with a similar meaning. I have added some commentary, which consists of my analysis and synthesis of the quotations. Obviously, this word does not represent a significant component of the Michaelian teachings, but even so, the word appears often enough that it seems to me that students can benefit from seeing all of those instances documented and commented on in a chapter of this *Study Papers* book. Furthermore, the word is related to a number of other components of the Michaelian teachings that are considered to be more significant; these will be noted in the commentary on the instances of the word and its contexts. Briefly and basically, the Michaels recommended to the original Michaelian group members that they

So what is meant by faith? The online Merriam Webster dictionary definition is:

The word “faith” is not capitalized in this chapter or other chapters of this *Study Papers* book because it has no special meaning in the Michaelian teachings; it is not a Michaelian jargon word that needs a definition apart from its use in the common vernacular. One might therefore wonder why it is even included in this book. One answer is that it is just a Scholar–Cast Artisan thing to do: I study the Michaelian teachings documents and I write about them and I want to be thorough. Another answer is that trust issues are pervasive in human psychology and sociology, the subject came up in the original Michaelian group numerous times, some interesting things were said about it, and it might be helpful for Michaelian students to have the answers conveniently collected all in one place.

Faith per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

The following extracts from original Michaelian group transcriptions are Q&A exchanges, where an original Michaelian group member asks a question (or makes a comment), and the Michaels provide an answer. This is [not] a subject that would benefit by division into subcategories, as some subjects do. These extracts are presented in the chronological order in which they were given, even though this is not a subject where there was a development or evolution of a specific revelation of a facet of the Michaelian teachings, as was often the case with the original Michaelian group. As is my custom, I often provide some explanatory comments following the question or answer. Underlined words in the Michaels’ answers are my emphasis, to draw attention to what it is that I comment on. Sometimes I embed words or phrases [in brackets] that I believe help to clarify the question or the answer.

Concluding Comments on Faith





④ FANTASY

This chapter is the result of a search of the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group for the word “fantasy”. Obviously, this word does not represent a significant component of the Michaelian teachings, but even so, the word appears often enough that it seems to me that students can benefit from seeing all of those instances documented and commented on in a chapter of this *Study Papers* book. Furthermore, the word is related to a number of other components of the Michaelian teachings that are considered to be more significant; these will be noted in the commentary on the instances of the word and its contexts.

This chapter is one of many in this book that focuses on a psychological component of the Michaelian teachings as found in original Michaelian group transcriptions, rather than on a doctrinal or spiritual component. A psychological component is usually either a positive to be cultivated or a negative to be mitigated. As we will see, the Michaels tell us that fantasy is a negative to be eschewed. Psychological issues are addressed with psychotherapy. The Michaelian version of psychology is not to be confused with the popular psychology of the self-improvement movement, those that do not have a spiritual core or perspective. Rather, the Michaelian psychotherapeutic path (aimed at improving psychological health) is a beneficial precursor to the spiritual path (aimed at improving soul health). To skip the former but attempt the latter is referred to as “spiritual bypassing”. This is discussed at length on such websites as https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spiritual_bypass. To skip mitigating one’s psychological issues and attempt to go straight to enlightenment usually proves to be problematic.

The word fantasy is not capitalized in this chapter or other chapters of this *Study Papers* book because it has no special meaning in the Michaelian teachings; it is not a Michaelian jargon word that needs a definition apart from its use in the common vernacular.

It might be a little surprising how often this word fantasy shows up in the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group, considering that it has not appeared very many times in subsequent channeling sessions that we have record of. Precisely because it covers a subject that might otherwise have been ignored and forgotten, I regard it as useful and valuable to include this chapter, as with numerous other similar chapters on obscure topics in this *Study Papers* book. Doing so makes our understanding of the Michaelian teachings richer and more complete.

Briefly and basically, we humans are subject to the unhealthy propensity to get lost in one form or another of unreality, flights of fancy, jumps to unjustified conclusions, unwarranted imaginary problems, and such. The Michaels address several kinds of fantasies such as these, and more. The list of fantasies given in this chapter provides to the reader a convenient catalog of stuff to be vigilant about on their psychotherapeutic path.

Fantasy per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

The following extracts from original Michaelian group transcriptions are Q&A exchanges, where an original Michaelian group member asks a question (or makes a comment), and the Michaels provide an answer. These extracts are presented in the chronological order in which they appear in the transcriptions. As is my custom, I often provide some explanatory comments following the question or answer. Underlined words in the Michaels’ answers are my emphasis, to draw attention to what it is that I comment on. Sometimes I embed words or phrases [in brackets] that I believe help to clarify the question or the answer.

The first mention of the word fantasy appeared more than a month before the Michaels appeared:

The details of a sexual encounter were described here to simplify the above.

[Soleal:] Much progress is made after this lesson is brought to consciousness. My telling you will only give you something to work out. Some people work on the giving of themselves freely for many lifetimes. That is the most difficult part of love. Love, to mean anything in the line of consciousness, cannot be predicated on

anything material; it must come from higher Centers. That comes about when you finally give up non-verbal expectations about the actions of those around you and begin to accept them without modification in your fantasies. [03 July 1973]

Refer to the chapter “Sexuality” for more discussion of the fact that sexuality can be distorted by fantasies perhaps more than any other facet of human life. This answer is not only about sexual fantasies, but about our general inability to see other people as they really are rather than as what we want to see in them.

Dick then meditated on a complicated question silently. Soleal answered as follows:

Postpone the decision for now, and don't dwell on the fantasy of the reaction of others that would confirm your worst fears. [03 July 1973]

You might be surprised to learn that other people are usually disinterested in condemning you for your every little sin of omission or commission, so stop worrying about what they think of you. This particular fantasy is covered in some detail in the chapter “Considering — Internal and External”.

The subject of fantasy appears again soon after the Michaels appeared to the original Michaelian group:

I am only pointing out to you that you are not always present, and one reason is that you are still in fantasy to a still injurious extent. Now, that only applies to those aspirants who desire help with conscious[ness] raising techniques. Others can and will disregard this information; it serves no purpose to them. Dick, you are an aspirant; take heart; [for you] the ability is there. [21 August 1973]

When one is truly “present” in the moment — meaning, focused on the situation or circumstance in which one is currently embedded — then one's mind will not drift off into some imaginary world. Some people have more capacity for this mind-wandering than others. However, as with so many phenomena, I perceive a healthy and an unhealthy expression. Even though it does not say so here, I would say that –Fantasy is a Negative Pole and +Imagination is a Positive Pole of the Higher Intellectual Center, which I prefer to name the Concept Center.

In the next original Michaelian group session, the subject of fantasy appeared again:

Dick: Could we have a definition of Karma from Michael?

As you reap, so you also sow. Or as you sow, so you shall reap. However, this goes far deeper than mere action by those immersed in the waking sleep. For them, the energy loss is far greater, for most of their lives are wasted in fantasy and fantasy costs much in Karmic debts. You must fulfill all carnal desires before serious work is begun on the Essence. This can take many lives, usually a minimum of forty-nine. [26 August 1973]

Refer to chapters “Karma”, “Energy and Energy Leaks”, “Awakening from Sleep”, “Essence and Personality”. Fantasy can be serious business in the sense that people who are distracted by fantasy rather than focused on reality often do something hurtful. The point to be made here is that we better pay attention to what is really going on.

Kathryn: Is it useful for us to know when we are going to die, so that we can speed things up?

Not until you can stay out of fantasy about it. This information is already known to you on another level. When you can tap this, there will be no danger [of fantasy]. [26 August 1973]

A Michael channel told me that the plan for this lifetime is to live to 96 or 97. My father lived to age 96 so this is not an unreasonable expectation, and I do not sense that I have any fantasies about that. My plan is to try to get everything on my bucket list done ASAP, rather than dilly-dally because of some expectation that I have plenty of time left.

Richard: I see as long as I'm in False Personality, I'm blocking and wasting much energy, and I suppose the best thing to do would be to separate from False Personality as much as possible.

Soleal has a tendency not to trust his decisions until he has fantasized over the alternatives, none of which are relevant and come from vestigial False Personality. [06 October 1973]

Refer to the chapter on “False Personality”. Basically and briefly, False Personality resides more in the Negative Poles of the Overleaves. The mention of “trust” reminds me of the Poles of the Skeptic Attitude, namely –Suspicion versus +Investigation (“trust but verify”). It also reminds me of the Poles of the Caution Mode, namely –Phobia versus +Deliberation. The point that I want to emphasize here is that a distinction should be made between excessive planning and inadequate planning when one comes to ‘a fork in the road’ that requires some serious thought; there is ‘due diligence’, and then there is more than and there is less than ‘due diligence’. The trick is to find the ‘due’ point in ‘diligence’. If you find yourself fantasizing and

catastrophizing about some weighty decision, then apply +Investigation and +Deliberation; this will get you back 'down to earth'.

Richard: What is the best way I can overcome my nervousness?

Your nervousness stems from what you fantasize to be other's expectations of you: your mother, your first grade teacher, even [your wife] Sarah. [20 October 1973]

Elsewhere, Richard was said to be trapped in the Negative Pole of his Acceptance Goal, -Ingratiation. Refer to the chapter "Considering — Internal and External" for more discussion of the undesirability of fantasizing about what other people think of you.

Billie: How does the Role of Artisan apply to me?

You can bring a great deal of creative talent to all that you do, but you do not do this consistently. You need time to yourself alone to indulge in fanciful activity to bring this out. You are right about the music. This could be a great avenue. [23 October 1973]

There are a couple of instances in the original Michaelian group transcriptions where the word "fanciful" is used. This is obviously not exactly the same concept embodied in the word "fantasy". I include the word in this chapter because I want to make a distinction between a healthy imagination, such as Artisans in the Positive Pole are prone to have, and an unhealthy imagination, such as Artisans in the Negative Pole are prone to have.

Richard: Where would be the best place to look?

Don't look now. Listen. When you speak of buying land there now, it is fantasy. Wait until you have been there. We feel that you will be drawn to the land, but there is a special place that should draw you more than the others. Take [a] vacation and be leisurely about the decision. It is the most important one you will make. [20 October 1973]

During the original Michaelian group there was much discussion about starting a commune. It was an aspiration that never got past the fantasy stages. It is Good Work to run new ideas through one's imagination, to 'simulate' what could happen, but when there is very little actual data to crunch, the mind drifts off into fantasies. This was early days of the original Michaelian group, so the Michaels recommended that they continue to research their options realistically before even considering the making of plans.

There was quite a discussion here about sexuality, False Personality, and Essence. Some at the meeting were uneasy because they thought Michael was running down sex. Then came:

Plan is fantasy, or if you will, imagination. If the sexual act is surrounded by fantasy, it is both competitive and unreal. It is neither good nor bad [*per se*]; it is that which insures the continuity of the Tao. This universe has an awesome order. [08 November 1973]

Refer to chapters on "Sexuality" and "Essence and Personality". In terms of fantasy versus imagination, I would polarize them as "bad" versus "good" this way: -Fantasy versus +Imagination. Besides being "unreal", sexual fantasies can be "competitive" rather than unitive.

More was said about sexual fantasy later in this same month:

Dick: Please explain "passive non-identification".

Soleal's advice is colored by his own personal bias, but still good. We doubt that this is an impossible goal for most. Basically, it would mean satisfying those needs that are strictly physical with a minimum of fuss and bother. The greatest energy loss is not in the sex act itself but in the fantasy that surrounds [it]. The calories you burn are really insignificant. [29 November 1973]

That was a brief statement, but the subject gets complicated when 'unpacked'. Animals don't have fantasies about sex, but people do, because they are complicated, consisting of many layers that can get confused. The confusion between layers is what results in "fantasies", which are unsorted, misunderstood, misapplied beliefs about what is really going on here.

Alice: I had a strange "I" that appeared a couple of times the night we had our last meeting. Everyone left except Sue and Carolyn. I had been working at the hospital because of the hospital strike, and it seemed that they were trying to keep me up so that I would be so tired that I could not go into the hospital in the morning. I know intellectually that this is not so. Is there anything there in past Karma for me with either of them, as the feeling was strong. I know I was also very tired from working at the hospital the past week.

There is no negative Karma for you. This was a fantasy trip, Alice. Carolyn was very high on the marijuana and wound up like a top. The only resentment that she had was due to the fact that she could not use the office equipment and wished to do this. Neither has much emotional ties with labor unions. [16 December 1973]

We tend to make up explanations that make sense to us rather than just ask other people what is really going on with them.

Richard has much work to do in the area of being or being able to live one day at a time. How many times have your dire fantasies borne fruit, Richard? [30 December 1973]

Perhaps you have heard the joke: "Worrying about the future must work because nothing I worry about ever comes to pass." Richard was in the Caution Mode, which is notorious for worrying about every little thing, especially in the Negative Pole of -Phobia. If you, dear reader, are a 'worry wart', you might want to refer to internet resources on "generalized anxiety disorder".

Billie: I am concerned about my mother's reaction to the news that Ray and I have split. I know my father is going to have to handle her, so I am worried about their reactions.

Their reaction will be much of what you already suspect. Your task is to realize that this is truly your fantasy when you take responsibility for their reaction. You must realize that you can do nothing to stop it, except to capitulate again, and aren't you tired of that? [17 January 1974]

This phenomenon of fantasizing about other people, called "Internal Considering" in the Gurdjieffian teachings, came up repeatedly, and the Michael's always recommended against it.

Mallory: I would like to know if there is somewhere I could go for this training, and if I could use it to help people.

That is valid. You could conceivably bring this to an entire community that would be receptive to this in the near future. You can learn the Sufi dances and also folk dancing helps some to act out their fantasies. This can be the most valuable for essentially non-verbal, strictured souls. [22 January 1974]

At the time, Mallory was in college, in the process of becoming a psychotherapist. Here, to "act out their fantasies" is not a bad thing; it is therapeutic when facilitated in a recreational, fun, harmless setting. Many psychotherapeutic techniques are aimed at understanding a person's "fantasies" as a means to uncover their hidden truths. Mallory was a Seventh Level Mature Warrior, and the advice given was totally appropriate for that Age and Role. So, the takeaway notion from this passage is that we should look at our fantasies and ask what it is that they are trying to tell us about stuff that we might have repressed or overlooked.

Shirley: I feel I am my own worst enemy and I want Michael's help.

That is valid. We think that you are not helping yourself right now, Shirley. None of the conflicts you are now experiencing are Karmic, and the suffering is needless. Accept the guidance of those who would give freely of their time and company, and reconstruct your life around this new superstructure. You will find the meaning you seek. You can alter your goal and change things for yourself in a most positive way by taking what is offered instead of chasing rainbows that have already faded. This advice can be taken to heart by others here also, but you are now dwelling in fantasy and you must take the step that will liberate you from this. If you follow our advice, you cannot fail to change it; it is guaranteed. [24 January 1974]

Refer to chapters "Karma" and "Liberation". There is a difference between "chasing rainbows" and "following your bliss", meaning, there are realistic aspirations and there are unrealistic aspirations. If you are having difficulty discerning the difference all by yourself, then you might want to ask your friends for a "reality check".

Different Attitudes provide different tendencies or proclivities to "dwell in fantasy," or not:

Sue: Could we have the Attitude for those who do not know what theirs is?

Sue is a Realist. Billie: Realist. Ellis: Skeptic. TomM: Idealist. The only one in the group with a Spiritual[ist] Attitude is Cheryl.

The Realist perceives the situation at hand in an almost intellectual clarity, and sub-consciously applies all of the alternatives with lightning speed, coming up with a workable solution within an extremely short period of deliberation. The Realist has few expectations of fanciful nature, and, as would be expected, is grounded in reality.

Ray: In the area of Attitudes, the description of Realist does not fit with my idea of what Billie's Attitude is. I have seen fantasies and expectations in Billie.

We do not see many fanciful expectations in Billie. We see less in you than before. But, there are some lingering there. Your imagination just a short time ago was the most exciting component of your life. [24 January 1974]

The Pragmatist Attitude provides the least distorted perception of the world, and therefore it is probably the least inclined to 'flights' of fantasy. All of the other Attitudes are more distorted in their perspective, but the Realist Attitude is a close second to Pragmatist for lack of fantasy. The Cardinal Attitudes (Idealist, Spiritualist,

Realist) are prone to happy fantasies, and the Ordinal Attitudes (Skeptic, Stoic, Cynic) are prone to unhappy fantasies.

The next mention of fantasy in the original Michaelian group transcriptions mentions “the Idealist’s dreams” in particular:

[Soleal:] I think that one of the problems with the teacher and also with me in accepting your outlines for organization would have to be your reliance to such a great extent upon the money that can be poured into your group excluding a number of students who can offer far more than a mere medium of exchange (such as money) and consequently, the teacher has vetoed your plans. This is Bad Work to exclude on this base, and also [it is Bad Work] to dwell at such length upon all of the directions as contingencies that might happen. Do you realize that this is as much a fantasy as the Idealist’s dream? I am not an Idealist, but I am certainly willing to run a trial-by-error test on anything that seems to be meaningful in the end. If everyone on your world had waited until all of the loose ends were neatly tucked in, no progress ever would have been made. There is such a thing as obstinate realism. [18 February 1974]

This is another passage about the communal living project, as it was still not going well: some people had an unrealistic positive view, and some had an unrealistic negative view. This passage affirms and confirms what I said about some previous passages, namely that there are positive and negative fantasies. The trick for all of us is to discern when we are in one or the other mode, and we would do well to find the balance point between the extremes that makes solid progress, being neither overly optimistic nor overly pessimistic about our aspirations and expectations.

Edgar: It took me a half an hour to realize that I was all right.

We would remind you all at this point that whatever your pre-conceived fantasy of the appearance of this entity is, that [is] what you will see on the Astral Plane until you clear the blocks. [20 February 1974]

As stated previously, fantasy is usually the product of a natural tendency in a personality type, or it is the product of an overactive imagination when confronted with insufficient or ambiguous or confused data, as is the case here in this passage.

Dick: Patty felt fear of BA’s violence. Is her fear valid? He seems benign to me.

He entertained fantasies of this [violence], yes, and she perceived it. In this male, it was pure fantasy. [03 March 1974]

Certainly, keeping one’s (negative or positive) fantasies to oneself is better than acting them out in reality, but, of course, the best option is to extinguish fantasies.

It is interesting to note that the dreams all concern some primary fantasy fears, such as Alice’s dreams of pursuit with intent to [do] violence to her and Sarah’s dreams of food being destroyed before her eyes. [13 March 1974]

Refer to the chapter “Dreams and Dreaming” for more discussion of the study of one’s dreams for ferreting out one’s fantasies.

Richard: When I was building my fence today I had these fantasies about having trouble with my neighbor, who has threatened me with a knife before. It really tired me out with all the fantasies I had should he come out drunk again and become belligerent. [14 April 1974]

Real threats are especially good at provoking fantasies, and then maintaining fantasies that are hard to ‘shake off’.

Comment on psychological reasons or effects of the rip-off.

The man Jim enjoys being his own boss. Being a carpenter is not so much a problem as being under the constant direction of others. Also, this man works far better as a solitary entity. But, aren’t you just a little bit leery about being out all by yourself and don’t you spend a great deal of time with this fantasy, only to reject it as impractical?

Regarding hypnotherapy — having a therapy place where some of us would treat troubled people by hypnosis — synthesis while under hypnosis.

Once we realize we can change — how do we know when that is?

Usually, the Mature Soul at that point seeks therapy. Whether this is effective depends upon the skill of the therapist. The same goes for the skill of the teacher in the school such as this.

We believe that it is certainly worth exploring [and] discussing where the others fit in would help; all could make a contribution. Such a move in the right direction could be a tremendous stride toward growth if the space was positive and the manifestation did not involve unrealistic fantasy. [08 May 1974]

This is just another friendly warning to have reasonable expectations about whatever we do.

Dick: Feeling [that] a conscious soul has inner fires burning.

We do not dispute that. The energy will be available in quantities, now unavailable to you, simply because you will not be leaking it out through fantasies and hostilities. [05 June 1974]

Several times the Michaels note that fantasies are a waste of time and a leak of “energy”, which could otherwise be directed to spiritual growth.

Gene: At times, I have felt that Susan was suppressing her sexuality.

We see little fantasy of this nature in this lady. [16 June 1974]

It might have seemed to Gene that his wife was frigid, because he was not one to “suppress” his sexuality. The point to be made about this Q&A exchange is that one type of fantasy is to attribute or impute or explain the behavior of others based on our own subjective evaluation of them. This is a common mistake.

Narra: What happened to the SLA [Symbionese Liberation Army] members that were pacific and then became violent?

The same phenomena occurred here that occurs over and over again. The way of peace is far too slow for most Young Souls, and if they are politically involved, they usually temper their mercy with a little blood at the end. The three in question were swept up in the charisma of the leader, but they were already tasting the frustration of bringing about a “better world” through non-violence. They [perceived] massive inequities around them, and were unable to separate from their fantasies. The trouble with this and many revolutionary groups is that they choose notoriously poor targets through Emotional Center. For instance, the man Marcus was viewed by the militant Black as “Uncle Tom”. In reality, he was far from that. [19 June 1974]

Besides Attitude, mentioned previously, the Soul Ages and Centers are prone to certain types of fantasies that are specific to them. Actually the Negative Poles of all of the Overleaves are different types of “fantasy”, if you expand the definition to include an unrealistic and unhealthy way of being in the world. Generally speaking, it is self-righteous to try to “change the world” unless one has perfected oneself, in which case one would have no fantasies about oneself and the world; one would perceive self and not-self without distortion.

What is the difference between boredom and depression?

We would say that the line is exceedingly thin, almost invisible. Boredom normally comes about when the individual is unable to meld his fantasy with the realities of everyday life, and this includes fantasied expectations of those around him, such as those the man Dennis has of the man James and [the woman] Marsha.

Marty: What does Dennis expect besides service and a home? All his decisions made for him? Can he understand his fantasizing, given his Overleaves?

No. [03 September 1974]

One type of fantasy is to use the imagination as an escape from boredom, from situations, or from people that do not live up one’s expectations. As I said above, if you look at the Negative Poles of all of the Overleaves you will see a long list of distortions toward fantasy.

Sexual behavior in this culture is largely instinctive to the point where any gesture of friendliness is interpreted as a sexual overture if it comes from one of the opposite gender, and the fantasies and expectations begin.

When you behave as society wishes you to, you can know for certain that instinct has a large part in it, unless of course it happens to coincide with what you really desire, and this is rare. [21 December 1974]

By “instinctive”, per the context, I understand this to refer to cultural programming, not the type of instinct that animals are born with. Per previous comments, unlike animal sexuality which is purely instinctive, aka inborn, thanks to cultural imprinting human sexuality is rife with fantasies heaped on top of the inborn drive to propagate the species.

Soleal, an Adept on another planet, shares his struggles against his own fantasies as he contemplated a potential visit to planet Earth:

Shirley asked what we could do to help him perceive us better or us perceive him better.

[Soleal:] I am afraid that it is my own task to perceive you, and I must do it in my own time. However, you have access to the same energy that I do, and you are welcome to try any of the teacher’s [Michael] gimmicks

whenever you wish. My own perceptions are colored a little by my own imagination, which is by no means extinguished. This is also among the last vestiges to go. During the waking hours, I can maintain a high level of vigilance over my fantasies. At other times, this becomes difficult, and unfamiliar sensations assail me, and I lose all of my comfortable landmarks.

It is perhaps not possible for me to convey this to you so indirectly. When I can be among you, it will become far easier. The process involved leaves me with a dual feeling of anticipation and dread. I can share with you all of my fears and trepidations that I have in the waking state, and thereby let you glimpse the chink in the armor, and perhaps this will above all things boost the trust level for a few of you.... [11 January 1975]

The human brain is actually hard-wired to panic under threatening conditions; this is the well-known so-called “fight or flight” reflex; it is a part of the survival program built into all living organisms. Psychologists know how this works: the human mind has a memory of past events, and it generates a “model” of how the world works based on that data, so that it can make predictions about the future that are more or less statistically accurate, the purpose being to ensure its safety as much as possible. Extrapolating from that built-up model, the human imagination generates an expectation of how the world will work in the future, and it constantly checks that model against what actually happens, and the model gets updated. Rinse and repeat *ad eternum* as we go through life; this is how we learn. All of creation partakes of this so-called “feedback loop” process between objective and subjective reality systems. This useful and beneficial function of *imagination* typically tips into the realm of counterproductive *fantasy* when it faces unusual and unfamiliar situations that have not yet been modeled, particularly those that evoke fear, the “fear of the unknown”. Looking for the optimal coping strategy, the imagination frantically searches the ‘space’ of all known or statistically possible actions and responses to actions. As Soleal said, this instinctive mechanism built into the organism is one of the last facets of False Personality that will be overridden on a spiritual path.

Fantasies about fears about the future are among the most pernicious:

You have not lost a thing when a non-serious student leaves the teaching — at least, you have lost nothing positive. What you may have lost is much scattering of energies to the winds. Working with one who is truly not a student only wastes the energies of the [original Michaelian group] cadre, and grieving over their loss results in a tremendous drain. I don’t think I even need mention what happens when you fantasize over what might happen if that one or this one left the teaching.. [16 February 1975]

Little did they know that a few days hence the large group meetings would cease, that the original Michaelian group would revert to the founding and core group members meeting on an occasional basis. The point to be emphasized here is that “shit happens”, and it is wise to factor this fact into our model of how the universe works, so that we are not so surprised and so dismayed when “shift happens”.

When is Soleal coming?

[Soleal:] I think, and the teacher [Michael] agrees, that [to tell you] that would be Bad Work, and would only encourage fantasy to tell you when. [16 February 1975]

On several occasions the Michaels, as well as Soleal, refused to provide an answer to a question, saying that it was up to the questioner to trust their intuition; refer to the chapter “Intuition”. The desire to know the future is understandable to those who are fearful or prone to fantasy by nature. However, the future is not ‘set in stone’, so any sense of security that one might have about the future comes best from more predictable internal resources than from less predictable externalities. In the so-called “sermon on the mount”, Jesus is alleged to have said: “Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.” (Matthew 6:34, KJV) One common aphorism about this recommended state of mind is to “Be here now”.

We have a message for the lady Louise. You were in complete illusion, you were in fantasy, all your fears are in fantasy. Of course the mountain is not real, and perhaps you may look deeper into the Biblical characters [with] whom you have chosen to identify; [this might be] ‘Symbology’, perhaps, rather than truth. We would say the same for the man Allyn. It is a mystical experience, not [a] spiritual one. Learn to differentiate. [16 April 1975]

Refer to the chapter “Fear” to see more examples of illusory trepidations. Having a list helps one to be more vigilant about what might trip you up.

[Soleal:] Reality is never as difficult to deal with as the fantasy, because in the fantasy you seldom see any tangible results. [Dimensions! June 1975]

Fantasies typically make matters worse rather than better, so squelch them if you can. Otherwise, even though “seldom”, they could conceivably become “self-fulfilling prophecies”.

The evening began with talk about the [A Course in] Miracles material, and we shared thoughts about the difference between false goals and true goals. Must we give up life goals?

All must realize that the term Holy Spirit [in that book] does in fact refer to the Essence — that within the self that is in contact with the Tao. To contact this Holy Spirit, then, requires only the quieting of the Overleaves to the extent that the Essence can be perceived. The perception is often brilliantly elucidated during a so-called “spiritual” experience, when the Personality is temporarily inactivated by the powerful input. [Psychedelic] Drugs will often facilitate this, but are not necessary; environment is more important. Without this perception, all of this [Michael’s teaching or any spiritual teaching] is simply another barrage of words. Only the knowledge of one’s own Essence is convincing. We cannot emphasize this too much. It can be explained by the timeworn cliché: “seeing is believing”. There is no other way that one can be certain that planes beyond the physical exist, other than experiencing them. The same can be said for the perception of one’s own Essence. When this is accomplished, the power of the experience drowns disbelief. Then, of course, it is still entirely up to you which course you wish to pursue. It is doubtful, though, that one would choose to continue with purposeless activities. False goals are those that are largely unattainable, as they exist only in fantasy. True goals lead to the awakening of the Essence and its breakthrough. This is indeed possible for those who wish it and without great sacrifice upon the mountain-top. [12 December 1976]

In this passage, we see that the Personality and the Overleaves can be the sources of distorted perceptions of the world and of truth and of goodness. Allegedly, the Essence wants to reveal itself and its true perceptions to us. This passage reveals the Michaels’ epistemology: how do we know that some proposition is real and true rather than a fantasy? Answer: experientially. If the reader does not have some familiarity with the ins and outs of the branch of philosophy called epistemology, then take a look at this lengthy webpage; it is well worth reading for context about the subject of this chapter: ><https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Epistemology><; epistemology is all about discerning the difference between reality and unreality, truth and fantasy, knowledge and ignorance. For relevant information on subjects mentioned in this passage, refer to the chapters “Essence and Personality”, “Psychedelics”, “Awakening from Sleep”.

Dick: Robert [Burton] was fascinating to me. He DID see a different reality. I will never be able to. There can be no spiritual growth for me — forget it.

We would like you to consider the possibility that once a thought is thought, it becomes a tangible force in the universe, and a concept once discerned must be acted upon somewhere in the physical universe, even though, perhaps, not by the particular man-mass that thinks it. Even your fantasies are tangible. This accounts for many Biblical admonitions such as the one concerning lust after a neighbor’s wife [one of the Ten Commandments]. The notion is not new, and has occupied philosophers for many centuries. [21 October 1977]

According to Seth, “you create your own reality”. According to some interpretations of quantum physics, there is a feedback loop between physics and personality. To what extent this is true or not is arguable by physicists and by philosophers and by non-physical entities, but until we know for certain exactly how this works it is wise to “be careful what you wish for.”

Concluding Comments on Fantasy

People who are attracted to spirituality, more than those who are not, are prone to have good imaginations, and they are attracted to flights of fancy, and they are prone to fantasies. Many components of the Michaelian teachings are directed at the discovery and mitigation of fantasies, and these are covered not only in this lengthy chapter, but in several other chapters about subjects that could be placed in the general category of psychotherapy to mitigate fantasy, such as “Maya”, “False Personality”, “Fear”, “Drama”, “Glamour”, “Awakening from Sleep”, “Liberation”, “Buffers”, “Energy and Energy Leaks”, “Communication”, “Identification”, “Imprinting”, “Knowledge as gnosis”, and “Veil”. Read them, and you will likely get a better grip on reality.

Speaking of reality, fantasy and reality are inversely related, meaning that the more of one the less of the other. So, if you find yourself having a lot of fantastical ideation about something, then you know that the fantasy is trying to fill in the missing ingredient of some desired reality. That being the case, by reviewing the nature of your fantasies, you might be able to discern some clues about what is the reality that you seek but have not yet achieved.





③ FASTING

This chapter is the product of a search for the word fasting in the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group channeling sessions. This word does not represent a significant component of the Michaelian teachings. However, there are good reasons to discuss the subject in this *Study Papers* book: 1) the subject came up numerous times during the original Michaelian group; 2) some interesting things were said about the subject; 3) the subject is related to a number of other components of the Michaelian teachings that are considered to be significant; 4) students can presumably benefit from having the mentions conveniently collected and commented all in one place.

The word fasting is not capitalized in this chapter or other chapters of this *Study Papers* book because it has no special meaning in the Michaelian teachings; it is not a Michaelian jargon word that needs a definition apart from its use in the common vernacular.

As we all know, “fasting” is going without food for some period of time. According to the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group, this involves more than just skipping meals. Specifically, fasting is one of the primary practices or tools that the Michaels recommend to their students, to promote and augment spiritual development. It is almost always recommended in connection with other consciousness-raising practices.

It might be a little surprising how often this word fasting shows up in the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group, considering that it has not appeared very many times in subsequent channeling sessions that we have record of. Precisely because it covers a subject that might otherwise have been ignored and forgotten, I regard it as useful and valuable to include this chapter, as with numerous other similar chapters on obscure topics in this *Study Papers* book. Doing so makes our understanding of the Michaelian teachings richer and more complete.

This chapter is one of many that discusses a particular tool that the Michaels recommend if they are serious about advancing on their spiritual path; refer to the chapter “Tools” for a complete accounting.

Fasting per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

The following extracts from original Michaelian group transcriptions are Q&A exchanges, where an original Michaelian group member asks a question (or makes a comment), and the Michaels provide an answer. These extracts are presented in the chronological order in which they were given. As is my custom, I usually provide some explanatory comments following the question or answer. Underlined words are my emphasis, to draw attention to what it is that I comment on. Sometimes I embed words or phrases [in brackets] that I believe help to clarify the question or the answer. Numerous study papers related to this chapter are to be found among my comments.

If the Michaels said it once, they said it a dozen times:

[Soleal:] To get to higher Centers, do what Jesus did: fasting, meditation, and agonizing self-appraisal. [03 July 1973]

Alice: How can I raise myself to the higher — through meditation?

[Tomas:] You are right. Meditation is the door by which you can enter the higher plane and communicate with those waiting to help. Fasting and occasional solitude and silence prepare you for a more meaningful experience. There are many excellent places giving instruction. Maybe this would open the door for you, Alice. The need for personal guidance varies with the individual. [24 July 1973]

Dick: Is fasting healthy?

Fasting when done properly leads to the liberated meditation. It produces the same state as marijuana if practiced long enough and diligently enough. You should not fast if you are ill or if there is honest grief or pressures of private agendas.

Dick: How should we do it?

Start with one day. Go to two, then three. Do not exceed five at this stage. Take plenty of liquids and be quiet at first. Do not drive. That [liquids] includes water and unsweetened liquids and fruits [juices?].

[What about] milk?

No milk. You can fill up on milk. [21 August 1973]

Perhaps “fasting” to the Michaels meant to avoid solid food, not liquid food other than milk. Perhaps tea and coffee without sugar or artificial sweetener are acceptable? I do not see how fruit juices would be considered an unsweetened liquid. Evidently, dehydration is not a good thing.

Edgar: I would like advice regards getting rid of pain.

We can be of assistance only in that your illness is a part of Karma for you and when you come to grips with your spiritual controversy, the pain will no longer be necessary. This can be accelerated, of course, by those methods we have outlined for the others; that is: meditation, concentration, fasting, and study. [15 November 1973]

Speaking of doing what Jesus did:

Edgar: What is meant by his saying he was the Son of God?

You are all sons of “God”. This man, before the Infinite Soul manifested, referred to himself as the servant of man. The Infinite Soul said, “I am the Word.” The Infinite Soul manifested during a period of intense meditation and fasting, and “the sermon on the mount” was the first uttering of the Infinite Soul. [22 November 1973]

Sue: Any hint in the direction I might take?

Should we go through it all over again, Sue? Meditation, concentration, fasting, study, right-thinking — this is the magic enlightenment formula, like $E = MC^2$. [22 November 1973]

How do you start planning for internalizing?

Answer: They’ve told us through fasting, meditation, and concentration. [06 February 1973]

Edgar: Is there any technique I can use to detach myself from Maya?

We have given those to you. They are again: meditation, concentration, fasting, and study. [03 March 1974]

Dick: We can tell in the book how we have received the material intellectually. However, we don’t yet have the necessary steps to overcome our Overleaves. We have some keys, such as “experiencing it out”, and meditation, fasting, studying, which seem non-directive. [10 May 1974]

Would fasting help meditation?

Many times it does, yes. It deepens the trance. [03 July 1973]

Thaddeus: What would Michael suggest in work to further myself?

We have suggested that you meditate. We also suggest that for you, creative silence is something you might find valuable. This must be done with another student. Otherwise, it is not effective. Although you have been known to talk to yourself, you are much more inclined to do this when in the presence of others. You have a noisy head and must work to quiet it down. This is not unusual with your Overleaves, but as a student, you must choose to override it. Also, you can practice concentration, augmented [with psychedelics] or not. Also, for you, periodic fasting would be of great value. Spiritual food is what you crave, but the Personality demands the substitute. If you can stand not to gratify the body’s demands, the hold of the Personality will weaken. The movement you are now doing is good — don’t stop. In fact, you could increase it. [29 October 1974]

James asked what must we do to become awake.

We have, of course, outlined to this cadre the steps that they must take if they are to ever become sufficiently awake to hear the words. We have told them of the highest truth, which is Agape, which is the unqualified acceptance of other creatures as the greater part of self. We have given them the tools for attainment of this state, which are yes, meditation, concentration, fasting, and study. [20 November 1974]

Bill told us he is taking a course from Transcendental Meditation and would like a comment from Michael about anything he could do prior to the experience that would help him.

Prior to this, fasting would help, yes, for at least twelve hours. Also, a brisk walk and openness. This is a highly successful form of meditation for beginners and works most of the time. [26 November 1974]

Sandy: Seth seems to give more personal help with private situations. Why not Michael also?

We are most willing to act as a guide or help you in all of those areas involving spiritual growth, such as meditation, concentration, fasting, and the like... [02 January 1975]

Fasting without proper mental preparation can interrupt the accepted behavioral stimuli of the brain cells. The intention to fast must in advance be determined or the body reacts in pain. [13 April 1975]

Dick talked about Kundalini energy.

... The way to this energy can be found through many media. Those we have suggested have been meditation, concentration, and fasting, augmented [by psychedelics] or not; also, art that is of a participatory nature, [such as] music, color, water — and by water we mean swimming, floating, sailing or simply standing beneath a water flow — “hydrotherapy” if you prefer. The sensory deprivation method is another, but there again, the water [in the sensory deprivation tank] helps more than you realize. [04 November 1974]

Concluding Comments on Fasting

The practices that the Michaels mention in connection with fasting are: meditation and concentration, self-appraisal, solitude and silence, prayer, study, positive thoughts, psychedelics, art, hydrotherapy, and sensory deprivation. (To these I would add mindful walking). In other words, don't just suffer the hunger pangs and harbor resentment that you “have to” do this unpleasantness; do focused, intentional “spiritual” activities.

Refer to the chapters “Meditation and Concentration” and “Psychedelics” for those adjuncts to fasting.





FEAR

This chapter is the product of a search for the word “fear” and its synonyms in the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group channeling sessions. Learned students will know that these words do not represent a significant component of the Michaelian teachings. However, there are good reasons to discuss the subject in this *Study Papers* book: 1) the subject came up numerous times during the original Michaelian group; 2) students can presumably benefit from having the mentions conveniently collected and commented all in one place; 3) some interesting things were said about the subject; 4) the subject is related to a number of other components of the Michaelian teachings that are considered to be significant; 5) Fear issues are pervasive in human psychology and sociology and spirituality.

The words relating to fear are not capitalized in this chapter or other chapters of this *Study Papers* book because they have no special meaning in the Michaelian teachings; they are not Michaelian jargon words that needs definitions apart from their use in the common vernacular.

This chapter is one of many in this book that focuses on a psychological component of the Michaelian teachings as found in original Michaelian group transcriptions, rather than on a spiritual component, as so many other chapters in this book do. Psychological components of the Michaelian teachings are usually either a ‘virtue’ to be cultivated or a ‘vice’ to be mitigated; both are amenable to psychotherapy. Obviously, fear is a negative worth eschewing. The Michaelian version of psychology is not to be confused with the pop psychology of the self-improvement movement, those that do not have a spiritual core or perspective. Rather, the Michaelian psychotherapeutic path (aimed at improving psychological health) is a beneficial precursor to the spiritual path (aimed at improving soul health). To skip the former but attempt the latter is referred to as “spiritual bypassing”. This is discussed at length on various websites, including https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spiritual_bypass. To skip mitigating one’s psychological issues and attempt to go straight to enlightenment usually proves to be problematic.

Definition of Fear

So what is meant by feminine and masculine? The online Merriam Webster dictionary definition is:

Fear per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

The following extracts from original Michaelian group transcriptions are Q&A exchanges, where an original Michaelian group member asks a question (or makes a comment), and the Michaels provide an answer. This is a subject that benefits by division into subcategories. As is my custom, I often provide some explanatory comments following the question or answer. Underlined words in the Michaels’ answers are my emphasis, to draw attention to what it is that I comment on. Sometimes I embed words or phrases [in brackets] that I believe help to clarify the question or the answer.

The word “fear” occurs many times in the original Michaelian group transcriptions in contexts that have no significance or relevance to a general discussion of what may be called the philosophy of fear, so I omit those from this chapter.

Relevance of Overleaves to Fear

The first relevant Q&A exchange is this one:

Richard: I’ve been told that I have some obstacles toward spiritual growth — some “bad Tapes” so to speak — that are keeping me from progressing. Can you tell me about them?

Anxiety over others' impressions of your actions, obsessions with systems and procedures, worry about what is right, the fear that you will not be somehow the good little boy. [But the reality is:] Your halo can be tarnished, and many will still love you. [mid 1973]

Refer to the chapter "Bio-computer" for more about "tapes", aka 'programming', that can obscure and counteract True Personality. The above message was channeled long before Richard's Overleaves were revealed, but note that, besides those "obstacles toward spiritual growth", Richard had the Goal of Acceptance and the Caution Mode. These two Overleaves are "diametrically" opposed to each other, and it is the type of internally-abrading Overleaves that can make a person neurotic, and make other people neurotic as they interact with that neuroticism. Anxiety, obsession, worry, and fear are variations of the Negative Pole of the Caution Mode, namely -Phobia, and "good little boy" is from the Negative Pole of the Goal of Acceptance, namely -Ingratiation, and "love" is from the Positive Pole of the Goal of Acceptance, namely "Agape".

Infant Souls are often bitten by dogs who have no previous history of biting, simply because of their inordinate fear... The Baby Soul is fearful (of almost everything), and her kitchen is usually antiseptically clean. [lat August 1973]

There are legitimate fears, such as of aggressive dogs and harmful germs, but when taken to an extreme the fear is illegitimate:

Infant Souls manifest fear. This can be seen in their eyes. This fear is out of proportion to the situation. The whole business of living is fearful to them. [18 September 1973]

Infant Souls having so little understanding of life, my speculation is that their pervasive sense of fear is a product of bewilderment and bafflement.

Richard: Misguided concern ... does this primarily involve others?

It stems from your fear of being either challenged or rejected [due to your Goal of Acceptance and your Mode of Caution]. [22 September 1974]

This was a very early hint that the Negative Poles of the Overleaves are based in fear, among other issues, and the Positive Poles are based in love; refer to my comment on the first Q&A exchange in this chapter.

Miscellaneous Fears and Comments on Fears

Dick: I've been chipping away at the granite mountain with my internal dialogues and it doesn't seem to get anywhere for me. Another thing is that I realize that, in me, fear predominates over love, no matter how strong the love is.

Fear of loss of control besets all of you. With you, Dick, it is loss of emotional control. With Richard, it is fear of being considered insane. With many of you, it is fear of loss of reasoning.

Dick: I don't live in fear all the time, because everything I do is designed to avoid situations where I might encounter it.

If the Personality was not living in fear, it would not go to such elaborate means to avoid the pain-producing situation. [02 October 1973]

We do not say that your fears are groundless, just that perhaps we can aid you to convert them into [something] other than fear. [91 November 1973]

That is a key passage in this chapter on fear and what to do about it. The general and basic idea is to notice your specific fear, ask yourself what its source might be, consider how you might confront it in such a way that you transmute it into love. This is not unlike the injunction mentioned previously in this chapter, namely to transmute the Negative Poles of your Overleaves into their Positive Poles.

Shirley: What does she associate pain with?

Most persons who have been fortunate enough not to have had much pain are terribly afraid of it. It is more of the same old fear of the unknown. All of your literature is resplendent with gruesome accounts of the agonies associated with this disease. We are not surprised that it is feared. [29 November 1973]

Ellis: I have been reluctant to get involved in the extra-consciousness out-of-body experience phenomenon. Is this from fear?

It is merely the same old fear of the unknown. [13 December 1973]

Fears born uncertainty are some of the most debilitating. This type seems to be related to the fear of loss of control mentioned previously.

Fear of Going Against Social Norms

... fear of castigation. [14 December 1973]

Fear of social punishment is like fear of being shamed, which is discussed at length in the chapter “Shame”.

Phobias from Past Lives

Mallory: I would like to ask about a fear of vomiting, which I have had as long as I can remember. Is this fear from a past life?

Yes, the vomiting is reminiscent of a time you died of Diphtheria and could not help from choking. The fear persists in many for the same reason.

(Mallory suggested that many people died in this manner and wouldn't there be many more who had this fear?)

Alice: [Alice's daughter] Victoria had a fear of vomiting. Did she too die of diphtheria in another life?

She was choked. [22 January 1974]

Various seemingly irrational phobias can perhaps be traced to past-life traumas that carry over to the present life.

[[Continue search to end of transcriptions. Include synonyms such as fright.]]

Concluding Comments on Fear

Perhaps you have heard it said that the opposite of love is not hate, it is fear. There is something to be said for that, and this is what I say. The way I think of the relationship of love to hate and fear is that +Love is the Positive Pole of the Goal of Acceptance, +Unification, and –Hate is the Negative Pole of the Goal of Rejection (the “complement” of the Goal of Acceptance), namely –Prejudice, and –Fear is the Negative Pole of the Caution Mode (the “diametric” of the Goal of Acceptance), namely –Phobia. In graphic form, note how this shows up on the Overleaf chart:





FEMININE AND MASCULINE

This chapter is the product of a search for the words feminine and masculine and their variations in the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group channeling sessions. Learned students will know that these words do not represent a significant component of the Michaelian teachings. However, there are good reasons to discuss the subject in this *Study Papers* book: 1) the subject came up numerous times during the original Michaelian group; 2) students can presumably benefit from having the mentions conveniently collected all in one place; 3) some interesting things were said about the subject; 4) the subject is related to a number of other components of the Michaelian teachings that are considered to be significant; 5) Masculinity and femininity issues are pervasive in human psychology and sociology and spirituality.

The words femininity and masculinity are not capitalized in this chapter or other chapters of this *Study Papers* book because they have no special meaning in the Michaelian teachings; they are not Michaelian jargon words that needs definitions apart from their use in the common vernacular.

Basically and briefly, the Michaels recommended to the original Michaelian group members that they

Definition of Feminine and Masculine

So what is meant by feminine and masculine? The online Merriam Webster dictionary definition is:

Feminine and Masculine per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

The following extracts from original Michaelian group transcriptions are Q&A exchanges, where an original Michaelian group member asks a question (or makes a comment), and the Michaels provide an answer. This is [not] a subject that would benefit by division into subcategories, as some subjects do. These extracts are [not] presented in the chronological order in which they were given, even though this is not a subject where there was a development or evolution of a specific revelation of a facet of the Michaelian teachings, as was often the case with the original Michaelian group. As is my custom, I often provide some explanatory comments following the question or answer. Underlined words in the Michaels' answers are my emphasis, to draw attention to what it is that I comment on. Sometimes I embed words or phrases [in brackets] that I believe help to clarify the question or the answer.

Concluding Comments on Feminine and Masculine





FLASH

This chapter is the product of a search for the word flash and its derivatives and synonyms in the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group channeling sessions. This word does not represent a significant component of the Michaelian teachings. However, there are good reasons to discuss the subject in this *Study Papers* book: 1) the subject came up numerous times during the original Michaelian group; 2) students can presumably benefit from having the mentions conveniently collected and commented all in one place; 3) some interesting things were said about the subject; 4) the subject is related to a number of other components of the Michaelian teachings that are considered to be significant, so it behooves us to have a working knowledge of it.

The word flash is not capitalized in this chapter or other chapters of this *Study Papers* book because it has no special meaning in the Michaelian teachings; it is not a Michaelian jargon word that needs a definition apart from its use in the common vernacular.

The reason I researched and wrote this chapter is because I noticed, while I was researching and writing the chapters on “Intuition” and “Insight” (refer to those chapters), that this word appears repeatedly in the original Michaelian group transcriptions. A word search in the original Michaelian group transcriptions revealed that the subject also appears in other contexts, so then I flashed on the notion that having a chapter of its own would be a useful project.

Definition of Flash

So what is meant by flash? [The online Merriam Webster online dictionary definition is: Wikipedia has an article that provides a definition and a description, as follows \(underlined words are my emphasis\):](#)

Flash per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

The following extracts from original Michaelian group transcriptions are Q&A exchanges, where an original Michaelian group member asks a question (or makes a comment), and the Michaels provide an answer. [This is a subject that benefits by division into subsections. These extracts are presented in the chronological order in which they were given.](#) As is my custom, I usually provide some explanatory comments following the question or answer. Underlined words are my emphasis, to draw attention to what it is that I comment on. Sometimes I embed words or phrases [in brackets] that I believe help to clarify the question or the answer. Numerous study papers related to this chapter are to be found among my comments.

Concluding Comments on Flash

[“epiphany” never appears in the original Michaelian group](#)





FRAGMENTATION and REINTEGRATION

Question: Well, if we do Astral travel to associate with the spirits more, maybe they won't let us associate with them, after we have made the commitment. You really don't know whether they will associate with you anyway. That puts you where you don't care. Take the Astral trips first. See if you like it.

Don't worry. We will associate. We will now answer an earlier question. We are integrated fragments of an ancient entity. (One of us had wondered earlier who our new entity was.) [date]

Comment (from the medium): He wants to say something else.

The entity of which [Saint] Paul [of the Bible] was a part is not completely integrated.

Discussion: concerning the effects of alcohol on quieting the personality, then the Fragmentation of Paul's Entity, and finally Fragmentation in general.

When the spirit Entity first becomes Earth-bound, there can be as many as a thousand Fragments. As the Entity progresses, the Fragments unite. As each lesson is learned, the Monads are formed.

Comments: You mean we are all fragmented? That's what he said, which means that we have a lot of things to work out here. Well, I'm still fragmented.

You will be until you are reintegrated. The Christ entity even consisted of two Fragments. Jesus still had a guru in John [the Baptist]. The master/pupil Monad must be experienced from both sides.

The next question was also lost, but it concerned the fact that John [the Baptist] was presumably a reincarnation of Elias.

You are correct, Elias was a part of the Infinite Soul at the time of the manifestation. The Causal body evolved. The high planes each have seven levels. The fragments integrate at different times. When the integration takes place, evolution supervenes. [18 September 1973]

Does this mean that I only have one more life? They say that I only have one Monad left. What does this mean? Do I make it then or is that my last chance?

Then, your [entity] fragments will be reunited and you will be an integrated Causal body. [date]

Is burning a karmic ribbon always a negative thing?

Sometimes you are the debtor. Sometimes it is to you that the debt is owed. The ribbon is the thread that links you to the other fragments of a karmic play. You wish to complete the Monad. As soon as this is accomplished, the fragment has evolved. As soon as the major Monads are completed, the fragments are integrated.

Could we have a clarification of Fragments and Entities?

The higher planes each have seven levels of evolution, not just the physical. The continuous creative force that is universal casts out Entities into physical lifetimes. These Entities fragment and become many different personalities. Their integration is the evolutionary pattern for all souls. You do not feel the desire to seek the remaining fragments of your entity until the last physical cycle. Then at that time, there is almost a compulsion. You do not always know why, but you always do seek.

Dick: It seems that the unification of Fragments goes on inter-life [between lifetimes]. You can't do it here, can you?

You can, but it is difficult. It requires psychic union and that by definition requires that you be an Adept. That is always polar. It is usually done between lives.

Dick: You could not possibly experience all there is to experience in 49 lives. Do Fragments experience between lives?

Richard: Can we assume then when the Entity is reintegrated, it has experienced everything there is on the physical plane?

It has experienced all of life, yes. Each fragment does not need all experiences, but most fragments choose to experience all of life. [date]

Gene: I imagine that they are talking about the non-fragmented Entity — the unified Entity — “were first born at the same time,” and that seems to me contradictory, because those of us who were born are only part and not the Entity.

Entire entities are cast from the Tao. They fragment into physically trapped souls for as long as is necessary for them to experience all of life through the cycles. This means that when Eugene’s entity first fragmented, other entities fragmented also. The entity that includes Eugene fragmented at the same point in history as did the entity that includes Sarah and Alice. [date]

Ellis: Do we have any idea as to how many persons are involved in the Fragmentation of an Entity?

Sarah: They say at least one thousand and then they reintegrate at different speeds.

Richard: They also made the statement that not all of the Fragments have to experience all of life.

Ellis: Then they reintegrate into the Entity and that is the total cycle. Then where do you go from there?

Sarah Chambers: Where Michael is.

Ellis: On the transcendental level?

Richard: Here again, I think that we are assuming too much.

Ellis: The next question that comes to me is, is this a process of growth and evolution and for what purpose or just indigenous or if that is so, why?

To ensure the continuous creative force is the only purpose we know. The entities no longer earth-bound experience lengthy periods on the high planes and at the end, reunite with the primeval force that is creation. Thus, the created becomes the creator and the cycle repeats itself ad infinitum. This is infinity.

Dick: If Eugene and I are part of the same Entity, whose perception does the reunited Entity have?

The whole becomes the sum of the parts.

Gene: Do we then lose our individual perceptions?

You will lose your individual perceptions long before you become a mid Causal teacher. [date]

Gene: Remarked that he felt that he was probably already at least one hundred reintegrated Fragments.

Eugene is essentially correct. There are approximately twenty separate fragments of that entity extant on the Physical plane. All of you are composites of completed Monads.

Dick: How many Fragments are in my composite?

Approximately one hundred and fifty. All of you now have fragments that are a part of the mid Astral sequence.

Dick: Did I experience this polarity?

No.

Richard: I have past lives and so do the other Fragments. When you come together, do you remember the other lives of the other Fragments?

You do experience the flashes from all of the composite fragments. This is why Sarah is so confused right now.

Richard: Is this something like micro-Akashic records?

Yes, but you must remember that all of the fragments are not in the physical body at the same time. Georges Gurdjieff glimpsed this in part when he presented his theory of recurrence. [date]

Sarah Chambers: Can you tell us about the Astral plane and its levels?

The first level of the Astral plane is populated by living fragments adept at Astral travel and those souls who penetrate this plane accidentally through drugs. The second level of the Astral plane is inhabited by all those between [physical] bodies. The third level attracts Old Souls who are trying to burn final karma without being reborn.

The mid Astral bodies are partially reunited entities. You have manifested a mid Astral entity previously [Tomas]. The three higher levels are progressively integrated. Access to the high planes is through these levels. Even very high adepts such as Soleal have fantasies concerning the high planes. We have confronted him on the low Astral plane and have been required to descend a staircase that does not exist except in his mind.

Question: What is meant by the high planes?

By "high planes," we refer to the Causal [plane] and beyond [Mental plane, Messianic plane, Buddhaic plane].

Eugene Trout: From the first time a Fragment is made, this [Role] carries on. If I'm 150 Fragments at this point (in time), that means there are 150 Roles. Could they comment on this? Do we assimilate these? Is there a dominant role?

The Fragments as they integrate assume the dominant personality. The strong experiential thread persists.
[date]

I was David Hume. Was anyone else David Hume?

When you were David, there were approximately forty integrated Fragments. But to answer your real question, no, there is no one else alive. [date]

Am I acquainted with any of the Fragments of my Entity?

You have been acquainted with Fragments before. They are integrating. One person you know now is part of your larger Entity — a teacher at school.

How many Fragments are united in me?

CH's Entity consisted of five hundred Priests, four hundred Sages and one hundred Kings.

Richard: How many Fragments are united in me?

In you, there are now one hundred and thirty five fragments.

Dick: Am I correct in assuming in my Role I have lived 5,000 previous lives? (One hundred fifty Fragments, each Fifth Level Old soul = 4,800 lives.)

This is not completely valid. The dominant Fragment, in other words, the thread that is still drawn to the Physical Plane, remembers only those lives that pertained to it exclusively. It only has indirect access to the integrated fragments [of its Entity].

Dick: Does the dominant Fragment have indirect access to my previous lives?

The integrated Fragments of your entity, which are a part of the low Astral body, have a tremendous pull on you. It is almost as though they are calling you home. You are right though, R____, it will be curtains for those who integrate. The others will continue as long as they are earthbound by karmic ribbons and have incomplete Monads.

Dick: Who will be the dominant Fragment between Phyllis, Eugene Trout and me?

This will depend on the evolution. Right now, it would appear that Eugene has a few more incomplete [Monad]s. The Fragments you hold in common with Eugene and Phyllis are the same. These Fragments did not fall by the wayside. They experienced all of life.

Dick: You mean my 150 Fragments are the same as Phyllis's and Eugene Trout's?

That is valid.

Dick: How can I have the same Fragments as Eugene Trout and Phyllis?

The strength comes from those Fragments that have already integrated and are no longer subjected to karma. You are a part of this Entity, not separate from it, but there is now a partition between you and those Fragments available, so to speak. It is up to you whether [or not] you can draw upon the conglomerate knowledge. You must first be able to perceive that a large part of your time is now being spent off the Physical Plane, and this time grows longer as more and more of the original Entity becomes integrated. The pull is almost irresistible now. More than half of the allotted sleep you now spend on the Astral Plane; Phyllis too.

Dick: Are 150 Fragments incarnate in me on this Physical Plane?

No. There are more than one hundred Fragments integrated [on the Astral Plane]. It really amounts to the same thing. R____, stop thinking of the Astral Plane as 'up there'; it is 'down there' — reach out and touch it.

Dick: Is my incarnate soul a single Fragment?

In your physical body, there is a single dominant thread, but you must understand that you are no longer separated from your integrated Fragments. They are very much a part of you. When the Entity first Fragments and all of it is on the Physical Plane, there is wide separation, then there is progressive integration. All of the

Fragments still incarnate have the pull exerted on them by their Astral Fragments. There is no “real” separation, merely a physical barrier that is easily scaled.

Dick: 150 Fragments are on the Astral Plane then. (The body is a container working on its karma.) Eugene Trout, PJ and I are sharing the 150 Astral Fragments.

That is valid.

Dick: Who would be the dominant Fragment if Eugene Trout, PJ and I are united?

It will be a Fragment that has not experienced all of life.

Dick: That spoils my concept. Then the Schlitz beer ads are correct: one time around. This destroys my concept of the continuation of that consciousness of which I am aware. After that, I would be united with my Entity and would no longer be conscious of self as I now know it.

That is invalid. The whole is the sum of the parts. We have no dominant Fragments. We are an Entity-integrated whole. There is no sense of loss, wistfulness, poignancy or what have you. The loss is perceived only on the Physical Plane. Now we are whole. Before, we were split apart and therefore had less than total. There is still evolution in store for us. Although we apprehend this, we still do not see it as it will be when this occurs. Right now, you feel that the loss of the individuality will be felt as pain. This is not true. The individuality is painful, not the integration. [date]

AD: Roles are in essence, not changeable. What are roles on higher astral plane, if any?

The Roles are, of course, retained on the low Astral plane, where the souls remain separate. As the integration begins to take place, the Roles become more and more blurred, until they are dissolved, or better yet, resolved, on the high Astral plane. They are not transcended here, but the memory of them is retained. If you like, you can compare it to a racial mixture which eventually leads to assimilation. Your observation is valid except for the judgment about it. There is a great difference in the power, but it cannot always be equated with a higher spiritual being. [date]





① FRICTION

This chapter is the product of a search for the word friction in the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group channeling sessions. This word does not represent a significant component of the Michaelian teachings. However, there are good reasons to discuss the subject in this *Study Papers* book: 1) the subject came up numerous times during the original Michaelian group; 2) some interesting things were said about the subject; 3) the subject is related to a number of other components of the Michaelian teachings that are considered to be significant; 4) students can presumably benefit from having the mentions conveniently collected and commented all in one place; 5) friction is unavoidable in our lives; it is pervasive in human psychology and sociology and spirituality — subjects covered extensively in this book — so it behooves us to have a working knowledge of it.

About a dozen times in the original Michaelian group transcriptions, the word Friction is used. One could guess what it probably means by its usage in the common vernacular and the context in which it is used in the transcriptions, but it is never actually defined in the transcriptions. As it turns out, it did not need to be defined because this is a term and concept in the original Michaelian group — one among many — that was adopted and adapted from the Gurdjieffian teaching, one of the spiritual teachings that some of the original Michaelian group founding members were familiar with. For an introduction to the general subject of the Gurdjieffian teachings and the involvement of founding original Michaelian group members with it, refer to the chapter “Gurdjieff, Ouspensky, Collin, Burton”. The term has a particular meaning apart from the common vernacular, and because of this specific meaning in the context of the Gurdjieffian teachings and the Michaelian teachings, it is on the jargon list, and therefore capitalized.

Even though the Michaels used the term Friction on numerous occasions during the original Michaelian group, Yarbro did not mention [\[verify\]](#) it in her book about the original Michaelian group, *Messages from Michael*, perhaps because, near as I can tell, Yarbro was not familiar with the Gurdjieffian teachings. The Michaels have not used it in subsequent groups so far as I have been able to determine, perhaps because subsequent groups have not been familiar with Gurdjieffian teachings. Therefore, the term, and even the concept referred to by the term, has not become common knowledge in the Michaelian teachings community subsequent to the original Michaelian group. Nevertheless, I believe Gurdjieff’s psychological insights are worth discussing, the subject of Friction being one of them. I also believe that it is worthwhile to make the historical record of the original Michaelian group reasonably complete.

So far as both Gurdjieff and the Michaels were concerned, Friction is the word that applies to any experience — internal or external — that can be consciously and intentionally used as catalyst for psychotherapeutic and/or spiritual growth. Friction is whatever happens, inside or outside, that gets the Mechanical Man upset enough that he wants to make changes for the better in his life and consciousness. Experiences are labeled Friction if they make one aware of issues that need to be addressed. Friction is a “wake-up call”, or anything that “rubs one the wrong way”, or is outside one’s “comfort zone” — to use common pop-psychology terminology. Friction has commonly been addressed by various psychotherapeutic tools in societies and cultures from, I suppose, prehistory to now. The Gurdjieffian and Michaelian teachings have their own psychotherapeutic tools for dealing effectively with Friction.

First we will look at some of what the Gurdjieffian teachings has to say about Friction, then we will take a look at what the original Michaelian group transcriptions say about the subject.

Friction Per Gurdjieff

Georges Gurdjieff taught that a person does not have an immortal soul; one must create it via struggle, and the struggle in general was called The Work. Another one of Gurdjieff’s descriptive words for this struggle/work was Friction.

The following quote is from one of Gurdjieff's pupils, Peter Ouspensky, who quoted a lecture given by Gurdjieff:

Fusion, inner unity, is obtained by means of "friction", by the struggle between 'yes' and 'no' in man. If a man lives without inner struggle, if everything happens in him without opposition, if he goes wherever he is drawn or wherever the wind blows, he will remain such as he is [— unchanged]. But if a struggle begins in him, and particularly if there is a definite line [between yes and no] in this struggle, then, gradually, permanent traits begin to form themselves; he begins to "crystallize". [P. D. Ouspensky, *In Search of the Miraculous*, p. 32]

On the subject of Friction, Ouspensky himself had the following to say in some of his lectures:

The moment one starts working — trying to remember oneself, trying not to identify, to remember the system — at once friction begins. Friction creates energy. If things are easy, there is no friction. But if you put spokes in the wheel of Mechanicalness, this creates friction, which creates energy. [P. D. Ouspensky, *The Fourth Way*, p. 254]

... where there is friction [opportunities for training will always present if you can find them]. But that depends on what you want — on whether you want friction, on your decision, your state, and your position. In the Work every moment one has to overcome laziness, inertia, wanting to stop. If one does not work there is nothing to overcome, but if one works at anything one always has to overcome one's desire to stop working... Anything is friction if you do it. But it is not enough merely to think about it. Only by friction can you create energy and develop will. ... Work means friction, conflict between "yes" and "no", between the part that wishes to Work and the part that does not wish to Work. There are many parts of us that do not wish to Work, so the moment you begin to Work, friction starts. If I decide to do something and a part of me does not wish to do it, I must insist as much as I am able, on carrying out my decision. But as soon as Work stops, friction stops. [P. D. Ouspensky, *The Fourth Way*, p. 259]

Some habits are quite ordinary and harmless, but if you begin to [intentionally] put obstacles in their way it will give you good material for self-observation, and you will be able to distinguish identification when it enters. This struggle introduces friction, and without friction you would not notice yourself, you would live as though in a thick fog, without noticing it. But the second step depends on your decision — you can only be simply irritated by this friction, or you can [choose to] use it [as catalyst to change]. [P. D. Ouspensky, *The Fourth Way*, p. 315]

The word "Work" in these quotations is capitalized because it had a specific meaning in the Gurdjieffian teachings, referring as it did to practices that allegedly fostered spiritual growth. The concept was to some extent adopted and adapted in the original Michaelian group, so refer to the chapter on that subject.

In those four references, Ouspensky only mentions internal Friction, between conflicted factions of the Personality self. Elsewhere there is a lot of talk in the Gurdjieffian teachings about the many "I"s — sub-personalities — that make the typical person indecisive and inconsistent. As internal Friction is dealt with effectively, the person becomes unified in their consciousness.

However, an expositor of the Gurdjieffian teachings had this to say regarding Friction *between* Personalities:

The tasks assigned to the students were invariably concerned with the actual functioning of the school: gardening, cooking, house-cleaning, taking care of animals, milking, making butter; and these tasks were almost always group activities. As I learned later, the group work was considered to be of real importance: different personalities, working together, produced subjective, human conflicts; human conflicts produced friction; friction revealed characteristics which, if observed, could reveal "self". One of the many aims of the school was "to see yourself as others saw you"; to see oneself, as it were, from a distance; to be able to criticize that self objectively; but, at first, simply to see it. An exercise that was intended to be performed all the time, during whatever physical activity, was called "self-observation" or "opposing I to it" — "I" being the (potential consciousness), "it" the body, the instrument. [www.american-buddha.com/boyhood.gurdjieff2.htm]

There is much more to the Gurdjieffian teachings on the spiritual path than what is said above about Friction, but a summary of it is this: Friction provokes soul-searching; soul-searching provokes choices; choices develop a unified physical consciousness which crystallizes into a permanent spiritual consciousness that survives the death of the physical body.

With that foundation in the Gurdjieffian teachings laid, let us build on it with the Michaelian teachings. Now that we know what Gurdjieff taught about Friction, we understand what members of the original Michaelian group understood about it. In this section we examine each of the dozen or so occurrences of the word in chronological order as they appeared in the original Michaelian group transcriptions.

Friction per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

The following extracts from original Michaelian group transcriptions are Q&A exchanges, where an original Michaelian group member asks a question (or makes a comment), and the Michaels provide an answer. These extracts are [not] presented in the chronological order in which they were given. As is my custom, I usually provide some explanatory comments following the question or answer. Underlined words are my emphasis, to draw attention to what it is that I comment on. Sometimes I embed words or phrases [in brackets] that I believe help to clarify the question or the answer. Numerous study papers related to this chapter are to be found among my comments.

The first mention of Friction showed up in the original Michaelian group transcriptions even before Michael showed up. It was channeled from a spiritually adept student of Michael from another planet, Soleal. It was in a session for which we do not have the complete and dated transcript:

I think a sense of responsibility toward your job is essential. Don't you have a sense of responsibility toward your job?

Oh yes, I certainly do. I just do not worry about it. It takes skill to separate [distinguish between responsibility and worry]. That is your Friction, to learn to take the action necessary with calm detachment. [early 1973]

Underlined words in this and other quotations are my emphasis, to call attention to key concepts.

When one experiences Friction, one is presented with an opportunity to learn something. Anyone who has ever had a job knows that employment offers many opportunities to experience Friction. Any person who is on a self-aware psychotherapeutic or spiritual path can use the Friction as impetus or catalyst to make wise choices that minimize the Friction. At the minimized Friction there is calm detachment, without worry, that still gets the job done. This is a “skill” that can be learned, and the Michaelian teachings is full of information to facilitate this skill.

The next mention of Friction is also from a Soleal session, and involves another common source of Friction besides employment, namely *imprinting*:

Richard: I am trying to work on my bad tapes and get rid of them, and I have a strong feeling when these impulses are coming in on the board and we're going over certain words, I get a different register than I get when we're going over other words, and I seem to correlate the one group of words with the bad tapes. Are you helping me work on the bad tapes in that way?

Not to my knowledge. You may be picking up on core words that have special meaning to you. If this can be of help to you, if you can be conscious to it [sic]. Whenever you ask a question, there is much hesitation because you have so many auxiliary readings going. To separate is as I told you already, your major part of Friction. [03 July 1973]

The “bad tapes” mentioned here are experiences imprinted in the Bio-computer subsequent to birth, that influence a person inappropriately, causing Friction. The mitigation of the Friction then is obviously to consciously, intentionally erase the tapes, so to speak.

Some Frictions can be catalysts for growth, and others, not so much:

Should I keep the Capri [automobile]?

The Capri is a worthless piece of junk, but it is providing you with some beautiful Friction. Yes, scrap it. [04 September 1973]

There is a tendency of the Personality to get attached to its Friction because in some perverse way it finds the Friction seductive or appealing or attractive — “beautiful”. In this passage, the Michaels advise to “scrap” whatever Friction cannot be used for growth because of the attachment trap. This implies that one has better things to do than be distracted or held back by unnecessary Friction. There is “skill” in discerning what Friction is worthless and what is not. This passage is reminiscent of the so-called *serenity prayer*: “God, grant me the courage to change the things I can, the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, and the wisdom to know the difference.” A student of the Michaelian teachings might substitute “Essence” for “God”.

Friction inevitably appears whenever one applies psychotherapeutic and/or spiritual tools. Sometimes, growth automatically rubs the body and the personality the wrong way:

It is not necessary to be physically inactive in order to grow. It is necessary to meditate and be inactive for periods of time, but not all day every day. The Work brings about Frictions and growths like new grass in the forest after a rain. [20 November 1973]

The advice here is to take care of both one's physical and spiritual aspects in a balanced proportion. Otherwise, the neglected side of one's life will experience Friction.

Not only the mind and the spirit, but Body Type figures into the Friction equation. In the next appearance of Friction in the transcriptions, a specific type of Friction, procrastination, was mentioned as common for a certain Body Type, and for some of the Roles:

Question about procrastination.

This is usually the major part of Friction for Saturnine [Body Type] individuals and also with all but Priests, Slaves, Warriors, and Kings. They cannot procrastinate, as it goes against their Essence more than other Roles. Scholars, Sages, and Artisans do not hesitate to put off things indefinitely, in hopes that some miraculous solution will suddenly appear all by itself, and then this Saturnine creature can just sit back and wait for the [gear] wheels of the gods to grind. [14 December 1973]

When the environment — the flow of events in the universe — makes it clear that something should be done in a timely manner, and it does not get done, then there is Friction. Although the passage says nothing about it, Cardinal Fragments (Sage, Priest, King) tend to have an *I'm OK you're not OK* worldview, which means their Friction is more likely to be with others and the environment than within themselves. On the other hand, Ordinal Fragments (Warrior, Server, Artisan) tend to have a *You're OK I'm not OK* worldview, which means their Friction is more likely to be within themselves.

The next mention of Friction in the original Michaelian group transcriptions is that between Roles:

Dick: I would like to ask for a comment on my hatred for Dominant Warriors, and anything on the synthesis for acceptance and fears.

This would represent a major part of Friction for you, as you see in them all those traits you endeavor to eradicate from your own life. Only by understanding that Warriors in the earlier cycles are pretty much a victim of their karmic ribbons — and will be until they meet with a teaching — then you can apply the same principle of unconditional acceptance that you must with all others in perceiving the synthesis. This acceptance is imperative. [03 January 1974]

The part about “you see in them all the traits you endeavor to eradicate from your life” is called *projection* in psychotherapy, and the Jungian answer to it is called *shadow work*. Michael seems to endorse this. The use of the word “hatred” here indicates something more than a petty annoyance. This strong a reaction is surely a red flag that something is seriously amiss. The resolution to this kind of Friction with another person is the same as all other kinds, unconditional acceptance. “Unconditional” refers to the neutral place that is the gestalt, or “synthesis” of the negative and positive poles of a phenomenon. Neutralize the hatred with love. In other words, *integrate the experience*. This is an “imperative”, or necessary endeavor, for all those in a spiritual teaching.

The next mention of Friction came a month after the one quoted above, and again uses the word *synthesis* as the way to ameliorate it:

Betty: Some of the nurses make me so mad. How can synthesis help me feeling this way about some of them?

[She] is in Rejection; also is a Cynic. This will take much work for you, and is there for Friction. [03 February 1974]

Some people are so obnoxious that it is truly a major challenge to integrate the entire experience into a profound understanding and thus neutralize the Friction.

The next mention of Friction is in the context of contrast between the Gurdjieffian teachings and the Michaelian teachings:

Gurdjieff was organized and was not haphazard, and Michael says the only thing valid [in his cosmology] was the Centers and a life beyond the physical ...

[Soleal:] At great risk of developing some real Friction, I offer this, in part my own, in part the Teaching, not yet inseparable.

Then Soleal described the Friction that the original Michaelian group members would face if they continued on the spiritual path, any spiritual path, but especially if they started a commune: privacy issues, trust issues, acceptance issues, control issues, needs issues, organizational issues, financial issues, and so on. Then he said:

[Soleal:] It is sometimes difficult and sometimes disheartening, but in the long run, rewarding beyond words. [18 February 1974]

Confronting Friction then is sometimes very much in the realm of delayed gratification. Not every step of the journey is always rewarding. Therefore, it is best to be farsighted when stepping upon the spiritual path.

In the next mention of the term, we see that one of the tools for managing Friction is meditation:

Mallory: Would a silent mantra help?

It can, or you can use the one you have now, except that this [current one] does produce some Friction with you and that needs to be resolved. "Never changing, ever flowing, eternally the Tao" works for some. [20 February 1974]

It is best to resolve the Frictions one has now than ignore or repress them and go on to other sources of Friction. The mantra proposed appears to be one that might resolve this person's Friction.

The term *Friction* next appears again in the context of communal living:

Many of you came to this because of the Friction in your lives, seeking a method of handling this and still staying above ground emotionally, and toward this end, some of you have made much progress. [24 February 1974]

There is Friction aplenty in the typical living arrangements in our culture, and it is Good Work to resolve those Frictions before embarking on the Frictions that one will surely encounter in a commune. Communal living might be an escape from some Frictions that are inherent in the culture at large, but it can also be the source of other Frictions. Ultimately, there is no avoiding Friction by changing living arrangements because many of the issues go with the person who has them, independent of circumstances and situations. The only way *out* is *through* — one must be transformed.

There is usually Friction in any new situation, not just starting a commune, and with any new people who come into one's life:

Are new students helpful because they bring new questions?

Each new student who approaches this teaching in a serious vein brings new questions that would otherwise go unasked. This is good. The constant ebb and flow of students causes consternation and provides Friction for some students, but these [new students] are welcome to our private help any time [if group members are not so inclined to help]. [27 March 1974]

The word *consternation* of course refers to an unpleasant, negative experience. The goal of a psychotherapeutic path is to turn this into a positive, growth-provoking experience, and then it is properly labeled as *Friction*. In the pop-psychology vernacular, this is "turning lemons into lemonade."

Some people go *along* with the cultural norm and do or do not feel Friction, whereas others go *against* the cultural norm and do or do not feel Friction:

Is the work ethic a carry-over from a past life?

We would see it as one of the most tenacious barriers you must scale.... We feel, however, that you should discharge your obligations made in good faith, whether or not the respondents are in the teaching or not. Whoever is beyond this, we see no real obligations. We would see you pursuing some form of relaxation every day, even though this may at first seem like work for you.... Just resting is all right, also. The penchant to "do" is part of Friction for the Ordinal Roles [that they would do well to let go of]. [27 March 1974]

The Ordinal Roles are Warrior, Slave/Server, and Artisan. Typically, they are not content to just relax and "be"; they feel they earn their worth by doing things that make a contribution to the greater good, even at their own expense. The Cardinal Roles, Sage, Priest, and King, have more self-worth inherent, are less willing to sacrifice their well being for the greater good, and have a greater natural ability to just *be*. The balanced approach is to both *do* and *be* in moderation and proportion, whatever one's Role.

As part of the preparation for living communally, the original Michaelian group members spent some long weekends together. Of course this brought up some issues:

We shared a discussion about a weekend full of Friction.

Friction such as this always forces one to objectively assess one's inner progress in a situation such as this one provided at the end of the week. One is also forced to see the contrast.... Then the progress can be seen with far more clarity than if one goes on in the same old rut. [03 April 1974]

One of the reasons for reflecting on one's level and type of Friction is to note the mile-marker, so to speak, of one's progress on a psychotherapeutic path. It was Good Work that they collectively discussed the Friction. There is a time to experience Friction, and a time to reflect on it, to extract as much progress as one can.

Speaking of Friction among group members, the next mention of the word was this:

Dick: What are we going to do with the group being so loose?

You can use this for Friction [and thereby grow toward Agape] or you can successfully eliminate it altogether by going to smaller sessions only. [14 April 1974]

The group continued to increase in size — and presumably looseness — for about another year, and this of course increased the Friction. The excessive Friction eventually caused the group to overheat. The large group

was disbanded, and they went to the smaller, core group sessions for another three years. So far as we know, this seemed to be the happy medium, a Goldilocks zone of not too much and not too little Friction. The point here is to manage one's amount of Friction, as much as possible, so that it can be assimilated most efficiently.

Besides group interactions, family interactions can be another source of Friction, of course:

Mallory: Do I have bad karma with [my son]? Why do I have such clashes with him?

The Friction is caused by clashing Overleaves. [30 May 1974]

The Overleaves, except for the Neutral Overleaves, have Cardinal and Ordinal attributes, and they have Positive and Negative Poles. This oppositeness makes for clashes (if not dealt with in a psychotherapeutic way) or Friction (if dealt with in a psychotherapeutic way). Integrating the opposites in one's consciousness neutralizes the Friction. Or, to say this another way, one can use the Friction between polarized Overleaves and Poles of Overleaves to grow out of one's narrow identity. Refer to the chapter "Abrading Overleaves" for some elaboration.

It is one thing to experience Friction with others; it is another thing to experience Friction within oneself:

Ted: I have no personal goal at this time. What could be a meaningful one for me now?

Since it [the lack of a goal] is the primary point of Friction for you now, why not attempt the transition into growth? We would suggest for you [the] concentration [exercise]. [24 September 1974]

Depending on one's interpretation, one can be comfortable with the feeling of being stagnant, or one can be uncomfortable with it. In the latter case one can use the Friction as a catalyst for change. The recommendation here to do the concentration exercise is probably applicable to all students. This means focus on the problem, whatever it is, until you make a breakthrough; don't deny it or ignore it or repress it.

Sometimes it is useful to intentionally put oneself in a situation where Friction is inevitable. The spiritual school or commune is one such situation. The key to success in this situation is to manage the level of Friction — to keep it constructive rather than destructive considering the level of consciousness — aka psychological/spiritual maturity — of the people involved, and to apply the tools that effectively transmute Friction into progress:

This group engaged in a lengthy discussion of communal living, discipline of small children, the rights of teenagers, and the problem of domestic animals. We then asked the Teacher for a comment.

The whole purpose of bringing you together communally was not to present you with insurmountable situations and more Friction than you can handle. The purpose instead was to bring you together in the Work. The most startling advantage of all would not be apparent until you were well into the venture and had some experience in dealing with a lack of alienation.... Students must learn to realistically look at the amount of Friction caused by their reactions... Students in a communal situation must learn that, if the responsibility for the Friction becomes communal, it will not be allowed to violate the inner spaces. We have no quarrel with firm, loving disciplinary measures issued by the most competent student [toward the less competent]. This would eliminate much of the Friction. Looking at the Overleaves should be extensively used in determining who would be most effective in the various Friction-fraught areas... [12 February 1975]

Presumably, in a commune, there will be advanced Students who can help the less advanced students transmute their Friction better than they would if they were on their own. From other passages, we know that to "eliminate" Friction is not to deny or repress or avoid it, but to be transformed by it. It would be a mistake to believe that living in a commune, even with other Students of the Michaelian teachings, results in less Friction.

There are situations where Friction is advantageous because of its potential byproducts. This is particularly true in communes where the participants are consciously engaged in learning from Friction:

It has been our experience that the most significant progress in the Work is always made by groups of dedicated committed students, together working toward the goal of Agape. This can only be done in any steady sense in a communal setting, in that there must be continuity, and there must be Overleaves that are incompatible for the Work to be continuous. Most in life choose to live with only those other souls whose Overleaves complement their own. [Dimensions! April 1975]

Creating a Frictionless commune will not help anyone's growth. It is the Friction that produces the shocks for growth. Jumping from one well-feathered nest into another produces no Friction. ... Exclusivity for the sole purpose of avoiding Friction is Bad Work and should not be sanctioned, especially by advanced Students.... None of you is unable to combat this "bullshit" should you choose to do so. Excluding a source of valuable Friction is just another excuse, the same as looking for the ideal land package that will gratify all the Instinctive Centers involved. [15 April 1975]

The above is the most explicit statement in the transcriptions of the role and use of Friction. To be dismissive of Friction as “bullshit” is simply not the right attitude for a student of the Michaelian teachings to take. To maintain “exclusivity” — separation of self from sources of catalytic Friction — is simply not Good Work. The student should take advantage of the opportunities that the universe provides, rather than avoid or deny them. My stipulation is that if the value of Friction for spiritual growth is a one-sided understanding between two people, it can still work, but it helps enormously if both parties are aware of the value and use of Friction.

The Philosophy of Friction

A brief review is appropriate here if the reader is to understand Friction in the context of other aspects of the Michaelian teachings. Both the Gurdjieff and Michaelian teachings are concerned with growth or development. This is said to consist of seven stages, three lower/*Ordinal–Personality*/psychotherapeutic stages, a middle/*Neutral/composite* stage, and three higher/*Cardinal–Essence*/spiritual-growth stages. Progress is made by integrating life experiences, which are often composed of Ordinal and Cardinal halves that when completed combine to form a *Monad*, a whole experience. Progress in the Ordinal stages is generally driven by discomfort with the current situation, so *Friction* is an appropriate term here. To use a common metaphor, one might say that in the Ordinal stages, the “stick” that drives progress is the norm. In the Cardinal stages, the “carrot” is the normal impetus to progress. The term *Friction* does not seem to apply so well to the carrot, but still there is a discomfort with the status quo. Both negative/Ordinal stick and positive/Cardinal carrot are catalyst for progress.

According to Gurdjieff, Friction is the “struggle” between *yes* (Cardinal) and *no* (Ordinal) in one’s sub-personalities, and the resolution of that struggle results in personal and spiritual growth. This is just one type of Friction, the internal type, but it makes Friction a subset of the concept of *Monads* in the Michaels’ cosmology. There is a lengthy chapter “Monads” but briefly, Monads are whole experiences that consist of Cardinal and Ordinal halves that are experienced separately. Some examples are: rich and poor, healthy and sick, strong and weak, smart and stupid. In Monads, when one has fully experienced both the Cardinal and Ordinal halves of the Monad, then the Monad is said to be complete, and thereby one’s consciousness is raised to the next higher level in a septenary of progression; one has learned another piece of all that life has to teach. Likewise, when a person resolves their internal Friction by getting above and beyond the struggle between competing sub-personalities, then they grow psychologically and spiritually.

There are two poles on the psychotherapeutic/spiritual path. At both poles there is no Friction. The Ordinal pole is when one is completely content to remain with the status quo and has not even started to progress on the path. This is the natural abode of Mechanical Man, ‘asleep at the wheel’ so to speak. The Cardinal pole is at the end of a very long process of vigilance in regard to Friction (and other catalyst for progress), when one sees and accepts reality exactly as it is without getting perturbed; in other words, when one has become Balanced Man, fully awake and aware. These two poles are comparable to the Negative and Positive Poles of the Goal of Stagnation, namely, –Inertia and +Suspension. One can also find a meaningful resonance with the Negative and Positive Poles of the Observation Mode, –Surveillance and +Clarity.

Whereas Gurdjieff said the immortal soul is created by struggle and work — Friction — the Michaels have a different view. They say each of us already has an immortal soul. Personality is said to be the Ordinal, mortal, pole of the human Monad, and Essence is said to be the Cardinal, immortal, pole of the human Monad. Unlike what Gurdjieff taught, Michael teaches that we therefore do not need to *create* the soul via work on self, but Essence can be *developed* by this work, the *spiritual* path. In the three Ordinal stages of the seven-stage process, Personality is developed by this work, and this is herein termed the psychotherapeutic path. Michael agrees with Gurdjieff that there are *decisions and choices* involved on both the psychotherapeutic and spiritual paths if we are to realize and actualize this alleged fact that the soul exists. Michael repurposed the word and the concept significantly.

There is the Friction that involves psychotherapeutics — development of the Personality component of the human Monad — and there is the catalyst that leads to spiritual growth — development of the Essence component of the human Monad. Friction is between the competing parts of the Personality or the Personality versus the environment, and catalyst is between Personality and Essence or Essence versus the environment. By nature, both the Personality and the Essence are hedonistic. That is, there is an innate bias in both of them to avoid suffering and seek pleasure. The Personality is on a hedonistic psychotherapeutic path, and the Essence is on a hedonistic spiritual path. The common hedonistic goal ultimately brings them together. When the Personality or the Essence experiences Friction or catalyst, it *decides by choice* to find a way to mitigate the suffering and/or seek the pleasure.

There is a type of Friction that was not alluded to in any of the quoted material. That is the Friction that occurs between Personality and Essence. In order to understand Friction, one must understand the subject of Personality and Essence as Gurdjieff and the Michaels presented it. That is the subject of another lengthy chapter, but here is a brief explanation: The human being has a Personality (physical, Ordinal) component and an Essence (spiritual, Cardinal) component. Together these make up the Monad that is the human being. In some spiritual teachings, this is referred to as the lower self and the higher self respectively. In all of these teachings, neither side of the Monad is complete without the other, and the goal of the teaching is to bring the two together into a harmonious and unified whole. Ultimately, the two are not in conflict, but before this ultimate truth of their compatibility is realized and actualized in the human life, there is Friction between Personality and Essence. The original Michaelian group transcriptions describe at length the situation of Essence *versus* Personality; the goal of the spiritual path is Essence *and* Personality, such that there is no Friction between them; the Monad is then complete.

The terms, Mechanical Man and Balanced Man and Personality and Essence — from the Gurdjieffian teachings and adopted in the Michaelian teachings — are explained in other chapters. The terms, Ordinality and Cardinality and Monads — from the Michaelian teachings — are also explained in other chapters.

Summary and Conclusion

There are, of course, situations that one should just extract oneself from if possible because no learning can be extracted from them, or the costs outweigh the benefits, or there is actually nothing that can be done, internally or externally, to transmute the problem. Realms where it is generally expedient to transmute Friction are: family, work, lovers, and friends — unless there is serious abuse involved. However, if one perceives that one has issues within oneself, or has issues with other people, or has issues with the situation at hand, then the first thing is to simply recognize or re-frame the *issue* as an *opportunity*. If there is a little voice inside one that says the problem is not reality itself, the problem is one's perception or interpretation of reality, then it is time to dig down to the root of the problem. There are Gurdjieffian and Michaelian tools for resolving Friction, listed as follows:

- **Photography.** That is Michael's term for what Gurdjieff called *self-observation*. This tool is hardly mentioned in this chapter, but it has its own chapter. Briefly, one makes progress on the path just by noticing that one has a problem or an issue. Seeing it for what it is automatically stops the problem, or at least (temporarily) gets one out of subjective consciousness and into objective consciousness. This tool is also called *disidentification*, and there is a chapter about that.
- **Choice.** Here again, this tool is hardly mentioned in this chapter, but it has its own chapter. Briefly, the next step after one notices that there is an issue, is to make a choice to not deny or repress or avoid the issue, but to face it head on, figure it out, get to the root of it, and do something about it.
- **Monadology.** This tool applies knowledge of the underlying psychodynamics of a certain kind of Friction to its transformation. This is where the issue consists of Cardinal and Ordinal phenomena, such as abrading Overleaves, or the projection of unresolved internal issues onto others. In this instance, the halves of the Monad can be reconciled and progress can be made by collapsing the polarity, otherwise known as integrating the source of the Friction. The subject of Monads has its own chapter.
- **Agape.** This is said to be the ultimate goal of the Michaelian teachings. It consists of giving up attachment to the differences. Instead, arrive at and maintain unconditional regard for everything. There is of course a chapter on this subject. You should just “kiss and make up” with whatever “pisses you off.”





FORGETTING AND REMEMBERING

This chapter is the product of a search for the words “forgetting” and “remembering” in the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group channeling sessions. This word does not represent a significant component of the Michaelian teachings. However, there are good reasons to discuss the subject in this *Study Papers* book: 1) the subject came up numerous times during the original Michaelian group; 2) students can presumably benefit from having the mentions conveniently collected all in one place; 3) some interesting things were said about the subject; 4) the subject is related to a number of other components of the Michaelian teachings that are considered to be significant; 5) This chapter is not as trivial as the title might suggest to you, considering that the concept has implications that go far beyond the psychological, into the realms of the philosophical and spiritual and theological.

The word “**template**” is not capitalized in this chapter or other chapters of this *Study Papers* book because it has no special meaning in the Michaelian teachings; it is not a Michaelian jargon word that needs a definition apart from its use in the common vernacular.

Definition of Forgetting and Remembering

So what is meant by **template**? The online Merriam Webster dictionary definition is:

Forgetting and Remembering per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

The following extracts from original Michaelian group transcriptions are Q&A exchanges, where an original Michaelian group member asks a question (or makes a comment), and the Michaels provide an answer. This **is [not]** a subject that would benefit by division into subcategories, as some subjects do. **These extracts are [not] presented in the chronological order in which they were given, even though this is not a subject where there was a development or evolution of a specific revelation of a facet of the Michaelian teachings, as was often the case with the original Michaelian group.** As is my custom, I often provide some explanatory comments following the question or answer. Underlined words are my emphasis, to draw attention to what it is that I comment on. Sometimes I embed words or phrases [in brackets] that I believe help to clarify the question or the answer.

Concluding Comments on Forgetting and Remembering

Hindu teaching about Brahman forgetting itself = creation of the universe.





⑥ FORGIVENESS

This chapter is the product of a search for the word forgive and its derivatives and synonyms in the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group channeling sessions. This word does not represent a significant component of the Michaelian teachings. However, there are good reasons to discuss the subject in this *Study Papers* book: 1) the subject came up numerous times during the original Michaelian group; 2) some interesting things were said about the subject; 3) the subject is related to a number of other components of the Michaelian teachings that are considered to be significant; 4) students can presumably benefit from having the mentions conveniently collected and commented all in one place; 5) issues of forgiveness are unavoidable; they are pervasive in human psychology and sociology and spirituality — subjects covered extensively in this book — so it behooves us to have a working knowledge of it.

The word forgiveness is not capitalized in this chapter or other chapters of this *Study Papers* book because it has no special meaning in the Michaelian teachings; it is not a Michaelian jargon word that needs a definition apart from its use in the common vernacular.

It might be a little surprising how often this word forgiveness shows up in the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group, considering that it has not appeared very many times in subsequent channeling sessions that we have record of. Precisely because it covers a subject that might otherwise have been ignored and forgotten, I regard it as useful and valuable to include this chapter, as with numerous other similar chapters on obscure topics in this *Study Papers* book. Doing so makes our understanding of the Michaelian teachings richer and more complete.

Basically and briefly, the Michaels informed the original Michaelian group members that forgiveness is a personal and social convention, invented by the Personality self to absolve feelings of guilt, or to excuse perceived offensive conduct by others. However, the Essence has quite a different view of right and wrong and what to do about it.

Definition of Forgiveness

So what is meant by forgiveness? The following definition and description was found on the internet:

What Is Forgiveness?

Psychologists generally define forgiveness as a conscious, deliberate decision to release feelings of resentment or vengeance toward a person or group who has harmed you, regardless of whether they actually deserve your forgiveness.

Just as important as defining what forgiveness is, though, is understanding what forgiveness is not. Experts who study or teach forgiveness make clear that when you forgive, you do not gloss over or deny the seriousness of an offense against you. Forgiveness does not mean forgetting, nor does it mean condoning or excusing offenses. Though forgiveness can help repair a damaged relationship, it doesn't obligate you to reconcile with the person who harmed you, or release them from legal accountability.

Instead, forgiveness brings the forgiver peace of mind and frees him or her from corrosive anger. While there is some debate over whether true forgiveness requires positive feelings toward the offender, experts agree that it at least involves letting go of deeply held negative feelings. In that way, it empowers you to recognize the pain you suffered without letting that pain define you, enabling you to heal and move on with your life.

While early research focused on forgiveness of others by individuals, new areas of research are starting to examine the benefits of group forgiveness and self-forgiveness.

[><https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/topic/forgiveness/definition>< — retrieved 12 November 2022]

This description is all well and good regarding the Personality level of the human experience, but, as we will see in the next section, the Michaels presented a rather different perspective regarding “forgiveness” at the Essence level as it relates to human experience.

Forgiveness per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

The following extracts from original Michaelian group transcriptions are Q&A exchanges, where an original Michaelian group member asks a question (or makes a comment), and the Michaels provide an answer. These extracts are presented in the chronological order in which they were given. As is my custom, I often provide some explanatory comments following the question or answer. Underlined words in the Michaels’ answers are my emphasis, to draw attention to what it is that I comment on. Sometimes I embed words or phrases [in brackets] that I believe help to clarify the question or the answer.

The first mention of forgiveness in the original Michaelian group transcriptions is found toward the end of a long series of Q&A exchanges about Karma: What creates it and what are we to do about it? (Refer to the chapter “Karma” for the whole story.)

Richard: Does Essence force False Personality to work off Karma?

No. It is merely that the Essence acknowledges the debt. Of course, most Karmic Ribbons are incurred by False Personality. Remember now, all of you, that all of the myriad little interpersonal crises you weather in a given lifetime are not [Karmic] Ribbons.

What makes a Karmic Ribbon?

Deliberate action: positive or negative, of course.

Ray: What is the criteria whether a Ribbon is formed or not?

If you communicated all of your expectations, the other soul understood all the options and took action on that basis, then a [positive?] Ribbon probably [doesn’t?] exists.

The two words in separate brackets are my attempts to make sense of this statement: strike out one or the other. Proper communication and appropriate response should not result in a *negative* Karmic Ribbon, but I can see how it could result in a *positive* Karmic Ribbon. Positive and negative Karma are discussed further on.

Most interpersonal crises revolve around unfulfilled expectations and do not involve Karma of a substantial sort. Neglect of very young children constitutes Karma; breaking engagements does not.

Refer to the chapter “Expectations” for more discussion of that subject. Basically and briefly, if you have *no expectations* of others about how they supposedly “should” behave toward you, then you avoid hurt feelings or other negative reactions. In that case, there is no need for ‘forgiveness’ or anything like that.

We wish to clarify this further in a broader sort for everyone’s benefit.

Hostile actions such as murder, armed robbery, kidnapping, abandonment, embezzlement of large sums of money, leaving other souls destitute, all incur debts that must be paid. Humanitarian acts, great courage in the face of overwhelming adversity, acts of public altruism, all incur Karma of a positive sort. This can be as simple as a man helping another to start a small business to a millionaire giving his entire fortune to a research organization. Fits of pique do not incur Karma. You can yell and scream yourself blue in the face and not incur Karma. You can have the nastiest temper on the planet and still not incur Karma, unless you hurt someone in your rages. Emotional pain is self-inflicted and incurs no Karma.

Not everyone is mature enough to realize that “sticks and stones may break my bones but words can never hurt me”, so they feel hurt when negativity it is directed at them. Sometimes the right thing to do, after you get over your nasty temper tantrum, is apologize, for the sake of social harmony, closing the loop of “clearing the air”. An apology does not include asking for forgiveness; it is up to the other person to offer that in response to the apology, if it is a part of their belief and value and behavior system to do so.

Cheryl: Do you need to acknowledge all Karma before you can become conscious?

That is valid....

Nichols: I would like to ask what “acknowledgment” means in Cheryl’s comment. Does acknowledgment have to be in life?

Cynthia: It [acknowledgment] is the teachings of Jesus, complete forgiveness, accepting it [forgiveness] even if you do not know what for.

You must somehow petition for this [acknowledgment]; otherwise, there is no communication.

After all that run-up, we now get to the word “forgiveness”. As this chapter progresses, we will see more indications that, obviously, people have different ideas about what misbehavior is, about what acknowledgment is, and about what forgiveness means. They might be religious or they might be secular, so we must take account of that in our “communications” with them. Offering forgiveness and accepting forgiveness might or might not be appropriate with any specific person regarding any specific situation.

By “petition”, in the context of the mention of Jesus, I take this to refer to Biblical statements along the lines of “Confess your sins one to another” and other statements about asking and giving and receiving forgiveness: refer to ><https://www.openbible.info/topics/forgiveness>< for many Biblical quotations on the subject.

Nichols: If I have a falling out with someone, and can see and can accept the reality and forgive him but he does not accept me, is there Karma still there?

Then the communication has been incomplete and you may still find yourself facing the business end of a shotgun. One needs only to be aware that there is a Ribbon, but for full understanding and acknowledgment, both must know. [20 February 1974]

Refer to the chapters “Karma” and “Communication” for more complete discussions of those subjects. Basically and briefly, stupid, ignorant, foolish incarnate Fragments make mistakes. In terms of human legal systems, there are “crimes” and there are “misdemeanors”: Karma is like a crime and an “interpersonal crisis” and a “falling out” are like misdemeanors. The incarnate Personality selves do well to “forgive and forget” ‘misdemeanors’ if they can, by means of “acknowledgment” and by means of “communication”. However, resolving Karmic ‘crimes’ must be handled at a higher level, by the Essence selves; the Essence self is not as limited by stupidity and ignorance and foolishness as the Personality self is.

The discussion about Karma continued in another session later that month, and again the notion of forgiveness was a part of the conversation:

Dick: Why not wait until you are on the Astral level to study it [Karma] objectively? Why study while on the subjective, life level? If you are dispassionate, you are in no position to do anything. Why start while you’re here?

Many souls choose this as a method of accelerating.

Alice: We have to experience living while on the Physical Plane, don’t we?

That is valid. During the Astral [Plane] interval [between incarnations], the study is retrospective and unchangeable. Here [on the Physical Plane] you have the opportunity to change right up until the last breath is drawn [at the time of death].

Dick: The concept smacks of Christian forgiveness of sins. It has the same flavor.

There must be a perception behind the words. However, the words have been muttered many times in meaningless context because they were literally ‘blowing in the wind’ and addressed to forces completely detached and unable to even answer. In order to have this concept [of forgiveness] made valid, the situation must be apprehended, and the plea addressed to the correct source. [27 February 1974]

Refer to the chapter “Acceleration” for more about that subject. Even though the Personality self cannot usually resolve Karmic ‘crimes’ because it is not evolved enough to do so, it facilitates the process of spiritual growth for the Personality self to know about and acknowledge the difference between ‘crimes’ that it cannot resolve on its own and ‘misdemeanors’ that it can resolve on its own. Basically and briefly, ‘crimes’ and ‘misdemeanors’ are to be resolved at the level where they are truly and fully “perceived”, “apprehended”, and “acknowledged”, whether by the Personality self or by the Essence self.

Richard: My “work ethic” gets in my way. My boss was supposed to be there in the afternoon to receive a call, but had gone sailing. I got “revenge” by calling him that evening at 9:00.

Cynthia: That’s hard on the Agape.

We would speak of Agape in this context, thanks to Cynthia. Agape sometimes means only not appointing yourself as judge and jury. Agape also always means forgetting. Notice that we did not say “forgive”; this is beyond you and is far too abstract. We said “forget”, and this means quite literally “the end”. It does not mean crawling away to lick your wounds and to plan a counter-attack; it means forgetting once and for all. The concept of Agape does not mean [a required] proximity [to the other person]. In practice, it often can be more easily applied when one moves away from the immediate cause of the hostility. [17 April 1974]

This is probably the key passage in this chapter on the subject of “forgiveness”, and the key is to “not appoint yourself as judge and jury” about what other people do (or about what yourself does). When you perceive yourself as having been “wronged” (or yourself as having done wrong), just forget about it.

Sometimes it helps to remove yourself from the proximity of the wrongdoer. Refer to the chapter “Agape” for more discussion of that topic. Basically and briefly, true Agape does not even perceive that an infraction has occurred, let alone that it needs to be “forgiven”. For those of us who have not achieved perfect Agape, then forgiveness procedures (acknowledgment, communication) as described previously often makes sense, when done with sincerity and sensitivity.

Does it help to forgive those who owe us [Karma]?

Forgiveness is a gratuitous, empty term. Forget, yes, that is valid. Remember, then look at it, and then forget it.

Does this help in having others forget the debts? This attitude would encourage those to forget their debts.

Sometimes it does, especially if they are also in contact with a teaching or in a sufficient space to hear the words. [30 May 1974]

The function of Karma is to learn lessons. If the lesson of a particular Karmic event can actually be learned without the repayment of the debt, then so much the better. It might be possible for spiritually mature people to “forgive and forget” Karma during incarnation, but my suggestion is that that does not necessarily mean that the Karmic Ribbon is burned; the means of repayment, or forgiveness, is for two Fragments between lifetimes to determine and negotiate.

I guess that pretty much put to rest the discussion of forgiveness, because the next mention of forgiveness came two and a half years later:

We talked about “forgiveness” ...

This is a very transcendental notion, of course, and involves negating the Physical Plane. Of course, if the Essence forgives, then the “hatchet” is buried because the Essence does not feel the transition between the planes as death.

In a limited sense, it is possible to function on the Physical Plane in Essence. Survival is the goal of the Personality and this is directly opposed to the goal of the Essence, which is ecstasy. The Personality cannot forgive, because in doing so, it exposes its Achilles heel to anti-survival thrusts. For instance, hostility must be met with the back to the wall if survival is to be assured. The other, especially if he be more powerful, must be the first to concede. Then a certain pseudo forgiveness takes place. [21 November 1976]

On the Physical Plane, where one of the games is called “survival of the fittest” (or strongest), it is not safe to “forgive and forget” someone who has seriously wronged you and who is not inclined to back down or change. It is healthy to be wary of, and/or defend yourself against, and/or remove yourself from the vicinity of, harmful, hurtful people. This includes the avoidance of people who are spiritually, intellectually, and emotionally abusive, not just those who are physically abusive. Don’t kid yourself that you the Personality self are such a spiritual giant that you can tolerate severe mistreatment of any kind by a sociopath. In terms of the transcendental meaning of the word forgiveness, the Essence self can do it but the Personality self cannot; refer to the chapter “Essence and Personality”. The Personality self can only do “pseudo forgiveness” toward a repentant abuser.

And then another year went by before the subject of forgiveness surfaced again:

Dick would like a comment on his observation of himself finding it more difficult to forgive people having more powerful Overleaves than his own.

The absolving oneself of all guilt is, of course, the first step toward understanding the ability of those in Exalted Overleaves to absolve others of the responsibility that they themselves can then willingly shoulder. This concept is no different than that espoused by Werner Erhard, only it is expressed in religious terminology and, therefore by definition, becomes obscure and difficult to absorb; or, at least, one gets the illusion of difficulty from the semantic problems. Forgiveness is really no more than the utter willingness to accept responsibility for one’s own life, and this is why it is so difficult for those in Ordinal Roles when their own existences seem so pale beside the more Exalted Roles. In truth, the Exalted Roles are more able to take the responsibility. Of course, they are. It is easy to take responsibility in the Power Mode, and a King finds it easy to excuse the behavior of a Slave. However, it is far from impossible for those in Ordinal Roles to go through the process of learning to take responsibility for their wins as well as their losses. [03 September 1977]

Refer to the chapter “EST” for more about Werner Erhard. Refer to the chapter “Guilt” for more discussion of the relationship of the concept of forgiveness to the concept of guilt. Basically and briefly, we see that the view of those subjects as communicated by the Michaels differs from the typical view of humans. “Absolving” and “excusing” oneself and others for the “bad” things they do is from Personality; the Essence self has a different

approach, namely that it “accepts responsibility” for what the Personality self does, and fixes things. The Personality self should also learn to accept responsibility for its actions, and give others the room to accept responsibility for their actions. Even if the Personality self does not know how to make amends, as the Essence does, it can still “pseudo-forgive and forget”. We come into every lifetime as an “idiot” about something, and presumably we learn during the lifetime to not be an idiot about that thing. “Responsibility” means that the older less-idiot self makes amends for the younger more-idiot self. This process of making amends includes the Essence self, which is on its own learning path and schedule, taking responsibility for the idiocy that transcends lifetimes.

Concluding Comments on Forgiveness

In all human transactions, there is the Personality self and there is the Essence self. When you the Personality self feel in retrospect that you have wronged another person and regret it, there is value in taking personal responsibility, and saying to the other person words to the effect, “Oops. My bad. I apologize. Please forgive me. Let’s all hope that I have learned my lesson and won’t do that again.” Where minor infractions are born of normal human stupidity and ignorance and foolishness, this procedure, if heartfelt and sincere, typically facilitates social harmony, and the offender and the offeree can get on with their lives. However, if your actions are so egregious that they have actually incurred Karma, and you later come to see the error of your ways, then you should approach the person and apologize and ask what you can do to make amends to the satisfaction of the other Personality self. The Essence self has a different standard of right and wrong and a different procedure for achieving justice, so there might still be a Karmic payback in another lifetime, negotiated by Fragments on the Astral Plane.

Contrariwise, when you the Personality self feel that another person has wronged you with some minor infraction, then, for the sake of your own mental health, it is Good Work if you can rise above your expectation and perception of right and wrong, and align the Personality self with the Essence self in order to “forgive and forget”. In the case that the other person has committed a Karmic offense against you, the Personality self should still do the best it can to neutralize the trauma during the lifetime, and let the wheels of Karma work out the remainder during another lifetime.





④ FORMATORY

This chapter is the product of a search for the word formatory in the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group channeling sessions. This word does not represent a significant component of the Michaelian teachings. However, there are good reasons to discuss the subject in this *Study Papers* book: 1) the subject came up numerous times during the original Michaelian group; 2) some interesting things were said about the subject; 3) the subject is related to a number of other components of the MT that are considered to be significant; 4) students can presumably benefit from having the mentions conveniently collected and commented all in one place.

The word Formatory appears about half a dozen times in the original Michaelian group transcriptions. One could guess what it probably means by its usage in the context in which it is used, but it is never actually defined in the transcriptions. As it turns out, it did not need to be defined because this is a term and concept in the original Michaelian group — one among many — that was adopted and adapted from the Gurdjieffian teaching, one of the spiritual teachings that some of the original Michaelian group founding members were familiar with. For an introduction to the general subject of the Gurdjieffian teachings and the involvement of founding original Michaelian group members with it, refer to the chapter “Gurdjieff, Ouspensky, Collin, Burton”. The term has a particular meaning apart from the common vernacular, and because of this specific meaning in the context of the Gurdjieffian teachings and the Michaelian teachings, it is on the jargon list, and therefore capitalized.

Even though the Michaels used the term Formatory on a few occasions during the original Michaelian group, Yarbrow did not mention [verify] it in her book about the original Michaelian group, *Messages from Michael*, perhaps because, near as I can tell, Yarbrow was not familiar with the Gurdjieffian teachings. The Michaels have not used it in subsequent groups so far as I have been able to determine, perhaps because subsequent groups have not been familiar with Gurdjieffian teachings. Therefore, the term, and even the concept referred to by the term, has not become common knowledge in the Michaelian teachings community subsequent to the original Michaelian group. Nevertheless, I believe Gurdjieff’s psychological insights are worth discussing, the subject of Formatory being one of them. I also believe that it is worthwhile to make the historical record of the original Michaelian group reasonably complete.

In this brief chapter, we will first get a definition from Gurdjieff, and then we will take a look at the original Michaelian group transcriptions.

Formatory per Gurdjieff

Following is the best definition that I found with an internet search, apparently taken from a lecture given by Gurdjieff at his school near Paris:

More About Formatory Apparatus

Prieuré, January 29, 1923

I have understood from conversations that people have a wrong idea about one of the centers, and this wrong idea creates many difficulties.

It is about the thinking center, that is, our formatory apparatus. All the stimuli coming from the centers are transmitted to the formatory apparatus, and all the perceptions of centers also are manifested through the formatory apparatus. It is not a center but an apparatus. It is connected with all the centers. In their turn, centers are connected with one another, but these connections are of a special kind. There is a certain degree of subjectivity, a measure of the strength of associations, which determines the possibility of intercommunication between centers. If we take vibrations between 10 and 10,000, then within this range there are many gradations divided into the definite degrees of strength of associations required for each center. Only

associations of a certain strength in one center evoke corresponding associations in another; only then can a stimulus be given to corresponding connections in another center....

The best way for me to illustrate the formatory apparatus is by an analogy. It is an office with a typist. Every incoming paper comes to her, every client who comes in addresses himself to her. She replies to everything. The answers she gives are qualified by the fact that, in herself, she is only an employee, she does not know anything. But she has instructions, books, files and dictionaries on the shelves. If she has the wherewithal to look up some particular information she does so and replies accordingly; if she hasn't, she does not answer....
[><https://austingurdjieffsociety.weebly.com/more-about-formatory.html>< — retrieved 19 June 2022]

The above is an extraction from a lengthy webpage. Briefly, the formatory apparatus distorts and/or filters communication between Centers, such that it is difficult for a person to have a complete understanding of, an objective view of, and appropriate response to, internal and external phenomena. One of the stated goals of the Gurdjieffian teachings was to help students grow beyond subjective consciousness to objective consciousness.

Formatory per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

The following extracts from original Michaelian group transcriptions are Q&A exchanges, where an original Michaelian group member asks a question (or makes a comment), and the Michaels provide an answer. These extracts are presented in the chronological order in which they appear in the transcriptions. As is my custom, I often provide some explanatory comments following the question or answer. Underlined words in the Michaels' answers are my emphasis, to draw attention to what it is that I comment on. Sometimes I embed words or phrases [in brackets] that I believe help to clarify the question or the answer.

The term first appeared in an early original Michaelian group session, and it was used in the context of the teaching of the leader of the local Gurdjieff group, namely Robert Burton:

Dick: Four factors put me out of Robert's group: Miles Barth, Linda Kaplan, and Melanie McDonald, and this exercise of not using "very, really, a lot." I notice that Michael uses these words — not often, but they did use "very" tonight. I'd like a comment on that. Formatory language is really another subject.

Linda and Melanie are Baby Souls; Miles is a Mature Soul, Mid-Cycle.

We do not object to expressions of enthusiasm when enthusiasm is genuine. It is when you feel compelled to exclaim that it becomes "formatory" and of the "waking sleep". The expression "far out" can be valid or it can be inane. [20 October 1973]

The term "waking sleep" is also from Gurdjieff; refer to the chapter "Awakening from Sleep" for the whole story about that metaphor. The point of this comment from the Michaels is that their students should become conscious enough to use their speech or choice of words and expressions accurately and sincerely, rather than remain so unconscious that their choice of expressions is programmed or habitual or artificially stylized according to some cultural norm or expectation. The younger the soul, the more likely the person is to follow the cultural norm. The Michaels often enjoined the original Michaelian group members, typically older souls, to be awake and self-aware enough to shed their acculturation; refer to the chapter "Imprinting".

A few days later the subject came up again:

One concerns formatory speech and pertains to a question earlier asked [in the 20 October session]. We hear more formatory speech in response to verbalized insights than at any other time, especially those voiced by Dick and Sarah. We do not say that you should not comment on insights, but give some thought to understanding before exclaiming, "Wow, far out." The exercise the man Robert [Burton] imposed on his teaching is not desirable because it is not individualized, but the idea is a good one and we are proposing that similar ones be devised. [01 November 1973]

In this instance, "formatory speech" refers to thoughtless verbalizations or inane and mindless expressions.

The final occurrence of the term appeared a few months later:

I am wondering about Phyllis being in the Moving Part of Intellectual Center. That [Intellectual] is the formatory Center. It seems she is picking around the periphery of the subject. Could Michael comment on the Centers and how Moving Center is romanticized, and how the cosmic is romanticized?

Again, that [Gurdjieffian] system does not probe deep enough; it scratches the surface. Many times to probe deeply would shatter the system altogether, and many high physical teachers are guilty of this. Yes, your

interpretation of the lady Phyllis's enTrapment is essentially correct. We will bring the more concise definition to you. [27 March 1974]

Referring to the chapter "Centering Traps" for an explanation of that phenomenon. Briefly, one of the stated goals of both the Gurdjieff and Michaelian teachings is to not be "trapped" in the Part of a Center, but to express each Center purely and simply. Being Trapped in a Part of a Center is fostered by the so-called "formatory apparatus", which allegedly distorts and/or filters communication between Centers.

There is another passage that discusses formatory language but that does not use that term:

We will now give response words we would like to see Photographed in yourselves and they are: "never", "forever", and "always." These irritate us far more than "very", "a lot", *et cetera, et cetera, et cetera*. Yes, it would be valuable for a while to Photograph these in each other. We will tell you when you have become Identified with the exercise, when it has become Mechanical. It would be interesting to tabulate all those situations to which you apply these absolutes. There are truly few conditions, and most of them are cosmic, to which these do apply. [21 December 1974]

Refer to the chapters "Photography", "Identification", and "Mechanical Man".

The point the Michaels are making is that it is Good Work to be exacting and accurate in one's use of words. The challenge is to become self-aware enough to notice when we are not being self-aware enough about our use of language. To assist our increasing self-awareness, other people can offer Photographs of our lack of self-awareness, or Mechanicality, in our abuse of language.

Concluding Comments on Formatory

It looks to me as if "formatory apparatus" is the Gurdjieffian term that is somewhat like the Tape Loops mentioned in the original Michaelian group; refer to the chapter "Bio-computer: its Programs and Tapes".

It also looks to me as if the "formatory apparatus" might be referring to the so-called "reticular activating system" of modern brain science:

The reticular formation is a set of interconnected nuclei that are located throughout the brainstem.... Neurons of the reticular formation, particularly those of the ascending reticular activating system, play a crucial role in maintaining behavioral arousal and consciousness. The overall functions of the reticular formation are modulatory and premotor, involving somatic motor control, cardiovascular control, pain modulation, sleep and consciousness, and habituation.... The reticular formation is essential for governing some of the basic functions of higher organisms and is one of the phylogenetically oldest portions of the brain.

[>https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reticular_formation< — retrieved 23 September 2022]

The point to be made here is that so many of our psychological and spiritual problems as human beings can be attributed to the biological evolution of the physical organism, including brain structures. The pathway starts with the earliest vertebrates, and extends through fish through amphibians through reptiles through mammals through primates to humans. This path of evolution provides a heavy 'baggage' that it is extraordinarily difficult to surmount and transcend. Sometimes it seems to me as if almost the entirety of our difficulties on our spiritual paths can be attributed to the suffocating encumbrance of our animal heritage. But then again, the reason for reincarnation is to fully experience this phase of the story arc of evolution back to the Tao. This process will inevitably play out whether or not we consciously and intentionally participate in bypassing the "formatory apparatus", aka "reticular activating system", on a psychotherapeutic and/or spiritual path.





FUN — HUMOR — LAUGHTER — LEVITY— PLAY

This chapter is the product of a search for the word “fun” and “play” in the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group channeling sessions. This phenomenon does not represent a significant component of the Michaelian teachings. However, there are good reasons to discuss the subject in this *Study Papers* book: 1) the subject came up numerous times during the original Michaelian group; 2) students can presumably benefit from having the mentions conveniently collected all in one place; 3) some interesting things were said about the subject; 4) the subject is related to a number of other components of the Michaelian teachings that are considered to be significant; 5) Seriousness issues are pervasive in human psychology and sociology and spirituality.

The words expressing the concept are not capitalized in this chapter and/or other chapters of this *Study Papers* book because they have no special meaning in the Michaelian teachings; it is not a Michaelian jargon concept that needs a definition apart from its use in the common vernacular.

Basically and briefly, the Michaels recommended to the original Michaelian group members that they

Definition of Fun

So what is meant by fun? The online Merriam Webster dictionary definition is:

Fun per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

The following extracts from original Michaelian group transcriptions are Q&A exchanges, where an original Michaelian group member asks a question (or makes a comment), and the Michaels provide an answer. This is [not] a subject that would benefit by division into subcategories, as some subjects do. These extracts are presented in the chronological order in which they were given, even though this is not a subject where there was a development or evolution of a specific revelation of a facet of the Michaelian teachings, as was often the case with the original Michaelian group. As is my custom, I often provide some explanatory comments following the question or answer. Underlined words in the Michaels' answers are my emphasis, to draw attention to what it is that I comment on. Sometimes I embed words or phrases [in brackets] that I believe help to clarify the question or the answer.

How does Bacchus, the god of wine, fit into Eleusinian mysteries?

It has been said by us before that rituals unify and bring together many who otherwise would not be able to participate. The same goes for festivals. They provide an excellent opportunity to play the fool in a controlled, safe environment, which is necessary for all souls in Ordinal Goals and Roles. Sages and Priests normally need no special invitations to be hams, but the same is not true for many Artisans and Warriors. Many Artisans are essentially nonverbal, except for those few who are like you, Dick, Intellectually Centered. Warriors fear the loss of respect that accompanies the loss of dignity. Timid souls often blossom during festivals. This was known in the ancient times, more so than today. The Bacchanalian cults arose from the celebration of the harvest and were sponsored at first by Attic vintners. This was so much fun that the cults spread and took on additional significance. There is nothing dull about spiritual growth. The need is to become more joyous and expansive, not more somber and introverted. [10 January 1974]

There you go. In the first appearance of the word “fun” in the original Michaelian group transcriptions we are told that the spiritual path should not be onerous. In fact, I would say that fun can sometimes be a guide to what the higher self wants for the Personality self.

The Tahitian islands are consummately Spiritualistic (fun-loving). [22 January 1974]

The parenthetical explanatory comment about the Attitude of Spiritualist being fun-loving was inserted by the original transcription editor.

The dictates of this culture are severe and stern. We doubt that it is much fun for anyone. This is not necessarily true of the entire Physical Plane. Although the Physical Plane is by nature solid, ponderous and complex, you make it even more so by trying to analyze these behavior patterns in terms other than instinct. [21 December 1974]

Well, that search was not much fun; the word only appears thrice. If we take that as an indication of its importance in the Michaelian teachings, then fun would seem to be unimportant. However, there are other instances found in the original Michaelian group transcriptions where something like fun was intentionally sought, and was commended by the Michaels. For instance:

We also ohm'd in a circle and acted out a, "Don't you ever, ever, EVER, EVER let me catch you brushing that dog's teeth with my toothbrush ... "

As the group becomes more and more cohesive, many more sharing experiences may take place without the self-consciousness present in more multi-disciplined gatherings. This will create a unique atmosphere in which growth is almost certain to occur. [06 February 1974]

Play per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

Let's see what insights a search for the word "play" bring to light.

Dick: The reason I could sit there peacefully was I didn't have to worry about food. I have provided for my own children. If Essence is Snow White and Red Riding Hood, we have to go into this dependency on Michael or whomever is going to take care of us. Otherwise, we have to scurry around to produce what we need. I would be happy to go back into that state; it's so lovely. Unless you become independent, you must forage for yourself. To go into Essence completely, there must be trust. As a child, there is no trust; there is knowing that you will be cared for. Something tells the child as he grows older, that this idyllic situation will end and it will be up to him to take care of himself.

The Roles in Essence provide the necessary food, clothing and shelter without the scurrying. This adult play can be financially rewarding. That is why we have told you that communal living is an upward step in spiritual evolution. This allows you to pursue the Role in Essence. There will be those who will provide the other necessities. [27 October 1973]

Levity per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

Joan: Are the plans made on the Astral Plane?

Of course. You have the option of not planning at all and making hasty, last minute choices, which is precisely what has happened to some souls with whom you are acquainted. Usually, toward the end of the Young Soul Cycle, the choices become better and the soul chooses to review the past with far more thoroughness and attempts to strive toward completion of the Monads. There is also much "just plain living" as there is on the Physical Plane. Just as you, as students, do not pursue the [spiritual] path twenty-four hours a day, so the Astral beings do not either. We have told you all before that there is levity on the Astral Plane and to be aware of this. This should give you some insight into some of the options there. [17 April 1974]

Dick: We've waited a year and a half for spontaneity, and there has been no activity.

The insight that the majority of the students are Apollonian-oriented is a valid one. There is great difficulty in planning ahead for diversion, but not for work. Does this suggest areas that need development? [10 July 1974]

Per >https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Apollonian_and_Dionysian<

In Greek mythology, Apollo and Dionysus are both sons of Zeus. Apollo, son of Leto, is the god of the sun, of rational thinking and order, and appeals to logic, prudence and purity and stands for reason. Dionysus, son of Semele, is the god of wine and dance, of irrationality and chaos, representing passion, emotions, and instincts."

In other words, Dionysian-oriented people know how to play and have fun. On a spiritual path, it is Good Work to have a balance of both. The original Michaelian group was too Apollonian for their own good.

... This levity comes in part from anxiety.... [06 February 1974]
Humor is a good tension-breaker.

Concluding Comments on Fun and Play

The desire for fun comes much more naturally to Sages than it does to any other Role. One might even say that their type of fun, whatever it may be, is their philosophical guiding light to beauty, truth, love, and energy. In other words, whatever they find to be fun leads to whatever is their enlightenment. Some say “follow your bliss” — probably said by a Priest — but Sages say “follow your fun”.

“The Sage is the Artisan exalted.” [late October 1973] As an Artisan myself, who tends to be rather serious by nature, I look up to Sages as sources of fun in the form of the dramatic arts.





GAMES, PSYCHOLOGICAL

This chapter is the product of a search for the word game in the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group channeling sessions. This word does not represent a significant component of the Michaelian teachings. However, there are good reasons to discuss the subject in this *Study Papers* book: 1) the subject came up numerous times during the original Michaelian group; 2) students can presumably benefit from having the mentions conveniently collected and commented all in one place; 3) some interesting things were said about the subject; 4) the subject is related to a number of other components of the Michaelian teachings that are considered to be significant; 5) The playing of games is unavoidable, they are pervasive in human psychology and sociology and spirituality, so it behooves us to have a working knowledge of them.

The word game is not capitalized in this chapter or other chapters of this *Study Papers* book because it has no special meaning in the Michaelian teachings; it is not a Michaelian jargon word that needs a definition apart from its use in the common vernacular. However, as we will see in this chapter, the word game is applied to both positive and negative phenomena, hence +game and -game.

This chapter is one of many in this book that focuses on a psychological component of the Michaelian teachings as found in the original Michaelian group transcriptions, rather than on a doctrinal or spiritual component. Psychological components of the Michaelian teachings are usually either a positive to be cultivated or a negative to be mitigated. In this case, the word game has both a positive and a negative connotation. The negative connotation is amenable to psychotherapy. The Michaelian version of psychology is not to be confused with the pop psychology of the self-improvement movement, those that do not have a spiritual core or perspective. Rather, the Michaelian psychotherapeutic path (aimed at improving psychological health) is a beneficial precursor to the spiritual path (aimed at improving soul health). To skip the former but attempt the latter is referred to as “spiritual bypassing”. This is discussed at length on various websites, including https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spiritual_bypass. To skip mitigating one’s psychological issues and attempt to go straight to enlightenment usually proves to be problematic.

Definition of Game

So what is meant by game? The online Merriam Webster online dictionary definition is: My usual go-to source Wikipedia has an article that provides a definition and a description and an explanation, as follows (underlined words are my emphasis):

Game per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

The following extracts from original Michaelian group transcriptions are Q&A exchanges, where an original Michaelian group member asks a question (or makes a comment), and the Michaels provide an answer. These extracts are presented in the chronological order in which they were given. As is my custom, I usually provide some explanatory comments following the question or answer. Underlined words are my emphasis, to draw attention to what it is that I comment on. Sometimes I embed words or phrases [in brackets] that I believe help to clarify the question or the answer. Numerous study papers related to this chapter are to be found among my comments.

The first appearance of the word game occurred several months into the original Michaelian group sessions:

Alice: This is the game of life. I mean, you can go and sit on a mountain somewhere — many do and they don’t have any expectations — but they are not playing the game like we are. [02 October 1973]

Each Role tends to prefer one or another metaphor for what life is all about. For instance, Scholars tend to see life as a school and Sages tend to see life as a theatrical play. Artisans tend to see life as an intellectual puzzle: they try to figure out how it works so that they can play the game with more skill. It so happens that Alice was an Artisan, and she was cognizant of the fact that different people play different kinds of games, and this fact

often means that we experience discomfort and have misunderstandings with other people. The alternative lifestyle to playing this interactive game is isolation, and the Michaels often recommend against that lifestyle; refer to the chapter “Solitude, Solitary, Isolation, Seclusion”. One function of the Michaelian teaching is to make students more aware of this awkward fact, that people play different games, so that they can play their own game of life with more smarts.

Whereas the previous original Michaelian group passage used with word game with a positive connotation (+game), the word can also be used with a negative connotation, –game). In the following Q&A exchanges, the particular situation under discussion had to do with the sale of a property, and we all know how money can potentially lead to a –game called salesmanship:

Alice: He said that the owner did not wish it said.

You do not wish to destroy loyalty gained honestly through Essence by shady dealings through False Personality. We wish this Teaching to remain scrupulously honest.

Dick: We have wolves, too. This is what we want to stop using.

The moment you stoop to this type of dealing, you once again become identified with this game. The man Miles is heavily identified with this game. There is truth in the concept that we can obtain for you what you need. This man does not accept this completely and feels that the game of wits is still important. [27 October 1973]

Dishonesty is one of the manifestations of a person playing a –game; refer to chapters “Honesty and Dishonesty” and “Machinations” and “Manipulation”. Also refer to the chapter “Identification”, where there is further discussion of the phenomenon where a person loses their integrity in some illegitimate belief system, value system, or behavior system –game.

The next mention of game swings back to the positive connotation of the word:

Ray: Two weeks ago, Michael suggested further contact with meditation. I can't concentrate and I need more advice on this.

Meditation is the clearing of the mind of trivia, and allowing the free flow. Transcendental Meditation provides good groundwork for those new to the enlightenment game. The more exalted forms, such as that taught by Chögyam Trungpa, requires much preparation, and may take years to perfect. Also, many meditate for all of their lives and achieve nothing. To be effective, meditation must prepare one for activity, not rest.

The journey to enlightenment itself can be thought of as a game to be learned and played with increasing expertise.

The next mention of game swings back to the negative connotation of the word:

Edgar: If I try the stock market, could I make money without working so hard?

It is like any other monetary game and depends on the whimsy of the economy and how astute a guesser you are. It would not relieve your financial anxiety; it would create a new anxiety-laden set of obstacles. [22 November 1973]

The question is, do you know how to play the monetary game better than the stock market or not. Perhaps you are better off if you can monetize an excellent skill in some soul-fulfilling business venture of your own, in which case it would be a +game. There is not nearly as much self-improvement in playing the stock market as there is in playing with more personal ways to make a living.

The pattern of swinging back and forth between –game and +game continues:

Evelyn: About three years ago, my sister-in-law's personality changed. It troubles her and she would like some help to understand this.

We have discussed this lady at length. Her primary difficulty should be resolved if she would trust the intuition. The change that occurred is nothing more serious than a late manifestation [of the Fourth Internal Monad]. She feels now very insecure. She was very secure in her old role, where everything was clearly defined. Now the edges are blurred. She does not like this, but it is, of course, preferable and is the initial opening of the door. Warriors find the [spiritual] “path” especially steep and rocky. All her old relationships were taken for granted. For the first time in her life, she was faced with the challenge of creating new relationships out of totally new material and with a new game with different rules. [29 November 1974]

Warriors are competitive by nature, and they like challenges, but they also tend to get themselves into a metaphorical ‘rut’. The way that they get out of the old habitual mode is when they are presented with an exciting new game with new rules.

The Michaels regard Karma as a game:

Mallory: I'd like to ask about Ralph, a man I was in Alex Horn's group with 5 years ago and I've know him for 10 [years]. I'm becoming shy about Soul Levels.

Because he perceives that those in the "work" are on to something, does this give you a clue? This man is a Fifth Level Mature Soul in Growth. He is a Skeptic, Emotionally Centered Scholar. He is mostly Lunar, some Mercurial. The conflict is Karmic; they have played this game before. Ralph once left the Jesuit order in order to pursue her [Mallory].

Refer to the chapter "Karma" for more discussion about that instructive form of a game.

Betty: I would like to ask about the "witch hunt" at work. The nurses are dissatisfied with the MD's treatment of patients. The doctors sometimes won't come in the middle of the night to care for a patient. What is the purpose of their doing this and talking so awful? I can't separate.

This [Michaelian] teaching should enable you to dissociate from this destructive life game; it is played all over.

Gene: The game is, "I'm right and you're wrong."

The game is also: I am so well and you are so sick.

Betty: I remain aloof, but it affects me.

If you do not dissociate, you run the risk of becoming a leading player — and a losing one at that. [03 February 1974]

That might be an allusion to the famous pop-psychology book *Games People Play* by Eric Berne, which was published in 1964, and which described many "mind games" similar to the two mentioned above:

In the first half of the book, Berne introduces his theory of transactional analysis as a way of interpreting social interactions. He proposes that individuals encompass three roles or ego states, known as the Parent [Moving Center], the Adult [Intellectual Center], and the Child [Emotional Center], which they switch between. He postulates that while Adult to Adult interactions are largely healthy, dysfunctional interactions can arise when people take on mismatched roles such as Parent and Child or Child and Adult.

The second half of the book catalogs a series of "mind games" identified by Berne, in which people interact through a patterned and predictable series of "transactions" based on these mismatched roles. He states that although these interactions may seem plausible, they are actually a way to conceal hidden motivations under scripted interactions with a predefined outcome. The book uses casual, often humorous phrases such as "See What You Made Me Do", "Why Don't You — Yes But", and "Ain't It Awful" as a way of briefly describing each game. Berne describes the "winner" of these mind games as the person that returns to the Adult ego-state first. [[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Games_People_Play_\(book\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Games_People_Play_(book))< — retrieved 13 May 2023]

The reason for my speculation above is that the Michaels referred to Berne's so-called "Transactional Analysis" with this comment:

The man Eric Berne knew this when he called the Intellectual Center "the adult," the Moving Center "the parent" and the Emotional Center "the child". [12 December 1976]

The Gurdjieffian and Michaelian teachings have much to say about responding to others from the appropriate Center for the situation, such as: you should not be intellectual ('Adult') with a person who is having an emotional meltdown ('Child'). If people interact with each other through different Centers, then the transactions devolve into unhealthy –games.

More is said about unhealthy –games in the next appearance of the word:

Mallory: More on "machinations," please.

Growth is a rocky Goal, and causes the soul to go through some elaborate and complicated machinations, which mask all of the other Goals. Many times, the soul in Growth is forced to play out all of the agonies of the other Goals in order to grow, such as the Rejection [Goal]-Dominance [Goal] seen often in many members of this group who are in Growth. Depression and elation usually manifests often in this Goal. There is sometimes the need to submit, i.e., to put oneself in the hands of the guru [Submission Goal]. There are also many times the need to feel accepted, to have the [Acceptance] Goal verified by society, to check out with life, the sanity of the soul's purpose. This often makes the soul who is still in False Personality go through a set of well-defined patterns.

You can now begin to Photograph these patterns in one another. There is the definite game-playing aspect to this that, on a lower level, is worked out in awareness groups. Sometimes, it is easier to observe the various machinations by observing awareness groups at work. Perhaps this film (Here Comes Everybody) would be valuable for all of you to see. [24 February 1974]

Later that year the Negative Poles of the Overleaves were revealed, and I would say that all of the Negative Poles, not just those of the Goal as described above, provoke sick –games. For this reason, many relationships, indeed many organizations, are based on the playing out of unhealthy –games. Refer to the chapter “Machinations” for the whole story about many other appearances of that word.

As with crossed Centers described previously, the general principle is that differences create an opportunity for an unhealthy –game to play out:

We have told you many times that communication with the higher planes should not be used as a parlor game, and in the light of the questioning one, we would reiterate this advice. There are denizens of the low Astral Planes who are no more admirable in death than they were in life. [27 March 1974]

An example of a “parlor game” might be teenager girls who use an Ouija board to ask about their romantic inclinations.

The thought that comes to my mind is that, inequalities of all kinds, not just the difference between Astral and Physical denizens, set up a situation where –game-playing becomes more likely; it might be a power differential or a smarts differential or a wealth differential or a status differential or a knowledge differential. It is important that we play +games with people who want to play the same +game, and the more well-matched the game-players, the more the challenge and the fun and the learning.

Parlor games were mentioned again in a session a few weeks later:

Would hypnosis of the group during meetings be helpful?

We feel that any serious move toward opening this door is Good Work, but steer clear of parlor games. [08 May 1974]

Here again we are admonished to not let something that could be a serious +game degenerate into a frivolous –game.

We first asked for a general comment from the teacher. This is what we received.

As long as you continue to play the game of the culture and undergo the constant role-switching that occurs day in and day out, there will not be too much outward change in you. But this does not mean that there has been no change. It is merely that the role-switching uses up a tremendous amount of psychic energy that could be utilized for Work on the Path. [21 December 1974]

Refer to the chapter “Culture” for more discussion of the –games that cultures play that are likely not consistent with the +games that the Essence wants to play.

Of all the varieties of relationships where –games can be played, the romantic relationship is one of the most fraught (along with politics and money):

Carolyn: I refuse to continue with this unresolved thing, to be put upon or shit upon.

There is, of course, the risk of involved game-playing developing — of the “No, please allow me to make the sacrifice,” if this is carried too far. This is a risk one always takes when one tries to convince another to retract a valid choice. Even if there is a game being played on the part of the one making the choice, the choice must still be considered valid....

Carolyn: I don't feel I am playing a game. I haven't said I am burning any bridges.

In very advanced students, there is a degree of detachment from the master Tapes that sometimes works against them in strange ways. For one thing, it sometimes makes them unaware of behaviors that are still continuing on lower levels, mostly by rote, to some degree. There is always, until Balance has been achieved, the risk of slipping back into these behavior patterns. In this cadre, there are students at all levels [of spiritual growth] and you can observe this easily. In society, most contracts and most interpersonal relationships are based upon manipulative behavior patterns. In the male-female relationships, this is especially apparent. [15 January 1975]

Refer to the chapter “Romantic Relationships” for the whole story in some detail.

... If there is any purpose to our being with you, you must cease this game of “If I tell him what I see, I might be wrong and he won't like me.” This is not confrontation tactics, but merely accepting responsibility for your perceptions and having the strength of vulnerability to express the perceptions.... [09 February 1975]

If one is not certain of oneself, then oneself will likely play some insincere –game.

There will be no global war. There will be frequent unrest, and you have chosen to partake in the culture that sustains unrest. Rest assured that this game has, of course, a conclusion. [Dimensions! June 1975]

Dick said we were all just spiritual dilettantes — the utilitarian value comes later — the value of the Overleaves. In order to “surrender” there has to be a feeling that there is something to achieve through this surrender.

There are two types of experience going on within this movement — and by ‘movement’ we mean the whole guru game that is now on-going. These are the true experiences and the cultural experiences. Most of those who go to EST do not experience anything but group highs, and this could have happened merely by smoking marijuana in the living room with a group of friends. Others have elected to change their lives, and this has occurred only through surrender to the processes. Faith is what determines success. [10 April 1977]

On this particular evening, we had a great deal of conversation about the Overleaves and just how much value they really hold for us. We talked about the fact that we feel we don’t always use them properly and wondered what we could do to use them more effectively.

The majority of all students of this and comparable teachings use the Overleaves and all other tools given to them in the manner that will allow them to control their environment to their greatest satisfaction and to keep the game they are playing going. Only the exceptional student uses the tool as it is intended. In the case of those of you here present, you use these tools as many less knowledgeable use religion — as a controlling device. All of you need to feel that you are an individual rather than a Fragment of a larger whole. This is the function of the ego — that is, to keep the illusion of separateness intact. If this [illusion] dissolves, the ego is in trouble. [04 November 1977]

We talked about the whys and wherefores of having Sequences and paying Karma, and why one would want to alter Personality if this is the Personality we have chosen to handle these things we have apparently agreed to do in this life. If Cynthia is no longer a tragic heroine, for example, how will she complete her Agreements?

You will know that you have reached that point when you discontinue the “yes, but” game. In other words, whenever you are willing to give up your pain, you have completed all that you came to complete and are ready to go on from there. [04 November 1977]

Ralph: It seems to me that the presentation of this teaching has focused on SRGA (Soul-Role-Goal-Attitude) [and] has not been successful in communicating to others. Should another approach be used? Do the SRGs make this teaching unique from all others?

We would hesitate to call this system of naming behavior patterns [Overleaves] as the cornerstone of our teaching. Rather, we would see you all ascertaining from those expressing interest in this teaching: whether or not they are ready to accept in full the concept that they have lived before and that this life is merely a continuation of an experience begun in another time frame. And by this we mean, to be sure within yourselves that they do in fact accept this as truth for them. All the rest, including the Soul Levels, will come easily. It is upon this premise [reincarnation] that the entire [Michaelian] teaching is based and it is therefore useless (underlined) to any student not knowing this truth for himself — it becomes a parlor game of meaningless words. [13 January 1978]

Concluding Comments on Game





② GLAMOUR

This chapter is the product of a search for the word glamour in the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group channeling sessions. This word does not represent a significant component of the Michaelian teachings. However, there are good reasons to discuss the subject in this *Study Papers* book: 1) the subject came up numerous times during the original Michaelian group; 2) some interesting things were said about the subject; 3) the subject is related to a number of other components of the Michaelian teachings that are considered to be significant; 4) students can presumably benefit from having the mentions conveniently collected and commented all in one place; 5) the distractions of glamour are unavoidable in this world; they are pervasive in human psychology and sociology and spirituality — subjects covered extensively in this book — so it behooves us to have a working knowledge of it.

This chapter is one of many in this book that focuses on a psychological component of the Michaelian teachings as found in original Michaelian group transcriptions, rather than on a doctrinal or spiritual component. A psychological component is usually either a positive to be cultivated or a negative to be mitigated. As we will see, the Michaels tell us that glamour is a negative to be eschewed. The Michaelian version of psychology is not to be confused with the popular psychology of the self-improvement movement, those that do not have a spiritual core or perspective. Rather, the Michaelian psychotherapeutic path (aimed at improving psychological health) is a beneficial precursor to the spiritual path (aimed at improving soul health). To skip the former but attempt the latter is referred to as “spiritual bypassing”. This is discussed at length on such websites as https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spiritual_bypass. To skip mitigating one’s psychological issues and attempt to go straight to enlightenment usually proves to be problematic.

The subject of this chapter is another one of those topics that seems to me to deserve to be capitalized as a jargon word in the Michaelian teachings. So far as I have been able to determine, it is not a word or a concept that came into the original Michaelian group via Gurdjieff, or any of the other teachings that original Michaelian group members borrowed from. The word does appear three times in Yarbro’s book *Messages from Michael*, which is about the original Michaelian group, but the word and concept has not become widespread in the Michaelian teachings communities since then, so far as I have been able to determine. However, it was mentioned in the original Michaelian group often enough that I deem it worthy of investigation, examination, and discussion. Because it was on the Michaels mind back then, apparently unprompted by the familiarity of original Michaelian group members with other teachings, I feel that it should be on our minds now.

Definition of Glamour

The meaning of the word glamour as used by the Michaels does not differ much from the dictionary definition. Underlined words in the following quotation are my emphasis on synonyms for glamour, some of which the Michaels themselves use, as we will see:

1: an exciting and often illusory and romantic attractiveness: “the glamour of Hollywood”; especially: alluring or fascinating attraction, often used attributively: “glamour stock”, “glamour girls”, “whooping cranes and other glamour birds”.

2: a magic spell

Synonyms: bewitchment, charm, enchantment, invocation, spell.

Examples of glamour in a sentence:

“She left her hometown, attracted to the glamour of the big city.”

“An acting career filled with glitz and glamour.” [<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/glamour> — retrieved 04 July 2021]

All of these words indicate that there is something false in one's perception of whatever the word glamour is applied to. That is, the allegedly glamorous object or event superficially looks better than it proves to be in the long run or upon closer examination. I searched the original Michaelian group transcriptions for these synonyms, and, where appropriate, I included them in this chapter.

Glamour in the Original Michaelian Group

The following extracts from original Michaelian group transcriptions are Q&A exchanges, where an original Michaelian group member asks a question (or makes a comment), and the Michaels provide an answer. As is my custom, I usually provide some explanatory comments following the question or answer. Underlined words are my emphasis, to draw attention to what it is that I comment on. Sometimes I embed words or phrases [in brackets] that I believe help to clarify the question or the answer. Numerous study papers related to this chapter are to be found among my comments. There is enough information about glamour in the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group that it seems expedient to divide the material into three sections: the glamour of the Physical Plane, the glamour of spiritual teachings, and miscellaneous mentions of glamour.

[\[\[run search for "allure" \]\]](#)

Glamorous Physical Plane

The first time that the word appears in the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group, it came with something of a definition:

Carolyn: I have felt the need to express my opinions more lately, and I wonder if this is good. Sometimes I have spouted off.

[Tomas:] Do you understand the source of the negative emotions? If so, then you should examine them carefully and see if you can turn them into something positive. Hostility is never an act of conscious will. The only positive forces are peaceful, loving ones. Carolyn still has a tendency to slip into the patterns or vibrations of the moment. Many sleeping souls provide the necessary Shocks to keep her on the right track — constantly examining herself. This is a common failing among neophytes on the true path. There are always many doubts until the integration takes place, and the commitment is made and is irrevocable. Life on the material plane, with all its glamour, continues to lure you back. The glamour is illusion — Maya, if you prefer the more esoteric term. Maya is part of Karma and is present for a very specific purpose. It tests your spiritual growth all the time, and is your sole eternal safety checkpoint. When you reach the point in your spiritual growth when you "know" that all hostile feelings and thoughts and words — and even world wars — come from lower Centers in sleeping souls and they are not in control, then you will lose the desire or need to retaliate or spout off. It's like spouting off to a stone wall for all the good it does you. You gain nothing and lose a great deal. [24 July 1973]

Refer to the chapter "Maya" for an examination of one of the synonyms of glamour. Further on we see that, for younger souls the Physical Plane might seem glamorous, but for older souls, such as Carolyn, the attraction is weakening and the luster is wearing off.

Ellis: We all have negativity, and there is all this evil. What do we do with it? How do we handle it?

Evil *per se* exists only in the minds of those perceiving an action. If you happen to be a Young Soul, your desire will be to change that evil to good, "to right the unrightable wrong." You will not hesitate to wipe out the lives that stand in your way. After all, are they not evil? Mature Souls often perceive evil in themselves and seek to exorcise this. Young Souls perceive the differences in people often as evil. The Old Soul ordinarily does not perceive evil as such; he perceives the cause and does not seek to eradicate the agent. This is what is meant loosely by "acceptance". On a higher level, this acceptance becomes Agape. Your negativity can be dissolved as soon as you realize how futile it is. Souls enthralled in [the] glamour of the Physical Plane do senseless things, granted, but realize this, Ellis: the soul is eternal; these acts are temporal. [08 October 1973]

This passage tells me that the distinction between "good" and "evil" is subjective; it is the result of temporal shortsightedness on the part of the perceiver (in terms of Soul Age) and the perpetrator (also in terms of Soul Age). The apparent dichotomy between "good" and "evil" is due to glamour/Maya on the Physical Plane, but the dichotomy is understood in higher Soul Ages, and actually reconciled in higher planes.

Edgar: What happens when I am united with my Fragments?

When you finally reunite with all the Fragments, you will no longer be subject to the allurement of the Physical Plane and for you, Edgar, since you have been in touch with the occult for over ten thousand years, you will know this and you will experience the ecstasy. [31 December 1973]

Betty: *Is my aura purple?*

We do not agree with that. This aura is dark blue bordering on violet.

Betty: *What is the significance of that?*

This is significant to this lady's innate spiritual consciousness, yet there is still some drive toward the physical glamour. [15 May 1974]

Refer to the chapter "Auras" for more information about that subject. Life as a human on the Physical Plane is susceptible to all kinds of distractions from spiritual consciousness. If there was a specific physical glamour that beset Betty, it was not given. Some specifics are mentioned in the next Q&A exchange where glamour was mentioned:

At this point, Gene brought up the subject of trust. Asked for the group response as to how we felt about trusting him, etc. Considerable discussion followed.

If one is truly striving toward Balance, there will be a desire for harmony in the environment. They are one in the same. There is only chaos in the environments of those struggling with conflicts on the glamorous Physical Plane. The struggle to meet the expectations of others that is, sadly enough, most often without knowledge of those expectations. There is so much guesswork going on, how could you possibly trust? [24 September 1974]

These forms of glamour all arise from the Personality type that finds trauma-drama intriguing and attractive and appealing. The Personality feels more 'alive' when enmeshed in glamorous crazyness.

Arthur: We sold our house and are moving, having new friends. What direction to move in now?

For you, Arthur, this has been an enormous step. The next one will be when you are able to move with the other students [into a commune], and experience this growing group. Only then can you fully appreciate its influence on your present trend. Perhaps now that you have given up much glamour, you can continue to study and apply, and then further steps will be self evident, as they have been with other students. Your progress is so good right now. [08 October 1974]

That was just another general statement about the fact that there is spiritual progress in mitigating the distraction of glamour in one's life.

Man, or rather, "Mechanical Man", must then cut through the glamour and allurement of the Physical Plane in order to see the light of truth. Nowhere else is this as difficult, for on the Physical Plane, all is glamour and all is complex, even compared to the Astral Plane, which to the high planes can seem quite complex. [22 October 1974]

Refer to the chapter "Complexity versus Simplicity" for a discussion of this particular form of glamour and its antithesis, the anti-glamour of simplicity.

The process of seeking the King is not synonymous with changing Roles — it is rather an inner seeking of the highest spiritual value. Within each of you is the potential of kingliness. To seek this is to seek the throne, which is, of course, euphemistically describing that state of enrapturement or Agape. Because of the peculiar religious values of your cultural experience, that expression is simply a little more palatable, as is "the devil" a more readily accepted term for the allurement presented by the culture. Let us reemphasize that spiritual evolution is anti-cultural and, therefore, threatening to the majority of all — not only on this planet, but in all the universe as well.

There is danger in the stuck-ness that the Centers provide, for most of you are enamored of the particular Centering from which you operate. This happens over and over again, for the desire for enrapturement is strong in all of you. It is only your objects that get you into trouble — especially your "love objects" — for these are loved mostly by your Centers and, therefore, reinforce the notion that your stuck-ness is right. [30 September 1977]

Refer to the chapter "Acculturation" for a description and an explanation of that component of the glamorousness of the experience of the Physical Plane. While you are at it, take a look around you and consider if you are attached to and enamored with some physical object so much that it is a distraction from spiritual growth.

Glamorous Spiritual Teachings

In the second session in which the Michaels were the source, the word glamour was used in reference to "marketing" the Michaelian teachings to prospective students. This is the first of several similar warnings.

Regarding earlier growth of group. We've had requests [to join]. Gene has misgivings about the group growing.

Those who should be part of this [group/teaching] will not need a lengthy invitation; they will arrive easily. Be careful of luring anyone in with glamour. This [teaching] could be devastating to Young Souls. [17 August 1973]

Spiritual teachings, by their very nature — because they deal with extraordinary and supernatural things — are susceptible to exaggeration, embellishment, and hype. When discussing the Michaelian teachings with prospective students, it is best not to try to “sell” them on it. To do so is especially egregious when it comes to “evangelizing” immature souls. No matter that the Michaelian teachings is “the best thing that has ever happened” to you, it is not for everyone; in fact, it is right for very few people. Typically, Michaelian students—to find the Teaching serendipitously, they recognize it as “home”, and they require no luring.

Sue: Are there any Fragments of mine [my Entity] in this group? If so, who? Can you give me the name of one of my Fragments not here?

No. We would rather not [give names]. The enticement by glamour is a poor way to begin a teaching. We would prefer to let the group expand — flow such as the chance tides. There is a mean tide. [08 November 1973]

One of the potential glamour diversions that sometimes distract newbie Michaelian students is the desire for a channel to identify and classify other people per some component of the Michaelian teachings: Are they kindred souls? Do they have an Agreement or Karma? Are they members of the same Configuration? What past lives have they had together? ... and so on. If this identification and classification can be done without the interference and distortion of glamour, okay, but sometimes newbie students have unrealistic expectations of the nature and function of these Michaelian categories based on generic and stereotypical descriptions. Personally, I let new and old relationships develop organically however they will (“flow such as the chance tides”), without any compulsion to put a Michaelian label on them. Eventually, it becomes obvious if the relationship fits some Michaelian designation.

Richard: Is “False Personality” and “Maya” the same?

He [Tomas] is challenged by the glamour of the diversified belief systems, and is only able to differentiate because of higher teachers who are available. We do not prevent the dissemination of valid information from the Astral Plane [where Tomas was], but this is monitored carefully, and attempts are made to invalidate false data. Sometimes this is not possible, primarily because of the rigid belief systems of the medium involved. This is why we always attempt to work with Older [Soul] mediums. Their convictions tend to float more easily, and it is possible to sneak past their bias. [20 December 1973]

Oftentimes attempts to integrate other teachings into the Michaelian teachings are not useful, but sometimes they are. For instance, if there are contradictions between various (“biased”) Michaelian sources, some other (“higher”) teaching might have an answer or reconciliation, and to find it is Good Work for students.

There is another problem with “diversified belief systems”. Soleal pointed out that:

... many of you are dabblers. You dabble in this and that, tasting all of the fruits, eating of none, and in this light you dabble in spiritual growth as well. Now, this is all right; there is nothing wrong with this — it incurs little Karma — but on the other hand, it leads nowhere. [18 February 194]

One of the tenets of the Michaelian teachings is that “there is only one true Teaching”, and that the Michaelian teachings presents The Synthesis of all teachings (however imperfectly because of some “biased” channels). The challenge for all students is to discern the “signal” of truth out of the “noise” of glamour — that some teachings put out there. This is reminiscent of the ancient injunction to “separate the wheat from the chaff”.

So, if you are going to be a Michaelian student, be a serious Michaelian student; plumb its depths, and don't be distracted or diverted by other seemingly glamorous teachings. One of the things that I personally appreciate about the Michaelian teachings is that it is not glamorous; it is not fluffy happy talk. I recall that a Michaelian student once said, “the Michaels do not blow sunshine up your ass.”

... Both are Young [Souls], both are driven by the glamour.... [30 December 1973]

The nature of glamour varies from Age to Age. My guess is that the Michaels emphasized the potential for glamour in pseudo-spiritual pursuits because of the prevalence of late-Level Mature and Old Souls in the original Michaelian group.

Nichols: The need for secrecy won't be that great, as we will know how to handle this.

Soft-pedaling the activity will serve to tone down any sensationalism and the danger of luring in false students with glamour. [03 February 1974]

This Q&A exchange was about proposed communal living plans, but some of the original Michaelian group members were also concerned that their occult activities would be discovered and condemned by disapproving employers or neighbors. However, the Michaelian teachings espouses spiritual activities that even non-believers would not find objectionable, if the non-believers discovered them, so the need for secrecy is minimal. It is the glamorous pseudo-spiritual activities that the Michaels disapproved of, as we see in this chapter. It is also the glamorous pseudo-spiritual groups that often get into a scandal. Some communes are founded by charismatic leaders who lure students in with grandiose promises, and these typically come to wreck and ruin. Here the Michaels explicitly recommend that any such sensationalism be squelched.

The series of synonyms contained in the following passage is related to glamour.

Dick: To spread the Logos as Robert does, you must have a Level of Being to attract people. You must be Integrated and mysterious.

You almost have to have some type of mystery, yes; we agree with that. Most people do seek a Teaching, and this includes organized religion, that introduces some intrigue into their lives. The teaching, thereby, becomes exciting. Many do it with gimmicks; others with what you call charisma. It only works because it provides that special hint of the mysterious realm beyond the five senses to which you as the teacher have access and that they can someday hope to glimpse. We are not opposed to this as long as the teacher does not begin to believe in his own magic. [14 April 1974]

Integrated Man is the sixth Level of Being, according to Gurdjieff, a very charismatic Level, second only to the Master Level of Being. A person at that high Level Of Being will naturally and effortlessly attract students who are still at a low enough Level of Being that gimmicky mystery, intrigue, excitement, charisma, and magic provide an initial impetus. However, the long range goal is to get the students past such glamour.

Ralph: I had an experience influenced by [the book] Tales of Power by Carlos Castaneda. I was perceiving personalities of people in shapes of an egg, a mushroom, colors spinning and colors flashing. I had some appear in ways similar to others — saw similarities never before seen by me. I felt like I was seeing Overleaves, not translated images into words. Was this a valid experience?

What makes an experience such as this one so fascinating is that the ordinary person in life never is able to perceive the whole of another self. You ordinarily perceive only that part of the other that he wishes you to see at the moment, especially in life, where proper forms mean so much. We do not question the validity of the experience, but acknowledge the fact that your skepticism forces you to question it, and that is certainly not Bad Work. In fact, we would sometimes applaud a little Skepticism on the part of this cadre's Idealists. It is when you begin to attach great significance to rather mundane experiences that you fall away from the Teaching and into the glamorous false side of the occult. However, when a verification comes in this fashion, it cannot be ignored. It would be Good Work to apply concentration to those similarities that you observed. [25 January 1975]

There are times when it is appropriate to be fascinated by a spiritual experience — such as when it is legitimate — and there are times when it is appropriate to question the validity of spiritual experiences, lest one be deluded by glamour. The trick is to discern between legitimate and glamorous, and this comes with maturity on one's spiritual path.

Many who are close to him [Robert Burton] are the victims of their Overleaves, and are totally Identified with the glamour and excitement of a "hidden" group — this makes for an excellent smoke screen. [16 February 1975]

Even then, five years from its founding in 1970, Burton's Fourth Way group was showing signs of becoming a "cult of personality", a commune with a charismatic leader with alleged secret knowledge. Advertisers of everything, including spirituality, know that calling it "secret" makes it more appealing to a certain class of people who can be swayed by glamour. The very word "occult" means "hidden", but it was called such because "secret" societies had to remain hidden at a time when the church killed "heretics". It was Bad Work for Burton to intentionally use the ploy of offering "secret" knowledge to attract students.

Miscellaneous Glamour

The following Q&A exchanges did not fit into the two previous subsections.

Richard: Let's put it hypothetically: if I had strong feelings from Essence about the land and signed the mortgage papers for the price they asked, then faced reality after signing, that would throw me way back into False Personality.

You are correct in assuming that financial crises would throw you to the wolves, but even that would not be as difficult to recover from now as six months ago and six months from now it will be even easier. We have already begun to provide. The provision will not always be instantly material, but why do you think that you picked that particular real estate office? There were others larger and more impressively designed to attract through glamour. Intuition is the primary reasoning power of Essence. [27 October 1973]

The entire edifice of advertising, commercialism, and planned obsolescence is built on the selling power of artificial glamour. The antidote to this is vigilance against glamour: learn to catch your own internal tendency to generate glamour, and learn to resist being manipulated by external glamour. Rather, learn to yield to intuition, the primary reasoning power of Essence.

Alice: That fits my father, but it sure doesn't fit my mother as I see her. Where do humans go astray in choosing mates? No one is willing to wait for the right person.

There is a weird sort of estrus operating in humans that makes them seek a sexual partner. The societal mores demand that they cement this into a more binding contract. Sometimes this can be combined with financial gain or climbing the social ladder. There is usually little thought in the lasting emotional consequences, let alone the spiritual. Quite often two people will arbitrarily decide that they have a "great deal in common." This usually is not true, since neither presents the true picture to the other. Each tries to out-guess the other and fit in the mold in order to qualify for the prize, which can be sex, money, glamour, or prestige — all of which are features of False Personality. That type of sexual attraction is rarely lasting. It is based on an initial adrenaline [or endorphin or oxytocin hormonal] flow, which does not last. This produces a nice warm glow, which is interpreted as "love". [27 October 1973]

So much of the human mating game is predicated on glamour. Based on personal experience, I would say that you might not notice this very much when you are young, but when you are old, it becomes abundantly apparent that human sexuality is encumbered with and distorted by glamour due to the influences of hormones to get humans to perpetuate the species in spite of their better judgment.

Barbara: I know a man [named] Keith who is into black magic, and he has to kill something living everyday. He seemed so sweet until I heard that. Could Michael comment on this?

This is a First Level Young Artisan, misdirected, of course. Souls go to this type of endeavor mostly from glamour, and it appeals to many who strive to stand apart from society, even in an extremely negative way. [06 February 1974]

By nature, Artisans, as personifications of the Analysis Process, tend to be alienated from themselves and from others and from the world. Hence their susceptibility to this particular type of glamour, weirdness. As an Artisan myself, I have come to believe that it is okay to embrace the uniqueness and individuality that comes natural to the Artisan, but it is not healthy to embrace weirdness for its own sake, which is especially prevalent in Young Soul Artisans, because Young Soul and Artisan Overleaves are both aspects of the Analysis Process.

Edgar: Moses raised the serpent. Jesus said, "If I be lifted up," etc. What is the relationship to kundalini here?

Yes, this [kundalini] is the highest form of movable energy you have at your disposal and therefore, that which you can utilize for each: the emotional states or Higher Emotional Centers, Higher Intellectual Centers, which are synonymous with subjective consciousness [and] objective consciousness respectively. Also, with the same had just described by the yogi [sic]. The lower Centers are fixed and the energy is like a closed system. The higher Centers are capable of ecstasy or bliss; the lower Centers are not. The Sexual Center or the kundalini force can only be breached by bringing the lower Centers into harmonious Balance. In other words, in separating from the Maya or illusions for glamour of the Physical Plane and by giving up your expectations of what a sexual experience should be. [24 April 1974]

There is more Maya/illusion/glamour in sexual relationships than in (almost?) any other facet of human experience. Money and politics are two other realms that are rife with glamour, but those were not specifically associated with the word glamour in the original Michaelian group transcriptions.

The following Q&A exchange does not contain the word glamour, but it is relevant:

Someone asked about "artificial rhythms."

Energy, you see, does have a vibratory quality, and psychic energy is no exception to this. If the vibratory quality of the universal flow [through the Assimilation Center] is neutral, and the psychic energy flow from the Essence [through the higher Centers] is positive, then the vibratory quality of the Personality [through the lower Centers] must be negative. We would call this [personality vibration] "artificial rhythm," as we would call the other [Universal and Essence vibration] the "natural rhythm." Personality lives with artificial rhythms always.

Seldom does it even come into contact with natural rhythms. [Spiritual] Schools of the type we have been discussing many times will produce an environment wherein natural rhythms begin to flow. As students come to Balance, they find their own rhythmic niche and follow it through. Natural rhythms, of course, require that the Essence be satisfied with its occupation of the moment, whether it is Moving [Centered], Emotional [Centered], or Intellectual [Centered]. Much work still must be done in dissolving the grip on allurement. This still has you fast in its jaws, and we wish that you all could feel the level of vibrations emanating from you this evening: diffuse, peaked, and jerky, with no particular pattern other than discordance and jumbled rhythms going off into the ethers with no direction or focus. At this point in the Work, it is not necessary that you be receiving data. In order to focus, you must merely concentrate and focus your energies. If you are bored with the material being shared, that simply indicates to us that you are coming from an inappropriate Center. The same goes for apprehension over new students or visitors who happen to have strong Overleaves. If you respond with the appropriate Center, the apprehension will fade. [21 February 1975]

So far as we know, it was during this session that a disturbing incident with a disruptive member pushed Sarah over the edge, and she discontinued the large group meetings, preferring to work with a core group of committed members, even if only on a sporadic basis.

The concept of glamour is important enough, in my estimation, that I wondered if it found its way from the original Michaelian group into any subsequent Michaelian teachings communities. Therefore I went looking for it.

Glamour in other Michaelian Teachings Groups

One wonders if the concept of glamour lived only in the original Michaelian group. What about later Michaelian teachings communities?

As to the Yarbro group, it seems, if the notion gained any traction there, the evidence is scant: the word appears only once in Yarbro's second book:

... you cannot turn a sage away from glamour, you can only offer something more glamorous. At the moment, this fragment is leading the most glamorous life she can imagine. If she is to do something else, it must be because she has decided that another way is more glamorous. Most sages respond well to this method of control. In fact, it is of use to remember that all sages like and need applause... [More Messages from Michael, p. 129]

The word does not appear in Yarbro's third book, *Michael's People*. Yarbro was not a member of the original Michaelian group, so she might not have picked up on the notion of glamour, or perhaps the concept did not resonate with her enough to make a "thing" of it in *MFM*, *MMFM*, and *MP*.

However, there was another branch off from the original Michaelian group, led and channeled by members of the original Michaelian group, the Briggs group. The concept did continue therein.

Glamour in the Briggs Sessions

The following quotations were extracted from the book *Michael Speaks: The Legacy of Leslie Briggs*, published by the Center for Michael Teachings, Inc., the same publisher as *Michael Speaks: The Legacy of Sarah Chambers*.

The mind must consciously attempt to assimilate the knowledge of astral travel without much shock to the Personality. In its typical manner, it half glamorizes the experience of the astral recall. [10 November 1980]

It is the Personality, not the Essence, that is seduced by glamour. A legitimate spiritual path is not glamorous.

I have a feeling I'm gonna die. Two people have predicted when my death is to be, both hitting some point in time — within a certain range of times.

To predict something at a specific time in the future is called the glamour of the occult. It is not reliable. Your fears are legitimate from a previous lifetime. [29 December 1980]

In my opinion, a lot of New Age stuff appeals to the Personality's propensity to be seduced by the "glamour of the occult". Some other specific types of the glamour of the occult are mentioned in other sessions.

Apocalyptic prophesies, and "fortune telling" in general, are suspect:

Even [the] collective thoughts of thousands?

It's already been agreed to. For instance, if California falls into the ocean and there is a great catastrophic quake, the reason you are here is because your Essence needs to experience that trauma. Whether you believe it's going to happen or not is not going to change the fact that it might happen or might not. That's the fun of not knowing. And to comment is called the glamour of the occult. The outline of this teaching is not to inform

you of natural or unnatural disasters. The point is that if it's going to happen, it was set long before you incarnated. You came in to be "in on it", so relax and enjoy it. [10 January 1981]

Forms of divination such as you see offered by a professional "psychic" are suspect:

She creates her own reality.

So there are levels of participation by psychic individuals. There are psychics that never get past the glamour of the occult. [24 August 1982]

Although they are not on the following list, personally I have issues with the use of astrology and numerology by professed "psychics" because of their lack of scientific rigor:

Also, there are a few of us who study palm reading and we would like to know where this study fits in with the scheme of things?

It fits in about as well as tarot cards, crystal ball reading, et cetera, et cetera. It's the "glamour of the occult". [23 March 1983]

Enticements to excitement rather than to nitty-gritty Work on the spiritual path are suspect:

We've been too nice to each other?

You don't have to be nasty. You haven't been applying it. It's time now to start applying it. The trust is here now. It is very safe right here, every Wednesday night. It'll get less exciting, less glamorous, and you'll start working. [23 March 1983]

Again, forms of divination such as palm reading are suspect:

I have a question about that. I just took a course and one of the things that was said was that the number or whirls on your hand demonstrates your soul level and what you have learned in your past life and stuff like that, and the more you learn in your lives, the better your patterns get. I have been looking at this, and it doesn't seem accurate to me.

No, it's not. Ask him in five years what the whirls on the hand mean. That is what we mean by the "glamour of the occult". It's nothing. [23 March 1983]

With a little healthy skepticism, one can learn to detect all manner of goofy stuff that is offered in the pseudo-spiritual market place.

The following channeling in the Briggs sessions is a very pointed repudiation of some specific aspects of pseudo-spiritual glamour that appears to have been happening in a Michaelian teachings group in the Bay Area in the early 1980s:

She actually acknowledged herself to me earlier, that she'd been out being Warrior.

So the Warrior can keep, through her principles, the San Jose group clean. This is an assignment, Marilyn, because they're all over the place down there. There's a lot of speculation and there's a lot of idealistic stuff and there's a lot of, "We wish this was here and that was there" and glamour of the occult and "Let's bring the crystal ball and drape the room", right? That's not it; the teaching is about spiritual awareness, and that you can use in your own life. And you know about that. So let's get a little healthy skepticism into the room and wipe that stuff up. [21 April 1983]

Psychologists refer to this sort of "speculation", "idealistic stuff", and "wish" as 'magical thinking'. You may start to read about this here: ><https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/basics/magical-thinking><.

In that same session, more specific types of pseudo-spiritual glamour are listed:

If I've been running away from that group, I don't know. I just have not wanted to be there. Okay, I'll ...

You hear that Tony and Sandy and Bobbie and Judy who are all here for the same reason. There's *Looney Tunes* down there, gang, okay. There's people who are approaching the group from being bananas, okay? They don't want to look at anything seriously; they want to build all kinds of fictitious garbage. They want to have cute little dreams and schemes and nothing around the information. Judy hears all this. Come in costumes and have a witchcraft type thing; why not? Okay, so this [Michaelian teachings] isn't about any of the glamour of the occult. This is about the information and it isn't always that fun and it isn't always that woo-woo-woo. You know, it's just the information, it's just about your life. If that's not interesting enough for you, well ... [21 April 1983]

The word glamour is not used in the transcriptions of channeling sessions of JP Van Hulle that were published by The Center for Michael Teachings, Inc. This dearth of usage of the term indicates to me that the concept fell out of favor with channels not part of the original Michaelian group.

Glamour per 3MG Sessions

Even though the Michael's did not have much to say about glamour in most post-original Michaelian group groups so far as I know, the subject surfaced again when the original Michaelian group channel Sarah Chambers resumed channeling during 1996 to 1998. I refer to this as the third Michael group (3MG). The following exchanges were initiated by Terrence Powers, the fellow who was originally responsible for saving the original Michaelian group transcriptions from obscurity in the mid-1990s. Therefore, Powers was familiar with what the Michaels said about glamour in the original Michaelian group. (These 3MG transcriptions have not been widely published.)

Terence wondered about Michael's use of the word "glamour" in speaking of the detachment from the physical plane by older souls.

Perhaps it would be better if we were to use a word other than "glamour" when describing the gradual detachment from the physical plane that is the goal of the Old Soul Cycle. Perhaps "distraction" would have been a better choice. The detachment is from all of those distractions on the Physical Plane that hold so many Fragments in thrall, and effectively keep them from working on their Life Tasks and, in the case of Mature Souls, from right relationships. A few examples of this would be professional sports of any description, spectacles such as the annual awards by the Academy of Motion Pictures, fund raisers that cost more than they raise, television and any other passive entertainment that enables Fragments to "zone" out in order to escape from the task at hand.

Incidentally, the Old Soul does not begin to detach from the "comforts" or the "needs" of the Physical Plane until after the Mid-cycle [Fourth Level], and even then True Play or fun is very necessary. Fragments of this Entity recall enjoying life on the Physical Plane more when we were unencumbered by the burdens that accompany the younger Cycles. We remember that we were able to appreciate the sheer beauty of nature far more thoroughly than ever before. Fine old wine did not lose its taste, roasted lamb was just as succulent. One Fragment of this Entity recalls being a tent-maker at a very large caravansary as a Seventh Level Old Soul, and that being by far the most pleasant of his many lives. This was an Artisan-Cast Warrior, and he finally had the time and the inclination to express his creativity to its fullest extent, without any of the encumbrances of a large family, or of owning property; the caravansary belonged to someone else. He had nothing to do but sit under his palm tree and sew his tents and talk to the Bedouins who came his way. Yet, this Fragment was very detached from the needs of the Physical Plane, even though he found life almost unbearably pleasant. [undated 1998]

Terence: Maya and glamour can be very powerful. How can we as students determine when they are and what they are?

While we could really use these two terms interchangeably, we will separate them into two different categories for the purpose of answering this question. We use the term glamour because it is understandable to new students who do not always understand esoteric terminology such as Maya.

By strict definition, Maya is all those institutions, traditions, customs, folklore, mythologies, taboos, totems that keep Fragments safely grounded on the Physical Plane. We think that Maya was wonderfully defined in the student Kurt Vonnegut's book *The Cat's Cradle*. He called them "granfalloon", and they included institutions such as the Democratic Party, the Daughter's of the American Revolution, etc. all of those things that Fragments on the Physical Plane consider absolutely essential in their time-frame. For instance, the "nuclear family" is Maya, as is the "Christian Coalition".

Glamour, then, has more to do with comfort, but we would say includes hero worship and the heroes who are being worshipped, money and the pursuit of it for its own sake, the rewards, or "perks," for having a higher education, whatever that means to an individual Fragment, gourmet food, coffee, high-rise buildings, plush offices, and, yes, electronic gadgets; all those things that keep you going in the marketplace.

Now, having said that, we will have to add that none of the above is bad, insignificant, worthless, or otherwise beneath you or any other Fragment. The goal of the Mature Soul Cycle is not to detach from the Physical Plane, but to seek right relationship, first [Level] with self, then [Second Level] with family, then [Third Level] with significant others, then [Fourth Level] integrate all that, then [Fifth Level] seek right relationship with the tribe (community), then [Sixth Level] with the world, and finally [Seventh Level], with the environment. None of this can be done in the absence of glamour/Maya.

The goal of the Old Soul Cycle is to gradually detach from the Physical Plane, but the first four levels are still very much "in the world". What the early [Level] Old Soul is detaching from is the frenzy of the marketplace. During this time, most Fragments gradually become self-employed in some type of cottage industry or goods-for-service type situation.

We do not encourage students of ours to jump the gun, so to speak, and try to detach [entirely] from the glamour/Maya of the Physical Plane, until they are very Old Souls. Until then, we do remind them that these institutions, traditions, comforts and the like, are not absolutely necessary for the Essence to survive. However, it remains that the Personality needs them to exist. Oh, not in the present form, of course, but Fragments all over the physical universe need mythologies and traditions to learn from. They need a set of rules to live by, and the Fragments on this planet are no exception.

What we do encourage students to do is to learn to recognize the Chief Features or “dragons”, when they are in charge, and to try very diligently to balance the Four Pillars of Vitality [True Rest, Play, Study, Work]. We also encourage students to fill their Support Circle; that is, become vulnerable to other Fragments, and allow them into your personal space. We encourage students to study the traditions and mythologies of their civilization, and notice the enormous similarities and minute differences. Detaching from the Physical Plane is a very gradual process and usually takes place during the Sixth and Seventh Levels of the Old Soul Cycle.

We encourage all our students to learn to meditate, and learn to do meditations with intention. This is perhaps the most important thing that most Fragments ever learn to do. Journeying, with or without plant medicine, is also good for students of this Teaching. Recovering past life memories (not just asking us) is one benefit of periodic journeying. Of course, we can tell you who you were and when, but seeing it for yourself in a journey with intention is far more exciting. Dipping into the Akashic river is very good practice for students. You have the ability to become a “speaker” of this Teaching, and that is an ability that not all students are willing to recognize. [11 March 1998]

This lengthy quotation seems like an appropriate place to end this discussion.





GOAL SETTING

This chapter is the product of a search for the phrase “goal setting” in the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group channeling sessions, and other words with a similar meaning. I have added some commentary, which consists of my analysis and synthesis of the quotations. Obviously, this word does not represent a significant component of the Michaelian teachings, but even so, the word appears often enough that it seems to me that students can benefit from seeing all of those instances documented and commented on in a chapter of this *Study Papers* book. Furthermore, the word is related to a number of other components of the Michaelian teachings that are considered to be more significant; these will be noted in the commentary on the instances of the word and its contexts. Basically and briefly, the Michaels recommended to the original Michaelian group members that they

The phrase “goal setting” is not capitalized in this chapter and other chapters of this *Study Papers* book because it has no special meaning in the Michaelian teachings; it is not a Michaelian jargon phrase that needs a definition apart from its use in the common vernacular. One might therefore wonder why it is even included in this book. One answer is that it is just a Scholar–Cast Artisan thing to do: I study the Michaelian teachings documents and I write about them and I want to be thorough. Another answer is that goal-setting issues are pervasive in human psychology and sociology, the subject came up in the original Michaelian group numerous times, some interesting things were said about it, and it might be helpful for Michaelian students to have the answers conveniently collected all in one place.

Goal Setting per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

The following extracts from original Michaelian group transcriptions are Q&A exchanges, where an original Michaelian group member asks a question (or makes a comment), and the Michaels provide an answer. This is [not] a subject that would benefit by division into subcategories, as some subjects do. These extracts are presented in the chronological order in which they were given, even though this is not a subject where there was a development or evolution of a specific revelation of a facet of the Michaelian teachings, as was often the case with the original Michaelian group. As is my custom, I often provide some explanatory comments following the question or answer. Underlined words in the Michaels’ answers are my emphasis, to draw attention to what it is that I comment on. Sometimes I embed words or phrases [in brackets] that I believe help to clarify the question or the answer.

In fact, this would invariably bring you all much closer, and at this moment that is the goal. You have all been told about the utter foolishness in setting up impossible goals for yourselves: fixating on a goal years in the future is another of the Personality’s defenses against the Essence’s experiencing of the moment. [22 October 1974]

Concluding Comments on Goal Setting





GOOD WORK, BAD WORK

It might come as a surprise to some Michaelian students that, even though the Michaels are non-judgmental about whatever we humans do, and even though they say “nothing is wasted”, they do sometimes evaluate events with a label: either it was “good work” or it was “bad work”. Whatever did they mean by that? And how does it square with being non-judgmental?

Unlike some other concepts that appeared in the original Michaelian group and did not survive into subsequent Michael groups, this thing about GW–BW is one of those concepts that did survive the demise of the original Michaelian group.

[[Did this concept come from the Gurdjieff teaching?]]

Definitions of Good Work and Bad Work

As we will see in the next section, the phrases Good Work and Bad Work were used from the very beginning of the original Michaelian group, months even before the Michaels themselves showed up. It was, in fact, a few months into the original Michaelian group meetings that someone got around to asking for a definition. The questioner, Ellis, was not a founding member of the original Michaelian group, but he was involved in the Fellowship of Friends, a local group involved in the Gurdjieff–Ouspensky Fourth Way teaching. His question tells me that the phrase Good Work did not originate with Gurdjieff; it was probably invented by the Michaels; underlined text is my emphasis:

Ray: Does Michael have any comments on this?

No particular comment other than that is Good Work for you.

Ray: The thought was, “Should I continue in this line of assisting Sarah?”

Ellis: What does it mean when they say that is “Good Work” for you?

Good Work is that which comes from Essence and uses positive energy forces. [01 November 1973]

Even though Bad Work does not have such an explicit definition in the original Michaelian group transcriptions, one could reasonably surmise that it refers to the opposite of Good Work, namely ‘that which comes from Personality and uses negative energy forces’. That definition of Bad Work is supported by numerous statements, as we will see during the course of this chapter.

Note also that the word “Work” has a specific usage in the Michaelian teachings, and it has a chapter devoted to it in this *Study Papers* book. There you will see that it refers to the practices and procedures that one uses on the spiritual path espoused by the Michaels and other spiritual teachers. Thus, Good Work is that which moves one forward on the path, and Bad Work is that which moves one backward on the path. It so happens that this *Study Papers* book has a chapter, “Spiritual Path”, that covers that subject in detail.

GW–BW in the Original Michaelian Group

Is renunciation [of sex] the only way to achieve cosmic consciousness?

[Soleal:] I have not renounced and I do not intend to ever seclude myself from others. I prefer to teach. I do think though that non-attachment is necessary for any progress to be made. You should work on that. Renunciation would feed the ego and would be Bad Work. Celibacy frightens you. Why? [early 1973]

Both Richard and Sarah felt strong negative pull over the last few words, then the dictation continued:

[Soleal:] Not that I am willing, but I mean that it is still a part of growth for me and a route of expression with those to whom nonverbal expression of higher emotions is difficult. You do not have to concentrate on the knowledge that the [sexual] partner is operating out of lower Centers — just express yourself. Good Work results when you give the gift of higher expression. [03 July 1973]

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Tomas predicted the second coming, but as far as our own lives go, it is not Good Work to ask for answers for the future. [17 October 73]

If predicting the future is not Good Work by a supernatural source, then it must be Bad Work.

Kathryn: I would like to know what course of action to take, whether to go back to school, which is one of the present aims, or just what to do.

The formal education would only serve to give you the proper credentials and increase your credibility factor. If you can pursue the course in Essence, this would be Good Work. Otherwise, you probably will not distinguish yourself academically.

Kathryn: For the growth of my own soul, is this a good course of action, to, for instance, study music, which may be in my Essence?

If you do study music, yes. Don't allow yourself to become enmeshed in the rhetoric. You already appreciate this mode of expression. Now it would be Good Work to learn to express yourself in this fashion. Magnificent contributions have been made in this way by essentially non-verbal souls. You have learned the benefits of creative silence. The lecture hall is not for you. If you give the gift of higher expression through music, you will reach many. [26 August 1973]

Richard: Are there any general comments?

We have no general comments. We feel that the verbalization of those pressing questions is Good Work. We have chosen to work with you because we sense in you readiness to assimilate the type of data being transmitted. [04 September 1974]

Dick: Asked about the children.

Kathryn, Dorothy and RickH are final-Cycle [Seventh Level] Old Souls. MaryAlice and Craig are First Level Older Souls. Victoria is a Mature Soul. Cheryl is a final Cycle Young Soul. You are all curious and that is Good Work. Dick has experienced the Physical Plane four times as an Older Soul. Richard has seen one lifetime as an Older Soul; Alice, two; Sarah, four. [04 September 1974]

Dick: I have a question about conventional religions and how they influence people. I know it's a vague question, but people who become identified with a religion somehow limit their experience and don't seem to grow much, yet they may help other people. Christ did not look for his followers among the righteous. He looked among the unrighteous.

His followers were only unrighteous in the eyes of certain beholders. The rituals derived from the religions are Good Work. They produce a group high, which is the only way that Baby Souls ever experience a high; that is, vicariously (through others). [08 September 1973]

Richard: To me, Gandhi seemed weak and sick most of his life.

His diet was terrible.

Richard: But was that Good Work?

It was Good Work for him. It also accomplished his purpose. The High Causal body [Transcendental Soul] has no attachment for the Physical Plane.

Richard: But wouldn't he have been more effective if he had been healthier? Wouldn't he have reached more people?

No, he would have reached far fewer. When he fasted, those who loved him attempted to bring about the changes he desired in order to persuade him to break his fast. [18 September 1973]

Alice: Do I resent this?

You cannot divorce knowledge of the hats she has worn from her present role. The feeling is not Bad Work. In fact, it shows considerable evolution. A younger soul would not perceive this at all and would merely choose not to understand the child. [27 September 1973]

Sarah: He [Michael] told us that was Bad Work [to predict the future]. It does not do any good to know the answer. We have to work out answers for ourselves. Tomas predicted the second coming, but as far as our own lives go, it is not Good Work to ask for answers for the future. All choices are yours. You even choose your Role. [17 October 1973]

Ellis: I had a blissful childhood, with love and enjoyment. Was I aware of my Role then?

Children, before they are thoroughly programmed for their societal role, usually operate from Essence and know their Roles. The Role the child first voices as a desire usually comes from Essence. After that, from False Personality, based on expectations of those around the child.

To return to this state is, of course, a major part of the goal. Until you do, you cannot shake the enthrallment of the physical, material plane. The child, especially the young child, often sees beyond the veil. This is quickly squashed. The happy childhood is mostly a myth.

In your case, it was a *bona fide* ["good faith" = genuine, valid] experience and your desire to return there is Good Work. [

Ray: In my Role as Sage, what part would Artisan play in my interest in the healing arts. (Ray is a podiatrist.)

Not an awful lot. You are more likely to bring erudition to bear than creativity. That for you is Good Work. [23 October 1973]

Richard: Out of curiosity, did I go to the Realtor because of False Personality when everyone else copped out? (We three took naps the first afternoon.)

Out of your penchant for doing, yes. This is a feature in False Personality, but it was not Bad Work and allowed you to relax. [27 October 1973]

MichaelS: I would like to ask about the direction I am going and the Entities I have contacted.

This is Good Work for you if you do not attach too much bias of your own to the information. It would be helpful to work with another as a safety valve. [01 November 1973]

Kathryn: I would like to ask [about] the Center of gravity, Body Type, Soul Level and Role of the lady I live with now in Pacific Grove. Her name is Ramona.

This is a Mature Priest. This is an Emotionally Centered Lunar-Venusian. The maturity of the soul sometimes modifies physical characteristics.

Most Old Souls are rather sloppy. The tendency toward simplicity is Good Work; being a menace to public health is not. Sometimes the casualness provides an excuse to vegetate. [10 November 1973]

Alice: Could you comment on Sarah's feelings of being right? [She has a Chief Feature of Arrogance.]

Sarah would rather be silent than wrong. This is not Bad Work, but her put-downs are. This is improving some. A bachelor's degree is no longer the price of admission [to the cognoscenti]. [10 November 1973]

Kathryn: I would appreciate a comment about the books [Tales of] Beelzebub and All and Everything [both by Gurdjieff]. Is it Good Work to read them straight through? Is the third book available?

The one [Beelzebub], of course, is allegorical. *All and Everything* is worth reading. If you refer to *The Strange Life of Ivan Osokin*, that is also worth reading. To read allegorical literature "straight through" seems a bit foolhardy to us. [10 November 1973]

Sarah: I had a very vivid dream a week or so ago, in which this young man, who was very serious looking, not handsome, but clear-appearing male, spoke to me and said "Don't believe what history said about me." I would like to know if my impression of who this was is correct and also, if history is right. (Her impression was that the man was Julius Germanicus Gaicus.)

This is the proper name for the Fragment at that time.

The "dream" you had was not a dream. Had anyone seen you at the time of the vision, your eyes were open. You should experience this more often now that you recognize it for what it is. Good Work is in the making.

There are several other souls who are attempting to communicate with you in order to impart their stories to you. You will be quite busy with all of this writing. Do not attempt to validate too much of the information. It

cannot be researched, because history has not always been accurate, as you have seen. Not until later will the truth be known.

You will be receiving much information from spirit guides. They will help you communicate the message you wish to give others. There may be some difficulty with publication at first, and then controls will begin and things will roll along.

You should hear regarding your other book. This will be Good Work also. The message from the publisher will be good. Positive vibrations are exuding from you now and should continue. Therefore, your immediate future is extremely enhancing. You can do only right for the next six months. [13 December 1973]

Richard: Why is this? Because of the planets or what?

Correct. The planets favor our mediums during this time. This was explained somewhat to Sarah last night. This time period should prove fruitful. It will become clear during this time where this teaching will develop. There will come a time soon, Richard, when you will know that the purchase of the farm will no longer be false.

You are accomplishing much Good Work. This will continue. All members of the group should feel the energy. By the way, the comet has an effect upon all in the group. During this time, it will become clearer to those in the group whether they are meant to continue, and decisions will be made and will further the group's energy level.

This time is good for more small group meetings. With four souls present, it will become easier to counsel each of you individually. It has come to the point that your entities will require personalized information. Also, in smaller groups, there can be greater control of subject jumping. A whole evening can be spent on one subject without covering everything. We are seeing much growth in the entities in our group, and also see the need for smaller meetings like tonight, for further advancement at an accelerated rate. [14 December 1973]

Dick: Is there such a thing as spiritual materialism and is it bad?

This concept is valid, and, of course, we have not said that it is Bad Work to gain from the teaching. The only Bad Work is when you use the gains to feed inadequate parts of False Personality. This, of course, builds up a tremendous deficit and you slide backwards. If you can make this not matter so much emotionally, you can turn it into positive spiritual material gain and benefit the ladies, and still have the pleasant feeling but without the guilt. [16 December 1973]

Following this, we had a general meeting and began a general fund to help in paying the costs of typing minutes, Xeroxing material, etc. We discussed the initiation of a manual to help new students understand the material. We then asked for a comment from Michael.

This was Good Work. The way in which it was done, of course, says a great deal about the makeup of the group. Already the charisma has had its effect. Amazing. The group now has more exalted souls than originally. These people bring dynamicism and cause certain things to happen merely by their dynamicism. [20 December 1973]

Phyllis: I would like to know about moving 3,000 miles away from here, with a new job. I am going soon to look and I should get over some of my negative feelings. I am confused about how to do this work with my emotions, how to best see things as they really are.

We view this with some trepidation only for the obvious reason that you will be trading a positive power area for a very negative one. This is probably what you are feeling now, even though you cannot see this at all levels. If you can continue to search there and feel fulfilled spiritually, then it will not be Bad Work. It will be extremely difficult in that existential climate, although some have sought there successfully. They are spiritual recluses though during the last years. The climate there encourages ones to be as rational as possible. This will be a switch from this one. The negativity comes from knowing this on a deeper level that very much wants to seek. That amount of formality will be distressing to you and this influence will surprise you. In spite of your background, you have managed to become very "Californianized." It will be hard. [20 December 1975]

Edgar: Can you discuss energy and the concept of the pyramid?

What we just discussed is the pyramidal effect or the channeling of the energies from the wide dispersion at the base to the narrow flow at the top. The theory behind the pyramid is, of course, symbolic. However, many

cannot work without a concrete physical model representing the symbols. This is not Bad Work, necessarily, but you should learn to be a bit more abstract. The literalness of your culture is an obstacle to true spiritual growth. [27 December 1975]

Shirley: There is a strong feeling here that knowledge of my immediate past lives would shed light for me on my present life and what I have to do in this one for Karmic releases.

We feel that, possibly, it would, also. But, we would prefer that you first define your own areas of Bad Work. Only then will the knowledge be of value.

If we simply told you the circumstances, confusion would reign. The specific questions should be at least clear in our own mind before we supply specific answers. [27 January 1975]

Mallory: I feel there are quick subject changes and that the subject is not explored enough.

We would certainly hope that this Teaching would evolve into much more than continuous dialogue. The foundation for this has been given. Even the dialogue with us is excessive. There is not time given over to reflection and searching. Valid insights from students should be accepted. If they are invalid, they will feel wrong and you will know this without confirming this [with us].

Many months ago, we advised some other way of introducing this Teaching to potential students without reference to the mode of transmission. This has not been done as yet and many new students are lost because of this. We would hope that you would spend some time on this. Body movement would be good work. Also, meditation, group concentration and perhaps massage. [31 January 1974]

Comment: We can't sit and listen without applying the words. We have to learn from what's going on. One wanted to discuss things [among] ourselves [rather] than to listen to Soleal, but when it was said that Soleal's time was limited, unlike Michael's, we wanted to hear more of what he had to say.

[Soleal:] I have a finite amount of time. If you wish, I will share with you some of my thoughts on organization. I think that one of the problems with the teacher and also with me in accepting your outlines for organization would have to be your reliance to such a great extent upon the money that can be poured into your group excluding a number of students who can offer far more than a mere medium of exchange (such as money) and consequently, the teacher has ve— [rest of word missing – vetoed?] your plans. This is Bad Work to exclude on this base and also to dwell at such length upon all of the directions as contingencies that might happen. [18 February 1974]

Some of you are afraid that you will be knocked from your pedestals in a communal system. You are probably right. That will be Good Work, believe me, for it will be the False Personality that will fall. Many times, this is with [a] resounding crash, but it always levels out in the end. The reason this system has not worked on your world has been for the most part due to your tendency to give up at the first sign of opposition and to fall backwards to old, safe patterns. [18 February 1974]

Barbara: I would like to ask about the Essene Gospel of Peace. Manuscripts contemporary with Jesus are said to have strict prescriptions on diet and bathing, including a long tube. I would like some comment on this, if there is anything there that might help us along the way.

The Essene prescriptions for healthy living were among the pioneers of food fads. They were good enough for the time when they were given. We would not recommend the dietary restrictions nor the rather brutal methods of cleansing the body, which normally cleanses itself satisfactorily, provided that it was healthy. The man Jesus was not a member of the sect. The man John was. The man Jesus came in contact with them in the late teens and early twenties, and thought them to be relatively austere and not for most people. Some of their doctrines he accepted as good. This is valid. Some would still be Good Work for serious students. Exposure to periodic heavy manual labor and an extremely strong feeling of community was the hallmark of the Essene settlements. All of them took their turn in the fields and in the house, freeing them for serious study. They ate only enough to keep the body healthy, never to the point of satiation. They wore little constricting clothing. They were personally clean although they carried this into a ritual form. The idea was good. They also felt that the good was its own reward, drawing from the Hellenes. [03 March 1974]

Dick: I feel a sense of loss with [daughter] Kathryn. It reminds me of Matthew, when there was a knock at the door and Jesus said, "Thy family are without," and he said, "You are my family." I feel she has left us and there is a great sadness. I resent this from Robert's group.

We understand the resentment. Incidentally, [in] this particular instance, we see the advice as Bad Work. In many cases, however, there is much need in the students to separate from demanding physical relatives. The man Robert must learn to differentiate. [03 March 1974]

Alice: Is there still one outstanding?

This is still in the future and can be changed through acknowledgement. It is Good Work for you to be on the alert for this. [06 March 1974]

I would like to ask if our visitor from Paris will be interested in the teaching and about her SRGA.

One point to remember with this young lady is that she is also culturally volatile. This produces some of the effect.

She is mostly Mercurial, some Lunar. She is a Mid-Cycle [Fourth Level] Young Warrior in Acceptance, not Dominance, with vanity [Arrogance], yes. And an Idealist. She would be as enthusiastic about the Teaching as she is about everything, but there is also an ingrained element of fear of magic and [it] would be Good Work to go through this. [27 March 1974]

Dick discussed a machine Dr. Bryan has that is a photo-machine, like a stroboscope, which puts people into hypnosis quite rapidly. They watch lines like brain waves (which are rapid and they just see a flash) and go under hypnosis and then can be cured rapidly. Is this a valuable machine for the group to use?

We would consider such an experiment as extremely Good Work for this group. Whether or not it is one hundred percent effective will again depend upon you, but this is a quite foolproof method. [08 May 1974]

Would hypnosis of the group during meetings be helpful?

We feel that any serious move toward opening this door is Good Work, but steer clear of parlor games. [08 May 1974]

Is it a good idea for Sarah and Richard to write a book concerning the Teaching?

The effort would be Good Work. Both of you have the desire to see this in print. Each have different views of what should be said. Consensus may come hard, but is not impossible. [10 May 1974]

Dick: Sunday's hypnosis was a Good Work and excellent start.

We would agree that it was Good Work and an excellent start. [03 July 1974]

Dick: I need a change of my Overleaves in order to have courage enough to look at strange people's eyes as deeply as I need to, but rarely do. It seems that a Power Mode would be best for this or Passion, also.

Much of this, as has been said, is culturally induced; but we must admit, that Kings in the Passion Mode and Old Sages seem to skirt the culture well.

Going from Repression will be difficult for you, Dick. We know this and will be of as much help as we can.

Observation often also enables other more timid souls to look unfettered. This is a learned skill and we would think that it would be Good Work for you to regard this as your personal task. And, incidentally, it would be good to move you out of that place you no longer wish to inhabit. [07 July 1974]

We all agreed that Eugene was the group's Peter Pan. The topic then changed to a fear of SusanT.

The lady SusanT could at any point use her fierce inner turmoil as a growth-producing experience, but it is unlikely.

In answer to your question, no, this is not necessary, given your Overleaves: but, coming from Rejection is another story. The lady cannot drop this and it will hold her back.

Photograph the "Pollyanna feature" in all of the group members in Acceptance sometime. It will be enlightening and Good Work. [07 July 1974]

Liz: I feel that more is coming through but I do not have any specific questions. I don't know exactly how to behave or what to ask or if I should ask anything, but I feel the need to keep typing. I don't know if there is any more to come from you, Michael, but I still feel that if I keep typing ...

The lady Joan is asking for some answers. She is in a state of unrest at this time. She is indecisive and she wants answers from outside herself. She needs to look to herself, however. The trip she is to take in the near future will be Good Work for her only if she reconciles all her relationships before leaving. [13 August 1974]

Mallory: Are he and Lois of the same Entity? Twin souls? Has she moved from Stagnation to Growth?

No on the former and the latter, but she is now involved in some Good Work toward this. They do have a Sequential agreement and the attraction is quite strong. [24 September 1974]

Did Jesus die on the cross as is said in the Bible? Was Judas really a betrayer? Who is Judas in this lifetime?

This was, of course, a common form of execution for a non-Roman citizen. Yes, the body died that way. The task was finished. It was as it should have been. The man Judas did no more than he was asked to do. Still, he was confused and overcome by remorse, even though he understood that the man was long gone at the time the body died. The man Judas at that time was a Mid-Cycle [Fourth Level] Mature Priest in Submission. This gave him little option to refuse the King [Jesus]. It would be Good Work to determine this (who Judas is). [09 November 1974]

haddeus asked if he and Liz should smoke grass to help get into the trance state.

This would perhaps help facilitate, yes. It would also help you in your telepathic practice.

[Regarding Soleal:] That culture (Soleal's) also places great value upon direct eye contact. It would be Good Work to prepare for this. [10 November 1974]

Joan asked for a comment as a teacher from THE teacher [Michael].

Then it would be Good Work for us not to comment, as then you would be forced to break patterns. Your looking for a comment is an expectation of us. Do you photograph that? Also, we sense in some the need to verify that we are indeed on tap. Yes, we are. [19 November 1974]

We, of course, have no quarrel with the suggestion to begin the coming together of this cadre with silence and meditation. Handling the negativity that will arise from this will be excellent work for those who fear it and seek to avoid this. Many of you seek to placate and this is not Good Work. [28 December 1974]

All of you come to this teaching from a myriad of disciplines, beliefs, philosophies and et cetera. Validation within each other is the only criteria. "Judge not, lest ye be judged." Judgment is Bad Work. Acceptance of all and verification through experiencing is the only Good Work. [11 January 1975]

Sarah found herself reciting parts of the Koran. She noted that she used religious rituals as a way to release emotions.

This soul has searched through the ages for truth. The Scholar has sought to intellectualize all experiences of ecstasy and has, therefore, denied the experience. Being now in touch, however timorously, with truth, is both threatening and incredibly inviting. To allow the experience, ritual or some form that will enable the intellect to recede could be beneficial. More talking about it is not Good Work and merely prolongs the agony that must, of course, precede the ecstasy. We patiently await your trying another doorway. [11 January 1975]

Richard: How do we avoid that?

By continuing to climb for Balance in the way we have outlined and by continuing to look within for the motivation. To become visible merely to reach for the Sage would be Bad Work for you, Richard [an Artisan]. On the other hand, surfacing to spread the Teaching would not. [16 January 1975]

Leslie asked for a comment on something new happening within her. Is it awareness of mis-Centering or is it learning to use the correct Center?

You are now beginning to photograph wrong use of Centers in yourself and others. It is still a bit retrospective, but it is Good Work. In order to use the appropriate Center, you must be constantly alert. The exercise suggested by the student Thaddeus would help in this. [25 January 1975]

Ralph: I had an experience influenced by Tales of Power by Carlos Castaneda. I was perceiving personalities of people in shapes of an egg, a mushroom, colors spinning and colors flashing. I had some appear in ways similar to others — saw similarities never before seen by me. I felt like I was seeing Overleaves, not translated images into words. Was this a valid experience?

What makes an experience such as this one so fascinating is that the ordinary person in life never is able to perceive the whole of another self. You ordinarily perceive only that part of the other that he wishes you to see at the moment, especially in life, where proper forms mean so much.

We do not question the validity of the experience, but acknowledge the fact that your skepticism forces you to question it and that is certainly not Bad Work. In fact, we would sometimes applaud a little Skepticism on the part of this cadre's Idealists. It is when you begin to attach great significance to rather mundane experiences that you fall away from the teaching and into the glamorous false side of the occult. However, when a verification comes in this fashion, it cannot be ignored. It would be Good Work to apply concentration to those similarities that you observed. [25 January 1975]

James Bolen had communicated with a man in Russia, who is now in jail because of their correspondence, so it was difficult to plan to go to Russia. Japan would be easier.

The difference, of course, is that we suggest sometimes the most challenging area of operation, because we see that as the ultimately most satisfactory, in terms of the long goal of spiritual and psychic rebirth. The expansion of this exchange into the Orient is not a Bad Work for now. In fact, it may prove to be the most financially sound move that could be made at this time. [31 January 1975]

James Bolen asked about the name of the magazine in other languages —any suggestions?

We would suggest that in the Oriental countries that you suggest a word or title embodying the concept of intuition rather than psychic, since the religions of the East are all and one tied into the concept of the Buddha or godhead within and as a title, this would pack more punch.

What is contained within can be virtually the same, but it is the title that often sells, as you well know. In the European countries, the term "psychic" is not Bad Work as this suggests the concept of the external godhead, which is the basis of Western thought. For many centuries, this has been the major schism between Eastern and Western thought. [31 January 1975]

Jean told us about a manuscript that was given to her about a year ago. This manuscript was the result of ten years of Ouija board work communication by a woman with an Entity named Orlen. Jean read the manuscript and reviewed it, and lead the woman to a writer. Jean asked about the validity of Orlen and Ella, who is the female personification of the Entity. The writer/editor and the woman have a difficult relationship, and Jean asked if they should continue their work together on the manuscript or discontinue their relationship completely. She also asked if Orlen or Ella could come through Sarah.

Ah, yes, the wheels of Karma will turn. First, let us preface the answer by saying that the collaboration will continue, in spite of what you might do, until the Ribbon has burned. The information, if put into some readable form, is Good Work. This is a low Causal teacher, all one Entity, which for some reason this student wishes to split and divide into genders, but that is beside the point. [31 January 1975]

James Bolen asked if Edgar Phillip's source was good to contact or consult.

It is doubtful that this Mature [Soul] source would facilitate this, but the source is not doing Bad Work. It is sometimes not easy to contact the Fragments of another's Entity, as there is no affinity through the man Edgar. The information will be generally good. [31 January 1975]

Donna: I am becoming concerned about my growing desire to be alone. I'd like to ask about the Negative Pole of Acceptance (Rejection). I'd like some information on Scholars and running — am I running away from a close relationship?

Most Scholars do retreat from intimacy, yes, and you are no exception. This does not mean that your work entails tolerating rejection behavior in others. In fact, it is Good Work for you to detach yourself from the negativity of others. [01 February 1975]

Abdullah felt very highly charged bolts of energy coming in. He didn't need much sleep and couldn't find a way to outlay the energy.

You can utilize these periods of positive energy flow to work toward Balance through work in the Centers. Moving Center is a good one for this channel, and is, of course, the easiest to reach. Other Good Work can involve the breathing exercises that you experienced, turning the energy upward and out into the liberated meditation. You see, even meditation is subject to real and artificial space, and the Personality imposes limitations on the space that the meditation may occupy. The liberated meditation of the Essence utilizes the energy efficiently and does not cause leakage, resulting in fatigue. The moments of Power [Mode] that those in the Caution Mode experience from time to time may be utilized in the same fashion. [08 February 1975]

If the trust level is high enough, the need for substitutes will diminish. Of course, your needs will continue for a time, until you are willing to look at the basis of the need. Perhaps, there will be some things that you will be unwilling to give up, but you should at least look at them, so that you know where the need is. It is, again, not Bad Work at all if it is done consciously and not mechanically. Many of your needs now are based upon the core beliefs and master tapes that are stored for use by False Personality. Looking at them collectively will be more valuable again than looking at them individually, just as looking at the core beliefs and master tapes will be. [16 February 1975]

When is Soleal coming?

[Soleal:] I think and the teacher [Michael] agrees, that that would be Bad Work and would only encourage fantasy to tell you when. [16 February 1975]

We would point out to you that the reverse is true of our student Soleal. Since he was steeped in the silence, his work is now with the creative dialogue. Both are Good Work by excellent Students. Both are needed, for that is what Balance is all about. [16 February 1975]

Another example of Good Work is the alternation of introversion and extroversion, with a resulting balanced approach to life.

Who is your guide? (Abdullah's)

It is the old contact with this level — the Sixth Level — (Causal plane) with whom you established very firm ties but did not get back to continue the Good Work. [13 April 1975]

Mechanical Man, or man Asleep, does not communicate, at least not if one is to posit communication as a two-way street. One of the most useful Shocks we have seen applied by both Adepts and Masters in their Schools, has been when they have, from a position of Awakeness (operating not from Personality but from Essence) have asked someone to leave the School. This has many times been enough of a Shock to transform a leech into a Student. Yes, it is a negative Shock, but it is certainly not delivered or dumped from the Negative Pole of the Overleaves [which] results in leakage downward. All negativity comes from the negative. Therefore, we certainly do not consider it Good Work. [Dimensions! April 1975]

In the Bad Work category we can place being Mechanical, being Asleep, being a leech, and being negative in general.

Of course, it is Bad Work to constantly disrupt a line of work and if this is done in Sleep, it is reprehensible. [Dimensions! April 1975]

We have a diagram of a mountain, showing levels of progression as well as Overleaves and Centers. Leslie felt that she was too identified with the drawings — ladders, etc.

Third, of course, the mountain is not true. Neither are the Overleaves and it is also true that there is no anatomic landmark that you can distinguish as a Center. They are all visible expressions of higher concepts. Beware of the identification with non-identification.

Exclusivity for the sole purpose of avoiding Friction is Bad Work and should not be sanctioned, especially by advanced students. There is an awesome order to the cosmos. Yes, we agree with that, but there is no evidence of preordination [predestination, determinism] in all of that order. In other words, we cannot, at this moment, predict who will or won't accept the Work. [15 April 1975]

Lacey: Then it is not Emotional Center that feels "happiness" when I see a beautiful sunset? The group thought, no, that it came from Intellectual Center making the judgment of beauty.

Do not misunderstand, Lacey, there is no Bad Work connected with judging a sunset as beautiful. It is simply not the work of a barometer, but of the Reacting Part of Intellect [Center] that prefers sunsets to dead rats. [15 April 1975]

I would like to know about Eckankar. If this guy is an Adept, why is there so much Personality in his group?

He is interested in doing what could be called cabalistic path work for his own growth. This is not Bad Work for him. Now as for those who follow him, it may or may not. Remember, he has already worked on himself. He leaves this [spiritual growth] up to his fellow path workers. He does, incidentally, believe that Astral path work is a way to higher states and in him this is valid. With the lady, not so (Bill's sister-in-law [Harriet]). [15 April 1975]

Concluding Comments of Good Work – Bad Work

[[Have a numbered list of these.]]





⑦ GRACE

This chapter is the product of a search for the word “grace” in the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group channeling sessions. This word does not represent a significant component of the Michaelian teachings. However, there are good reasons to discuss the subject in this *Study Papers* book: 1) the subject came up a few times during the original Michaelian group; 2) some interesting things were said about the subject; 3) the subject is related to a number of other components of the Michaelian teachings that are considered to be significant; 4) students can presumably benefit from having the mentions conveniently collected and commented all in one place; 5) Issues about grace are pervasive in human psychology and sociology and spirituality, so it behooves us to have a working knowledge of it.

The word “grace” is not capitalized in this chapter and other chapters of this *Study Papers* book because it has no special meaning in the Michaelian teachings; it is not a Michaelian jargon word that needs a definition apart from its use in the common vernacular.

This chapter is one of many in this book that focuses on a psychological component of the Michaelian teachings as found in original Michaelian group transcriptions, rather than on a doctrinal or spiritual component. A psychological component is usually either a positive to be cultivated or a negative to be mitigated. As we will see, the Michaels tell us that grace is a positive to be cultivated. The Michaelian version of psychology is not to be confused with the popular psychology of the self-improvement movement, those that do not have a spiritual core or perspective. Rather, the Michaelian psychotherapeutic path (aimed at improving psychological health) is a beneficial precursor to the spiritual path (aimed at improving soul health). To skip the former but attempt the latter is referred to as “spiritual bypassing”. This is discussed at length on such websites as https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spiritual_bypass. To skip mitigating one’s psychological issues and attempt to go straight to enlightenment usually proves to be problematic.

Basically and briefly, the Michaels recommended to the original Michaelian group members that they cultivate grace in their lifestyle, and they accept the grace that our higher selves offer.

Definition of Grace

So what is meant by grace? Wikipedia provides a partial answer (underlined words are my emphasis):

Divine grace is a theological term present in many religions. It has been defined as the divine influence which operates in humans to regenerate and sanctify, to inspire virtuous impulses, and to impart strength to endure trial and resist temptation; and as an individual virtue or excellence of divine origin.

Following that brief introduction in the Wikipedia article was some documentation about the doctrine of grace according to some of the major world religions:

While many schools of **Buddhism** emphasize self-discipline and effort as the path to enlightenment, something akin to the concept of divine grace is present as well.

Grace in **Christianity** is the free and unmerited favor of God as manifested in the salvation of sinners and the bestowing of blessings. Common Christian teaching is that grace is unmerited mercy (favor) that God gave to humanity by sending his Son, Jesus Christ, to die on a cross, thus securing man’s eternal salvation from sin.

Hindu devotional or *bhakti* literature available throughout India and Nepal is replete with references to grace (*kripa*) as the ultimate key required for spiritual self-realization. Some, such as the ancient sage Vasistha, in his classical work *Yoga Vasistha*, considered it to be the only way to transcend the bondage of lifetimes of karma. One Hindu philosopher, Madhvacharya, held that grace was not a gift from God, but rather must be earned.

Salafi scholar Umar Sulayman al-Ashqar, dean of the Faculty of **Islamic** Law at Zarqa Private University in Zarqa, Jordan, wrote that “Paradise is something of immense value; a person cannot earn it by virtue of his deeds alone, but by the Grace and Mercy of Allah.” This stance is supported by hadith: according to Abu Huraira,

Muhammad once said that “None amongst you can get into Paradise by virtue of his deeds alone ... not even I, but that Allah should wrap me in his grace and mercy.” [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Divine_grace — retrieved 08 February 2023]

So why would the Michaels have anything to say about this religious or theological doctrine? As we will see, the Michaels did have an understanding of “divine grace”, but the terminology and the characterization is different from the above descriptions.

Grace per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

The following extracts from original Michaelian group transcriptions are Q&A exchanges, where an original Michaelian group member asks a question (or makes a comment), and the Michaels provide an answer. These extracts are presented in the chronological order in which they were given. As is my custom, I often provide some explanatory comments following the question or answer. Underlined words in the Michaels’ answers are my emphasis, to draw attention to what it is that I comment on. Sometimes I embed words or phrases [in brackets] that I believe help to clarify the question or the answer.

The first mention of grace in the original Michaelian group transcriptions was by a person who had a Christian background, so his understanding of grace was of a certain definition:

Edgar: The way I have understood the teachings of Christ through meditation or praying, one can elevate himself to receive the word by communion with God. That is what he meant by “receiving the word of God.” That is what is meant by being “under grace” — all troubles melt away. Can I achieve this state?

Refer to the chapter “Religion” for an overview of what the Michaels had to say about that subject. The fundamentalist Christian theological notion of grace was that all of one’s sins are forgiven, but Old Soul Edgar saw it from a higher perspective, namely that one could come to fully realize and actualize God’s grace within oneself, and thereby learn to live a sinless life. If you are uncomfortable with the Christian fundamentalist conception of “God”, then you may substitute the Gurdjieffian and Michaelian conception of “Essence”.

You will achieve this state — whether you do it this [life-]time is up to you. You know how to do it: meditation, concentration, right-thinking, study. [22 November 1973]

The Michaels stated these methods repeatedly; refer to chapters “Meditation and Concentration”, “Negativity and Positivity”, and “Study”. What grace means to me in terms of the ultimate aim of the Michaelian version of the spiritual path is that we aspire to and gradually approach the state where we float through life graciously and gracefully, having all the ‘rough edges’ (“sins”) smoothed off. This is somewhat like ‘mellowing in one’s old age’ only more so.

The next mention occurred many months later. So far as I know, Dick did not have a religious background, so his understanding of grace differed from Edgar’s:

Dick: That’s my beef with Michael and his crew ... they are stingy with their grace.

Richard: Maybe you’re not letting it come through.

Sarah: You’ve been hearing about it every time you’ve lived [reincarnated] and sooner or later, you’ll listen.

Dick: I’m saying it is their choice to give us grace.

We can only aid you in developing those senses available to the Essence, beyond those limitations placed upon the physical body. We cannot give you anything against your will.

Dick: Then is there no such thing as grace [in the religious sense]?

Not that we know of.

Dick: Are there things we could have if we asked?

We can help you to find them within yourselves. You are as well endowed as we are; we just have learned how to tap the resources. [14 April 1974]

From this and other Q&A exchanges we learn that Dick expected, or at least hoped, that the Michaels would magically make his problems go away, and that is what Dick meant by “grace”. Numerous times the Michaels put the onus back on Dick to do the work of allowing grace to manifest from his own inner resources, namely his own Essence, as stated above, and below:

Dick: Will Michael render assistance? Some people seem to have been granted grace.

We have offered the only assistance there is. We cannot change the Overleaves for you; we are not able to interfere to that extent. There has been no interference in these other instances, you may be certain of that. They choose to call the insight by other names, such as “grace”, that is all. [10 May 1974]

Dick was in the Repression Mode and was very unhappy about that; refer to the chapter “Overleaves, Changing” for the whole story. What the Michaels meant by grace is discussed at length in the chapters “Insight”, “Intuition”, “Enlightenment”, “Higher Expression”, and “Higher Self”. Basically and briefly, those words and phrases refer to the kind of grace that comes from one’s good-better-best self, not from the Michaels.

Is it the egotism of the Intellectual Center not to like housework or is it a cultural thing?

This has little to do with culture, surprising enough. The Exalted [Cardinal] Roles [Sage, Priest, King] find mundane chores distasteful, particularly those not in the Moving Center. The Ordinal Roles [Warrior, Slave, Artisan] accept them in more grace, but there again, they are often preferred by Warriors and Scholars simply because they point to efficiency and therefore to winning. [17 September 1974]

Refer to the chapter “Culture” for more discussion about that. In this instance, the Michaels used the word grace somewhat as I understand it, as referring to a lifestyle or way of being that is graceful and gracious about everything. Of course, some Roles find it easier to be graceful and gracious about some activities than other Roles and other activities.

It is possible to endure an unpleasant situation with grace, but the goal is to step from it as quickly as possible, not stay there and grind your molars. [21 November 1976]

Here again I would understand the use of the phrase “with grace” as gracefully and graciously.

Concluding Comments on Grace

The thing about “divine grace” as the Michaels present it is that Essence freely offers it guidance about how to live a “better life”, in whatever way that may be defined by the individual. One of the Michaels’ goals for their students is that they learn to flow through life gracefully and graciously.





⑧ GROUP COHESION

This chapter is the product of a search for the word cohesion and its variations in the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group channeling sessions, almost entirely in reference to the cohesion of the original Michaelian group itself. This word does not represent a significant component of the Michaelian teachings. However, there are good reasons to discuss the subject in this *Study Papers* book: 1) the subject came up numerous times during the original Michaelian group; 2) some interesting things were said about the subject; 3) the subject is related to a number of other components of the Michaelian teachings that are considered to be significant; 4) students can presumably benefit from having the mentions conveniently collected and commented all in one place; 5) issues of group cohesion are pervasive in human psychology and sociology and spirituality — subjects covered extensively in this book — so it behooves us to have a working knowledge of it.

The word cohesion is not capitalized in this chapter or other chapters of this *Study Papers* book because it has no special meaning in the Michaelian teachings; it is not a Michaelian jargon word that needs a definition apart from its use in the common vernacular.

This chapter is one of many in this book that focuses on a psychological component of the Michaelian teachings as found in original Michaelian group transcriptions, rather than on a doctrinal or spiritual component. A psychological component is usually either a positive to be cultivated or a negative to be mitigated. As we will see, the Michaels tell us that group cohesion is a positive. The Michaelian version of psychology is not to be confused with the pop psychology of the self-improvement movement, those that do not have a spiritual core or perspective. Rather, the Michaelian psychotherapeutic path (aimed at improving psychological health) is a beneficial precursor to the spiritual path (aimed at improving soul health). To skip the former but attempt the latter is referred to as “spiritual bypassing”. This is discussed at length in https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spiritual_bypass. To skip mitigating one’s psychological issues and attempt to go straight to enlightenment usually proves to be problematic.

Numerous chapters among these study papers are sister chapters to this one, as we will see below. The opposite of group cohesion is documented in the chapter “Individuality”.

Definition of Group Cohesion

So what is meant by cohesion? Wikipedia has an article that provides a definition and a description, as follows:

Introduction

Group cohesiveness (also called group cohesion and social cohesion) arises when bonds link members of a social group to one another and to the group as a whole. Although cohesion is a multi-faceted process, it can be broken down into four main components: social relations, task relations, perceived unity, and emotions. Members of strongly cohesive groups are more inclined to participate readily and to stay with the group.

Definition

From Neo-Latin *cohaesio* and French *cohésion*, in physics, cohesion means “the force that unites the molecules of a liquid or of a solid”. Thereby, there are different ways to define group cohesion, depending on how researchers conceptualize this concept. However, most researchers define cohesion to be task commitment and interpersonal attraction to the group.

Cohesion can be more specifically defined as the tendency for a group to be in unity while working towards a goal or to satisfy the emotional needs of its members. This definition includes important aspects of cohesiveness, including its multidimensionality, dynamic nature, instrumental basis, and emotional dimension. Its multidimensionality refers to how cohesion is based on many factors. Its dynamic nature refers to how it

gradually changes over time in its strength and form from the time a group is formed to when a group is disbanded. Its instrumental basis refers to how people cohere for some purpose, whether it be for a task or for social reasons. Its emotional dimension refers to how cohesion is pleasing to its group members. This definition can be generalized to most groups characterized by the group definition discussed above. These groups include sports teams, work groups, military units, fraternity groups, and social groups. However, it is important to note that other researchers claim that cohesion cannot be generalized across many groups.

Antecedents of cohesion

The bonds between group members do not develop spontaneously. They develop from a number of components such as attraction, coordination, sense of belonging, and shared emotions. The components can be known as antecedents of cohesion. Moreover, they also define the nature of cohesion. Each component is explained in-depth below. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Group_cohesiveness — retrieved 02 April 2023]

Thereafter followed paragraphs that discuss the components of cohesion. These include: attraction, sense of belonging, coordination, and shared emotions. Other sections are called Factors, Consequences, and Public Policy. By all means read the entire article if it piques your curiosity. Reading it will also help you to understand what happened in any group or groups that you might have participated in, and what happened in the original Michaelian group, as described below.

Group Cohesion per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

The following extracts from original Michaelian group transcriptions are Q&A exchanges, where an original Michaelian group member asks a question (or makes a comment), and the Michaels provide an answer. These extracts are presented in the chronological order in which they were given. As is my custom, I usually provide some explanatory comments following the question or the answer. Underlined words are my emphasis, to draw attention to what it is that I comment on. Sometimes I embed words or phrases [in brackets] that I believe help to clarify the question or the answer. Numerous study papers related to this chapter are to be found within my comments.

Early in the history of the original Michaelian group, a question came up as to whether or not to develop it in private, or develop in a more open group:

Does it help to have a group at the [channeling] sessions?

The group formulation would produce cohesion. This could eventually be valuable if you wish to use group concentration. There is no other reason. [21 August 1973]

This answer would seem to indicate that the Michaelian teachings could have developed and matured entirely within the core group of founding members. In fact, some new channeled teachings have appeared entirely within private sessions, where only the channel and an amanuensis were present. This has not been the case through the history of Michaelian teachings. Group cohesion becomes a concern in this situation. This answer also indicates that doing the channeling in a group setting should lead to group cohesion, but, as we will see, that alone is not enough.

We asked Michael to comment on the group's chances of acquiring communal property and coming together in a cohesive unit.

Our suggestion would be to go and investigate land available, but first find a sound organizer. A younger soul would be best, one who will keep the wolves away. [20 October 1973]

Refer to the chapter "Communal Living" for the whole story about the fact that the original Michaelian group had this as an aspiration during the entirety of their existence. As it so happened, to do this or not to do this, and how, was a 'bone of contention' rather than a rallying cry of cohesion.

The problem was that the original Michaelian group never had a "sound organizer" who could bring and hold them together as a "cohesive unit", a charismatic leader that everyone acknowledged was worth emulating and following. For group cohesion, it is not enough that a bunch of people huddle around a channel with rapt attention, because group cohesion is developed by the members interacting with each other.

After the original Michaelian group had been meeting for more than half a year, the subject of group cohesion came up for discussion yet again:

Is there a message for our group for the new year?

We would think that cohesion would be enough a goal to keep you going. There is a very viable structure beginning now with all of you who would be willing to live on a reduced scale in order to free yourselves from Maya. This is what we have endeavored to bring about. Merely the cognizance is a start. The details must be

worked out by each of you in a mutually satisfactory manner. Believe it or not, consensus can be reached within this group. Some will take longer than others, but even they will eventually verify. [30 December 1973]

The Michaels often mentioned the desirability of living a simple life; refer to the chapter “Complexity versus Simplicity” to get the whole story. This passage mentions “reduced scale” because that was a part of the overall plan to combine households on the way to communal living, which was a component of the overall plan to achieve group cohesion, which is a part of the overall plan to achieve Agape. That is how this all fits together.

At this point in our time, it turned midnight [on New Years Eve]. There was no kissing or screaming, but Richard asked if there was any special message for us for the New Year.

We think that the goals for the coming year would be cohesion, commitment, and commonality of ideation.

We wish you well in this; it is within your grasp. [31 December 1973]

Refer to the chapter “Commitment” because it is relevant to this chapter on cohesion; it is necessary to have commitment if one is to succeed in the lengthy and arduous process of group cohesion. Regarding “ideation”, if one is to have a cohesive group, then it is obviously important to have a shared belief system, value system, and behavior system, and obviously the Michaels were leading the people — most of whom came to the original Michaelian group from various other spiritual teachings — in that direction.

Dick: I feel that the cohesion of the group is not strong enough. I don't feel the advice given is enough to hold us together.

There is a definite striving toward cohesion between at least five members in this group. The advice must now be extracted from the middle of material you have received and spelled out to those who have not joined forces. We feel that you and several others are capable of extracting the essence of this teaching so far, and giving it to the others. If they accept it, then that is good. If not, then you must know that we were not their [true] teacher. You will receive much help in this from the Sage, Cynthia. [24 January 1974]

My guess is that the five cohesive members were the founding members of the original Michaelian group, namely Sarah and Richard, Alice and Dick, and Gene. Carolyn attended only sporadically from beginning to end, and there is no indication that she was a committed student. It is often the case in medium sized groups that there is a single core that is the most committed, and then there is a periphery of hangers-on. (In large groups, the tendency is to section off into teams of a manageable size.) This phenomenon even has a name, the 20-80 rule, because twenty percent of the people do eighty percent of the work of the group.

Cynthia, who attended for the first time in the session before this, did go on to create a large document “The Teachings of Michael: Emanations from the Causal Plane”, which extracted the best material from the transcripts of the 1973 sessions. This document was then used to bring newbie attendees up to speed, which, of course, accelerated group cohesion via spreading the shared belief system and value system.

As indicated in the lengthy Q&A exchanges later in this same month of January 1974, group cohesion was on their minds:

Mallory: I feel there are quick subject changes and that the subject is not explored enough.

We would certainly hope that this teaching would evolve into much more than continuous dialogue. The foundation for this [teaching] has been given. Even the dialogue with us [Michael] is excessive. There is not time given over to reflection and searching. Valid insights from students should be accepted. If they are invalid, they will feel wrong and you will know this without confirming this [with us].

Many months ago, we advised some other way of introducing this teaching to potential students without reference to the mode of transmission [channeling]. This has not been done as yet, and many new students are lost because of this. We would hope that you would spend some time on this. Body movement would be Good Work. Also, meditation, group concentration, and perhaps massage.

What is the value of the group?

Answer: For energy.

Ray: [Question lost.]

In order for this group to achieve the cohesion necessary to provide [spiritual] growth, a level of intimacy and trust far exceeding what you now have must be reached. This cannot be achieved through dialogue. Dialogue is False Personality's defense against Emotional Center.

Ray: This is the first time I feel the group is into something meaningful. The energy feels different. To get in touch with real feelings is frightening and is unattainable to this in a group.

Ellis: We can't reach each other through dialogue or what I call "aboutism." When someone brings up something deeply personal, the group as a whole makes the whole thing personal. I hear the pain, and then we go on to the next person's pain.

Richard: Are there suggestions for improvement? I feel the personal agenda could be handled by each person relating to each other, rather than running to Michael right away.

Ellis: I see a more basic problem here. I want to know what is the purpose of the group. I experience no purpose. There's the inevitable push on without discussing. We have to accept the goddam zombies. Gotta be honest. There has to be no judgment: no right or wrong.

Richard: I see our goal as becoming one. In meditation, I get that the soul evolves into a higher plane and there is a closeness and intimacy.

Edgar: My purpose is to receive the Teaching [that] I heard 2,000 years ago.

Ellis: You cannot receive anything in a vacuum.

Sarah: There's a feeling here that we are drawn together for a specific purpose and that we are to grow as a group from our experiences. We must be careful the group does not deteriorate into a therapy group. We have to put our heads together and get into the teaching. (As another member puts it, we must 'get our poop together.')

Edgar: The thing I'm into is the teaching.

Richard: Personal agendas create a block.

Edgar: These things are valid when we can relate the personal questions to the teachings. [31 January 1974]

That is perhaps the key passage in this chapter on group cohesion, because it connects many related subjects together; refer to the chapters "Agenda", "Bodywork Modalities", "Dialogue", "Emotional Center", "Intimacy", "Meditation and Concentration" and "Trust". There can be no group cohesion without a common purpose or goal; refer to the chapter "Purpose" for more discussion of that subject.

We also ohm'd in a circle and acted out a, "Don't you ever, ever, EVER, EVER let me catch you brushing that dog's teeth with my toothbrush ... "

As the group becomes more and more cohesive, many more sharing experiences may take place without the self-consciousness present in more multi-disciplined gatherings. This will create a unique atmosphere in which growth is almost certain to occur.

Ray: I suggest that we start and end the meeting with a circle of chants or something together, as an energy-raising thing. [06 February 1974]

Refer to the chapter "Ritual" for more discussion of that practice that should serve to develop group cohesion. Some groups begin with a recitation of a mission statement, or they begin with a moment of silence which tends to affirm solidarity, or something like that. Another reason for an opening ritual is to demarcate the division between whatever was happening before the meeting and whatever happens during the meeting; the chapters "Agenda" and "Scattering" have somewhat to say about that.

Alice: Where was it that we [original Michaelian group members] were together before?

You have known each other several times at the cardinal points [in history], and once in between [cardinal points] with Cheryl.... Most of the present group has come together several times in its entirety, but the cohesion did not come about. [13 February 1974]

More than once the Michaels told the original Michaelian group that they were kindred and friended souls who had reason to be together over the millennia of their reincarnational story arc. For any group to hang together, the forces of attraction must be stronger than the forces of repulsion, and, at least for older souls, the determining factor is likely to be the kindred and friended soul thing. With the original Michaelian group, the difficulty of achieving this aspiration for cohesion is emphasized by the fact that "the cohesion did not come about" for the original Michaelian group members this go-round either. This original Michaelian group failure should be a lesson to the successor groups of Michaelian students. By the way, the "cardinal points" in history are the turbulent transitions (such as now) between relatively stable phases. What better time for groups to model cohesiveness than when society is 'coming apart at the seams'.

Phyllis: It seems there has been progress made in that we are not jumping subjects around so much.

There has been some improvement, yes, but we [still] see much scattering in the aims of the various souls involved in this. We would still see [that] some more cohesion and mutual purpose should arise; then that should eliminate the scattering.

Refer to the chapter "Scattering" for more discussion about that impediment to group cohesion. There you will read that, basically and briefly, there can be no group cohesion if members focus their minds and hearts

and behaviors elsewhere than on what is happening here and now in the group. I have noticed that the more people there are in the group, the more the potential for cohesion is diluted and thwarted because of lack of ability to focus with so many people present.

Gene: I see a purpose evolving in Susan's group. It has a therapeutic format and takes an upset and the accumulated information. It takes into account Karmic Ribbons from past lives and how this has affected us and others. I would like to hear some feedback on how we are doing.

These specific conflicts are best hashed out in the small groups or preferably alone, using either the techniques presented to the lady Susan or the alternatives suggested to Richard and Dick. [20 March 1974]

The value of having a focused purpose for the group was already discussed, above. Obviously, conflicts mitigate group cohesion, so there should be a way to resolve them.

A few months after that session, Dick came up with a list of stuff that would promote group cohesion:

Dick had some angles on the group toward a more cohesive, active one:

- We have a medium and a treasurer, and we need a secretary for communication of activities such as exercise meetings, dance, yoga, games, plays, concerts, etc.
- We could have one or two hypnosis or meditation classes per week or work with the hypnosis machine.
- Weekend trips for those who wish to be together need planning (Carmel, Tahoe, the beach) for new experiences and impressions. (Mendocino)
- Write for [Robert] Monroe's tapes (something's already being done by Chambers on this.)
- Purchase game equipment for the group, such as volleyball and net, badminton, football, basketball, softball and/or baseball plus a bat.
- Dinners out need planning and communicating.
- Contact Fischer-Hoffman (Appoint Gene "Secretary of State"). Contact other groups.
- Plan "work teams" to finish Chambers' apartment, Alice's garden and shed, Mallory's whatever, Narra's thing, Gene's airplane. In other words, help each other.
- Have pottery, art workshops, jewelry mementos such as abalone necklaces.
- Poetry readings, our own or Cody's. (Good for Emotional Center).
- Group massage. (Good for Instinctive Center.)
- Group concentration exercises.
- Year-round cabin rented at Tahoe by the group.
- Someone to coordinate films and projectors, such as Esalen-type "Here Comes Everybody".
- Evening or two to make pillows for the group.
- Meetings sans alphabet board. (Wednesday meetings are too large for the board, says one angle of thought.)
- Group library. [07 July 1974]

I included this list so as to supplement whatever ideas that future Michaelian groups might come up with. In addition to those suggestions, just 'hanging out' with other students develops group cohesion.

The above list was given at the very beginning of that session; the following appeared at the very end:

... we have told you many times that you need each other, this being one of the reasons each of you moves in or on a different vector, and each can offer the other valuable insights through close association. Tonight was an enormous step in the direction of group solidarity. [07 July 1974]

Socializing is Good Work for its own sake, but there is more to group cohesion than that:

Beth: I feel I have known Matt before. I felt good with him five minutes after meeting him.

In fact, you have known each other before. In your group, as in this one, there is an intermingling of familiar Entities and Fragments. This produces a special sort of cohesion that enables the Work to proceed. Those who drop by the wayside usually belong in another [student] cadre. They do not always know why, but the feeling is just not right and they leave. [14 July 1974]

Best for group cohesion, more than anything else, at least for Old Souls, is that the group consist of kindred and friended souls, those who have been together in past lifetimes and future lifetimes, and will continue to

cohere on higher planes on the way to the reintegration of the Cadre. By the way, the word “cadre” in that passage does not refer to the group of seven Entities cast at the same time (that word for a group of Entities appeared after the original Michaelian group); it refers to some other type of non-random grouping of people.

On some occasions, the original Michaelian group would spend a weekend together, for the purpose of developing group cohesion. It is a lengthy quotation that starts and ends with the mention of cohesion. Many synonyms and antonyms for cohesion are mentioned, and I underline them:

We held a group discussion of experiences and impressions during the weekend we spent together. Many of us experienced verification of Soleal, Emotional Center experiences, and a cohesiveness of the group. We then asked Michael for a comment about the weekend the group had spent together, specifically about trust.

We would hope that those of you who were exposed to the verification of the presence of our other student [Soleal] and who were exposed simultaneously to the joy of communication without the need for subterfuge and verbiage, would attempt within the next few months to perfect, or at least awaken, these skills within yourselves. This is perhaps the most exciting breakthrough that this cadre [of students] has yet experienced. Those students who did not experience this at least now know where the work is, and yes, we would agree there will be much focus on this and other similar teachings in the coming years, and it will be up to the students to lend credence to the words. This [teaching] will be far more believable coming from a Balanced student than [if it were from] a scattered one.

It was excellent work to have the group pressed into a crowded situation and yet come away with far more positive emotions than negative ones, even though many privately held belief systems concerning the need for alienation were violated. Those of you who made the experience count will not lose the ground gained. Those students who refused to penetrate the experience are in precisely the same spot as they were before the experience.

It does not worry us that you wish to go into this [cohesion] gradually; we have much time. It is, however, gratifying that at least the ball is now rolling, and many students are now looking at alternatives that in the beginning were untenable. This is some progress. The rest must come about at a comfortable rhythm. The more time that you can spend in close proximity, the easier the Work will become. It was graphically clear to many students, for instance, that they were not restricted by the fact that the other students were present, and that they were able to function in many spheres and with a far keener appreciation of the action undertaken. This is a valuable lesson and a valid group Photograph.

This is an old group. There are no desires to mold you. You can interact casually with one another, and we think that within a very few months (could) manage to give up many of your remaining expectations of how that interaction should feel. When this happens and you are able to express genuine feelings to one another, you will be ready for an alternative life, such as the [communal] one we have suggested.

The reason for the psychic Photograph should be fairly clear at this time. It is primarily a warm-up exercise, leading to non-verbal communication. Many students who are also teachers err in trying to speed up this process, and for that reason the desired communication does not take place. The telepathic silence is anything but silent, but students cannot be shielding if this is to come about. If you first learn to express your feelings to one another without shame or guilt or any of the other myriad barriers, then you open the door to silence. Only then can you be truly comfortable without the chatter. Chattering is usually just another shield so the Personality does not have to be honest. You see, the Essence cannot lie; therefore, the Personality cannot tell the truth; it can only lie. This is an important point to remember, since the chattering emanates from the Personality. The Essence does communicate. There is no need for mindless silence in the path toward Balance, but it might as well be truthful communication, and until you can knock away the barriers, this cannot come about. The Personality will always be around to conveniently lie in order to satisfy the Goal. If this Goal happens to be Acceptance, for instance, think of how much energy is lost.

Dick: Asked for a comment from Michael regarding his own experiences during the weekend. He felt in an obligated emotional state, non-relating, alienated, didn't feel well, a psychosomatic type illness. He asked if this was a past life carry-over, and if there was a rewarding answer, he would like to hear it.

With some students, and we include you, Dick, in this, the desire to experience the experience was counterbalanced by the feeling of unreadiness and unwillingness to verify that on a strong plane. Also, the belief systems of some students includes the “I'm not psychic” fact and this was strongly operative during this group gathering.

It was surprising even to us the amount of fear that individual students had concerning other student expectations of their behavior, even to developing unpleasant physical symptoms. There were also many expectations of the gain, if any, to be had through the experience, also counterbalanced by preparations for the almost certain disappointments. As long as you maintain this belief that you cannot open up these skills, they will remain closed forever, closeting you off from the rest.

The feelings of alienation always surface more strongly when the alienated student is in a situation where he senses on some level that the other students are in contact, either with each other or with the teacher. This happened to you this time. You even anticipated that it would happen, and yet your presence was felt and acknowledged by many other students, and they would have felt a definite loss had you not conquered your fears and attended. It would probably astonish you if you could transverse these barriers and feel the cohesiveness. [12 November 1974]

In this *Study Papers* book there are entire chapters on some of the words that appear in that lengthy quotation, namely, "Alienation", "Barriers and Blocks", "Belief System", "Communication", "Emotional Center", "Expectations", "Guilt", "Honesty and Dishonesty", "Photography", "Positive and Negative", "Scattering", "School Metaphor", "Shame", "Silence, The", "Telepathy", "Truth", and "Verification and Validation".

Stop for a moment and notice the lack of cohesion. No wonder the information is painfully squeezed out letter by letter [on the Ouija board]. Why the tremendous scatter? Do you know at all? Can you feel it? We certainly can. Why tonight? Can you gain any insight? This is directed toward all concerned. The evening reminds us of the myth of Sisyphus: one step forward, two steps back. [21 February 1975]

The scattered attention in that meeting was so bad it interfered with the speed of the Ouija board. Not only that, but this was said in the context of members attempting to discern the Overleaves of someone, and they were too distracted to make accurate guesses.

However, we must say that if the "break-away" [from imprinting and acculturation] occurs normally, then the manifestation of the soul level will also occur unimpeded, and then the fragmentary learning can be brought together in a more cohesive whole. It is possible to learn this material and allow it to effect a change of sorts without peeling back the layers, but the gains will be superficial and there will be backsliding. As to which is better, the answer would be that all that takes one back to "go" are better. [10 April 1977]

The last mention of cohesion, said near the end of the original Michaelian group, was about learning the teaching as a "coherent whole" rather than as "fragmentary learning". The teaching was delivered in a piecemeal fashion in a group that had little cohesiveness, but now that we have the essence of the whole teaching we should be able to do better.

Concluding Comments on Cohesion

Some of the suggestions found in the original Michaelian group transcriptions for promoting group cohesion were these:

- Have a stable leader worth following.
- Have a ritual that gets everyone functioning 'on the same page'.
- Have a common purpose worth pursuing.
- Have a teaching worth believing.
- Have a procedure for resolving differences.
- Have a commitment to the group, to the exclusion of irrelevancies and trivialities.
- Have a preference for Collectivism over Individualism; leave your personal agenda behind.
- Pay attention to what is doing on in the meeting; don't be distracted or be distracting.
- Socialize with other group members in meaningful ways, not during the group.

There are many impediments to group cohesion. These are typically overcome, at least temporarily, in a personality cult, where some charismatic and dynamic guru is able to brainwash their followers to such an extent that they forget their differences and unite in a common purpose. Personally, I was once a member of such a cult, a quasi-Christian sect, so I understand the psycho-dynamics. There was a strong rewarding feeling of camaraderie in that we were preparing for the second coming of Christ to save humanity from the clutches of Satan, and what could be more noble — and urgent — than that? However, that did not happen on

schedule (1975). The Michaels have indicated that their students will also have some part to play in yet another manifestation of the Infinite Soul, but they do not make a big deal out of it.

Group cohesion is a short-range component of a much longer-range phenomenon, namely the reintegration of composites of kindred souls; refer to the chapters “Composites” and “Kindred Souls”. For the most part, this takes place on the Emotional (aka Astral) and Mental (aka Causal) Planes, but we can attempt to start the process on this Plane, by breaking down “Barriers and Blocks”; refer to the chapter by that name.





GROWTH, SPIRITUAL

The Michaelian teachings is about a lot of things, and most of them are covered in various chapters in this book. This chapter is obviously about spiritual growth.

This Teaching is one of spiritual growth. [27 December 1973]

Do you go faster in a Goal of Growth? When is the Goal of Growth chosen? Is it because of karmic reasons that it is chosen?

It can, of course, but is usually not desirable. The goal of growth is usually chosen to complete a monad.

Do you choose all Goals in a cycle?

That is usually what happens. Some choose stagnation and sit out several levels in a cycle — plateauing-out on life — but this is usually after some particularly stormy sessions.

Then would it be ideal in any Goal to switch to Growth in a life?

That is valid, but most never see their goal.

How does the Goal set up before birth?

The soul must review the karma incurred during the immediate past life and determine where the lessons lie, then set the goal in that light. [20 February 1974]

But the Michaelian teachings is not about the Goal of Growth, so let's move on.

We have a method by which all of you can choose to achieve a modicum of growth on a spiritual plane. Many of you can even use it as a springboard toward becoming an adept. This is entirely up to you. We will find many vehicles through which we can teach the logos — this does not present us with a problem. We answer all calls for this teaching.

What is the method?

We have been transmitting this to you, but many have not heard. This teaching has implicit within it the method of which we speak.

The method is to live the teaching in an attitude of love.

Individual verification of the given material is perhaps the most vital precept upon which this teaching is based, for this process alone opens the door to expanded perception, which is, of course, necessary in order to experience agape, and thus grow spiritually. [24 February 1974]

One student has just communicated a ponderous insight of his and it is worth sharing, of course. Many in this group still earnestly desire to acquire spiritual growth through some magical process of osmosis, and, therefore, are slow to get into the Work. It is certain that you will acquire some measure of personal growth merely by associating yourself with a teaching such as this. However, you are cheating yourselves by remaining on the periphery, for the inner circle provides all of those miracles that you earnestly desire. The magic is there, not out on the perimeter. If you persist in skirting the issues, you can only stand on the outside looking in, and only sense frustration and longing. "Go on, take the plunge — you can always retreat if you wish to." [11 January 1975]





GUILT [— BLAME?]

This chapter is the product of a search for the word “guilt” in the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group channeling sessions. This word does not represent a significant component of the Michaelian teachings. However, there are good reasons to discuss the subject in this *Study Papers* book: 1) the subject came up numerous times during the original Michaelian group; 2) students can presumably benefit from having the mentions conveniently collected all in one place; 3) some interesting things were said about the subject; 4) the subject is related to a number of other components of the Michaelian teachings that are considered to be significant; 5) Guilt issues are pervasive in human psychology and sociology and spirituality.

The word “shame” is not capitalized in this chapter or other chapters of this *Study Papers* book because it has no special meaning in the Michaelian teachings; it is not a Michaelian jargon word that needs a definition apart from its use in the common vernacular. The Michaels attached no special meaning to the word “guilt”, but the Michaels had a certain *perspective* on guilt, and it is Good Work for their Students to know about that; hence this chapter. The Michaels’ special perspective is discerned via a careful examination of the occurrences of the word throughout the original Michaelian group transcriptions. Basically, as we will see, the Michaels recommended against wallowing in guilt; it is not an appropriate emotion for their students; its function is better served by other emotions and thoughts.

+Guilt versus –Guilt

First let’s first take a look at the common definition and understanding of the term, and then we will take a look at its usage in the original Michaelian group, and in subsequent Michaelian teachings communities.

Definition of Guilt

Guilt Cultures

This chapter is one of a triad of chapters, along with “Shame” and “Fear”, that discuss three types of human cultures. I will let Wikipedia tell you about them:

In cultural anthropology, the distinction between a guilt society or guilt culture, shame society or shame culture and honor–shame culture, and a fear society or culture of fear, has been used to categorize different cultures. The differences can apply to how behavior is governed with respect to government laws, business rules, or social etiquette. This classification has been applied especially to so called “apollonian” [intellectual, as distinct from “dionysian”, emotional cultures] societies, sorting them according to the emotions they use to control individuals (especially children) and maintaining social order, swaying them into norm obedience and conformity.

In a guilt society, control is maintained by creating and continually reinforcing the feeling of guilt (and the expectation of punishment now or in the afterlife) for certain condemned behaviors. The guilt worldview focuses on law and punishment. A person in this type of culture may ask, “Is my behavior fair or unfair?” This type of culture also emphasizes individual conscience.

In a shame society, the means of control is the inculcation of shame and the complementary threat of ostracism. The shame–honor worldview seeks an “honor balance” and can lead to revenge dynamics. A person in this type of culture may ask, “Shall I look ashamed if I do X?” or “How will people look at me if I do Y?” Shame cultures are typically based on the concepts of pride and honor. Often actions are all what count and matter.

In a fear society, control is kept by the fear of retribution. The fear worldview focuses on physical dominance. A person in this culture may ask, “Will someone hurt me if I do this?”

The terminology was popularized by Ruth Benedict in *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword*, who described American culture as a “guilt culture” and Japanese culture as a “shame culture”.

[>https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Guilt—shame—fear_spectrum_of_cultures< — retrieved 26 February 2023]

Besides this chapter on “Guilt” and the chapters on “Shame” and “Fear”, another relevant chapter is “Culture”. As we will see below, the Michaels had a dim view of guilt as a means to persuade them to conform to standards that have only a local and temporary cultural significance.

Guilt per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

The following extracts from original Michaelian group transcriptions are Q&A exchanges, where an original Michaelian group member asks a question (or makes a comment), and the Michaels provide an answer. This is not a subject that would benefit by division into subcategories, as some subjects do. These extracts are presented in the chronological order in which they were given, even though this is not a subject where there was a development or evolution of a specific revelation of a facet of the Michaelian teachings. As is my custom, I often provide some explanatory comments following the question or answer. Underlined words in the Michaels’ answers are my emphasis, to draw attention to what it is that I comment on. Sometimes I embed words or phrases [in brackets] that I believe help to clarify the question or the answer.

Dick: That was Pamela on the phone. She wanted to tell me that her Karmic thing with Gary was over. That’s why she called. She asked me to ask about her [Karmic] role.

Pamela is a Mature Soul who is uncomfortable with the people that guilt makes her stay around. [26 August 1973]

Sarah: The wording is so ambiguous, it would be hard to know for sure that’s what they had.

It is doubtful that anyone could survive if they bled really for that long. This particular problem is symbolic of sexual problems in general, most of which are hysterical. Many women do cause prolonged uterine bleeding through their feelings of rejection and guilt. If the bleeder is a Mature Soul, you can help them by helping them to see the source. Otherwise, you may have to remove the uterus. How they react to your suggestion that there is nothing organically wrong should give you a clue to the Cycle. [04 September 1973]

Dick: Was my father a late Cycle Old Soul whose personality was much bound up in False Personality?

Yes, but not late Cycle, [he was] early [Cycle Old Soul]. This is why he could not come out of the False Personality to be “real” to you and Mary [his mother]. CarolH [his sister] did not perceive this. He had [the] desire to search, but not [the] knowledge of the goal. The goal [of searching] does not become clear to other than Older Souls. That is why the penitent orders are almost entirely composed of Mature Souls. They perceive the collective guilt of the world around them and assume that it is they who have sinned. There is no sin, only Karma, as there is no evil, only Maya. [08 September 1973]

Ellis: I have done psychotherapeutic work in the past. Much has come from my False Personality. I am thinking of starting again from Essence. I would like some comments.

This is, of course, possible only if the experience itself comes from Essence. This will require that you examine your motivations from Essence. Try to determine why you wish to do this. In other words, what is in it for you? If it comes from a space that is guilty, then False Personality has the upper hand. Don’t try to go back in this life and unwind [Karmic] Ribbons. This is not the way it is done. The work you did was not wholly in False Personality, but there was a great deal of gain for the Personality there. You can be certain that all of those desires attached to physical or material gain emanate from False Personality. This includes accolades and laurel leaves.

Alice: Explain, please.

Your willingness to take the blame should be your first clue as to what needs “looking at”.

Alice: What do you mean?

Alice, you are blaming yourself for his problems. This is not on a conscious level always, but the guilt is there. You must stop [self-blaming] before he can look at himself in relation to you. We see the question you ask on multiple levels. There is the sub-vocal one, but this is a tempest in a teapot compared to the underlying structure. It [the challenge] is in [her husband] Dick. This must be solved by him. As long as you help by shouldering the blame, whether consciously or not, it will not be solved. He brings up surface issues that cloud the real issue and you respond when he pushes your buttons. Stop responding in your penitent fashion. This will be the needed shock [to provoke his insights]. You must know that you are not to blame. [10 November 1973]

With Victoria, there is a Mercurial drive to establish an independent career and justify her existence to herself. In Victoria, there is considerable guilt of earlier waste of potential. [16 December 1973]

Do any of us ever live up to our aspirations? This problem might be specific to humans, not animals or plants. Self-justification is connected to the notion of "Guilt" — refer to the chapter by that name. If the Emotional Center did not feel guilt, the Intellectual Center would not need to — justify it. If a person understands that they have inherent worth or value regardless of living up to some alleged ideal or not, and therefore need no justification for their existence, then there would be no guilt.

Dick: How can we help others if we can't help ourselves? I would like to ask about spiritual materialism — that is, using the powers of the teaching to draw attention to myself. That is, using the teaching for ego gratification to get a bevy of females following me, like Robert. There is a conflict developing here.

Haven't you discovered yet that all things that are ego-gratifying have an element of delicious clandestine guilt attached? The ego seeks intrigue and adventure; the Essence does not. This is why the man Robert could play it straight. He had permission to have a female following and there was no guilt. There was also no ego-satisfaction. This is why he could not be seduced — seduction was not a suitable reward to him. We feel that this culture is amiss in not giving permission. Sometimes you must go and ask for it. The permission is symbolic, but sometimes in this culture, it must almost be literal. If marijuana was on sale at all corner stores, few would smoke it — at any rate, no more than smoke it now and a few would quit. [16 December 1973]

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Dick: Is there such a thing as spiritual materialism and is it bad?

This concept is valid, and, of course, we have not said that it is Bad Work to gain [financially] from the Teaching. The only Bad Work is when you use the gains to feed inadequate parts of False Personality. This, of course, builds up a tremendous deficit and you slide backwards. If you can make this not matter so much emotionally, you can turn it into positive spiritual material gain and benefit the ladies, and still have the pleasant feeling but without the guilt. [16 December 1973]

Emotional disorders occur for the most part during the Mature Cycle and are related to the soul's perception of those around it, however erroneous that might be. This causes an enormous buildup in guilt and also hostility. [27 December 1973]

Dick: In the Goal of Growth, does one review all the other Goals? It seems I'm in and out of all of them.

The Goal of Growth causes the soul to search, sometimes restlessly, for the answers to questions of a philosophical and religious nature almost from the time the first breath is drawn. In the early Cycles, this sometimes causes grief and guilt, as there is often a split with family members over untenable views held by

them. The “review” is a phenomenon that we believe to be universal in the Older Cycles. We see this in all of you, but far more pronounced in those in Growth. This endless searching often produces both Acceptance and Submission; then when the flash [of insight] comes, the student in Growth often becomes temporarily Dominant in order to spread the word he has received. This is entirely natural. [03 January 1974]

[[continue search to end of transcriptions]]

Physical guilt versus natural guilt (no morality — bastardized it — the soul doesn't feel guilt — not guilt but debt? Should this be the only type of guilt?)

Ideally yes, of course, if you follow our advice in not doing that which intuitively feels wrong, then why should you feel any guilt? Guilt implies that you did something intuitively wrong. [08 October 1974]

The full question was apparently abbreviated in the transcription, but the gist makes it apparent that one of the functions of intuition is to provide a conscience that tells you what is right to do and what is wrong to do in particular situations. Intuition provides guidance where there is not an absolute standard of right and wrong, where some actions are merely better or worse than others; the Soul self and Karma handle the absolute rights and wrongs, and the Personality self cannot do much if anything about that. **Refer to the chapter “Guilt” for a full discussion of that “feeling”. There you will read that there is +Guilt and there is –Guilt.** (Perhaps that is what the questioner meant by “physical guilt versus natural guilt”.) We do not always heed our intuition, and in retrospect we realize we did wrong. With +Guilt we acknowledge the sin and learn the lesson and do better the next time; with –Guilt we condemn ourselves all to hell for eternity.





GURDJEFF, OUSPENSKY, COLLIN, BURTON

There are things about the Gurdjieffian teachings that make it susceptible to cultish distortions, and Robert Burton has done that, if the rumors are to be believed. I do not see the same potential in the Michaelian teachings, unless one claims some exclusive access to the Michaels via channeling, as Yarbrow does (we do not really know what it is like in her group). Another





GURDJIEFF — LAW OF SEVEN

[[Copied from HOLC; modify to suit SPOMG.]]

The previous chapter discussed Gurdjieff's teaching about the Law of Three, and we saw that there was a correlation to the Michaels' teaching about Monads, and to the structure of the Overleaf System (OLS). Gurdjieff's "Law of Seven", or "Octaves", is often mentioned in conjunction with the Law of Three, and both laws are said to be fundamental to the working of the universe. Every Michaelian teachings student knows that 7 is a very important number in the Michaelian teachings. Some of the founding members of the original Michaelian group were familiar with the Gurdjieffian teachings, and there are some significant similarities between the two. Is there a relationship between Gurdjieff's understanding of sevenness and the Michaels presentation? The answer to that question is the subject of this chapter.

Law of Octaves

In the Gurdjieffian teachings, the Law of Seven is also called the Law of Octaves. "Octave" is, of course, a word that refers to the number eight. The reason for this choice of words is that Gurdjieff relates this alleged law of the universe to one particular phenomenon of it, namely the musical scale of the western tradition, in which there are eight notes divided into seven intervals, with the last (higher) note being twice the vibration speed of the first (lower) note, *ad eternum* from the slowest possible vibration to the fastest possible vibration. Gurdjieff claimed that truths about the workings of the cosmos, from slow to fast and including human experience, are embodied in the workings of the music scale. Refer to pages 124–137 and pages 285–294 of Ouspensky's book, *In Search of the Miraculous*. The relevant sentences expressing some principles of the Law of Seven were extracted from those pages and combined in the following quotation:

The number of fundamental laws which govern all processes both in the world and in man is very small. Different numerical combinations of a few elementary forces create all the seeming variety of phenomena. In order to understand the mechanics of the universe it is necessary to resolve complex phenomena into these elementary forces... The next fundamental law of the universe is the law of seven or the law of octaves. In order to understand the meaning of this law it is necessary to regard the universe as consisting of vibrations. In this connection according to the usual views accepted in the West, vibrations are continuous. This means that vibrations are usually regarded as proceeding uninterruptedly.... So that one of the fundamental propositions of our physics is the continuity of vibrations.... In this instance the view of ancient knowledge is opposed to that of contemporary science because at the base of the understanding of vibrations, ancient knowledge places the principle of the [stepwise] discontinuity of vibrations. The principle of the discontinuity of vibration means the definite and necessary character of all vibrations in nature ... to develop not uniformly but with periodical accelerations and retardations.... In order to determine these moments ... the lines of development of vibrations are divided into periods corresponding to the doubling or the halving of the number of vibrations in a given space of time... This means that within vibrations other vibrations proceed, and that every octave can be resolved into a great number of [fractalic] inner octaves. Each note of any octave can be regarded as an octave on another plane.... We have spoken earlier of the law of octaves, of the fact that every process, no matter upon what scale it takes place, is completely determined in its gradual development by the law of the structure of the seven-tone scale.

The underlined words are my emphasis. They reveal four *principles* of the Law of Seven. If one were to read all of the pages of that book about the Law of Seven, one would see that several of the particulars of Gurdjieff's teaching about the Law of Seven have not come into the Michaelian teachings, but some of the four principles have, and these are as follows:

1. The Law of Seven expresses a stepwise rather than a smooth, continuous development.

2. The development is an unalterable sequence with certain characteristics of each step that unfolds over time.
3. The Law of Seven applies to all of time (not space), from the shortest to the longest spans.
4. The Law of Seven is fractalic; that is, it is a repeating nested pattern, each octave nested inside the next higher octave, perhaps with slight variations within each octave.

The Law of Seven was significant in the Gurdjieffian teachings in several ways, among them the seven Centers and the seven Levels of Being, as explained in previous chapters. It is also significant that it shows up in many other esoteric cosmologies, as one can find from reading >www.kheper.net<, a veritable encyclopedia of introductions to esoteric cosmologies. Another one of my books, *The Tao of Cosmogony*, discusses many of these esoteric cosmologies that are based on the number 7.

It is of course well known among Michaelian teachings students that the number 7 is also rather common in the structured part of the Michaelian teachings, such as that Fragments devolve and evolve through seven levels in each plane — of which there are seven — and that each Soul Age — of which there are seven — consists of seven Levels. These are manifestations of the fractalic nesting mentioned above. It also shows up as the seven categories of Overleaves. The number 7 occurs in many other contexts in the Michaelian teachings, generally having to do with a repetition in the course of time of the seven archetypical characteristics. Instantiations of Sevenness are discussed in many places in this *History* book.

Cycle

In the original Michaelian group transcriptions, the word “cycle” is often used as synonymous with what Gurdjieff called The Law of Seven. Like so many other words in the Michaelian teachings system, it is capitalized in my books to call attention to the fact that it has a special meaning in the Michaelian teachings.

The word Cycle first appeared in the descriptions of Soul Ages in late August of 1973. It appeared many times thereafter in the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group, usually in the context of Soul Age, because each Age consisted of seven Levels, but sometimes in the context of the entire Cycle of reincarnation through seven Soul Ages. Many times the word Cycle was used in place of the word Level, referring to the seven Levels within each of the seven Soul Ages.

Among instances of the occurrences of the word Cycle, we find a clue that the Soul Ages (and by extension, the Levels), participate in the Monadic Attributes:

A question was asked about all of us being Old Souls.

The Exalted [Cardinal] Cycles are sparsely populated. Sarah is right about the bell curve. [S/C, 26 August 1973]

The clue is the word Exalted, which typically refers to the Cardinal Overleaves. This implies that there are Ordinal Cycles and a Neutral Cycle. Therefore we can infer that the Infant, Baby, and Young Ages are Ordinal Cycles, Mature Soul Age is Neutral, and Old Soul Age is Cardinal.

Another use for the word Cycle during the original Michaelian group was in the case of what has become known as the Grand Cycle in subsequent Michael groups. This usage is also appropriate because it involves evolution through the seven planes. There is that number 7 again.

Is this a process of growth and evolution, and for what purpose, or just indigenous or if that is so, why?

To ensure the continuous creative force is the only purpose we know. The Entities no longer earth-bound experience lengthy periods on the high [three Cardinal] planes, and at the end reunite with the primeval force that is creation. Thus, the created becomes the creator and the Cycle repeats itself *ad infinitum*. This is infinity. [S/C, 08 October 1973]

All of these uses of the word Cycle at various time scales — seven within seven within seven — indicate the fractal, nested, repetitious, nature of creation with regard to time. Note that in this passage, the word “high” is synonymous with the words Exalted and Cardinal.

Concluding Remarks on the Law of Seven

On page 286 of Ouspensky's book *In Search of the Miraculous* we find a description of how Gurdjieff ingeniously combined the Law of Three and the Law of Seven to come up with the Enneagram, which is a geometric figure based on the number 9. In this *History* book, there is an introduction to the Enneagram in Chapter 1B above, “Personality Typologies”. The Enneagram also makes an appearance in the subject of Body Types, as documented in chapters in Part One and Part Four of this *History* book. An internet search will provide a

thorough description of the Enneagram. The Enneagram is not something that was even mentioned in the original Michaelian group transcriptions, let alone discussed. Instead, the Michaelian teachings combines threeness and sevenness in a different way, which in my books are called the Septenarian Attributes. This is discussed at length in other chapters of this *History* book and in my other books.

Gurdjieff taught that one of the fundamental aspects of reality was the existence of vibration, or frequency, and he proposed that the musical scale was an aspect of this law of nature. He read a lot into this notion that has not come into the Michaelian teachings. For instance, the notes of the scale are distinct so that there is an obvious difference between *do* and *re* and *mi* and *fa* and *so* and *la* and *ti*. The intervals between the notes are not all equal, so as to preserve harmonies between them; otherwise the music would be very disharmonious. However, if one were to try to relate the characteristics of, for instance, the seven Roles to the notes of the music scale, it obviously fails to account for the difference between a Warrior and a Slave and an Artisan and a Scholar and a Sage and a Priest and a King. Therefore, whatever legitimacy there might or might not be in the way Gurdjieff understood the Law of Seven, that is not the way it is understood in the Michaelian teachings.

So how is it to be understood in the Michaelian teachings? My book *The Tao of Cosmology* explains the Law of Seven as it applies to nature in general: space, time, and dimension. My book *The Tao of Personality* explains the Law of Seven as it applies to the Overleaf System. My book *The Tao of Cosmogony* explains the Law of Seven as it applies to time, at various time scales, from brief to eternity, and in various realms of nature and supernature. Portions of the understanding of Sevenness/septenary are found in this *History* book, but the presentation in those three books is much more extensive.

The Law of Seven is very important in mystical cosmologies, more so in Theosophy than in Gurdjieff, actually. I direct the reader to these resources:

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Septenary_\(Theosophy\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Septenary_(Theosophy))

https://theosophy.wiki/en/Septenary_Principle

https://theosophy.wiki/en/Primordial_Seven

https://theosophy.wiki/en/Seven_Rays

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/7>





GURDJIEFF — LAW OF THREE

[[Copied from HOLC; modify to suit SPOMG.]]

Nearly every Overleaf Chart that we examine in Part Three applies the Attribute “Ordinal” or “Neutral”, or “Exalted/Cardinal” to each Overleaf. These are referred to as the “Monadic” Attributes in this *History* book. What do these terms mean? Where did this convention come from? Why are they applied to the Overleaves?

These three words have a strong similarity to a component of the Gurdjieffian teachings, with which some of the original Michaelian group founding members were familiar as a result of their participation in a local Gurdjieff study group that called itself the Fellowship of Friends. Gurdjieff taught an idea that he called the “Law of Three”; it defined how “passive–negative–denial” and “neutral–reconciliation” and “active–positive–affirmation” forces are necessary for anything to happen. Gurdjieff taught in the first half of the 20th Century but the Law of Three concept itself is actually quite ancient. For instance, in an Oriental philosophy, the synonymous words were “yin”, “chi”, and “yang”; Wikipedia has an entry on the concepts behind those words: >https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yin_and_yang<. In more modern times, the words sometimes used as equivalent in meaning to the Monadic Attributes and the Law of Three are “thesis”, “antithesis”, and “synthesis”; Wikipedia has an entry on those words: >https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thesis,_antithesis,_synthesis<. If you read those articles, you will have a good foundation for understanding concepts that are important to an understanding of the Overleaf System, and of the Michaelian teachings in general.

The similarity of these various triads of words to Ordinal–Neutral–Cardinal in the Michaelian teachings should be obvious to the reader without explanation, but far be it from a Scholar–Artisan–Priest–Sage to not provide explanations. The terms used in the original Michaelian group (Cardinal, Ordinal, Neutral) have the same meaning as the terms in the previous paragraph. However, they appear not to have come from Gurdjieff or these other philosophies; they came from the Michaels themselves. The Michaels started out using this triad of words in reference to a phenomenon they called “Monads”; refer to the chapter by that title. Basically and briefly, they described Monads as necessary experiences, consisting of complementary opposites, to advance a soul on its spiritual path. The growth process consisted of having Ordinal experiences and the opposite, Cardinal experiences, such that when completed, the experience was Neutral. When the soul has experienced both sides of all of the necessary Monads and thereby Neutralized them, then the soul is complete as far as the Physical Plane is concerned, and can move on to higher realms of experience.

It is not coincidental that the Overleaf System uses the same terminology as the Monadic terminology, because the Overleaf System is all about experiencing Ordinal and Neutral and Cardinal personality traits in various lifetimes. When all of the Overleaf traits have been experienced in various lifetimes, the soul is complete as far as the Physical Plane is concerned, and the soul can move on to higher realms of experience. Hence, the application of Monadic Attributes to the Overleaf System. Refer to Chapter 2B in Part Two, “Attributes of Overleaves”, for a complete listing of the synonyms of the Monadic Attributes.

The purpose of this chapter is to put the Gurdjieffian teachings about the Law of Three and the original Michaelian group transcriptions together to show the applicability of these terms and this concept to the Overleaf System, the subject of this *History* book.

Gurdjieff’s Law of Three

One of the original Michaelian group members asked the Michaels about other sources on their teaching about Monads:

Has anybody ever written about this [subject of Monads] on our plane?

Many knew: [Teilhard de] Chardin, [Georges] Gurdjieff, [Aldous] Huxley. [John] Lilly knows too. [S/C, 12 August 1973]

Having some acquaintance with these authors can support a more thorough understanding of this subject, but we investigate only Gurdjieff. Although there are similarities between the Michaels' teaching about Monads and Gurdjieff's teaching about the Law of Three, they do not seem to be quite the same thing. Monad — the word itself — refers to “oneness”, and obviously the Law of Three refers to “threeness”. To quote Gurdjieff's student Ouspensky:

The number of fundamental laws which govern all processes both in the world and in man is very small. Different numerical combinations of a few elementary forces create all the seeming variety of phenomena. In order to understand the mechanics of the universe it is necessary to resolve complex phenomena into these elementary forces. The first fundamental law of the universe is the law of three forces, or three principles, or, as it is often called, the law of three. According to this law every action, every phenomenon in all worlds without exception, is the result of a simultaneous action of three forces — the positive, the negative, and the neutralizing. [P. D. Ouspensky, *In Search of the Miraculous*, p. 122]

The Law of Three, in a short description, means that three ‘forces’ enter into every manifestation, into every phenomenon and every event. They are called (but these are only words, because they do not express their qualities) positive, negative and neutralizing, or active, passive and neutralizing, or still more simply they may be called first force, second force and third force.... Everything in the world, all manifestations of energy, all kinds of action, whether in the world or in human activity, whether internal or external, are always manifestations of three forces which exist in nature. [P. D. Ouspensky, *The Fourth Way*, pp. 16 and 189]

This website, >https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fourth_Way_enneagram<, had this to say about the Law of Three:

The Law of Three holds that three forces act on any event, which can be called Active, Passive, and Neutralizing forces, or simply First, Second, and Third forces respectively. These three forces can appear in any order, 123 for example or 312, giving 6 possible “triads” of forces describing 6 very broad types of events. Humanity is said to be “third force blind”, to have difficulty recognizing the third force, which may appear to us in the guise of a result or of a background environment. “People cannot perceive the third force directly any more than they can spatially perceive the ‘fourth dimension’” Gurdjieff is quoted as saying. [retrieved 11 July 2019]

Another Wikipedia article, >https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fourth_Way<, says this about the Law of Three:

The Law of Three is described by Gurdjieff as “the second fundamental cosmic law”. This law states that every whole phenomenon is composed of three separate sources, which are Active, Passive and Reconciling or Neutral. This law applies to everything in the universe and humanity, as well as all the structures and processes.... Gurdjieff taught his students to think of the law of three forces as essential to transforming the energy of the human being. The process of transformation requires the three actions of affirmation, denial and reconciliation. [retrieved 10 September 2019]

Underlines in all of these quotations are my own emphasis. Their correlation with the Michaelian teachings is as follows:

- What the Michaels referred to as Ordinal, Gurdjieff referred to as passive and negative and denial.
- What the Michaels referred to as Cardinal, Gurdjieff referred to as active and positive and affirmation.
- What the Michaels referred to as Neutral, Gurdjieff referred to as neutralizing and reconciliation.

These quotations describe what Gurdjieff meant by the Law of Three. The Michaels, when talking about Monads, were referring to life experiences that are part of a required curriculum in reincarnation; these consist of an Ordinal Pole and a Cardinal Pole (the opposite of the Ordinal Pole), which gives a complete understanding of the experience because one sees it from both sides. When both poles are experienced, one advances to another experience. This also goes somewhere in life, namely, toward cycling off the Physical Plane. The same Law of Three applies to the Overleaf System, because it is has “structures and processes” built on that law.

The Law of Three in the Fellowship of Friends

In the early days of the Fellowship of Friends, a fellow named Harold Wirk drew many cartoons to illustrate features of the Gurdjieffian teachings with graphics and text. These cartoons were known to founding members of the original Michaelian group; they can now be found on the internet, as well as in Volume 2 of

Michael Speaks — *The Legacy of Sarah Chambers*. The cartoon on the Law of Three has this text (underlines are my emphasis):

The first thing to remember is that everything in the world — all manifestation of energy, all kinds of action, whether in the world or human activity, whether internal or external — are always manifestation of three forces which exist in nature: Active, Passive, and Neutralizing.

When three forces meet together (triad) things happen! If they do not come together, nothing happens.

These two do not differ from one another as activity and passivity differ in our ordinary understanding of these terms. Active and Passive forces are both active, for a force cannot be passive. But there is a certain difference in their activity, and this difference makes all the variety of phenomena that exist in the world.

In ordinary thinking we realize the existence of two forces, action and resistance, positive and negative electricity, and so on. But in this state of consciousness we do not see that three forces are always present in every event, every phenomenon, and that only a conjunction of three forces can produce an event.

Suppose you want to study something — some “I’s” want to, that is, and some “I’s” don’t. They represent active and passive forces. Suppose that this study produces some emotion in you. That emotion would be the neutralizing force, and then you could study. If emotion does not come, the “I’s” will continue to argue, and nothing will happen.

Two forces will not produce anything; they cannot. They will only turn round one another without any result. For some reason we are “third force blind”, although we can observe it in many chemical and biological phenomena.

Why study these forces? Behind all things are cosmic laws. You cannot understand why things happen in one way or another unless you know these laws.

In the Work you can see 2 forces: the ideas of the System and your own resistance, your own sleep. A third force will enter and help one side or the other.

- Three forces exist in Nature and in Man.
- They should be studied psychologically — by means of self-observation. One must observe 1st and 2nd force before one can see 3rd force.
- In making aim, 2nd force must be calculated; otherwise the aim will be impractical. Aim (1st force) makes 2nd force appear.
- A force is invisible — and our more direct contact with what is invisible is by means of self-observation.
- Forces are not things. A desire is a force, not a thing. For example:
 - Life is the neutralization force which keeps personality active.
 - The Work is the neutralizing force which activates essence.

It might not be obvious how this relates to the Monadic Attributes as described in the Michaelian teachings, so let me explain it in the next section. The key to understanding is simply that the same three concepts apply to both, although different words are used.

The Law of Three in the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

Gurdjieff’s teaching about the Law of Three is pretty close to the Michaels’ teaching on Monads. A much more extensive explanation — too long to repeat here — of the Law of Three appears in Ouspensky’s book *In Search of the Miraculous* on pages 77–81, and it is almost certain that the founding members of the original Michaelian group were familiar with it. However, the phrase, “Law of Three”, does not occur in any of the original Michaelian group transcription that The Center for Michael Teachings, Inc., has acquired. There are a few references to positive and negative “forces” at work, but these seem to be influences or pressures not related to the Law of Three. There are a few instances in the original Michaelian group transcriptions that do seem to reference the Law of Three, and some of them even use the same word, “force”, the same word that Gurdjieff and Ouspensky used, as quoted above. For instance:

Could you elaborate on the third chapter of Genesis about what the knowledge of good and evil is?

Knowledge of positive and negative force. [SJC, 22 November 1973]

This is quite a common correlation, equating good and evil to positive and negative. From the Fourth Way quote above, we see that “positive and negative forces” are the same thing as “first and second forces”. We

shall see that the Michaels use these very terms when referring to the Ordinal and Cardinal poles of the Monads. Therefore, even though it is not quite explicit, there obviously is a correlation of Gurdjieff's Law of Three and the Michaels' Monads.

In another original Michaelian group transcription, Gurdjieff's word "force" is used, and this time it is the "third force":

We asked for a comment about the "third force" of which Gurdjieff spoke; the need of this [third force] to go [progress] from Personality to Essence.

We have spoken many times of the neutral universal flow. This is what they [Fourth Way teachers] try to put into words as the force acting upon you. Yes, this does exist, and yes, does have the influence that the student is trying to explain. When the fulcrum tips too widely to one side or the other though, the neutral force has no effect on the action. Only when the middle ground is reached, or at least approached, can this [force] be effective. This is why it is so difficult for students to put [it] into words. It is illusively [elusively?] felt by all but the most powerful Adepts [who feel it strongly because they are so close to Balance]. It is almost never recognized by the others [non-Adepts] who come into its range unaware. In other words, although they are benefited, they do not know why. They only feel the neutralizing effect, but cannot describe the feeling. [SJC, 07 December 1974]

Based on this endorsement of Gurdjieff and the Law of Three, the reader is encouraged to research the Fourth Way teaching on the Law of Three for further understanding. The Michaels here equate the "Balancing" force with Gurdjieff's third force, the Neutralizing force. Third force is not a static condition between first force and second force; it is a force of its own that, as stated above, has benefits on the spiritual path, the Levels of Being from Personality to Essence. Using another term mentioned above, it is the "synthesis" force, the force that seeks to reunite what was fragmented in the primordial schisms of Tao-Consciousness. Without this force, there would be no progress. There would only be an eternal war between light and dark, good and evil, positive and negative, active and passive, and so on.

More was said about forces a month later:

There was a discussion regarding "neutralizing force" or forces — one flows into the other — has part of another within — there is no "control" — positive force, use of the Intellectual Center to start the Moving Center, et al.

... we have no quarrel with the need for [a] neutralizing force in actions involving the Centers. All yin-yang activities do require this neutralizing force for stability. [SJC, 12 January 1975]

Putting this statement together with the one a month earlier quoted above, we note again that neutralizing-synthesizing force is the same as Gurdjieff's third force in the triad. One of the functions of third force is to keep the metaphorical 'train' of progress from 'going off the rails' on either the yin (negative) side or the yang (positive) side of the 'tracks'. And, specifically in regard to Centers, the above is another advocacy statement for becoming Balanced in the Neutral Center; refer to Chapter 4 in Part Four, "The Instinctive Center". The stability achieved by Balanced Man is not the static end of the spiritual path, however. It is a precondition to progressing onward and upward, to becoming an Adept and then a Master in the higher Centers, at Levels of Being beyond Man # 4, Balanced Man as described in the previous chapter of this *History* book.

The Law of Three forces apply to an entire group of people on their spiritual quest, as well as to individuals on their spiritual path:

[In the original Michaelian group] three forces have come together and asked for cosmic influence. We [the Michaels] are to provide that and pass [on] the system by which you must teach and learn truth in Being. If you lose one of these [forces], you will also lose your effectiveness and eventually also lose contact [with cosmic influence] and be left with a false Teaching — an incomplete system. [SJC, 01 April 1975]

"Teach" and "learn" are poles of a Monad that results in spiritual growth. Spiritual paths are not true unless they consist of the three forces: learning, teaching, and growing. Refer to the previous chapter, Chapter 1], "Gurdjieff's Levels of Being", for more information on what the Michaels meant by the word "Being" in the quote above. Recall that Gurdjieff and Ouspensky said that all three forces are necessary to make anything happen. This Michael quote agrees with that.

For the convenience of the reader, the following table of correspondences for Law of Three and Monads and Monadic Attributes is provided.

Table 1Ka — CORRESPONDENCES to the LAW OF THREE			
LAW OF THREE	Negative, Passive, Denying	Neutralizing, Reconciling	Positive, Active, Affirming
MONADIC ATTRIBUTES	Ordinal	Neutral	Cardinal
ORIENTAL TERMS	Yin	Chi	Yang
PHILOSOPHICAL TERMS	Antithesis	Synthesis	Thesis

Comments on this table are as follows:

- LAW OF THREE: The first row shows some of the descriptive words given to the three laws in the Gurdjieffian teachings.
- MONADIC ATTRIBUTES: The second row shows the names given to the Law of Three in the Michaelian teachings. These are applied to the experiential Monads that a soul completes in its journey of reincarnation. The words and concepts also apply to the Overleaf System.
- ORIENTAL TERMS: The third row shows the names given to the three laws in Oriental philosophy. Recall Chapter 42 of the *Tao Teh Ching* that I quote a number of times in this book: “All things carry the Yin and embrace the Yang / Through the blending of the Chi they achieve harmony.” That is the Law of Three, known from ancient times, and in many cultures, by various names.
- PHILOSOPHICAL TERMS: The fourth row shows the names given to the Law of Three in Hegel’s dialectic philosophy. Refer to <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/hegel-dialectics/> for an excellent overview.

Concluding Remarks on the Law of Three

So what did the above have to do with the Overleaf System? It may have seemed like a diversion, but it is Good Work to recognize that the Overleaf System applies to Attributes of the personality traits: Ordinal — Neutral — Cardinal. The same principles, using different words, apply to the fundamental ‘laws’ and ‘forces’ of nature, as Gurdjieff said. In fact, it can be said that the Overleaf System is a subset of Nature. The Overleaf System is like a map of personality traits, and the same features of the map, the Monadic features, are also the features of the universe as a whole.

Let’s put it this way:

- The Law of Three is fundamental to all that exists and functions, all being and doing, as claimed by Gurdjieff.
- The Law of Three as described by the Michaels is fundamental to the Monads, the soul’s journey through life.
- The Law of Three as described by the Michaels is fundamental to the Overleaf System.

This is explained in my books *The Tao of Cosmology* and *The Tao of Personality*.

Even though Gurdjieff’s Law of Three and the Michaels’ Monads are different words based on different numbers, we see that they do point to the same fundamental phenomenon. Interestingly enough, others, usually philosophers, notably Hegel, teach about the same fundamental principle using the word “dialectic”, a word that emphasizes the “twoness” of this phenomenon. Refer to the dictionary definition of “dialectic” at <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/dialectic> for more about that. More about precursor teachers on this fundamental phenomenon may be found with an internet search on the words, and also a search on the words ‘thesis antithesis synthesis.’

The subject of Monads leads naturally into the subject of the Monadic Attributes (Ordinal — Cardinal — Neutral) which are applied to each Overleaf and which show up on practically every Overleaf Chart reviewed in Part Three. There is a great deal more information about that in Chapter 2B in Part Two, “Attributes of Overleaves”.

There is also a chapter on the subject of Monads in my book *Study Papers on the Original Michaelian Group*. In that book there is also a chapter on “Balance”, which is the Michaels’ name for the Third Force of Gurdjieff.





HAPPINESS

This chapter is the product of a search for the word “happy” and its derivatives in the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group channeling sessions. This word does not represent a significant component of the Michaelian teachings. However, there are good reasons to discuss the subject in this *Study Papers* book: 1) the subject came up numerous times during the original Michaelian group; 2) students can presumably benefit from having the mentions conveniently collected all in one place; 3) some interesting things were said about the subject; 4) the subject is related to a number of other components of the Michaelian teachings that are considered to be significant; 5) “**Template**” issues are pervasive in human psychology and sociology and spirituality.

The word “**template**” is not capitalized in this chapter or other chapters of this *Study Papers* book because it has no special meaning in the Michaelian teachings; it is not a Michaelian jargon word that needs a definition apart from its use in the common vernacular.

Basically and briefly, the Michaels recommended to the original Michaelian group members that they

Definition of Happiness

So what is meant by happiness? The online Merriam Webster dictionary definition is:

say something about the Greek word *eudaimonia*

Happiness per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

The following extracts from original Michaelian group transcriptions are Q&A exchanges, where an original Michaelian group member asks a question (or makes a comment), and the Michaels provide an answer. This is [not] a subject that would benefit by division into subcategories, as some subjects do. **These extracts are [not] presented in the chronological order in which they were given, even though this is not a subject where there was a development or evolution of a specific revelation of a facet of the Michaelian teachings, as was often the case with the original Michaelian group.** As is my custom, I often provide some explanatory comments following the question or answer. Underlined words are my emphasis, to draw attention to what it is that I comment on. Sometimes I embed words or phrases [in brackets] that I believe help to clarify the question or the answer.

Concluding Comments on Happiness





HEALTH — PHYSICAL AND MENTAL

Physical Health

Dick: I read an article in a medical journal that the homogenization of milk may be responsible for the high coronary artery disease incidence. The homogenization of the fat particles allows them to get into the blood stream undigested. Is this a fact?

Yes. Why do you drink milk? [16 December 1974]

Eugene: I would like a comment on my approach to cancer patients as to their responsibility of causing and controlling their disease. I have been selling hard that they chose it and that through meditation, they can alter its course and cure it.

They are the best hope pills we know of. You will have some success, but prepare yourself for failure with those who cannot look at their conflicts. These will not get better. Of course, others will. Your best successes will be with Young and Mature Souls. [06 March 1974]

Even in the case of physical health issues, it is Good Work to ask oneself if and how one might take responsibility for the condition, and if the cause is wrong beliefs, poor values, or unhealthy behaviors in this world, then do something about it. According to the Michaels, the benefits go beyond the placebo, where a positive attitude tend toward are better outcome. Here again, taking responsibility leads to learning, growth, and maybe even healing. In any case, one wants to avoid the so-called “nocebo” effect, where hopelessness and victimhood lead to a worse outcome than the placebo effect typically does.

[People at Lourdes] wish to be healed. Often their illnesses are still wholly psychosomatic and there has been no structural damage. Hysterical paralysis is particularly easy to cure at Lourdes. [05 June 1974]

Dick commented that he loses much energy around the experience of a patient dying.

Well, unfortunately, in this culture, death has long been associated with punishment, and this spills over onto the family and those in attendance. In cultures accepting the teachings of reincarnation, even this occasionally happens, especially in those that espouse reincarnation to a lower order [animal]. If you regard death as “bad”, then naturally you are going to lose energy when this “bad” happens. Also, if you project expectations of healing upon the patient and his attendants, you are going to feel a sense of failure when you do not fulfill these expectations. Yes, you can go to great and heroic lengths to prolong the physical life, but often to the great discomfort of both the patient and his family. Often, the death of someone who has been painfully ill for a long period of time comes as a distinct relief to the members of his family, even though they would be unable to verbalize it. Sometimes you can do them a disservice by prolonging agony that they must suffer vicariously. If healing is to take place, it will be far more dramatic than mere analgesia [pain reduction], and these are those cases in which you may put your skills to the task. But in cases where there is no healing possible, the most you can offer is comfort, and usually this would be better directed toward those to be left behind. Many very ill persons have an acute awareness of their impending death, and the opportunity to discuss this is many times more valuable than any useless last drastic treatment. We would hope to see in the future more counseling directed toward those who will be left with a life to live, after the death has occurred. Many times during a long illness, these persons need the most help, certainly more than one who has died. We wish we could graphically illustrate the awareness that a dying person feels. We feel that it would put your fears to rest. Many times, this awareness even becomes an intense longing toward the last. You all know where the line can be drawn between a case in which there can be a healing and the case in which there will be imminent death. Leveling with those involved when this line is drawn, can be therapeutic for both the physician and the patient. The guilt, of course, stems from the concept of death as a punishment. After all, you are sending this soul to meet his fate and are, therefore, responsible. This is quite a burden and we are not surprised that this produces fatigue. It need not be that way, but you yourself must begin to look upon the physical life as merely a transitory thing and not to be mourned. In the older souls, this becomes far easier, as almost all of them will

accept some concept of perpetuation. With the younger souls, this may require more skill, but still can be smoothly handled by one with strength of convictions. [14 December 1974]

Mental Health

The Infant or "first born" Soul perceives itself and the world around it simply as "me" and "not me." In this Cycle, there are no racial memories. If "not me" is perceived as hostile and unkind early in life, withdrawal occurs, and a condition known as autism often results. If this perception occurs later, the Infant Soul may react with unchecked violence: sadism, murder without visible provocation, acts of unbelievable cruelty. The Infant Soul truly does not know the difference between right and wrong action, but it can be taught the laws of common sense and decency. [late August 1973]

Dick: Define hysteria.

Hysteria is the production of an abnormal state with no discernible structural defect manifest. Hysterics are capable of producing all manner of organic phenomena with no appreciable damage to the body. Easter bleeders are an excellent example. They are rarely anemic and yet they sometimes hemorrhage copiously. The hysteric always gains by producing these phenomena. Discover the gain and you can usually help these most unfortunate souls. Sometimes, an inattentive spouse must be pressed into service in this fashion. Usually, however, the hysteric is a weak, underdeveloped soul and the phenomenon is the only way for this soul to compete with the stronger souls around it. In these cases, it is difficult to cure the hysteria. You cannot help the soul to gain in strength.

Dick: Was Christ able to cast out demons?

The demons are produced by the sick mind and do not exist. They can be cast out only by one skilled in this. The exorcist must be able to give the patient a visible substitute; thus, he must be capable of producing psychic phenomena at will. Jesus was an occult master. He could produce the necessary phenomena to make the patient see his demon leave and occupy some other organism. Then, of course, you must still treat the sickness that caused the soul to produce the demon. Usually, this is masochism in its extreme manifestation. It was motivated in part by compassion and in part by his knowledge of the Karmic Ribbons of those around him. He was also aware of the fact the medical care in Greece was far superior to that in Syria.

Dick: The healing that Jesus did, was that done to demonstrate to people that he had these powers so that people would follow him to hear "the word" — his mission being to "spread the Logos"?

In the beginning, yes, it was. [04 September 1974]

We would say that the line [between boredom and depression] is exceedingly thin, almost invisible. Boredom normally comes about when the individual is unable to meld this fantasy with the realities of everyday life — and this includes fantasied expectations of those around him. [03 September 1974]

We are discussing now the rivalry that occurs between the child and the same sex parent. The imprinting discovered by Freud is not normal imprinting and is perhaps then only a half-truth. This imprinting is the result of an alienated society with limited identification. In societies where the alienated nuclear family does not exist, this phenomenon does not exist. Intense rivalry will produce this phenomenon each time it occurs to exalted Roles more than others. It will be more noticeable in feminine Roles in masculine bodies and vice versa. Where exposure to models is limited, the phenomenon will be most marked and will have the most far-reaching consequences. In this society, especially where seldom more than two generations occupy the same living quarters. The change, however far-fetched it may seem though, is a viable alternative. Otherwise you must deal individually with those conflicts as you have done. In other words, you must either help to change the cause or continue to treat the effect. In situations where there is only one male and one female to emulate, this and many other abnormal imprintings are inevitably going to occur, depending upon the Overleaves of the adults doing the imprinting. We are suggesting to you how this can be expressed in semantics which can be understood by others. [03 September 1974]

Of course, one must realize that spiritually-oriented groups of persons where acceptance is the cardinal rule will attract many lonely, maladjusted persons searching for reaffirmation of their humanness, and these persons will not be helped to grow spiritually but will bask in the warmth of the acceptance for a time: and those truly on the path will still be able to see the sickness. This phenomenon is certainly not unusual. It is only that these groups are founded upon the principles of love and acceptance and often the members fail to confront even the most obnoxious behavior in these spiritual interlopers. What is apparent there is that these persons are not going toward growth at all and are in fact acting as ballast and making the path more difficult for others. The therapeutic approach must, yes, be individualized to conform with the abnormal habit present. First you must be able to differentiate what is going on. For instance, is the person having a normal reaction to an abnormal situation or an abnormal reaction. These require radically different therapeutic approaches, and the rate of cure is higher in the former certainly than in the latter. By the therapeutic approach, we speak of that method by which the person becomes stripped of the tough outer fibers of the False Personality and become vulnerable to other demands of Essence. [14 September 1974]

Would a hypochondriac be a Martyr or what?

This syndrome runs the gamut and permeates the Cycles. It is also another example of the alienation on this world, as often it is an honest plea for some attention, even though that attention might hurt or otherwise be unpleasant. It often takes the form of an uneducated person's reaction to scare propaganda; also, a need for punishment of family members who have not been nice; also, the result of imprinting by an over-concerned parent. [19 October 1974]





HIDING

This chapter is the product of a search for the word “hiding” and its variations in the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group channeling sessions. This word does not represent a significant component of the Michaelian teachings. However, there are good reasons to discuss the subject in this *Study Papers* book: 1) the subject came up numerous times during the original Michaelian group; 2) students can presumably benefit from having the mentions conveniently collected all in one place; 3) some interesting things were said about the subject; 4) the subject is related to a number of other components of the Michaelian teachings that are considered to be significant; 5) **“Template” issues are pervasive in human psychology and sociology and spirituality.**

The word “hiding” is not capitalized in this chapter or other chapters of this *Study Papers* book because it has no special meaning in the Michaelian teachings; it is not a Michaelian jargon word that needs a definition apart from its use in the common vernacular.

[[Search for words such a conceal and reveal, perhaps have sections on those words in this chapter.]]

Definition of Hiding

So what is meant by hiding? The online Merriam Webster dictionary definition is:

Hiding per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

The following extracts from original Michaelian group transcriptions are Q&A exchanges, where an original Michaelian group member asks a question (or makes a comment), and the Michaels provide an answer. This is [not] a subject that would benefit by division into subcategories, as some subjects do. **These extracts are [not] presented in the chronological order in which they were given, even though this is not a subject where there was a development or evolution of a specific revelation of a facet of the Michaelian teachings, as was often the case with the original Michaelian group.** As is my custom, I often provide some explanatory comments following the question or answer. Underlined words in the Michaels’ answers are my emphasis, to draw attention to what it is that I comment on. Sometimes I embed words or phrases [in brackets] that I believe help to clarify the question or the answer.

Concluding Comments on Hiding

The metaphor of hiding is present in theology in the sense that “thou art a god that hides itself” is a Biblical phrase. ><https://bible.knowing-jesus.com/topics/God-Hiding><. The Greek word *theophany* is about the deity showing itself in nature.

Refer to chapter “Veil”





④ HIGHER EXPRESSION

This chapter is the product of a search for the phrase higher expression in the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group channeling sessions. This phrase does not represent a significant component of the Michaelian teachings. However, there are good reasons to discuss the subject in this *Study Papers* book: 1) the subject came up numerous times during the original Michaelian group; 2) students can presumably benefit from having the mentions conveniently collected and commented all in one place; 3) some interesting things were said about the subject; 4) the subject is related to a number of other components of the Michaelian teachings that are considered to be significant, so it behooves us to have a working knowledge of it.

It might be a little surprising how often this phrase shows up in the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group, considering that it has not appeared very many times in subsequent channeling sessions that we have record of. Precisely because it covers a subject that might otherwise have been ignored and forgotten, I regard it as useful and valuable to include this chapter, as with numerous other similar chapters on obscure topics in this *Study Papers* book. Doing so makes our understanding of the Michaelian teachings richer and more complete.

The phrase “higher expression” is not capitalized in this chapter or other chapters of this *Study Papers* book because it has no special meaning in the Michaelian teachings; it is not a Michaelian jargon phrase that needs a definition apart from its use in the common vernacular. One might therefore wonder why it is even included in this book.

Higher Expression per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

The following extracts from original Michaelian group transcriptions are Q&A exchanges, where an original Michaelian group member asks a question (or makes a comment), and the Michaels provide an answer. These extracts are presented in the chronological order in which they were given. As is my custom, I often provide some explanatory comments following the question or answer. Underlined words in the Michaels’ answers are my emphasis, to draw attention to what it is that I comment on. Sometimes I embed words or phrases [in brackets] that I believe help to clarify the question or the answer.

The phrase, higher expression, appeared even before the Michaels appeared to the original Michaelian group. The following Q&A exchange followed a comment about the Emotional Center’s need for close physical contact being an impediment to celibacy:

Both Richard and Sarah felt strong negative pull over the last few words, then the dictation continued:

[Soleal:] Not that I am willing, but I mean that it is still a part of growth for me and a route of expression with those to whom nonverbal expression of higher emotions is difficult. You do not have to concentrate on the knowledge that the partner is operating out of lower Centers — just express yourself. Good Work results when you give the gift of higher expression. [03 July 1973]

Richard and Sarah were husband and wife, and in the early original Michaelian group sessions they operated the Ouija board together, until Sarah developed to where she could operate it on her own. This passage is a strong clue that higher expression is motivated and generated by the so-called “higher” Centers. It is also a clue that when one is expressing the higher Centers, the expressions of the lower Centers are mitigated. Another important factor to note in this context is that the lower Centers tend to be needy of “energy”, whereas the higher Centers tend to be giving of “energy”; refer to the chapter “Energy and Energy Leaks”. Refer to the chapter “Good Work, Bad Work” for more about that subject, mentioned in this passage. In the original Michaelian group transcriptions, the phrase “higher expression” is often preceded by the words “the gift of”. This is reminiscent of the way “Agape” operates, as expecting nothing in return, aka a gift, so take a look at the chapter on “Agape”.

You mean everyone must eventually be a guru?

You all have need to seek a [spiritual] teacher. You may all teach at the same time. Right now, though, the primary role is that of student. In previous existences [lifetimes], you have all experienced receiving the gift of higher expression. You must now learn how to express [teach] it to complete the Monad and integrate that fragment [other half]. [12 August 1973]

Refer to the chapter “School” for more about schools and teaching and learning and students as metaphors for one of the functions and purposes of reincarnation. Refer to the chapter “Monads” for more about how learning and teaching are two sides of the same experience, and there are many other types of Monadic experiences. Briefly, with Monads, the Ordinal side is experienced first and then the Cardinal side is experienced. Thus, higher expression is experienced first as a student, and then higher expression is experienced second as a teacher, specifically as a “guru”.

Dick: Then I want to know whether what I did with that young lady was correct — putting my hand on her head?

Yes, it was correct. That came from higher expression. [26 August 1973]

Dick was a medical doctor, and in this case he felt impelled to comfort a suicidal patient with a physical gesture. This is a benevolent impulse in people who have some energy, some empathy, some compassion emanating from some higher Center.

Kathryn: For the growth of my own soul, is this a good course of action, to, for instance, study music, which may be in my Essence?

If you do study music, yes. Don't allow yourself to become enmeshed in the rhetoric. You already appreciate this mode of expression. Now it would be Good Work to learn to express yourself in this fashion. Magnificent contributions have been made in this way by essentially non-verbal souls. You have learned the benefits of creative silence; the lecture hall is not for you. If you give the gift of higher expression through music, you will reach many. [26 August 1973]

Refer to the chapter “Silence” for more discussion about listening to promptings from Essence. Perhaps Essence will give you the gift of higher expression through music rather than through words, and then you can pass that gift on to others.

Dick had had an energizing and/or ecstatic and/or mystical kundalini experience with a sexual partner at some time in the past, and it deeply affected him, and it haunted him:

Dick stated that he felt only rejection, sorrow and loss, and that he could see those blocking his ability to love (fear of this happening over again).

In that relationship, you were able to give the gift of higher expression. It was not reciprocal because she was not in touch with higher Centers, but she has also memories. This is often the case. You could not recapture that experience, but you could duplicate the Higher Emotional energy output — now especially. But first, you must stop equating the experience you had with a specific partner; it was your experience; you were ready to have it. [22 September 1973]

This is a passage that is more explicit than previous passages, indicating that higher expression is motivated by energy in the higher Centers. Refer to the chapter “Sexuality” for more about the evidence that the so-called “Sexual Center” is a higher Center, and that it can indeed be used to gift higher expression.

In addition to sexuality as a possible gift of higher expression, there is this:

Shirley: I am doing that now. Do I keep taking care of her? Why do I feel guilty?

Because that is in Essence for you, Shirley. In each case, you were able to give the gift of higher expression. Once in the remote past, she cared for you when you were orphaned, but this did not require the massive obeisance [you have] performed. This was solely within you. The guilt is something you must shed before you can grow. Further, your [Karmic] debt to this lady is paid ten thousand fold. [27 January 1974]

This instance of loving care of one person for another person is a different type of the gift of higher expression.

And there is yet another type:

Edgar: Please explore further.

He [Edgar] taught him [Robert Burton] fallibility. This experience and others like it made this man [Robert] a suitable vehicle for higher expression by the high Causal body [Transcendental Soul]. [31 January 1974]

Refer to the chapter “Transcendental and Infinite Souls” for more about the quality and the quantity of influence that these manifestations can have on the general populace. Obviously, it is much greater than the

influence that normal humans can have, even if we are spiritually mature enough to provide some of the gifts of higher expression.

Mallory: Have they ever heard The Balinese Monkey Chant?

Opera is also one of the most ancient forms of musical expression. People sang long before they played instruments. The island saga[s] were originally sung. These operas were later written by reincarnated Fragments of a Viking prince. Yes, we like Wagner. Writing the opera is a gift of higher expression; yes, the Libretto, if you prefer. A Fragment of this Entity once sang opera. [09 February 1974]

This is obviously a variation on the notion of music as a gift of higher expression, as mentioned previously.

Is self-remembering the way to produce psychic energy?

Not the way, simply the by-product. The self-remembering must be produced first through those methods we have outlined to you [meditation, concentration, fasting, study]. Then as you go progressively toward Balance, you automatically will have more and more flashes of consciousness, opening the door to higher expression. [09 February 1974]

Refer to the chapter “Self-remembering” for more about that technique for “Awakening from Sleep”, for “Liberation”, and for “Enlightenment” — all of which are more or less synonymous with having access to the higher Centers at will and as appropriate. Refer to the chapter “Balanced Man” for more about that. Briefly, the so-called “Balanced Man” is a person who is solidly ensconced in what I refer to as the “Impulse Center”, the transition zone between the lower Centers and the higher Centers. As I have said repeatedly, higher expression emanates from the higher Centers.

In my mind, this interpretation is bolstered by this passage:

[Soleal:] Until you open yourself to the joy of this verification, you cannot experience the “key”, as you have called it. You have asked for this key many times, and it can only be given in love and joy; it cannot be given to an alienated Personality; there is no meeting point where the gift can be transferred. When the meaning of this perception of oneness comes, only then can the gift of higher expression be given. It will then become a gift to your self. It cannot come from the teacher [Michael], nor can it come from me. [11 January 1975]

In Oriental spiritual traditions, an enlightened guru can give an acolyte a “shaktipat” or enlightenment experience, but during the original Michaelian group the Michaels repeatedly recommended that we do the work of approaching awakening and liberation and enlightenment with the help of various means and methods of mitigating alienation in the personality. Perhaps we could characterize this as meeting Essence half way, in the Impulse Center, where the key can be transferred in love and joy.

In my mind, this interpretation that higher expression comes from Essence in the higher Centers is bolstered by this passage:

Discussion about Artificial Space — False Personality — Karmic debts.

For a moment, look at the physical universe as an enormous stage, and all of the physical things within it as the sets and actors. Then look for a moment at the possibility that Karma, or the system of Karma, may in fact be looked upon as the director of the play of life. Souls experiencing all of life on the Physical Plane never have to seek spiritual growth. They can, and most do, go through the whole cycle [of reincarnation] in the “waking sleep”. The moment that you elect to commit yourself to the [spiritual growth] path, you remove yourself from the list of available actor’s equity. Were it not for Karmic Ribbons, souls would not experience much at all; they certainly would not experience all of life.

Now this play is, of course, a lie; there is no truth to be found within it. The only truth lies within the Real Space beyond the theater. In this Real Space beyond, then, the Essence is free to select the best script available — the one enabling the particular Fragment to experience out some facet of physical life that it has not experienced before. These are facilitated by what we have chosen to call “Overleaves”. Certain composites of Overleaves are conducive to certain types of activities — for instance, the extraction of an old [Karmic] debt. Remember, the moment you step on the [spiritual] path this is no longer the case. You may depart from the script just as soon as you realize that it exists. You may depart from it completely, and if you wish, without regrets, but this is hard work; just the realization is difficult enough. You see, that which you call Essence, that which has access to higher expression, operates always in Real Space. The False Personality fears Real Space as the agoraphobic fears the open field. [08 February 1975]

Refer to the chapter “Real Space versus Artificial Space”. Briefly, Real Space and Artificial Space are somewhat equivalent to consciousness that lives in True Personality or Essence versus consciousness that lives in False Personality, aka “Maya”, aka “Glamour”.

Add the visual arts to music and to opera, mentioned previously, in the list of gifts of higher expression:

Dick stated that he was surprised by his painting ability, that years ago he could not paint that well. He seems to be improving all the time. He wonders if he has been given the gift of higher expression by the teacher or wonders if the energy of the group has anything to do with this.

The gift of higher expression is there, Dick, but you are wrong about the source. You see, when the action occurs in Real Space and is work of the Essence, then it always takes place at the most Positive Pole of the [Inspiration: Repression-Passion] Axis. When you paint now, you not only have moments of Passion, but hours. This can be sustained now because you also see the results, not from Repression [Mode], but from Passion [Mode]. We would agree that, with your present standard of living and alone, you will find it difficult to make the painting all of life for you. But with the support of this [original Michaelian group] cadre, it could be a reality now that you are willing to look at this as a possibility. Nothing will make the gift of higher expression come as easily as will acts of, yes, “External Consideration” — the ability a student has to look beyond his own needs to the true needs of another student to express his Essence. [12 February 1975]

Refer to the chapter “Considering — Internal and External” for more information about External Consideration as an expression of love or Agape. Briefly, these Michaelian jargon words are all connected in a network that refers to aspects of higher consciousness, higher meaning, higher expression.

Further on in this same session, Dick returned to the topic of his artwork:

Dick asked if there were others in the [original Michaelian group] cadre who could become involved in art rather than in crafts as a source of income for the commune. He also asked for some easy tips on communing.

Higher expression can certainly be given in this way, and we would see many of you bringing your Essences to bear in such a project. And, yes, do not ignore the real talents of some of the youngsters. By this time, it is apparent for many of them, that scholarship is a waste of time. Why not then capitalize on what is for them in Essence? We agree that it is well for all to learn to communicate, but beyond that, we feel that the Essence should be honored. For many students, scholarship is a way of life and pleasure, not a bore. Why not exploit that, also? Yes, they can write books and the like to promulgate the Logos to other scholarly souls. You can express the Logos through the arts. [12 February 1975]

“Higher expression” in the higher Centers is about *energizing* in the Higher Moving Center, *inspiring* in the Higher Emotional Center, and *uniting* in the Higher Intellectual Center. Refer to the chapter “Logos” for more about what that means. (As a scholarly soul myself, my higher expression is to write books about the Michaelian teachings, rather than to do music or opera or visual arts.)

Soleal was present.

[Soleal:] Perhaps we should clear the agendas and then I will be around for those who wish more.

Please stop associating religion with the “church”. Religion is the ecstasy of the Logos. In your society, the church is a business in Artificial Space. One is of the Essence; one is not. One is in Real Space; one is not. Preparing an altar for the experience can be third line work of the highest order or it can be a drudge — or even worse, it can be a mockery. Or better yet, for those in the Work, it can be the gift of higher expression.

Is this referring to a literal or a symbolic altar?

[Soleal:] It can be either. Where is your symbolic altar if you do not have that quiet space? As long as it does not become a crutch, the material altar serves those brothers who do not have the altar of the soul. You see, it is possible to transfer the psychic energy to your brothers, but there must not be agendas in your way or the flow will be scattered, and you will not be able to transmute the collective energy into the higher expression. Those troubled among you will simply feed on the energy flow. [16 February 1975]

Refer to the chapter “Religion” for more about the Michaels vision for a “church” that operates in Real Space, in Essence, in Agape, in Logos — and so on with the synonyms for “higher expression” — where energized, enlightened, loving souls feed each other’s higher Centers.





② HIGHER SELF

This chapter is the product of a search for the phrase higher self in the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group channeling sessions. This word does not represent a significant component of the Michaelian teachings. However, there are good reasons to discuss the subject in this *Study Papers* book: 1) the subject came up numerous times during the original Michaelian group; 2) some interesting things were said about the subject; 3) the subject is related to a number of other components of the Michaelian teachings that are considered to be significant; 4) students can presumably benefit from having the mentions conveniently collected and commented all in one place.

The phrase higher self is not capitalized in this chapter or other chapters of this *Study Papers* book because it has no special meaning in the Michaelian teachings; it is not a Michaelian jargon word that needs a definition apart from its use in the common vernacular.

The term 'higher self' is used a number of times in the original Michaelian group transcriptions, and this makes it a legitimate topic for this *Study Papers* book. However, the phrase does not appear in the transcriptions of the Briggs group, which, in the early 1980s, took up the Michaels' baton after the original Michaelian group disbanded in the late 1970s. Nor does the phrase appear in the transcriptions of the Michael group led by Sarah Chambers in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Furthermore, none of the first three Yarbro books mention the higher self. Even though the concept has not been carried forward in the post-original Michaelian group era, most Michaelian students will be familiar with it, which makes the subject worthy of review. This is another one of those concepts that I capitalize as jargon words.

Higher Self per Wikipedia

The phrase 'higher self' has been commonly used in New Age metaphysical circles for more than a century, so it is not surprising that it made an appearance in the original Michaelian group. It was only a little bit surprising to me that my favorite primary internet research source has an entry on this topic:

Introduction

Higher self is a term associated with multiple belief systems, but its basic premise describes an eternal, omnipotent, conscious, and intelligent being, who is one's real self. [Theosophist Helena] Blavatsky formally defined the higher self as "Atma, the inseparable ray of the Universe and one self. It is the God above, more than within, us". Each and every individual has a higher self.

Concept

The higher self is generally regarded as a form of being only to be recognized in a union with a divine source. In recent years the New Age faith has encouraged the idea of the Higher Self in contemporary culture, though the notion of the higher self has been interpreted throughout numerous historical spiritual faiths. Some denominations believe that the higher self is a part of an individual's metaphysical identity, while others teach that the higher self is essentially our tie to the heavens. Similar to the notion of the soul, the higher self can be defined by many different sects, while also being a topic of interest in the scientific and philosophical fields.

Religious views

Christianity: In the conservative evangelical Christian interpretation, only those who are born again receive a "new spirit" (Ezekiel 36:26, see John 3:1-7). This appears to be similar to the concept of the "higher self" yet different in many respects. According to this tradition, only those who are "born again" receive the indwelling of the "Holy Spirit", or the personal presence of God. This is distinct from the conception in the Advaita Vedanta non-dual mystical tradition, which teaches that the Atma, the individual soul, and Brahman, the Oversoul, are one and the same.

Islam: In Sufism and some esoteric Shia, the higher self has an important role, which is connected with [the] notion of al-Insān al-Kāmil, the six organs, Al-Nafsul Mud'ma'inah and Fana'.

Hinduism: In Hinduism, the higher self is one and the same with the Jiva or individual self. With this perspective, the Hindu faith generally teaches that the higher self, or Atman is not an object possessed by an individual, rather the self is the subject which perceives. In his book *The Higher Self*, Deepak Chopra utilizes the views of the Hindi denomination to support his claims concerning the divine force that is acquired with the awareness of the self. Hinduism teaches that through the examination of self-knowledge, or "atma jnana," one can attain salvation by comprehending the true self.

New Age: Most New Age literature defines the higher self as an extension of the self to a godlike state. This higher self is essentially an extension of the worldly self. With this perspective, New Age text teaches that in exercising your relationship with the higher self, you will gain the ability to manifest your desired future before you. In other words, the self creates its own reality when in union with the higher self.

Higher self meditation and channeling

In numerous reports concerning the higher self, the practice of meditation or channeling to contact the higher self is highly encouraged. Most of this ideology agrees with the concept that with mindful awareness of the higher self, peace, salvation, or enlightenment may be procured. This is due to the idea that the higher self contains an advanced amount of insight into man's most taxing questions, such as the purpose of existence or death, etc. Through spiritual exposure, a person is thought to make a conscious connection with their higher self or other higher beings. In this state, the meditator may tap into this higher intelligence in order to develop a more enlightened perspective on world matters. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Higher_self — retrieved 25 August 2021]

Personally, even without these definitions, upon first hearing the term decades ago, it seems that I had the intuitive understanding there there is an ideal self, that toward which I aspire and toward which I am evolving, and which is in opposition to the "lower self", that with which I am all too familiar and all too encumbered.

Higher Self per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

Even before the Michaels revealed themselves to the original Michaelian group, the notion of the higher self appeared, though in this first quotation the actual phrase "higher self" is not used:

Sue: Tomas, if you don't know what to listen to, when you have so many things going through your head at one time, you don't know what to listen to.

[Tomas:] That is true, Sue. That is a very good thing to say. Now I know that there were times when I was on this [Physical] plane when I would hear this still voice and I would argue. It was as though I were arguing with myself. I was up there in my conscious mind [saying], "Now you listen and let me tell you how this is" and the little voice was saying, "You listen and let me tell you how it is." I didn't listen — I was too smart, so, I have to, and everybody has to, keep going. But that little voice is still there. If you will quiet your own mind, get on a subject that is of profound interest to you, and listen, you will hear. You aren't arguing with your self — they are telling you. [03 July 1973]

This paragraph contains the basic procedure for contacting your higher self, as well as learning to channel: need to know; ask the question; listen for the answer. The higher self must be invited; it does not intrude.

Another channeled contactee for the original Michaelian group members was Soleal, and he weighed in on the subject:

[Soleal:] As you live more and more in your Essence, you will realize that the goals are very different [from the goals of the body and of the Personality]. The body seeks survival in physical form. The primeval Essence does not need the form and substance. It cares nothing for the desires of the body. It seeks elevation through any avenue open to it. Think of the way Jesus died. This is always the way it is in the end [of physical life].

Entrapment in the physical body is part of Karma for the Essence. It will fight to be free, and if martyrdom is all there is, it will choose that door to freedom. [03 July 1973]

This is the only appearance of the word elevation in the original Michaelian group transcriptions, but by the context we surmise that this passage is talking about, not just contact with the higher self, but actually becoming it. Refer also to the chapter "Liberation" for the insights about what Essence desires from the human

experience. Refer to the chapter “Essence and Personality” for more insights about the contrasts between those two aspects of the human experience.

The actual phrase, higher self, appeared in an answer provided by Soleal:

We asked for further elaboration on this, as there was some confusion.

If that [martyrdom] is the only route to higher consciousness, then the higher self will take that route to work off the Karma. [03 July 1973]

Apparently, the higher self is equivalent to what is often called “Essence” in the original Michaelian group transcriptions, and Essence apparently does not relish the Karmic entrapment of incarnation. The point made here is the point that is made in many Q&A exchanges on the subject, namely that the higher self is viewing things from a perspective different from that of the lower self, so that the two are usually at odds with each other, and not only in life-and-death matters as mentioned here. What we should do, then, when we, as the lower self, find ourselves experiencing something that the lower self does not like, is first to ask ourselves what stupid or ignorant thing we might have done to bring the unpleasantness on ourselves, and if nothing is discovered, to then ask ourselves if the higher self might be going for a transcendent experience, such as burning a Karmic Ribbon or completing a Monad. It might also be that we brought some unpleasantness upon ourselves because we did not listen to the promptings of Essence, aka higher self.

The second appearance of the actual phrase, higher self, occurred in a question that was answered by Tomas, channeled via Carolyn in this case, not Sarah:

Dick: I thought you were coming through [my daughter] Kathryn. How can the information be coming through her higher self? Do we have all information available through our higher selves?

[Tomas:] That is a generalization and close. All information is available to you through the higher plane. This contact with the higher self is a connection with information [on the higher plane]. [17 July 1973]

That answer pretty much explained the location and function of the higher self. The higher self knows more than the lower self. This answer seems to imply that the higher self functions primarily on a higher plane, and provides information downward to a person on the Physical Plane. As documented in the chapter “Planes”, any plane “above” the Physical Plane can be labeled “higher”, including Astral and Causal; it does not just refer to the Cardinal planes.

Dick: How is Kathryn releasing her higher self as a medium?

[Tomas:] In acting as a medium, she released the higher self as she was in a higher state of relaxation and allowing the self to come through. Until the release of the higher self can be achieved, acting as a medium will allow the higher self to speak, as you cannot call on the higher self yet. Acting as a medium, you do call out the higher self and it answers. The essence of the human body is in the diaphragm area in the stomach, and that is why the feeling; an emotional reaction can be felt there. [17 July 1973]

Tomas often stated things clumsily via Carolyn. Learning to be a medium or channel for one’s own higher self is a step above the relaxation of one’s lower or middle self.

The next mention of higher self was an entire year later:

How can I be with Michael?

We will tell you what we have told all of the others. We can be with you at all times during meditation or concentration. You may wish to use the alphabet [Ouija] board or the auto[matic] writing in the beginning, but this is not at all necessary. When you express a wish to hear our words, we are with you from that point on. Intuition being the manifestation of the higher self, we can think of no better advice than to follow your intuition in this communication in this as in all things. [14 July 1974]

May I comment that having intuition does not necessarily mean hearing words in your head, and vice versa; one must learn to discern where the words and/or intuition are coming from, whether higher self or lower self.

I would like verification of the validity of my use of the Ouija board. Was I in touch with my higher self or was it my imagination or what?

We would say that the information is certainly valid. We would also add that one’s higher self is perfectly good counsel and should not be feared, even if it does happen to peek through once in a while. “Higher” means just that, and we would advise all to listen to that higher self as carefully as you listen to us. After all, the Essence has a vast store of knowledge accumulated over the centuries, and can be trusted implicitly. Only the Personality is transient and fraudulent, and you will soon recognize the difference. We add the lecture as a word of caution

only. We do not wish to discourage anyone from establishing the link. It is our wish to bond to each of you soon. [17 July 1974]

Here again it is obvious that the so-called “higher self” is synonymous with the Essence, and is therefore a reliable source of guidance for the lower self.

She naps four times a day — that kind of enthusiasm leads to frustration. Is this inborn? Essence?

Yes; in other words, the exalted part of self; the **higher self**. [08 October 1974]

So, if there is a “higher” self, what about a “lower” self? That term is not recorded in the original Michaelian group transcriptions. However, there is mention of an inner self, which is also equated with Essence.

Inner Self per Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

Besides the transcriptions that mention the higher self, there are a couple of passages where the phrase inner self occurs.:

Gene: How can we be sure who we're talking to?

We are also limited in trying to communicate at times. Another misspells Tomas [as Thomas, on the Ouija board] and the only way to verify it is Tomas is to be in touch with the inner self. It does not matter if it is I. The information from others is reliable. I am emphasizing this. When asking a question through a medium and then asking the same question through another, verify the presence of another entity both times in order to avoid confusion. Make sure it is the same entity each time for true verification. The fact of Tomas or another does not matter. It does not have to be I as long as it is the same at the time of both questions. [17 July 1973]

In the mention above, no reference to Essence is made, but in the second mention, the equivalence of inner self to Essence is made:

Ellis asked a question about his new feelings into other person's battles and new insights.

When a student begins to do some really serious work — and that only comes after the realization is made that the material needs are easily satisfied and not gratifying in the long haul — then, often the Essence demands to be heard. There is nothing more that the beleaguered Personality can do to fight in what becomes a losing battle. This is quite in line with the school that demands that you experience out all of your desires of the Personality, in order to free yourself for study. We have discussed this many times before, but perhaps it is worth repeating, for it seems that there is some confusion in this. Only when the Personality knows that it has played out its last hand, does it begin to give way to the demands of the Essence. This Essence is called by you students many names — “the small, still voice” *et cetera*. But it is all the same — the call to the inner self — the voice that commands you to look within and satisfy the deeper urgings of the soul and then forget the destructive cravings of the physical. This is what happens to you people each day. You, at some time in the near future, will be forced to stop and listen. [09 January 1975]

Obviously, the inner self could be contrasted to the outer self, but the phrase outer self is not to be found in the original Michaelian group transcriptions. The outer self would, of course, be the Personality that is often contrasted with Essence, same as the case with the higher self.

Concluding Comments on Higher Self

Regarding the equivalence of higher self and Essence, both terms seem ambiguous to me, because the original Michaelian group transcriptions do not define them well enough, in my opinion. Apparently they are not a reunited “Composite” (Cadence, Greater Cadence, Side, Entity, Cadre, whatever) that feeds inspiration and insights to us from a higher viewpoint. Apparently they are not spirit guides that watch over us and nudge us along an optimal path. Near as I can tell, the terms are a stand-in or place-holder for all of the influences that come to present-self from a future-self that is further along the evolutionary story arc; they are outside of space/time as we live it on the Physical Plane. Another way to say this is that they are the teleological component in our psyche. Another way to say this is that they are the abstract ideal self that draws the concrete self forward.

Even though there is no explicit mention of it in the original Michaelian group transcriptions, I propose that there is such a thing as the “middle self”, and I claim that it is aware of both the lower self and the higher self. The existence of the middle self seems to be implied by certain aspects of the Michaelian teachings and other spiritual teachings, such as this: When we are ‘sleepwalking’ through life, we are mostly functioning in the lower self. For those who are destined to be on a psychological path leading to a spiritual path, the first step of

'waking up' in the middle self is to realize that there is a lower self and a higher self, and then realize that it is up to the middle self to minimize the lower self and maximize the higher self using various tools and techniques. This phenomenon is elaborated in such chapters as "Essence and Personality", and "The Spiritual Path".





HONESTY AND DISHONESTY

This chapter is the product of a search for the word “honesty” and its derivatives and its synonyms and antonyms in the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group channeling sessions. This word does not represent a significant component of the Michaelian teachings. However, there are good reasons to discuss the subject in this *Study Papers* book: 1) the subject came up numerous times during the original Michaelian group; 2) students can presumably benefit from having the mentions conveniently collected and commented all in one place; 3) some interesting things were said about the subject; 4) the subject is related to a number of other components of the Michaelian teachings that are considered to be significant; 5) Honesty and dishonesty issues are pervasive in human psychology and sociology and spirituality.

The word “**template**” is not capitalized in this chapter or other chapters of this *Study Papers* book because it has no special meaning in the Michaelian teachings; it is not a Michaelian jargon word that needs a definition apart from its use in the common vernacular.

This chapter is one of many in this book that focuses on a psychological component of the Michaelian teachings as found in original Michaelian group transcriptions, rather than on a spiritual component, as so many other chapters in this book do. Psychological components of the Michaelian teachings are usually either a ‘virtue’ to be cultivated or a ‘vice’ to be mitigated; both are amenable to psychotherapy. Obviously, honesty is a virtue and dishonesty is a vice. The Michaelian version of psychology is not to be confused with the pop psychology of the self-improvement movement, those that do not have a spiritual core or perspective. Rather, the Michaelian psychotherapeutic path (aimed at improving psychological health) is a beneficial precursor to the spiritual path (aimed at improving soul health). To skip the former but attempt the latter is referred to as “spiritual bypassing”. This is discussed at length on various websites, including >https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spiritual_bypass<. To skip mitigating one’s psychological issues and attempt to go straight to enlightenment usually proves to be problematic.

[[search for synonyms and antonyms such as lie and lying etc.]]

Definition of Honesty

So what is meant by honesty? The online Merriam Webster dictionary definition is:

Honesty per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

The following extracts from original Michaelian group transcriptions are Q&A exchanges, where an original Michaelian group member asks a question (or makes a comment), and the Michaels provide an answer. This is **[not]** a subject that would benefit by division into subcategories, as some subjects do. These extracts are presented in the chronological order in which they were given, even though this is not a subject where there was a development or evolution of a specific revelation of a facet of the Michaelian teachings, as was often the case with the original Michaelian group. As is my custom, I often provide some explanatory comments following the question or answer. Underlined words in the Michaels’ answers are my emphasis, to draw attention to what it is that I comment on. Sometimes I embed words or phrases [in brackets] that I believe help to clarify the question or the answer.

The reason for the psychic Photograph should be fairly clear at this time. It is primarily a warm-up exercise, leading to non-verbal communication. Many students who are also teachers err in trying to speed up this process, and for that reason the desired communication does not take place. The telepathic silence is anything but silent, but students cannot be shielding if this is to come about. If you first learn to express your feelings to one another without shame or guilt or any of the other myriad barriers, then you open the door to silence. Only then can you be truly comfortable without the chatter. Chattering is usually just another shield so the Personality does not have to be honest. You see, the Essence cannot lie; therefore, the Personality cannot tell the truth; it can only lie. This is an important point to remember, since the chattering emanates from the Personality. The Essence does communicate. There is no need for mindless silence in the path toward Balance, but it might as well be truthful communication, and until you can knock away the barriers, this cannot come about. The Personality will always be around to conveniently lie in order to satisfy the Goal. If this Goal happens to be Acceptance, for instance, think of how much energy is lost. [12 November 1974]

Concluding Comments on Honesty





HOSTILITY

This chapter is the product of a search for the word “hostility” in the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group channeling sessions. This word does not represent a significant component of the Michaelian teachings. However, there are good reasons to discuss the subject in this *Study Papers* book: 1) the subject came up a few times during the original Michaelian group; 2) students can presumably benefit from having the mentions conveniently collected all in one place; 3) some interesting things were said about the subject; 4) the subject is related to a number of other components of the Michaelian teachings that are considered to be significant; 5) hostility issues are pervasive in human psychology and sociology and spirituality.

The word “hostility” is not capitalized in this chapter and other chapters of this *Study Papers* book because it has no special meaning in the Michaelian teachings; it is not a Michaelian jargon word that needs a definition apart from its use in the common vernacular.

Basically and briefly, the Michaels recommended to the original Michaelian group members that they

Definition of Hostility

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Carolyn: I have felt the need to express my opinions more lately, and I wonder if this is good. Sometimes I have spouted off.

Do you understand the source of the negative emotions? If so, then you should examine them carefully and see if you can turn them into something positive. Hostility is never an act of conscious will. The only positive forces are peaceful, loving ones. Carolyn still has a tendency to slip into the patterns or vibrations of the moment. Many sleeping souls provide the necessary shocks to keep her on the right track — constantly examining herself. This is a common failing among neophytes on the true path. There are always many doubts until the integration takes place, and the commitment is made and is irrevocable. Life on the material plane, with all its glamour, continues to lure you back. The glamour is illusion — Maya, if you prefer the more esoteric term. Maya is part of Karma and is present for a very specific purpose. It tests your spiritual growth all the time and is your sole eternal safety checkpoint. When you reach the point in your spiritual growth when you “know” that all hostile feelings and thoughts and words — and even world wars — come from lower Centers in sleeping souls and they are not in control, then you will lose the desire or need to retaliate or spout off. It’s like spouting off to a stone wall for all the good it does you. You gain nothing and lose a great deal. [24 July 1974]

The Infant or “first born” Soul perceives itself and the world around it simply as “me” and “not me”. In this Cycle, there are no racial memories. If “not me” is perceived as hostile and unkind early in life, withdrawal occurs and a condition known as autism often results. If this perception occurs later, the Infant Soul may react with unchecked violence: sadism, murder without visible provocation, acts of unbelievable cruelty. The Infant Soul truly does not know the difference between right and wrong action, but it can be taught the laws of common sense and decency. Infant Souls rarely seek higher education unless forced. They are bewildered and hostile in strange situations. [late August 1973]

The Baby Soul perceives itself and the world around it as “me” and “many other me-s.” The Baby Soul forms strong beliefs early in childhood, borrowed from those around it, and these are literally unshakable and incorruptible. The Baby Soul is normally agreeable, a pillar of the community — until an opposing viewpoint is expressed. Then, inwardly the Baby Soul is bewildered, baffled by the difference. Outwardly, it will express anger, hostility, negative emotional energy, belligerence. [late August 1973]

Dick: As I get thinner, I seem to become more sensitive to hostile impulses or the generation of hostile feelings in others, particularly in people like Pamela's mother. I don't know how to handle this. There are so many ideas, like the Lamb of God and the Essenes. You should shield yourself, but I'd like to know if there is a way of handling hostility directed toward you.

Yes, there is a way. Telepaths shield, but the way you have learned is sufficient for now. Recognize that they cannot control their hostility and move away from it in your mind. Develop a mantra, if this is necessary. Accept that their bad spaces are not your concern. They are acting out of their own roles. [26 August 1973]

CarolynH is also a Mature Soul. This Cycle is really fraught with Maya, more so than any other, because the perception of the Older Soul begins to emerge, but the understanding does not. The Mature Soul feels all of the hostile vibrations around them. They have a need to remove themselves from this, but are too caught up in the traditional mores to remove themselves entirely. They feel a certain sense of duty that does not dissipate until the transition [to Old Soul] is made. This is why a skilled therapist would be of help in this Cycle. [08 September 1973]

Dick: Could we have a statement on race.

There are scholars in all races. Some cultures place great emphasis on intellectual pursuits. Testing these cultures would result in a preponderance of intellectually-oriented youngsters. Some cultures are concerned primarily with survival in a hostile world. [27 September 1973]

Dick: It's a question of internal flagellation and I think that it is (False) Personality beating on Essence.

Depression is normally the passive Personality's only channel through which it can express hostility. The anger can be self-directed, but does not have to be. [02 October 1973]

Refer to the chapter “Anger”. These two chapters cover much of the same territory. However, in terms of Overleaves, I associate anger with the Negative Pole of Impatience, namely –Intolerance on the Action Axis, and I associate hostility with the Negative Pole of Skeptic, namely –Suspicion on the Expression Axis.

Dick: I think that the way you eventually get there is by chipping away at it the way we're doing. One of our big things, for three years, was to rid ourselves of anger and hostility, either dumping it or accepting it, but somehow just saying that you want to get rid of it doesn't get rid of it. There was no method suggested there that seemed workable.

Unfulfilled expectations are the sole cause of anger. We know of none other. When you stop expecting, there will be no anger. [02 October 1973]

Hostility is one possible reaction to perceived hostility from the environment.

Sarah: I'm reading The Great Lion of God and it's bringing up all sorts of hostile emotions. I am just getting very hostile.

Gene: What are you getting hostile about?

Sarah: Paul.

Gene: You don't like him?

Sarah: No. And I never have, and I am reading about his fanaticism and I just can't wait to get back to it, so that I can pounce on him. Why do I have this hostility?

Sarah is almost a zealot when it concerns her dislike of fanaticism. She is, so to speak, fanatically opposed to fanatics. [02 October 1973]

Mature Souls who are Artisans and Scholars can be extremely valuable to this teaching if you can provide a comfortable environment for them where they don't feel threatened by hostility. [27 October 1973]

Persons who are hostile and aggressive enough to inflict pain or death upon other persons are always found to be sexually uptight in some way. Sexually satiated persons are normally passive, but this is only true when the mind accepts the sexual act in the same frame as the body does. As long as there is conflict in the mind [about the meaning of sex], there is not complete satisfaction, and aggression results. [29 November 1973]

[[other potential chapters to compile and comment: "Conflict"; "Passivity versus Aggressivity"]]

Ray: I've been reading a lot of David Hume's writings and I can't seem to understand some parts of it. What I want to know is, if Hume is part of my Fragment, then why can't I understand something I wrote before?

The semantics are throwing you off. You recognize many similar thoughts. You must remember the age in which you were living then. Startling concepts were introduced cautiously and with much reservation, sometimes cloaked in obscurity, so that they would not be recognized for what they were by hostile souls. England was an absolute monarchy then. [13 December 1973]

Phyllis: Could we check the Soul [Age] and Role of [my son] Elliott? Mature is good for Mott, but Elliott seems like the oldest soul I ever knew.

This child [Elliott] is quite secure within his present framework. Not all Mature Souls are troubled. Some are quite creative within a nurturing environment, with avoidance of stress and hostility in the family members. This child picks up quite well on all negative vibrations, but does not act upon them. [27 December 1973]

Childhood schizophrenia or autism is quite different and should not be compared to the adult psychosis. These children are Infant Souls who have perceived the "not me" as hostile at an extremely early stage, sometimes shortly after birth, or even during actual birth and have subsequently withdrawn. Children who exhibit unwanted hostility and are subject to loud outbursts and antisocial behavior are normally Infant Souls of Exalted Roles with Dominant Goals, who also perceive the "not me" as hostile. Emotional disorders occur for the most part during the Mature Cycle and are related to the soul's perception of those around it, however erroneous that might be. This causes an enormous buildup in guilt and also hostility. [27 December 1973]

Tina: What is the purpose of learning all these [Overleaf] labels? I dislike labels.

It is only important if you wish to make The Synthesis. We agree, verbal communication is a poor excuse for the sum of communication. However, until one of you break through with telepathy, this will have to do. This study [of the Overleaf System] enables you to have insights to the motivation of certain activities that could conceivably be perceived by you as hostile or undesirable, and prohibit the understanding necessary for Agape to take place. It will also enable you to aid those who seek your counsel. [31 December 1973]

Richard: I had a strong Soleal presence feeling this afternoon and would like a comment.

It is partially valid. You were not sufficiently relaxed to destroy your own bias. You were quite angry this evening. We suggest that you try to discover the source of this anger. The source [cause of an anger] can be deceptive and, of course, this teaching is moving toward the understanding of these hostile emanations. [03 January 1974]

If you could be like Christ and turn the other cheek, would that stop the Karma?

That is valid. It is acknowledgment of the Ribbon without the hostile action. [10 January 1974]

Concluding Comments on Hostility

This is a lengthy chapter, which I found surprising as I was compiling and commenting it.





HYPNOSIS

One of the founding members of the original Michaelian group was a medical doctor, and also a certified hypnotist. That was Gene. In some of the early sessions, when group members were still experimenting with ways to contact the supernatural, one of the ways was hypnosis, and it was Gene who induced the hypnotic trance.

During the original Michaelian group, the subject was revisited on numerous occasions. As we will see below, hypnosis is a way to facilitate the psychotherapeutic path, and even to facilitate the spiritual path.

Hypnosis per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

Concluding Comments on Hypnosis





“I’s”, MANY

This chapter is the product of a search for the word(s) “template”, “___” in the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group channeling sessions. This word does not represent a significant component of the Michaelian teachings. However, there are good reasons to discuss the subject in this *Study Papers* book: 1) the subject came up numerous times during the original Michaelian group; 2) students can presumably benefit from having the mentions conveniently collected all in one place; 3) some interesting things were said about the subject; 4) the subject is related to a number of other components of the Michaelian teachings that are considered to be significant; 5) “Template” issues are pervasive in human psychology and sociology and spirituality.

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Basically and briefly, the Michaels recommended to the original Michaelian group members that they

The Many “I’s” per Gurdjieff

Many I’s” is a Gurdjieff phrase for “sub-personalities,” which are parts of the False Personality.

Many “I’s” per the original Michaelian group Transcriptions

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Kathryn: When I do that, it feels like “me.” Some of the information has been contradictory. I wonder if it’s my “many I’s”?

Many times. Many times, the strong intellect takes command and forces us out. We come only through higher Centers. [08 September 1973]

Dick: I’ve been working on this for years and there seems just no way to get rid of Personality. I think when I’m stoned, I’ll be able to do it, but as soon as I become unstoned, I can’t. What Gurdjieff says is, it’s a step-by-step process in which a work “I” becomes dominant over the other “I’s” in Personality and is always working on this problem.

Dick: Later, you develop deputy steward and finally the steward that keeps Personality in line — on the straight and narrow. My work has been such that I cannot verify this. Even if I’m organized, my Personality is still the same dusty way. [06 October 1973]

In Gurdjieff’s teachings, Deputy Steward was a name for “impartial observer.”

From *Discovering Gurdjieff* by Dorothy Philpotts: “Conscience has been called by Mr. Gurdjieff the voice of the Steward. The Steward speaks to us in a quiet voice, which we cannot hear amid the vociferous clamor of the many I’s, each proclaiming some petty interest of desire, or even some idle fancy.”

Dick: Internally, I have and I assume others have also, a great deal of pulling and shoving, sometimes like I'm composed of many different people. Some are in charge at one time and others are in charge at other times. Up until now, I had always assumed that this was the many "I's" in False Personality [as taught by Gurdjieff]. Is it this or is it the many Fragments or is it a mixture?

It is an admixture of both. [08 October 1973]

The personality becomes more complex as the soul ages up until the Mature Soul Age, and then it moves toward simplicity again: refer to the chapters "Complexity versus Simplicity" and "Composites"

Inner turmoil — the anger at oneself — always results from unreasonable expectations that at least one Overleaf has of the others, and since there is virtually no communication between the Poles of Overleaves — the "many I's" — then these expectations are only clear to a few of the Overleaves, while the others are in the dark. There again, the leak is downward and results in the same pattern. Yes, this is the same as inner considering. [Dimensions! April 1975]

Concluding Comments on The Many "I's"

Refer to chapters "Ego" and "Composites".





② IDENTIFICATION

About a dozen and a half times in the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group the word “identification” was used. The context in which the word was used reveals that this word refers to a psychological function. This is an ordinary word in the English vocabulary, but it is also a word that has a special meaning in the Michaelian teachings, hence its capitalization in this *Study Papers* book as yet another jargon word.

The meaning and use in the Michaelian teachings context might surprise you unless you know that Identification was a term and a concept borrowed from the Gurdjieffian teachings, like so many other terms and concepts that were adopted and adapted into the Michaelian teachings. Some of the founding original Michaelian group members were familiar with the Gurdjieffian teachings, and the Michaels found it expedient to use terminology that was already familiar to them. However, the concept did not survive into subsequent Michaelian teachings groups. The function of this chapter is to make present-day Michaelian teachings students familiar with the concept, because it is not unimportant for people on a spiritual path to understand it. For that matter, neither is it unimportant for people on a mere psychotherapeutic path to understand it.

The original Michaelian group transcriptions themselves are not as clear about this concept as I prefer, so I believe that it is useful to the reader to see some preliminary description and explanation of it. Let’s take a look at it from the perspective of the dictionary first, then Gurdjieff, then the Michaels.

Introduction

First of all, let’s get a dictionary definition of Identification. In this chapter we are *not* talking about *recognition* of what something *is*. That might be the first definition that you find in any given dictionary. Rather, we are talking about another definition that you will find in a dictionary, and that has to do with psychology. To wit, from Merriam–Webster online:

“*a*: psychological orientation of the self in regard to something (as a person or group) with a resulting feeling of close emotional association; *b*: a largely unconscious process whereby an individual models thoughts, feelings, and actions after those attributed to an object that has been incorporated as a mental image.”

[><https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/identification>< — retrieved 02 June 2021]

Definition *b*: is closest to the Gurdjieffian and Michaelian use of the term, as we will see below.

Actors seem to have an uncanny ability to portray the fictional characters that they model. As for us ordinary people, an example of identification is when we are watching a movie and we *identify* with a character in the movie. That is, we transfer some of the identity of the other person into ourselves. There are degrees of this, of course, from a mild sympathy to an extreme empathy, where it is almost as if one *becomes* the character. Identification with another person can be done in real life as well as in movies. The reason for this phenomenon is that, according to neurologists, there are so-called “mirror neurons” in the brain that make this happen; refer to >https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mirror_neuron< for a thorough description.

More will be explained about this in other chapters about subjects that are related to Identification. To wit:

- “–Identification” is the original name of the Negative Pole of the Passion Mode, and the dictionary definition given above is what it means. This particular instance is a small piece of the general universal principle of Identification. It is expounded upon in my other books, namely *The Tao of Cosmology*, *The Tao of Cosmogony*, and *The Tao of Personality*.
- “Fragmentation and Reintegration” of Tao. This subject is covered in some detail in the chapter by that name, but basically, fragmentation and reintegration are all about Identification and dis-Identification of the Fragment soul with aspects and/or portions of the Tao.
- “Incarnation” is when a Fragment dis-Identifies with Essence and Identifies with a body-personality during ensoulment.

- The chapter “Spiritual Path” explains how a Fragment dis-Identifies with the body and Personality of an incarnation and Identifies with Essence.

Identification per Gurdjieff/Ouspensky

Below I quote just a few comments by Gurdjieff, as recorded by Ouspensky, about identification. Incidentally, this was a major plank in the structure of his system.

A man identifies with a small problem which confronts him and he completely forgets the great aims with which he began his work. He identifies with one thought and forgets other thoughts; he is identified with one feeling, with one mood, and forgets his own wider thoughts, emotions, and moods. In work on themselves people are so much identified with separate aims that they fail to see the wood for the trees. Two or three trees nearest to them represent for them the whole wood.

“Identifying” is one of our most terrible foes because it penetrates everywhere and deceives a man at the moment when it seems to him that he is struggling with it. It is especially difficult to free oneself from identifying because a man naturally becomes more easily identified with the things that interest him most, to which he gives his time, his work, and his attention. In order to free himself from identifying a man must be constantly on guard and be merciless with himself, that is, he must not be afraid of seeing all the subtle and hidden forms which identifying takes.

The difficulty of struggling with identifying is still further increased by the fact that when people observe it in themselves they consider it a very good trait and call it “enthusiasm”, “zeal”, “passion”, “spontaneity”, “inspiration”, and names of that kind, and they consider that only in a state of identifying can a man really produce good work, no matter in what sphere. In reality of course this is illusion. Man cannot do anything sensible when he is in a state of identifying.

A man becomes a thing, a piece of flesh; he loses even the small semblance of a human being that he has. In the East where people smoke hashish and other drugs it often happens that a man becomes so identified with his pipe that he begins to consider he is a pipe himself. This is not a joke but a fact. He actually becomes a pipe. This is identifying. And for this, hashish or opium are entirely unnecessary. Look at people in shops, in theaters, in restaurants; “Identification” is so common a quality that for purposes of observation it is difficult to separate it from everything else. Man is always in a state of identification, only the object of identification changes.”
[P.D. Ouspensky, *In Search of the Miraculous*, pp. 150–151]

Briefly, Identification is a loss of self-awareness; it is consciousness–lowering rather than consciousness–raising.

Identification per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

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The first mention of the word appeared in the transcription of the first session in which the Michaels appeared.

But I’ve felt that at the times that I have been [sexually] turned on, I’ve been much closer to higher Centers, and actually zoomed into them part of the time. In fact, the turning off leads into a depression for me, and at that time, one is as far from one’s higher Centers as one can ever be.

That is different. Then you are using the Sexual Center as access to the higher Centers. The physical act itself can be performed with little loss of energy. The problem with most is that they are heavily Identified with other aspects when they are performing the sex act. This is what we mean [when we say you detract from the higher Centers when you lose focus on the energy of the Sexual Center]. [12 August 1973]

Therefore, one form of Identification is distraction from the task at hand; it is lack of mindful attention. Many modern spiritual teachers, including the Michaels, have a lot to say about “mindfulness” because it is one of the opposites of Identification.

I have a question about conventional religions and how they influence people. I know it's a vague question, but people who become Identified with a religion somehow limit their experience and don't seem to grow much, yet they may help other people. Christ did not look for his followers among the "righteous"; he looked among the "unrighteous".

His followers were only unrighteous in the eyes of certain beholders. The rituals derived from the religions are Good Work. They produce a group high, which is the only way that Baby Souls ever experience a high; that is, vicariously (through others). [08 September 1973]

Living vicariously, whether via religion or any other group dynamic, is a form of Identifying. Basically, Identification is when you live according to something other than your true self, when you assume the identity of another person or group or ideology. This phenomenon is evident in many other mentions in the original Michaelian group transcriptions.

Sarah: I attempted to save Judas? Why?

You did not Identify well with his guilt. The attempt to save him (Judas) was a verbal failure. Your powers of persuasion were not strong. You were a male at that time. [02 October 1973]

Whereas sympathy and empathy for another person's plight are commendable aspirations, Identification with their negativity is not.

You have all made strides toward eliminating superfluous material possessions. Don't fall into the trap of begrudging Younger Souls their possessions. This is merely transference of Identification and equally pervasive. [20 October 1973]

Young Souls are by nature materialistic, and that is a belief, value, and behavior system that is inconsistent with the belief, value, and behavior system of Old Souls on a spiritual path. Old Souls should not envy Young Souls, because envy is a form of Identification.

Dick: We have "wolves" too. This is what we want to stop using.

The moment you stoop to this type of dealing, you once again become Identified with this game. The man is heavily Identified with this game. There is truth in the concept that we can obtain for you what you need. This man does not accept this completely and feels that the game of wits is still important. [27 October 1973]

When you are involved with, or have dealings with, other people who are playing some dishonest "game", the challenge is to not be sucked into Identification with their game, Identification being to play their game on their terms rather than being honest with yourself and with reality.

Kathryn: I have difficulty Identifying with males. There's an emotional trauma. [10 November 1973]

It happens the other way also: males have difficulty Identifying with females, so much so that it is fodder for jokes about men not being able to understand women. Seems to me that it would be Good Work for the genders to be able to understand each other empathetically. The use of the word Identify here is not quite what is meant by the negative meaning of Identification in this chapter. Perhaps it could be said that there is a Positive Pole of +Identification and a Negative Pole of -Identification.

The Server in Essence Identifies with the wrongs of humanity, and tries to bring comfort in a material sense to many. [15 November 1973]

The Michaels do not characterize this Identification as a bad thing, as -Identification. In my view, this might be another instance of +Identification, where the Server is naturally empathetic toward the suffering of others, and feels the urge to alleviate the suffering. Refer to the chapter "Considering — Internal and External"; it explains a psychological phenomenon that is very similar to Identification, where Considering has Negative and Positive Poles.

I see Clarence as a Warrior, Baby Soul. He is full of anger and disappointments of expectations of others. He isn't getting Social Security and seems to be destroying himself. He may die soon. I can't think of anything to do to help him. I also am afraid of him. He is so big and violent. So far, the violence is directed inward.

This man is indeed angry enough to destroy himself, not with suicide, but with bodily dysfunction. He has chosen this for himself and there is nothing to do. There is little chance he will turn the violence outward. He will eat away at himself. He perceives only himself and me and cannot perceive others at this stage. He will not be helped. Do not overly concern yourself. Help him as you would anyone, but do not become Identified because there is nothing you can do. He has chosen. He will pay. He will grow. You cannot assist in that. [20 November 1973]

Identification, whether +Identification or -Identification, is about the Personality-self establishing and maintaining an appropriate boundary with other people and with various situations. It is very similar to

having a healthy sense of one's integrity: do you lose your greater self in –Identification with a lesser self, or do you find your greater self in +Identification.

Dick: Could it [an incarnate soul unaware of its Entity] be analogous to a cell of my fingernail not knowing what the rest of the body is doing? All of the cells don't know what is going on?

Identification and labeling is part of False Personality. You have heard this from the man, Robert [Burton]. [22 November 1973]

Identification with only the incarnate self is obviously referring to –Identification in that it comes from False Personality; True Personality knows that it is a part of a greater self. The man Robert Burton was the leader of the local Gurdjieff group, where the concept of Identification was made known to the founding original Michaelian group members.

Dick: Can Michael give us information that would help us cease sexual activity?

That is drastic for most persons. We would hope that you would strive more for passive non-Identification.

Dick: Please explain "passive non-Identification".

Soleal's advice is colored by his own personal bias, but still good. We doubt that this [passive non-Identification] is an impossible goal for most. Basically, it would mean satisfying those needs which are strictly physical with a minimum of fuss and bother. The greatest energy loss is not in the sex act itself but in the fantasy that surrounds [it]. The calories you burn are really insignificant. [29 November 1973]

Human sexuality is fraught with fantasy about as much as anything else humans do. Sexual relationships are commonly fraught with Identification issues such as fantasy because it is exceptionally difficult to make the distinction between loving and empathetic +Identification and loss of integrity in –Identification. Few people are capable of transcendence in sexuality, so forget that, but –Identification is also to be avoided. Perhaps the best that most people can achieve is the Neutral passive non-Identification, which is neither +Identification nor –Identification. The phrases "friends with benefits" and "fuck-buddies" come to mind, but this practice requires maturity; refer to the chapter "Romantic Relationships". While you are at it, refer to the chapters, "Sexuality" and "Energy and Energy Leaks", for clarification about intimate sexual relationships.

Sue: I just finished reading a book about Christ's time, and I was identified with the period of time, and Him, and with St. Luke's mother. Was I around at that time?

You were around. The reason the identification is so strong is because you lived in Antioch. The deja vu is for the city, not the lady, except you were also an expatriate. We really hate to say this, but [you were] a Greek. [13 December 1973]

This passage might be a use of the word identification that is not Identification; this use seems more like what the word Recognition refers to; refer to the chapter by that name.

Dick: It seems to me that a person on the [spiritual] path should not be lashing back at "sick people". Is Michael inferring that we confront these obnoxious people?

By the therapeutic approach, we speak of that method by which the person becomes stripped of the tough outer fibers of the False Personality, and becomes vulnerable to other demands of Essence. It is true, Richard, this Personality cannot love; only the Essence is capable of loving, and only when its demands are met will you love. We have suggested to you that the way to achieve this is through giving up the Personality's expectations of the experience, and you are yet scornful of this truth. Yet, it goes far deeper than this. When you strip down to the Old Souls' perceptions of others, that is, as a part of something — and make note of that "a part" — only a minute part of something greater which includes self. Only when you become willing to part with your ultra-precious Identification [with Personality] will you glimpse the truth in this. [14 September 1974]

The essence of the spiritual path is dis-Identification with False Personality, where the True Personality achieves more +Identification with Essence.

The longest single screed by the Michaels on the subject of Identification was the following. The underlined words are descriptive of –Identification:

All of these organizations purport to have a lofty goal, but since the goal of none is Agape, again, they can only lead to more entrapment and more isolation from the goal. Examples of organizations that act as barriers are: the Democratic Party, or any other party; the Catholic church, or any other dogmatic church; the cult of the Ku Klux Klan, or any other terror organization; the Central Intelligence Agency, or any other espionage agency; Black Panthers, or any other separatist organization. The list is endless, and they are real barriers to growth if

you align yourself solely in them to where you become Identified in their dogma and accept it as your own. Other barriers can be found in the educational system. Many have seen this and have written about it, but their words have fallen largely on deaf ears. The moment that you Identify with any of these barrier groups, you move off the [spiritual] path, and Personality likes this and struggles to keep you Identified. Changes in government cause the Personality great pain as they result in a failure of the chosen barrier, and those Identified with the barrier feel fear. Naturally, they would, as they associate their personal barrier with the “good” while all other barriers are “bad”. Even the barriers [of] liberalism and conservatism are fear-producing if you happen to be on the other side. The alignment with one or more of these barrier groups rules out effectively a positive change in any other direction, especially if the alignment occurred early in life, childhood for instance. Oh, of course, if you Identify with this [original Michaelian group] group in the same manner and to the extent that you Identify with barrier groups, it will serve as an isolating factor, and a very good one at that. On the other hand, you can take the teaching for what it is, a liberating, growth-producing force, and expand your love to include all man[kind].

As all previous discussions have revolved around how none of these problems could ever be solved, we will now give response words we would like to see Photographed in yourselves, and they are: “never,” “forever,” and “always.” These irritate us far more than “very,” “a lot,” *et cetera, et cetera, et cetera*. Yes, it would be valuable for awhile to Photograph these in each other. We will tell you when you have become Identified with the exercise, when it has become Mechanical. It would be interesting to tabulate all those situations to which you apply these absolutes. There are truly few conditions, and most of them are cosmic, to which these do apply. [21 December 1974]

Obviously, this is a description of –Identification, specifically where one gives ones integrity over to some group that is focused on being competitive toward others rather than being cooperative. To do so is antithetical to the spiritual path. At the time of the completion of this *Study Papers* book, the years 2021 and 2022, a form of –Identification that commonly goes by the name of “tribalism” is utterly rampant. Refer to the chapters, “Photography” and “Mechanical Man”, for the expositions of those topics.

Gene: Until the manifestation of the Transcendental Soul, Robert’s personality would be in the way.

When the manifestation occurs, the man Robert — as we have already said — belongs to the age, and the route to him will no longer be blocked. At the moment, of course, he has a rather formidable guard, and it is extremely doubtful that you could penetrate this, unless you first made the commitment to rejoin that group. In no way is this man and his close followers ready to reveal the source of their teaching, as it differs from that of the man Peter (Ouspensky). Many who are close to him are the victims of their Overleaves, and are totally Identified with the Glamour and excitement of a “hidden” group — this makes for an excellent smoke screen. We would not discourage you from making the attempt. We would ask that you also not have any expectations of success. There is a chance, but a slim one, that those close to him would Identify enough with the fascination to make the necessary space for contact.... [16 February 1975]

My takeaway from this passage is that, even so-called spiritual groups that are following an enlightened guru can attract people who lose integrity because of their illusory perceptions of the nature of the group and the leader, rather than gain integrity with their Essence as a result of group involvement. Refer to the chapter “Glamour”, for more information about stuff you do not want to –Identify with.

It seemed to bother Sarah that a new student was present.

[Soleal:] It is rather your Identification with the student, than his presence — with the novelty of the situation. [16 February 1975]

This example of –Identification would seem to be an over-sensitivity (fascination, excitement) to some person for some reason.

Negative manifestations of –Identification are noted in underlined words in the following quotation, but a positive manifestation of +Identification is also noted:

Regarding recurring dreams of living in a commune, can’t find children, everyone turning against me, making love and no privacy, etc.

These are your very real surface fears symbolically experienced as dreams. Really, they are not even symbolic; they are actually fairly overt for dreams. All of you are facing these fears to some degree. The feeling of losing your children is a common one here; also, the fear of no privacy to do your hidden chores, or to hide all of those slightly tarnished activities that you cannot share with anyone because they are so awful. Sex is only one of these things, and you are not alone in this by any means. There is not one student in this room who is not

Buffering [a Gurdjieff term for denying, repressing, and compartmentalizing unwelcome sub-personalities] the true fears about communal living right now. It is not *necessary* that you live on a commune. This is a *choice* that we would see many of you students make as a preference, rather than something that is being forced upon you by an unfeeling, non-human teacher who cannot possibly Identify by the way of awesome and anguish of the Physical Plane. Well, we have news for you. All of the Fragments of this Entity were very much alive on the Physical Plane for thousands and thousands of years, and we, as an Entity, have experienced all of life. The choice is yours, dear students. We have asked that you consider this as a growth potential. We will not experience a feeling of failure; we will merely go on to the data-giving phase until it begins to wear thin with even the most tenacious intellectual among you. [21 February 1975]

The Michaels' empathy with their students appears to be a manifestation of +Identification.

We have a diagram of a mountain, showing levels of progression as well as Overleaves and Centers. Leslie felt that she was too identified with the drawings — ladders, etc.

[Our] third [recommendation:] of course, the mountain is not true; neither are the Overleaves, and it is also true that there is no anatomic landmark that you can distinguish as a Center. They are all visible expressions of higher concepts. Beware of the Identification with non-Identification. [15 April 1975]

This passage might best be understood in the light of a previous passage (21 December 1974), where the virtue of non-Identification becomes a vice if it gets to be Mechanical. This is another injunction about the desirability of discernment in the matter of non-Identification, +Identification, and -Identification; be vigilant about your boundary issues so that you maintain your integrity with Essence.

... do not Identify heavily with strong Overleaves in a manner which would persuade you to accept as a teacher one who is not yet ready for that. [15 April 1975]

It is all too easy to let people with strong Personalities assume a leadership role that they have not earned via real competence. It happens in many groups, to their detriment, but experience is how incompetent people learn to become competent, and how followers learn to choose better leaders.

Concluding Comments on Identification

To get my thoughts together on a topic, it helps to put them in a bulleted list.

- As with many other concepts that appear in the original Michaelian group, the concept of Identification as used in the original Michaelian group was borrowed from the Gurdjieffian teachings because founding members were familiar with it. However, it did not survive the demise of the original Michaelian group because successor groups were not familiar with it, and Yarbrow did not make a thing of it in her book *Messages from Michael*. Now that the near-complete set of original Michaelian group transcriptions are generally available, Michaelian students can benefit from coming to understand this particular psychological technology, and use it on their spiritual path.
- Basically, Identification is about having an appropriate boundary between oneself and some other-self or some not-self. Oneself should not Identify with some lesser or lower self, and one should Identify with some greater or higher self; the former is involution and the latter is evolution. In terms of the cosmic cycle of souls, the former is aligned with the fragmentation of Tao and the latter is aligned with the integration of Tao.
- In the negative sense of the word, -Identification is a function of False Personality, and has to do with a person losing integrity by investing a portion of itself in something other than Essence. This is a distraction that causes the person to devolve, to lose energy, and to lose focus on spiritual goals.
- In the positive sense of the word, +Identification is a function of Essence, and has to do with empathetic sympathy with another person.
- One of the aspirations of people on a spiritual path is to learn to distinguish between the negative and positive functions of Identification.





ILLUSION

This chapter is the product of a search for the word illusion in the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group channeling sessions. This word does not represent a significant component of the Michaelian teachings. However, there are good reasons to discuss the subject in this *Study Papers* book: 1) the subject came up numerous times during the original Michaelian group; 2) some interesting things were said about the subject; 3) the subject is related to a number of other components of the Michaelian teachings that are considered to be significant; 4) students can presumably benefit from having the mentions conveniently collected and commented all in one place; 5) illusion issues are unavoidable; they are pervasive in human psychology and sociology and spirituality — subjects covered extensively in this book — so it behooves us to have a working knowledge of it/them.

The word illusion is not capitalized in this chapter or other chapters of this *Study Papers* book because it has no special meaning in the Michaelian teachings; it is not a Michaelian jargon word that needs a definition apart from its use in the common vernacular.

It might be a little surprising how often _____ shows up in the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group, considering that it has not appeared in subsequent channeling sessions that we have record of. For instance, it never appears in Yarbro's books, not even *Messages from Michael*, which was about the original Michaelian group. Because it covers a subject that might otherwise have been ignored and forgotten, I regard it as useful and valuable to include the research in this chapter; it makes our understanding of the Michaelian teachings richer and more complete. I have done the same with numerous other chapters on obscure topics in this *Study Papers* book.

This chapter is one of many in this book that focuses on a psychological component of the Michaelian teachings, rather than on a doctrinal or spiritual component. Psychotherapeutic components of the Michaelian teachings are usually either a positive to be cultivated or a negative to be mitigated. // Obviously, illusion is a negative to be eschewed. Psychological issues are addressed with psychotherapy. The Michaelian version of psychology is not to be confused with the popular psychology of the self-improvement movement, those that do not have a spiritual core or perspective. Rather, the Michaelian psychotherapeutic path (aimed at improving psychological health) is a beneficial precursor to the spiritual path (aimed at improving soul health). To skip the former but attempt the latter is referred to as “spiritual bypassing”. This is discussed at length on such websites as >https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spiritual_bypass<. To skip mitigating one's psychological issues and attempt to go straight to enlightenment usually proves to be problematic.

About a _____ times in the original Michaelian group transcriptions, the word _____ is used. One could guess what it probably means by its usage in the common vernacular and the context in which it is used in the transcriptions, but it is never actually defined in the transcriptions. As it turns out, it did not need to be defined because this is a term and concept in the original Michaelian group — one among many — that was adopted and adapted from the Gurdjieffian teaching, one of the spiritual teachings that some of the original Michaelian group founding members were familiar with. For an introduction to the general subject of the Gurdjieffian teachings and the involvement of founding original Michaelian group members with it, refer to the chapter “Gurdjieff, Ouspensky, Collin, Burton”. The term has a particular meaning apart from the common vernacular, and because of this specific meaning in the context of the Gurdjieffian teachings and the Michaelian teachings, it is on the jargon list, and therefore capitalized.

Even though the Michaels used the term _____ on numerous occasions during the original Michaelian group, Yarbro did not mention [verify] it in her book about the original Michaelian group, *Messages from Michael*, perhaps because, near as I can tell, Yarbro was not familiar with the Gurdjieffian teachings. The Michaels have not used it in subsequent groups so far as I have been able to determine, perhaps because subsequent groups have not been familiar with Gurdjieffian teachings. Therefore, the term, and even the

concept referred to by the term, has not become common knowledge in the Michaelian teachings community subsequent to the original Michaelian group. Nevertheless, I believe Gurdjieff's psychological insights are worth discussing, the subject of _____ being one of them. I also believe that it is worthwhile to make the historical record of the original Michaelian group reasonably complete.

Definition of Illusion

So what is meant by template? The online Merriam Webster online dictionary definition is:

My usual go-to source for definitions and descriptions and explanations, Wikipedia, says this (underlined words are my emphasis):

Illusion per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

The following extracts from original Michaelian group transcriptions are Q&A exchanges, where an original Michaelian group member asks a question (or makes a comment), and the Michaels provide an answer. This is a subject that benefits by division into subsections. These extracts are presented in the chronological order in which they were given. As is my custom, I usually provide some explanatory comments following the question or answer. Underlined words are my emphasis, to draw attention to what it is that I comment on. Sometimes I embed words or phrases [in brackets] that I believe help to clarify the question or the answer. Numerous study papers related to this chapter are to be found among my comments.

Concluding Comments on Illusion





IMAGINATION

This chapter is the product of a search for the word “imagination” and its derivatives in the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group channeling sessions. This word does not represent a significant component of the Michaelian teachings. However, there are good reasons to discuss the subject in this *Study Papers* book: 1) the subject came up numerous times during the original Michaelian group; 2) students can presumably benefit from having the mentions conveniently collected all in one place; 3) some interesting things were said about the subject; 4) the subject is related to a number of other components of the Michaelian teachings that are considered to be significant; 5) **Imaginary issues are pervasive in human psychology and sociology and spirituality.**

The word “imagination” is not capitalized in this chapter or other chapters of this *Study Papers* book because it has no special meaning in the Michaelian teachings; it is not a Michaelian jargon word that needs a definition apart from its use in the common vernacular.

As we review the original Michaelian group transcriptions, we will see that imagination is used as if it had a Positive Pole and a Negative Pole. In my view, imagination is a function of the Higher Intellectual Center, which I prefer to call the Concept Center in its ordinary, every-day manifestation.... **Both have to do with forming an image in one’s “mind’s eye” rather than forming words. In the Positive Pole, the image is realistic; in the Negative Pole, the image is unrealistic, an imaginary fantasy,**

Definition of Imagination

So what is meant by imagination? The online Merriam Webster dictionary definition is:

Imagination per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

The following extracts from original Michaelian group transcriptions are Q&A exchanges, where an original Michaelian group member asks a question (or makes a comment), and the Michaels provide an answer. This **is [not]** a subject that would benefit by division into subcategories, as some subjects do. **These extracts are [not] presented in the chronological order in which they were given, even though this is not a subject where there was a development or evolution of a specific revelation of a facet of the Michaelian teachings, as was often the case with the original Michaelian group.** As is my custom, I often provide some explanatory comments following the question or answer. Underlined words are my emphasis, to draw attention to what it is that I comment on. Sometimes I embed words or phrases [in brackets] that I believe help to clarify the question or the answer.

The first two occurrences of the word imagination are recorded in transcriptions before the Michaels appeared:

Richard: I'd like to ask about that feeling in the doorway. A few minutes ago, when I walked through this doorway, I sensed some attraction, and I pointed it out to the others and I think that everyone thinks that they experienced it. Could you comment on this at all? Do you have any comment about what we experienced?

[Tomas:] Air currents and imagination. [03 July 1973]

This incident was apparently an example of the Negative Pole of imagination at work. To give it a name, let's call it –Fantasy. For many people it is easy to let their imagination “run away with them”.

[Tomas:] The [Body] Types are a generalization of the common things, habits, personality traits in most people, and can resemble astrology. It can be well used if not in imagination. [10 July 1973]

This statement can be construed as an endorsement of the use of the scientific method to confirm if something is imaginary or not; refer to the chapter “Validation and Verification”.

Your group is not complete by any stretch of the imagination. [17 August 1974]

That common phrase, “stretch of the imagination”, is an acknowledgment that over-extension of the imagination is one of the common foibles of the human condition. Evolutionary anthropologists and cognitive scientists tell us that an overactive imagination might have evolved as a safety mechanism. For instance, a rustle in the bushes might be a saber-toothed tiger and it might not, but imagining that it was a tiger even when it was not increased the probability of survival of those imaginative humans.

One of the faculties that humans have far in excess of other animals is imagination. Humans are able to build up a detailed model of their environment in their imagination, and that allows them to predict the future with more fidelity than animals not so endowed. That is a good use of imagination.

Gene: I saw recently an old friend whom I hadn't seen for several years. He's a parapsychologist and mystic. He seemed just as dogmatic as ever. He says that any teaching that says that people change sexes in their different lifetimes is pure bilge, because if we knew something of the origin of creation and the true nature of twin souls, we wouldn't have such terrible conceptions. Could Michael comment on souls and sex changes?

We have often reiterated that belief is not necessary. This is another example of one dogma being more palatable than another and therefore acceptable. He cannot envision himself in a physical body of a female.

Paul [Saul of Tarsus] could not imagine a messiah who sweat, either, but Jesus did. [27 September 1973]

So here is a case where imagination is a good thing, such as when pre-conceived beliefs keep a person from seeing what is possible. Refer to the chapter “Belief System” for more about that.

Richard: We seem to always find obstacles in our path. Is this part of Karma for us, or is it something that we are imagining?

False Personality does not want you to have a commune. [20 October 1973]

Here is a case where False Personality pushes the imagination into the Negative Pole. The converse is that True Personality pushes the imagination into the Positive Pole.

MichaelS: I would like to ask about the direction I am going and the Entities I have contacted.

This is Good Work for you if you do not attach too much bias of your own to the information. It would be helpful to work with another as a safety valve. MichaelS, you have an exotic imagination, and this could throw you in ‘hot water’. [01 November 1973]

Perhaps you have heard the phrase “reality check”? If past experience indicates that you are the type of person who has an “exotic” imagination, then maybe you should ask your trusted friends whether or not your imagination is off on just another flight of fancy. Refer to the chapter “Bias” for discussion of a type of fantasy.

[[Continue to search]]

Concluding Comments on Imagination





IMPRINTING

This chapter is the product of a search for the concept of imprinting in the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group channeling sessions. This word does not represent a significant component of the Michaelian teachings. However, there are good reasons to discuss the subject in this *Study Papers* book: 1) the subject came up numerous times during the original Michaelian group; 2) students can presumably benefit from having the mentions conveniently collected all in one place; 3) some interesting things were said about the subject; 4) the subject is related to a number of other components of the Michaelian teachings that are considered to be significant; 5) Imprinting issues are pervasive in human psychology and sociology and spirituality.

The word imprinting is not capitalized in this chapter or other chapters of this *Study Papers* book because it has no special meaning in the Michaelian teachings; it is not a Michaelian jargon word that needs a definition apart from its use in the common vernacular.

Definition of Imprinting

So what is meant by imprinting? The online Merriam Webster dictionary definition is:

Imprinting per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

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The subject of imprinting did not appear in the original Michaelian group transcriptions until many months after its start.

Dick: I'd like verification of the SRG of Chris. I think he's a Sage, not a King and in Growth and an Idealist.

This youngster is confusing to you for several reasons. The most prominent one being the fact that both his father and mother are Young Sages: she in Growth, he in Dominance. This [parental influence and imprinting] has not dissipated. The fact remains that this is an Old King. [06 February 1974]

The first imprinting influence is as one would expect, namely from parents. A mother who has more than one child knows that there are differences in temperament between those children that can be detected even in the womb. Therefore, the infant is not born completely as a *tabula rasa* (blank slate) upon which anything can be written. However, the parents can imprint the infant enough to obscure the Role of the child.

The second imprinting influence is, of course, the socio-cultural environment in which the child grows up:

Mallory: Are children more Balanced than adults, and does the enTrapment take place in adolescence?

The specific Center is chosen prior to the interval [incarnation], but the enTrapment takes place during childhood, usually during adolescence, when the child is the most vulnerable, (due to) cultural imprinting.

Mallory: Can this happen earlier than adolescence?

Yes, and later.

Mallory: Why are some children imprinted less than others?

Children in Exalted Roles [Sage, Priest, King] and dominant Goals [Acceptance, Growth, Dominance] are not easily imprinted. [03 March 1974]

How much does the Attitude determine where one is Trapped?

Very much. Most of the imprinting of early childhood is very effectively converted into Tape Loops.

Richard: Is bias [the same as] Tape Loops?

A major part of it, yes. Some [biases] are, of course, original [not imprinted]. [03 March 1974]

Refer to chapters "Centering Traps" and "Biocomputer: Its Programs and Tapes" for more about those subjects.

Where are Jim and Joan's children?

The little one is not imprinted, so is free flowing. The older girls are fairly solidly in the Emotional Parts. [03 March 1974]

Centering is partly a matter of imprinting.

Why do we have to be so serious?

The levity is difficult for you all, as you were imprinted with the work ethic early in life. Dick and Richard. Sarah and Susan more so. [10 March 1974]

Dick: Is there anything resembling sex on the Causal plane?

There is, but it is genderless. The Essence is thoroughly capable of experiencing the ecstasy and frequently does. The Personality cannot because of the pain-pleasure Monad. It is automatic. In your culture, it is imprinted early in life that if you are to experience pleasure, you also must have pain. The entire Entity [Michael] experiences. There are no more Fragments. We are whole. [10 March 1974]

Comment: We are imprinted that we are our brother's keepers and feel bad when a person in Rejection or Retardation seems to lose out in life. They came for that purpose — to learn something. You cry because of the guilt you have because you "should have done something for them". Photograph your own "goodness" and remember, they are not here to be happy. [13 March 1974]

That may sound like sociopathy, but that diagnosis is a cultural artifact.

About William, who has been told he would die by next fall and he is supposed to be an Old Soul. He seems too bigoted to be a final Level Old Soul. Comment, please?

There was in this Fragment much Karma, many Ribbons dating back many centuries. He chose not to burn [his Karma] until now. There is also so much failure on his part to look at himself until quite recently, primarily due to the very rigid imprinting he received. Also, prejudice is cultural and does not always dissolve in the Old Soul Cycle, although it is usually not manifested aggressively. [15 May 1974]

False Personality work? Where does it come from? How does it have to do with Overleaves?

The Overleaves exert an enormous influence on the ultimate Personality. That [False Personality] emerges from the cultural imprinting and determines how the given Fragment will adapt or not adapt to a set of similar life circumstances. For instance, one would expect an Emotionally Centered Mid-Cycle [Fourth Level] Mature Priest to react with more lasting stigmata to say forcible rape than a Moving Centered Old Scholar. [05 June 1974]

Concluding Comments on Imprinting





INDIVIDUALITY-SM?

This chapter is the product of a search for the word “individuality” and related words and concepts in the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group channeling sessions. This word does not represent a significant component of the Michaelian teachings. However, there are good reasons to discuss the subject in this *Study Papers* book: 1) the subject came up numerous times during the original Michaelian group; 2) students can presumably benefit from having the mentions conveniently collected and commented all in one place; 3) some interesting things were said about the subject; 4) the subject is related to a number of other components of the Michaelian teachings that are considered to be significant; 5) Issues of individualism versus collectivism are pervasive in human psychology and sociology and spirituality.

The word “individuality” is not capitalized in this chapter or other chapters of this *Study Papers* book because it has no special meaning in the Michaelian teachings; it is not a Michaelian jargon word that needs a definition apart from its use in the common vernacular.

This chapter is one of many in this book that focuses on a psychological and psychotherapeutic component of the Michaelian teachings as found in original Michaelian group transcriptions, rather than on a spiritual component, as so many other chapters in this book do. The Michaelian version of psychology is not to be confused with the pop psychology of the self-improvement movement, those that do not have a spiritual core or perspective. Rather, the Michaelian psychotherapeutic path (aimed at improving psychological health) is a beneficial precursor to the spiritual path (aimed at improving soul health). To skip the former but attempt the latter is referred to as “spiritual bypassing” (>https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spiritual_bypass<), and it usually proves to be problematic.

Definition of Individuality

So what is meant by individuality? The online Wikipedia dictionary definition is:

An individual is a person or any specific object in a collection. In the 15th century and earlier, and also today within the fields of statistics and metaphysics, individual means “indivisible”, typically describing any numerically singular thing, but sometimes meaning “a person” as in “The problem of proper names”. From the 17th century on, individual indicates separateness, as in individualism. Individuality is the state or quality of being an individuated being; a person separated from everything with unique character by possessing their own needs, goals, and desires in comparison to other persons. [><https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Individualism>< — retrieved 26 March 2023]

The reason that I looked to Wikipedia for a definition of the word “individuality” is because, as we will see in the next session, the Michaels had a lot to say about “individualism” as a way of life versus its opposite, “collectivism” as a way of life. Spoiler alert: there are advantages and disadvantages to individualism and collectivism, and everyone should find their own personal optimal balance point on the spectrum between the extremes, but the Michaels recommended against individualism and recommended collectivism for those people who chose a lifestyle of growth on a spiritual path.

Individuality per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

The following extracts from original Michaelian group transcriptions are Q&A exchanges, where an original Michaelian group member asks a question (or makes a comment), and the Michaels provide an answer. This is [not] a subject that would benefit by division into subcategories, as some subjects do. These extracts are presented in the chronological order in which they were given, even though this is not a subject where there was a development or evolution of a specific revelation of a facet of the Michaelian teachings, as was often the case with the original Michaelian group. As is my custom, I often provide some explanatory comments following the question or answer. Underlined words in the Michaels’ answers are my emphasis, to draw

attention to what it is that I comment on. Sometimes I embed words or phrases [in brackets] that I believe help to clarify the question or the answer. Numerous study papers related to this chapter are to be found among my comments.

The first mention of individuality appeared about a month before the Michaels revealed themselves to the original Michaelian group.

Dick: I would like to ask Soleal: because of studying Gurdjieff, I've come to believe that the only possibility for anything is through individual personal growth and not through trying to change things like political systems. I would like to know if this is correct.

[Soleal:] Not entirely. Someone must teach the Logos in the first [place, if politics is to change]. As the population grows, the teachers increase. Some people need much more personal direction; reading will not help them. [03 July 1973]

Although it has almost no relevance to this chapter, the reader can refer to the chapter "Logos" for a discussion of what that means. One chapter that is relevant to this chapter (and that answer) is "School Metaphor", because it discusses the whole teacher/learner didactic dialectic. Basically and briefly, the majority of people are extroverts, and they flourish in a social environment where they get feedback on how they are doing about where they are going. My surmise is that even introverts, who tend to be individualistic autodidacts (self-taught), will do better if/when they are not complete loners. Not everything that is beneficial to learn is found in the written word.

The subject came up again less than two weeks later. Both the following session and the previous session were very early in the original Michaelian group story arc, so they did not know where all this was going.

Alice: How can I raise myself to the higher — through meditation?

[Tomas:] You are right. Meditation is the door by which you can enter the higher plane and communicate with those waiting to help. Fasting and occasional solitude and silence prepare you for a more meaningful experience. There are many excellent places giving instruction. Maybe this would open the door for you, Alice. The need for personal guidance varies with the individual.

Sarah is another who profits from sitting at the feet of the "master". All of you have a need to check and verify, and that is not Wrong Work. Much of this has to do with your predominantly scientific backgrounds. You will all reach the point, if you pursue this, where you will know. [24 July 1973]

This answer is filled with words that are irrelevant to the subject of this chapter, but they are "Meditation and Concentration", "Planes", "Communication", "Fasting", "Solitude, Solitary, Isolation, Seclusion", "Silence, The", "Adept and Master", "Validation and Verification", "Good Work, Bad Work". The point to be made here that was hinted at in that passage is, it is up to the individual to discern their introversion/extroversion ratio if they are to find the right balance for them between learning via individualism versus collectivism.

In the second session in which the Michaels were the source, the subject of individual work versus group work came up for discussion:

Dick: Tomas came through as a hard power, but the group was shaky — Gene and Susan, Carolyn. Gene is pivotal to the group and feels he may have to drop out. [What is a] viable group?

The viability of the group depends upon the ability of the individuals involved to rise above the trivial circumstances now driving them apart. It is within the grasp of each of you to do this, even Susan. It is in her Karma to seek the path you wish to follow. She has sought it many times before. The closer you become, the easier it will be for you to recall [your plans for your lifetime]. The ability to define your purpose in this existence will even come to you. The group has one thing the individual cannot tap alone and that is the collective memory. The ability to see the lesson that is being learned is difficult enough in a group, let alone in solitary. The relationships within this group are ancient. I realize this is a new concept for you to swallow, but in order to progress further, you must come to grips with this. The law of cause and effect is as old as the Tao and that has existed for a long time. [17 August 1973]

Concluding Comments on Individuality





INFLUENCES: A, B, C

The subject of this chapter is yet another component of the Gurdjieffian teachings that was carried over into the original Michaelian group, but which did not find its way into the Michaelian teachings in general. My speculation about its lack of transition out of original Michaelian group is that perhaps Yarbrow apparently was not familiar with Gurdjieff, and had nothing? little? to say about it in her book *Messages from Michael*. Even so, I believe that it would be helpful if modern Michaelian students were aware of Gurdjieff's psychological insights, the subject of types of "influences" being one of them.

Influences per Gurdjeff

All people in the ordinary conditions of life live under two kinds of influences. First there are the influences created in life, desire for riches, fame and so on, which we call influences A. Secondly, there are other influences which come from outside life, which work in the same conditions although they are different, and we call these influences B. They reach man in the form of religion, literature or philosophy. The influences of the second kind are conscious in their origin. Influences A are mechanical from the beginning. Man can meet these B influences or he can pass them by without noticing them, or he can hear them and think that he understands them, use the words and at the same time have no real understanding at all. These two influences really determine the further development of man. If man accumulates influences B, the results of these influences crystallize in him (I use the word crystallize in the ordinary sense) and form in him a certain kind of center of attraction, which we call magnetic center.

The compact mass of memory of these influences attracts him in a certain direction, or makes him turn in a certain direction. When magnetic center is formed in man it will be easier for him to attract to himself more influences B, and not to be distracted by influences A. With ordinary people influences A can take so much of their time that nothing is left for other influences and they are hardly affected at all by influences B. But if this magnetic center in man grows, then after some time he meets another man, or a group of people, from whom he can learn something different, something that is not included in influences B, and which we call influence C. This influence is conscious in origin and action and can only be transmitted by direct instruction. Influences B can come through books and works of art and things like that, but influence C can only come by direct contact. If a man in whom magnetic center has grown meets with a man or a group through whom he comes into contact with influence C, that means that he has made the first step. Then there is a possibility of development for him. [P.D. Ouspensky, *The Fourth Way*, p. 21–22]

Influences per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

Kathryn: That's interesting. There is no live Master here.

We are cosmic influence. 08 September 1973]

"Cosmic Influence" is a concept from Gurdjieff about types of influences we experience in life, with cosmic influence coming from supernatural planes. Cosmic influence is also called "C influence."

Dick: Guess I'm saying there has to be large internal changes in order to make a change in jobs, before I can trust cosmic influences. Soledad said you have to use your own resources. They [Michael] are saying, "Don't toil so much." That's what I'm complaining about. They [Michael] say not to work so hard. [06 October 1973]

From <http://glossary.cassiopaea.com/glossary.php?id=907>: "C influences" are only found with the Work [the Fourth Way] and can only be received in personal interaction with a conscious being; "C influences" come from the SOURCE, that is, from an esoteric Center located outside of life.

Dick: Robert depended on cosmic influence. He made no decisions of his own concerning the property. He apparently knew that he would be cared for.

We will guide you, also. We do not make the choices, not even for the man Robert. The final decision is always left up to you, but we will not fail you or cause you to make unsound deals. Such would seriously hinder this teaching. [20 October 1973]

Allen Noonan-Michael was on TV recently. Watching him from a conventional point of view, I thought he was kooky, i.e., he says there are angels in UFOs and that space people built the pyramids and that he has been on board a UFO. Further, that he has a "radio station" in his head tuned into the "cosmic influence." It was disquieting, though, to find that his ideas are close to those of this school in many areas.

The man is for real. You may end up appearing as strange as, or stranger than, this man. He has a teaching from above your plane and has a rather unusual way of spreading the knowledge attained. He will not seem so strange a year from now. There will be more like him, including yourselves. [20 November 1973]

Dick: Is this what we would call a "C" [Cosmic] influence group?

We think that we qualify as cosmic influence. Dick asked if Yorgos's group was a "C" influence group.

We also feel that while many of these splinter groups do perform a valuable service; they really intensify the difference between the mainstream of materialistic society and groups such as the one in which you are now involved; i.e., those groups where the teaching becomes the prime mover.

Dick: I spent hours with Nanette and it is like she cannot see the difference between "C" and "B" groups. She thinks she will be God-conscious soon. She thinks she's near, through the Agni Yoga. Is it because I do not have the guidance when I'm talking with her or what?

No. It is not your lack of guidance. It is your lack of courage of conviction that does not permit you to point out the utter nonsense in the hope for instant "enlightenment." The path is long and steep. The difference in the teachings is, of course, the fact that this is a living teaching. Many of those are not. You have found it difficult to interpret the scriptures of the various religious sects on your world. This is because these are now dead teachings. [30 December 1973]

Dick: Robert said that Alex's teacher was Lord Pentland and that he was a "C" influence teacher. Could we have a comment?

He [Lord Pentland] was a student of Rodney (Collin). The Englishman (Pentland) did have contact but the psychic energies were low and there was much bias. [20 January 1974]

Mallory: I would like to ask about Abraham Lincoln.

He was a Seventh Level Old Sage.

Dick: Did he have cosmic influence?

Yes, he did. [22 January 1974]

Dick: Robert's group is also a "C" [cosmic] influence group. How can this be?

The conflict will be resolved when this man experiences the manifestation of the Transcendental Soul. He is right in saying that internal consideration is the last to go and this is a phenomenon of this. [03 March 1974]

Dick: Gurdjieff says that Mechanical Man has no will (a #1, #2 or #3 Man). He may start out to pursue a course, but will succumb to societal pressures, fears, habits, etc. Gurdjieff says in order to become conscious, one must attach himself to a man with "C" influence [direct contact with an enlightened person] and allow him to function as his will. Michael cannot function in this capacity, as he needs a medium. [21 September 1974]

Liz read a statement received in trance to the effect that a "force" had come into being that would attempt to lead us back into "A influence."

The first that comes to mind is the search for land. We would suggest that you call at least a six-month moratorium on this, as the way you are now going about it could result only in financial disaster for several who are not in the place to weather this storm. During this period of time, serious students could begin to work on consolidating existing households and begin to live together in what is now available. What is happening now is that the property is being searched for by Instinctive Centers rather than the three Centers that should be involved. Creating a frictionless commune will not help anyone's growth. It is the friction that produces the shocks for growth. Jumping from one well-feathered nest into another produces no friction. Second, we would recommend that as many of you as can possibly do it, make the trip to the property belonging to the man Yorgos simply to experience what one truly needs to live and an environment in which growth can occur. Then, during the next six months, consider this environment and what Overleaves reject it.

The system that we recommend that you use to bring the Overleaves under control is no longer a teaching — this is true. Georges [Gurdjieff] is dead — this cannot be denied. It remains, however, that this system,

reinforced by cosmic influence, is valid. If you splinter too much and diverge too far, you will lose the cosmic influence and then you will have nothing. [15 April 1975]

Joan listens to [Richard] Wagner and has a high. Where does this come from?

Very high B influences such as this can prepare you for transient higher states. These can be experienced in the moment and perceived as great, overwhelming joy. This is fine, but should be experienced when they happen and not sought to the exclusion of work with Lower Centers. [15 April 1975]

From ><http://glossary.cassiopaea.com/glossary.php?id=907><: “B Influences” means influences that are consciously created for a definite purpose. These influences are embodied in the form of religious systems, teachings, philosophies, etc. “A influences” are those created within life itself, such as race, nation, country, family, profession, customers, etc. “C influences” are only found with the Work [the Fourth Way] and can only be received in personal interaction with a conscious being; “C influences” come from the SOURCE, that is, from an esoteric center located outside of life.

Perhaps we should clarify our position. Three forces have come together and asked for cosmic influence. We are to provide that and pass [on] the system by which you must teach and learn truth in being. [Dimensions! April 1975]

A Higher School is one which has access to and receives its information from a Higher Source than can be found on the Physical Plane. This Higher Source can be called “Cosmic Influence.”

The Fourth Way was a Higher School as long as Georges Gurdjieff was alive. Tarot was a higher School during the Renaissance. The Transcendent Brotherhood operates Higher Schools all over the Galaxy.

Cosmic Influence comes to this School from the Mid-Causal Plane of Reality. It will be a Higher School only as long and not a moment longer, as we are in dynamic contact with that Cosmic Influence. [Dimensions! June 1975]

Concluding Comments on Influences





⑧ INSIGHT

This chapter is the product of a search for the word insight in the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group channeling sessions. This word does not represent a significant component of the Michaelian teachings. However, there are good reasons to discuss the subject in this *Study Papers* book: 1) the subject came up numerous times during the original Michaelian group; 2) some interesting things were said about the subject; 3) the subject is related to a number of other components of the Michaelian teachings that are considered to be significant; 4) students can presumably benefit from having the mentions conveniently collected and commented all in one place; 5) to develop the faculty of insight is recommended in human psychology and sociology and spirituality — subjects covered extensively in this book — so it behooves us to have a working knowledge of it.

The word insight is not capitalized in this chapter or in other chapters of this *Study Papers* book because it has no special meaning in the Michaelian teachings; it is not a Michaelian jargon word that needs a definition apart from its use in the common vernacular.

This chapter is one of many in this book that focuses on a psychological component of the Michaelian teachings as found in original Michaelian group transcriptions, rather than on a doctrinal or spiritual component. A psychological component is usually either a positive to be cultivated or a negative to be mitigated. As we will see, the Michaels tell us that insight is a positive to be cultivated. The Michaelian version of psychology is not to be confused with the popular psychology of the self-improvement movement, those that do not have a spiritual core or perspective. Rather, the Michaelian psychotherapeutic path (aimed at improving psychological health) is a beneficial precursor to the spiritual path (aimed at improving soul health). To skip the former but attempt the latter is referred to as “spiritual bypassing”. This is discussed at length on such websites as https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spiritual_bypassing. To skip mitigating one’s psychological issues and attempt to go straight to enlightenment usually proves to be problematic.

This is not a short chapter, which is an indication that this subject is not insignificant for Michaelian students. Furthermore, this chapter has several other sister chapters, namely: “Inspiration”, “Instinct”, “Intuition”, “Knowledge as Gnosis”, “Recognition”, and “Understanding”. Basically and briefly, insight is the capacity and competence to look beyond the superficial level. The basic thrust of this chapter (and those other chapters) is to point out that people who lack insights into themselves, into other people, and into the world in general, will not get very far in life or on a psychotherapeutic and/or spiritual path. They will stumble and bumble their way through life, never knowing who they are and where they are going (if anywhere), why things happen to them as they do. It can reasonably be said that much of the Michaelian teaching is aimed at increasing the faculty of insight in their students. Any holistic system of knowledge and understanding ‘worth its salt’, such as the Michaelian teaching, will likely help people have more insights, because the system will provide a conceptual framework for understanding deep things more quickly and easily.

Definition of Insight

So what is meant by insight? As usual, I turn to Wikipedia for a definition and description (underlined words are my pointers to synonyms):

Insight is the understanding of a specific cause and effect within a particular context. The term insight can have several related meanings:

- a piece of information
- the act or result of understanding the inner nature of things or of seeing intuitively (called *noesis* in Greek)
- an introspection

- the power of acute observation and deduction, discernment, and perception, called intellection or noesis
- An understanding of cause and effect based on the identification of relationships and behaviors within a model, context, or scenario (see artificial intelligence)

An insight that manifests itself suddenly, such as understanding how to solve a difficult problem, is sometimes called by the German word *Aha-Erlebnis*. The term was coined by the German psychologist and theoretical linguist Karl Bühler. It is also known as an epiphany, eureka moment, or (for cross word solvers) the penny dropping moment (PDM). Sudden sickening realizations often identify a problem rather than solving it, so Uh-oh rather than Aha moments are further seen in negative insight. A further example of negative insight is chagrin which is annoyance at the obviousness of a solution missed up until the point of insight, an example of this being the Homer Simpson's catchphrase exclamation, D'oh!.

In psychology, insight occurs when a solution to a problem presents itself quickly and without warning. It is the sudden discovery of the correct solution following incorrect attempts based on trial and error. Solutions via insight have been proven to be more accurate than non-insight solutions.

Insight was first studied by Gestalt psychology, in the early part of the 20th century, during the search for an alternative to associationism and the associationistic view of learning. Some proposed potential mechanisms for insight include: suddenly seeing the problem in a new way, connecting the problem to another relevant problem/solution pair, releasing past experiences that are blocking the solution, or seeing [a] problem in a larger, coherent context. [<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Insight> — retrieved 31 March 2023]

The Wikipedia article continues with a review of scientific research on insight, a description of the types of problem-solving situations that are amenable to insight, and theories about how and why it works and how to foster it. In my opinion, the article is well worth reading for Michaelian students.

Insight per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

The following extracts from original Michaelian group transcriptions are Q&A exchanges, where an original Michaelian group member asks a question (or makes a comment), and the Michaels provide an answer. These extracts are presented in the chronological order in which they were given. As is my custom, I often provide some explanatory comments following the question or answer. Underlined words in the Michaels' answers are my emphasis, to draw attention to what it is that I comment on. Sometimes I embed words or phrases [in brackets] that I believe help to clarify the question or the answer.

The word “insight” first occurs in the original Michaelian group transcriptions about a month after the Michaels appeared:

Richard: I would like to ask if there is advice on how to turn things around in the right direction.

You are using Emotional Center as a psychic dumping ground. This is causing the energy Leak you are feeling now. The meditations, or more correctly concentrations, under marijuana result in good insights for you, if you will follow them out. [22 September 1973]

Refer to chapters “Energy and Energy Leaks”, “Meditation and Concentration”, and “Psychedelics” for more information about those subjects related to the development of insight. The Michaels also recommended to those Intellectually Centered original Michaelian group members that they develop their “Emotional Center” (refer to the chapter by that name), because they regard the latter as more important on a spiritual path than the former.

Some things promote the likelihood that we will have insights.

Richard: Is there someone? Could we have some direction? Could we ask for some insight into our problems?

Just take it easy. This does not have to be done tomorrow. [20 October 1973]

Emotional Center worry and Intellectual Center rumination often block insights rather than foster them. It is a well-known phenomenon that insights often come when the lower Centers (Moving, Emotional, Intellectual) are not processing anything in particular; they are relaxed. My suggestion is that insights come from the next higher Center, namely the Instinctive Center, which I prefer to call the Impulse Center, naming the Positive Pole +Intuition; refer to the chapter “Intuition”.

One concerns formatory speech and pertains to a question earlier asked [in the 20 October session]. We hear more formatory speech in response to verbalized insights than at any other time, especially those voiced by Dick and Sarah. We do not say that you should not comment on insights, but give some thought to

understanding before exclaiming, “Wow, far out.” The exercise the man Robert [Burton] imposed on his teaching is not desirable because it is not individualized, but the idea is a good one and we are proposing that similar ones be devised.

Refer to the chapter “Formatory” for more information about ‘half-baked’ ‘cross-wired’ ‘short-circuited’ expressions emerging into one’s awareness from the nether, lower regions of the brain — these are not valid insights. “Formatory” was a notion that came from the Gurdjieffian teachings, and from Robert Burton, who led a local Gurdjieff group that some founding original Michaelian group members attended; refer to the chapter “Gurdjieff, Ouspensky, Burton, Collin” for the whole story. Formatory exclamations are the antithesis of true insights, which are more like understandings and epiphanies that filter down into regular consciousness from higher aspects of being, the super-conscious mind, not the sub-conscious mind. Neither Gurdjieff nor the Michaels looked favorably upon muddle-headed mush-for-brains exclamations.

Sue: I’ve been having a lot more insights lately and psychic experiences, and I’d like to know the cause.

You are making some progress. [13 December 1973]

Similar to what I said in the previous Q&A exchange, “insight” is somewhere near the realm of “psychic” experience; refer to the chapter “Paranormal, The”. It is good to cultivate that type of experience and mitigate its opposite. It does not explicitly say so there, but as one makes progress on their psychotherapeutic and spiritual path, they should have more insights about how the whole world works.

... This relationship can only change with insight on his part, and we doubt it [will happen]. [13 December 1973]

Insights are not just abstract epiphanies about something; they often affect behavior (and emotions).

Richard: I would appreciate a comment on my sharing my insights with people who do not seem to care or understand what I am saying. It seems I am at a higher level. Is this my ego dragging me down to a lower level?

The words never fall on completely deaf ears; some level picks up on it. You must, however, be prepared for overt rejection in the verbal form. You must learn not to allow this to throw you from the path. There are bound to be repercussions. You people are decidedly abnormal, if you really want the truth, and you must get used to this. If you wish to be normal, you are pursuing the wrong path. [16 December 1973]

Newly-minted Michaelian students often feel evangelical about their new-found understanding; they want to spread the “Gospel” (good news) about it. The problem is that, with the Michaelian teachings as with everything else, what one person finds insightful another person may not, so one must be careful about broadcasting one’s insights indiscriminately. I am reminded of some Biblical passages, such as:

The Parable of the Sower (sometimes called the Parable of the Soils) is a parable of Jesus found in Matthew 13:1–23, Mark 4:1–20, Luke 8:4–15 and the extra-canonical Gospel of Thomas.

Jesus tells of a farmer who sows seed indiscriminately. Some seed falls on the path (wayside) with no soil, some on rocky ground with little soil, some on soil which contains thorns, and some on good soil. In the first case, the seed is taken away; in the second and third soils, the seed fails to produce a crop; but when it falls on good soil, it grows and yields thirty-, sixty-, or a hundred-fold.

Jesus later explains to his disciples that the seed represents the Gospel, the sower represents anyone who proclaims it, and the various soils represent people’s responses to it.

[>https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Parable_of_the_Sower< — retrieved 04 February 2023]

One way to evaluate your insights is to ask your higher self if your insights are worthy of ‘sowing the seeds’ on ‘fertile ground’. (There are plenty enough ignoramuses who share “insights” with other ignoramuses.) Regarding insightfulness, note the following:

Gene: She wants to know if there is residual cancer. Does she?

Yes, she does. This is not now aggressive, and we think that Denise has more of a chance to counteract this at this point than at the onset. This lady does not recognize in herself the sadness that she has. You must get to her sadness and also to her resentment over unfulfilled expectations. She will talk to you, and she has the aptitude to acquire the necessary insights. [20 December 1973]

There is a spectrum of aptitude for acquiring insights, and it probably depends mostly on personality factors such as are discussed in many components of the Michaelian teachings, particularly the strength of higher Centers, which provide access to transcendent sources of understanding.

Omens are different. The omens very often are given to you as Shock, just as precognitive experiences [are]. The omens or signs are often Astral, and the one to whom they are addressed are the only ones who see them. There are others, such as darkening skies, *et cetera*, that are seen by many, and the collective mind flashes on the insight that was communicated. [20 December 1973]

Here again, insights are mentioned in the same context with such paranormal phenomena as omens, precognition, and signs; refer to the chapter “Paranormal, The”. Refer to the chapter “Shock” for more discussion about a sudden, startling experience that provokes an unexpected insight on one’s spiritual path.

Are these Goals a changeable thing in one’s lifetime?

These Goals may be altered. However, the insight rarely comes. This is why psychotherapy sometimes works. [25 December 1973]

Insights can be prompted and boosted with the help of other insightful people, such as psychotherapists. Insights can be so strong that they lead to a change in Overleaves; refer to the chapter “Overleaves, Changing” for the whole story.

Edgar: Who explained the Sermon on the Mount to Joel Goldsmith?

The insights were his own. [25 December 1973]

Some insightful people do not need the help of other people or sources.

... The way you can handle it is to become Balanced and thus come into contact with the Emotional Center and learn to control the output. Right now, there is sporadic high output with little insight — it resembles volcanic eruptions. [27 December 1973]

A goal for us all is to make insight a consistent component of our way of being. Emotional Center is said to be more insightful than Intellectual Center, and a Balanced person is consistently functioning in the Instinctive Center, aka Impulse Center with its Poles of +Intuition and –Instinct (my preference); refer to the chapter “Balanced Man”.

Tina: What is the purpose of learning all these [Overleaf] labels? I dislike labels.

It is only important if you wish to make The Synthesis. We agree, verbal communication is a poor excuse for the sum of communication. However, until one of you break through with telepathy, this will have to do. This study [of the Overleaf System] enables you to have insights to the motivation of certain activities that could conceivably be perceived by you as hostile or undesirable, and prohibit the understanding necessary for Agape to take place. It will also enable you to aid those who seek your counsel. [31 December 1973]

When you know a person’s Overleaves and you understand what the traits really mean, then you know what ‘makes the person tick’ at a deep level. This is insightful in that it gets below the surface, beyond the superficial. Going beyond the understanding of the Overleaf System, understanding the entire Michaelian teaching, which the Michaels referred to as “Synthesis, The” (refer to the chapter by that name) should provoke many insights about how life in general works, not just the personality typology component.

Valid insights from students should be accepted. If they are invalid, they will feel wrong and you will know this without confirming this [with us]. [31 January 1974]

The name that the Michaels gave to offering insights to fellow original Michaelian group members was “Photography”; refer to the chapter by that name. There is a hierarchy of insightfulness in the Michaelian community, and the human population in general; some people are more insightful than others. Therefore, the appropriate helpful activity is for the more insightful to offer insights to the less insightful.

... Similar insights have come to others, but they have chosen to discount these as irrational, mainly because the changes would be immediately painful, and immediate pain is more scary than projected pleasures are worth. [24 February 1974]

In fact, some valid insights are irrational, and cannot be justified on the grounds of reasonability. This is why Intellectually Centered people must sometimes go outside their ‘comfort zone’ to accept their own insights, or the insights offered by others. What validates some insights — in the long run — is the phenomenon called “short-term pain, long-term gain”. Another type of validation of an insight happens when a person has, or offers, an insight that includes a more accurate cost/benefit calculation.

(She [Cheryl] said in reading a book about Alexander [the Great], she felt she was the boy, Bagoas.)

Cheryl, you have a valid insight in yourself in that long-ago life. [06 March 1974]

Dick: I noticed a profound difference in Susan on Sunday. There was a feeling of acceptance and warmth. She told us she had reached a "primary" source through automatic writing. It is a new concept to me, working back through past lives to the #1.

That was a completely valid insight on the lady Susan's, part. Primary experience is often centuries in the past. The secondary and tertiary experiences must be your guide, and hard work is all that will work to surface the primary pain. [13 March 1974]

During the original Michaelian group, and often in subsequent Michaelian groups, the Michaels often tell their students to trust their insights about past lives, such as who they were or where they were or why something is happening in the current lifetime.

We do have considerable insight into individual needs, but then, so do you all. [14 April 1974]

Elsewhere it has been said that some Michaelian students have a tendency to look to channeling for answers rather than look to their own insights. This is okay in the early days of student-hood as a "Crutch" (refer to the chapter by that name), but Michaelian students can reasonably be expected to advance along the spectrum from dependence on channeling to dependence on insight.

Sometimes, souls [people] search for entire lifetimes, are restless and insecure, and cannot gain any insight to why they are compelled to search. [17 April 1974]

That some people are unable to gain insights into the reasons behind what they do is yet another experience to have as part of experiencing "all of life". Presumably, this negative experience will provide more impetus to have the breakthrough insights in subsequent lifetimes.

Many times, the meditation does serve as a precursor of insightful concentration. [10 May 1974]

Refer to the chapter "Meditation and Concentration". There you will read that meditation is emptying the mind of thoughts whereas concentration is the focus of the mind on a subject or object of interest or concern. Insights can happen in either practice, but it may be that if you want insights on a specific topic, then concentrate on that topic. Many people report that insights are gained by first concentrating on the problem, then relaxing their efforts, and that is when the insight comes; a solution mysteriously pops into their head.

They choose to call the insight by other names, such as "grace", that is all. [10 May 1974]

One of the characteristics of valid insight is that it seems to come from outside one's own normal processing capacity, and insights seem to come without effort, even if preceded by effort, so the word "grace" is an appropriate synonym.

Gene: Susan has asked for a divorce. Why the change?

Basically, [she has] the same inability to take full responsibility [that you have for the way the marriage has been going], but [she has] the additional insight that you also do not take responsibility for her reaction in the anticipated [hoped for positive] direction, and that you will not in the future be willing to shoulder such [responsibility for the way things have been going in a negative direction]. It is conceivable that the lady will continue to listen to "the voice within" and continue to move in a positive direction.... [13 May 1974]

Sometimes an insight involves what one "should" do and sometimes it involves what one "should not" do. Sometimes an insight involves oneself, and sometimes an insight involves another self.

... the younger levels [Ages] bereft of any psycho-spiritual insight. [13 May 1974]

It should not be a surprising revelation to Michaelian students that, the older the soul, the more "psycho-spiritual insight" they may have, typically speaking.

Comment: We wondered if he would burn the [Karmic] Ribbons he had left, and went on considering that everyone on earth has a goal — a set of things to experience and learn on the Physical Plane. We wondered about the betrayal of Astral agreements we may have made, and someone asked if Michael would let us know what missions we had decided to accomplish.

We will, yes, but we had hoped that by giving you the Overleaves and Photographing the patterns, the insights would come. Many of you already have some inkling of what you have agreed to do merely by discussing your Karmic Ribbons and interwoven Sequences. These tasks are not always difficult; many are not even very interesting, but in some way, they enrich the Fragment and lead to the experiencing of all of life. [15 May 1974]

That answer is one important key to understanding this chapter. The Michaels have gifted us with the Overleaf System and told us how to use it. It is a structured framework of knowledge about how Personality works in a fundamental and comprehensive way (and how physics and philosophy works, but that is not the subject of this one of my books). Understanding the workings of the Overleaf System as a whole should

provoke insights about its workings in various novel situations. In other words, knowing the overall pattern of how things work in general should make the recognition of the particulars more efficient and effective.

Louise: Is my health trip Karma burned?

There is no Karma where your health is concerned, but if you look at your Overleaves in the light of the health patterns, some insight should flash. Much of your present questioning involves many Mercurial souls who rush through life. (They are) also exhausted. [15 May 1974]

Thanks again to the Overleaves and the pattern-recognition thing in the context of insight; refer to the chapters "Pattern" and "Flash".

Should we recognize [life] tasks in others?

Yes, you should. Particularly, you should work toward some insight to your own [life] task. [12 June 1974]

Refer to the chapter "Recognition" for more about a subject related to insight.

Richard: Are insights about [Isaac] Asimov correct (human brain) etc.?

Essentially, your insights are valid yes, and yes, Isaac is a liar. Of course, he does not know the truth, but Richard is receiving some help with his insights. [16 June 1974]

Asimov was an atheist, so evidently he was not receiving insights from supernatural realms, whereas Richard was. Some people are more insightful than others, and there are reasons for this, such as openness to the existence and utility of transcendent resources, which is where insight often comes from.

Dick: Observing self — can't figure out why it operates as it does (the machine). What do I do to make the change?

We would say at this point that the insight you have mentioned is an extremely essential one; that is, to view from the inside [via Self-observation] the utter mechanicality of the Personality and its conditioned responses. [19 June 1974]

Refer to the chapters "Mechanical Man" and "Bio-computer". There you will read that many people function at such a low level of awareness that the capacity for higher insights is very limited. It is quite an insight for a Mechanical Personality to realize its mechanicality. It would be impossible if it were not for the fact that there is a "ghost" in the "machine".

Nichols: Myth of the Tower of Babel — [is it] Entity Fragment symbolism?

We find no fault with this insight. [19 June 1974]

An insight often involves a leap of inference that is not readily apparent. In this case, the insight is to equate the scattering of humanity at Babel (when God made them speak different languages) to the fragmentation of Entities into different personality types.

Delia: Does my meditative sanctuary have to do with any of my previous lives?

No, this is the space created by you for meditative and insightful periods. Of course, many do duplicate from memory spaces that were particularly tranquil. [03 July 1974]

It is a good idea to set aside quite time, unencumbered by distractions and concerns, and allow insights to flow. My suggestion is that you have a pen and paper at hand, to record the insights. Sometimes insights arrive when your attention is elsewhere (in the shower or on the throne or cutting the veggies), but more often than not, insights happen when you address a question to the universe and then listen for an answer.

Joan: Do I have a Sequence with anyone in this room?

All of these are more readily verified if the insights come to you. [03 July 1974]

This is another instance where the Michaels suggested to a student that they look within for insights rather than look without, such as to the Michaels to get their revelation. Refer to the chapter "Validation and Verification". There you will read that the essence of validation is that you look to personal insight and intuition, not to a channel.

But sometimes the Michaels confirmed someone's insight:

Elizabeth: Was I Anton Chekov?

That is a valid insight. [17 July 1974]

Channels do not provide what can properly be called subjective insights, but yourself can, and other people can offer their subjective insights:

... we have told you many times that you need each other, this being one of the reasons each of you moves in or on a different Vector, and each can offer the other valuable insights through close association. [07 July 1974]

If someone else shares with you an insight about you, then “If the shoe fits, wear it”. Although it is irrelevant to the direction this chapter is headed, note that there is a chapter on “Vectors” in this book. There you will read that you can learn to intuit what Vector you are on, which is a mildly precognitive experience.

Dick: We've waited a year and a half for spontaneity, and there has been no activity.

The insight that the majority of the [original Michaelian group] students are Apollonian-oriented is a valid one. There is great difficulty in planning ahead for diversion, but not for work. Does this suggest areas that need development? [10 July 1974]

Per >https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Apollonian_and_Dionysian<, “In Greek mythology, Apollo and Dionysus are both sons of Zeus. Apollo, son of Leto, is the god of the sun, of rational thinking and order, and appeals to logic, prudence and purity and stands for reason. Dionysus, son of Semele, is the god of wine and dance, of irrationality and chaos, representing passion, emotions and instincts.” Ideally, there is a place for both Apollo and Dionysus in our pantheon of gods to be emulated. Or to use other words: ‘head and heart’. Or to use Michaelian terminology: Intellectual and Emotional Centers. The Michaels often indicated that the Emotional Center fosters insights better than the Intellectual Center; refer to the chapter “Emotional Center” for further discussion.

Perhaps Dick, because he was Intellectually Centered, was having Apollonian insights rather than Dionysian insights when he said this:

Dick: I am surprised repeatedly when memories surface and I have insight upon insight, and I am exactly where I was before the insights.

Perhaps, someday, soon, it will not so much surprise you as it will to spur you on to changing those factors in you standing in the way of the surge. It is much like those who experience the surge well in spots such as Esalen and expect [it] to carry over in their fixed life patterns. It is the patterns that must be altered as the insights come. [14 September 1974]

If the insights are merely conceptual or intellectual epiphanies, that is only half of the job: the other half is that a person's entire belief system, value system, and behavior system is also adjusted for the better; refer to the chapter “Belief System”.

... There could be much more said [by us, the Michaels], of course, but the man gains valuable insights on his own. [24 September 1974]

This is yet another instance where the Michaels nudged a student toward leaning to their own insights, rather than running to the Michaels for answers. Insights arrived at by introspection are more meaningful and impactful than insights elicited by external prompting, or only the Intellectual Center.

... [When the need for communication arises,] It would be an ideal time to exchange those insights that are individually unique in origin and yet universally relevant. [24 September 1974]

Refer to the chapters “Communication” and “Dialogue” for more discussion of the role of those activities in eliciting insights. Note that insights about one's own little self are relevant to insights about the world at large, and *vice versa*; the world gives us hints all the time where we might be going astray.

Gene: Predictability on my part?

... If the emotions are chaotic, the work cannot proceed in this direction [of predictability]; that is where the Balance comes in. When the student first comes into contact with an unfamiliar Center, there is an initial surge, and then until the adjustment [to Balanced predictability] is made the insights are unrelenting and chaotic. [24 September 1974]

This passage refers to a general principle, namely that there is a chaotic zone between two relatively stable stages in any developmental process. This phenomenon was only hinted at in the original Michaelian group transcriptions such as this one, but it is discussed at length in my book *The Tao of Cosmogony*, mostly in terms of the seven Life-Stages. The insights that arrive during such chaotic transitions nudge the person toward Balanced predictability after the transition is complete. The mention of “Balance” and “Centers” in that passage reminds us that, in the Gurdjieffian teachings, a person's rise ‘up’ the seven so-called “Levels of Being” (refer to the chapter by that name) was framed in terms of the sequence of Centers, from Instinctive to Moving to Emotional to Intellectual to Balanced to Higher Centers. When a person transitions from one Center to the

next 'higher' Center, the insights are "unrelenting and chaotic" until "Crystallization" (refer to the chapter by that name) in the Center. I mention this here because if you, dear reader, find yourself flooded with insights, maybe you are in just such a transition. Not to worry; hang on for dear life, until things settle down again.

Alice: Question about nightmares since [her] bed faces north and south. [Is she] contacting lower Astral beings or what?

No, Alice, there are not frightening contacts, but more frightening insights that you run from even in your sleep. Often, these are gained on the Astral Plane. You are right about that, but they are not the result of encounters with anyone but self. The practice of remembering your dreams is doubly important for you, Alice, as this would enable you to explore your insights. [08 October 1974]

Refer to the chapter "Dreams and Dreaming" for more discussion of that resource for having insights.

This man is aware of the areas needing work, as well as the feelings of growth. He is gaining in the area of insight.... He will have much clearer insights as time goes on and the present pressure is relieved.... [08 November 1974]

Here again we see that it is an important component of the Michaelian teachings that students develop the faculty of insight. Here again we see that insights are blocked by stress of any sort.

... As for the verification, we would ask you to meditate upon this information and try to look at your own insights. [19 November 1974]

Here again we see the Michaels recommend that their student develop and use their faculty of insight.

Ted spoke of his feelings that there was a strong attraction between Liz [his wife] and Richard [Sarah's husband]: [Is this] from previous lives? False Personality? He asked for a comment from Michael about his feelings in this.

These two [Liz and Richard] have had many Sequences in the past and many lives have been interrelated, but the insight is valid. [19 November 1974]

As stated above, insights are not just intellectual. There are different names that some people give to the faculty of insight, and "feelings" is one of them. This word is applied to subtle energetic sensations and subtle emotional responses to an event. If we pay close attention to how our body "feels", we can become more consciously aware of such perceptions, perceptions that might otherwise remain subliminal.

Ted asked if any members of our group aside from Thaddeus were among the twelve [disciples of Jesus].

This insight has occurred to one member of this [original Michaelian group] cadre. We would defer a definitive answer until this student has had an opportunity to verify his insights. [19 November 1974]

Here again we see that it is an important component of the Michaelian teachings that students develop the faculty of insight.

This man may now develop some insights into his enTrapment. At least we know he will begin to Photograph himself as the victim [in Martyrdom] from now on, and in his case this would be positive [Good] Work, for then he can begin to see ways of not being the victim if he wishes. [07 December 1974]

Here again we see it said that understanding one's Overleaves will provoke valuable insights about the possible reasons for one's unhealthy thoughts, emotions, and behaviors. Refer to the chapter "Liberation" for more discussion about entrapment; refer to the chapter "Photography" for more discussion about that method for escaping from entrapment.

... The confirming of the group comes with the insights that the group discovers together. [14 December 1974]

You might have noticed that there is just something about interactions within a group that naturally provoke insights.

... Trusting your intuition is valid and the insights are your own; you know when they 'fit'. [14 December 1974]

Refer to chapters "Trust" and "Intuition" and "Validation and Verification".

The following passage has several synonyms for insight, and they are underlined.

Ellis asked a question about his new feelings into other person's battles and new insights.

When a student begins to do some really serious work — and that only comes after the realization is made that the material needs are easily satisfied and not gratifying in the long haul — then, often the Essence demands to be heard. There is nothing more that the beleaguered Personality can do to fight in what becomes a losing battle. This is quite in line with the [spiritual] school that demands that you experience out [exhaust] all of your desires of the Personality, in order to free yourself for study. We have discussed this many times before, but perhaps it is worth repeating, for it seems that there is some confusion in this. Only when the Personality knows

that it has played out its last hand, does it begin to give way to the demands of the Essence. This Essence is called by you students many names — “the small, still voice” *et cetera*. But it is all the same — the call to the inner self — the voice that commands you to look within and satisfy the deeper urgings of the soul and then forget the destructive cravings of the physical. This is what happens to you people each day. You, at some time in the near future, will be forced to stop and listen. [09 January 1975]

That pretty much sums up what the Michaels had to say on the subject, but there are more mentions of the word.

During the Crusades, Liz feels that she was with Saladin, who was Rick [in this life]. She saw him transform into Saladin.

[Soleal:] Then, why do you doubt your insights — if you see the transformation? Or, is it that you do not trust the space you are in when the transformation comes? There is no reason why you should doubt this particular insight. Verification from me is quite a crutch and it is still necessary for most of you. The teacher [Michael] hounds you over and over again to learn to trust your insights. It is more than simple belief that all of your neat “head stuff” is springing from the foundation of knowledge. It is the ability to ‘separate the wheat from the chaff’ — to determine at that instant how much of your own Personality and its attendant longings come into play, and how much is genuine insight. I must tell you that the need to follow my own particular goal, or my “task” if you will, becomes imperative, and I know that the time is at hand. I, too, must make a choice the same as you, and there comes a time when I can no longer stall for time. [11 January 1975]

This chapter also “hounds you over and over again to learn to trust your insights.”

Resolution of this conflict could be brought about by less intellectualization and more expression from you, Mallory, on these emotions you only have begun to surface. Perhaps, this would lead to some rather surprising insights about what still remains hidden in your relationship. Perhaps, you may choose to no longer hide it. It, or rather, all still hidden in many relationships stands in the way and acts as a permanent barrier to Agape, even on that level, to true cooperation. Most life relationships resemble icebergs in that most truth about the partners remains hidden below the surface. The partners then attempt to modify their behavior around what they perceive as the expectations of the other and what they have set as a goal.... True, you have expressed, but you have been received intellectually, and to a certain extent even rationalized your emotions. [16 January 1975]

There is a difference between intellectual intelligence and emotional intelligence. More insights come through the latter than through the former.

Carolyn: In hypnosis, she experienced something that seemed like a skipping from one lifetime to another. True? Also, experienced a feeling of physical expansion and feeling very small at the same time.

In answer to the latter question, while in the hypnotic state, the person experiences both the Astral and Physical Plane in an incomplete symbiosis, and thus the distortion of physical boundaries with the accompanying unpleasant sensation. This same applies to all other instances wherein the Astral Plane is experienced in the waking or the trance state, where the Personality remains vigilant.

Yes, there were many memories crowding into play here. Many times, this does happen in regression, which does much for discrediting the experience to those wishing to discredit. When this happens, you can always go back to the starting point and move forward more gradually, for instance, day by day, until you are thoroughly oriented to that life you wish to pursue.

Incidentally, this form of remembering is far more valuable than myriad transmissions of information from the Akashic Plane. The experiencing of the past directly through recall triggers many more insights than receiving this indirectly from this Entity. You see now that by our reading of this into your memory banks merely facilitates the manufacture of a new Tape. [30 January 1975]

The Michaels were aware that their teaching about general spiritual principles was a good thing, but sometimes telling students about specifics was not always a good thing, because it works better to let students come to their own insights coming from their own higher self.

The role of observer will be the best choice by far, and the continuing offering of insights. [31 January 1975]

As the Michaels said numerous times during the original Michaelian group, it is better if a person comes to their own insights in their own time and in their own way than that the person be handed insights by others, including the Michaels. Therefore, if you, having honed your insightfulness to a high degree, find yourself in a situation where you are given a true insight worth sharing about someone else, then I suggest that you impart the insight to the other person via the Socratic method. This is where you ask the other person leading

questions, thereby potentially eliciting insights from within themselves. If this results in them having the same insight that you had, great!

Joan: I have been trying to be quiet at times and trust my intuition, and I would like to ask about an accident that happened to a pottery planter that was made by an Old Artisan friend of mine. The pot broke in the storm and I'd like to ask if the string holders were naturally weak or is this a sign for me to contact her in some way?

There is need here for an exchange. There is a gift that you can give and there are insights that can be given to you concerning your present dilemma. By all means, follow the lead. [01 February 1974]

This seems to place insight into the same realm as divination: reading external "signs", whereas usually insight is about reading internal signs.

Recent questions gave you this insight. [21 October 1977]

It seems to be the case that, often times, questions come to mind immediately before answers come to mind. Therefore, pay attention to questions that pop into your head and that begin to 'bug' you, then start listening for answers, because they will likely be close behind, once you have cultivated your insight faculty.

Concluding Comments on Insight

The importance of insight to the Michaels is revealed by the length of this lengthy chapter.

The word "epiphany" does not occur in the original Michaelian group transcriptions, but it is one of my favorite synonyms for insight and intuition, although not exactly the same.





INSPIRATION

This chapter is the product of a search for the word inspiration and its derivatives in the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group channeling sessions. This word does not represent a significant component of the Michaelian teachings. However, there are good reasons to discuss the subject in this *Study Papers* book: 1) the subject came up numerous times during the original Michaelian group; 2) some interesting things were said about the subject; 3) the subject is related to a number of other components of the Michaelian teachings that are considered to be significant; 4) students can presumably benefit from having the mentions conveniently collected and commented all in one place; 5) Issues of inspiration or lack thereof are pervasive in human psychology and sociology and spirituality — subjects covered extensively in this book — so it behooves us to have a working knowledge of it.

The word inspiration is not capitalized in this chapter or other chapters of this *Study Papers* book because it has no special meaning in the Michaelian teachings; it is not a Michaelian jargon word that needs a definition apart from its use in the common vernacular.

This chapter is one of many in this book that focuses on a psychological component of the Michaelian teachings, rather than on a doctrinal or spiritual component. Psychotherapeutic components of the Michaelian teachings are usually either a positive to be cultivated or a negative to be mitigated. Obviously, inspiration is a positive to be cultivated. The Michaelian version of psychology is not to be confused with the popular psychology of the self-improvement movement, those that do not have a spiritual core or perspective. Rather, the Michaelian psychotherapeutic path (aimed at improving psychological health) is a beneficial precursor to the spiritual path (aimed at improving soul health). To skip the former but attempt the latter is referred to as “spiritual bypassing”. This is discussed at length on such websites as https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spiritual_bypass. To skip mitigating one’s psychological issues and attempt to go straight to enlightenment usually proves to be problematic.

Definition of Inspiration

So what is meant by inspiration? Wikiquotes has an article that provides a definition and a description, as follows:

Inspiration is the act or power of exercising an elevating or stimulating influence upon the intellect or emotions; the result of such influence which quickens or stimulates; as, the inspiration of occasion, of art, etc. [<https://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/Inspiration> — retrieved 01 April 2023]

Thereafter followed dozens of quotes about inspiration gathered from dozens of celebrities and other deep thinkers.

Inspiration per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

The following extracts from original Michaelian group transcriptions are Q&A exchanges, where an original Michaelian group member asks a question (or makes a comment), and the Michaels provide an answer. This is [not] a subject that would benefit by division into subcategories, as some subjects do. These extracts are [not] presented in the chronological order in which they were given, even though this is not a subject where there was a development or evolution of a specific revelation of a facet of the Michaelian teachings, as was often the case with the original Michaelian group. As is my custom, I usually provide some explanatory comments following the question or answer. Underlined words are my emphasis, to draw attention to what it is that I comment on. Sometimes I embed words or phrases [in brackets] that I believe help to clarify the question or the answer. Numerous study papers related to this chapter are to be found among my comments.

Gene: Is the Theosophical teaching accurate, e.g., what Annie Besant wrote?

Some of it is, some of it isn't. The lady [Theosophist] Alice Bailey wrote some inspired material. [29 November 1973]

Edgar: To start the search, it must come from the Bible. It seems you are trusting Michael. My interpretation is not materialistic, it's more spiritual.

As it certainly is not profane, we suppose that one could call this work "sacred". We would prefer "inspired", as much of it came down through centuries of oral tradition. Much of the *Old Testament* is poetry and mystical. This cannot be taken literally. The man John was a witness of that which he attempted to describe. He was an Emotionally Centered Young Scholar. The man Peter was functionally illiterate, which was a shame, for he understood more than he could communicate. John was subject to visions. [20 January 1974]

Barbara: I'd like to ask about a shaky reaction I received when I saw a guru's picture over 20 years ago. I felt he was my guru. His name is Ramana Maharshi.

We find no real fault with this man's expression. This was a Fifth Level Old Scholar in Growth, a Spiritualist, who accelerated through application of the principles we have laid out here. This man is worth reading, but since he no longer lives, cannot answer any queries you might have, which is one of the problems with all inspired literature. [06 February 1974]

Question not recorded.

Not usually this overtly, that is correct. Most craftsmen are inspired though by very subtle nudges from those ordinal entities. [14 April 1974]

SRG on [Swami] Muktananda?

This is a Sixth Level Young Sage. He will do no harm. He has indeed had a profound experience, and is able to inspire others to follow his chosen path, which while outstanding, is not wrong. He is a Spiritualist, yes, and in Dominance in a Passion Mode. A Young King would not play this role. [24 April 1974]

In Self-remembering, one is aware of the flower he sees, himself and the sun shining impartially on both.

Essentially, yes. One of the reasons that no one of your previous teachings has impressed you indelibly is that the mystical "awe inspiring" element was largely pushed to the background. Some respond to this approach, others do not. You do not. We wish so much to bring you together with a teacher who will bring this element to this teaching. We see the difficulty, and, of course, have been cognizant of it all along, but in this particular instance, it has taken much work to provide this synthesis. [21 September 1974]

The soul in Power has an outward appearance of strength and inspires confidence in others because of this. The soul in Power, in order to be in Essence, must be at or near the top in all situations, even if this means creating a brand new situation. These souls are the innovators, the inspirational [Expressive] people. Souls in Power are very apparent. They stand out in a crowd. [28 September 1974]

Yes, Abdullah, he makes one think and this leads in some ways to contact with intellect. In other words, the barrage leaves little room for emotional reactions until its over and by that time some has been absorbed. The teachings themselves are in part inspired by higher sources and in part by Krishna[murti]'s vivid Personality. [01 October 1974]

Bill asked about his affinity to animals — if it has anything to do with past lives and his intense dislike of birds. He described a bad experience with crows when he was young.

We have told this group once that most Older Souls do find comfort and do have affinities for other creatures. Most Older Souls inspire confidence in the animals and the animals respond quite naturally to this. Some Older Souls even find this affinity extends to wild and fearful animals. Several in this group have demonstrated this. [26 November 1974]

[[continue search to end]]

Concluding Comments on Inspiration

Say something about Socratic daemon, the concept of muse, refer to chapters "Intuition" and "Insight"





INSTINCT

This chapter is the product of a search for the word “instinct” and its derivatives in the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group channeling sessions. This word does not represent a significant component of the Michaelian teachings. However, there are good reasons to discuss the subject in this *Study Papers* book: 1) the subject came up numerous times during the original Michaelian group; 2) students can presumably benefit from having the mentions conveniently collected and commented all in one place; 3) some interesting things were said about the subject; 4) the subject is related to a number of other components of the Michaelian teachings that are considered to be significant; 5) Issues about inspiration or lack thereof are pervasive in human psychology and sociology and spirituality.

The word “inspiration” is not capitalized in this chapter or other chapters of this *Study Papers* book because it has no special meaning in the Michaelian teachings; it is not a Michaelian jargon word that needs a definition apart from its use in the common vernacular.

This chapter is one of many in this book that focuses on a psychological and psychotherapeutic component of the Michaelian teachings as found in original Michaelian group transcriptions, rather than on a spiritual component, as so many other chapters in this book do. The Michaelian version of psychology is not to be confused with the pop psychology of the self-improvement movement, those that do not have a spiritual core or perspective. Rather, the Michaelian psychotherapeutic path (aimed at improving psychological health) is a beneficial precursor to the spiritual path (aimed at improving soul health). To skip the former but attempt the latter is referred to as “spiritual bypassing” (>https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spiritual_bypass<), and it usually proves to be problematic.

Definition of Instinct

So what is meant by instinct? [Wikipedia has an article that provides a definition and a description, as follows:](#)

Instinct per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

The following extracts from original Michaelian group transcriptions are Q&A exchanges, where an original Michaelian group member asks a question (or makes a comment), and the Michaels provide an answer. This is [not] a subject that would benefit by division into subcategories, as some subjects do. [These extracts are \[not\] presented in the chronological order in which they were given, even though this is not a subject where there was a development or evolution of a specific revelation of a facet of the Michaelian teachings, as was often the case with the original Michaelian group.](#) As is my custom, I usually provide some explanatory comments following the question or answer. Underlined words are my emphasis, to draw attention to what it is that I comment on. Sometimes I embed words or phrases [in brackets] that I believe help to clarify the question or the answer. Numerous study papers related to this chapter are to be found among my comments.

This chapter on Instinct excludes Q&A exchanges that are about the so-called “Instinctive” Center; refer to the Chapter “Instinctive Center” for that analysis and synthesis.

Dick: Do the planets have an influence on us?

Haven't you already felt the influence of the Moon? Try an experiment and chart your emotions and moving instincts. This should prove it to you. It is ancient knowledge and is true. [05 July 1973]

Comment: When a baby is deprived of a mother because she is sick when it is born and a certain amount of time goes by, that mother doesn't have the Agape love anymore. It is gone. The mother's love is instinctive.

Nurturing, not loving, is instinctive. [12 August 1973]

Don't accept the words or evaluations of the others until you have verified their status. This ability is within your grasp. You know instinctively who to seek and have so far sought with discrimination on an instinctual level. Now, you can move into doing it on a higher level. The knowledge is there. [08 September 1973]

The King is the Warrior exalted. These Roles express themselves through leadership and the ability to influence motivation. The King takes charge through knowledge and inherent power; the Warrior [takes charge] through an instinctive drive. [late October 1973]

The Warrior leads instinctively; there is an inner drive to lead. [15 November 1973]

In this case, I suggest that by "instinctive" drive to "take charge" the Michaels mean that Warriors are natural born leaders on their good days, and "control freaks" on their bad days.

Jim: Could you capsulize on various Roles and how they approach life?

Yes. Both Artisan and Sage approach life artistically and with much innovation and originality, sometimes whimsically, the Artisan manually and the Sage verbally, the Artisan through instinct and the Sage through innate wisdom.

The King manifests a tremendous need to lead others. The Warrior, while often an excellent leader because of the instinctive drive, can be a solitary fighter for a cause. We almost hate to say that the Warrior faces life combatively, but that is essentially valid. [20 February 1974]

Both Warrior and "Instinctive/Moving" Center are on the Ordinal side of the Action Axis, so it makes sense that originally Warriors would be said to lead "instinctively", but here we find that Artisan also have an instinctive function. This tells us that the Michaels did not just apply to word "instinct" to Ordinal Action — or Neutral Assimilation, which is where the Instinctive Center ended up; see next chapter.

Dick: Does erotic love ever play a part in the soul's growth?

Erotic love is a rationalization of False Personality, all owing for perpetuation of the species. Just look around you, Dick, and see how complicated this most natural instinctive function has become. The only reason that your culture has not built up a similar ritual, complete with rules, around defecation is that you do it all alone. As soon as you come together with another Personality, you begin to rationalize all functions and behaviors [including reproduction]. [24 February 1974]

The birds and the bees also do sex instinctively, naturally. This and other statements indicate that the Michaels used the word instinct pretty much like everyone else, so there is not need to capitalize it as I have done with numerous other words that do have a special meaning.

We discussed wild animals and wondered if they had some feelings besides instinct.

Wild animals have no personality at all. Some domestic animals, through training, do develop the rudiments of what might be called personality. All acts of the animal kingdom except for [hu]man are the result of the hive soul or group Essence. [19 March 1974]

Is there anything Michael can say to help us feel Agape toward this sort of person?

We feel that it is indeed possible for you all to accept this lady in all her glory and yet, we would not recommend that any of you spend too much time in that negative environment. You do not need to be present to feel Agape. This lady creates a vortex of negative energy that is particularly difficult for those souls in Acceptance, which is precisely why certain people instinctively elected not to go to this place. [03 April 1974]

[[Continue search to end of transcriptions]]

Concluding Comments on Instinct





INSTINCTIVE CENTER

The Instinctive Center is probably the Center that is the most misunderstood of the seven Centers. The reason for this, and my resolution of the misunderstanding, is thoroughly covered in my book *A History of the Overleaf Chart* in the chapter on "The Instinctive Center". I am not going to repeat all of that information here; in this chapter, I only repeat that information which is necessary to explain the quoted material. Rather, the purpose of this chapter is to supplement the information found in that other book, thus making my analysis and synthesis of the original Michaelian group transcriptions more complete. There is also a chapter on the Instinctive Center (aka "Impulse Center") in my book *The Process Aspect System*.

This chapter on the Instinctive Center excludes Q&A exchanges that are about instinct in general; refer to the Chapter "Instinct" (previous to this one) for that analysis and synthesis.

Sarah: Lust seems to be coming from Instinctive/Moving Center. I know I want men as friends, but find this difficult. [22 September 1973]

In the Gurdjieffian teachings, the combination "Instinctive/Moving" Center was the "lowest" or "first" Center. Somewhere between Gurdjieff and the later stages of the original Michaelian group, the two were separated such that the Instinctive Center became the "middle" or "fourth" Center; this is documented in my *History* book. Regarding "lust", in the Gurdjieffian teachings, sexual function was also a component of the first Center, but the Sexual Center was a so-called "higher" Center. This understanding continued in the original Michaelian group, where animal-like "lust" was from the lowest Center, but the Sexual Center was a higher Center, as shown in the first Overleaf chart produced in the original Michaelian group. This history of the Sexual Center is also documented in my *History* book, in the chapter "The Action Centers".

Dick: I think that Mrs. P is a Mature Soul. Her husband is an Instinctive/Moving Martial Baby Soul. She is just having a hell of a time coping with the constant warfare that goes on in her house. He is a Warrior. He beats the children, argues with her and gives her a hard time. [20 October 1973]

This is another example of the understanding at the time, namely that Instinctive and Moving (and sexual) functions were combined as Parts of the lowest Center.

Psychic energy is the energy generated by the Essence. It is naturally a more refined energy than that generated by the internal Centers of Emotion, Intellect and Instinctive and Moving functions. This energy is independent of the others. [29 November 1973]

Previous comments by original Michaelian group members, quoted above, showed that they combined Instinctive and Moving functions in one Center, the same as Gurdjieff, but this answer might indicate that the Michaels were moving them toward the understanding that Instinctive Center and Moving Center were separate.

Dick: Question regarding "chakras."

The significance probably lies in the fact that so many have become aware of this at all, some not even on the path, or following strange pseudo-paths.

These "chakras," of course, correspond to the measurable energy flow from the individual Centers. In other words, the lowest chakra corresponds to the output of the Instinctive Center. ... the Instinctive Center, which malfunctions only during organic illness.

There is now a brightening of the aura also in the region of the Instinctive Center as it digests your dinner. This will only last while the most significant work is being done, not while the contents are being dehydrated [in the large intestine]. This requires little expenditure. [16 June 1974]

Dick: Should the proper role for the Intellectual Center for a Balanced person be shut down until there is an actual problem to be solved?

The Intellectual Center should be functioning as a decision-making partner in the process. The Emotional Center cannot make decisions properly, as it cannot think out the ramifications of any given situation with the speed necessary to make a valid, split-second decision. The Intellectual Center works at a far greater speed than does the Emotional Center when the soul is in Balance. In Mechanical Man, the Moving Center takes over the rapid functions. This is, of course, necessary for survival of the body, as when a hand is removed from a hot stove by the Moving Center in cooperation with the Instinctive Center. In Balanced Man, the Intellectual Center claims its rightful functioning and become the decision maker. In other words, Balanced Man chooses to remove the hand. [17 September 1974]





INTEGRATION VERSUS DISINTEGRATION

This chapter is the product of a search for the word “integration” and its opposite “disintegration” in the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group channeling sessions. This subject does not represent a significant component of the Michaelian teachings. However, there are good reasons to discuss the subject in this *Study Papers* book: 1) the subject came up numerous times during the original Michaelian group; 2) students can presumably benefit from having the mentions conveniently collected all in one place; 3) some interesting things were said about the subject; 4) the subject is related to a number of other components of the Michaelian teachings that are considered to be significant; 5) Integration and disintegration issues are pervasive in human psychology and sociology and spirituality.

The words are not capitalized in this chapter or other chapters of this *Study Papers* book because they have no special meaning in the Michaelian teachings; they are not Michaelian jargon words that need a definition apart from their use in the common vernacular.

As used by the Michaels, this word never referred to racial integration; it referred to the Michaelian student who understood the teaching. Furthermore, this chapter is not about fragmentation of the Tao and the reintegration thereof; refer to the chapter “Fragmentation and Reintegration” for that story.

Basically and briefly, the Michaels recommended to the original Michaelian group members that they move away from disintegration and more toward integration in their belief system, value system, and behavior system.

Definitions of Integration and Disintegration

So what is meant by **template**? The online Merriam Webster dictionary definition is:

Integration and Disintegration per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

The following extracts from original Michaelian group transcriptions are Q&A exchanges, where an original Michaelian group member asks a question (or makes a comment), and the Michaels provide an answer. This is a subject that benefits by division into the two subcategories. These extracts are presented in the chronological order in which they were given, even though this is not a subject where there was a development or evolution of a specific revelation of a facet of the Michaelian teachings, as was often the case with the original Michaelian group. As is my custom, I often provide some explanatory comments following the question or answer. Underlined words in the Michaels’ answers are my emphasis, to draw attention to what it is that I comment on. Sometimes I embed words or phrases [in brackets] that I believe help to clarify the question or the answer.

Disintegration per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

The first hint about what disintegration might mean is found in the first mention of the term:

Dick: I would like more information on troubled souls.

When we speak of troubled souls, we speak of a clouding of reason leading to disintegration of the functioning psyche. [20 October 1973]

The obvious one-word meaning of the underlined phrase is “insanity”. The *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* published by the American Psychiatric Association provides descriptions of many kinds of “troubled souls”. This is the opposite of an “integrated soul” who is sane in terms of their belief, value, and behavior systems. “Trouble souls” are mentioned again further on.

Schizophrenics are Mid-Cycle Mature Souls who have ego disintegration without the corresponding spiritual growth.... The disintegration of the Personality, however False, is not something that the individual can handle without the corresponding liberation of the Essence. [27 December 1973]

Refer to the chapters "Ego" and "False Personality" for more about that. Basically and briefly, ego is another word for False Personality. One of the goals of the Michaelian teachings is to mitigate ego and False Personality, but unless there is some True Personality and Essence to replace a shattered ego, then "ego-disintegration" is not a good thing.

Severe psychological traumas can lead to disintegration of the psyche for an entire lifetime:

Our access leads us to believe that the lady in question [Mary] was a Mid-Cycle Mature Priest [at the time of Jesus' life] and that she sustained sufficient emotional trauma during that lifetime to cause a psychic disintegration. However, our access also leads us to believe that the resolution of the disintegration occurred normally on the Astral Plane. [17 April 1974]

Although it does not say so in the original Michaelian group transcriptions, what used to be called "multiple personality disorder" and is now called "dissociative identity disorder" may be the functional equivalent of what the Michaels called "psychic disintegration"; refer to

>https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dissociative_identity_disorder<. Refer to the chapter "Health: Mental and Physical" for more about what the Michaels have to say on that subject.

Disintegration only comes when the Personality is lost and the Essence is freed prematurely, such as in some psychotic states. [14 September 1974]

Although modern psychiatry and psychology does not understand mental illness in terms of the damage to the "soul", severe childhood abuse sometimes results in disintegration as an escape from, or denial of, the abuse.

Abdullah asked if the pressures asserted by the full moon (astrological moon) were influencing behavior of certain ones at the place he works.

It is common that troubled souls react to the full moon with far more intensity than more Balanced out souls. The thing that these young men had in common was that they were all troubled Mid-Cycle Mature Souls. Troubled souls can sometimes be guided through this difficult period by someone who is able to recognize the ego disintegration, who is in tune with the lunar Cycle and also close enough to the involved souls to recognize the restlessness and disorientation that precedes the break. [01 October 1974]

We are not leading you to any disintegration, but there is indeed a danger of this [disintegration], if you do let go of the [physical] life force before learning to harness the more universal [spiritual] force, but these energies are those utilized by the Personality and the Essence. They are also the physical expression and the spiritual expression respectively.... The spiritual expression to the Essence is, of course, quite powerful and taps into the universal flow. The physical expression of the Personality, which sustains the body, is in comparison quite weak and can be overpowered and the body killed, if one is not careful. Yes, it can be harnessed and used effectively. The best check-point we know of is the fact that the student not ready to harness this is seldom willing to use the time necessary to produce good result at will.... Those who tap into the spiritual expression, letting go of the physical expression without the conditioning, often go "mad" or die. [29 October 1974]

Liz: Mother withdrawing, disoriented, wants to diet [sic: "die"?]. Anything I can do?

Although it is a shock, it is not surprising given this lady's Overleaves, that the disintegration is taking place. She could be helped by the proper therapy; Gestalt would help. We would not advise that you do it, only that the therapist also be a Mature [soul level] therapist. [29 October 1974]

One's array of Overleaves strongly influences how well one deals with the entropy of getting old and decrepit. Withdrawal and disorientation and disintegration is the Negative Pole, but it is possible to continue to be engaged with others and focused on life during the aging process, which is the Positive Pole.

Integration per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

Carolyn: I have felt the need to express my opinions more lately, and I wonder if this is good. Sometimes I have spouted off.

Do you understand the source of the negative emotions? If so, then you should examine them carefully and see if you can turn them into something positive. Hostility is never an act of conscious will. The only positive forces are peaceful, loving ones. Carolyn still has a tendency to slip into the patterns or vibrations of the moment. Many sleeping souls provide the necessary shocks to keep her on the right track — constantly examining herself. This is a common failing among neophytes on the true path. There are always many doubts until the integration takes place, and the commitment is made and is irrevocable. Life on the material plane, with all its glamour, continues to lure you back. The glamour is illusion — Maya, if you prefer the more esoteric term. Maya is part of Karma and is present for a very specific purpose. It tests your spiritual growth all the time and is your sole eternal safety checkpoint. When you reach the point in your spiritual growth when you “know” that all hostile feelings and thoughts and words — and even world wars — come from lower Centers in sleeping souls and they are not in control, then you will lose the desire or need to retaliate or spout off. It’s like spouting off to a stone wall for all the good it does you. You gain nothing and lose a great deal. [24 July 1973]

Refer to chapters “Negativity”, “Awakening from Sleep”, “Glamour”, “Maya”, “Karma”, “Growth, Spiritual”,

Gene: All of a sudden, we’re having this huge body of information about souls and it must be important, and I would like an overview. Is this information going to be practical to me? Can I use it? Why this topic?

This is another Overleaf, and integration [of this information] must take place before you are able to perceive the Synthesis, which, of course, must precede perception of the Tao. Yes, it can be of great value to you. Body Typing answers some questions. This [Soul Age] answers still another set of questions. This is a broader Overleaf, and there are more. [18 September 1973]

Refer to the chapter “Synthesis, The”

Sarah: Discussed being Moving Centered and the group asked for a clarification on this.

Sarah is Moving Centered, but is moving toward integration [Balance of Centers] and can touch Intellectual [Center]. [22 September 1973]

Refer to the chapter “Balanced Man” for the Gurdjieffian and Michaelian perspectives on the integration of the Ordinal Centers.

Dick: Robert [Burton] used to say that there are three ways a teaching could go: love, sympathy, and denial. I have a feeling my way would be denial. Comment, please.

We would like to amend that to love, empathy, and denial. We feel that the most effective teachers, among whom was Jesus, used all three. It is the successful integration [of the three] that separates [effective from ineffective teachers]. [03 September 1974]

Integration includes experiencing the negative as well as the positive. If I were to be so presumptuous as to make broad and bold claims about spiritual teachings, I would say that integrated teachings include a coherent belief system, value system, and behavior system, and that saw the value of the negative as well as the positive.

Ralph: I have the impression that within our group, the articulation of the teachings emphasizes the static, the intellectual, and the hierarchical. Is this primarily a distortion arising from my biases or the group’s or the languages? Or is this an accurate transmission of the teachings? Please comment.

In the beginning of this group, the primary concern was in the development of the belief system in the language necessary to explain it to each other and to oneself. This is a necessary step in the formation of any group, but in most, becomes a barrier toward further growth, and eventually becomes the belief system itself. In this group, there has been evolution of a sort that now points toward continuance in growth [beyond belief]. The possibility still exists, however, that you will continue to concern yourselves with the intellectual hierarchical aspects and neglect the spiritual, yes, but you do not have to. You can put this belief system to the acid test and see if it works [leads toward transcendence]. Until you do this, yes, you are still trapped in the beginning stages. This is where most of the other belief systems remained throughout their existence, including the world’s great religions. The concern remained hierarchical and primarily intellectual and never got off the ground spiritually. You are right, of course; you are trading one belief system for another; but there is a unity here that has not been before, and there is a trend toward integration that you are capable of verifying implicit within the [belief] system. [19 October 1974]

That passage indicates that there is a level of integration of the Michaelian teachings into one's consciousness that is beyond the mere intellectual level. Refer to the chapters "Knowledge", "System", and "Validation and Verification". Besides the "belief system", the Michaelian teachings also espouses a value system and a behavior system. Above and beyond objective "belief", there is subjective experience. Besides the "Intellectual Center" understanding, the Michaelian teachings also espouses four levels of understanding above and beyond that level, namely the Impulse Center, the Concept Center, the Sympathy Center, and the Excitation Center. The ultimate goal of the Michaelian teachings (and reincarnation) is to integrate the entire septenarian spectrum of experience into one's being.

Ralph: Is The Synthesis simpler than the systems that man erects?

In its most evolved form, yes. In words suitable for communication with the members of this enclave, it becomes complex. Again, Creatures of Reason take the simplest activity and render it complex through symbols. The Synthesis is not complex. The Synthesis seeks integration, simplicity. Creatures of Reason seek to justify their existence through expressions of individuality, isolation, alienation. Creatures of Reason seek to justify their existence by assigning themselves a role, even a negative one, if that be the case, of subrogation, taking the responsibility from themselves, assigning that responsibility to a higher power, conveniently beyond the five physical senses and, therefore, unarguable, unprovable, unassailable, safe, comfortable, complex. [26 December 1974]

Refer to the chapters "Synthesis, The" and "Complexity versus Simplicity" and "Creatures of Reason" and "Alienation" and "Responsibility". The point to be emphasized here is that integration moves away from the complexity of fragmentation and toward simplicity of beliefs, values and behaviors.

There was a great deal of talk at this point about violence, anger, hostility, etc. and ways of dealing with it and moving on to more positive spaces in ourselves.

Ideally, this teaching could provide such an environment where the trust level would give permission to ventilate the anger. But remember that anger is an emotion felt by the ego when its expectations go unfulfilled or even worse, ignored. What should develop within a Teaching is the "steward" who can stand aside in each of you and observe the ego ventilating its wrath. But we must realize that only a fraction of self is angry. There is never a time when all the Overleaves are angry or sad or happy. If that ever happened, either enlightenment or disintegration would occur. For instance, Intellectual Center cannot experience anger. [21 March 1977]

In the Gurdjieffian teachings, there is a hierarchy of levels in the metaphorical 'household' of being a human. The so-called 'steward' was the intermediary between the so-called 'master' and the so-called 'servants'. While functioning in mere Personality, one is a 'servant'. With the help of Self-observation, one develops from being a 'servant' up the hierarchy through the 'steward', an observer of Personality, and then further up the hierarchy to the penultimate observer, Essence, the 'master' level.

Concluding Comments on Integration and Disintegration





⑧ INTEGRITY

This chapter is the product of a search for the word integrity in the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group channeling sessions. This word does not represent a significant component of the Michaelian teachings. However, there are good reasons to discuss the subject in this *Study Papers* book: 1) the subject came up numerous times during the original Michaelian group; 2) some interesting things were said about the subject; 3) the subject is related to a number of other components of the Michaelian teachings that are considered to be significant; 4) students can presumably benefit from having the mentions conveniently collected and commented all in one place; 5) issues of personal integrity are pervasive in human psychology and sociology and spirituality — subjects covered extensively in this book — so it behooves us to have a working knowledge of them.

The word integrity is not capitalized in this chapter or other chapters of this *Study Papers* book because it has no special meaning in the Michaelian teachings; it is not a Michaelian jargon word that needs a definition apart from its use in the common vernacular.

This chapter is one of many in this book that focuses on a psychological component of the Michaelian teachings as found in original Michaelian group transcriptions, rather than on a doctrinal or spiritual component. A psychological component is usually either a positive to be cultivated or a negative to be mitigated. As we will see, the Michaels tell us that integrity is a positive. The Michaelian version of psychology is not to be confused with the pop psychology of the self-improvement movement, those that do not have a spiritual core or perspective. Rather, the Michaelian psychotherapeutic path (aimed at improving psychological health) is a beneficial precursor to the spiritual path (aimed at improving soul health). To skip the former but attempt the latter is referred to as “spiritual bypassing”. This is discussed at length at https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spiritual_bypass and other websites. To skip mitigating one’s psychological issues and attempt to go straight to enlightenment usually proves to be problematic.

The word only appears three times in the original Michaelian group transcriptions, which seems remarkable to me, considering that integrity, in the largest sense of that word, is one of the aspirations of a psychological path of self-improvement, and a spiritual path of finding and expressing one’s true self or higher self. However, there are other words in the same semantic realm that have chapters in this book, namely “Honesty and Dishonesty”, “Integration versus Disintegration”, “I’s, Many”, and “Truth”.

Definition of Integrity

So what is meant by integrity? My usual go-to source for definitions and descriptions and explanations, Wikipedia, says this (underlined words are my emphasis):

Integrity is the practice of being honest and showing a consistent and uncompromising adherence to strong moral and ethical principles and values. In ethics, integrity is regarded as the honesty and truthfulness or accuracy of one’s actions. Integrity can stand in opposition to hypocrisy, in that judging with the standards of integrity involves regarding internal consistency as a virtue, and suggests that parties holding within themselves apparently conflicting values should account for the discrepancy or alter their beliefs. The word integrity evolved from the Latin adjective *integer*, meaning whole or complete. In this context, integrity is the inner sense of “wholeness” deriving from qualities such as honesty and consistency of character.

[<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Integrity> — retrieved 31 March 2023]

Some of those synonyms have chapters of their own in this book, as mentioned above. The Wikipedia article continues with a summary of the fact that philosophers have given this notion a lot of thought over the decades.

Integrity per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

The following extracts from original Michaelian group transcriptions are Q&A exchanges, where an original Michaelian group member asks a question (or makes a comment), and the Michaels provide an answer. These extracts are presented in the chronological order in which they were given. As is my custom, I usually provide some explanatory comments following the question or answer. Underlined words are my emphasis, to draw attention to what it is that I comment on. Sometimes I embed words or phrases [in brackets] that I believe help to clarify the question or the answer. Numerous study papers related to this chapter are to be found among my comments.

The first of three mentions of integrity is this one:

She [an Artisan] needs to be appreciated for her own creative integrity, but views herself as relatively unappreciated. [27 October 1973]

Artisans are the personification of what I refer to as the Ordinal Expression, aka Analysis, Process. Consider the other Overleaves in this Process and you will see what I mean: Rejection, Caution, Renunciation, Skeptic, Intellectual, Young. All of these traits are concerned with integrity in the sense of uniqueness or purity. Creative Artisans don't want to copy stuff, they don't want their stuff to look like other people's stuff. Rather, they want to make stuff the likes of which has never been seen before. Perhaps only another Artisan can appreciate the creative integrity of an Artisan.

The second of three mentions of integrity is this one:

Financial integrity is the watchword of this [materialistic] culture and, therefore, fraught with Maya. This can always be easily seen in any culture. That which is held up as the goal of society is the goal of False Personality and, therefore, opposed to spiritual growth. [14 December 1974]

Refer to the chapters "Culture", "Growth, Spiritual", "Maya", and "Personality — True and False". Financial integrity — in the sense of handling money honestly — is a good thing in any culture, but a materialistic culture — such as the one dominated by the beliefs, values, and behaviors of Young Souls that is focused on the acquisition and use of money to the exclusion of other endeavors — is an unbalanced and distorted endeavor, therefore driven by Maya.

That was not the only time that the Michaels mentioned financial integrity:

We do not recommend this [iffy business venture], however, if there is any danger to financial integrity. This [Psychic Magazine] is far too valuable a vehicle and tool to tamper with. [31 January 1975]

That time "financial integrity" was regarded as a good thing, not to be jeopardized.

Concluding Comments on Integrity

This chapter is related to Gurdjieff's notion that the many "I's" of the False Personality should be integrated into a singular "I": refer to the chapter "Integration versus Disintegration".

Another chapter loosely related to this chapter is "Group Cohesion". The Michaels were concerned that the original Michaelian group develop cohesion; this is a component of their overall Agape-development project.





⑤ INTIMACY

This chapter is the product of a search for the words “intimacy” and “intimate” in the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group. This word does not represent a significant component of the Michaelian teachings. However, there are good reasons to discuss the subject in this *Study Papers* book: 1) the subject came up numerous times during the original Michaelian group; 2) some interesting things were said about the subject; 3) the subject is related to a number of other components of the Michaelian teachings that are considered to be significant; 4) students can presumably benefit from having the mentions conveniently collected and commented all in one place; 5) Intimacy issues are unavoidable; they are pervasive in human psychology and sociology and spirituality — subjects covered extensively in this book — so it behooves us to have a working knowledge of them.

The word “intimacy” is not capitalized in this chapter or other chapters of this *Study Papers* book because it has no special meaning in the Michaelian teachings; it is not a Michaelian jargon word that needs a definition apart from its use in the common vernacular.

This chapter is one of many in this book that focuses on a psychological component of the Michaelian teachings as found in original Michaelian group transcriptions, rather than on a doctrinal or spiritual component. A psychological component is usually either a positive to be cultivated or a negative to be mitigated. As we will see, the Michaels tell us that intimacy is a positive to be cultivated. The Michaelian version of psychology is not to be confused with the popular psychology of the self-improvement movement, those that do not have a spiritual core or perspective. Rather, the Michaelian psychotherapeutic path (aimed at improving psychological health) is a beneficial precursor to the spiritual path (aimed at improving soul health). To skip the former but attempt the latter is referred to as “spiritual bypassing”. This is discussed at length on such websites as https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spiritual_bypass. To skip mitigating one’s psychological issues and attempt to go straight to enlightenment usually proves to be problematic.

Chapters closely related to this chapter are “Alienation”, “Strangers”, and “Trust”, as you can readily see from their names. Many other chapters also connect to what is said in this chapter, and those are noted where appropriate.

As you read the following extracts from the original Michaelian group transcriptions, note the things that promote intimacy and the things that demote intimacy.

Intimacy per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

The following extracts from original Michaelian group transcriptions are Q&A exchanges, where an original Michaelian group member asks a question (or makes a comment), and the Michaels provide an answer. These extracts are presented in the chronological order in which they appear in the transcriptions. As is my custom, I often provide some explanatory comments following the question or answer. Underlined words in the Michaels’ answers are my emphasis, to draw attention to what it is that I comment on. Sometimes I embed words or phrases [in brackets] that I believe help to clarify the question or the answer.

In the first mention of intimacy in the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group, we find that the concept is applied to intimacy with oneself:

I would like to know how long you have been the leader of your world and I would like to know what you teach them.

[Soleal:] I have been here for ten of this world’s revolutions. I teach them what I would teach you: that is, to seek moderation in all things, to love unselfishly, to become intimate with the inner workings of your spirit, to live in the essence of that spirit, to liberate the trapped Essence is the reincarnational purpose. I try to guide them in this path, so that they might be free sooner. [early 1973]

Refer to chapters “Moderation”, “Love”, “Essence and Personality”, and “Reincarnation”. Regarding “free sooner”, refer to the chapter “Liberation”. The point to be made here is that before you can be intimate with others, you must first be intimate with the inner workings of your own spirit.

Edgar: I would like to return to the comment you made at the beginning of the evening on the origin of the species, Homo Sapiens. We seem to ignore it with our egotistical questions.

We have discussed the problem of personal agendas before. We do understand this drive and we do not deplore it. It is just that we have much more time than any of you and we would be of as much help as possible in the limited time available. Being in a more intimate situation would also eliminate this problem. [24 January 1974]

Refer to the chapters “Agenda” and “Communal Living” and “Trust”. There you will see that focus on personal agendas was a recurring problem that would be solved if/when/as the group fostered intimacy in group meetings (‘parties’, as it were, rather than channeling sessions) convened specifically for intentionally getting to know each other, where they could ‘bare their souls’ in a setting of mutual trust.

More was said about that a week later:

In order for this group to achieve the cohesion necessary to provide growth, a level of intimacy and trust far exceeding what you now have must be reached. This cannot be achieved through dialogue. Dialogue is false personality’s defense against Emotional Center.

Ray: This is the first time I feel the group is into something meaningful. The energy feels different. To get in touch with real feelings is frightening and is unattainable to this in a group.

Ellis: We can’t reach each other through dialogue or what I call “aboutism.” When someone brings up something deeply personal, the group as a whole makes the whole thing personal. I hear the pain and then we go on to the next person’s pain.

Richard: Are there suggestions for improvement? I feel the personal agenda could be handled by each person relating to each other, rather than running to Michael right away.

Ellis: I see a more basic problem here. I want to know what is the purpose of the group. I experience no purpose. There’s the inevitable push on without discussing. We have to accept the goddam zombies. Gotta be honest. There has to be no judgment: no right or wrong.

Richard: I see our goal as becoming one. In meditation, I get that the soul evolves into a higher plane and there is a closeness and intimacy. [31 January 1974]

Refer to chapter “Growth, Spiritual”. There is a lot of text around this extraction about the original Michaelian group struggling toward something more intimate than verbal dialogue in the Intellectual Center. Refer to the chapter “Emotional Center”, where we find that the Michaels advocated that the original Michaelian group members get out of their Intellectual Center and into the Emotional Center, which is where social bonding happens, which is where a shared value system develops. Personally, I would expand the notion of ‘dialogue’ to include the exchange of ‘energy’ of all kinds, including emotional and sexual energy, not just verbal/intellectually energy.

Would you give us more on the Teacher-Guide?

The guidance groups require much time and can become intensive, and for that reason, must remain small or they lose their effectiveness. This, of course, is because of the trust level, which is proportional to the level of intimacy in any group. [27 March 1974]

This passage says only what is self-evident, namely that in order to develop intimacy, it takes spending a lot of time together, the time together must be intensely focused rather than scattered, and the group must be small enough to really get to know each other.

I feel isolated from people. Is it related to sex or Overleaves or what? How can I approach this problem?

We would also point out to you that you have erected many barriers between yourself and possible emotional trauma. You do not allow yourself the luxury of intimacy. [27 March 1974]

Refer to the chapters “Barriers” and “Sexuality” and “Emotional Center”. Many people think of intimacy as it relates to sexuality, but having sex can be intimate and it can be alienating, depending on many things, some of which are discussed in those three chapters, and other chapters.

Comment: There is not enough to work on here [with that answer].

You are fearful of the projected ramification of an intimate relationship. These fears, of course, are culturally induced, but that is slightly irrelevant when you are struggling with them. Almost all of these fears concern some material considerations, and again are bound up in your ferocious work ethic. Intimate relationships can

be expensive, for instance. Intimacy requires time and nurturing. To be intimate, you must trust. [27 March 1974]

Refer to the chapters “Fear”, “Culture”, “Trust”, and “Money”. To focus on intimacy is to de-focus on working as much as the socio-cultural imperative says one should. This is a case where you cannot ‘have your cake and eat it too’.

Comment: I've got to get more exercise. There's no time.

Pleasurable activities can often be utilized in establishing intimate relationships. [27 March 1974]

So, ‘kill two birds with one stone’ by going to the local gym with someone you love, and deepening the intimacy that way. If exercise is not your “thing”, then what is your “thing”? Sharing unpleasant traumatic experiences can also forge intimate bonds, but the Michaels typically prefer that we share pleasant activities together.

Why does twinning occur? What is it?

Twinning is an almost natural impulse of the human species, and one of the least understood. The desire to join with another of like mind supersedes all other impulses, even sometimes those necessary for survival in a hostile environment. Those with reclusive Overleaves do not exhibit this impulse as strongly as others, but it still happens to them also. This process has become extremely blurred by the cultural taboos and the isolation that permeates the way of life. There is so much suspicion on the Physical Plane that the truly intimate relationship of twins is all but precluded, especially if the twin happens to be of the same gender. [25 June 1974]

There are physical twins who share the same physical womb, and there are soul twins who share the same Entity: refer to the chapter “Twins — Physical and Spiritual”.

Donna: I am becoming concerned about my growing desire to be alone. I'd like to ask about the Negative Pole of Acceptance (Rejection). I'd like some information on Scholars and running — am I running away from a close relationship?

Most Scholars [such as yourself] do retreat from intimacy, yes, and you are no exception. This does not mean that your work entails tolerating rejection behavior in others. In fact, it is Good Work for you to detach yourself from the negativity of others. Your work now needs to be directed toward developing your own good space to the point where you can see that it is all right for you to ignore this plea for rejection. You can work with yourself in the area of not expressing your own negativity. In other words, you need not react at all to someone else's negative space; you can choose to simply ignore it. No relationship that is not between Balanced Man can be one hundred percent intimate. Some of the expectations placed upon you in the past have been unreasonable and you have reacted to them in the only way you could. Now, you are coming to the space where you can verbalize that without difficulty. Your concern needs to be with your own growth, as those around you need to be concerned with theirs. The degree of intimacy that you allow will grow with your trust level: as it goes up, you will allow more intimacy. Scholars are not generally the most intimate of souls. [01 February 1975]

It is okay to “detach yourself from the negativity of others”, but it is not Good Work to detach yourself from the positivity of others. Note again the injunction to first become intimate with yourself — and sometimes this means a lot of time alone — before you can reasonably expect to be intimate with others. Refer to the chapter “Balanced Man”.

I have been extremely sleepy the last two evenings. I didn't know Soleal would be here yesterday, but was told he would be here tonight. Is this a block of Soleal on my part or is it that I'm slow to absorb his last appearance? (January 11 in Stockton)

In many ways, you flee from this student [Soleal], as he represents a rather fearful degree of intimacy. You know that he is telepathic, and one of your blocks surrounds the belief that if you sleep through the experience, he will not invade your cerebral space. This student is extremely careful with this great gift of his, and would never use it to invade, only to enhance communication. [01 February 1975]

Refer to the chapter “Telepathy”. One can become so intimate with another person that the two become telepathic with each other, as in, they finish each other's sentences.

Is it possible to know the motive behind a tumor of the gastrointestinal system?

Only if you were willing to spend the necessary time with each patient — that is to say, develop a certain level of intimacy with them. This is being done to a limited extent in the holistic health centers, but there again, here we have half-trained practitioners with more zeal than skill. [21 February 1977]

It is a known fact that therapy of any kind, whether medical or mental, is enhanced when the therapist and the therapee have a rapport with each other.

Summary Comments on Intimacy

The difference between introverts and extroverts is not mentioned in any of the passages that discuss intimacy, but it is important to take account of this personality factor in yourself and in others. Both personality types do Good Work to develop intimacy with themselves as well as intimacy with others, but the balance will be different for introverts and extroverts: introverts need to spend more time apart from their social lives in order to find their authentic selves, whereas extroverts need more time with others in their social lives to find their authentic selves.

The emphasis in this chapter is not so much on the fact that the Personality avoids and rejects intimacy, but it is emphasized in the antithetical chapter to this one, namely "Alienation".

To be truly intimate, two people should look for connections on as many levels as they can; refer to my book *The Tao of Relationships: The Chemistry and Alchemy of Service and Intimacy*.





⑧ INTUITION

This chapter is the product of a search for the word intuition in the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group channeling sessions. This word does not represent a significant component of the Michaelian teachings. However, there are good reasons to discuss the subject in this *Study Papers* book: 1) the subject came up numerous times during the original Michaelian group; 2) some interesting things were said about the subject; 3) the subject is related to a number of other components of the Michaelian teachings that are considered to be significant; 4) students can presumably benefit from having the mentions conveniently collected and commented all in one place; 5) intuition is a notion that is pervasive in human psychology and sociology and spirituality — subjects covered extensively in this book — so it behooves us to have a working knowledge of it.

The word intuition is not capitalized in this chapter or other chapters of this *Study Papers* book because it has no special meaning in the Michaelian teachings; it is not a Michaelian jargon word that needs a definition apart from its use in the common vernacular.

Numerous times during the original Michaelian group the Michaels refused to answer a personal question asked by a member. The Michaels suggested that the student should consult their own intuition to arrive at an answer that was meaningful to them on a deep level of their own being. On many other occasions, the Michaels recommended that students develop their intuitive faculty, because if they did that, then they could make wise decisions and come to an accurate understanding of their life on occasions when the Michaels were not available to provide their guidance

Definition of Intuition

So what is meant by intuition? The online Merriam Webster dictionary definition is:

1a: the power or faculty of attaining to direct knowledge or cognition without evident rational thought and inference

1b: immediate apprehension or cognition

1c: knowledge or conviction gained by intuition

2: quick and ready insight [<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/intuition>< — retrieved 26 September 2022]]

Wikipedia puts it this way:

Intuition is the ability to acquire knowledge without recourse to conscious reasoning. Different fields use the word “intuition” in very different ways, including but not limited to: direct access to unconscious knowledge; unconscious cognition; inner sensing; inner insight to unconscious pattern-recognition; and the ability to understand something instinctively, without any need for conscious reasoning... Use of intuition is sometimes referred to as responding to a “gut feeling” or “trusting your gut”. [<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Intuition>< — retrieved 26 September 2022]

Thereafter the Wikipedia article discussed the concept as understood in psychology (Freud, Jung, Modern), and as understood in philosophy (Eastern and Western). In my opinion, the article is well worth reading as an introduction to this chapter.

One relevance to this chapter and the Michaelian teachings in general is that Jung regarded intuition as a distinct faculty or function of the personality, along with three other faculties or functions, namely 1) bodily sensation, 2) feelings or emotions, and 3) rational thought. A perceptive Michaelian student will recognize these four as corresponding to the 1) Moving or Physical Center, 2) Emotional Center, 3) Intellectual Center, and 4) Instinctive Center. As you may read in Chapter 4F, “The Instinctive Center”, in my book *A History of the*

Overleaf Chart, I prefer to rename the so-called “Instinctive” Center as the Impulse Center, and I name its Positive Pole as +Intuition and its Negative Pole as –Instinct. Much of what I say in my commentary below is based on the notion that the Michaels use the word intuition to refer to one of the functions of the Impulse Center, namely that it is the gateway to the so-called “higher” Centers. My assertion is that impulses in the Impulse Center come from the *subconscious* “lower self” (–Instinct) and from the *superconscious* “higher self” (+Intuition).

The fact that the concept of intuition is present in psychology and philosophy going back to ancient times indicates that this is a phenomenon worthy of serious consideration. In addition to the historicity of the phenomenon, almost certainly all of us have subjectively experienced the phenomenon: an idea or feeling “pops into our heads” from “somewhere” and it seems important. However, the question that we Michaelian students should ask ourselves when we experience this phenomenon is this: *from where* do these promptings come into the conscious mind, from lower-self –Instinct or from higher self +Intuition? The discussion that follows is focused on the answers to that question.

Intuition per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

The following extracts from original Michaelian group transcriptions are Q&A exchanges, where an original Michaelian group member asks a question (or makes a comment), and the Michaels provide an answer. These extracts are presented in the chronological order in which they appear in the transcriptions. As is my custom, I often provide some explanatory comments following the question or answer. Underlined words in the Michaels’ answers are my emphasis, to draw attention to what it is that I comment on. Sometimes I embed words or phrases [in brackets] that I believe help to clarify the question or the answer.

So let’s dive in to intuition. Even though the word itself is not used, the notion of intuition is mentioned in one of the earliest original Michaelian group sessions:

Gene: How can we be sure who we’re talking to?

[Tomas:] We are also limited in trying to communicate at times. Another misspells Tomas [as Thomas, on the Ouija board] and the only way to verify it is Tomas is to be in touch with the inner self.... [17 July 1973]

That phrase, “being in touch with the inner self”, is a pretty good definition of intuition, as we will see in the remainder of this study paper. Also, refer to the chapter “Higher Self”, because the higher self is one place where intuition comes from.

The next few Q&A exchanges are from an early session with the Michaels:

Dick: I would like to ask if Michael was with me last night and saw me put my hand on the brow of this young lady who had taken an overdose and cut her wrists.

Yes, Dick, we are almost constantly with all of you now. It will be that way from now on.

Please accompany the gestures with meditation upon my aura and then we can guide you. The words will be in your mind then and there will be no mistake. You will even be able to discern whether any action should be taken at all. In many cases, you should do nothing, and I realize that this is contrary to your [medical] training, but it is one of the hurdles you must scale.... The healer knows intuitively when not to heal.

Once contact with the Michaels is established, they can serve as a source of inspiration and guidance, but this phenomenon is not the same as intuition, or contact with one’s own inner/higher self:

Dick: Then I want to know whether what I did with that young lady was correct — putting my hand on her head?

Yes, it was correct. That came from higher expression.

Dick: I perceive vaguely a better way to heal, but it is too vague.

I have given you a start. You must begin to approach your patients as souls who are Centered in different places. You have verified for yourself the truth of the Centers. Now, you must verify the truth of the [Soul Age] Cycles. This is practical knowledge for the Older Soul, not just idle chatter. It supersedes all previous information. This is the lesson you must learn. The approach must be governed by what you sense intuitively, given this special skill. [04 September 1973]

Elsewhere in the original Michaelian group transcriptions, “Higher Expression” (refer to the chapter by that name) is found to refer to the functions of the higher Centers, and this expression increases as we grow spiritually; refer to the chapter “Growth, Spiritual”. Furthermore, apparently, to have awareness of a person’s Centering and of Soul Age (and other Overleaves) enhances intuition about them; you will understand “where they are coming from”. What the Michaels here advised Dick to learn or practice appears aligned with the

acclaimed abilities of people who refer to themselves as “medical intuitives”; they can allegedly discern disease in the etheric (auric) body before (or after) it manifests in the physical body. They may follow their intuitive diagnoses with recommendations of allopathic therapeutics, and/or they may apply complementary/alternative therapeutics of one sort or another.

JeanP: What do Edmund's migraines mean?

These aches have their origin in tension, part of which is job-related, part of which is rooted in a basic inability to disappoint those whom he senses are counting on him. This man still needs to feel completely free to refuse, in clear conscience, that which he intuits as a wrong move. [24 September 1973]

This is the only place where the word “conscience” appears in the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group, but I have written a chapter on it anyway, so check that out. This might or might not be surprising to Michaelian students. It was not surprising to me, because other concepts take its place in the Michaelian teachings. Therefore I refer the reader to chapters “Essence”, “Guilt”, “Innocence”, “Good Work, Bad Work”. Basically and briefly, the Michaels ask us to consider where our consciousness of guilt versus innocence came from. If it came from parents and culture, then it is not really intuition; it is imprinting and programming and enculturation. But if it came from Essence or higher self or whatever you want to call it, then that is actual intuition.

Gene: How is it practical for me to know about my [Entity] Fragments? Should I search for them?

It is more practical not to resist than to try to consciously search. False leads are possible at your level. Learn not to analyze your intuition out of existence; that is a trait of False Personality. [08 October 1973]

Many things in our lives are like this, so we should just “Let go and let God”, as the aphorism goes. Excessive thinking swamps intuition because intuition tends to be more subtle than thinking. Intuition is better perceived in ‘silence’ than in ‘noise’. This passage is referring to an excessive reliance on the Intellectual Center for guidance, but I would include an overactive Emotional Center and an overactive Moving Center as distractions and diversions from the discernment of the subtle promptings of intuition and/or Essence and/or higher self and/or higher Centers via the Impulse Center. Refer to the chapter “Personality — True and False” for more discussion of those two factors that enhance and impede intuition respectively.

Phyllis: I would like to know what level my son, Josh, is (14 years old).

He is a Third Level Old Soul. This child is gifted.

Phyllis: What do I do with his gifts?

Allow him to develop them. He could be a powerful psychic. He expresses this musically. (He possesses) the intuitive sense of understanding so often present in Older Souls. [17 October 1973]

With so many past lives ‘under their belts’, so to speak, Old Souls have an “internal guidance system”. The trick is to learn to listen to it consistently, by mitigating distractions such as False Personality, as stated above and below.

Richard: Let's put it hypothetically: if I had strong feelings from Essence about the land and signed the mortgage papers for the price they asked, then faced reality after signing, that would throw me way back into False Personality.

You are correct in assuming that financial crises would ‘throw you to the wolves’, but even that would not be as difficult to recover from now as six months ago, and six months from now it will be even easier. We have already begun to provide. The provision will not always be instantly material, but why do you think that you picked that particular real estate office? There were others larger and more impressively designed to attract through Glamour. Intuition is the primary reasoning power of Essence. [27 October 1973]

Refer to the chapter “Glamour” for more discussion of that particular distraction from intuition. Refer to the chapters “Personality — True and False” and “Essence and Personality” for more discussion of those factors that enhance and impede intuition respectively. In the original Michaelian group transcriptions, Essence is mentioned repeatedly in connection with intuition.

Dennis: I would like to know my soul level and Role.

Fourth Level Mature Scholar. This young man has difficulty trusting intuition, which stems from childhood misadventures, and is also inherent in the [Mature Soul] Cycle. [15 November 1973]

Fourth Level Mature is the pivot point of the reincarnation cycle, the switch from Ordinality to Cardinality. As such, it is doubly Neutral, and as such, a person at that Level/Age should be able to easily detect the subtle promptings of Essence if not distracted by “misadventures”. Refer to the chapter “Trust” for more discussion about that particular enhancement to intuition. When childhood misadventures traumatize the tender and

impressionable psyche, it tends to crush trust in the universe, and trust in one's own intuition or internal guidance system. More than any other Soul Age, Mature Souls, because they are not strongly polarized Cardinal or Ordinal, are vulnerable to trauma, so they need a stable childhood in order to not be traumatized.

Evelyn: About three years ago, my sister-in-law's personality changed. It troubles her and she would like some help to understand this.

We have discussed this lady at length. Her primary difficulty should be resolved if she would trust the intuition. The change that occurred is nothing more serious than a late manifestation [of the Fourth Internal Monad]. She feels now very insecure. She was very secure in her old role, where everything was clearly defined. Now the edges are blurred. She does not like this, but it is, of course, preferable and is the initial opening of the door. Warriors find the [spiritual] "path" especially steep and rocky. All her old relationships were taken for granted. For the first time in her life, she was faced with the challenge of creating new relationships out of totally new material and with a new game with different rules. [29 November 1973]

I include the entire answer so as to let the reader see some of the impediments to trusting intuition, which include insecurity (fear) and ambiguity. If I may expand on that theme, I would add that the Negative Poles of the Overleaves and the Chief Features block intuition, based as they are on various fears.

Arthur: I would like to ask if I should continue living in my present dichotomy, or change my life style and pattern?

If you do not make a change sooner or later, you will make the transition [physical death] with the split intact. However, this is not necessarily Wrong Work. You lead an interesting life, Arthur. You have not been with us before, but know now that all choices must ultimately be made by you. We would say that you should be governed in this matter by intuition rather than logic. [13 December 1973]

Logic is based on making distinctions ("dichotomies, splits") between alternatives. Oftentimes the choice between alternatives is clear, but when it isn't, what are we to do? If/when we rely only on logic, we cannot always make wise choices; in those cases, there must be a tie-breaker. In philosophy, this is known as the problem of Buridan's Ass (>https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Buridan's_ass<), a hypothetical donkey that starves to death because it cannot logically decide to go eat this pile of hay versus go eat that equidistant pile of hay; intuition is the illogical tie-breaker that keeps the donkey from starving. Several original Michaelian group passages contrast intuition with that kind of "logic" or "reason" or "rationality". Making logical sense is a good thing in most cases, but then there is a higher faculty than merely making logical sense; intuition has a sense-making faculty of its own, from its higher perspective, not always logical. Intuition can reconcile the dichotomies, the splits, the dilemmas in our choice-making faculty.

As an example of how this works, let's say that you come to a 'fork in the road' of your life 'journey' and cannot make up your logical mind about which way to go, so you decide to let the universe decide: you flip a coin and look at the result. At that exact instant you might have a flash of intuition that tells you how it "feels" about the answer the coin-toss provided, whether yea or nay. Some people are more indecisive than others, more hung up on being rational than others, such as people in the Caution Mode or in the Intellectual Center, so it would take longer than usual for them to train their intuition via this method.

Dick: I am in my head [Intellectual Center] at [my job in] the hospital, in Moving Center playing golf, Sexual Center in sex, but my Emotional Center is always "playing background music." The Emotional Center seems to pull in the opposite direction [of all these others].

This [Emotional Center background music] is the sensation that accompanies the beginning of the moving toward harmony and Balance. This sensation, however unpleasant it may seem, heralds being able to bring all Centers into play during all activity, so that the situation can be [intellectually] assessed, [emotionally] felt, and [moving] acted upon. Not in everyone it does, but in you, the Emotional Center has come in for the strongest barrage of work. You must be able to see intellectually, feel emotionally, and act with Moving Center almost instantly in order to be working out of Essence through intuition. [16 December 1973]

Refer to chapters "Balanced Man" and "Emotional Center". Briefly, the Michaels recommended to most original Michaelian group members that they reduce their overactive Intellectual Centers and enhance their underactive Emotional Centers, with the goal of using all of the Centers where appropriate. This process results in a balanced and centered approach to life. My view is that "+Intuition" works well as the name of the Positive Pole of the Impulse (aka "Instinctive" Center when properly understood) Center, the Impulse Center being the balanced combination of the other six Centers.

Dick: There is not one grain of faith here in the Bible other than a teaching. I am happy to borrow from Buddhism. There are too many obscure things in the Bible. What I have for myself, I have verified step by step without faith. It seems like Edgar has blind faith in the Bible.

Edgar: Peter could not see spiritually what Jesus was ... this is faith.

Dick: You're showing the same ...

What we call "intuition", Edgar calls "faith".

Edgar: (He was asked about his intuition.) Intuition is premonition.

That is not intuition either; that is precognition. [20 January 1974]

We know things by what they are as well as by what they are not. Other passages contrast intuition with logic; this passage contrasts intuition with premonitions of the future. Personally, I just regard these as semantic distinctions, depending on definitions of words; I see premonition as one type of function that well-honed intuition can perform. Refer to the chapter "Paranormal, The" to gain more discernment.

One might think that intuition should bring two people into agreement:

Susan: My perceptions as a Priest seem true and right, and [my husband] Gene [as a Scholar] thinks his are. Yet, they are totally different to what the truth is. I don't understand.

The approach is very different [between the two of you.] Neither of you is yet ready to express the truth in an absolute sense. Susan intuitively perceives more at this level, but she is not able to apply this, yet. Gene applies more than he intuitively knows at his level. [20 January 1974]

There is an absolute truth at the ultimate synthesis of all of the relative truths. Another way to say this is that each person only has a piece of the whole truth. For this reason, the intuition that is appropriate or applicable to one person might not be right for another person. Susan and Gene parted ways later that year due to this sort of "irreconcilable differences".

Richard: I got some automatic writing when I was doing reports for the Assessment District. My hands were frozen as a child, and when the temperature became 40 degrees today, a message came through that there would be an important message tonight.

There are many fears in this [original Michaelian group] group that must be met and dealt with before going on [to communal living]. One [fear] concerns the decision you will be making within the next six months, some to go and some to stay [within the original Michaelian group]. Many will be sad. Many will choose to go on with the security they now believe they have, while others will trust their intuition. Whatever the move, it will be painful, and at one level many fear the newness of the concept, and recognize that [it] is [a] total break with all familiar. This you have learned to dread. Others realize that this will mean drastic changes in the nuclear family and also dread this. Relationships will change as growth occurs. You are now at the crossroads. One way leads to spiritual growth, the other to Maya. All of you are now at the point where you realize that you must make some decision as to whether you intend to pursue this. You are no longer investigating. You know precisely what is being offered. This levity comes in part from anxiety. The Silence often brings you face to face with your anxiety. [06 February 1974]

Refer to the chapters "Communal Living" and "Fear" and "Maya" and "Silence, The" for more about those subjects. Fear and Maya block intuition; going into The Silence is where one listens for intuition to speak; living in a commune should foster listening to intuition. Two things can be gleaned from this passage: fear interferes with intuition, and learning to discern and follow one's intuition mitigates fear. When one recognizes that one is at a crossroads, then one should look to intuition for guidance in making the decision which way to go.

What level soul was he [Fulton Sheen] and was he intuitive about this choice [to burn all Karmic ribbons]?

He was a final [Seventh] Level Old Soul. He really did not have much [Karma] to burn. What he did, he felt intuitively. You will, too. [09 February 1974]

Intuition helps one to navigate through the fog of ignorance about what might be 'really going on' in terms of Karma ... and Agreements and Sequences and the Life Task and such.

... You brought to this interval [lifetime] a wealth of experience and knowledge that is yours to tap at will. The tapping is up to you, but it is yours if you wish it.

Jim: Is this intuitive knowledge or scientific knowledge or both?

Both. [17 March 1974]

This passage adds to what was said previously about older souls having better intuition: older souls also bring character and skills from previous lifetimes into the current lifetime. According to this passage, in addition to intuition, actual scientific knowledge about how the universe works is useful to help one navigate through life. So by all means, everyone does well to develop both intuition and scientific knowledge.

Carolyn: I had a perception about my recent shoulder injury. I had a feeling I was going to fall. Was this a true impression or did I influence myself to fall? I have never done anything like that before.

We would think that this was truly precognitive [rather than intuitive, semantically speaking].

Inordinate fear of failure is a part of Arrogance, timorousness [is] a part of Self-deprecation. We see none of this in Carolyn, but we see much Stubbornness. She is an Idealist. The lady is relying more now on her intuitive knowledge though, and that is good. [17 March 1974]

The same as is said elsewhere, there is a reciprocal relationship between functioning from the Overleaves and functioning from intuition. By “reciprocal” I mean, the more of one the less of the other. Here and elsewhere the Michaels recommend functioning in intuition rather than functioning from the Overleaves.

Trust, as you have said, implies communication and awareness, and they are inseparable. Trust is solely based upon intuition and cannot be logical. Logic will fail you every time in matters of trust. [20 March 1974]

Refer to the chapter “Trust” for more about that subject. The better you get to know a person, the more you trust them (if they are trustworthy), and the easier it is to let intuition, rather than analyzing, do the heavy lifting of relating to them meaningfully and intimately. Several times the Michaels discredited the Intellectual Center in those cases where it is an impediment to intuition. There are situations where logic is appropriate, and there are situations where logic is not appropriate; according to the Michaels, when we are in a situation where the question is to trust or not to trust, then reliance on intuition is more appropriate than reliance on logic.

Dick: I am used by [my employer]. The people who are running it are in the Perseveration Mode. Will we be able to receive a way of changing?

You may do the work within this [Michaelian] teaching, but in order to do so, you must be able to recall the reasons you chose the offending Overleaf, the same way the lady Susan did, and this means following up on your intuitive drives. Those coming out of the Repression Mode often do so explosively and with much resentment over all that they have missed. Some of this “shock” therapy you will see should give you considerable insight into where the work is. [14 April 1974]

Refer to the chapters “Shock” and “Overleaves, Changing” for more discussion of those phenomena. That passage is another clue, stated more explicitly elsewhere, that the Overleaves can be made obsolete by increasing one’s intuition, intuition being understood as functioning in Essence rather than functioning in Personality, as explained in this chapter and the chapter “Essence and Personality”.

Dick: When is enough? What decides? In Personality, one could say it was enough ...

This decision cannot be made from Personality with any positive results. The only positive results emanate from the true realization that this has been experienced, but more important, that the soul recognizes a pattern controlled by self. The Essence or soul, as we have said before, does become [metaphorically] ‘encrusted with barnacles’ and has much to go through to act intuitively. Most of the time, its powers are totally suppressed and it spends its time slumbering, as you well know. Those moments of crystal clarity come about when it is prodded into wakefulness by some shock.

Richard: I would like a comment on my intuitions lately and the “fact” that my aura indicates healing. Did I Agree to this [intuitive healing] on the Astral Plane?

It is not that you Agreed to do this on the Astral Plane, it is more that the combination of Overleaves you chose given your affinity for this. By all means, try it. [16 June 1974]

Refer to the chapter “Agreements and Sequences” for a discussion about the soul making plans for a lifetime. Comparing this passage to other passages about the inverse relationship of Overleaves and intuition (the more of one the less of the other), I am not convinced that Richard was correct in his usage of the word intuition. However, I can see that a choice of Overleaves would incline a person to pursue the more-intuitive alternative/complementary healing *arts* rather than the less-intuitive allopathic healing *sciences*.

Gene: When I communicate with my Fragments, how will I perceive them?

The information will at first appear to be dreaming. Then, you may wish to transfer this over to the waking state and just be aware of the larger part of yourself, which is the Essence of the Old Soul’s perception.

Gene: [Does it come as] Intuitive thoughts?

More than that. Even as loud as a voice sound that only you can hear.

Gene: How do I recognize it?

An intuitive feeling of affinity of an extension of self. It will be far more in tune with your innermost thoughts than even we are [with you] at times. [16 June 1974]

Refer to the chapter “Composites” for more discussion of the situation where one’s kindred souls co-inhabit an incarnation. The voices in your head might be something other than “intuition”; it might be kindred souls acting as spirit guides; they can function as a component of your intuitive “internal guidance system”.

Liz: Gradually giving validity to intuition. What is the Karmic Ribbon with Liz and Ted?

In this instance, the lady’s intuition is valid and this Ribbon winds back to the immediate past life.... [19 June 1974]

By definition, intuition is irrational and unreasonable. When you are mysteriously caught up in some strange thing happening between you and another person and you cannot explain it logically, then maybe the answer lies in some influence or ‘unfinished business’ from a past lifetime. Refer to the chapter “Karma” for more about that type of unfinished Business. Besides Karma, Agreements and Monads are other types of soul Business.

... she should, of course, follow her intuitions and not the advice of others. [10 July 1974]

This is good advice from the Michaels for people who have learned to recognize their intuitions as distinct from their wishful thinking or their delusions or whatever else can lead them astray.

Mallory: I am interested in my Balance — Emotional Part of Moving Center — so I need to find Intellectual Center. I have some idea what it is but am not sure what Intellectual Center is.

Intellectual Center, when working without interference or energy leaks, has the capacity to record and process data in a detached and non-judgmental fashion. From the Moving Center, this looks like learning without necessarily doing. In other words, learning for the pleasure of learning, without the proviso of application attached. Emotionally Centered souls or those working through Emotional Center, operate on intuition, and feel — rather than think — through a problem. Moving Centered souls or those working through Moving Center, are concerned with the action and read with this in mind, with always an eye toward later application. [10 July 1974]

Perhaps each Center in its Positive Pole can be said to have a type of intuition, but I would prefer to limit intuition to a faculty in the Centers above the Ordinal Centers. Emotional Center provides one kind of “intuitive” (non-intellectual, non-behavioral, non-visceral) knowing, but there are other kinds of intuition, as documented in this chapter. For instance:

Caitlan: How can I be with Michael?

We will tell you what we have told all of the others: we can be with you at all times during meditation or concentration. You may wish to use the alphabet [Ouija] board or the auto[matic] writing in the beginning, but this is not at all necessary. When you express a wish to hear our words, we are with you from that point on. Intuition being the manifestation of the higher self, we can think of no better advice than to follow your intuition in this communication as in all things. In the beginning, it is often necessary to separate yourself from others to establish the bond [with the Michael Entity]. [14 July 1974]

Refer to the chapter “Meditation and Concentration”. Listening for the Michaels is yet another source of intuition, in addition to those sources mentioned previously. Listening to the “Higher Self” (refer to the chapter by that name) is another source of intuition. There you will read that the higher self, the super-conscious self, is more or less equivalent to Essence, and Essence is known to contact the Personality, the conscious self, through the Cardinal Centers.

Meditation is passive and concentration is active, the same as intuition:

Today, for the first time in many days, you have been serious, albeit not intentionally. The feeling you had at the pool when lying in the sun is valid for this [Michaelian] teaching. Pursue the intuition that came to you then. The group is looking to you to give some message from us. This is very frightening to you. You do not see yourself correctly. Do not fear. [13 August 1974]

Development of intuition involves both passive listening and active listening. By that I mean, passivity is not specific and intentional about what advice it seeks from the higher self, whereas activity is specific and intentional about what advice it seeks from the higher self or from the Michaels in the form of inspiration. The word “feeling” is semantically ambiguous: sometimes it refers to a physical faculty such as bodily sensations; sometimes it refers to an emotional faculty; sometimes it refers to an intuitive faculty. In his mention, it is the

latter, and the point to be emphasized here is that the Ordinal Centers should be relaxed or quiescent (while 'lying in the sun') if one is to tune into the intuition that comes from the Cardinal Centers.

(From Ted): Have I had an experience with intellectual meditation?

Ted has been, in his second most recent lifetime, a Benedictine monk who was the scholar for his order. He led his order in the discipline of meditation at a very high plane. Isolation. Solitude. Isolation. That question is for you to flounder in, and [therein] you will no doubt find the answer. Any answer we would give would not be acceptable, as you are now doubting your own veracity. Do not doubt. Give credence to your intuition. It is valid always. [13 August 1974]

Well then, by definition, if the "intuition" did not prove valid, then it was not intuition. This is the way to empirically and experimentally verify and validate and discern whether it is intuition or not that is talking to you. Refer to the chapter "Solitude" for more information about that situation where the noise of the outer world is quieted so that the inner world of intuition is more easily heard. Another point to be emphasized here is that, generally speaking, one needs to have a *question* addressed to intuition before you will receive an *answer* from intuition; the question might be about a fork in the life path, as mentioned in some of the quotations, or it might be about some other significant decision.

Louise: For me, my intuitions verify for me and I just know. [03 September 1974]

Intuitions are often accompanied by a sense of conviction that, for instance, wishful thinking and delusions do not provide.

Discussion on how to dress like a peacock without money. Sarah claims she was imprinted to be earning money and feels guilty not working. This led to the transformation of Robert [a former school teacher] and how he told Dick how hard it was not to renew his teaching contract. Dick felt that this was an act of will, and [he] asked for a correlation between "will power" and "intuition" or Essence.

It can be likened to the Centers then, Dick. For instance, think of Essence as the [Cardinal] emotions [Center], intuition as the [Cardinal] intellect [Center], and will as the drive force [Cardinal Moving Center]. [21 September 1974]

This is speculative on my part, but in order to make better sense of this statement in the context of other statements about intuition and Essence and will, I would shift the correlation from the three Ordinal Centers to the three Cardinal Centers on the same Axis, thus: Essence could be correlated with Higher Emotional Center, intuition could be correlated with Higher Intellectual Center, and will could be correlated with Higher Moving Center. By the way, there is a study paper on "Will" in this book.

Jean: What do Edmund's migraines mean?

These aches have their origin in tension, part of which is job-related, part of which is rooted in a basic inability to disappoint those whom he senses are counting on him. This man still needs to feel completely free to refuse, in clear conscience, that which he intuits as a wrong move. [24 September 1974]

Integrity is doing the intuitive thing even when it is counter to doing the expected thing, either something expected by others or something expected by a false part of oneself. In order to heed intuition, one must first 'sort oneself out', the true from the false, the reasonable from the unreasonable.

At this point in time, it is useless to bring up any discussion of an ultimate purpose in existence. This is not a concept that can be dealt with in the language of the Physical Plane. It must be intuited at a higher level, and it is up to the student to work toward this intuition; it is not easy. The Tao cannot be understood intellectually, it can only be intuited. As we have stated before and will again, Leslie, growth [truth] is the greatest good and love is the highest truth. Music is Mechanical Man's only method of expressing the higher [level], and this is also true on the high planes at another level. [24 September 1974]

This is yet another indication that intuition comes from a level of consciousness that is above and beyond our ordinary mundane level of consciousness and awareness in the Ordinal Centers.

Ted: Question about a temporal-type goal for his life.

Actually, Ted, you have provided yourself with a lot of necessary skills to bring your Essence to bear on the Physical Plane. Your [Slave] Role demands that you supervise the physical needs of many and thus satisfy it fully. You can do this easily with the ammunition you now have. As for a temporal goal, we will only repeat an earlier question. Do you wish for a fuller life on the Physical Plane or do you desire spiritual growth? If it is the former, then there are many groups geared for this. If the latter, then this [Michaelian] teaching is for you and there are no temporal goals. We could, of course, suggest some satisfying activities, but you can and will intuit these on

your own. We will not substitute our true purpose in this way, as it is possible to obtain this on the Physical Plane. This is not to in any way downgrade this pursuit. It is just to say that we do not feel that it is valuable in the path toward spiritual growth. The steps you have already taken have helped you immeasurably, but you must allow for the quiet space to look at them objectively. [28 September 1974]

Sometimes the Michaels refused to answer specific personal questions or provide specific personal information to their original Michaelian group students, but instead directed them to tune in to their own internal guidance system. To do so is to take personal responsibility for one's own spiritual growth, to stand or to fall as part of the whole learning process. Refer to the study paper "Crutch". Basically and briefly, for a Michaelian student to perpetually rely on a channel to always answer all their personal questions is a temporary expedient, and one does well to outgrow that dependency when it becomes unhealthy.

Mallory: I have been offered two jobs, one at the same place Abdullah is. I feel uncertain about both. Comment?

The best advice that we can give is that which we have given many times before: if it feels wrong, don't do it. Let your intuition drive you to your spot. Don't run this kind of risk unless you are very confident that it fits completely. This does not come from Intellectual or Moving Center — it must be intuited [through Emotional Center to the higher Centers]. If you have doubt, don't jump. [01 October 1974]

My count is that the Michaels gave the advice to discern and follow your intuition nearly three dozen times before, so it must be important. They gave that advice many times after:

Physical guilt versus natural guilt (no morality — bastardized it — the soul doesn't feel guilt — not guilt but debt? Should this be the only type of guilt?)

Ideally yes, of course, if you follow our advice in not doing that which intuitively feels wrong, then why should you feel any guilt? Guilt implies that you did something intuitively wrong. [08 October 1974]

The full question was apparently abbreviated in the transcription, but the gist makes it apparent that one of the functions of intuition is to provide a conscience that tells you what is right to do and what is wrong to do in particular situations. Intuition provides guidance where there is not an absolute standard of right and wrong, where some actions are merely better or worse than others; the Soul self and Karma handle the absolute rights and wrongs, and the Personality self cannot do anything about that. Refer to the chapter "Guilt" for a full discussion of that "feeling". There you will read that there is +Guilt and there is -Guilt. (Perhaps that is what the questioner meant by "physical guilt versus natural guilt".) We do not always heed our intuition, and in retrospect we realize we did wrong. With +Guilt we acknowledge the sin and learn the lesson and do better the next time; with -Guilt we condemn ourselves all to hell for eternity.

... Three Centers on the Astral Plane? Emotional, Intellectual, and Spiritual?

That is fairly accurate, yes, except that we would place the Spiritual Center on this [Causal] plane rather than the Astral and substitute Intuitive [Center] on the Astral. You are correct, of course, in that these Centers are those you now call Higher [Centers]. [08 October 1974]

That channeling seems garbled when compared to other passages, so the following comments ramble. (My perception is that the original Michaelian group did not have the mature understanding of the Centers and the Planes and their correlation that the Michaelian teachings has arrived at subsequent to the original Michaelian group.) The so-called "Spiritual Center" is not mentioned anywhere else in the original Michaelian group transcriptions, but it makes sense to me as an alternative name for the Higher Emotional Center. It makes no sense to correlate a so-called "Spiritual" Center with the Causal Plane, which has a mental nature to it, any more than it makes sense to correlate the Spiritual Center with the Astral Plane, which has an emotional nature to it. As for intuition on the Astral Plane, from other passages, it seems fairly well established that the Michaels regarded the Emotional Center as more "intuitive" than the Intellectual Center, and regarded emotions as a better springboard or access port to the higher Centers than the Intellectual Center. In esoteric lore, the Astral Plane has an emotional ambiance to it, and the Causal Plane has a mental ambiance to it, but I do not see that this was understood in the original Michaelian group. The best interpretation that I can apply to the passage is that intuition comes from the higher Planes, which correlate with the Higher Centers, down through the Causal and Astral planes (which are higher than the Physical) and is expressed through the Emotional Center.

The learning process, therefore, is very different on each plane, with Physical [Plane] inhabitants learning primarily through rejection. You prefer to call it experience, or more often, "bitter experience." More often than not, it is merely a rejection of intuition. Therefore, the errors made on the Physical Plane often are the result of cognitaling [sic; cogitating?] and eventually rejecting the intuitive selection for the more profitable or culturally-

acceptable one. These errors are not usually resolved until the Physical [Plane] student meets with a [high spiritual] teacher, this usually occurring in the later Cycles [mid-Level Mature and higher]. These lessons, of course, provide the groundwork for the lessons yet to come, as the Entities work progressively toward the Tao [on planes beyond the Physical]. [08 October 1974]

So, if you learn the easy way, but following your intuition, you will not need to learn the hard way, by “bitter experience”. Refer to chapters “School Metaphor” and “Planes”.

Ron: SRG? Priest? Artisan? Scholar? Slave? (all were mentioned) ... Power, Self-deprecation, Spiritualist, Growth?

Why so much confusion? This should not have been so difficult. Most of you now have this within you, but are not following the intuitive line. [15 October 1974]

My method for intuiting Overleaves is to first spend plenty of time with the person in question, then review my impressions of them at some later time. As I hold the person in my imagination, I recall the seven traits in one of the seven Overleaf categories; I sense which of the seven traits obviously do not fit, leaving the one trait that seems to fit the best. Then I move on to another Overleaf category; and repeat for all seven categories. Following intuition when discerning a person’s Overleaves can yield different results from the non-intuitive methods. This is certainly the case when I use the Ouija board to get Overleaves, because it turns out that the latter usually does a better job than my intuition or reasoning by the process of elimination.

You have been told [by Gurdjieff] that Mechanical Man cannot love, and that is true. Love is the highest truth of all, and isn’t it said that ultimate truth is sealed off from man? Man also cannot “help”. In fact, man cannot do anything at all, at least from the standpoint of will or volition, because of the two imperative senses he chooses not to use: we speak of the intuitive sense and the telepathic sense. One would think that these had suffered the atrophy of disuse. This is not the case at all; they are simply held in abeyance until such a time that Mechanical Man can willingly look behind the barriers he has constructed about these very frightening senses and put them to use. This is usually the last lesson learned on the Physical Plane, and the hardest one, because it, or rather they, are the one that the Personality fights the most. Of course, it fights these, and it is a fight for survival, for once the door is open in this direction, only the Essence can go through it and behind the barrier is knowledge. [22 October 1974]

This passage brings together a collection of words and concepts that are often used in the original Michaelian group: refer to the chapters “Barriers”, “Essence and Personality”, “Love”, “Mechanical Man”, “Telepathy”, and “Truth”. As I understand it, the intuitive sense is from the Impulse Center, and the telepathic sense is from the Higher Intellectual Center. These Centers are above and beyond where most people function, which is in the lower Centers.

Comment: Wants, shoulds, and have to’s — If you’d let Essence do what it wants, you’d survive ...

The time for doing this exercise is whenever there is intuitive consensus. [22 October 1974]

If individual members of a group are able to yield to Essence and to intuition and to telepathy, it will be easy for them to come to agreement on what to do as a group.

Ralph asks a question aimed at clearing up a statement, documented above, made during a session one week before:

Ralph: Differences between the “intuitive” and “telepathic” senses?

Actually, there is as much difference in them and of a similar nature, as between sight and hearing. The telepath hears and the intuitive person sees, but in a far more developed sense. [29 October 1974]

Evidently, the intuitive and telepathic senses are beyond the usual five (sight, hearing, taste, touch, smell), but they can be compared to the two, sight and hearing.

Bill: How do I use ...?

Intuition is not shallow. We will go into this further. Recognition is yours if you would not block the feelings and not think on it so much. Your intuitions seem strongest when you are the most confused about where they come from. You have therefore created a double frustration.

Bill: [Question not recorded.]

Again, the confusion here will clear when you learn the difference in [between] intuition and just feelings. Intellectualizing will always cloud this in you. Looking at the Centers as steps also will aid you in this. How will you remember those things you want to? [03 November 1974]

My suggestion is that +Intuition is a suitable name for the Positive Pole of the Impulse (Instinctive) Center, which is the next “step” that is metaphorically ‘above’ the Intellectual Center, which is the next “step” that is metaphorically ‘above’ the Emotional (“just feelings”) Center. (The lowest Center is the Moving Center; the “higher” Centers are ‘above’ the Impulse Center.)

Gene asked why there have been errors in Soul Levels and Roles — are they purposeful? He had been told by Michael much earlier that he was an Artisan and during a session the night before, someone in the group had asked about his Role and was told it was Scholar, which seems to fit him better.

The errors occasionally happen with growth in mind, yes. Often, they are errors. The man is right in one respect. The test is not testing, but rather a lesson to be learned in trust and getting in touch with intuition. The soul level discrepancies are not reflective of too much more change. The coincidence of the changes just happened to come in order of the questions. [09 November 1974]

(By the way, having spent many hours with Gene, my surmise was that he was an Artisan-Cast Scholar, but Casting was not revealed until years later.) In addition to what has been said elsewhere, this is another indication that it is important for Michaelian students to learn to get in touch with their intuition and learn to trust it — instead of credulously trusting channeling. You might not like this answer, but this answer indicates that the Michaels sometimes let errors slip through the channel without later correcting them, so that students who notice them learn to trust their intuition more than they trust channeling; it is actually a matter of your spiritual growth that you not rely too much on the channeled source. It is possible to graduate from the Michaelian teaching that is provided to typical students. Refer to the chapters “Validation and Verification” and “Bias” for more discussion about that. I suspect that the Michaels intended for their teaching to provide their students with tools to help them grow beyond the Michaelian teaching.

The next Q&A exchange has more to say about intuition and Validation:

Jim asked if his Essence Twin was in the group?

First of all, perhaps we should reiterate a bit. There is, of course, a very special relationship between Essence Twins, and, of course, this is desirable and many want it. But the knowledge of this should come in on an intuitive level in order to be verifiable. For us to simply tell you that so and so is your Essence Twin would only lure you into perceiving a false set of specifications. If you verify this on an intuitive level, it would be easily verifiable.... Please be assured that twinning does produce an almost unbreakable bond — a strong bond you are usually aware of on an intuitive level, long before you can express it verbally. [10 November 1974]

Let me also reiterate a bit: refer to the chapter “Validation and Verification”. By the way, there is also a chapter, “Twins — Physical and Spiritual”, and another chapter on “Bonding”. When a student has Validated the Michaelian teachings, whether academically or experientially, then they can graduate from dependence on the external resource, the Michaels, to independence in the internal resource, intuition.

You, [Allyn] like Bill, have trouble separating the intellect from intuition. [11 November 1974]

This passage is yet another indication that the Intellectual Center is a step down from the Impulse (aka Instinctive) Center, although different words are used, and that one does well to distinguish how they work and when they should be used.

... there are many Entities on this [Causal] plane who are working with groups and with single souls, on this and many near worlds. You are not unique in this and you are quite right, the individual bias through which we come [via human mediums] does distort the words somewhat, in some cases, beyond verification. We choose [channels] on the basis of desire and ability to serve as a transmitter. This does not always prove successful, and the only positive feature arising from this is that the resulting distortions are readily discerned and discarded. Those who perpetrate them are quite quickly branded as “crackpots” and forgotten. Those who make the most unbiased transmitter-receivers are those with the most Neutral Overleaves. Unfortunately, these are also the ones who normally resist their intuition the longest and sometimes never span the chasm. [20 November 1974]

The point of this passage in the context of this chapter is to note that learning to yield to one’s intuition increases the quality of one’s channeling. Overleaves other than the Neutral Overleaves (Mature, Scholar, Stagnation, Observation, Pragmatist, Instinctive, Stubbornness) provide distorted filters, and therefore biased channeling. This fact should be taken into account when evaluating and Validating what a channel says, and presumably the bias that was filtered in can be filtered out.

Could Michael give us some of James’s Agreements on the Astral Plane?

This student has elected to reach a large number of souls with what he discerns as the Logos. This to us represents a good beginning. Although on the surface this may seem to be a commercial venture, the observations are at a deeper level, and the Essence here has more influence than you would think. Although he is still quite "asleep", he does follow many intuitive drives. [20 November 1974]

My preference is to name the Positive Pole of the Impulse Center to be +Intuition and the Negative Pole to be -Instinct. Then I would say that the former is *not* "asleep", but the latter *is*. However, in keeping with this passage, I would also say that one can still follow "intuitive drives" without having consciously developed the skill.

The next appearance of -Intuition in the original Michaelian group transcriptions is as the Negative Pole of the Higher Emotional Center. This makes some sense because there are some passages where it is said that the Emotional Center is a gateway to a higher state of awareness, intuition. However, it does not make sense because as a Negative Pole it seems inconsistent with the high esteem in which intuition is held throughout the original Michaelian group transcriptions. Personally, based on my observation of people in the this Center (which I prefer to call the Sympathy Center), my preference is to name the Negative Pole -Sensitivity, meaning that people in that Pole are overly "touchy". I have a similar issue with the Negative Pole of the Higher Intellectual Center being called -Telepathy, mentioned previously as a desirable faculty to be assiduously sought, right up there with intuition. My preferred name for the Negative Pole is -Fantasy. So as not to be accused of mere semantic quibbling, I can reconcile these two by thinking that the original names of the Negative Poles of these Centers refers to those Centers in their *extraordinary* manifestations, whereas my names for those Poles refers to their *ordinary* manifestations; refer to Chapter 4G, "The Higher Centers", in Part Four of my book *A History of the Overleaf System* for the documentation of my evidence and argument.

Was Allyn ['Doubting'] Thomas, [apostle with Jesus]?

That is valid.... Trusting your intuition is valid and the insights are your own. You know when they 'fit'. [14 December 1974]

Refer to the chapter "Knowledge as Gnosis" for more description of the kind of knowing that is intuition. There is also a chapter on "Insight".

Ralph: Is there some dimension we might call "feeling" or "love" or "value"?

Or truth or light. Of course. Value, truth, love, feeling, intuition, understanding, knowledge. Synonyms. No substantial difference. Knowledge is understanding, is Agape, is the goal. Once there is understanding, there is knowledge, there is love. [26 December 1974]

My preference is to say that intuition is consistent, rather than synonymous, with this list of virtues. In order to clear up any semantic ambiguities between these words, the reader may refer to chapters "Agape", "Knowledge as Gnosis", "Love", "Truth", "Understanding", and "Value and Worth".

"Good will to men," a cliché in your culture, can be taken to a much deeper level. First of all, "will" — it begins with an ability to accept what is real, then a "willingness" to follow wherever the intuitive sense leads. [28 December 1974]

Refer to the chapter "Will" for more discussion of that subject. Basically and briefly, one's personal will should become increasingly aligned with the transpersonal will, that of Essence, accessed via intuition.

How to avoid emotional expression? How to avoid emotional experience?

Trusting your intuition. [09 January 1975]

With previous statements we have been told that intuition is not logical (of the Intellectual Center), and here we are told that it is not of the Emotional Center either, although there are statements that intuition can be accessed through the Emotional Center better than through the Intellectual Center.

I'm curious about the Negative Pole of Growth [-Confusion].

A scattering of attention, the relentless search for the answer to a not-yet-formulated question, the quest for spiritual experiences without any clear-cut feeling or intuition as to what that might be. Students in the Negative Pole of Growth often go from group to group for many years not knowing for certain what it was that the experience lacked, but knowing that they did not find it. Many in the Negative Pole of Growth become quite prominent philosophers; the man, Emmanuel Kant, for example. Many others go from religion to religion for surcease from their internal torture. In addition, they fight any real growth within themselves with [whatever is] the degree of strength provided by the Mode. [19 January 1975]

Intuition mitigates -Confusion.

Louise had a reading last year and was told she was "Temah" in Atlantis. Was this male or female?

This, or a word similar to it, was not a proper name, but a title: that of priestess. In this case, "keeper of the word". You were female, yes, and because of the annals, did not predict a cataclysm. There was widespread disbelief. You see, at that time more, but not enough, credence was given to the power of intuition. Obviously, though, it was not enough to prevent the destruction of what was then [the] civilized world, even though it was within their grasp. [30 January 1975]

Some groups, some cultures, some nations, lend more credence to intuition than others.

The next series of Q&A exchanges mention intuition several times, perhaps because one of the attendees, for the first and only time, was a man who was editor and publisher of *Psychic Magazine*.

James asked about Writings from Beyond, a book by Edgar Phillips. He had a business consultation and gave James a reading for his magazine ["Psychic"], about its expansion and growth. The source of the book is mysterious. Can Michael comment on the source and on the quality of the information? What is the motive?

First, a word about the man Edgar. This is a Sixth Level Mature Priest in Growth, in the Observation Mode, a Realist in the Emotional Part of Intellectual Center.

As to the source, it is yes, Astral, but the emphasis on the monetary aspect comes not from the source but from the medium. The source, as in most cases, is composed of the united Fragments of the man Edgar's Entity. This man possesses a high level of tapable psychic energy; [and] is well aware of the intuitive knowledge. The acumen is nothing that we would quarrel with, but is in no way mystical and cannot be construed as a guarantee. [31 January 1975]

According to the chapter "Knowledge as Gnosis", the kind of intuitive knowledge one gets from *gnosis* is from a different realm or source than the kind of knowledge one gets from *episteme*, which is scientific and philosophical knowledge. As stated in the passage above, *Gnosis* is acquired from kindred souls and psychic energy, a type of energy that connects to a field of intuitive knowledge; refer to the chapter "Psychic Energy".

Jean asked for a comment about the "psychic revolution" and the magazine's role in it.

Well, you see, there are ten, approximately, alternative courses open to this world at this time — eight of which we would consider fairly unattractive. The other two concern what we are terming "psychic revolution." This would, of course, be in fact the overthrow of the prevalent belief systems that now control the governing forces of this world, and would return leadership to those best qualified to lead on the basis of intuitive knowledge and what we call truth. Whether you like this or not, it is what is happening now and it is what the [original Michaelian group] cadre has asked to become a part of. This revolution, like all other revolutions, would result in widespread anxiety and perhaps even an exchange of hostility. We can in no way guarantee that this will not happen, but it is far less "bloody" than the eight alternatives. They will burn witches again as they have in all ages past. We never told any of you that it would be a "rose garden." [31 January 1975]

Refer to chapters "Paranormal, The" and "Belief System".

James told us about a man who came to California from Illinois, who is a psychic. He has a benefactor, who wants to expose him to the people. He gave James a reading and felt the information was embellished by his Personality.

We would have to say that this man's Chief Feature stands in the way of any communication with other than his own subconscious storehouse of knowledge. However, this being a Mature Soul, [he] has quite a storehouse and does have much tapable psychic energy of an intuitive nature. He will, for the most, tell you what you wish to know and, many times, this can accelerate a wise, spontaneous move; but as for actually seeing the open alternatives, we would have to say that he does not. [31 January 1975]

Refer to the chapter "Psychic Energy". There you will read that it manifests in various ways, intuition being one of them.

James asked about the name of the magazine in other languages —any suggestions?

We would suggest that in the Oriental countries that you suggest a word or title embodying the concept of intuition rather than psychic, since the religions of the East are all and one tied into the concept of the Buddha or godhead within and as a title, this would pack more punch. [31 January 1975]

There we see the notion that intuition can be understood as contact with one's own divinity.

Bill: I hear Joan mention a class in intuition. I would like to do it but the cost deters me. Anyway, can't I find all that through the [Michael] teaching?

[Soleal:] You can find all that you need in the [Michaelian] teaching. If you enjoy those other experiences, then do them. If you are forcing yourself to grow or trying to do that, then forget it. [01 February 1975]

Presumably the Michaels are saying that the methods and means that they recommend are adequate to develop intuition; refer to the chapter “Tools”. While using the tools, you might actually get further if you realize that efforting does not help, it hinders influence via contact with Essence. Elsewhere (05 June 1974) it is said that the Essence refuses to struggle; refer to the chapter “Struggle”.

Joan: I have been trying to be quiet at times and trust my intuition.... [01 February 1975]

Intuition is cultivated by being quiet enough to ask questions and listen for answers. After that, one develops trust in one’s intuition by following it and seeing how it works out. If it does not work out, then maybe it was not true intuition; it was something else. Rinse and repeat, until you learn to recognize when it is the real thing.

There are others in the group who play all transmissions through the Mechanical brain. You judge — in fact, you cannot accept — any message that does not fit into the slot that you allow for the message. If it differs, if it is a round peg in a square hole, then the Mechanical brain puts it aside without trying it on through the intuitive process. [09 February 1974]

This says what I said in the previous comment. The Mechanical brain has a lot of programming in the sub-conscious mind, but real intuition, otherwise known as Essence, comes through the Balanced brain, which is able to tap into the super-conscious mind.

[Presumed question about the Roles in Essence versus Personality]

Please remember that the Role is in Essence, not in Personality. All the other Overleaves [other than Role] are in Personality. Only the Role gives you a glimpse of the Essence. When the Fragment is pursuing a more Essence-related life, the frustrations therein are likely to be more related to Chief Feature than those awesome frustrations that arise when a Fragment pursues a task totally out of Essence. Your culture has placed intuition very low on its list of priorities. Therefore, the artist who must operate solely by intuition cannot expect the adulation of the crowds. True artists who express the Logos in their works do, however, derive the satisfaction of having done so. Do not confuse the Role [of] Artisan with the life role of artist, even though they often dovetail. Ideally, Artisans would pursue creative endeavors, but this is certainly not [always] the case. Most musicians for instance are Scholars and most soloists are Kings and Sages. Most successful writers are Scholars, Warriors, and Slaves, except in the case of sacred literature of a moralistic bent, which is mostly drivel and composed by Young [Age] Priests on a crusade. Most painters and sculptors are, however, Artisans. This solitary form of creative expression just does not appeal to the more verbal Roles. [01 October 1977]

Not only is intuition connected to inspiration from Essence, but here we see that it is connected to creative endeavors such as art and music and writing. Truly creative endeavors bring originality and uniqueness, and this does not usually happen from mere Mechanical Personality.

Narra: Is Paul] my Essence Twin?

Your Essence has already Recognized its twin: why cannot the rest? This is not quite fair, we realize, but there is a tendency, even on this [mid-Causal] level, [for us] to want you to answer your own questions, in particular, those concerning Fragments of your Entities, Essence Twins, and the déjà vu one feels when one encounters an old friend from the past. With you, the barrier is more of a tendency not to trust your own intuitive knowledge. The joy one experiences when the twin Essences come in contact is not wanted by the Repression Mode. We are not evading your question — we have answered it. We would say then that you must trust that intuition. [21 October 1977]

This was not the only occasion when the Michaels suggested that students not run to the Michaels every time they wanted an answer, especially when it came to the type of answer that intuition could provide, namely Recognition of a newly-arrived kindred or friended soul; refer to the chapter “Recognition”.

Concluding Comments on Intuition

In the original Michaelian group transcriptions, the proper function of intuition is often contrasted with the proper function of the Intellectual Center, and the recommendation is that we students learn to discern which situations are handled appropriately by which function. More broadly, the contrast is made between functioning in Essence, the source of intuition, versus functioning in Personality, the source of incomplete and/or distorted information. A chapter related to this chapter is “Knowledge as Gnosis”, *gnosis* being the Greek language word for inner experiential knowledge that comes via a smarter, higher, wiser place of intuition and insight and inspiration.

One of the goals of the Michaelian teachings is to teach us to outgrow the Michaelian teachings, via intuition = autodidactic autopoiesis (self-taught self-creation). This is done by developing one's own intuition to the point that the spiritual aspirant does not need a channel, the student does not need to be in school, the person has sufficiently Validated and inculcated the basic information to such an extent that life experiences thereafter become the teacher with the help of personal insights gained via introspective reflection on the principles revealed in the Michaelian teaching.

Basically and briefly, the gist of this chapter might be that intuition seems to work best for most people in answering personal questions about their individual problems or mundane life decisions. The Michaels provided a general framework, a broad understanding of how humans exist and function, and they were not totally averse to giving advice to individuals. However, the situation is that the Michaels are not always available for consultation, so it works best if students learn to develop and access and trust their own intuitive faculty.





JESUS — CHRIST — CHRISTIANITY

As you live more and more in your Essence, you will realize that the goals are very different. The body seeks survival in physical form. The primeval Essence does not need the form and substance. It cares nothing for the desires of the body. It seeks elevation through any avenue open to it. Think of the way Jesus died. This is always the way it is in the end. Entrapment in the physical body is part of Karma for the Essence. It will fight to be free and if martyrdom is all there is, it will choose that door to freedom.

To get to higher Centers, do what Jesus did: fasting, meditation, and agonizing self-appraisal. Exercise the body, learn to love unselfishly. This is hard to do, but it can be achieved by [first] intellectually apprehending the fact that no other Creature [of Reason] owes you anything, and then materially obtaining what you need through your own resources. Emotional acceptance will only come about when the expectations [of entitlement] have ceased. Jesus had no aspirations of his students. In fact, he knew that he would fail the most dismally in his mission to those closest to him. Yet, he persisted in his efforts. For his own growth, it was more important to express the higher good than it was that those around him absorb it. Many did absorb — many more now than then. Even if you feel that good efforts are being wasted, continue. Positive energy is never wasted; somebody always absorbs it. [03 July 1973]

Comment: Now Jesus was always against sex, even thinking about sex.

Jesus was not against sex. He was for moderation. Prostitution is not moderate.

Sex is part of the computer [human body] — we've got to accept that. It may be one of the most highly important parts and maybe I've neglected it. Maybe in Jesus' time, they weren't neglecting it. Maybe if he were here today, he would tell people to have more. Maybe in Jesus' day, people thought about it all the time and we hardly ever think about it.

Quality is the answer. It is what you think, not how often. In Jesus' time on Earth, most of the thoughts were bound up in fertility rites and superstition. They were negative energy vortices.

Comments: You mean we are all fragmented? That's what he said, which means that we have a lot of things to work out here. Well, I'm still fragmented.

You will be until you are reintegrated. The Christ Entity even consisted of two Fragments. Jesus still had a guru in John the Baptist. The master/pupil Monad must be experienced from both sides.

Comment: "Jesus loves me, yes I know, for the Bible tells me so." That's being loved.

But you must feel this force. Intellectually saying 'Jesus loves me' will not do it. You use Jesus as a convenient source of love. It is one that will not backfire and that's OK, but you must eventually get it together with your own Fragmented Entity. The conscious beings are all loving. [12 August 1973]

Dick: In treating allergy, is there distinctions of Young and Old Souls? Is there some way to get to repressed emotions? Robert used to say the Bible had keys to understanding the words. With Christ, it may have not actually been "healing." When he made the blind man see, the Bible may have been using esoteric terms. Is this interpretation correct?

Those parables are true as you expressed them. Jesus was also able to calm the hysterical by his presence alone.

There is a clear-cut case of globus hystericus in the Bible. This is not an organic disease. You could learn to differentiate in this way. The people then were superstitious. It was easier to talk them out of their demons.

There was also a case of hysterical paralysis.

Dick: [Perhaps, they mean] the man they lowered through the roof in order to see Christ and the woman who menstruated for eight years.

Sarah: The wording is so ambiguous, it would be hard to know for sure that's what they had.

It is doubtful that anyone could survive if they bled really for that long. This particular problem is symbolic of sexual problems in general, most of which are hysterical. Many women do cause prolonged uterine bleeding through their feelings of rejection and guilt. If the bleeder is a Mature Soul, you can help them by helping them to see the source. Otherwise, you may have to remove the uterus. How they react to your suggestion that there is nothing organically wrong should give you a clue to the Cycle.

Dick: Are you aware of modern medical methods?

Yes.

Dick: Why are there so many diseases? God made a perfect organism and caused so many diseases.

Only False Personality is susceptible [to disease]. Many things — such as diet and life style — mitigate against good health. Excesses of any sort mitigate against good health and since thoughts are things, excess wrong thinking mitigates against good health. Jesus said that, I did not. You [medical doctors] are bombarding psychically sick organisms with organic and inorganic compounds [drugs] in shotgun fashion. One thing within the grasp of terran medicine right now is the substitution of accoustical holographs for x-ray. This should be done soon. It is available now. Cost is what is holding it back. This is a clear-cut case of scrambled priorities.

Dick: Was Christ able to cast out demons?

The demons are produced by the sick mind and do not exist. They can be cast out only by one skilled in this. The exorcist must be able to give the patient a visible substitute; thus, he must be capable of producing psychic phenomena at will. Jesus was an occult master. He could produce the necessary phenomena to make the patient see his demon leave and occupy some other organism. Then, of course, you must still treat the sickness that caused the soul to produce the demon. Usually, this is masochism in its extreme manifestation. It was motivated in part by compassion and in part by his knowledge of the Karmic Ribbons of those around him. He was also aware of the fact the medical care in Greece was far superior to that in Syria.

Dick: The healing that Jesus did, was that done to demonstrate to people that he had these powers so that people would follow him to hear "the word" — his mission being to "spread the Logos"?

In the beginning, yes, it was. [04 September 1973]

Were we a part of the "passion play" [Jesus's crucifixion]?

Israel, of course, refers to the Tao. Israel was not a physical thing when those words were written. Souls cast from the Tao at the beginning, at least not in any way that you would understand. Israel was not Syria-Palestine, at least not until fairly recent times. Israel was an allegory used to express the inexpressible. When the being you speak of as Moses spoke of his people being cast from their homeland, he spoke of souls becoming Earth-bound for the Cycle. The genealogies are reincarnational Cycles: count them. [mid September 1973]

Gene: Yeah, OK, and then there were the five perfect masters that Meher Baba talks about. Maharaj Gee, the 14-year old Guru calls himself the "Perfect Master." There are so many masters and there are so many Christ principles and God principles, and I sure would like some clarifying help in this.

The Infinite Soul manifested through the physical forms of Lao Tsu, Sri Krishna, Siddhartha Gautama and Jesus — no others. The Transcendental Soul has manifested through Socrates, Zarathustra, through Muhammed, and through Mohandas Gandhi. [18 September 1973]

Dick: I seem to have come on a realization that I've undergone crystallization in Personality and that is why everything is so fixed and seemingly unchangeable. I'm under constant internal attack by Personality and that is why I can't seem to listen to any new information and transform it into anything worthwhile. I was hoping for a miracle that would change things. Also, grass [marijuana] will do it, but it just does it temporarily. That's why I can't seem to react to or feel any new possibilities.

The fixed rigid Personality is rather like a mountain of granite. Chipping away relentlessly is the sole solution. Depression is the external manifestation of the internal struggle. Depression, by the way, is one of the only neurotic manifestations left to the Old Soul. Even Jesus felt it. Each of you spent many years building the facade. Do you really feel that you should be able to discard this quite casually with hardly a whimper? We think not. Progress is being made in quite concrete ways. [02 October 1973]

Dick: I have a complaint and comment and a question. I don't seem to be able to change knowledge into being and I don't feel any different.

You do approach "being" under the influence of marijuana. This is an incontrovertible message about the pace of your life. Marijuana slows the responses to physical phenomena and heightens emotional response to all experiences. You feel the music instead of hearing it. The five primitive senses belong to False Personality. They can be compared to margarine — they will never be butter, no matter how you color them or package them. Your life is not geared for understanding, just toiling. We know that this is difficult for Richard and Dick. However, Jesus was trying to tell this same truth two thousand years ago. We keep telling you: you must choose your path. If that [path] is spiritual liberation, then you must eliminate the distractions of Maya. If the goal is different, then the path will be different and you are correct in assuming that we don't care. We don't. We impart the Logos dispassionately. It is yours to accept or reject.

Alice: Look at the Jehovah's Witnesses who come to the door. They certainly have a certain amount of love and enthusiasm for Jesus.

There is a certain amount of transference of eroticism in the "love of Jesus." In that situation, you are merely substituting the non-existent lover with the personification of the Infinite Soul.

Dick: When love is turned on, this in itself puts you on a high. Maybe that's "Man #4" according to Gurdjieff and it is not permanent.

The love of the Logos or Agape permeated the being of Jesus even prior to the manifestation [of the Infinite Soul]. He lived for the Word. The quest for spiritual liberation took precedence over all things, sometimes to his despair prior to manifestation. This was an Emotionally Centered Mercury-Saturn. He was passionate and sensual. When others rejected his opinions, he was astonished. [06 October 1973]

Richard: Did Christ know about atomic theory when he was in the physical body?

Not as an Old Soul, but when the high Mental body manifested, it brought the sum of the Logos to bear.

There was discussion about the Transcendental and Infinite Souls, and their place on the reincarnational Cycle; about the possibility of the Transcendental Soul manifesting through Robert, etc.

That is oversimplification. The Transcendental Soul is only such when it is manifest on the Physical Plane, as is the Infinite Soul. The high Causal body [Transcendental Soul] is capable of displacing many souls at once. This will occur within the next decade. Many must sit at the feet of living masters. You are now living in a large, complex society. A Jewish carpenter [Jesus] would hardly be apropos. [08 October 1973]

Richard: Well, Christ certainly didn't require that you fork over the earnings of the day to see him. When Robert manifests [the Transcendental Soul], will this still be necessary or will I be able to relate to him then? Or shouldn't I be uptight about this?

There is more money in the hands of all people today than in the time Jesus was manifesting the Infinite Soul. If he had charged admission of that sort, the people he was trying to reach would not have gotten into the hall.

This is not true today. Money is the one thing almost everyone has. [20 October 1973]

Dick: As a child, I was in Essence playing with my toys, watching the dust particles float by in the sunlight, knowing that my father would provide the necessities for me and my mother would cook the food and clean for me. Is Michael saying that they will provide for us so that we may not feel rushed or hurried (or is it harried?)?

We are saying that. Jesus said it also. All of the highest teachers have said this. The harassment is self-produced.

The only way you can get off the physical Cycle is to rise above this. You cannot bring it here. [27 October 1974]

Edgar: What was the essence of the teachings of Christ?

Truth is the greatest good and love is the highest truth. Good is its own reward, as is truth.

Edgar: I'm seeking for a practical way of practicing the teachings of Christ. Can you tell how this can be accomplished for me?

That should be self-evident.

Richard: Could we ask for a general comment?

Honesty without guile, simplicity without poverty of soul, love without material expectations, emptying the life of all nonessential considerations, the endless Cycles of evolution with the Physical Plane being the crudest and roughest. These are the things emphasized in the true teachings of Christ.

Edgar: Whereby Jesus' statement "I can do nothing"?

He could do nothing. That is true of all, without the other forces holding the universe together — all of these combined are necessary to perpetuate the Cycles. Knowing how it happens does not give you *carte blanche* to go and do it. Many people were disappointed in Jesus because he did nothing physical about their woes. This will be the case again. The Infinite Soul does not come to lead the troops; the Infinite Soul comes to bring the Logos to bear. It is up to you to listen and take your own action.

Edgar: What is the meaning in the scriptures that Christ died to save [us from] our sins? It makes no sense to me.

It does not make any sense to us either. In the literal sense, it is meaningless. He did not say that. That was perpetuated by zealots.

Dick: I've read much on the crucifixion and have never been able to figure out why it happened.

He [Jesus] was a threat to Joseph Caiphas who was getting rich on temple funds and there was a suitable pawn available in the person of the Judean governor who was a coward and who was already in trouble with [Roman Emperor] Tiberius over other things.

The Infinite Soul cares nothing about the physical body, and when it was realized how the deck [of cards] was stacked, it was seen as a convenient way to speedily fulfill the prophesy.

Edgar: What is meant by his saying he was the Son of God?

You are all sons of "God." This man, before the Infinite Soul manifested, referred to himself as the servant of man. The Infinite Soul said, "I am the Word." The Infinite Soul manifested during a period of intense meditation and fasting, and "the sermon on the mount" was the first uttering of the Infinite Soul.

Edgar: Did the man Jesus become conscious after the forty days and forty nights?

This man was an occult master. He was a final Level Old Soul.

Edgar: What is the meaning of, "I am the Word"?

The Logos, the truth, the absolute, the order of things.

Edgar: "Thy kingdom come, (when you hear the word,) thy will be done" — could you comment on this?

The word is uttered, the way is made known. If you chose the path, evolution will occur.

Dick: It makes me wonder [that] if evolution occurs through Cycles regardless of what one does, what is the point of the Infinite Soul manifesting? A lot of people quit their jobs to follow him and then lead useless lives. The implications are not to quit these things unless you are on the path instead of quitting your job and sitting around waiting for the "king" and "judgment day."

This was promulgated by a man named John, who had a series of nightmares. It was not pleasant to watch someone you loved [Jesus] die in a particularly horrible manner. There was an earthquake and an eclipse that day; completely natural phenomena, believe it or not. This gave rise to many bad dreams in already susceptible superstitious people.

Edgar: Could you comment on the "second coming" being in the clouds?

He [Jesus] was warning them not to expect any physical help from him. They could not conceive of the help in the abstract and to have told them that in two thousand years, he would repeat this performance would have been meaningless.

By the time Lucanus Quirinus [Luke] reached the Holy Land, the mother of Jesus was completely insane. She had borne far more than could be expected of one fairly simple peasant woman.

Edgar: Luke didn't come until after Jesus was crucified, that is right. Was I there?

You were not in Judea; you were in Rome.

Edgar: Which Roman was I?

You were Greek, not Roman. You were a tutor. You did hear about Jesus. Almost everyone did. Mail service was very good.

Edgar: The way I have understood the teachings of Christ through meditation or praying, one can elevate himself to receive the word by communion with God. That is what he meant by "receiving the word of God." That is what is meant by being "under grace" — all troubles melt away. Can I achieve this state?

You will achieve this state — whether you do it this time is up to you. You know how to do it: meditation, concentration, right-thinking, study. [22 November 1973]

Richard: On December 17th at 2:00 PM, will a new Messiah be born? (That was the time Betty Bethards said there would be one born.)

We think that November the 17th 1973 is the date. We do not wish to transmit the name at this time. This date corresponds to the date or rather, the day of the month, that Jesus was born.

Richard: Was Jesus a Scorpio?

No.

Richard: What astrological sign was he born under?

Pisces was the Sun sign, Gemini the Moon, Leo the ascendant. [16 December 1973]

Edgar: Could you explain the Sermon on the Mount. I do not understand it. All my life I've been asking people. (Richard suggested that frequently we ask people who are more lost than we are. We read at this point from Matthew 5:1-12 concerning the "beatitudes" ... Blessed are the meek ... merciful ... peacemakers ... they that mourn ... hunger after righteousness ... the poor in spirit, etc.)

Substitute for the word blessed, the word fortunate. The emphasis here is on simplicity. By meek, we don't speak of cowardice, but rather an inwardness of purpose. Those poor in spirit refer to those who recognize within themselves the lack of spiritual guidance and seek this. This passage is warning against complacency that heralds the downfall of the degradation of humanity. The barbarians can be used symbolically here as the materialistic existentialists who deny other dimensions beyond the Physical Plane and devote themselves to the pursuit of Maya. They are indeed unfortunate, in that they incur much adverse Karma.

One must keep in mind the audience to which the man Jesus spoke and the scribes who wrote the account, before passing judgment on the words. These people believed in a very literal, very personal God who monitored every move they made and was for the most part, stern and disapproving.

Greek thought had much influence on the man Jesus, particularly Epicurus, but it would have been impossible for him to espouse the words of this pagan philosopher from the porticoes of the temple.

Then, when the Infinite Soul manifested, the Logos was brought to bear in the language of the times, transcribed by a Roman tax collector [Matthew] and an Emotionally Centered Greek physician (Luke).

Epicurus had a most profound influence on all of the philosophy of the time, surpassing that of the Stoic, Zeno. This philosophy was made to order for the Sadducees, who also appealed to this young man's sensitive nature. The Epicurean thought pattern is what you all are striving to accomplish.

We discussed how Jesus taught that the children of light were to have no sex and that if you want to grow in this way, there would be no sex. Someone suggested this might refer to a level above our physical one and that the soul is sexless. Someone said ... the Bible said there are no marriages in heaven.

Edgar then asked if Jesus really did work miracles or if that was imagination.

This man was an occult master. The miracles are there for those who wish to become masters. Mass hypnosis was not beyond the grasp of ordinary priests, let alone one who has mastered all of the mysteries. Even most Adepts can perform feats that could be considered miracles by those who were looking on. Many of the stories surrounding the birth of the man Jesus were concocted long after his death to satisfy those who felt that the ancient prophesies should be fulfilled.

Edgar: Was Jesus really conceived without sex?

Of course not.

Dick: What was his Body Type? It has been said he was a Martial and that his body was perfect.

No. This man was a Mercurial Saturn. [25 December 1973]

Eugene: I would like to ask more questions on the books about the Masters of the Far East, by Thomas Spaulding, whom I've asked about before. I've read 4 of the 5 volumes now. There is good teaching information there. He said he was talking in person to Jesus and Mohammed and other Old Souls. He went to Asia, Tibet, in the early 1900s or late 1800s, where he was taught to teleport. I would like a comment and also to ask if he really was talking to Jesus and Mohammed as he implied.

The High Mental body [Infinite Soul] spends time with all Adepts. Some see the Infinite Soul in several transcendental forms. This is usually because the perceptions of physically tied Adepts are not keen enough to perceive that much of the Synthesis. They, like some of you, see the reintegration as loss of self and bemoan this. He saw his own perception of the fragmentation of the Infinite Soul. [03 January 1974]

[[Continue search to end of transcriptions.]]





JOY

This chapter is the product of a search for the word “joy” and related words in the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group channeling sessions. This word does not represent a significant component of the Michaelian teachings. However, there are good reasons to discuss the subject in this *Study Papers* book: 1) the subject came up numerous times during the original Michaelian group; 2) students can presumably benefit from having the mentions conveniently collected all in one place; 3) some interesting things were said about the subject; 4) the subject is related to a number of other components of the Michaelian teachings that are considered to be significant; 5) Issues about having or not having joy in one’s life are pervasive in human psychology and sociology and spirituality.

The word “joy” is not capitalized in this chapter or other chapters of this *Study Papers* book because it has no special meaning in the Michaelian teachings; it is not a Michaelian jargon word that needs a definition apart from its use in the common vernacular.

Basically and briefly, the Michaels recommended to the original Michaelian group members that they

Joy per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

The following extracts from original Michaelian group transcriptions are Q&A exchanges, where an original Michaelian group member asks a question (or makes a comment), and the Michaels provide an answer. This is not a subject that would benefit by division into subcategories, as some subjects do. These extracts are presented in the chronological order in which they appear in the transcriptions, even though this is not a subject where there was a development or evolution of a specific revelation of a facet of the Michaelian teachings. As is my custom, I often provide some explanatory comments following the question or answer. Underlined words in the questions and answers are my emphasis, to draw attention to what it is that I comment on. Sometimes I embed words or phrases [in brackets] that I believe help to clarify the question or the answer.

In the second session in which the Michaels were the source, we find this interesting hint that there is something very deep about the phenomenon of joy:

Phyllis: How does [her] friend share a Karmic Ribbon?

From what you are projecting, however, the Essence is one of compassionate strength. This is not always presented to the world, but you sense it at a deeper level. This is not a joyous Essence. This is why he seeks joy in the Essence of others at that deeper level.

The definition of Essence in the original Michaelian group transcriptions is ambiguous; refer to the chapter “Essence and Personality”. Whatever it refers to here, you know a joyous or not-joyous person when you see one.

What about Arthur’s Essence? What is it?

This man has a joyous expansive Essence. [17 August 1973]

You might have noticed, as I have, that people tend to have what I call a “happiness thermostat”: some people are just naturally more joyous than others. Some people are more serious and sober in their expression; they have other virtues, such as “compassionate strength”. This might or might not be irrespective of their Emotional or Higher Emotional Center expressions, or their Role, if Role is a synonym for Essence in this instance (Roles were not revealed until a couple months later). One might wonder if there is a “light-hearted versus heavy-hearted” spectrum in the Essence, similar to the so-called high-to-low “frequency” spectrum or the so-called “masculine versus feminine” spectrum (also called “focused versus creative” and “convergent versus divergent”). Personally, I tend to be more toward the heavy, serious end of the spectrum, but I do thoroughly enjoy the work of comedians, who I perceive to be at the high end of the spectrum.

Kathryn: Who should I go to, to meditate with better?

Chogyam Trungpa's methods would work for you.

Kathryn: What? Who is that?

Sarah: He's a Tibetan Llama from Delhi. He has one place in Vermont and another in Colorado.

She could read the book or could seek him out. Either would work. The latter would be more interesting. He is a beautiful, joyous Essence. Find him. [08 September 1973]

CT was known to live an extreme life; some of his demeanor was worth emulating, and some was not; refer to https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chogyam_Trungpa. Refer to the chapter "Beauty" for more about that subject.

Ellis: I have a daughter, Marina, 26 years old, who is miserable. How can I help her to enjoy life more?

Mature Souls do not usually 'enjoy' life unless they are surrounded by souls in bliss. This is a difficult Cycle. We must emphasize this difficulty. The Mature Soul is beset with many problems, all intrinsic. The only way you can help is to make the environment non-stressful, so that she has sanctuary. The Mature Soul often seeks professional help on its own. [18 September 1973]

Refer to the chapters "Fun — Humor — Laughter — Levity — Play" and "Happiness" for more about those subjects that are not quite the same thing as having joy in one's Essence.

Dick: As I measure and have the ashes of life and see life as a bore, I know I'm not on the path. Progress would be more joyous and pleasurable and there would be a love to toil. I see also that to sit around stoned all day is not the way either.

Sarah and Dick were at one time in this life emotionally barren. Neither is today. That is progress. [06 October 1973]

Concluding Comments on Joy

In my view, joy is an experience of the Higher Emotional Center as much as it is an experience of the Emotional Center ...





JUDGMENT

[[Might need to have two chapters, one about exercising “good judgment” and another about “being judgmental”. Positive and Negative Poles of the Rejection Goal, respectively.]]

This chapter is the product of a search for the word(s) “template”, “___” in the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group channeling sessions. This word does not represent a significant component of the Michaelian teachings. However, there are good reasons to discuss the subject in this *Study Papers* book: 1) the subject came up numerous times during the original Michaelian group; 2) students can presumably benefit from having the mentions conveniently collected all in one place; 3) some interesting things were said about the subject; 4) the subject is related to a number of other components of the Michaelian teachings that are considered to be significant; 5) “judgment” issues are pervasive in human psychology and sociology and spirituality.

The word “judgment” is not capitalized in this chapter or other chapters of this *Study Papers* book because it has no special meaning in the Michaelian teachings; it is not a Michaelian jargon word that needs a definition apart from its use in the common vernacular.

Basically and briefly, the Michaels recommended to the original Michaelian group members that they

Definition of Judgment

So what is meant by judgment? The online Merriam Webster dictionary definition is:

in the sense of having “good judgment” and in the bad sense of condemnation

Judgment per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

The following extracts from original Michaelian group transcriptions are Q&A exchanges, where an original Michaelian group member asks a question (or makes a comment), and the Michaels provide an answer. This is [not] a subject that would benefit by division into subcategories, as some subjects do. These extracts are [not] presented in the chronological order in which they were given, even though this is not a subject where there was a development or evolution of a specific revelation of a facet of the Michaelian teachings, as was often the case with the original Michaelian group. As is my custom, I often provide some explanatory comments following the question or answer. Underlined words in the Michaels’ answers are my emphasis, to draw attention to what it is that I comment on. Sometimes I embed words or phrases [in brackets] that I believe help to clarify the question or the answer.

Concluding Comments on Judgment





⑦ JUSTIFICATION, SELF-

This chapter is the product of a search for the word “justification” in the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group channeling sessions. The word is almost always used in the sense of *self-justification*. This word does not represent a significant component of the Michaelian teachings. However, there are good reasons to discuss the subject in this *Study Papers* book: 1) the subject came up numerous times during the original Michaelian group; 2) some interesting things were said about the subject; 3) the subject is related to a number of other components of the Michaelian teachings that are considered to be significant; 4) students can presumably benefit from having the mentions conveniently collected and commented all in one place; 5) Self-justification is pervasive in human psychology and sociology and spirituality — subjects covered extensively in this book — so it behooves us to have a working knowledge of it.

The word “justification” is not capitalized in this chapter or other chapters of this *Study Papers* book because it has no special meaning in the Michaelian teachings; it is not a Michaelian jargon word that needs a definition apart from its use in the common vernacular.

This chapter is one of many in this book that focuses on a psychological component of the Michaelian teachings as found in original Michaelian group transcriptions, rather than on a doctrinal or spiritual component. A psychological component is usually either a positive to be cultivated or a negative to be mitigated. As we will see, the Michaels tell us that self-justification is a negative to be eschewed. The Michaelian version of psychology is not to be confused with the popular psychology of the self-improvement movement, those that do not have a spiritual core or perspective. Rather, the Michaelian psychotherapeutic path (aimed at improving psychological health) is a beneficial precursor to the spiritual path (aimed at improving soul health). To skip the former but attempt the latter is referred to as “spiritual bypassing”. This is discussed at length on such websites as https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spiritual_bypass. To skip mitigating one’s psychological issues and attempt to go straight to enlightenment usually proves to be problematic.

Some of the chapters that relate to this chapter are “Morality and Ethics”, “Excuse”, “Conscience”, “Evil and Good”, “Good Work, Bad Work”, “Responsibility”, “Guilt”, “Virtue and Vice”, “Suffering and Pain”, “Value and Worth”,.... *[[add to list when this book is complete]]* All of these chapters deal with various facets of what is referred to in theology and philosophy as “the problem of evil”; for an introduction to that topic refer to https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Problem_of_evil. The reader could hardly do better than to read that Wikipedia article for an understanding of the issues that are addressed in those listed study papers.

Basically and briefly, the basis for this whole concept of justification is that there is spectrum or hierarchy of unrighteousness–righteousness, with utter evil at the negative pole and ultimate good at the positive pole. When people look at lived experience on this planet, they generally perceive that the evil–good spectrum is a real phenomenon. Theologians and philosophers have occupied themselves for millennia, pondering how we are to understand and justify the existence of the evil–good spectrum. Few humans are sophisticated theologians and philosophers, but nevertheless they would like to believe that during their lives they are moving from the evil end to the good end of the spectrum. What we discover as we review the original Michaelian group transcriptions in this chapter (and in those other chapters) is that the Personality has a different evaluation of the evil–good spectrum from that of the Essence, and consequently there is what I refer to as –Justification and there is what I refer to as +Justification. This chapter is mostly about –Justification. Let me begin to explain.

Definition of Justification

So what is meant by “justification”? Because there are several meanings — the word is applied to various phenomena in various contexts — Wikipedia has several separate articles, including but not limited to:

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Justification_\(theology\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Justification_(theology))

>[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Justification_\(epistemology\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Justification_(epistemology))<

>[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Justification_\(jurisprudence\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Justification_(jurisprudence))<

>https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/System_justification<

However, the Wikipedia article that discusses the meaning of the word as used in the original Michaelian group transcriptions is the one on “self-justification”, so I quote from it as follows:

Self-justification describes how, when a person encounters cognitive dissonance, or a situation in which a person’s behavior is inconsistent with their beliefs (hypocrisy), that person tends to justify the behavior and deny any negative feedback associated with the behavior. [<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Self-justification>< — retrieved 04 March 2023]

After that brief introduction, subsequent sections of the Wikipedia article discuss cognitive dissonance, strategies for self-justification, insufficient self-justification, moral choices, and decision-making. Basically and briefly, self-justification is the very human tendency to want to think more highly of oneself than is warranted by an objective evaluation of actual behavior; self-justification is a desire to believe that oneself is further along the evil–good spectrum than is warranted by the facts.

Reading this Wikipedia article will likely help the reader to become more aware of instances where they indulge in self-justification. It is hoped that the remainder of this chapter has the same result, because in the original Michaelian group transcriptions, the word justification is almost always used in the sense of the Personality’s penchant for rationalizing an unjust act. This psychological understanding is consistent with the spiritual understanding espoused in the Michaelian teachings that the goal of ensouled humans is to move away from the negative pole and toward the positive pole of the evil–good spectrum.

In the discussion that follows, we will see that there are only a very few instances in the original Michaelian group transcriptions where the word justification applies to the so-called Problem of Evil in theology and philosophy. The Michaelian teachings has somewhat to say about this in its notions of “Karma”, “Monads”, and “Balanced Man”, so refer to those chapters for that type of justification, which is the domain of the Essence, not of the Personality.

In this chapter, I am mostly going to discuss the subject of justification in the negative sense of this word. Basically and briefly, –Justification is what Personality does to kid itself that it is doing the right thing when in fact it is doing the wrong thing. The discussion of the positive meaning of this word is mostly left to those other chapters listed in the previous paragraph. Basically and briefly, +Justification is what Essence does when it is ‘balancing the scales of justice’, such as with burning a Karmic Ribbon or completing a Monad. +Justification is discussed in the chapters “Karma” and “Monads”. However, this chapter does allude to ideas found in those chapters, but I will not repeat the Q&A exchanges documented in those chapters. The word justification is not actually found in the original Michaelian group transcriptions in the sense of +Justification.

Self-justification, aka –Justification, is a thing because the human psyche exists in space in a hierarchy of levels, and functions in time in a hierarchy of stages. In the original Michaelian group transcriptions that mention self-justification, the hierarchy of levels is often stated in terms of the Centers, where ‘higher’ Centers are evaluated to be better on the spectrum of righteousness than ‘lower’ Centers. Likewise, the hierarchy of stages is often stated in terms of the Life-Stages, where ‘later’ Life-Stages are evaluated to be better on the spectrum of righteousness than ‘earlier’ Life-Stages. Levels and stages are different from each other (otherwise they could not be discerned as levels and stages), so naturally this difference gives rise to so-called “cognitive dissonance”. One of the goals of psychotherapy is to unify the self to such an extent that –Justification does not happen. One of the functions of burning Karmic Ribbons and completing Monads is to unify the Fragment and Essence and Self; this is +Justification.

–Justification in the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

The following extracts from original Michaelian group transcriptions are Q&A exchanges, where an original Michaelian group member asks a question (or makes a comment), and the Michaels provide an answer. These extracts are presented in the chronological order in which they were given. As is my custom, I usually provide some explanatory comments following the question or answer. Underlined words in the Michaels’ answers are my emphasis, to draw attention to what it is that I comment on. Sometimes I embed words or phrases [in brackets] that I believe help to clarify the question or the answer.

Dick: False Personality is always on guard. As far as Personality goes, it is not going to be duplicated. It's amazing how False Personality will avoid painful or even good situations. You make excuses and justify intellectually, even manufacturing illnesses to avoid doing something. [06 October 1973]

Refer to the chapter "Personality — True and False" for a discussion of that component of the human experience, False Personality, that indulges in self-justification, aka –Justification. False Personality makes self-justifying excuses whereas True Personality takes "Responsibility"; refer to the chapter by that name. Refer to the chapter "Excuse" for a review of another synonym of –Justification. Another name for "intellectual justification" is rationalization. This is where the Intellectual Center makes excuses for malfeasance of Centers below it in the hierarchy of Centers, namely the Emotional Center or the Moving Center or the Physiology Center.

Toni: I'm having an internal conflict right now based on certain information I have received, and I want to know if the conflict is justified.

No conflict is ever justified. There is much you do not understand. When you "flash" on the understanding, the conflict will disappear. Don't brood about this. [23 October 1973]

That answer is fundamental to understanding the difference between Personality –Justification and Essence +Justification. Refer to the chapter "Understanding". There you will read that, basically and briefly, "understanding" can be used as another word for +Justification in the sense that, with a "flash" of insight or understanding one has come to see that two apparently conflicting bits of information or contrasting experiences can be reconciled at the next higher level of progress 'up' the hierarchy of learning. Refer also to the chapter "Insight", which provides yet another synonym for the same process, namely progress on the learning path.

With Victoria, there is a Mercurial drive to establish an independent career and justify her existence to herself. In Victoria, there is considerable guilt of earlier waste of potential. [16 December 1973]

Self-justification is connected to the notion of "Guilt" — refer to the chapter by that name. If the Emotional Center did not feel guilt, the Intellectual Center would not need to –Justify it. Victoria was a King; this means that, more so than the other Roles 1) she had a noble expectation about herself, and 2) she was concerned about matters of competence. In order to feel good about herself, she needed to live according to a self-imposed high standard, or she felt guilty. But do any of us ever completely live up to our expectations and aspirations? We all fall short or miss the mark in many ways. If a person understands that they have inherent worth or value regardless of living up to some alleged ideal or not — and therefore need no justification for their existence — then there would be no guilt or self-justification. Another factor here is called "Identification"; refer to the chapter by that name. Basically and briefly, many people 'identify' with some external factor, such as being successful in an occupation esteemed by the culture, and they get their sense of self-worth from that — rather than satisfaction as it should be, from internal Essence fulfillment.

Alice: I would like to ask for the SR&G of a partner at EST who participated with me in an experiment where we looked into each other's eyes for an hour without deviating. She seemed to be about where I am and in Acceptance. Her face turned into that of a pig and I could not tell her that.

This lady is a Third Level Old Scholar in Acceptance.

The illusions were your own symbolic way of dealing with an extremely frustrating situation in your life where you feel that you should have to either force others to listen or pay them for their service. This is one of the hallmarks of the Submission Goal, and you wish to leave that behind. You made her deliberately grotesque in order to justify taking up her valuable time. We would hope that when you contemplate this sequence, you will realize enough about the mechanics to stop the illusions the next time the setup occurs. [27 January 1974]

The Negative Poles of the Overleaves were not known at the time, but of Submission that is –Subservience, which justifies its existence by obeisance to an external entity. Here again we see where –Justification comes into play because of a perceived differential, aka "conflict", between levels or stages. In this case the differential was not within a self, but between a person and another person. The first step in mitigating this negative psycho-dynamic is called "Self-observation" in the Michaelian teachings; refer to the chapter by that name. Basically and briefly, such differentials and conflicts can be reconciled by looking at the situation objectively rather than subjectively. This is done by elevating one's awareness to the next higher level or later stage. What this does is transmute or sublimate –Justification into +Justification. Perhaps you have heard of that procedure in reference to other Negative and Positive Poles.

Comment: We can't sit and listen without applying the words. We have to learn from what's going on. One wanted to discuss things [among] ourselves [rather] than to listen to Soleal, but when it was said that Soleal's time was limited, unlike Michael's, we wanted to hear more of what he had to say.

[Soleal:] I have a finite amount of time. If you wish, I will share with you some of my thoughts on organization.

... We have on this world a vast system of very large communes, so do not tell me that they cannot work. All [of our communes] are on a total "goods for service" basis, and all goods are common property, yet we have all of the emotions, the pride, and certainly the pleasures that you desire. You seem to feel that sharing [property] in some way removes your right to feel justified [in your existence]; that is ridiculous. [18 February 1974]

Some people "justify their existence" via something other than their inherent worth in Essence; they are overly "identified" (see the chapter "Identification") with factors other than Essence, such as their esteemed career (see above), or their expectations about themselves (see above), or their many material possessions, as in this case. The general point to be made in this chapter is that Personality has numerous –Justifications for what it is and thinks and feels and does, but the Essence is above all that, concerned as it is with +Justification.

Ralph: Is The Synthesis simpler than the systems that man erects?

In its most evolved form, yes. In words suitable for communication with the members of this enclave, it becomes complex. Again, Creatures of Reason take the simplest activity and render it complex through symbols. The Synthesis is not complex. The Synthesis seeks integration, simplicity. Creatures of Reason seek to justify their existence through expressions of individuality, isolation, alienation. Creatures of Reason seek to justify their existence by assigning themselves a role, even a negative one, if that be the case, of subrogation, taking the responsibility from themselves, assigning that responsibility to a higher power, conveniently beyond the five physical senses and, therefore, unarguable, unprovable, unassailable [unassailable?], safe, comfortable, complex. [26 December 1974]

Here again we see that if people were unified within themselves, and if they knew their proper place in the world as a whole, there would be no impetus for –Justification of their existence. Refer to the chapter "Value and Worth" for a review of this phenomenon, seen from another angle. Other chapters explain "Synthesis, The", "Complexity versus Simplicity", "Creatures of Reason", and "Individuality". Those chapters also discuss the inclination of the Intellectual Center to find value and worth in terms of individuality or uniqueness. Uniqueness is okay when the soul is in the Fragmentation phase of the story arc of creation, but it is counterproductive when the soul is in the Reunification phase of the story arc of creation; refer to the chapter "Fragmentation and Reintegration" for the whole story.

More is said about that in the next passage:

You see, because of the very real feeling of apartness — of loneliness, if you will — that is felt on the Physical Plane, it is comfortable for the Personality to think that there is someone else dependent upon them; then at least they are not completely alone in the void. This dependency must many times be forced, as most souls are innately willing to shoulder their own load of responsibility. Many times when this dependency is lifted, the soul who was experiencing gratification from this responsibility can no longer justify its existence, and a real psycho-emotional crisis occurs. [08 February 1975]

Refer to the chapter "Responsibility". It would appear that responsibility also has Poles of –Responsibility and +Responsibility, the former referring to times when a person presumes to assume responsibility as a justification for their existence, and the latter referring to assuming responsibility for their actions because it is the right thing to do.

This is the third time that the phrase, "justify existence", appears. Many experiences are meaningful and important to the Personality self that are not meaningful and important to the Essence self. When such differences are perceived by the lower self, –Justification appears, and when such differences are reconciled by the higher self, +Justification appears; refer to comments above where differences between levels and stages are discussed.

The following appearances of justification come from a channeling session with Leslie Briggs.

Many here tonight understand the principle involved in choosing not to lock into the other's bad spaces, and to choose to present a neutral facade at these times. This requires a conscious act of will, and this is what we wish you all to strive for. No, we would disagree, there is no positive anger or dread, or any of those things, but the Overleaves can always manage to justify any of these 'at the drop of a hat'. What we have consistently warned against is the repression of hostility, which is a vicious form of inner considering. This does lead to "sickness" of a sort, and it is the choice [to be neutral rather than be repressive] that we wish to see in you. The exercising of

will — that is now the goal. As long as you are reacting negatively, there is an Overleaf in control. When you react positively, then the Essence may be poking through the snow bank. [undated, 1980s]

Refer to the chapter “Considering — Internal and External” for more discussion about that. There again we see that it is the Personality self that indulges in –Justification. The Essence self is edified by +Justification. This understanding is repeated in the following channeling of Leslie Briggs:

True dedication is possible in our perspective. The student has yet to see this factor. [The] answer is not in the student’s grasp of the facts, due to the factor of fear. Justifying the growth only proves this phenomenon. Heaven is not the “reward” — the Gift of Life is the reward.

The Essence will remember the experience whether the Personality registers it or not. The machine only “cares” when it involves the machine’s belief in itself. The numbers it runs are the mystifying mode of the Intellectual Center to comprehend. In explanation, how does the intellect justify sex?

We missed the next question on the recorder.

To answer the question, the Personality has belief in what it does. The cover-up blocks the method of Centering. The justification in this student’s case is from the emotions, through the perception and results in the intellectualization of the process. Basically, it is the opposite of Louise and, therefore, perpetuates the intellectual traps (in both of us).

Refer to the chapter “Traps” for more examples of that metaphor for certain kinds of negative experiences. The Personality as a whole, and each Center in particular, have an inertia; they want to perpetuate the *status quo*. This is all part of their survival mechanism, their need to “justify” their existence, even in inappropriate ways and situations.

Allyn: I am talking about dealing with where I think I am — going forward.

Acceptance [Goal] does not in any way deny Growth [Goal]. In Essence, the fear of this is purely intellect. The intellectual identification is denying the Emotional Center. Therefore, the emotionalism [manifests negatively]. The block is attempting to justify the emotions intellectually.

Intellectual –Justification of Centers ‘lower’ than the Intellectual Center were explained previously. For one Center to “justify” another Center is confusion. A significant portion of the Michaelian teachings, as well as of the Gurdjieffian teachings, was about reconciling, aka “Balancing”, the Centers, so that they do not work against each other *internally*, and so that a person applies the appropriate Center to the *external* situation at hand. With that understanding in mind, we see that the concept of –Justification and +Justification applies to the improper and proper function of Centers respectively

Do not forget: the one owing [a Karmic debt] hangs on. The intellectual justification for survival in Acceptance is over. The acknowledgment completes the Ribbon, and within [the] Tao’s eyes, erases it. This also provides the Personality with the luxury of freedom. The Personality involved in the Karma does not have to be present on the Physical Plane to acknowledge the completion of Karma. Just because Essence is Trapped in the body does not mean that it is denied the experience of other dimensions. [07 November 1977]

Again we see that factors in Personality are involved in –Justification, whereas factors in Essence are involved in +Justification.

+Justification in the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

There are no explicit usages of the Positive Pole of justification in the original Michaelian group transcriptions, but the concept is found in other terms, such as Third Force in Gurdjieff’s Law of Three, in burning Karmic Ribbons that balance the scales of justice, and in the third step in Monads, where Cardinal and Ordinal experiences in a couplet combine to move people forward on the road to spiritual maturity. Refer to the chapters “Karma” and “Monads” for the discussion of those instantiations of +Justification.

One of the reasons that I framed this chapter in terms of the distinction between Personality –Justification and Essence +Justification is because of my involvement in a fundamentalist quasi-Christian church during my youth. Therein the theological doctrine of Justification was framed in different terms, but with a similar meaning, namely human self-righteousness versus Godly righteousness. This doctrine is based on many Biblical passages, in the so-called “Old” and “New” Testaments. Therefore, it would seem that the distinction between –Justification and +Justification is more than two thousand years old.





③ KABBALAH

The mystical wing of the Jewish tradition is known as Kabbalah. It was mentioned several times in the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group; hence and whence this chapter.

When I looked into the Kabbalah as part of research for my book *A History of the Overleaf Chart*, I found that it had so many similarities to the Michaelian teachings that I was astonished. Several sections in that book discuss some of those features of the Kabbalah that are relevant to the Overleaf System. There is also an entire chapter in my book *The Synthesis* that discusses other aspects of that teaching that are relevant to many components of the Michaelian teachings.

This chapter in the *Study Papers* book has nothing to say about the structure and meaning and doctrines and practices of the Kabbalah, but my hope is that scholarly readers of this chapter might feel impelled to research it. Start with Wikipedia and branch out from there.

Kabbalah in the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

The following extracts from original Michaelian group transcriptions are Q&A exchanges, where an original Michaelian group member asks a question (or makes a comment), and the Michaels provide an answer. These extracts are presented in the chronological order in which they were given. As is my custom, I usually provide some explanatory comments following the question or answer. Underlined words are my emphasis, to draw attention to what it is that I comment on. Sometimes I embed words or phrases [in brackets] that I believe help to clarify the question or the answer. Numerous study papers related to this chapter are to be found among my comments.

The subject of the Kabbalah came up in one of the earliest sessions:

Alice: My friend, Terry, who has never come to a meeting here, has expressed a desire to write a paper [about the Michael group] for a class she is taking in Witchcraft. I would like to ask for her if it is all right with everyone here and also ask the [Ouija] board for comments.

She can do a paper as far as we are concerned.

(Alice communicated this to Terry later, and she had decided to write on the Kabbalah instead of our communications with Michael.)
[17 October 1973]

In the chapter “The Synthesis” we see that the Michaelian teachings is an amalgamation of many metaphysical traditions and teachings that the Michaels had experienced during their thousands of incarnations. There are differences of opinion in the modern Michaelian teachings about when the Michaels graduated from the Physical Plane, and it might have been before the Kabbalah appeared in the late Middle ages. Even so, the Michaels were familiar with it:

A question was asked concerning the Kabbalah.

This is the occult component of the Judaic thought. For the most part, it was valid in the beginning and has become somewhat corrupted with time, but there are several Kabbalists who are *bona fide* [Occult] Brothers.

We would advise that you not place too much importance on any system of numerology that strives to explain certain purported divine nomenclature. [13 February 1974]

The “brothers” here referred to constitute a secret society of spiritually advanced people; refer to the chapter “Brotherhood” for more information. Refer to the chapter on the Kabbalah in my book *The Synthesis* for a discussion of the numerical component of the Kabbalah.

Ted: [What is the] role of Jewish people? Is it a lesson for me?

One can, of course, take from their wealth of experience a very important lesson, yes, and that would be: persevere in the face of persecution in order to see the dream.

Ted: Was I a Jew in a previous life?

Yes, you were, in the second century before the Common Era, and before that in Babylonia.

Liz: Told to study "middle pillar" by a psychic. Is this true for everyone?

Not specifically. This is just an excellent exercise toward growth. [19 June 1974]

Because the Jews are mentioned in this Q&A thread, we may reasonably suppose that "middle pillar" might be referring to the 'trunk' of the so-called "Tree of Life" in the Jewish Kabbalah, which has the property of "Equilibrium". It corresponds to the Neutral realm between the Ordinal realm on the left side of the Tree (left pillar = "Severity") and the Cardinal realm on the right side of the Tree (right pillar = "Mercy"). Thus, this might be equivalent to the quest to become Balanced Man in the Gurdjieffian teachings and in the Michaelian teachings. Appropriately, some properties of the middle pillar are knowledge, beauty, and foundation. For example, refer to http://www.kabbalah.info/eng/layout/set/trans_page/content/view/full/31413, and to <https://stottilien.com/2013/06/06/6760/>, and to many other websites for more information.

I would like to know about Eckankar. If this guy is an Adept, why is there so much Personality in his group?

He is interested in doing what could be called cabalistic path work for his own growth. This is not Bad Work for him. Now as for those who follow him, it may or may not. Remember, he has already worked on himself. He leaves this [spiritual growth] up to his fellow path workers. He does, incidentally, believe that Astral path work is a way to higher states, and in him this is valid. [15 April 1975]

There are various spellings of the name for this Jewish esotericism, and this variation is reflected in the various spellings found in the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group. From what I have seen of the Kabbalah, I would agree with the Michaels that it can indeed provide a valid spiritual path for many people, because of its many similarities to the Michaelian teachings.

Concluding Comments on Kabbalah

Because the founding members of the original Michaelian group had been affiliated with a Gurdjieff group, some of the components of the Michaelian teachings were borrowed from it. However, it could have been otherwise, and the Michaelian teachings would still be approximately what it is. For instance, I see more similarity of the Michaelian teachings to Theosophy and Kabbalah than to the Gurdjieffian teachings, but the original Michaelian group was not founded by expatriates of those teachings. The point to be made here is the point that is made throughout my book *The Synthesis*, namely that the Michaelian teachings is yet another instantiation of what is called "Perennialism", which is the observation that the religions and philosophies of the world throughout history have a common core of doctrines. Thus, the Michaelian teachings is a modern incarnation of ancient wisdom, tailored to a modern sensibility.





KARMA

This word is common in the oriental world from ancient times, and now in the occidental world in modern times. However, the Michaels have their own unique perspective on it, so I capitalize it in this *Study Papers* book as yet another jargon word in my systematic codification of the Michaelian teachings.

Search for “karm” (so as to find both “karma” and “karmic”) and “ribbon”.

Karma per Ancient Traditions

Typically, I turn to Wikipedia to provide introductions to chapter, and this chapter is no different.

Karma ... means action, work, or deed. For the believers in spirituality the term also refers to the spiritual principle of cause and effect, often descriptively called the principle of karma, wherein intent and actions of an individual (cause) influence the future of that individual (effect): Good intent and good deeds contribute to good karma and happier rebirths, while bad intent and bad deeds contribute to bad karma and bad rebirths.

For the believers, the concept of karma is closely associated with the idea of rebirth in many schools of Indian religions (particularly Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhism), as well as Taoism. In these schools, karma in the present affects one's future in the current life, as well as the nature and quality of future lives — one's *samsāra*. This concept has also been adopted in Western popular culture, in which the events which happen after a person's actions may be considered natural consequences. [<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Karma> — retrieved 14 December 2021]

The remainder of this lengthy Wikipedia article fleshes out that brief introduction in considerable detail, with a description of karma in terms of the principles of causality, ethicization, and reincarnation; and in terms of Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism, Falun Gong, Taoism, Shinto, Christianity, Judaism, psychoanalysis, Theosophy, Spiritism, and New Age thought.

Karma per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

In this chapter, we are going to learn about Karma in the same chronological sequence that the original Michaelian group members learned about it. The subject of Karma appears in the second session that has escaped obscurity, more than a month before the Michaels appeared to the original Michaelian group. Underlined words and phrases are my emphasis, to call attention to stuff that gets commented on:

[Soleal:] As you live more and more in your Essence, you will realize that the goals are very different [from the goals of the body and of the Personality]. The body seeks survival in physical form. The primeval Essence does not need the form and substance. It cares nothing for the desires of the body. It seeks elevation through any avenue open to it. Think of the way Jesus died. This is always the way it is in the end [of physical life]. Entrapment in the physical body is part of Karma for the Essence. It will fight to be free, and if martyrdom is all there is, it will choose that door to freedom.

We asked for further elaboration on this, as there was some confusion.

If that [martyrdom] is the only route to higher consciousness, then the Higher Self will take that route to work off the Karma. [03 July 1973]

That underlined statement would seem to indicate that Essence does not willingly choose incarnation. Further on we see that Karma is like a “law”: Karma is just the way things work in this creation, and that includes involution or imprisonment into matter, and evolution or liberation out of matter. Refer to chapters, “Essence and Personality” and “Liberation — Traps — Prison — Freedom”, for more information on those subjects that make an appearance in the above passage.

Richard: Have you heard of the Board of Karma?

[Tomas:] I have not heard of that one until just now. [05 July 1973]

Likewise, I had not heard of it, and I do not know for certain where the notion of the Karmic Board originated, but it might have come from the Ascended Masters channeled material. There is a description on this website: ><https://thegoldenpathway.org/picture-gallery/the-great-karmic-board><: “The Karmic Board, also known as the Lords of Karma, is a body of eight ascended masters who are assigned the responsibility to dispense justice and to adjudicate karma, mercy and judgment on behalf of each soul on earth. All souls must pass before the Karmic Board before and after each incarnation on earth. Prior to embodiment, souls receive their assignment for that lifetime. At the conclusion of each life, there is a review of their performance before the Karmic Board.” Other websites tell of it, such as this: >http://ascension-research.org/karmic_board.html<. If the Michaels subscribe to this notion, I do not know about it.

[Tomas] ... Maya is part of Karma [24 July 1973]

Further on, we will see where it is explained that if it were not for Maya, while incarnate we would know better than to commit Karmic acts. Another way to explain this is that Karma requires that we be deceived by Maya while incarnate. Refer to the chapter “Maya” for more explanation.

Tomas is a part of the high Astral body. These are entities who choose to work out Karmic Ribbons not on the Physical Plane. Many try. Few make it. It is easier to be born again.... This entity is attempting to work out of Karma on the Astral Plane. This is an opinion [of his]. [20 December 1973]

In the first session with the Michaels, the subject of Karma appeared again:

You will burn out all your Karma. You must. The choices you make between physical bodies are part of the learning process also. [12 August 1973]

Karma is apparently one of the teaching/learning lessons built into the structure and function of the cosmos, and cannot be avoided. It has to do with choices made and choices prevented, as we will see further on. Furthermore, the metaphor of ‘burning’ out Karma will be explained further on.

I can't see what part the Personality has to do with Karma. I think that's put in by culture.

It [culture] is just more complex Maya. You see, it really is infinite. [12 August 1973]

The ancient traditions, and the modern cultural adaptation of the traditions, do indeed present a different view of Karma than the Michaels do. Refer to the chapter “Personality — True and False” for a description of the influence of Maya-filled culture on Personality.

So what does the Personality have to do with Karma? Essence **is not subject to Maya?**, but it is subject to Karma, as we saw in the very first quotation. The Personality is subject to Maya, partly thanks to culture, so the Maya-deceived Personality incurs Karma, and the Karma is “burned out” by another Personality with the same Essence in another incarnation.

Dick: Tomas came through as a hard power, but the group was shaky — Gene and Susan, Carol. Gene is pivotal to the group and feels he may have to drop out. [What is a] viable group?

The viability of the group depends upon the ability of the individuals involved to rise above the trivial circumstances now driving them apart. It is within the grasp of each of you to do this, even SusanT. It is in her Karma to seek the path you wish to follow. She has sought it many times before. The closer you become, the easier it will be for you to recall [your plans for your lifetime]. The ability to define your purpose in this existence will even come to you. The group has one thing the individual cannot tap alone and that is the collective memory. The ability to see the lesson that is being learned is difficult enough in a group, let alone in solitary. The relationships within this group are ancient. I realize this is a new concept for you to swallow, but in order to progress further, you must come to grips with this. The law of cause and effect is as old as the Tao, and that has existed for a long time. [17 August 1973]

The use of the word Karma here appears to be broader than generally used — it seems to refer to what later came to be called the Life Plan in general. Of course, earning and burning Karma is part of a Life Plan. Karma is all about learning.

Physicists recognize that, in order to have a structured cosmos, which we experience as a space/time structure, it is necessary to have a cause/effect structure. Karma is the law of cause and effect as it applies to human behavior:

Phyllis and her Karmic Ribbon?

Karma is not fate. Fate is a lie. Karma is a law. There is a great danger in becoming fatalistic about Karma. You are all at the level now where that [fatalism] is a possibility. You must learn this about Karma, and that is, that lessons learned in this way are eternally yours. Fate is illusion. It exists no more than faith, which is simply silly. It

[Karma] is a weaving together of life Cycles. It is what keeps you together [from lifetime to lifetime]. Sarah would have found Alice again if she had to search the world. [17 August 1973]

Some original Michaelian group members had the wrong idea about Karma, perhaps because of the misrepresentation by culture that was mentioned above. We should think of it this way, that in the long run, Karma is not a bad thing; it is a good thing. More is said about the weaving together of lifetimes in the chapter “Tapestry”.

I read in previous notes that Karmic Ribbons must be burned. How are Ribbons burned?

Burning Karmic Ribbons consists essentially of collecting or repaying debts incurred in the past. As your Sequential partners do not necessarily reincarnate at the same time always, this process may take centuries. The problem being that you as the debtor will still have subliminal knowledge of the debt whether or not the person to whom it is owed is on the Physical Plane. This will usually result in some barrier to spiritual growth. Sometimes, souls search for entire lifetimes, are restless and insecure and cannot gain any insight to why they are compelled to search. The payment or collection can consist of a physical remittance such as money or an emotional one such as nurturing, or even a spiritual bond such as master and pupil. Karmic Ribbons concerning violence are usually settled with violence in the earlier Cycles. Those occurring in the later Cycles are usually settled more pacifically. We would encourage acknowledgment of any of these. The Older Souls are generally not given to commit violent acts. [17 April 1974]

Evidently, delayed repayment of Karmic debts is a drag on spiritual progress while incarnate. This is something that the Personality can do nothing about; it is up to the Fragment between lifetimes to make the arrangements.

If [the Karma] is sufficiently burning, you will find a way to bring it to its rightful conclusion. Naturally the one to whom the debt is owed will have more negative emotions surrounding the payoff. The one who owes will usually seek quiet solution while the one who is owed will continue to demand fireworks long after dawn. 'Forgiveness' is a gratuitous, empty term. 'Forget', yes, that is valid. Remember, then look at it and then forget it. Sometimes it does help [to have others forget their debts], especially if they are also in contact with a Teaching or in a sufficient space [spiritual awareness] to hear the words [of suggestion to forget the Karmic debt]. [Both] must choose [to acknowledge and burn or forget a Karmic ribbon]. When it becomes obvious that an impasse has been reached, cease to struggle and move on. Often those to whom the debt is owed have chosen Goals such as Rejection and [Modes such as] Retardation which will [not] allow them to collect. [30 May 1974]

An unpleasant Sequence in [a former] life [can cause negative feelings in this life — it may not be as serious as Karma].

[A karmic debt] is not the only reason for restlessness. It [may be] a major sense of purpose that causes the restlessness at a subliminal level and many times at a very conscious level you [may] feel your task. [With one] it [may be] the sense of purpose and not a debt. With others, it is a debt. With some, it is an incomplete Monad. All of these things come into play. Debts of great consequence are rare in Old Souls. [07 July 1974]

Concluding Comments on Karma

It is interesting to me that the Wikipedia article omits mention that the legal profession is the reflection in the human social realm what karma is in the spiritual realm. That is, legalism is humanly-imposed definitions of good and bad behavior, and the application of justice and punishment actions. I see Karma as a component of the Overleaf System writ large, in terms of the Dimensions. That is, all political societies have developed complex legal systems as part of the cause/effect Action Dimension, and all religions have developed a concept of karma to address the so-called “problem of evil” in the Inspiration or ethical Dimension. In the Expression Dimension, the corresponding phenomenon is the philosophy Aesthetics (beautiful versus ugly), and in the Assimilation Dimension the corresponding phenomenon is scientific and historical knowledge versus ignorance.

Taking off from the Michaels' use of “relatively” in one of the quoted passages, this seems like a good chapter to bring up the notion of moral relativism versus moral absolutism:

Moral relativism or ethical relativism (often reformulated as relativist ethics or relativist morality) is used to describe several philosophical positions concerned with the differences in moral judgments across different peoples and cultures. An advocate of such ideas is often referred to as a relativist for short.

Descriptive moral relativism holds only that people do, in fact, disagree fundamentally about what is moral, with no judgment being expressed on the desirability of this. **Meta-ethical moral relativism** holds that in such disagreements, nobody is objectively right or wrong. **Normative moral relativism** holds that because nobody is right or wrong, everyone ought to tolerate the behavior of others even when large disagreements about morality exist. Said concepts of the different intellectual movements involve considerable nuance and aren't absolute descriptions. Descriptive relativists do not necessarily adopt meta-ethical relativism. Moreover, not all meta-ethical relativists adopt normative relativism.

American philosopher Richard Rorty in particular has argued that the label of being a "relativist" [as distinct from an absolutist] has become warped and turned into a sort of pejorative. He has written specifically that thinkers labeled as such usually simply believe "that the grounds for choosing between such [philosophical] opinions is less algorithmic than had been thought", not that every single conceptual idea is as valid as any other. In this spirit, Rorty has lamented that "philosophers have... become increasingly isolated from the rest of culture."

Moral relativism has been debated for thousands of years across a variety of contexts during the history of civilization. Arguments of particular notability have been made in areas such as ancient Greece and historical India while discussions have continued to the present day. Besides the material created by philosophers, the concept has additionally attracted attention in diverse fields including art, religion, and science.

[>https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Moral_relativism< — retrieved 05 May 2023]

The Wikipedia article then presented extensive accounts of the three types of moral relativism mentioned in the introduction, then it launched into the history of philosophical and religious musing on the subject. Of the accounts discussed there, the following seems to be most similar to the Michaels' view:





KINDNESS

This chapter is the product of a search for the concept of kindness in the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group channeling sessions. This word does not represent a significant component of the Michaelian teachings. However, there are good reasons to discuss the subject in this *Study Papers* book: 1) the subject came up numerous times during the original Michaelian group; 2) students can presumably benefit from having the mentions conveniently collected and commented all in one place; 3) some interesting things were said about the subject; 4) the subject is related to a number of other components of the Michaelian teachings that are considered to be significant; 5) Kindness issues are pervasive in human psychology and sociology and spirituality, so it behooves us to have a working knowledge of it.

The word “kindness” is not capitalized in this chapter or other chapters of this *Study Papers* book because it has no special meaning in the Michaelian teachings; it is not a Michaelian jargon word that needs a definition apart from its use in the common vernacular.

This chapter is one of many in this book that focuses on a psychological component of the Michaelian teachings as found in original Michaelian group transcriptions, rather than on a spiritual component, as so many other chapters in this book do. Psychological components of the Michaelian teachings are usually either a positive to be cultivated or a negative to be mitigated; both are amenable to psychotherapeutic techniques. Obviously, kindness is a positive to be cultivated. The Michaelian version of psychology is not to be confused with the popular psychology of the self-improvement movement, those that do not have a spiritual core or perspective. Rather, the Michaelian psychotherapeutic path (aimed at improving psychological health) is a beneficial precursor to the spiritual path (aimed at improving soul health). To skip the former but attempt the latter is referred to as “spiritual bypassing”. This is discussed at length on such websites as https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spiritual_bypass. To skip mitigating one’s psychological issues and attempt to go straight to enlightenment usually proves to be problematic.

[\[\[Search for “gentle” and make a chapter? \]\]](#)

Definition of Kindness

So what is meant by kindness? [The online Merriam Webster online dictionary definition is: Wikipedia has an article that provides a definition and a description, as follows:](#)

The word kind most often appears in the original Michaelian group transcriptions as a synonym for “type”, as in “variation” or “almost like”

Kindness per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

The following extracts from original Michaelian group transcriptions are Q&A exchanges, where an original Michaelian group member asks a question (or makes a comment), and the Michaels provide an answer. This [is \[not\] a subject that would benefit by division into subcategories, as some subjects do. These extracts are \[not\] presented in the chronological order in which they were given, even though this is not a subject where there was a development or evolution of a specific revelation of a facet of the Michaelian teachings.](#) As is my custom, I often provide some explanatory comments following the question or answer. Underlined words are my emphasis, to draw attention to what it is that I comment on. Sometimes I embed words or phrases [in brackets] that I believe help to clarify the question or the answer.

The word kindness does not appear in the original Michaelian group transcriptions, but some derivatives do appear. The first instance is this:

The Infant or “first born” Soul perceives itself and the world around it simply as “me” and “not me”. In this Cycle, there are no racial memories. If “not me” is perceived as hostile and unkind early in life, withdrawal occurs and a condition known as autism often results. If this perception occurs later, the Infant Soul may react with unchecked violence: sadism, murder without visible provocation, acts of unbelievable cruelty. The Infant Soul truly does not know the difference between right and wrong action, but it can be taught the laws of common sense and decency. [late August 1973]

Pamela: Could I find out what level Lucian is and if this relationship can work. (Lucian is a new friend of Pamela's.)

A Fourth Level Young Soul. This could be all right as long as you do not expect miracles in the sense of sensitivity. He is kind but not terribly perceptive.

Pamela: Back to my subject: Is there any way our relationship could grow?

Whether or not this relationship blooms will be up to you, Pamela. First, you must eliminate thoughts of Gary changing — he will not change. This young man [Pamela's new friend Lucian] is kind and protective. Is this what you seek? [23 October 1973]

What is Sue's Role?

Sue is a Warrior, indeed, and is quite Mercurial. She has freckles but is not Martial and will not be for a long time. Her speech indicates Mercury in its rapidity. She will fight for what she wants and can be sneaky; also kindhearted when the occasion calls for it. She is also easily led astray. [20 November 1973]

Alice: Like two AM?

No. We were thinking of eight or nine in the morning. He is an Adept. He is a student of mine. That, interestingly enough, is a densely populated, Emotionally Centered, masculine world. They are volatile, explosive and kind all at the same time. [1 December 1973]

Concluding Comments on Kindness





KINDRED SOULS

[[What I have in mind for this chapter is to quote the appearances of Entity and the group of Entities that are “cast at the same time”, which later (MMFM) were referred to as Cadres. Members of the original Michaelian group were said to be of the same Cadre. Provide references to the chapters on Twinning, Fragmentation, Strangers etc..]]

The Michaels have provided a comprehensive and extensive teaching about the existence and function of what I refer to as “kindred souls”. This revelation goes far beyond the skimpy information found in any other esoteric teaching that I know of. This revelation goes far beyond the use of that phrase in the popular vernacular, as it refers to a special collegial friendship but there is no inkling of its supernatural cause. Rather, in the Michaelian teachings, it is the notion that spiritual souls come in spiritual families somewhat like physical families, what with their grandparents and parents and siblings and aunts and uncles and cousins and children and grandchildren, and so on. Such soul kinships often contribute to the special collegial friendships that most people experience, but they are rarely recognized as such, because this concept is unknown or under-appreciated outside of the Michaelian teachings.

This is not another one of those subjects that the original Michaelian group adopted and adapted from Gurdjieff, or from any of the other many esoteric teachings that members were familiar with, so far as I have discovered. Personally, I believe that this revelation about kindred souls might be second only in value to the revelation of the Overleaf System, in that it is such a unique contribution to the canon of spiritual understanding in the annals of spiritual teachings.

In the original Michaelian group, the concept of kindred souls was not very well developed. Quinn Yarbro, who was the first to publish about the Michaelian teachings, recognized that it was important, and had a lot more to say about it in her second book, *More Messages from Michael*, in the chapter “Michael Math”. Thenceforth, the notion became even more embellished in even more Michael channeling. Michaelian students are almost certainly aware of this extensive teaching, but in this chapter of this *Study Papers* book, I am only going to discuss what was revealed during the original Michaelian group.

Fragments per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

"[On the Astral Plane, you are] usually with the Fragments of your own Entity and those close to your Entity. Usually there is a period of transition from the Physical to the Astral life and this varies from Soul to Soul. This sometimes results in some Fragments not being reunited with their Entity until much later [than others in the same Entity]. For example, not all of your Fragments are now on the Physical Plane. Many will not become physical entities for another century." (6-9-74?) "There is a strong affinity [between Entity mates]. This can be either negative or positive depending on past associations, and the Level [and Age] of the Soul determines the amount of Recognition." (6-23-74)

"Twinning is, of course, the closest possible of physical relationships. This goes for the other Planes also and this is where the confusion regarding the so-called twin souls arises. For instance, the question was asked of us some time ago concerning the possibility that souls could not change sex or rather gender between lives because of some twin soul feature. It is true that most souls do search for their soul mate, but they err in assuming that that twin is of the opposite gender, and consequently lose out on an exceptionally close and rewarding relationship. Twinning occurs often at the moment the Entity is cast from the Tao and can occur between Entities cast at the same time. In other words, there is sometimes a crossover and these twin souls do go through many, usually all lives, together. The lady, [name] is an excellent example in her regression therapy sessions. She did remember the need to reincarnate because her twin had been reborn, although she did not understand the reasons and always saw the twin as male and herself as female. She did recognize the need. Twins normally make better than average partners. They also make exceptionally good marriages. The gender does not matter in this at all, although this culture makes it difficult for some twins to come together. Twinning

is rare between some Roles, frequent in others. Scholars rarely twin and usually with Warriors. Priests and Sages twin most of the time. Artisans and Slaves frequently, Kings rarely. Physical twinning can also strike an unerasable bond that continues throughout the remainder of the physical cycle driving these Souls together again and again. The closeness of twinning is a very special relationship. You choose to play out sequences with the former twin [from previous lifetimes]. [The purpose of twinning is] the natural impulse of the Fragments to reunite. [The difference between Soul twins and physical twins is] gradations only -- some physical twins are not drawn as strongly to their twins as are the Essence twins -- it does not make a substantial difference whether identical [twins] or fraternal [twins]. Essence twinning occurs at the moment the Entities are cast from the Tao. [Some] Entities were cast at the same time. [There can thus be] a crossover and these are Essence Twins [outside an Entity]. Physical twinning can occur at any time on the cycle [of reincarnation]. You may have both an Essence and a physical twin. Old souls who are seekers [of truth] and, yes, also Mature and Young seekers too, frequently recognize each other." (6-23-74) "There are no Essence triplets. There are close bonds between reunited Entities on this [Causal] Plane and we presume that this continues as the reuniting progresses. There are no [special, particular] responsibilities] between twins, but usually there is a strong enough pull so that the twins once reunited, will go along together and pursue a similar path if at all possible. That is a danger [that infatuation will not be distinguished from attraction for a twin soul] of course, but relationships between twins persevere through trials not usually weathered by those attracted to each other's personalities. Also, the bond withstands long separations and [experiences] not many setbacks. It is certainly not romantic, and even though the twins are of opposite gender they often choose another as a mate because of all the usual Maya, but not quite leaving the twin stranded." (6-25-74)

"All of you know in advance the approximate physical size of those in your cadre. Now we did not say exact, but you do know approximately. This leads you to be physically attracted to certain physiological persons than others." (9-17-74)

Entities per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

Cadres per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

Summary Comments on Kindred Souls

People who are not Michaelian students typically do have such a clear idea that souls come in families





⑦ KNOWLEDGE AS GNOSIS

This chapter is the product of a search for the word “knowledge” and its variants in the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group. Most of the time this word appears in the transcriptions with an ordinary meaning in the common vernacular, and these cases require no explanation. However, sometimes the word appears with an extraordinary meaning. It so happens that that meaning is the same as it was used in the Gurdjieffian teachings, which founding members of the original Michaelian group were familiar with. That special meaning is also found in yet other spiritual movements and traditions. Because of this variation in usage, if the reader is to understand the quoted material correctly, then it is useful to the reader for them to understand the background and the context of the special meaning. To make this even easier for the reader, where the word is used with the special meaning, it is capitalized, in this chapter and in other chapters of this *Study Papers* book, as yet another Michaelian jargon word.

This chapter is closely related to a few other chapters in this book, namely “Intuition” and “Belief” and “Belief System” and “Truth” and “insight” and “Validation and Verification”. This chapter also helps the reader understand why I chose the motto “The unexamined teaching is not worth believing” for my books. The point is that “head knowledge” (Intellectual Center) is good, but “heart knowledge” (Impulse Center and higher) is better, because the latter has inculcated the former in such a way that it changes their way of life, it raises their Level of Being, to use a Gurdjieffian phrase.

Epistemology

You might or might not know that there is a branch of philosophy dedicated to the study of knowledge, and it is useful to the reader to understand at least a little bit about it, and the issues involved in it. As usual when I need to quote an external source of information, I turn to Wikipedia for an introduction to the subject:

Epistemology (from Ancient Greek, *epistēmē*, ‘knowledge’, and *-logy*) is the branch of philosophy concerned with knowledge. Epistemologists study the nature, origin, and scope of knowledge, epistemic justification, the rationality of belief, and various related issues. Epistemology is considered a major subfield of philosophy, along with other major subfields such as ethics, logic, and metaphysics. Debates in epistemology are generally clustered around four core areas:

- The philosophical analysis of the nature of knowledge and the conditions required for a belief to constitute knowledge, such as truth and justification
- Potential sources of knowledge and justified belief, such as perception, reason, memory, and testimony
- The structure of a body of knowledge or justified belief, including whether all justified beliefs must be derived from justified foundational beliefs or whether justification requires only a coherent set of beliefs
- Philosophical skepticism, which questions the possibility of knowledge, and related problems, such as whether skepticism poses a threat to our ordinary knowledge claims and whether it is possible to refute skeptical arguments

In these debates and others, epistemology aims to answer questions such as “What do we know?”, “What does it mean to say that we know something?”, “What makes justified beliefs justified?”, and “How do we know that we know?”. [<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Epistemology> — retrieved 17 April 2022]

Thereafter follows a lengthy article on the subject. The gist of it is that scientists claim to have developed means and methods for teasing knowledge from nature about how it works, and philosophers have examined their claims with their own means and methods. If you are not familiar with the ins and outs of the subject, and you have an inquiring and curious mind, then this Wikipedia article will be useful for understanding this

chapter. Reading it might even make you into a deeper, broader, more insightful, and more critical thinker and seeker of knowledge.

This branch of philosophy is covered in much greater detail in my book *The Tao of Cosmology*. The thing about knowledge as it pertains to this chapter in this *Study Papers* book is that spiritual traditions are somewhat different from philosophical traditions, and they have their own view of what constitutes true “knowledge” in this special sense that transcends the quest for comprehensiveness, accuracy, and truthfulness in the process of data-acquisition. That extra dimension of knowledge is discussed in the next section.

Knowledge as “Gnosis”

The English word “knowledge” is derived from the Greek word *gnosis*. This is a kind of knowledge different from that to which the Greek word *episteme* was applied, as described in the previous section. Wikipedia has somewhat to say about that Greek word, and it is relevant to this study paper, so I quote from it at length. Please pay attention, because I suggest that this is important for understanding some of the things that the Michaels had to say; it is actually a central component of their version of the spiritual path.

INTRODUCTION

Gnosis is the common Greek noun for knowledge (*gnōsis*). The term was used among various Hellenistic religions and philosophies in the Greco-Roman world. It is best known for its implication within Gnosticism, where it signifies a spiritual knowledge or insight into humanity’s real nature as divine, leading to the deliverance of the divine spark within humanity from the constraints of earthly existence.

ETYMOLOGY

Gnosis is a feminine Greek noun which means “knowledge” or “awareness”. It is often used for personal knowledge compared with [in contrast to] intellectual knowledge (*eídein*), as with the French *connaître* compared with *savoir*, the Spanish *conocer* compared with *saber*, the Italian *conoscere* compared with *sapere*, the German *kennen* rather than *wissen*, or the Modern Greek *γνωρίζω* compared with *ξέρω*....

As we will see further on, the Michaels also advocated that students transmute objective intellectual knowledge of the ‘lower’ reality into personal subjective experiential knowledge of the ‘higher’ reality. A good English word for experience of the higher reality is “Enlightenment”; refer to the chapter by that name.

In the Hellenistic era the term became associated with the mystery cults....

One of the initiation rituals of some mystery cults was the consumption of psychedelics, aka entheogens, and the Delphic oracle was the “medium” or “channel” of that time in history; refer to the chapter “Psychedelics” for discussion of that method of inducing *gnosis*.

GNOSTICISM

Gnosticism originated in the late 1st century CE in non-rabbinical Jewish and early Christian sects. In the formation of Christianity, various sectarian groups, labeled “gnostics” by their opponents, emphasized spiritual knowledge (*gnosis*) of the divine spark within, over faith (*pistis*) in the teachings and traditions of the various communities of Christians.... The Gnostics considered the most essential part of the process of salvation to be this personal knowledge, in contrast to faith as an outlook in their worldview along with faith in the ecclesiastical authority....

That description of one of the doctrines of Gnosticism sounds rather Michaelian to me, and after reading the entirety of this chapter, you might agree.

MANDAEISM

In Mandaism, the concept of *manda* (“knowledge”, “wisdom”, “intellect”) is roughly equivalent to the Gnostic concept of *gnosis*. Mandaism (“having knowledge”) is the only surviving Gnostic religion from antiquity. Mandaeans formally refer to themselves as Nasurai (Nasoraeans) meaning guardians or possessors of secret rites and knowledge. The Mandaeans emphasize salvation of the soul through secret knowledge (*gnosis*) of its divine origin. Mandaism “provides knowledge of whence we have come and whither we are going.”

That Mandaean notion of *gnosis* as the means of “salvation of the soul” seems rather Michaelian to me, except that Michaelian knowledge is not retained in some secret society, into which students need to be privately initiated. The equivalent Michaelian doctrine of salvation of the soul is conceptualized as the fragmentation of the Tao and subsequent reunification during the reincarnation process.

JUDEO-CHRISTIAN USAGE

The Greek word *gnosis* (knowledge) is used as a standard translation of the Hebrew word “knowledge” (da’ath) in the Septuagint....

Philo [Jewish philosopher c.20 BCE – c.50 CE] also refers to the “knowledge” (*gnosis*) and “wisdom” (*sophia*) of God.

PATRISTIC LITERATURE

The Church Fathers used the word *gnosis* (knowledge) to mean spiritual knowledge or specific knowledge of the divine. This positive usage was to contrast it with how gnostic sectarians used the word. *Cardiognosis* (“knowledge of the heart”) from Eastern Christianity related to the tradition of the *starets* and in Roman Catholic theology is the view that only God knows the condition of one’s relationship with God.

EASTERN ORTHODOX THOUGHT

Gnosis in Orthodox Christian (primarily Eastern Orthodox) thought is the spiritual knowledge of a saint (one who has obtained *theosis*) or mystically enlightened human being. Within the cultures of the term’s provenance (Byzantine and Hellenic) *Gnosis* was a knowledge or insight into the infinite, divine and uncreated in all and above all, rather than knowledge strictly into the finite, natural, or material world. *Gnosis* is transcendental as well as mature understanding. It indicates direct spiritual, experiential knowledge and intuitive knowledge, mystic rather than that from rational or reasoned thinking. *Gnosis* itself is gained through understanding at which one can arrive via inner experience or contemplation such as an internal epiphany of intuition and external epiphany such as the theophany [seeing God in Nature].

In the *Philokalia*, it is emphasized that such knowledge is not secret knowledge but rather a maturing, transcendent form of knowledge derived from contemplation (*theoria* resulting from practice of *hesychasm*), since knowledge cannot truly be derived from knowledge, but rather, knowledge can only be derived from *theoria* (to witness, see (vision) or experience). Knowledge [as *gnosis*], thus plays an important role in relation to *theosis* (deification/personal relationship with God) and *theoria* (revelation of the divine, vision of God). *Gnosis*, as the proper use of the spiritual or noetic faculty plays an important role in Orthodox Christian theology. Its importance in the economy of salvation is discussed periodically in the *Philokalia* where as direct, personal knowledge of God (*noesis*) it is distinguished from ordinary epistemological knowledge (*episteme* — i.e., speculative philosophy).

SUFISM

Knowledge (or *gnosis*) in Sufism refers to knowledge of Self and God. The gnostic is called *al-arif bi’lah* or “one who knows by God”. The goal of the Sufi practitioner is to remove inner obstacles to the knowledge of god. Sufism, understood as the quest for Truth, is to seek for the separate existence of the Self to be consumed by Truth, as stated by the Sufi poet Mansur al-Hallaj, who was executed for saying “I am the Truth” (*ana’l haqq*).

My book *The Synthesis: The Michaelian Teachings as Perennialism* reviews many ancient and modern philosophies and religions, noting their many similarities to the Michaelian teachings.

As we will see below, the Michaels had a view of “Knowledge” similar to the notion of *gnosis* or enlightenment which is found in the mystical branches of the major world religions, as documented briefly above. In Michaelian terms, I understand *gnosis* to be somewhat equivalent to experiences of the higher Centers. Thus Michaelian “Knowledge” is not just data-acquisition by the Intellectual Center via the five senses (sight, hearing, touch, smell, taste), or even the kind of knowledge that comes from thinking and reasoning about data that is acquired via the five senses; that is mere *epistemic* knowledge. Rather, Knowledge as *gnosis* refers to experiential knowledge, and/or insights are acquired and inculcated and assimilated via intuitive faculties, faculties that are recognized as real in mystical traditions, although not in scientific traditions. *Gnosis* implies that the person is changed by the knowledge at the deepest level, not merely informed by the knowledge at a superficial level.

The Wikipedia article discusses several religious traditions that had a doctrine about gnostic insight, but it does not mention the Gurdjieffian teachings. It could have, and I do so in the next section.

Knowledge as *Gnosis* per Gurdjieff

Refer to the chapter “Gurdjieff, Ouspensky, Collin, Burton” for the story about the involvement of founding original Michaelian group members with a local Fourth Way teaching group. The Michaelian presentation does not much differ from the Gurdjieffian presentation, as we will see further on.

Now turn your attention to what I have pointed out to you before. A fully developed [hu]man, which I call “man in the full sense of the word”, should possess four states of consciousness. Ordinary man, that is, man number one [Moving Centered], number two [Emotionally Centered], and number three [Intellectually Centered], lives in two states of consciousness only. He knows, or at least he can know of the existence of the fourth state of consciousness. All these “mystical states” and so on are wrong definitions but when they are not deceptions or imitations they are flashes of what we call an objective state of consciousness.

But man does not know of the third state of consciousness or even suspect it. Nor can he suspect it because if you were to explain to him what the third state of consciousness is, that is to say, in what it consists, he would say that it was his usual state. He considers himself to be a conscious being governing his own life. Facts that contradict that, he considers to be accidental or temporary, which will change by themselves. By considering that he possesses [subjective] self-consciousness, as it were by nature, a man will not of course try to approach or obtain it. And yet without self-consciousness, or the third state, the fourth, except in rare flashes, is impossible. Knowledge however, the real *objective* knowledge toward which man, as he asserts, is struggling, is possible only in the fourth state of consciousness, that is, it is conditional upon the full possession of the fourth state of consciousness. Knowledge which is acquired in the ordinary state of consciousness is intermixed with dreams [fantasies, speculations]. There you have a complete picture of the being of man number one, two, and three. [P.D. Ouspensky, *In Search of the Miraculous*, p. 145]

Refer to the chapter “Fantasy” for a discussion of the opposite of Knowledge as gnosis.

Refer to the chapter “Levels of Being” for further discussion of Gurdjieff’s notion that knowledge involves a hierarchy of states of consciousness, with two states that I regard as *gnosis* in the mystical sense, namely subjective consciousness and objective consciousness. As in the Gurdjieffian teachings, so in the Michaelian teachings, the word “knowledge” had a special meaning. In fact, it had the same meaning in the Gnostic teaching, which was briefly documented above, and as we will see further on.

One may chose to translate the religious notion of “knowing God” to the Michaelian notion of knowing Essence, Logos, and Tao; “knowing” in the sense of being intimately experientially cognizant of the higher Self, which has these various levels and names — refer to the chapters “Essence”, “Logos”, and “Tao”. In this sense the Michaelian teachings is like Gnosticism.

Knowledge per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

The following extracts from original Michaelian group transcriptions are Q&A exchanges, where an original Michaelian group member asks a question (or makes a comment), and the Michaels provide an answer. These extracts are presented in the chronological order in which they were given. As is my custom, I often provide some explanatory comments following the question or answer. Underlined words in the Michaels’ answers are my emphasis, to draw attention to what it is that I comment on. Sometimes I embed words or phrases [in brackets] that I believe help to clarify the question or the answer.

There are numerous instances of the word “knowledge” in the original Michaelian group transcriptions where it is used in the usual sense of awareness of, or information about, something or other. Those instances are not interesting or instructive, nor are they relevant to the purpose of this chapter, so I ignore them herein. What I looked for and quoted are mentions of transcendent Knowledge or a heightened level of consciousness, aka *gnosis*.

The first mention in the original Michaelian group transcriptions happened about a month before the Michaels appeared:

[Soleal:] ... The state you desire can be achieved by decision. This may sound platitudinous, but it is the only way it can happen. No one is going to do it for you — take your hand and lead you to the sacred spring, so that you can drink the holy elixir and have instant Knowledge. [03 July 1973]

This is an instance where “knowledge” is obviously synonymous with “Enlightenment” (refer to the chapter by that name), and it is said that enlightenment is achieved by personal experience (“drink the holy elixir”) as a result of intentional personal practices.

Another common synonym for Knowledge as enlightenment is “Being”:

Dick: Does what we are doing now [in the original Michaelian group] have anything to do with the return of Christ?

[Tomas:] Not exactly. The purpose of your being here [in the original Michaelian group] is not to find only Christ but the Knowledge of how to "Be". Christ is in the picture, but he is not the total all — he was a good teacher. If you are seeking only Christ, why don't you go to church? [10 July 1973]

original Michaelian group members probably understood that "Be" here is an allusion to Gurdjieff's teaching about raising one's Level of Be-ing via experiential Knowledge. Organized religion has a function (refer to the chapter "Religion"), but that function is rarely aimed at the achievement of enlightenment, of gnosis, of Being. This is the first of many statements that the purpose of the original Michaelian group was to transmute knowledge into "Being", which is another name for *gnosis*; refer to the chapter "Levels of Being". Basically and briefly, Gurdjieff applied the phrase Levels of Being to stages of enlightenment, and he correlated enlightenment to the higher Centers. More will be said about that further on in this chapter.

Soleal and Tomas were the sources of information before the Michaels appeared. In the first session with the Michaels, this appeared:

Concerning the level of information given, why is there a difference, however slight, between the small, private sessions and the larger, open sessions?

When the knowledge level of the group is relatively low, then the information given will be at a lower level. The information given here today could not be given to the larger group in quite this form. The knowledge level here is relatively high. [12 August 1973]

The point to be made here is that there is a hierarchy of levels of knowledge, even as there is a hierarchy of Levels of Being. As will become clear through this chapter, ascent through 'lower' levels of knowledge culminates in ascent through 'higher' Levels of Being.

As it said in that passage, the original Michaelian group members had a level of knowledge that was relatively high; they were not neophytes, they were familiar with other spiritual teachings. For instance, the books of Carlos Castaneda, popular at the time, came up for discussion:

What are allies?

Allies was a word used by a relatively unlettered being [Don Juan] to describe the forces manifesting. Some he created and combated. This enabled him to override the heredity of superstitions and open himself to positive experience. His "man of knowledge" means the same as the "one in whom the Logos resides".... [21 August 1974]

Refer to the chapter "Logos". Basically and briefly, the Logos is the organizing principle of the cosmos, and in Greek philosophy it is opposed to "Chaos". The point to be emphasized here is that intimate experiential Knowledge of the Logos allows one to "override" or counteract "superstition" or what looks like meaningless random chaos in our lives, and harness that Knowledge to ascend to ever higher or more integrated states of consciousness.

Dick: I perceive vaguely a better way to heal, but it is too vague.

I have given you a start. You must begin to approach your [medical] patients as souls who are Centered in different places. You have verified for yourself the truth of the Centers. Now, you must verify the truth of the [Soul Age] Cycles. This is practical knowledge for the Older Soul, not just idle chatter. It supersedes all previous information. This is the lesson you must learn. The approach must be governed by what you sense intuitively, given this special skill. [04 September 1973]

The reason I quoted this passage is to make the correlation of Centers with Soul Ages and with Levels of Being, because all are a hierarchy of levels or stages through which the soul grows from sensory knowledge in the lower Centers and Ages, to intuitive Knowledge in the higher Centers and Ages, to Level of Being. This passage was one of the earliest hints of the hierarchy; other hints followed.

What is the difference between meditation and concentration?

Meditation is the emptying of the mind of Maya; concentration is the active acquisition of higher Knowledge: the Logos.

Ilene: What is "Logos"?

Sarah: THE Knowledge. [08 September 1973]

Simply stated, "higher Knowledge" or *gnosis* is about "active acquisition", aka subjectively experiencing the Logos.

The following quotation is one of the key passages in this chapter:

Dick: I have a complaint and comment and a question. I don't seem to be able to change knowledge into Being and I don't feel any different.

You do approach "Being" under the influence of marijuana. This is an incontrovertible message about the pace of your life. Marijuana slows the responses to physical phenomena and heightens emotional response to all experiences; you feel the music instead of hearing it. The five primitive senses belong to False Personality. They can be compared to margarine — they will never be butter [True Personality], no matter how you color them or package them. Your life is not geared for understanding, just toiling.... Jesus was trying to tell this same truth two thousand years ago. We keep telling you: you must choose your path. If that [path] is spiritual liberation, then you must eliminate the distractions of Maya. If the goal is different, then the path will be different and you are correct in assuming that we don't care — we don't. We impart the Logos dispassionately; it is yours to accept or reject. [06 October 1973]

Dick got the idea of "changing knowledge into Being" from the Gurdjieffian teachings. Refer to the chapter "Psychedelics" for the discussion of the role of entheogens in transcending the knowledge accumulated by the Personality, and transmuting it into higher Center experiences and states of consciousness. Refer to the chapter "Maya" and "Personality, True and False" for descriptions of what needs to be transcended in a spiritual teaching. Refer to the chapter "Understanding" for discussion of yet another word that is sometimes used as somewhat synonymous with Knowledge and Being and Enlightenment. Refer to the chapters "Liberation" and "Enlightenment" for descriptions of the higher Levels of Being, achievement of which is the goal of a spiritual teaching.

Cheryl: I become irritated when I hear older Souls talking down Young Souls. I hear what they say and it makes me mad.

You can hear the knowledge. Most Young Souls [such as yourself] are unwilling to devote themselves to the life of contemplation that is necessary to cause the words to [come to] fruition. This is an active Cycle, Cheryl, the one in which the most valuable lessons are learned and most of the mistakes are made. It is like any system of learning: the Infant Soul is in kindergarten, the Baby Soul is [in] life's elementary school, the Young Soul in gymnasias [high school], the Mature Soul in college and the Old Soul is out in the world. [22 November 1973]

Cheryl was a Young Soul (a Priest in Role), but it was said that she could "hear the knowledge" and "cause the words to fruition". There is a different type of knowledge that is accrued in school versus out in the world; the former is the head filled with information whereas the latter is experiential. Although the message of transmuting knowledge into Being is merely implied in this passage, elsewhere it is stated explicitly, as documented in this chapter. The "School Metaphor" is discussed at length in a chapter by that name. The Michaelian teaching can also be presented to students in terms of grades in the educational system, with some doctrines suitable for newbies (data) and some doctrines suitable for oldies (gnosis).

Edgar: We are not likely to become Adepts when we are working for the hospital. The satisfaction for the yearning for knowledge is interfered with by having to work.

The thirst for pure data accumulation is almost insatiable in the older Scholar. Yes, your lifestyle is interfering with the Goal of Growth. This [Michaelian] teaching is not well understood in solitary. [31 December 1973]

Edgar was an older Soul Scholar. Scholars tend to be auto-didactic, meaning that they prefer to teach themselves. This works well enough for knowledge as data, but not so well for Knowledge as Enlightenment. Counteracting the auto-didactic lifestyle, the Goal of Growth by nature yearns to turn knowledge into Being. The point of quoting this passage is to emphasize that becoming an Adept involves far more than an "insatiable thirst for pure data accumulation"; among other things, it requires a change in lifestyle and it involves experiential intimacy with other seekers. In that passage there are additional hints of the hierarchy of learning that goes somewhat like this: data > knowledge > understanding > experience > Knowledge > Being > Enlightenment > Adepthood.

Ellis: I would like to ask about the meaning of "synthesis". Byron has a theory about it, and I have the theory that it means putting the knowledge into effect for [spiritual] growth.

Both are valid. You cannot begin to put this [Synthesis] into practice until you fully understand it. The Synthesis will allow you to see the entire systems of ideas as one unified idea — the continuous creative force. Understanding why those around you are like they are [via the Overleaf System] will open you up to Agape and true acceptance. This will allow you to put personal agendas aside and pursue the path toward communion with the high teachers. [17 January 1974]

Refer to the chapter "Synthesis, The" for the whole story about what the Michaels named their teaching. The reason to understand The Synthesis is to grow spiritually to the point where knowledge becomes

understanding becomes Being and one experiences *gnosis*, here characterized as “communion with the high teachers”. The subject of “Agape” is also relevant to the subject of Knowledge; refer to the chapter by that name.

Ellis: I find the source of my trouble is awareness of Self in contrast to intellect, as an individual.

That is valid. That is where all of the problems are; you are right on that. We have said much about alienation, and one of its causes is this awareness of self as a separate and unique being in a hostile universe. We have also said that the universe is not hostile; it is completely neutral. Man’s separatism is an illusion, part of Maya for the Essence to overcome on the upward climb. You are now beginning to reorganize your perceptions to include the larger whole; all Old Souls do. Your own manifestation has been protracted by your own design. It has taken you a long time to question this and you must still ask many questions, as there is still a hiatus in your knowledge. [24 January 1974]

Refer to the chapters “Alienation” and “Ego” and “Individuality” and “Maya” and “Separation”. The point to be emphasized in response to that passage is that filling gaps in one’s *gnosis* results in the mitigation of alienation and Maya and the increasing awareness of the higher Self which is united with all other higher Selves. The development from individuality to the wholeness of Self is one of the aspects of the spectrum of the learning and growing hierarchy, from data to Adepthood.

Dick: They might also need to know that this is an intellectual teaching of discipline.

Mallory: What is meant by “intellectual teaching”?

Answer: To translate what you have learned intellectually as knowledge into what you do [and are] — (Being). It’s turning water into wine [as Jesus allegedly did].

This is, of course, our teaching also. The discipline, of course, includes going toward Balance through concentration, meditation, and other conscious[ness]-raising techniques. Also, the understanding and ultimate complete acceptance of all others, leading to the spiritual Agape, which is the doorway to true consciousness. [03 February 1974]

Refer to the chapters “Discipline” and “Meditation and Concentration” and “Agape” for more information about the continuum between the original acquisition of the knowledge that there is a higher Self and the full manifestation of “true consciousness”; refer to the chapter “Consciousness — Subjective and Objective” for the whole story about that subject as Gurdjieff told it, and as the Michaels tell it.

How does Soleal’s world [planet] find the Essence?

[Soleal:] Many comments come to mind, but first, may I point out that while the level of formal education in your group is not high when compared to that which is available, the level of knowledge is quite astounding. Does this tell you anything at all about the individual’s drive to obtain whatever knowledge becomes desirable? In our system, we do make available instruction in all of the arts and all of the sciences — nothing more; it is there for the asking. Young children are observed day and night by observers who only serve as guides and offer advice rather than instruction. Real instruction does not begin until adolescence, but by then, there is a surprisingly high level of acquired knowledge. Young children are encouraged to observe the acts of the adults, and are encouraged also to try their own hand whenever they feel the desire. They are never discouraged verbally from trying anything, for the ultimate decision must still come from them in making the decision. However, they have constant reassurance and help. There is no vicarious achievements on this world, simply because all are encouraged to achieve on their own that which is in Essence. [18 February 1974]

The point to be emphasized here is that children will naturally translate knowledge into Being; they will find their Essence or higher Self if allowed and encouraged to do so. Another point to be emphasized here is that knowledge that leads to Being is best acquired experientially rather than didactically.

... We have not suggested that the nucleus of this teaching expand to the point where needs are no longer being served. We are concerned only that you share the knowledge once it has been assimilated and verified. We have a method by which all of you can choose to achieve a modicum of growth on a spiritual plane. Many of you can even use it as a springboard toward becoming an Adept.... [24 February 1974]

Knowledge assimilated = understanding; knowledge is assimilated via “Validation and Verification”; refer to the chapter by that name. Here again we see that didactic knowledge of spirituality is a springboard that launches the person on the spiritual path toward *gnosis*, which is experiential Knowledge of the spirit.

The following Q&A exchange makes a clear distinction between knowledge and Knowledge:

Jim: Is this intuitive Knowledge or scientific knowledge or both?

Both. The lady is relying more now on her intuitive Knowledge though and that is good. [17 March 1974]

Is there anything else she could do?

Yes, she should spend more time pursuing the Knowledge within herself.

She says she has been doing transcendental meditation for about four months.

Mary, the meditation can be used to lead to fruitful concentration in a soul that old. [18 May 1974]

These are some of the many instances in the original Michaelian group transcriptions where the distinction is made between gaining knowledge of the outer-lower world by extrospection versus gaining Knowledge of the inner-higher world by introspection. As one journeys on the spiritual path, the progress is from the former to the latter.

Ted: In CIF and EST, [we are] exposed to much knowledge. What is the purpose of these for us?

This answer would be much the same for all in this room. That is, to synthesize and verify this Knowledge so that you can be in a better space to promulgate the Logos. [19 June 1974]

It is not for nothing or ourselves alone that we learn; it is for the benefit of all with whom the knowledge is shared. And the higher the Knowledge, as in the case of the Logos, the better, or course. One of the mottoes of the so-called “open source” concept and movement is that “Knowledge wants to be free”, meaning that sharing comes naturally to Knowledge.

Ralph: Is there some dimension we might call “feeling” or “love” or “value”?

Or truth or light. Of course. Value, truth, love, feeling, intuition, understanding, Knowledge. Synonyms. No substantial difference. Knowledge is understanding, is Agape, is the goal. Once there is understanding, there is Knowledge, there is love.

Abdullah: Can we on this planet participate in this Knowledge?

Only if you desire to do so; only if you seek; only if you allow it to uncritically flow into your consciousness; only if you open yourselves to the experience fully; only if you allow the experience to become the life. You now experience the dichotomy between what you perceive as your spiritual side and what you perceive as your physical side. In truth, there is no dichotomy and there cannot be. If you are to experience this pan-dimensional universe — this truth, this Knowledge — there is no dichotomy. There is no spiritual side to your Essence. [26 December 1974]

That was one of the clearest statements where Knowledge was equated with *gnosis* in the sense of personal experience of transcendent virtues. Refer to chapters “Value”, “Truth”, “Love”, “Intuition”, “Understanding”, “Agape”.

The following quoted passage is a good summary of the content and meaning of this chapter on “Knowledge as Gnosis”:

The evening began with talk about the [A Course in] Miracles material, and we shared thoughts about the difference between false goals and true goals. Must we give up life goals?

All must realize that the term Holy Spirit does in fact refer to the Essence — that within the Self that is in contact with the Tao. To contact this Holy Spirit, then, requires only the quieting of the Overleaves to the extent that the Essence can be perceived. The perception is often brilliantly elucidated during a so-called “spiritual” experience, when the Personality is temporarily inactivated by the powerful input. [Psychedelic] Drugs will often facilitate this, but are not necessary; environment is more important. Without this perception, all of this [Michael’s teaching or any spiritual teaching] is simply another barrage of words. Only the Knowledge of one’s own Essence is convincing. We cannot emphasize this too much. It can be explained by the timeworn cliché: “seeing is believing”. There is no other way that one can be certain that planes beyond the physical exist, other than experiencing them. The same can be said for the perception of one’s own Essence. When this is accomplished, the power of the experience drowns disbelief. Then, of course, it is still entirely up to you which course you wish to pursue. It is doubtful, though, that one would choose to continue with purposeless activities. False goals are those that are largely unattainable, as they exist only in fantasy. True goals lead to the awakening of the Essence and its breakthrough. This is indeed possible for those who wish it, and without great sacrifice upon the mountain-top. [12 December 1976]

In addition to the chapter “Maya”, there is another chapter on the opposite of Knowledge as Gnosis, namely “Fantasy”. These are supplemental to the chapter that documents the difference between “Essence and Personality”. You are invited to do an internet search on the phrase “spiritually transformative experience”

and read some of them, such as this one: ><https://aciste.org/about-stes/what-is-a-spiritually-transformative-experience-ste/><.

Conclusion to Knowledge as Gnosis

If we consider how long this chapter is we see how important it was to the original Michaelian group members and the Michaels that they turn the knowledge of the Michaelian teachings into Being. And we see even more emphasis if we consider how many other chapters, referred to in this chapter, that say the same thing in other ways.





② KUNDALINI

Members of the original Michaelian group were familiar with and interested in many spiritual teachings, ancient and modern, Eastern and Western. One of these had to do with “kundalini”. In the oriental esoteric physiological tradition and in the modern esoteric tradition, the chakra “energy centers” — discussed in another chapter in this *Study Papers* book — are related to “kundalini” energy in that sometimes this kundalini energy bursts out of hiding in the lowest chakra at the base of the spine and ascends upward through each chakra to the highest chakra at the top of the head. The rise of kundalini energy is allegedly related to stages of liberation from the physical realm and enlightenment in the spiritual realm.

original Michaelian group members read widely in the arcane literature available in the 1970s. Where original Michaelian group members got their information specifically about kundalini, we do not have a recognized clue other than perhaps Theosophy, which was mentioned a few times in the original Michaelian group transcriptions. Theosophy was instrumental in bringing the oriental ideas about chakras and kundalini to the occidental world.

Kundalini per Esoteric Physiology

For those Michaelian students who may not have an understanding of kundalini in oriental esoteric physiology and psychology, I refer to Wikipedia for a description. Underlined words are my emphasis on subjects relevant to this book in general, and this chapter in particular.

In Hinduism, Kundalini (Sanskrit romanized: kuṇḍalinī, lit. ‘coiled snake’) is a form of divine feminine energy (or Shakti) believed to be located at the base of the spine, in the muladhara. It is an important concept in Śhaiva Tantra, where it is believed to be a force or power associated with the divine feminine or the formless aspect of the Goddess. This energy in the body, when cultivated and awakened through tantric practice, is believed to lead to spiritual liberation. Kuṇḍalinī is associated with Parvati or Adi Parashakti, the supreme being in Shaktism; and with the goddesses Bhairavi and Kubjika. The term, along with practices associated with it, was adopted into Hatha yoga in the 9th century. It has since then been adopted into other forms of Hinduism as well as modern spirituality and New Age thought.

Kuṇḍalinī awakenings are said to occur by a variety of methods. Many systems of yoga focus on awakening Kuṇḍalinī through: meditation; pranayama breathing; the practice of asana, and chanting of mantras. Kundalini Yoga is influenced by Shaktism and Tantra schools of Hinduism. It derives its name from its focus upon the awakening of kundalini energy through regular practice of Mantra, Tantra, Yantra, Asanas, or Meditation. The Kuṇḍalinī experience is frequently reported to be a distinct feeling of electric current running along the spine.

IN SHAIVA TANTRA

Kuṇḍalinī arose as a central concept in Shaiva Tantra, especially among the Śākta cults like the Kaula. In these Tantric traditions, Kuṇḍalinī is “the innate intelligence of embodied Consciousness”. The first possible mention of the term is in the Tantrasadbhāva-tantra (eighth century), though other earlier tantras mention the visualization of Shakti in the central channel and the upward movement of prana or vital force (which is often associated with Kuṇḍalinī in later works). According to David Gordon White, this feminine spiritual force is also termed bhogavati, which has a double meaning of “enjoyment” and “coiled” and signifies her strong connection to bliss and pleasure, both mundane physical pleasure and the bliss of spiritual liberation (*moksha*), which is the enjoyment of Shiva’s creative activity and ultimate union with the Goddess.

According to Abhinavagupta, the great tantric scholar and master of the Kaula and Trika lineages, there are two main forms of Kuṇḍalinī, an upward moving Kuṇḍalinī (urdhva) associated with expansion, and a downward moving Kuṇḍalinī (adha) associated with contraction. According to the scholar of comparative religion Gavin Flood, Abhinavagupta links Kuṇḍalinī with “the power that brings into manifestation the body, breath, and experiences of pleasure and pain”, with “the power of sexuality as the source of reproduction” and with:

the force of the syllable *ha* in the mantra and the concept of *aham*, the supreme subjectivity as the source of all, with *a* as the initial movement of consciousness and *m* its final withdrawal. Thus we have an elaborate series of associations, all conveying the central conception of the cosmos as a manifestation of consciousness, of pure subjectivity, with Kuṇḍalinī understood as the force inseparable from consciousness, who animates creation and who, in her particularized form in the body, causes liberation through her upward, illusion-shattering movement.

According to William F. Williams, Kundalini is a type of religious experience within the Hindu tradition, within which it is held to be a kind of “cosmic energy” that accumulates at the base of the spine.

When awakened, Kundalini is described as rising up from the *muladhara chakra*, through the central *nadi* (called *sushumna*) inside or alongside the spine reaching the top of the head. The progress of Kundalini through the different chakras is believed to achieve different levels of awakening and a mystical experience, until Kundalini finally reaches the top of the head, *Sahasrara* or crown chakra, producing an extremely profound transformation of consciousness.

Swami Sivananda Saraswati of the Divine Life Society stated in his book *Kundalini Yoga* that “Supersensual visions appear before the mental eye of the aspirant, new worlds with indescribable wonders and charms unfold themselves before the Yogi, planes after planes reveal their existence and grandeur to the practitioner and the Yogi gets divine knowledge, power and bliss, in increasing degrees, when Kundalini passes through Chakra after Chakra, making them to bloom in all their glory...” [<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kundalini> — retrieved 31 October 2021]

The word “liberation” appears several times in the quotation as it relates to the psychological function of the rise of kundalini energy through the physical body; there is a chapter on that subject in this *Study Papers* book, namely “Liberation and Imprisonment”.

Chakras are mentioned in this quotation as they relate to the rise of kundalini energy through the physical body; refer to the chapter “Chakras”, for more information about that subject. In that chapter, the chakras are correlated with Centers. Centers are also mentioned in connection with kundalini in the original Michaelian group transcriptions, as we see in the next section.

Kundalini per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

The following extracts from original Michaelian group transcriptions are Q&A exchanges, where an original Michaelian group member asks a question (or makes a comment), and the Michaels provide an answer. These extracts are presented in the chronological order in which they were given. As is my custom, I usually provide some explanatory comments following the question or answer. Underlined words are my emphasis, to draw attention to what it is that I comment on. Sometimes I embed words or phrases [in brackets] that I believe help to clarify the question or the answer. Numerous study papers related to this chapter are to be found among my comments.

The subject of kundalini showed up in the original Michaelian group even before the Michaels showed up:

Tomas is here. Do you have a subject or questions?

Dick: I have a question about Kundalini energy. My impression is that enlightenment requires a great amount of energy and that it is kundalini energy. I experienced the energy once at age 37, briefly. What I want to know is, can it be a gift? And if so, can Tomas give it to me? [05 July 1973]

From Dick’s subsequent questions and comments, we know that his kundalini experience happened during a sexual encounter. It haunted Dick to such an extent that he asked about it repeatedly, enough that he elicited numerous answers from the Michaels about what is now called “sacred sexuality”; refer to the chapter “Sexuality” for the whole story.

In a personal communication with me, Sarah had this to say about Dick: “He was looking for instant enlightenment ... for revelation ...” The above question would seem to be an example of that. There are enlightened and powerful gurus who reportedly can grant a transcendent experience via transfer of some kind of energy, and perhaps this is what Dick was hoping for. In the oriental esoteric tradition, this is called “*shaktipat*”; an internet search on the term yields many hits, such as:

SHAKTIPAT

The spiritual teacher Meher Baba emphasized the need for a master when actively trying to awaken Kundalini:

Kundalini is a latent power in the higher body. When awakened, it pierces through six chakras or functional centers and activates them. Without a master, the awakening of the kundalini cannot take anyone very far on the Path; and such indiscriminate or premature awakening is fraught with dangers of self-deception as well as the misuse of powers. The kundalini enables man to consciously cross the lower planes and it ultimately merges into the universal cosmic power of which it is a part, and which also is at times described as kundalini ... The important point is that the awakened kundalini is helpful only up to a certain degree, after which it cannot ensure further progress. It cannot dispense with the need for the grace of a Perfect Master. [<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kundalini> — retrieved 31 October 2021]

Beyond that brief description of shaktipat in the article on Kundalini, Wikipedia has an entire article on it: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shaktipat>. Furthermore, you may want to watch YouTube videos with Marjorie Woollacott, a neuroscientist whom I have actually met, for a description of her shaktipat experience.

Tomas's answer to Dick's question was this:

This cannot be completely a gift — it requires work on your part. It can be a temporary gift. As you say, it can be painful to come down. Be careful of what you ask, Dick. It could be given.

The advice here given is exactly the advice usually given by kundalini masters to their students: you have to do a lot of preparatory physical and psychological purification first or the kundalini experience will be very unpleasant.

Dick: Can it be given in increments?

[Tomas:] It can be regulated. This is also temporary. Shall we try this in two days, Dick? I will attempt to send the energy Saturday, your time. Meditate and then we can try. This experiment may not succeed on the first attempt.

Dick: Is this [kundalini] the essence of consciousness?

[Tomas:] Not entirely. By itself, it can be called insanity. There also must be understanding. [05 July 1973]

If not properly prepared for and the meaning understood, the rise of Kundalini can drive the experiencer insane. A gentler experience is that kundalini energy is irrational, meaning incomprehensible to the rational mind.

The subject of kundalini came up again, many months later, when the Michaels were the primary source. It is here that we find that kundalini energy is related to the chakras and Centers:

What is kundalini? Is it true? High energy?

In a broad sense, this is what you refer to as Sexual Center — the energy therein. It is a liberating force for the Essence.

Note the word “liberation” here; that word got its own chapter in this *Study Papers* book.

Edgar: Moses raised the serpent. Jesus said, “If I be lifted up,” etc. What is the relationship to kundalini here?

Yes, this [kundalini] is the highest form of movable energy you have at your disposal and therefore, that which you can utilize for each: the emotional states or Higher Emotional Centers, Higher Intellectual Centers, which are synonymous with subjective consciousness [and] objective consciousness respectively. Also, with the same had just described by the yogi [sic]. The lower Centers are fixed and the energy is like a closed system. The higher Centers are capable of ecstasy or bliss; the lower Centers are not. The Sexual Center or the kundalini force can only be breached by bringing the lower Centers into harmonious Balance. In other words, in separating from the Maya or illusions for glamour of the Physical Plane and by giving up your expectations of what a sexual experience should be. [24 April 1974]

The location of the chakra version of the Sexual Center was ambiguous in the Gurdjieffian teachings, as documented in the chapter “Sexuality”. In the original Michaelian group, as documented in the chapter “Chakras”, the Sexual Center was correlated with the Throat Chakra, a “higher” chakra. However, in subsequent Michaelian teachings sources, its location becomes ambiguous again. As documented in my book, *A History of the Overleaf Chart*, in Chapter 4H, “The Action Centers”, I reveal my preference, which is to rename the Sexual Center as the Excitation Center, and correlate it with the Crown Chakra. This makes kundalini a source of enlightenment that is *pulled* from the top upward along the spine, as well as *pushed* upward from the bottom of the spine. This understanding is in alignment with the Wikipedia article that mentions downward as well as upward movement of energy.

Dick: Is the Kundalini source “sleeping?”

Not so much sleeping as simply stored. The liberation of higher energies is just that — a freeing of the stores. This can be brought about in many of the ways we have suggested to you. It cannot be brought about by any transfer of magical energies from one soul to another [*shaktipat*]. Even if we could transfer energy to you, you might choose not to utilize this. The utilization of higher energies must come from you, and we can say that you, Dick, have as much held in abeyance as anyone else in this room. [16 June 1974]

There is that word liberation again. Dick was in the Repression Mode, and I suspect that “held in abeyance” is a reference to that. Dick was the person in the original Michaelian group who asked the most questions about sexuality. Dick was the person in the room who claimed to have had a kundalini experience; see first quote in this section. Almost certainly the reason that he had a kundalini experience during a sexual encounter is because he had a lot of energy stored in his Sexual Center, reserved until he had an intimate encounter with a person of the opposite kundalini polarity.

Besides the connection of kundalini to sexuality, it is also connected to the health of the physical body:

Veronica: Asked a question about the morality of healing. What place is there for intervention? Do people need their disease? Comment on kundalini energy in Veronica.

We have said many times that only the self can choose to be affected by a healing process, and this still stands. There is, of course, a certain amorality in the concept of healing, and we find no fault with this. The law of Karma as pertains to another cannot be willfully broken by you, only the soul involved can give the necessary permission, but the transfer of higher rarefied [kundalini] energies is vital to the procedure. If you cannot do this, then no healing can take place. Bodies that are ill are devitalized. This is not mystical at all. Therefore, a vitalization process must take place. The morality concern is one that this culture fosters, of course. Amorality can be an extremely positive place if coupled with Balance in Being. The fact remains that it will be ineffective if the permission has not been given in advance, no matter how much intervention is attempted. If the body has decided to die, there is nothing you can do. If the permission is given, then you can transfer the higher energies, and the effect will be what you call healing. Actually it is more revitalization, or if you prefer, refueling. [undated]

Many New Age esoteric teachings also make the connection of kundalini to healing. This is often allegedly accomplished via a balancing of chakra energies. Refer to the chapters, “Balanced Man” and “Levels of Being” and “Health” and “Karma”, for more information about words that appear in this quotation.

The final entry on kundalini came as a response to the same person who initiated the topic years before. Recall that he had experienced it many years before, and apparently he wanted to experience it again:

Dick talked about Kundalini energy.

This energy of which you speak is tapped into from Higher Emotional Center and utilized by the Higher Intellectual function. All of you have experienced its flow for short periods of time but are unable to command its perpetuity. You have glimpsed the keys to unlocking this energy for your own use. Until you have relinquished your most negative characteristics, you cannot even seek a life in Essence, for that Negative Pole will seek the farthest shore, and you will follow it rather than your Essence. You are right, though. You cannot break the patterns any other way. Even a tiny flow [of kundalini] will enable you to break away at the molds that hold you fixed in place. The way to this energy can be found through many media. Those we have suggested have been meditation, concentration, and fasting, augmented [by psychedelics] or not; also, art that is of a participatory nature, [such as] music, color, water — and by water we mean swimming, floating, sailing or simply standing beneath a water flow, “hydrotherapy” if you prefer. The sensory deprivation method is another, but there again, the water [in the sensory deprivation tank] helps more than you realize. [04 November 1977]

We see in the above quotation and in the one previous to this quotation how the subject of kundalini is woven into the fabric of many other components of the Michaelian teachings. One must read about all of those components in order to see the entire tapestry. Or, to use another metaphor, kundalini is one of many ‘pieces’ in the ‘picture puzzle’ of the Michaelian teachings as a whole.

Summary Comments on Kundalini

Like all other chapters in this *Study Papers* book, this chapter on kundalini is a mere introduction to the subject. The reader is invited to research it further, in books and internet resources, if they are so inclined.

Like other chapters in this *Study Papers* book, the subject of this chapter is related to many other subjects covered in other chapters in this book. These other subjects and chapters are noted above where appropriate.

The subject of this chapter is covered in more detail in some of my other books, and these I have noted above where appropriate. Apologies that the information is so scattered, but there is no use repeating it here.

A lot of the information in the Michaelian teachings is aimed at the Intellectual Center, but the Michaels often declare that one of the aims of their teaching is to recommend practices that launch people into the higher Centers. The experience of kundalini is one of those experiences toward which Michaelian students can aspire on their spiritual path to enlightenment.

Kundalini awakening is in a class called “spiritually transformative experiences”; refer to <https://aciste.org/> and other internet resources for more information.





⑦ LEVELS OF BEING

This is yet another chapter, one of many, that discusses a component of the Gurdjieffian teachings that was adopted and adapted into the original Michaelian group because founding members of the original Michaelian group had been involved in a Gurdjieff group before striking out on their own and finding the Michaels; refer to the chapter “Gurdjieff, Ouspensky, Collin, Burton” for the whole story. However, this is yet another subject, one of many, that did not survive the transition from the original Michaelian group to post-original Michaelian group Michaelian groups because Yarbrow did not mention it in her book about the original Michaelian group, namely *Messages from Michael*. Now that the majority of the transcriptions of the channeling sessions of the original Michaelian group have been published, we have the opportunity to revisit the topic, and, if we so choose, adopt and adapt it into our individual and collective understanding of the larger and greater Michaelian teachings. Members of the original Michaelian group were intentional and focused about their spiritual paths in ways that have not gained traction in the post-original Michaelian group Michaelian groups. If that were ever to change, in individuals and in groups, then the information in this chapter will again become relevant, maybe even important.

Basically, Gurdjieff’s Levels of Being are his version of the stages of spiritual development, from “Mechanical Man” (refer to that chapter) in the lower Centers through “Balanced Man” (refer to that chapter) to Conscious Man in the higher Centers (refer to the chapters “Consciousness — Subjective and Objective” and “Adept and Master”). As we will see in this chapter, the seven Levels of Being are stated in terms of the seven Centers, so therefore it is expedient to read the study papers on the Centers if one is to get the entire picture.

Levels of Being per Gurdjieff

There is a chapter in my book *A History of the Overleaf Chart*, namely Chapter 1J, “Gurdjieff’s Levels of Being”. One may read that for some quotations from Gurdjieff books, but for this chapter of this *Study Papers* book, I am going to quote from two other sources, to provide an additional perspective on the subject.

By using the table of hydrogens, we know that a normal, sleeping man has his center of gravity in world 96; that is, in false personality, and generally reaches only as high as world 48, true personality. A man number four, who is working on himself, has his center of gravity in world 48 and reaches as high as world 24, or essence. A man number five has center of gravity in world 24 and experiences the higher emotional center, world 12. A man number six has crystallized in world 12, and has begun to experience world 6, the higher intellectual center. His center of gravity would be essence or the higher emotional center. A man number seven has crystallized in the higher intellectual center and his center of gravity is in the higher emotional center. This is, of course, a simplification of the reality. In actuality it isn’t so static; for example, at a given moment it’s possible for a man number four to work at the level of a man number five or even a man number six. What’s important to understand here is that the lowest story for a man number seven is still world 24 or essence. To take a step up to a man number eight we would have to suppose, as Gurdjieff does, that a man number eight’s top story would be world 3, that his middle story or center of gravity would be the higher intellectual center, and that his lowest story would be the higher emotional center. [<https://bepresentfirst.com/gurdjieff-agnostics-and-the-divinity-of-christ/> —retrieved 20 December 2021]

Each human being is born with a dominant lower center, called the dominant brain.

We meet only the three lower categories (man number 1, 2, and 3) in ordinary life; higher categories (man number 4, 5, 6, and 7) can be reached only through work on oneself.

Man number 1 = instinctive-moving center, physical man.

Man number 2 = emotional center, emotional man.

Man number 3 = intellectual center, intellectual man.

Man number 4 = balanced man (only possible normally as result of school work and school culture), has balanced centers and permanent center of gravity (idea of acquiring unity, consciousness, permanent I, and will

has become more important than all other interests), has valuation of the work, and values his relation to the school; begins to know himself and whither he is going, can lose everything. Man number 4 requires a certain number of men number 1, 2, and 3 to work with in order to develop.

Man number 5 has already crystallized essence, has higher emotional center operating (has self-consciousness), has one indivisible permanent I and all his knowledge belongs to this I (has unity), has many extra functions and powers, can be the result of right work (becomes man number 5 from man number 4, can then become man number 6 and man number 7) or of wrong work (becomes man number 5 without having been man number 4, cannot develop further, cannot become man number 6 and man number 7), can lose everything. Man number 5 requires a certain number of men number 4 to work with in order to develop.

Man number 6 has all qualities of man number 5 with addition of higher intellectual center operating, (has objective consciousness), has many more new faculties and powers, virtually superhuman, can lose everything. Man number 6 requires a certain number of men number 5 to work with in order to develop.

Man number 7 has all qualities of man number 6 with addition of both higher centers crystallized correctly, has permanent I and free will, can control all states of consciousness in himself, immortal within limits of solar system, superhuman, cannot lose anything he has acquired. Man number 7 requires a certain number of men number 6 to work with in order to develop. The presence of a man number 7 on the Earth indicates that all life is controlled by schools. [<https://www.oocities.org/fourthway.geo/manlevels1.html> — retrieved 03 March 2023]

Man Numbers in the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

The following extracts from original Michaelian group transcriptions are Q&A exchanges, where an original Michaelian group member asks a question (or makes a comment), and the Michaels provide an answer. These extracts are presented in the chronological order in which they were given. As is my custom, I usually provide some explanatory comments following the question or answer. Underlined words are my emphasis, to draw attention to what it is that I comment on. Sometimes I embed words or phrases [in brackets] that I believe help to clarify the question or the answer. Numerous study papers related to this chapter are to be found among my comments.

The description of Levels of Being in the section above mentions “Man Number” this and that. This terminology for the seven steps or stages or levels on one’s spiritual path also appears in the original Michaelian group transcriptions, beginning two months after the Michaels first revealed themselves:

Dick: When love is turned on, this in itself puts you on a high. Maybe that’s “Man #4” [Balanced Man] according to Gurdjieff and it is not permanent. [06 October 1973] ... Robert [Burton] was a “Man #5” — full of mystery and charisma. Should we wait until we are [before we presume to spread the Michaelian teachings]?

He did not wait. He was confident that such evolution would occur, and on this basis made his decision.... [20 October 1973]

Dick: I would like to know if the Gurdjieff idea of Man #1 [physically focused], Man #2 [emotionally focused], Man #3 [mentally focused] is correct and if so, at what level am I?

It is valid when the Man Number Six is thought of as the Transcendental Soul. You are [still Man #3 but you are] going toward Balance [Man #4]. Fear of emotional abandon holds you back — the fear of losing emotional control. [20 October 1973]

Dick: Agape love sputters for only fifteen seconds and it does not happen often. Is this moving toward a #4 [Balanced] person?

We agree. It is a difficult place to be, but definitely rewarding. [03 March 1974]

Dick: How does the Adept, Occult Master correlate to the #4, #5 and #6 Man of Gurdjieff?

They are not precisely the same, although the Adept is usually crystallized Number Four. The Occult Master has use of Higher Centers at will. It merely means that this soul is in Balance [or beyond] with no danger of backsliding. [03 March 1974]

original Michaelian group Overleaf Chart #3 puts the Adept at Man #5 and the Occult Master at Man #7, so “not precisely the same” is indeed ambiguous. Refer to the table further on in this section for a graphic representation of this hierarchy. Refer to chapters “Adept and Master” and “Crystallization” for more information about those subjects.

Dick: If we just go along reincarnating, it is okay, but if we are in this teaching, we should be changing. It does not seem that Michael is getting us to be conscious [Men #5] or even Number Four [Balanced Man] people. Life goes on the same old dreary way, and it doesn't appear that it will change. [14 April 1974]

Dick: Michael has a job to do, too, as I see it, and that is to produce #4 and #5 people in his teaching. ... If Michael is sensitive, he will help us solve our internal problems. The discovery track of what we are has to be complete before becoming a #4 or #5 Man. Comment, please.

We have given you the tools by which you can discover these within yourself. Telling you where the problem areas are would produce the same initial hostility and resentment as hearing it from a psychologist would. When you discover them within yourself, you also at that time verify them for yourself, and then they are truth for you. Until then, they are merely the opinions of another. Pointing to the tools is sometimes not enough, and the path is agonizingly slow. We would say that the conscious beings you have mentioned (Jesus, Fulton Sheen, Gandhi, *et cetera*) were not given more than the tools in the beginning. As you begin to use the tools, then you are given more material to work on. Only then can the path be trodden in a straight line. Until you begin to use the tools, all you have is information, and more information can hinder your growth rather than help it, if all previous data has not been assimilated. One of the things you have not verified to your satisfaction is your own ability to change some of your uncomfortable Overleaves, and until you do, all lessons concerning the how to of more difficult tasks would be in vain. All is changeable. Nothing is stationary. [03 September 1974]

Dick: Gurdjieff says that Mechanical Man has no will (a Man #1, #2 or #3). He may start out to pursue a course, but will succumb to societal pressures, fears, habits, et cetera. Gurdjieff says in order to become conscious, one must attach himself to a man with "C" influence [have direct contact with an enlightened person], and allow him to function as his will. Michael cannot function in this capacity as he needs a medium [channel]... [21 September 1974]

From these comments we understand that the Michaels considered these seven stages of spiritual development spoken of by Gurdjieff to be valid, or at least useful.

The following tabulation of Man Numbers with descriptions was among the original Michaelian group documents given to the Center for Michael Teachings, Inc., and dated March 1975:

GURDJIEFF'S LEVELS of BEING				
RANK	LEVEL OF BEING	COMMENTS ON THE PAGE	GURDJIEFF'S CORRELATION	EVENTUAL CORRELATION
1	MAN NUMBER ONE	Instinctive-Moving Man	Moving Center	Lower Moving Center
2	MAN NUMBER TWO	Emotional Man (feeling)	Emotional Center	Lower Emotional Center
3	MAN NUMBER THREE	Thinking Man	Intellectual Center	Lower Intellectual Center
4	MAN NUMBER FOUR	Balanced Man	unspecified	Impulse (Instinctive) Center
5	MAN NUMBER FIVE	Integrated Man (the Adept)	Higher Emotional Center	Higher Intellectual Center
6	MAN NUMBER SIX	Conscious Man	Higher Intellectual Center	Higher Emotional Center
7	MAN NUMBER SEVEN	Perfected Man (the Master)	unspecified	Higher Moving Center

Comments on this table are as follows:

- **RANK:** These numbers in the first column were not shown on the original Michaelian group sheet; they are shown only for comparison with other septenaries shown in other tables in this book and my other books.
- **LEVEL OF BEING:** The second column shows the Man Numbers shown on the original Michaelian group sheet.
- **COMMENTS ON PAGE:** The third column reproduces the comments that were on the original Michaelian group sheet. This, of course, reflected the state of the original Michaelian group understanding at the time, which was really just Gurdjieff's understanding. More is said about this

column in the next section of this chapter. In an original Michaelian group quotation, a Transcendental Soul is regarded as a Man #6.

- GURDJIEFF'S CORRELATION: The fourth column shows the Centers that correspond to the Man Numbers, aka Levels of Being, in previous columns. This column was not shown on the original Michaelian group table; the information was extracted from the quotations of the Gurdjieffian teachings in the previous section. So far as I have been able to determine, Gurdjieff did not correlate all of the Levels of Being with particular Centers, probably because he did not understand that there were seven separate Centers. Per the Wikipedia article on Centers, >[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Centers_\(Fourth_Way\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Centers_(Fourth_Way))<, Gurdjieff considered the Instinctive and Sexual Centers to be mere Parts of the Moving Center, and not separate Centers. However, in the original Michaelian group they are distinct Centers. The original Michaelian group started the process of correlating all Centers with Levels of Being by first defining seven Centers.
- EVENTUAL CORRELATION: The last column shows the understanding that the Michaelian teachings should evolve toward, subsequent to the original Michaelian group, with some help from Yarbrow first, and then myself second. Thus, the Levels of Being follow what I refer to as the Natural Sequence.

Levels of Being per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

Members of the original Michaelian group were very interested in advancing on a spiritual path. Consequently, a question about Level of Being came up in one of the earliest channeling sessions, and then came up repeatedly thereafter. Here are the instances:

Dick: I have a question. It has to do with the fact that I have only known one living master [Robert Burton], and when it comes to patterning my behavior, I have only this one model, and my tendency is, as the Level of Being goes up, to follow this model that I already know. Is this correct?

The pattern is a good one.... [26 August 1973]

Dick was one of the founding members of the original Michaelian group, and one of the early members of the local Gurdjieff group. The pattern of the Levels of Being may have been a "good one", but it was improved upon in the Michaelian teachings during the original Michaelian group, and further improved in subsequent decades; refer to my book *A History of the Overleaf Chart* to read about the entire story arc.

Edgar: How? How? How can this [concept of Monads] solve the reason to be?

If the Personality can take leave long enough to consider the task of the soul, then this will be clear. The task on the Physical Plane is to experience "all of life". Many Monads are not completed for many centuries [in many incarnations]. Others must be completed before the soul can perceive at a higher Level of Being. [Experiencing the] The Monads are the only reason to be that we know of. [17 March 1974]

Refer to the chapter "Monads" for the whole story. Basically and briefly, one advances 'up' the Levels of Being by experiencing something and experiencing the opposite of that something, so that one has a complete understanding of both sides of an experience.

Dick: No. That is just the way it is. I need more passion. It seems that Robert [Burton] was in a Power Mode, and he was extremely patient. He attracted people by his Level of Being. If one is to be a spreader of the Logos, one has to be a high person, probably in an Exalted Role [Sage, Priest, King]. It bugs me to be told to bring new people, then they pop in and out. To spread the Logos as Robert does, you must have a Level of Being to attract people. You must be integrated [#5] and mysterious [#6].

You almost have to have some type of mystery, yes — we agree with that. Most people do seek a teaching, and this includes organized religion that introduces some intrigue into their lives. The Teaching, thereby, becomes exciting. Many do it with gimmicks; others with what you call charisma. It only works because it provides that special hint of the mysterious realm beyond the five senses to which you as the teacher have access, and that they can someday hope to glimpse. We are not opposed to this as long as the teacher does not begin to believe in his own magic. [14 April 1974]

So, enticement to raise one's Level of Being might start out with charisma and mystery, but it cannot stay there.

Joan asked if we can we ever experience total death of the False Personality. Are there lapses [back into False Personality]? Does it always continue?

There are instances which we remembered well where there has been total death or extinguishment of the False Personality, concomitant with the emergence of True Personality of the Essence. This was indeed gratifying to behold, but it happens rarely on the Physical Plane, even in Adepts who are at a high Level of

Being. They must be constantly alert to prevent the instinctive behavior reactions of the False Personality from sneaking in. [25 January 1975]

A spontaneous healing appeared to have occurred with a lady afflicted with numerous physical ailments, including arthritis. What happened here?

What occurred here was a transfer of higher hydrogens [a Gurdjieff concept] by a person well able to transfer. This, incidentally, is what happens when spontaneous healings occur.... When you give higher hydrogens, they do produce remarkable phenomena. For instance, the man Edgar Cayce was able to remain in trance for prolonged periods during which the personality was deactivated. He received much high hydrogen during that time and was able to transfer these, but as he never received any in return, his own Level of Being never changed and he remained Secondary Man [Gurdjieff's "man # 2" — primarily emotional] throughout his life. [15 April 1975]

In all of these quotes from the original Michaelian group transcriptions, there is no indication that the Michaels taught the Levels of Being differently from the way that Gurdjieff taught it: they are stages in the development toward becoming a fully enlightened person.

Concluding Comments on Levels of Being

Refer to my book *A History of the Overleaf Chart*, Chapter 1], "Gurdjieff's Levels of Being", for another examination of this subject.

There are various ways and means to raise one's Level of Being. These were espoused by Gurdjieff, and by the Michaels during the original Michaelian group. These methods have not gained much traction in the Michaelian teachings because, for the most part, they require an intense, concentrated, and intimate environment, with committed students living and working together to apply the tools of spiritual development in a "school" founded and intended for this very purpose. Monasteries and communes have historically been established to foster spiritual growth. That situation does not (yet) exist in the Michaelian teachings community because the community is dispersed all over the world. Consequently, the modern Michaelian teachings community has pretty much lost sight of, or lost interest in, the whole concept of Level of Being and the tools for raising it in oneself and in others. In the unlikely event that such an interest is ever resurrected, may Michaelian students recall that it is explored at length and in depth in my book *The Tao of Relationships: The Chemistry and Alchemy of Service and Intimacy*.

There is a correlation of Levels of Being with other septenaries in the Overleaf System. This is all explained in other chapters of this book and in my book *A History of the Overleaf Chart*. Yet other septenaries that correlate with Levels of Being are explored in my book *The Tao of Cosmogony*.





LIBERATION AND IMPRISONMENT

Readers of the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group might be surprised at the prominence that the Michaels gave to the notion of the “liberation” of Essence from one or another form of imprisonment, bondage, enslavement, or entrapment. This is because the notion of Liberation has either more-or-less vanished from the post-original Michaelian group Michael community lexicon of jargon words, or the notion has been couched in other terminology. More will be said about the dearth of the appearance of the word toward the end of this chapter, where I document the lack of discussion in post-original Michaelian group writings. Here at the beginning of this chapter, I provide some documentation of its many precursors, because the notion did not ‘fall out of the sky’ for the first time in history with channeling of the Michaels. It should not be a surprise that the original Michaelian group inherited this idea from the Gurdjieffian teachings, as many other key Michaelian concepts were borrowed from Gurdjieff, but the idea goes back far further than Gurdjieff, to at least as far as antiquity; specifically, it appears in the Axial Age about 500 BCE, a time when the world was all awash in new philosophy and new theology like no other time in the recorded history of humankind.

In the Michaelian teachings and many other esoteric traditions, the spiritual soul is said to be a fragment of the Tao that repeatedly reincarnates, and the goal of reincarnation is to evolve to reunite with the Tao. The basic question is, how are lost souls found, redeemed, saved, *liberated* from confinement at the low level of consciousness which is the human condition.

So let’s start at the beginning of the story.

Soteriology

My presumption, based on a reading of the original Michaelian group transcriptions, is that original Michaelian group members were vaguely familiar with ancient religious, but apparently they were not theologically sophisticated. However, another presumption on my part is that the Michaels were theologically sophisticated, because they lived many religious traditions during their many reincarnations, and because they allegedly have access to the Akashic records from where they exist and function on the Mid-Causal Plane. Because of the latter presumption, it seem appropriate to me to briefly review the theological doctrine of liberation as it was taught in various ancient religious traditions. After we do that in this section, we will see in subsequent sections that the Michaels pretty much understood liberation the way it has always been understood, **but with tweaks**.

The Michaels in the original Michaelian group transcriptions never used the word “salvation”, but they used the word “liberation” often. In theology, the two words are somewhat synonymous. Therefore, I quote from the Wikipedia article on “soteriology”, which is the fancy word for the concept in general.

Soteriology (Greek: σωτηρία *sōtēria* “salvation” from σωτήρ *sōtēr* “savior, preserver” and λόγος *logos* “study” or “word”) is the study of religious doctrines of salvation [aka liberation]. Salvation theory occupies a place of special significance in many religions. In the academic field of religious studies, soteriology is understood by scholars as representing a key theme in a number of different religions and is often studied in a comparative context; that is, comparing various ideas about what salvation is and how it is obtained.

BUDDHISM

Buddhism is devoted primarily to liberation from suffering by breaking free of *samsara*, the cycle of compulsory rebirth, by attaining *nirvana*. Many types of Buddhism, Theravada, Mahayana and Vajrayana (or Tantric), emphasize an individual’s meditation and subsequent liberation from *samsara*, which is to become enlightened.

Refer to the chapters, “Reincarnation” and “Enlightenment”, for more about those concepts mentioned above.

Thus, the fundamental reason that the precise identification of these two kinds of clinging to an identity — personal and phenomenal — is considered so important is again soteriological. Through first uncovering our clinging and then working on it, we become able to finally let go of this sole cause for all our afflictions and suffering.

In the Michaelian teachings, the “letting go” of “clinging to identity” starts with overcoming psychological issues (Maya, False Personality, Acculturation, Negative Poles, Chief Features) so that we arrive at True Personality. However, the evolution does not stop there; eventually, one even transcends True Personality and arrives in Essence. However, the evolution does not stop there; eventually one arrives at reunification with Tao, wherein is the end of affliction and suffering (aka Fragment-hood). (Refer to chapters on all of those subjects.) Thus the Michaelian teachings is very compatible with the Buddhist notion of liberation.

However, the Pure Land traditions of Mahayana Buddhism generally focus on the saving nature of the Celestial Buddha Amitābha. In Buddhist eschatology, it is believed that we are currently living in the Latter Day of the Law, a period of 10,000 years where the corrupt nature of the people means the teachings of the Buddha are not listened to. Before this era, the bodhisattva Amitābha made 48 vows, including the vow to accept all sentient beings that called to him, to allow them to take refuge in his Pure land and to teach them the pure dharma. It is therefore considered ineffective to trust in personal meditational and even monastic practices, but to only trust in the primal vow of Amitābha.

The Michaelian teachings equivalent of this Buddhist teaching is that the Transcendental Soul (equivalent to the Bodhisattva), and the Infinite Soul (equivalent to the Buddha) have a part to play in the liberation of humanity as a whole and as individuals, in the sense that all Fragments are subsumed as “composites” in Transcendental Souls and Infinite Soul incarnations as their sixth and seventh Soul Ages, or as the Astral and Causal stages of the soul’s liberation from entrapment in physicality (depending on which channel is speaking). For the details, refer to Chapter 4M, “The Seven Soul Ages”, in my book *A History of the Overleaf Chart*. Thus, the Michaelian teachings is compatible with the Pure Land tradition of Mahayana Buddhism.

CHRISTIANITY

In Christianity, salvation, also called “deliverance” or “redemption”, is the saving of human beings from sin and its consequences. Variant views on salvation are among the main lines dividing the various Christian denominations, being a point of disagreement between Eastern Orthodoxy, Roman Catholicism, and Protestantism, as well as within Protestantism, notably in the Calvinist–Arminian debate. These lines include conflicting definitions of depravity, predestination, atonement, and most pointedly, justification. Christian soteriology ranges from exclusive salvation to universal reconciliation concepts.

While some of the differences are as widespread as Christianity itself, the overwhelming majority agrees that salvation is made possible by the life, crucifixion, death, and resurrection of Jesus.

This section on Soteriology is too brief to discuss the similarities of these diverse quasi- and pseudo-Christian versions of salvation with the Michaelian teachings, but they are discussed in more detail in the chapters on “Christianity” and “Gnosticism” in my book *The Synthesis: The Michaelian Teachings as Perennialism*. I say quasi- and pseudo-Christian because their various notions of the role of Jesus in liberation is not similar to the Michaelian notion, whereas the Gnostic notion is similar. Suffice it to say this here: “The ransom theory was first clearly enunciated by Irenaeus (c.130 – c.202), who was an outspoken critic of Gnosticism, but borrowed ideas from their dualistic worldview. In this worldview, mankind is under the power of the Demiurge, a lesser god who created the world. Yet, humans have a spark of the true divine nature within them, which can be liberated by *gnosis* (knowledge) of this divine spark. This knowledge is revealed by the Logos, “the very mind of the supreme God”, who entered the world in the person of Jesus. Nevertheless, the Logos could not simply undo the power of the Demiurge, and had to hide his real identity, appearing in a physical form, thereby misleading the Demiurge, and liberating mankind. In Irenaeus’ writings, the Demiurge is replaced by the devil.”

[>https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_in_Christianity< — retrieved 10 January 2022] Refer to the chapters, “Transcendental and Infinite Souls” and “Logos” for more details about their roles in the liberation of humanity. The original Michaelian group transcriptions do not refer to the “spark”, but subsequent channels do, such as Stevens and Hoodwin.

The Wikipedia article on Soteriology continues:

HINDUISM

Soteriology is discussed in Hinduism through its principle of *moksha*, also called *nirvana* or *kaivalya*. "In India", wrote Mircea Eliade, "metaphysical knowledge always has a soteriological purpose." *Moksha* refers to freedom from *samsāra*, the cycle of death and rebirth. There are various principles and practices that can lead to the state of *moksha* including the Vedas and the Tantras being the basic scriptures for guidance along with many others like Upanishads, Puranas and more.

ISLAM

Main article: [Salvation § Islam](#)

Muslims believe that everyone is responsible for their own actions. So even though Muslims believe that Adam and Hawwa (Eve), the parents of humanity, committed a sin by eating from the forbidden tree and thus disobeying God, they believe that humankind is not responsible for such an action. They believe that God (Allah) is fair and just and one should request forgiveness from him to avoid being punished for not doing what God asked of them and for listening to Satan. Muslims believe that they, as well as everyone else, are vulnerable to making mistakes and thus they need to seek repentance repeatedly at all times.

Muhammad said "By Allah, I seek the forgiveness of Allah and I turn to Him in repentance more than seventy times each day." (Narrated by al-Bukhaari, no. 6307) God wants his servants to repent and forgives them, he rejoices over it, as Muhammad said: "When a person repents, Allah rejoices more than one of you who found his camel after he lost it in the desert." (Agreed upon. Narrated by al-Bukhaari, no. 6309) Islamic tradition has generally held that it is relatively straightforward to enter Jannah (Paradise). In the Quran, God says: "If you avoid the great sins you have been forbidden, We shall wipe out your minor misdeeds and let you through the entrance of honor [Paradise]."

JAINISM

In Jainism, the soteriological concept is *moksha*, but it is explained differently than the similar term found in Hinduism. *Moksha* is a blissful state of existence of a soul, completely free from the karmic bondage, free from *samsāra*, the cycle of birth and death.

Any Michaelian student will immediately perceive that this very brief description of liberation per Jainism is not that different from the Michaelian teachings. For a refresher, refer to the chapters, "Karma" and "Reincarnation" in this *Study Papers* book. Also, refer to the chapter "Jainism", in my book, *The Synthesis*.

JUDAISM

Main articles: [Salvation § Judaism](#), and [Law given to Moses at Sinai](#)

In contemporary Judaism, redemption (Hebrew *ge'ulah*) is God's redeeming the people of Israel from their various exiles. This includes the final redemption from the present exile. Judaism holds that adherents do not need personal salvation, as Christians believe. Jews do not believe in original sin. Instead, they place a high value on individual morality as defined in the law of God — embodied in what Jews know as the Torah or The Law, given to Moses by God on Mount Sinai, the summary of which is comprised in the Ten Commandments. The Jewish sage Hillel the Elder states that The Law can be further compressed in just one line, popularly known as the Golden Rule: "That which is hateful to you, do not do unto your fellow".

In Judaism, salvation is closely related to the idea of redemption, saving from the states or circumstances that destroy the value of human existence. God, as the universal spirit and creator of the world, is the source of all salvation for humanity, provided an individual honors God by observing his precepts. So redemption or salvation depends on the individual. Judaism stresses that salvation cannot be obtained through anyone else or by just invoking a deity or believing in any outside power or influence.

Some passages in Jewish religious texts assert that no afterlife exists, even for the good and just, with the Book of Ecclesiastes telling the faithful: "The dead know nothing. They have no reward and even the memory of them is lost." For many centuries, rabbis and Jewish laypeople have often wrestled with such passages.

Evidently, standard Judaism has a psychotherapy of "doing the right thing", but not a spirituality. The mystical version of Judaism, the Kabbalah, does not go along with this pessimistic view of people as doomed to oblivion. [[brief quote here](#)] Refer to the chapter "Kabbalism" in my book, *The Synthesis*, for the whole story.

MYSTERY RELIGIONS

In the mystery religions, salvation was less worldly and communal, and more a mystical belief concerned with the continued survival of the individual soul after death. Some savior gods associated with this theme are dying-and-rising gods, often associated with the seasonal cycle, such as Osiris, Tammus, Adonis, and Dionysus. A complex of soteriological beliefs was also a feature of the cult of Cybele and Attis.

The similarity of themes and archetypes to religions found in antiquity to later Christianity has been pointed out by many authors, including the Fathers of the early Christian church. One view is that early Christianity borrowed these myths and motifs from contemporary Hellenistic mystery religions, which possessed ideas such as life-death-rebirth deities and sexual relations between gods and human beings. While Christ myth theory is not accepted by mainstream historians, proponents attempt to establish causal connections to the cults of Mithras, Dionysus, and Osiris among others.

Refer to the section, “Syncretism”, in the Introduction to my book *The Synthesis: The Michaelian Teachings as Perennialism*. What that fancy word means is that members of various religions noticed many similarities of their tradition with the traditions of other cultures, and they borrowed extensively from those other traditions. For the story, refer to <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Syncretism>. In my book, there are also chapters on Mithraism, Egyptian mythology (Osiris), and Greek mythology (Dionysius).

EPICUREAN PHILOSOPHY

More than a century after the establishment of the Garden, the school in which Epicurus taught philosophy, some people in the Roman world were calling Epicurus their Savior. The most prominent soul saved by Epicurus was the Roman Empress Pompeia Plotina. Lucretius, author of *De Rerum Natura*, also depicts the salvific power of philosophy, and of his Scholarch Epicurus, by employing literary devices like the “Broken Jar parable” (where the Scholarch is credited with helping mortals to easily enjoy pleasure), poetry, and imagery.

The salvation of Epicurus has no otherworldly connotations whatsoever. Judging from his *Principal Doctrines* and *Letter to Menoeceus*, he saves his disciples from supernatural fears and excessive desires for what is not natural, and gives his disciples clear ethical guidelines that lead to happiness. Lucretius says Epicurus has set the boundaries for the limits of nature. His followers in Roman times developed Epicurus into a culture hero, and revered him as the founding figure of his School, and as the first to have developed a fully naturalistic cosmology that emancipated mortals from all fear-based superstition.

Refer to the chapter “Philosophy and Philosophers” to read a section on Epicurus. Note that his method was a psychotherapy, not a spirituality, so his psychology only took a person half way to the ultimate goal; other religions and the Michaelian teachings take one further than Epicureanism.

SIKHISM

Sikhism advocates the pursuit of salvation through disciplined personal meditation on the name and message of God, meant to bring one into union with God. But a person’s state of mind has to be detached from this world, with the understanding that this world is a temporary abode and their soul has to remain untouched by pain, pleasure, greed, emotional attachment, praise, slander, and above all, egotistical pride. Thus their thoughts and deeds become “*nirama*” or pure, and they merge with God or attain “union with God”, just as a drop of water falling from the skies merges with the ocean.

Refer to chapters “Meditation and Concentration”, “Extinguishment”, “Tao”, and “Fragmentation and Reintegration” for the Michaelian teachings correlates of these teachings of Sikhism.

OTHER RELIGIONS

Shinto and Tenrikyo similarly emphasize working for a good life by cultivating virtue or virtuous behavior.

In an age which still saw salvation as primarily collective — based on the religion of the family, clan, or state - rather than the emerging province of the individual (as popularized by Buddhism and the mystery religions such as Mithraism), Hellenistic ruler cults from about 300 BCE sometimes promoted the revering of a king as the savior of his people. Prominent examples included Ptolemy I Soter of Egypt and the Seleucids Antiochus I Soter and Demetrius I Soter. In the Egyptian context, the deification of a ruler built on traditional pharaonic religious ideas. [<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Soteriology> — retrieved 10 January 19 2022]

Numerous of these religions and philosophies are discussed in the chapters, “Religion and Religions”, and “Philosophy and Philosophers”.

Liberation per Ancient Religions

Two relevant Wikipedia articles, >https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ancient_Egyptian_afterlife_beliefs< and >https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ancient_Egyptian_conception_of_the_soul<, indicate that the ancient Egyptians had only a vague notion of the liberation of the soul from the body, or the spirit from the flesh. So far as my limited research has found, the idea of liberation was formally launched by Plato ... [[See Wikipedia articles on moksha and henosis. See Wikipedia articles on gnosticism, Jainism:

Champat Rai Jain, an influential Jain writer of the 20th century in his book *The Key of Knowledge* wrote:

The next thing to understand in this connection is the effect of the action of matter on the soul. We have said that the fusion of spirit and matter results in the bondage of the soul. This is literally true; for the union of substances always tends to limit their natural functions, though new properties and faculties arise in consequence of it. As hydrogen and oxygen, which are gaseous by nature, are robbed of their natural 'freedom', i.e., of their gaseous nature, by combining with each other in the form of water, so does the soul become crippled in respect of its natural functions in consequence of its union with matter. This is the bondage, meaning, as it does, the suspension and vitiation of the natural functions and properties of the soul-substance, which are held in check for the time being...

[>[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bandha_\(Jainism\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bandha_(Jainism))< – retrieved 14 December 2021]

Liberation per Gurdjieff

With this subject we have yet more terminology and concepts — with modifications — borrowed from Gurdjieff.

[Gurdjieff:] "The study of the forty-eight orders of laws to which man[kind] is subject cannot be abstract like the study of astronomy; they can be studied only by observing them in oneself and by getting free from them. At the beginning a man must simply understand that he is quite needlessly subject to a thousand petty but irksome laws which have been created for him by other people and by himself. When he attempts to get free from them he will see that he cannot. Long and persistent attempts to gain freedom from them will convince him of his slavery. The laws to which man[kind] is subject can only be studied by struggling with them, by trying to get free from them." [P.D. Ouspensky, *In Search of the Miraculous*, p. 84]

[Gurdjieff:] "Freedom, liberation, this must be the aim of man[kind]. To become free, to be liberated from slavery; this is what man[kind] ought to strive for when he becomes even a little conscious of his position. There is nothing else for him, and nothing else is possible so long as he remains a slave both inwardly and outwardly. But he cannot cease to be a slave outwardly while he remains a slave inwardly. Therefore in order to become free, man[kind] must gain inner freedom. The first reason for man[kind]'s inner slavery is his ignorance, and above all, his ignorance of himself. Without self-knowledge, without understanding the working and functions of his machine, man cannot be free, he cannot govern himself and he will always remain a slave, and the plaything of the forces acting upon him. This is why in all ancient teachings the first demand at the beginning of the way to liberation was: 'Know thyself'." [P.D. Ouspensky, *In Search of the Miraculous*, p. 104]

"throw off the yokes"

per Gurdjieff: confinement, restraint, limitation by "laws" – many at the low end where humans live, few at the high end where God lives

Now that we know the history of the concept of liberation, we can proceed to an exploration of what it is that we are in the process of being liberated from. After that, we will explore liberation itself.

Liberation is not Escapism

This word "escape" is ambiguous in the original Michaelian group transcriptions as it is in the world in general. One type of escape is legitimate, such as escape/liberation from the prison of psychological issues (False Personality, Maya, Negative Poles, Chief Features), but there is also the use of the word as referring to avoidance of reality, as mere *escapism*. The latter usage is found in this passage (and others):

Alice: Not a monastery; not a sanctuary; not an escape — to be in Essence. [24 February 1974]

This use of escape was in its meaning of escapism; communal living should not be used to bypass the work of transformation, transmutation and transcendence. In fact, communal living is meant to give one the time

and energy to transform, to facilitate escape entrapment in Personality to liberation in Essence. Refer to the chapter “Communal Living”, for more information.

The use of alcohol as an escape from reality is mentioned in a couple of passages:

Twice, there has been an involvement with drinking as an escape. Twice, you have aided each other in facing that which you wished to escape. [19 June 1974]

Marty: Newly recovered alcoholic living in my home. Mature Sage or Priest in Submission?

Many [Sages], yes, do have this problem, sometimes due to the extremely false facade of the life they lead on stage or as a “famous personage”. The alienation again drives them into an escape route that often ends in degradation. Sages, because of their flair for the dramatic, usually at one time or another, choose this type of life [alcoholism].

Any device used to avoid facing one’s issues is escapism, or what is called by some, “spiritual bypassing”. An internet search on that phrase yields such as the following:

DEFINING SPIRITUAL BYPASSING

- Using the spiritual (transpersonal) to bypass the personal e.g. espousing ideals of unconditional love but not permitting love to show up in its more challenging personal dimension.
- The use of spiritual practices and beliefs to avoid dealing with painful feelings, unresolved wounds and developmental needs.
- Spirituality which accepts the light whilst avoiding its heat. Not only avoids pain but also legitimizes such avoidance.
- Is the shadow of spirituality.

SPIRITUAL BYPASSING INCLUDES

- Exaggerated detachment
 - Emotional numbing and repression
 - Overdone niceness versus emotional depth and authenticity
 - Overemphasis on the positive
 - Anger-phobia (confusing anger with aggression and ill will)
 - Blind or overtly tolerant compassion
 - Weak or too porous boundaries
 - Lopsided development e.g. cognitive intelligence too far ahead of emotional and moral intelligence
 - Debilitating judgment about ones shadow side
 - Devaluing of the personal relative to the spiritual
 - Delusions of having arrived at a higher level of being
- [>www.integralpsychology.org/uploads/what_is_spiritual_bypassing.pdf< — retrieved 10 January 2022]

Readers of these study papers will recognize such varieties of spiritual bypassing in various chapters. The basic idea is that one must experience *through*, not experience *around*, to get to the other side. As here:

Liz: I'd like to ask about my unreasonable fear of reptiles, dinosaurs, and snakes. (A suggestion was made by someone for her to try marijuana.)

This is an avenue that is open to you, Liz, to experience out the fear you once hid from, as you were in that cold room knowing that there were ritual snakes all over the grounds and that you were powerless to escape, not so much from them as from your experience. [29 September 1974]

Imprisonment

Next we examine the original Michaelian group transcriptions for occurrences of variations of the word prison.

Dick: Things like trips and new impressions don't help much, because the wolf goes on vacation with me, and I can also see where, if I ask a Transcendental Soul to take over my body, he would do quite well with it. In fact, there is almost no end to what he would do with it. But that would mean that I would go from here to the Astral Plane and I would hate to carry all this garbage with me. Also,

the reason I don't start anything new, is that I know that the wolf will somehow stop it anyway, and also there is a great deal of fear that helps keep me in prison and I'm afraid to get out.

The amount of "garbage" you have discarded during this lifetime has been significant. The pilgrimage would force all of you to be real. There would be no opportunity for False Personality to take over. We do not like to make suggestions concerning the disbursement of funds. However, we see in several of you a real need to do this thing.

Dick: I think that all unhappiness results from greed or wanting something. Greed imprisons you in Maya. [02 October 1973]

Dick: I felt in Robert [Burton]'s group that only men in the active Body Types could contribute anything to the group except for money. You could not even be his friend unless you were an active body type. The Body Type stuff is the Body Type stuff — I verified it as true.

The Body Types refer to characteristics that belong to False Personality. It is in the same category as saying, "I am a typical Leo or Taurus." If you believe yourself to be a victim of your Body Type, you are. In fact, you are virtually imprisoned by it. [06 October 1973]

Refer to the chapter "Body Type" for more information about that. The thrust of this answer seems to be that the Body Type is influential, but it is not determinative, unless you believe it to be determinative.

There was an impression that the soul is entrapped in this physical body, and I disagree with that answer, and my opinion was expressed regarding this: there is one Infinite Soul, and we are each manifestations of the same soul, and I fail to see how the Infinite soul can be trapped in a finite body.

All souls, or Fragments, as we choose to call them for now, are of course, a part of the universal creative force, which we call the Tao. However, when this fragmentation occurs and the physical cycle begins, this Fragment is remote from the Tao, and remote from what we call the Infinite Soul. We think that we have a problem with semantics here. Let us use an analogy and perhaps this will become crystal clear. Imagine the Atlantic Ocean as the whole; imagine filling ten test tubes, then sealing them so that they are both water tight and air tight; then imagine dropping them back into the ocean. They are a part of the whole, yes, but unless some outside force liberates them, they are remote from the source and trapped in an effective prison. This same way the soul is trapped in the body. The body is very limited in what it can do." You [Edgar is in a wheelchair] should understand this really better than the others. "The soul in its true spiritual state has no limitations or handicaps." [20 December 1973]

Paradoxically, all human life yearns to be free, while it expends tremendous energy developing mind prisons for itself. The yearning for God is that same state. It is sad. It is wistful and to those of us who no longer yearn, it is tragic, for the tendrils of frustration and anguish traverse the entire physical universe. If any one of you could hear the screams of all the thousands of civilizations, you would abandon many of your personal dilemmas, for you would realize that life problems are largely insoluble, and this is a part of the drama that you are starring in. Each frame that you play creates a new opportunity for you to tire of the charade, but seldom is this recognized and the play goes on. Within this room is gathered a group that at least can be angry about its imprisonment. [30 September 1977]

Freedom

Next we examine the original Michaelian group transcriptions for occurrences of variations of the word freedom...

Love and sex seem like separate things – but when they're pulling together, it seems like a stronger force is generated than either by itself. It seems like the only kind of energy that I have experienced to date that might be the kind of energy that you need for actual [spiritual] evolution.

Sexual energy, when used to express higher Centers, can be incredibly strong. When the energy is relegated downward, it results in an energy leak. That is sometimes why you want to sleep after physical union. You fed lower Centers — sometimes the Moving Center and the Essence is exhausted, so the body goes to sleep to free the Essence. When you use [the] Emotional Center to express Moving [Center] needs, don't you feel the leak? So, if you feel that, just stretch your mind. Right now, you are all using Emotional Centers to satisfy Moving [Center] needs, and this is a result that is culturally induced — that you feel something uplifting each time you have a physical union. That is absurd! It just is not possible. The body is not capable of experiencing ecstasy. Only the Essence can experience ecstasy. The body does not even come close with its sensual pleasures. [03 July 1973]

As you live more and more in your Essence, you will realize that the goals are very different. The body seeks survival in physical form. The primeval Essence does not need the form and substance. It cares nothing for the desires of the body. It seeks elevation through any avenue open to it. Think of the way Jesus died. This is always the way it is in the end. Entrapment in the physical body is part of karma for the Essence. It will fight to be free, and if martyrdom is all there is, it will choose that door to freedom.

We asked for further elaboration on this, as there was some confusion.

If that is the only route to higher consciousness, then the higher self will take that route to work off the karma. [03 July 1973]

The Essence uses others to get free. The state you desire can be achieved by decision. This may sound platitudinous, but it is the only way it can happen. No one is going to do it for you — take your hand and lead you to the sacred spring, so that you can drink the holy elixir and have instant knowledge. [03 July 1973]

Discussion: concerning being unpopular because you held unpopular beliefs, pursued teachings, etc.

There will always be unpopularity when unpopular ideas are espoused and expressed. The body does not wish the Essence to be freed. It will fight to keep the Essence asleep. It takes many such fights to strengthen the Essence. [12 August 1973]

I feel that I've been cast into the wind, without direction, without control.

You are free to choose. The rub comes in where False Personality, which is karma driven, makes most of the choices, in direct opposition to the desires of the Essence. [08 October 1973]

Well, what would you concentrate on?

Think of the free-floating Essence, devoid of maya. [20 October 1973]

Is there a message for our group for the new year?

We would think that cohesion would be enough a goal to keep you going. There is a very viable structure beginning now with all of you who would be willing to live on a reduced scale in order to free yourselves from maya. This is what we have endeavored to bring about. Merely the cognizance is a start. The details must be worked out by each of you in a mutually satisfactory manner. Believe it or not, consensus can be reached within this group. Some will take longer than others, but even they will eventually verify. [30 December 1973]

It seems that Robert Burton has lost more than he has who have stayed with him. There's no talking, you aren't supposed to show emotions and you have to be so careful.

This teaching should eventually free you from the yoke of collective guilt, then the sober affect will be even more inappropriate. Learn joy now and it will not be such a shock then. [10 January 1974]

How did the healing in Edgar take place?

We have said many times that we offer guidance and support. The work is yours. We can show you the path. You must walk it. We can show you the healing and the healer, but you must be healed. For the first time your essence (Edgar) was free to rise above the body and the pain, and experience freedom. This is synthesis on a higher level. [20 February 1974]

Are they chosen on the basis of karma?

First of all, the locale, the socioeconomic status, the parents you chose — all are formative in programming the bio-computer. These Overleaves are chosen by the soul to be acted out in life, independent — most of the time — of the wishes of the essence. The soul chose them to complete the specific task. The soul desires simplicity and freedom, making a split between soul and essence. [27 February 1974]

My mother suicided. Was this so of her? Did she make too many unwise choices?

This is — as far as we know — the only set of circumstances that drive the soul to seek this way to freedom. [13 March 1974]

The personality bases its actions on the cultural mores in which it moves. The soul or Essence does none of these, and feels the freedom. [17 March 1974]

Is Michael willing to reveal to each of us our karmic debts?

Yes. These small sessions are workable for this. Most in this group do not have substantial karma. This is what has freed you to seek the teaching. [17 April 1974]

Does this mean acting out of essence instead of personality?

[It means the] freeing of the soul. The soul in bondage is sick — there is no doubt about it. [07 July 1974]

Could Michael comment on ego strength?

What you wish to give up is the strength of the ego of the personality. The Essence has much strength of its own. They are separate and distinct. Remember, when you become your Essence, there will not be the albatross [burden] of [your] Repression [Mode] to deal with. Perhaps it would be helpful to point out to you at this time, Richard, that you come far closer to loving when you are painting than at any other time. [RH being the reincarnation of the French painter Auguste Renoir.] You do not have to start with loving difficult persons. This is not the primary objective at this time. Loving is [from the] Higher Emotion[al Center] and that requires Balance [of all Centers]. The person who is “conscious” is not a doer anyway. Most who have reached that exalted state of physical being prefer not to *do*. They are content merely to *be* with the present. That feeling you have glimpsed when you were in those states briefly. (paraphrased) This is something we have asked you to consider before: what is it you wish to do, learn to be more fruitful and happier in life, or go on to spiritual enlightenment? The goals are very different, and the methods of approach, therefore, would have to be quite different. Living in life requires what you are calling self-image and ego strength. Spiritual acceleration does not require this. It requires negation of the cultural facade. Those who defined the ego and ego states thereof were not, after all, conscious beings and were observing only the personalities of others with their own personalities. The Essence, separate from this, has an innate strength of its own, and can survive if the body is prepared for the surge when it comes. Disintegration only comes when the personality is lost and the Essence is freed prematurely, such as in some psychotic states. Otherwise, those on the path find the surge exhilarating and liberating and are prepared for it when it comes, but this only comes after the groundwork has been laid. Those tools we have given you are at your disposal. You might say that the Essence has its own ego. You are just not acquainted with it. The Artisan ego [Richard was an Artisan] is what has produced the world’s great masterpieces, not always for the King’s ransom, either, many times in a lonesome gallery. [14 September 1974]

Due to the rigidity of my beliefs, I cannot move freely. Is there something Michael could say to help me at this point?

Your most difficult lesson will be in accepting that yourself is responsible and no others, Richard. Only then can you experience your experience. [21 September 1974]

Sexual behavior in this culture is largely instinctive to the point where any gesture of friendliness is interpreted as a sexual overture if it comes from one of the opposite gender, and the fantasies and expectations begin. When you behave as society wishes you to, you can know for certain that instinct has a large part in it, unless of course, it happens to coincide with what you really desire, and this is rare. The dictates of this culture are severe and stern. We doubt that it is much fun for anyone. This is not necessarily [a] true [factor] of the entire Physical Plane. Although the Physical Plane is by nature solid, ponderous and complex, you make it even more so by trying to analyze these behavior patterns in terms other than instinct. You have been taught that to even think of instinctive behavior in conjunction with human beings is bad. Well, this is nonsense. It is so strong that it overrides your pleasure and your growth. Creatures of reason have it all over their fellow inhabitants, as they alone are able to experience awe and delight. But the creatures of reason in this culture seldom allow themselves this luxury. They instead find devious methods of avoiding these experiences. The denial of pleasure and the pursuit of pain is high on your list of priority and it should be clear now why this is true, but there is no

reason for it other than the instinctive memories. This is the strongest reason we know of for working on the separation from your personality and allowing the Essence to free itself. Only the Essence can experience ecstasy. We have told you this before and we emphasized it again and again, to keep you aware of the goal. Separation from the personality's conflicts allows the student to override the instinctive behavior patterns that now govern your actions. This culture erects tremendous barriers in the name of progress to keep you from sighting the goal. Many of these are in the forms of false organizations that supersede the true organizations, and keep you from seeking your cadre. When you align yourself with these false organizations or barriers, you become completely caught up in their dogmas and lose sight of any alternatives. [21 December 1974]

Liberation

In this section, we review the transcriptions in chronological order.

I would like to know how long you have been the leader of your world, and I would like to know what you teach them.

I have been here for ten of this world's revolutions. I teach them what I would teach you: that is, to seek moderation in all things, to love unselfishly, to become intimate with the inner workings of your spirit, to live in the essence of that spirit, to liberate the trapped Essence is the reincarnational purpose. I try to guide them in this path, so that they might be free sooner. [Soleal, early 1973]

Richard Hannah: Is fasting healthy?

Fasting when done properly leads to the liberated meditation. It produces the same state as marijuana if practiced long enough and diligently enough. You should not fast if you are ill or if there is honest grief or pressures of private agendas. [21 August 1973]

The use of psychotropic substances to liberate the ordinary mundane consciousness has been used for millennia.

The "women's liberation" movement was in high gear at the time, the mid 1970s, and it was a topic of conversation in the original Michaelian group at least once that we have knowledge of:

We discussed how women were or were not accountable for their crimes. When governments become feminine, they become decadent and fall. Female murderers many times are not held for their crimes. Juries are prejudiced. Only one woman in the history of California was executed. In jobs, when women make a mistake, they are not called to task — it's passed off with, "She's a woman, she can't help it." Women will never be liberated until men are liberated when the employers can deal with women as they do with men.

Men are extremely intolerant of mistakes that women make. [27 September 1973]

Some of the internal depression and anger I experience seems to be the result of expectations I have of myself.

Reexamine those expectations for shades of realism. One step at a time is normally effective for useful ambulation; why not for spiritual liberation? [02 October 1973]

It seems that it is the personality that is mad — the personality is the wolf and it is trying to eat Essence and beat on it.

It is only trying to survive. Survival is the goal for the organism [the physical body and False Personality]; ecstasy is the goal of the Essence. Being burned at the stake was an ecstatic experience for the soul of Joan D'Arc. Liberation — whether by death by fire or whatever method — is the goal. The body seeks to survive regardless. [02 October 1973]

I have a complaint and comment and a question. I don't seem to be able to change knowledge into being and I don't feel any different.

You do approach being under the influence of marijuana. This is an incontrovertible message about the pace of your life. Marijuana slows the responses to physical phenomena and heightens emotional response to all experiences. You feel the music instead of hearing it. The five primitive senses belong to False Personality. They can be compared to margarine — they will never be butter, no matter how you color them or package them.

Your life is not geared for understanding, just toiling. We know that this is difficult for the two Richards [Chambers and Hannah]. However, Jesus was trying to tell this same truth two thousand years ago. We keep telling you: you must choose your path. If that [chosen path] is spiritual liberation, then you must eliminate the distractions of maya. If the goal is different, then the path will be different and you are correct in assuming that we don't care [which path you choose]. We impart the Logos dispassionately. It is yours to accept or reject. [06 October 1973]

The use of psychedelic substances is mentioned yet again in this Q&A exchange:

Someone had a question about William and his overuse of the drug PCP.

This man needs to know that those experiences can be had without [psychotropic] drugs, of course. Yes, he is pretty dependent upon this fairly dangerous crutch now — the essence enjoys the temporary liberation, yes. The lady could profit, but she cannot bring about any change in him — he must do this himself. [05 June 1974]

Richard Chambers to Sarah Chambers: Do you want to go back to work so you can liberate my spirit? [06 October 1973]

Guess I'm saying there has to be large internal changes in order to make a change in jobs, before I can trust cosmic influences. Soleal said you have to use your own resources. Michael is saying, "Don't toil so much." That's what I'm complaining about. They say not to work so hard.

We hold up Soleal as an example of how this can be done by someone living very much in the world. He is not an ascetic by any stretch of the imagination. He simply has learned to dissociate himself from the mundane and concentrate on the arcane. The decision to pursue spiritual liberation is an agonizing one for everyone who makes it, without exception. No adept has found it easy. If we have led you to think that being an Old soul means being on the gravy train, that is your misinterpretation. It is probably the most difficult [cycle] of all. The only thing that makes it better is your own readiness to stand apart from the mainstream and begin to verify. This, of course, makes you even odder than ever. [06 October 1973]

With meditation, I am close.

Then perhaps, for you, it will be possible. It does not matter how the liberation comes about. If it requires marijuana for a while, then so be it. [06 October 1973]

When love is turned on, this in itself puts you on a high. Maybe that's "man #4" [Balanced Man] according to Gurdjieff and it is not permanent.

The love of the Logos or agape permeated the being of Jesus even prior to the manifestation. He lived for the word. The quest for spiritual liberation took precedence over all things, sometimes to his despair prior to manifestation. This was an Emotionally Centered Mercury-Saturn. He was passionate and sensual. When others rejected his opinions, he was astonished. [06 October 1973]

What is the purpose [of my physical disability]?

To seek liberation of the trapped Essence through coming to grips with the frailty of the physical body, and its crude, gross limitations. You have not experienced disability of this gravity for a long time. This time we feel there is much opportunity. [08 November 1973]

This is counterintuitive. Michael is saying that physical challenges often force the Personality to seek an escape from the body and acknowledge a higher, better reality, the realm of Essence. ???

There was an impression that the soul is entrapped in this physical body, and I disagree with that answer, and my opinion was expressed regarding this: there is one Infinite soul, and we are each manifestations of the same soul, and I fail to see how the Infinite soul can be trapped in a finite body.

All souls, or Fragments, as we choose to call them for now, are of course, a part of the universal creative force, which we call the Tao. However, when this fragmentation occurs and the physical cycle begins, this Fragment is remote from the Tao, and remote from what we call the Infinite Soul. We think that we have a problem with semantics here. Let us use an analogy and perhaps this will become crystal clear. Imagine the Atlantic ocean as the whole; imagine filling ten test tubes, then sealing them so that they are both water tight and air tight; then imagine dropping them back into the ocean. They are a part of the whole, yes, but unless some outside force liberates them, they are remote from the source and trapped in an effective prison. This same way the soul is trapped in the body. The body is very limited in what it can do." You [Edgar is in a wheelchair] should

understand this really better than the others. "The soul in its true spiritual state has no limitations or handicaps. [20 December 1973]

Is there a commonality of soul level, Role, Goal, in different types of handicapped people such as deaf, blind, mentally retarded, emotionally retarded, those with learning disabilities, etc.? Are they definable as a group?

Sensory deprivations such as deafness and blindness often are karmic. However, there is much commonality within the emotional disorders. For instance, manic depressives are always mature, Emotionally Centered souls. Schizophrenics are mid cycle Mature Souls who have ego disintegration without the corresponding spiritual growth. Hyperactive children normally are Moving Centered Mature Souls with Retardation goals. Specific learning disorders, such as agraphia [the inability and the loss of the ability to write and spell when writing], are sometimes karmic, but this is rare. It normally points to a mid cycle [Fourth Level] Mature Soul who has a Retardation goal. On the other hand, gross mental retardation is enhanced by bad genes, although this is chosen for growth. The disintegration of the personality, however false, is not something that the individual can handle without the corresponding liberation of the Essence. Childhood schizophrenia or autism is quite different, and should not be compared to the adult psychosis. These children are Infant Souls who have perceived the "not me" as hostile at an extremely early stage, sometimes shortly after birth, or even during actual birth, and have subsequently withdrawn. Children who exhibit unwanted hostility, and are subject to loud outbursts and antisocial behavior are normally Infant Souls of Exalted Roles with Dominant [Dominance?] Goals, who also perceive the "not me" as hostile. Emotional disorders occur for the most part during the Mature Cycle, and are related to the soul's perception of those around it, however erroneous that might be. This causes an enormous buildup in guilt, and also hostility. We can give you an excellent example of a relatively frail, Intellectually Centered, young child, a mid Cycle [Fourth Level] Mature Scholar, born into a family of achievement-oriented Warriors with Dominant Goals. The child reacts time and time again with failure. [27 December 1973]

I feel I am my own worst enemy and I want Michael's help.

That is valid. We think that you are not helping yourself right now, Shirley. None of the conflicts you are now experiencing are karmic, and the suffering is needless.

Accept the guidance of those who would give freely of their time and company, and reconstruct your life around this new superstructure. You will find the meaning you seek. You can alter your goal and change things for yourself in a most positive way by taking what is offered instead of chasing rainbows that have already faded. This advice can be taken to heart by others here also, but you are now dwelling in fantasy [typical for Idealists], and you must take the step that will liberate you from this. If you follow our advice, you cannot fail to change it. It is guaranteed. [24 January 1974]

This is what we therapists call "creative illness."

The recognition of the ignorance of false personality is the first step toward liberating the Essence. [27 January 1974]

Is there a difference between introspection and meditation?

Oh! Yes! There is no comparison. Introspection is often morbid. Meditation should always be joyful and produce a feeling of liberation. [06 February 1974]

We keep telling you that the desires of the soul are the antithesis of the desire of the organism. Liberation is one of these; unencumbrance is another; pleasure is the greatest [desire of the soul]. We would seem quite hedonistic to most of you. [17 March 1974]

As I see it, the essence desires liberation from the body. How can these #1 experiences carry over from one life to another when the essence is not of the body? — tragedies only happen to false personality, which is not of essence.

You now have an important insight to work on. The goal is to leave the body free and clear. No, it does not as long as these unfulfilled desires and primary unresolved experiences exist. The Essence drags its barnacles around with it between lives and affects the carryover, even though a new Personality is born in the new body. [17 April 1974]

The following two passages describe another path to liberation, commonly known as kundalini:

What is Kundalini? Is it true? High energy?

In a broad sense, this is what you refer to as Sexual Center — the energy therein. It is a liberating force for the Essence. [24 April 1974]

Is the Kundalini [energy] source "sleeping?"

Not so much sleeping as simply stored. The liberation of higher energies is just that — a freeing of the stores. This can be brought about in many of the ways we have suggested to you. It cannot be brought about by any transfer of magical energies from one soul to another. Even if we could transfer energy to you, you might choose not to utilize this. The utilization of higher energies must come from you, and we can say that you, Richard, have as much held in abeyance as anyone else in this room. [16 June 1974]

Could Michael comment on ego strength?

What you wish to give up is the strength of the ego of the personality. The Essence has much strength of its own. They are separate and distinct. Remember, when you become your Essence, there will not be the albatross [burden] of [your] Repression [Mode] to deal with. Perhaps it would be helpful to point out to you at this time, Richard, that you come far closer to loving when you are painting than at any other time. [RH being the reincarnation of the French painter Auguste Renoir.] You do not have to start with loving difficult persons. This is not the primary objective at this time. Loving is [from the] Higher Emotion[al Center] and that requires Balance [of all Centers]. The person who is "conscious" is not a doer anyway. Most who have reached that exalted state of physical being prefer not to *do*. They are content merely to *be* with the present. That feeling you have glimpsed when you were in those states briefly. (paraphrased) This is something we have asked you to consider before: what is it you wish to do, learn to be more fruitful and happier in life, or go on to spiritual enlightenment? The goals are very different, and the methods of approach, therefore, would have to be quite different. Living in life requires what you are calling self-image and ego strength. Spiritual acceleration does not require this. It requires negation of the cultural facade. Those who defined the ego and ego states thereof were not, after all, conscious beings and were observing only the personalities of others with their own personalities. The Essence, separate from this, has an innate strength of its own, and can survive if the body is prepared for the surge when it comes. Disintegration only comes when the personality is lost and the Essence is freed prematurely, such as in some psychotic states. Otherwise, those on the path find the surge exhilarating and liberating and are prepared for it when it comes, but this only comes after the groundwork has been laid. Those tools we have given you are at your disposal. You might say that the Essence has its own ego. You are just not acquainted with it. The Artisan ego [Richard was an Artisan] is what has produced the world's great masterpieces, not always for the King's ransom, either, many times in a lonesome gallery. [14 September 1974]

Talked of a headache he sometimes gets — this came tonight immediately after receiving the information he asked for. What is it? Why?

As for the band of tension, there is an underlying disappointment that needs not be. You are a good student and as capable as those others.

As the goal of agape or spiritual liberation entails ultimately becoming an adept, the concept of telepathy should not be taken lightly. It is within the grasp of you, and would require an enormous amount of predictability. When you meet with an adept who is strongly telepathic, and also totally vulnerable, you will understand this more fully, but it is not an unrealistic goal for the man Eugene. [24 September 1974]

Man's place in the universe should, of course, have become a little more apparent to you since we opened the discussion on complexity. As we have intimated before, the Tao is the epitome of simplicity and therefore the simplicity toward which we all strive in our return to the primeval. Therefore, the Physical Plane, with its enormous complexity, offers by far the most challenge, and also the most barriers to spiritual liberation. Man, or rather, Mechanical Man [a Gurdjieff expression], must then cut through the glamour and allurements of the Physical Plane in order to see the light of truth. Nowhere else is this as difficult, for on the Physical Plane, all is glamour and all is complex, even compared to the Astral plane, which to the high planes can seem quite complex. Man must strive uphill in the battle to free the essence. By "man," of course, we refer to all creatures of reason. For in all languages we know of, there is a word meaning "man." This uphill battle is growth-producing and also provides the strength to persevere through the several cycles spent on the Physical Plane.

The lessons learned on the Physical Plane are necessarily painful just because they are so complex. With simplification, there is analgesia. On this world, there have been significant cultural and religious barriers to growth. On other worlds, there have been hostile natural environments and threats from without to contend with.

Man is the first rung on the cosmic ladder and must take this rung slowly, learning to place one foot in front of him at a time. Here on the Physical Plane, there are limitations placed on size and speed, on senses and acuity, with which man can perceive his universe. Until he realizes that he can break these barriers, he is trapped. We say trapped by maya and this is precisely what it amounts to, because he becomes so immersed in life crises that he fails to contemplate even the purpose of his sojourn here until quite late in the cycle. Then he must race to make up for lost time. By that time, however, he has usually experienced the greater part of life, and can relax and get down to the real business of study and contemplation that allows him access to the pan-dimensional universe. [22 October 1974]

How can we prepare ourselves? What can we do to help ourselves see through the veil?

You are right, Richard, "veil" is a word we would prefer, for these barriers — from our vantage point — are as insubstantial as the morning mists. But man chooses to solidify them to the point where he cannot destroy them. This brings them into line with the solidness of the Physical Plane. "Solid" is very much like ponderous to us. The weighty philosophical battles, battles waged by Mechanical Man, are his attempts to solidify even thought and make it more complex. He must first come to the point that he can verify for himself the tenuousness of that which stands between him and the pan-dimensional universe, and the path toward simplicity and therefore perfection. All in this universe is truly perfect. It is only faulty perception that renders it imperfect. Once the perception is full, the imperfection is gone, and the liberated essence can perceive all there is on the higher planes, and can move about without the solid limits of the Physical Plane. Many of you have had a taste of this and know of what we speak. The heavy weightiness of the Physical Plane is a burden you have chosen to bear in order to come to this point. Now you wish to throw off the yoke, and this is why we have chosen to assist you. If you were not ready, you would simply not hear the words. We have stated, essentially, the purpose — succinct to be sure, but still essential. [22 October 1974]

What is the SRG on David: [Guess:] late Mature Slave or Warrior, in Acceptance, Spiritualist, Emotional part of Moving Center, Martial / Mercurial or Jovial, Chief Feature of Martyrdom or maybe Self-deprecation, Mode of Caution or Observation, Intellectual part of Emotional Center?

There is a tremendous internal battle being waged here, which is why we suggested that he study the Overleaves carefully. For instance, this Essence desires to lead. This personality desires to "help" because of the combination of Overleaves here. This results in the love-hate, attraction-repulsion complex. You were not far off the track in the beginning, and then wandered far afield. This is a First Level Old Warrior in Acceptance, with a strong Chief Feature of Martyrdom, but yes, with much Self-deprecation, a Spiritualist in the Caution mode, yes, mostly Mars, but with some Jovial modification, in the Emotional part of Moving Center.

Whenever there is this strong an element of repulsion towards one's chosen life task, you can be certain that there are major Overleaves in conflict, as is the case here. Once the soul is liberated to the point where it can gratify certain of its basic needs, such as the Artisan's need to create, then this conflict begins to resolve; but until then it must remain on the plane where William David's attitude lies. Until the Essence, or soul, if you will, is free enough to have this lead, the personality has the upper hand, and directs blindly from the Overleaves — and it is truly a trap, no way around it; the victim is held fast in the steel jaws of his Overleaves. This man may now develop some insights into his entrapment. At least we know he will begin to photograph himself as the victim from now on, and in his case, this would be positive work, for then he can begin to see ways of not being the victim if he wishes. He has tremendous drives toward leadership. Just photograph his use of the word "boss" in line with the terminology he has developed. This is a dead giveaway to his space. [07 December 1974]

Much discussion ensued about "boss," "partner," "servant"; our perception of it and how David Pearlman sees it. Other similar triads were brought to mind — parent, sibling, child, etc.

All of these "triads" are, of course, valid in describing the various combinations of interactions of the personality, but you must not overlook the fact that there is an over truth that supersedes all of these. That is

the truth of the Essence, or truth as the liberated Essence perceives it, which is far less complex than any truth that is perceived by the entrapped Essence, and the key is in the simplicity with which the truth is perceived. The more verbiage needed to explain a truth, the more deeply entrapped that truth has to be. Many fine-sounding psychological words having five or more syllables have been coined to describe obnoxious behavior stemming from harsh Overleaves. These are all true of course, and they all say the same thing to one from this [mid-Causal] vantage point. They are the entrapped Essence working overtime to produce a truth. [07 December 1974]

Richard Chambers commented and asked about the relationship between trapped Essence and personality.

The personality does not even perceive that much of the truth. The personality does not look at truth, only at the needs of its systems for perpetuation — and even these are quite often false: just look at the obese person's "need" for food. [07 December 1974]

Oh, of course, if you identify with this group in the same manner and to the extent that you identify with barrier groups, it will serve as an isolating factor, and a very good one at that. On the other hand, you can take the teaching for what it is, a liberating, growth-producing force, and expand your love to include all man. You see, this teaching does something that these barrier groups do not like very much: it gives you carte blanche permission to love, and it does not specify that you must love only white American Protestants, or any other barrier group members. [21 December 1974]

Is there a correlation between energy Centers and chakras?

When one becomes Balanced, there is tremendous correlation, yes, for you feel the use of the energy in these spots described as, or called, chakras, with the higher Intellectual Center being, of course, analogous to the highest chakra or the chakra of liberation that places it above the physical body. All the chakras would be felt as energy Centers, yes. Now that the Emotional Center was responding to an appropriate situation, this would be felt in the "gut" chakra. [25 January 1975]

Abdullah Bawaney felt very highly charged bolts of energy coming in. He didn't need much sleep, and couldn't find a way to outlay the energy.

You can utilize these periods of positive energy flow to work toward Balance through work in the Centers. Moving Center is a good one for this channel, and is, of course, the easiest to reach. Other good work can involve the breathing exercises that you experienced, turning the energy upward and out into the liberated meditation. You see, even meditation is subject to real and artificial space, and the personality imposes limitations on the space that the meditation may occupy. The liberated meditation of the Essence utilizes the energy efficiently, and does not cause leakage, resulting in fatigue. The moments of Power [Mode] that those in the Caution Mode experience from time to time may be utilized in the same fashion. [08 Feb 1975]

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We had a long discussion about finances of the commune, spiritual needs and the physical space necessary.

We have no comment on financial alternatives as these are life crisis situations and excellent fruit for photography. However, there is one alternative that was not even discussed, and that is abandonment of any action because of unreadiness that is now being called fear and many other euphemisms. This is of course a viable alternative and should not be discarded without serious contemplation. Perhaps you are not ready to part with your suffering and this prolongation would give you the space to experience the anguish a little longer.

You are quite right. There is no more preferable system around for working against the Overleaves than the one designed by Georges [Gurdjieff] and we see much progress evolving from the continuous self and communal remembering that is now occurring. Those who make themselves a part of this task force will find their tasks or burdens lightened considerably. Those who do not may continue to find themselves tight, held-fast victims of their Overleaves. Yes, many of you have now experienced that much lies beyond the five crude senses of the Physical Plane. We find this enhances the student's motivation if he can, at least once, glimpse the goal he knows, or verifies its existence; but we must at this time warn you that even if you do make a voyage in real space and do experience the liberation therein, it is only a partial experience. For as long as you take your Overleaves with you, you drag all of your artificial rhythms into that space with you, and you continue to perceive in a limited sense. This accounts for the frightening experiences many souls do have when they venture into real space without the necessary groundwork. It is utterly terrifying to most of them. If you do not wish to confront astral dragons then you must learn not to create them with your Overleaves. If you do not wish to confront demons then you must first learn or verify for yourself that there are none. In other words, if you wish to walk you must first learn to stand.... If you are thrown together in the work on a continuous basis, then you give yourself no choice. You must survive and in order to survive, you begin to do the work, or you see yourself being left far behind by others. Yes, the path is steep but it is, and must be, also joyous. There is enormous satisfaction at the end of each mile successfully walked. We would not expect that you would be utterly without joy. If you were then you could not grow at all. Joy is an integral part of agape and therefore an indispensable part of the goal of this teaching. This joy, of course, is not to be experienced by the personality, so if you are to have this, it also is going to have to come from somewhere else. The joy is there for the asking. It can be in a walk in the woods, a meal prepared and shared in a community, a Moving Centered activity such as a game, a shared meditative period. It can be found in anything, but only if the Overleaves do not interfere. The mindlessness that is preliminary to successful meditation can also be used to prepare oneself for joy. In fact, it is perhaps the most certain preparation that we know of. Of course, much joy will occur of its own accord, as the student begins to experience the step-by-step liberation of the Essence. Students must not depend upon each other for the creation of an experience. They must create, and share their experiences. What happens most often is that students with soft Overleaves look to those with harder ones to create experience for them. This is not valid. No one can create an experience for anyone else. It must come from within and burst forth. It must free itself from the Overleaves. Balanced Man can experience his experience ... you cannot. There again, if you are to truly experience anything at all positively it must come from other than the Overleaves. Mechanical Man is in an enviable position. He does not have to do to think or experience. He merely has to play his tapes. [Dimensions! April 1975]

All do not grow to appreciate that which is in Essence, but most do experience a nagging pull in that direction. Religion has nothing to do with formal belief in any one particular system. We would have you look upon religion as an ecstatic celebration of the pan-dimensional life of the constant creative force of the universe, of the Tao. We would see you look upon religion as the joy of the liberated Essence. [Dimensions! June 1975]

Summary and Conclusion

Liberation from consciousness prison is not like liberation from a physical prison. The latter is "one and done", but the former happens by degrees, in steps, each step a little more liberated than the step before.

Plato's allegory of the cave [quote Wikipedia]. The situation is that we are not just chained in one 'cave', there is a series of successively larger 'caves', such that when we escape one 'cave' and 'see the light', we feel liberated for a time. But then we continue to grow in grace and knowledge until we realize that the way of being in the current cave feels like imprisonment, and we look for a way to make another 'jail break'. And so on and so on; that is spiritual evolution. The final cave is not escaped until the liberation from being a Fragment of Tao.

Methods for liberation from traps:

- Psychotropics
- Meditation
- Removing distractions





LIFE-TASK

This chapter is the product of a search for the word “task” in the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group channeling sessions, looking for those specific instances where it referred to what later became formally known as the Life-Task. There are many occurrences of the word task that do not refer to the Life-Task, and these were also collected, and they are discussed in the chapter “Task”.

Learned students will know that the concept of Life-task is among of the ‘official’, you might say, doctrines of the Michaelian teachings. Consequently, the word “Life-Task” is capitalized in this chapter and other chapters of this *Study Papers* book; it has a special meaning in the Michaelian teachings; it is a Michaelian jargon word that needs a definition apart from whatever use it might have in the common vernacular.

Briefly and basically, it is said that the soul chooses a primary Life-Task for an incarnation. It is said to be a specific project to be worked on, or lesson to be learned. It is said that the Life-Task is usually not tackled until the successful transition of the Middle-Age Life-Stage. It is said that working on one’s Life-Task is deeply satisfying.

Life Task per Psychology and Philosophy

An internet search reveals that the notion of a life task is not unknown in the self-help psychology domain and in the life-coach world. For instance there is the work of Robert Green, which is introduced here: ><https://mercecardus.com/mastery-robert-greene-strategies-life-task/><. In the life-coach realm, consider this: ><https://www.lifecoach-directory.org.uk/memberarticles/5-strategies-to-find-your-life-task><. These people do not profess the understanding that it is the soul that selects and sets a Life-Task, but the phenomenon is obvious enough that it is considered a real thing, worth knowing about, and worth implementing.

James Hillman, a prominent psychologist, is quoted: “Sooner or later something seems to call us onto a particular path. This is who I am. This is what I must do.”

Johann Wolfgang Von Goethe, a prominent philosopher, is also quoted: “The misery that oppresses you lies not in your profession but in yourself! What man in the world would not find his situation intolerable if he chooses a craft, an art, indeed any form of life, without experiencing an inner calling? Whoever is born with a talent, or to a talent, must surely find in that the most pleasing of occupations! Everything on this earth has its difficult sides! Only some inner drive — pleasure, love — can help us overcome obstacles, prepare a path, and lift us out of the narrow circle in which others tread out their anguished, miserable existences!”

Documentation of awareness of this phenomenon outside of the Michaelian teachings could be expanded considerably, but let’s move on to what the Michaels had to say about it during the original Michaelian group.

Life Task per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

The following extracts from original Michaelian group transcriptions are Q&A exchanges, where an original Michaelian group member asks a question (or makes a comment), and the Michaels provide an answer. This is [not] a subject that would benefit by division into subcategories, as some subjects do. These extracts are presented in the chronological order in which they were given, **even though this is not** a subject where there was a development or evolution of a specific revelation of a facet of the Michaelian teachings, as was often the case with the original Michaelian group. As is my custom, I often provide some explanatory comments following the question or answer. Underlined words are my emphasis, to draw attention to what it is that I comment on. Sometimes I embed words or phrases [in brackets] that I believe help to clarify the question or the answer.

This chapter is about one of those instances where “We are guilty of some semantic ambiguity at times” (27 March 1974), so some careful parsing of the transcriptions has been applied.

During the original Michaelian group, it often happened that the Michaels dropped a word or a concept, without explanation, into some channeling on some other subject, and it was up to the original Michaelian group members to pursue the hint thereafter. The earliest mentions of the concept of Life-Task were not explicit about what was meant. The first clue that there is such a thing as a Life-Task is the following, which appeared in an undated block of channeling about the Soul Ages:

The Older Soul usually enjoys hard, manual labor, but seldom works as an artisan. It may or may not seek higher education. If pressure is exerted by the guru, it will, or if it senses that its [Life-]Task somehow involves the necessity for obtaining the proper credentials. [undated, late August 1973]

The hyphenated capitalized phrase does not actually occur anywhere in the original Michaelian group transcriptions, but it is a reasonable inference that such was the meaning here and elsewhere.

The second hint that some souls come into an incarnation with a specific job to do is this one:

Buckminster Fuller does nicely, and so do many others like him. They have an important [Life-]Task. Some [people] are aware; others are driven blindly. [20 October 1973]

Fuller had a Life-Task that made him important and famous and influential in the world at large. Others have a Life-Task that is important to themselves and some other people in their orbit, whatever size that orbit may be. It does not say so here, but the Michaels have the Life-Task to help us become aware of the meaning of what is going on during incarnation, so that we are not driven blindly.

Ray: What is my role [Life-Task] in my present life; one I can't perceive yet?

We see you reaching a better space within. We have not talked with you before, and [we] wish to emphasize that yours is a steep path. All Mature Souls have this [reaching a better space within] as their [Life-]Task. [23 October 1973]

In this case, the word “role” is used as a synonym for Life-Task, and this is not the only instance. [[search, record, comment](#)] At this stage of the investigation, my suggested interpretation of that quotation is that there is a generic Life-Task that is common to a Soul Age (and a Role), [[A search would uncover more.](#)] for instance, and then there are specific Life-Tasks that a Fragment chooses for a specific lifetime.

The implicit notion that there is such a thing as a Life-Task became explicit with this revelation:

A competent surgeon could have saved the life of Nero Claudius Drusus. Does this give you some clues as to the man William's [task in this life](#)? He has been waiting for over two thousand years to play out this role. [Figuring out how to avoid that type of slow, painful death.] It has been now two thousand years since that man [Drusus] was born. The role was known [to William even] then.

There is that word role again, used as a synonym for Life-Task. But the concept is still not yet defined.

Do we all have a [Life-]Task like that?

By all means. Some are not quite that exciting this time around. [14 December 1973]

Some souls choose world-changing Life-Tasks in past lifetimes, and more modest ones in later lifetimes.

Alice: Are all Overleaves in Essence?

No. [They are all] in Personality.

Alice: Are they chosen on the basis of Karma?

First of all, the locale, the socioeconomic status, the parents you chose — all are formative in programming the bio-computer. These Overleaves are chosen by the soul to be acted out in life, independent — most of the time — of the wishes of the Essence. The soul chose them to complete the specific [Life-]Task. The soul desires simplicity and freedom, making a split [distinction] between soul and Essence. [27 February 1974]

One implication of that statement is that sometimes specific Overleaves are chosen by the Fragment to facilitate the completion of the Life-Task. This makes perfect sense. Refer to the chapter “Essence and Personality” for a clarification of the distinction between levels of the greater self, which can have different purposes.

One of the few explicit discussions of what came to be known as the Life-Task appears in this Q&A exchange:

Comment: We wondered if he would burn the [Karmic] Ribbons he had left, and went on considering that everyone on earth has a goal — a set of things to experience and learn on the Physical Plane. We wondered about the betrayal of Astral agreements we may have made, and someone asked if Michael would let us know what missions we had decided to accomplish.

We will, yes, but we had hoped that by giving you the Overleaves and Photographing the patterns, the insights would come. Many of you already have some inkling of what you have agreed to do merely by discussing your Karmic Ribbons and interwoven Sequences. These tasks are not always difficult; many are not even very interesting, but in some way, they enrich the Fragment and lead to the experiencing of all of life.

Is our Essence aware of the things we have to accomplish?

The group answered, yes, and that we needed to be in touch with our Essence. [15 May 1974]

Add the word “mission” to the list of synonyms for Life-Task”; refer to the chapter by that name. That discussion had more to do with the task of the story arc of reincarnation as a whole, rather than the specific life-task of a specific lifetime.

Are these tasks simple to experience? That is, are the tasks simple ones?

Many times, yes, especially in the Older Levels. There is very little effort left for some here.

Cheryl: What have I to accomplish?

Yours is much harder, Cheryl. For one thing, you have agreed to jump from one Cycle to the other, which involves a major change in your perceptions of the world around you. We think this is progressing rather nicely.

Cheryl: Does that mean a jump from a Young Cycle to an Old Cycle?

We did not say that. There will be a major acceleration though. We are not saying that you could not transcend, Cheryl. We are, however, saying that we doubt that you will. The lady knows how. An entire Cycle would be a monstrous task. We are not saying that it cannot be done, but it is not attempted often and is usually unsuccessful.

Cheryl: Could the task be that of a teacher?

Why does this not seem plausible from your present Level? There are certain Sequences and major Monads that are more easily experienced from the Mature Cycle than any of the others. After all, it is during this Cycle that the perceptions of the emotions of those around you are sharper than they will be again. [15 May 1974]

Richard: I have a feeling that [with the] task I chose, I have bitten off more than I can chew.

We think that you can handle it. You are correct that you have not begun. You wasted a good many years fretting, Richard.

Dick: Would you like to ask — what is the task you have chosen when on the Astral Plane?

Richard has agreed to come to Balance through the Intellectual Center in this life since he is still Trapped in the Emotional Part of Moving Center. He does have a formidable task. This will result in some quite startling changes in perception of those all-important priorities.

Alice: What have I agreed to accomplish in this life? I don't seem to have any perceptions along this line. Perhaps, I just had to raise the six children.

It was more important than simply bearing the children. The lesson lies in the recognition of those children as true entities within themselves and not merely as an extension of yourself. You have had many children in the past, but not these children. In them lies the lesson. [18 May 1974]

... after the particular life task is done... [05 June 1974]

Richard: I get stronger things from auto[matic writing]. I have gotten an important task in this life and I'd better shape up. Is this valid?

Yes, this is valid for you as well as for others in this room.

Richard: We were told when up at Lake Tahoe from Tomas that something significant would happen.

Joan: Ready for her task ... What is it?

One of the tasks to which you agreed is to introduce those around you to the tactile sense while largely at [word(s) missing]. It [word(s) missing] this culture, true. In other words, help them to open this door.

Joan: Is there another one?

One other we have in part discussed with you and that involves communication and can be satisfied through your teaching (your creativity).

Marty: [My Life] task?

Of course, the more obvious one involves service to those with whom you come in contact. This one you are currently fighting, but would, in the final inning, find fulfillment in if you would follow up on the previous suggestion. You might surprisingly delineate your tasks quickly. [05 June 1974]

It finally dawned on original Michaelian group members that Life-Task was worth asking about around the room:

Betty: What is my Life Task?

As with most Priests, it is primarily missionary in nature and will involve your own ability to project the teaching from your own center of serenity to the most unlikely group of students. Also, in this lifetime, you have agreed to play out Sequences, only two of which you have begun.

Jim: What is my [life] task?

This task involves dissolving the attachment to material success through true creativity. The man Jim has a formidable task in this as most of his Sequences and Ribbons involve money, a habit that is hard to break.

Should we recognize [life] tasks in others?

Yes, you should. Particularly, you should work toward some insight to your own [life] task.

Carolyn: [Life] task? Is it to be alone, involvement with child?

To be happy alone, depending upon the "all". Pan-dependency, of course, is predicated upon the Personality becoming independent and functioning self-sufficiently without depending upon the actions of others around you to move first. Of course, this is necessary if you are ever to allow the Essence to rely upon the cosmic forces that it knows are dependable. That is one of your primary tasks; it is not a goal. No, that is not the only one; there are others involving arriving at an inner "truth." That, in turn, involves unscrambling much conflict in doctrines, or rather many conflicting doctrines. Again, this is largely a solitary task. If we clarify this, it will take more hours than you now have, since it involves a lifetime of work, but briefly this lady has within her the ability to arrive at a point of spiritual tranquility that she does not now enjoy, by recognizing further [for] her self what is true and discarding that which is patently false, keeping the good and throwing out the bad from all of those influences that have and will later come into play.

A "task" — is it one or several things?

"The" task that most of you in this room have agreed upon is that you will attempt to hear the words. This is paramount. The others are life tasks and vary from Fragment to Fragment, depending upon what you have experienced in the past.

Louise: Thinks [her life] task is moving from being dependent to being more independent.

This is essentially valid, but with some reservations. One is that your last life was a relatively colorless one and we see in you an attempt to live with more flair. This stems from one of the tasks, which is the development of an inner vitality from a point of inactivity.

Elizabeth: Creativity workshop. Doctor on psychology.

Your task can be summarized in one word: participation. This is generally not an easy task for Scholars and most do not like it much. That is the primary reason for the Passion Mode and Acceptance Goal. It forces you to participate rather than to slip through vicariously again.

Gene: Task involving teaching and aloneness — separation?

Also, an important part of this task involves the discrimination in knowing who can hear the words without wasting the energy on those who cannot. Yes, the separation is almost accomplished and yes, it is a solitary task and cannot be interfered with. If there is interference, there is nothing accomplished. The true occult Adept is usually lonely.

Alice: My task?

(Given before) although that one is by no means complete. There is another that, of course, involves allowing your talents to emerge from underneath the Submission. You have not completely reconciled yourself to all of the children's "things". For instance, [your daughter] Kathryn. [12 June 1975]

Liz: Will Michael give us our [Life-]Task? Teach — Performing — Speaking?

— Study Papers page 697 —

We would agree with the former. The latter, of course, is a memory of a time when this was a real part of your life. You could, of course, teach very effectively in this manner. All Sages come equipped for the stage; it is built into the model. [19 June 1974]

Victoria: What is my [Life-]Task?

Your **primary** [Life-]Task is, of course, the same as the others, that of an attempt to hear these words. Also, [secondarily] you have Agreed to give of your creative abilities, the gift of color and design, and to express yourself in this mode. [25 June 1974]

That passage indicates that a primary and a secondary Life-Task can be chosen as part of the Life-Plan.

Joan: Can a Sequence and a [Life-]Task be synonymous?

Usually your Sequential partners are selected to facilitate the [Life-]Task in some way, yes, but also, some Sequences are outside of the [Life-]Tasks. [03 July 1974]

Sequences always involve other people because of their Monadal (Cardinal-Ordinal) structure, but the Life-Task is essentially an individual matter, where the soul want to experience something specific.

Dick: Is my restlessness and lack of ease due to subliminal knowledge of a Karmic debt?

That is not the only reason for the restlessness. With you, Dick, it is a major sense of purpose that causes the restlessness at a subliminal level and many times at a very conscious level, you feel your task.

Dick: Do I have a Karmic debt with [his daughter] Kathryn?

With you, Dick, it is the sense of purpose and not a debt. With others, it is a debt. With some, it is an incomplete Monad. All of these things come into play. Debts of great consequence are rare in Old Souls. [07 July 1974]

One of the major clues as to what your Life-Task might be is to ask yourself if there is one otherwise-inexplicable decades-long project that you feel you must accomplish. The Life-Task is mildly compelling in that way, although not as compelling as the payment of a Karmic debt.

Allyn: My Life Task and/or Sequences with this group?

This large group, which incidentally became a family again in this life, is largely interwoven with Sequences. These all involve the spirit of cooperation, to enable the growth so necessary in several of those concerned. You are not an exception to this, as you need the space, and are with those in Sequence who will freely give it. You too must give of this even though it may be extremely difficult and has already involved growth in what Mechanical Man calls sacrifices. Actually, nothing has been sacrificed; it was chosen as a growth process. You are a good student. This is part of your task. There could be much more said, of course, but the man gains valuable insights on his own. [24 September 1974]

Life-Task per Messages from Michael

The mentions of the Life-Task in *Messages from Michael* — the book that is based somewhat on the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group — were rather skimpy, and none of them were taken from the original Michaelian group transcriptions that have become widely available. For your convenience, those mentions are provided below.

THE MAJOR LIFE-TASKS ARE SELDOM EASILY ACCOMPLISHED. [p. 67]

THE MAGNETIC KINGS PULL THEIR SUBJECTS TO THEM SO THAT THE LIFE-TASKS MAY BE COMPLETED. [p. 102]

... FOR THOSE IN THE ORDINAL GOALS, WHO FEEL MUCH RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE MISERY AROUND THEM AND FEEL IT IS THEIR LIFE-TASK TO MITIGATE IT. [p. 166]

PARENTS OFTEN HAVE SEQUENCES WITH THEIR CHILDREN WHICH WILL INVOLVE ENVIRONMENTAL CONTROLS THROUGH WHICH THE CHILD FRAGMENT MUST WORK IN ORDER TO COMPLETE THE LIFE-TASK. [p. 190]

ALL THE CHOICES WE HAVE DISCUSSED HAVE BEARING ON THE LIFE-TASK, THAT ONE GOAL WHICH YOU SET FOR YOURSELF BETWEEN LIVES. [p. 239]

THE SUBJECT WAS ABLE TO COMPLETE ALL HER MONADS, COMPLETE THE WORK OF HER SEXTANT FOR ONE LIFE, ACHIEVE MOST OF THE GOALS OF HER LIFE-TASK, AND DIE WITH RELATIVE PEACE. [p. 255]

WE GIVE THIS SYSTEM ONLY AS A TOOL THAT YOU MAY USE IN YOUR LIFE-TASKS TO AID YOU IN THE UNDERSTANDING OF THE LIFE CYCLE. [p. 281]

Some more was said in More Messages From Michael:

TRUE PERSONALITY IS THE MANIFESTATION OF THE OVERLEAVES IN THE LIFE, AND THE PROGRESS TOWARD THE COMPLETION OF THE LIFE TASK, THAT OVERALL GOAL THAT IS ESTABLISHED FOR ANY GIVEN LIFE. TRUE PERSONALITY IS WHAT IS EXPRESSED AFTER THE SUCCESSFUL PASSAGE THROUGH THE FOURTH INTERNAL MONAD, AND GIVES THE FRAGMENT THE OPPORTUNITY FOR TRUE WORK ON THE LIFE TASK. [p. 48]

AT THAT TIME, THE LIFE TASK WAS ABDICATED ... [p. 54]

THERE CAN BE MUCH WORTHWHILE GROWTH WHEN MEMBERS OF THE SAME ENTITY SET OUT TO ACCOMPLISH THEIR LIFE TASKS TOGETHER, FOR THAT BRINGS THE WEIGHT OF THEIR TIE TO INCREASE THE IMPETUS. [p. 84]

OFTEN THE WORK OF THE CONFIGURATION IS DIFFERENT THAN THE LIFE TASK OF THE INDIVIDUAL FRAGMENTS MAKING UP THE CONFIGURATION, BUT IT IS MOST OFTEN COMPLIMENTARY TO THE LIFE TASK. THOSE WHOSE LIFE TASKS OR KARMIC OR MONADAL DEMANDS INCLINE THEM TOWARD OTHER CHOICES OFTEN PREFER TO DISTANCE THEMSELVES FROM THE CONFIGURATION. [p. 85]

MOST OF THE OTHERS HERE GATHERED HAVE HAD SUCH EXPERIENCES IN THE PAST, AND MOST OF THEM ARE RENEWING OLD SKILLS AS AN ADJUNCT TO THEIR LIFE TASKS. [p. 112]

Concluding Comments on Life Task

This is one of the components of the Michaelian teachings that has been developed more fully in subsequent channeling... Yarbrow, Briggs, etc.

The gradual and progressive revelation of the concept of Life-Task is typical of the Michaels. They drop a hint in some answer, and it is up to the students to interrogate the Michaels in such a way that the 'bones' of the concept gets 'fleshed out' with 'organs and muscles'. So far as I can see, the only subject that has come to be understood as the Michaelian teachings doctrinal panoply is the Overleaf System.





③ LOGOS

The word *logos* appears numerous times in the original Michaelian group transcriptions. This word and its meaning might not be familiar to some readers, but the fact that it was used so many times indicates that the so-called “logos” is not an insignificant component of the Michaelian teachings. Therefore, a lengthy chapter is dedicated to it in this *Study Papers* book.

I have been unable to discover if the Michaels adopted and adapted the concept, for their own purposes, from some other spiritual teaching that the original Michaelian group members were familiar with, as happened numerous times during the original Michaelian group. As we will see below, the word and the concept came from Greek philosophy, and was used in early Christian theology, both of which were not completely unfamiliar to well-educated members of the original Michaelian group, including the main channel, Sarah Chambers.

This chapter begins with a definition of the word and a description of its application. Even though the Michaels use the word with a meaning that more or less matches its use in the common vernacular, I have chosen to capitalize it as yet another jargon word in the Michaelian teachings.

Definition and History of Logos

The word “logos” has more than a definition; it has a history, a philosophy, and a theology. Underlined words in the following extraction from the Wikipedia article on the Logos are my emphasis.

Logos (Ancient Greek: λόγος, romanized: *lógos*; from λέγω, *légō*, literally “I say”) is a term in Western philosophy, psychology, rhetoric, and religion derived from a Greek word variously meaning “ground”, “plea”, “opinion”, “expectation”, “word”, “speech”, “account”, “reason”, “proportion”, and “discourse”. It became a technical term in Western philosophy beginning with Heraclitus (c. 535 – c. 475 BC), who used the term for a principle of order and knowledge.

Ancient Greek philosophers used the term in different ways. The sophists used the term to mean discourse. Aristotle applied the term to refer to “reasoned discourse” or “the argument” in the field of rhetoric, and considered it one of the three modes of persuasion alongside *ethos* and *pathos*. Pyrrhonist philosophers used the term to refer to dogmatic accounts of non-evident matters. The Stoics spoke of the *logos spermatikos* (the generative principle of the Universe) which foreshadows related concepts in neoplatonism.

Within Hellenistic Judaism, Philo (c. 20 BC – c. 50 AD) adopted the term into Jewish philosophy. Philo distinguished between *logos prophorikos* (“the uttered word”) and the *logos endiathetos* (“the word remaining within”).

The Gospel of John identifies the Christian Logos, through which all things are made, as divine (*theos*), and further identifies Jesus Christ as the incarnate Logos. Early translators of the Greek New Testament such as Jerome (in the 4th century AD) were frustrated by the inadequacy of any single Latin word to convey the meaning of the word logos as used to describe Jesus Christ in the Gospel of John. The Vulgate Bible usage of *in principio erat verbum* was thus constrained to use the (perhaps inadequate) noun *verbum* for “word”, but later Romance language translations had the advantage of nouns such as *le Verbe* in French. Reformation translators took another approach. Martin Luther rejected *Zeitwort* (verb) in favor of *Wort* (word), for instance, although later commentators repeatedly turned to a more dynamic use involving the living word as felt by Jerome and Augustine. The term is also used in Sufism, and the analytical psychology of Carl Jung.

Despite the conventional translation as “word”, logos is not used for a word in the grammatical sense — for that, the term *lexis* (λέξις, *léxis*) was used. However, both *logos* and *lexis* derive from the same verb *légō* (λέγω), meaning “(I) count, tell, say, speak”. [<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Logos> — retrieved 27 September 2021]

The remainder of the Wikipedia article expands on these introductory comments. From among them, I extracted some paragraphs that seem most relevant to the Michaels' use of the term:

Stoic philosophy began with Zeno of Citium c. 300 BC, in which the logos was the active reason pervading and animating the Universe. It was conceived as material and is usually identified with God or Nature. The Stoics also referred to the seminal logos ("logos spermatikos"), or the law of generation in the Universe, which was the principle of the active reason working in inanimate matter. Humans, too, each possess a portion of the divine logos.

The Stoics took all activity to imply a logos or spiritual principle. As the operative principle of the world, the logos was *anima mundi* to them, a concept which later influenced Philo of Alexandria, although he derived the contents of the term from Plato. In his Introduction to the 1964 edition of Marcus Aurelius' Meditations, the Anglican priest Maxwell Staniforth wrote that "Logos ... had long been one of the leading terms of Stoicism, chosen originally for the purpose of explaining how deity came into relation with the universe".

Philo (c. 20 BC – c. 50 AD), a Hellenized Jew, used the term logos to mean an intermediary divine being or demiurge. Philo followed the Platonic distinction between imperfect matter and perfect Form, and therefore intermediary beings were necessary to bridge the enormous gap between God and the material world. The logos was the highest of these intermediary beings, and was called by Philo "the first-born of God". Philo also wrote that "the Logos of the living God is the bond of everything, holding all things together and binding all the parts, and prevents them from being dissolved and separated".

Plato's Theory of Forms was located within the logos, but the logos also acted on behalf of God in the physical world. In particular, the Angel of the Lord in the Hebrew Bible (Old Testament) was identified with the logos by Philo, who also said that the logos was God's instrument in the creation of the Universe.

The concept of logos in Sufism is used to relate the "Uncreated" (God) to the "Created" (humanity). In Sufism, for the Deist, no contact between man and God can be possible without the logos. The logos is everywhere and always the same, but its personification is "unique" within each region. Jesus and Muhammad are seen as the personifications of the logos, and this is what enables them to speak in such absolute terms. One of the boldest and most radical attempts to reformulate the neoplatonic concepts into Sufism arose with the philosopher Ibn Arabi.... To Ibn Arabi, every prophet corresponds to a reality which he called a logos (*Kalimah*), as an aspect of the unique divine being. In his view the divine being would have for ever remained hidden, had it not been for the prophets, with logos providing the link between man and divinity.... For Ibn Arabi, the logos or "Universal Man" was a mediating link between individual human beings and the divine essence..... In the 15th century Abd al-Karīm al-Jīlī introduced the Doctrine of Logos and the Perfect Man. For al-Jīlī, the "perfect man" (associated with the logos or the Prophet) has the power to assume different forms at different times and to appear in different guises. [<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Logos> — retrieved 27 September 2021]

As you read the original Michaelian group transcriptions quoted below, you will better understand them in light of this historical, philosophical, and theological background information. Whether or not the original Michaelian group members were familiar with this history, the Michaels probably were, and the statements of the Michaels can be better understood in this historical context.

In passing, note in the above quotation that *Logos* is in triad with *Pathos* and *Ethos*. Refer to internet resources for a fuller description of this triad, such as <https://pathosethoslogos.com/> and many others. There you will see that these three terms are typically used in the ancient and modern worlds as modes or types of influence and persuasion. In my understanding, these three words may be correlated with the three so-called "higher" Centers, thus: Logos = Higher Intellectual, Pathos = Higher Emotional, Ethos = Higher Moving. These three concepts and these three Centers can be thought of as persuasive influences from higher realms. As we will see below, in the Michaelian teachings the Logos is said to be influential and persuasive. Thus, Logos is more than a reference to the rational sensibility of the world; it is more than a pointer to the intelligible structure of the world; it is more than a name for the bridge between the divine world and the human world — it points to the catalytic impact of the higher to the lower in our lives.

Logos in the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

The following extracts from original Michaelian group transcriptions are Q&A exchanges, where an original Michaelian group member asks a question (or makes a comment), and the Michaels provide an answer. As is my custom, I usually provide some explanatory comments following the question or answer. Underlined words are my emphasis, to draw attention to what it is that I comment on. Sometimes I embed words or phrases [in

brackets] that I believe help to clarify the question or the answer. Numerous study papers related to this chapter are to be found among my comments.

Instead of following the start-to-finish chronology of the original Michaelian group transcriptions as I often do, this section is divided into several subsections because that is what comes naturally with this particular subject. The first subsection provides a definition of the Logos; the second subsection is a collection of quotations on “propagating” the Logos; the third subsection is a collection of quotations on the Logos being “brought to bear”; the fourth subsection is about the Michaels’ injunction to us to “express” the Logos, and the fifth subsection is a collection of miscellaneous comments on the Logos that do not fit into the other subsections.

Definition of the Logos

The definition of the Logos as it was understood in the original Michaelian group did not appear at, or even near, the beginning of its mentions, but it did appear a few months into the sessions:

What are “allies” [mentioned in the Carlos Castaneda books]?

Allies was a word used by a relatively unlettered being [Don Juan Matus] to describe the forces manifesting. Some he created and combated. This enabled him to override the heredity of superstitions and open himself to positive experience. His “man of knowledge” means the same as the “one in whom the Logos resides.” There were no words in his vocabulary to describe what he knew. He could only take disciples over the same rocky path and hope that they would arrive at the same place. It was very difficult for him to have an outsider [Carlos Castaneda] for a student, but he did succeed. [21 August 1974]

Here the Logos is equated with “knowledge” that originates with “experience” of the Logos and is propagated or taught via a person, as it is in the Wikipedia article quoted above and in several places in the original Michaelian group transcriptions. This is not just head knowledge such as one gets by reading books or listening to a lecture (the Greek words for various kinds of that sort of knowledge are *episteme*, *doxa*, and *techne*); it is higher spiritual “knowledge”, insights such as one gets by direct influence from an enlightened teacher, whether Don Juan or some other personage. In early Christianity, the branch called “Gnosticism” by later scholars claimed that “salvation” was had by direct illumination from the spirit realm, *gnosis* being the Greek word for this kind of transcendent knowledge that is not merely *informative*; it is *transformative*:

Gnosis is the common Greek noun for knowledge (γνῶσις, *gnōsis*, f.). The term is used in various Hellenistic religions and philosophies. It is best known from Gnosticism, where it signifies a spiritual knowledge or insight into humanity’s real nature as divine, leading to the deliverance of the divine spark within humanity from the constraints of earthly existence. [<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gnosis> — retrieved 27 September 2021]

In short, the Logos is an organized energy that imparts Gnosis; refer to the chapter “Gnosticism” in my book *The Synthesis* for more information. **Of the metaphysical systems that have appeared in the history of humanity, Gnosticism has about as many similarities to the Michaelian teachings as any of them. [[revisit this statement after writing that chapter]]**

So, who is the highest and greatest “man of Gnosis”, the “one in whom the Logos resides”?

The religion of the Infinite Soul is the Logos. [late August 1973]

Well then, obviously we should pay attention to the Logos as we would pay attention to the Infinite Soul if we aspire to acquire Gnosis. This is the first time the Infinite Soul is connected to the Logos, and it is not the last, as we will see further on.

Someone asked about the definition of the word:

Ilene: What is “Logos”?

Sarah: THE knowledge.

Dick: “In the beginning was the word. The word was God.” [John 1:1 in the Bible]

Sarah: They are saying the teachings aren’t the Logos; they are just the interpretations of the Logos, and the interpretations have to be constantly changed.

Dick: Well, they had better hurry up because we have hydrogen warheads aimed at Russia and they at us, and there may not be a world to spread the Logos to. [08 September 1973]

The Logos is a kind of systematic “knowledge” that is influential, persuasive, impressive, transformational, enlightening, empowering. More is said about “spreading” the Logos in a subsection below.

More synonyms for the meaning of Logos were given:

What is the difference between meditation and concentration?

Meditation is the emptying of the mind of Maya. Concentration is the active acquisition of higher knowledge: the Logos. [08 September 1973]

This is yet another instance of the equation of the Logos with “higher knowledge”, aka Gnosis.

And there are more:

Dick: I have a complaint and comment and a question. I don't seem to be able to change knowledge into Being and I don't feel any different.

You do approach “being” under the influence of marijuana. This is an incontrovertible message about the pace of your life. Marijuana slows the responses to physical phenomena and heightens emotional response to all experiences. You feel the music instead of hearing it. The five primitive senses belong to False Personality. They can be compared to margarine — they will never be butter, no matter how you color them or package them. Your life is not geared for understanding, just toiling. We know that this is difficult for Richard and Dick. However, Jesus was trying to tell this same truth two thousand years ago. We keep telling you: you must choose your path. If that [path] is spiritual liberation, then you must eliminate the distractions of Maya. If the goal is different, then the path will be different and you are correct in assuming that we don't care; we don't. We impart the Logos dispassionately; it is yours to accept or reject. [06 October 1973]

Refer to the chapter “Psychedelics” for more information about their use on the spiritual path. The notion of converting “knowledge” into “Being” came to Dick via Gurdjieff, as one may verify with an internet search. For example, there is this: ><https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7znYE8vO7cw><. That notion is Gurdjieff's version of converting Personality “knowledge” through “understanding” into Essence Being, aka Gnosis, with the help of Logos, a true teaching and a true teacher. Gurdjieff systematized this notion in his “Levels of Being” — refer to that chapter in this *Study Papers* book. The Michaels affirmed that their mission is to impart the Logos, the same as Gurdjieff and Jesus.

Dick: When love is turned on, this in itself puts you on a high. Maybe that's “Man #4” according to Gurdjieff and it is not permanent.

The love of the Logos or Agape permeated the being of Jesus even prior to the manifestation [of the Infinite Soul]. He lived for the Word [Logos]. The quest for spiritual liberation took precedence over all things, sometimes to his despair prior to manifestation. This was an Emotionally Centered Mercury–Saturn. He was passionate and sensual. When others rejected his opinions, he was astonished. [06 October 1973]

In addition to its connection to Gnosis, the Logos is connected to Agape (another Greek word, by the way) and spiritual liberation. Refer to the chapters on “Agape” and “Liberation” for more information.

Edgar: What is the meaning of, “I am the Word”?

The Logos, the truth, the absolute, the order of things. [22 November 1973]

Refer to the chapter “Truth” for more about that component of the Logos. The Absolute is covered in the chapter “Tao”. Evidently, Scholars are especially focused on defining the Logos:

Louise: What does the Scholar seek?

The Scholar seeks to define the Logos. [01 October 1974]

Louise was a Scholar, so naturally she would ask this question. As a Scholar-cast Fragment myself, my interest in science is to gain a more definitive understanding of the Logos in all realms of objective knowledge and subjective experience.

With those definitions of the Logos behind us, let us now search the original Michaelian group transcriptions for fuller descriptions and explanations in other contexts.

Propagation of the Logos

The first appearance of the word Logos was in the second session in our possession, a month before the Michaels appeared to the group. I do not know how and why members of the original Michaelian group were familiar with this obscure Greek word and the concept to which it referred.

Richard meditated silently on the question of whether or not, if we got heavily involved in propagating the Logos, and were arrested for our activities and incarcerated, there would be a possibility of rescue. Sarah and Richard both acknowledged that they had no fear of being gassed or hung, but did fear long imprisonments.

[Soleal]: We can do it [rescue you]. [03 July 1973]

From the very beginning, the original Michaelian group founding members had the lofty goal of propagating the Logos. Perhaps that is one reason why the Michaels chose them to do just that. To us these

days it may seem unwarranted to have such fear of exposure of what they were doing. Perhaps the fear was born in what happened to Jesus when he propagated the Logos, namely crucifixion. Perhaps the fear was born in the information that some members of the original Michaelian group were allegedly affiliated with Jesus during his ministry, and did not want to re-experience the trauma.

The session continued:

Dick: I would like to ask Soleal: because of studying Gurdjieff, I've come to believe that the only possibility for anything is through individual personal growth and not through trying to change things like political systems. I would like to know if this is correct.

Not entirely. Someone must teach the Logos in the first [place, if politics is to change]. As the population grows, the teachers increase. Some people need much more personal direction; reading will not help them. Are you ready to take on that task? [03 July 1973]

Here we see that the Logos is something that is better taught by a person than by a book. The advice here seems to be that, rather than attempt to change a political system directly, you should influence people around you; if the teaching is indeed from the Logos, a 'grassroots' movement will grow enough to eventually change the political system. The Logos taught by the Infinite Soul and Transcendental Soul is aimed at the masses, rather than the ruling elites, so don't expect the elites to change the world for the better.

Dick: The healing that Jesus did, was that done to demonstrate to people that he had these powers so that people would follow him to hear "the Word" — his mission being to "spread the Logos"?

In the beginning, yes, it was. [04 September 1973]

Jesus was an embodiment of the Word, the Logos. Notice that here again the Logos is not just words, it is *the* Word; the Logos emanates the kind of energy that has the power to heal.

Dick: I am concerned about the slow growth of the group. It was said that we should spread the Logos.

It is the manner in which it is being presented that frightens many. Arrange the data in some suitable form and teach it yourselves. We will be with you to keep you from embellishing. [13 October 1973]

It does not say so here, but by other accounts, the verbal method of spreading the Logos is the primitive stage. As one's Level of Being rises, the method changes from speaking words to emanating energy.

Tina: I hear. What can I do with this?

Propagate the Logos. This isn't trite. We expect this teaching to reach others. We are not just hollering down the rain barrel. [31 December 1973]

Typically, all down through history, supernatural messages and energies arrive on the scene and spread. People who have discovered good things for themselves are naturally prone to share them with others. This is why I write books. People who are more charismatic than I am emanate energy in addition to words.

Barbara: Does this mention of Alexandria in Egypt have anything to do with the "White Brotherhood"?

By all means. We wish for you the opportunity to propagate the Logos. How you do it should be as comfortable as possible, so that you can devote yourself best to growth and not to struggle. [22 January 1974]

Refer to the chapter "Brotherhood (Occult)" for more information. Allegedly, one of the tasks of the Brotherhood is to propagate the Logos, and that task was also assumed by the original Michaelian group, and encouraged by the Michaels. Subsequent to the original Michaelian group, Michaelian teachings books have been published and internet websites have been created without undue struggle.

Sarah: I am seeking a way of life within the group, not to become more effective in the milieu.

There is a way, you know, that this Teaching can serve the needs of all who seek, and you have it within the original nucleus to perform this service. Those who have the need for intensified personal searches can arrange for this. Those who are not certain of their level of commitment may find that the general session is adequate for them. The smaller sessions are most valuable for the more committed students and definitely should be reserved for that purpose. There is some merriment derived in the general session merely by pursuing some of the less dedicated students' personal agendas and this will benefit all. We still see the tendency in all of you to expect of the others, and to be disappointed when the anticipated reaction does not come about. This cannot be avoided unless much intensive work is done. We could do this with you and we are always available for this. There is a need for some diversification here now with all of the parts contributing toward a greater whole in the end. We have not suggested that the nucleus of this teaching expand to the point where needs are no longer being served. We are concerned only that you share the knowledge once it has been assimilated and verified. We have a method by which all of you can choose to achieve a modicum of growth on a spiritual plane. Many of you can even use it as a springboard toward becoming an Adept. This is entirely up to you. We

will find many vehicles through which we can teach the Logos — this does not present us with a problem. We answer all calls for this Teaching. [24 February 1974]

The teacher propagates the Logos, the students grow enough to become teachers and they propagate the Logos, and so on.

In order to teach the Logos, must we get rid of problems, such as cultural problems, before we teach?

We would agree with that. Where major conflicts stand as significant barriers between the students and the Logos, then the student can seek the guidance group. Most of you, though, are in a position where you can begin to look at your own conflicts and, with our help, work through them. [27 March 1974]

Here again we see that raising one's Level of Being is efficacious if one is to be effective in propagating the Logos. And again:

To spread the Logos, one [of us] saw the opposition coming from Christians. Christ was crucified because he had a new idea.

Dick: No. I need more Passion. It seems that Robert [Burton] was in a Power Mode, and he was extremely patient. He attracted people by his Level of Being. If one is to be a spreader of the Logos, one has to be a high person, probably in an Exalted [Cardinal] Role. It bugs me to be told to bring new people, then they pop in and out.

Dick: To spread the Logos as Robert does, you must have a Level of Being to attract people. You must be Integrated and mysterious. [14 April 1974]

Refer to the chapter "Level of Being" for more information about that prerequisite for propagating the Logos effectively and efficiently.

Comment on smaller groups — a meditation group.

We find no fault with souls gathering for meditation. This would only be a positive experience if those gathered knew their purpose in being there and wish to grow. You cannot ram growth down anyone. You have some fervor that can be tamed to advantage. We [do not] mean that you must cease to propagate the Logos — far from it. Just work on your possible let-down if one does not accept the teaching. All zeal is counterbalanced by depression. [01 May 1974]

Refer to the chapter "Meditation and Concentration" for more information about that. The point of this answer, and many others is that one must work on oneself enough to get to a place where one is not being presumptuous and pretentious about evangelizing the Logos to others. The original Michaelian group transcriptions, and some chapters in this *Study Papers* book, are full of such admonitions.

Ted: In CIF and EST, [we are] exposed to much knowledge. What is the purpose of these for us?

This answer would be much the same for all in this room. That is, to synthesize and verify this knowledge so that you can be in a better space to promulgate the Logos. [19 June 1974]

During the original Michaelian group, the members of the original Michaelian group sought information from many other metaphysical systems. The Michaels endorsed and recommended, as instances of the Logos, many metaphysical teachings and practices other than their own. There is a notion, referred to as Perennialism, that claims that there is a common core of beauty, truth, love, and energy in the various religious and philosophical traditions. We should make use of these sources.

For many students, scholarship is a way of life and pleasure, not a bore. Why not exploit that, also? Yes, they can write books and the like to promulgate the Logos to other scholarly souls. You can express the Logos through the arts. [12 February 1974]

It is also Good Work for a Scholar-Cast Artisan, such as myself, to do this scholarship and writing about the Logos. More is said about "expressing" the Logos in a subsection further on.

Logos Brought to Bear

It is not entirely up to teachers on the planes higher than the physical, and their students on the Physical Plane, to propagate the Logos on the Physical Plane; it is also the task of Transcendental and Infinite Souls to "bring the Logos to bear":

Dick: In regard to Christ, when the Ouija board said, "When the teacher dies, the teaching dies," did they mean Christ?

The descent of the High Mental body [Infinite Soul] supersedes all that has gone before. The High Mental body does not live in the sense that you know life. When the avatar descends, the Logos is brought to bear. This is not a teaching [it is a transforming energy]. When the avatar descends again [in modern times], the Logos will again be brought to bear, but in the language of today. Teachings are interpretations of the Logos. They must be updated, not because the Logos changes, but because language does. [08 September 1973]

Refer to the chapter “Transcendental and Infinite Souls” for more information about them. As stated elsewhere, the Logos is not just about verbal influence; it is about an energetic influence that has an impact on the psyches of humans; the Logos provides a spiritual ‘pressure’, so to speak. The phrase, “bring the Logos to bear” occurs a number of times in subsequent sessions, typically in connection with the function of the Infinite Soul. The Logos changes minds and hearts with and without words.

Richard: Did Christ know about atomic theory when he was in the physical body?

Not as an Old Soul, but when the high Mental body [Infinite Soul] manifested, it brought the sum of the Logos to bear. [08 October 1973]

The kind of knowledge that is available from the Logos transcends the usual path of knowledge–acquisition via “the five primitive senses” mentioned above.

Sarah: Just look around you — the ancient enemies are at it again; political unrest, religious schism. Tomas told us that the Infinite Soul would manifest in 1997 and bring the Logos to bear. [17 October 1973]

So, Tomas was off by at least two and a half decades at the time of this writing. We do not have the session transcription where this was stated.

Edgar: Can you explain reality and unreality?

The ‘realities’, of course, depend upon the perceiver. This session itself is a good example. Some in this room perceive us as real; others do not. The same could be said of unidentified flying objects and most unexplained phenomena. Another concept of ‘reality’ begins with widespread agreement that a certain object is real. We think that Bishop George Berkeley [1734 – 1753] had a few words on this subject. There is, of course, an ultimate reality that is absolute. This can only be glimpsed when the Logos is brought to bear [by the manifestation of an Infinite soul]. [08 November 1973]

The Logos parts the veil that occludes the absolute, the ultimate. With its presence, we glimpse a transcendent layer of reality beyond the physical reality system in which we normally find our consciousness embedded. Berkeley was a philosopher as well as a theologian; he taught “idealism”, the notion that the ultimate reality is mind stuff, not physical stuff.

SharonB: I would like to know the relationships between the caste system of India and Roles?

There was [a relationship] in the beginning when Sri Krishna brought the Logos to bear. This has since become blurred by ambition and material desires. [15 November 1973]

Elsewhere, Krishna was identified as one of four manifestations of the Infinite Soul, aka the High Mental Body.

Soleal’s visit would be like John the Baptist, bringing the Logos to bear. Many would listen and there would be worldwide interest.

Yes, it would. [20 November 1973]

Infinite Souls are not the only ones who can bring the Logos to bear.

Edgar: Whereby Jesus’ statement “I can do nothing”?

He could do nothing. That is true of all, without the other forces holding the universe together — all of these combined are necessary to perpetuate the Cycles. Knowing how it happens does not give you *carte blanche* to go and do it. Many people were disappointed in Jesus because he did nothing physical about their woes. This will be the case again. The Infinite Soul does not come to lead the troops; the Infinite Soul comes to bring the Logos to bear. It is up to you to listen and take your own action. [22 November 1973]

Elsewhere, Jesus was identified as one of four manifestations of the Infinite Soul, aka the High Mental Body, such as here:

Greek thought had much influence on the man Jesus, particularly Epicurus, but it would have been impossible for him to espouse the words of this pagan philosopher from the porticoes of the temple. Then, when the Infinite Soul manifested, the Logos was brought to bear in the language of the times, transcribed by a Roman tax collector [Matthew] and an Emotionally–Centered Greek physician (Luke). [25 December 1973]

If one does not feel the transformative impact of the written and/or spoken words of some metaphysical teaching, then the Logos was not brought to bear in that particular case. For this reason, my recommendation is to look for a teaching that moves you in every way: viscerally, emotionally, intellectually, intuitively, philosophically, spiritually, and energetically. The transcriptions of the original Michaelian group do that for me.

Express the Logos

Another category of mentions of the Logos in the original Michaelian group transcriptions had to do with “expressing” the Logos. One of these expressions is to propagate the Logos, as documented above, but the another type of expression is embodying the Logos in one’s personal life. Practically all of these mentions appeared in the later original Michaelian group sessions. The point is, bringing the Logos to bear is not just the work of Transcendental and Infinite Souls or other high teachers. When we inculcate the Logos, we simultaneously express the Logos.

Living the Logos is one way of expressing it, but the manner of doing so changes from culture to culture, and that can be a challenge:

Dick commented that he was reading The Teachings of Don Juan, the last book [of Carlos Castaneda] and he could not incorporate it in our truth, but had to file it as a separate truth.

This is precisely why so many Astral [Plane] and Physical [Plane] Masters insist in absolute faithfulness from their students, in asking that they abstain from studying any other teachings. Some go to the extreme of saying that there are no other teachings. Teachings are chosen carefully for the students. In many ways, you are fortunate in having a Causal [Plane] teacher who can impose no such restrictions, but also in many ways it is confusing to you when it is difficult for you to make a synthesis where the cultural differences are so vast. We would not quarrel with the teaching of this Yaqui teacher [Don Juan Matus]. Within his cultural milieu, he expressed the Logos. The Oriental concept that, “When the student is ready, the teacher will appear”, is true. The teacher is, like everything else, no accident. [30 January 1975]

There is also the challenge of verbally teaching the Logos in a different language and in a different time:

... much of it [the information thus far received] is valid and constitutes an enormous stride in approaching the vast problem of expressing the Logos in the language of this time frame. One does not have to see the Logos in terms of the Synthesis that you have received, in order to see it. [31 January 1975]

Each of us can express the Logos in our own way, appropriate to our talents and our intentions:

Eugene: What is the Agreement?

It has to do with the rendering of a service. Yes, it will be your way of expressing the Logos. Yes, the three of you are ideally suited to his task. [undated, 1975?]

The original Michaelian group partook of many spiritual teachings, and found in them expressions of the Logos:

Language evolves, customs change. Words acquire new connotations in response to societal dynamism. The Bible must be read as literature today. The chapters contained therein are merely stories about systems and teachers who lived long ago. On the other hand, the Logos, as expressed by the Realized Masters, can be couched in the language of the times, no matter how complex or dangerous those times might be. When the Infinite Soul manifested through the man Jesus, the sum of the Logos was brought to bear. In the stories about this Master and his system, however, there is much emotional bias, occult nonsense, and romantic embellishment.

Aside from our own teacher, we have individually and in small groups within our group been experiencing the Gurdjieff/Ouspensky material, and/or Werner Erhard’s EST training, as well as the approach of Chögyam Trungpa, Rinpoche, whose book Cutting Through Spiritual Materialism has been of interest to some of us. One of our people has just read The Only Dance There Is by Baba Ram Dass and is sharing this with others of us. Another is perusing The Phoenix Lectures by L. Ron Hubbard, of Scientology. Others are in touch with the Living Love Center and are studying their Handbook to Higher Consciousness. The Logos abounds, to be sure ... within and without us ... and we synthesize and unfold, as we learn and, ultimately, detach. [Dimensions! June 1975]

There is some overlap in the expression of the Logos and the expression of Essence in our lives:

[Presumed question about the Roles in Essence versus Personality]

Please remember that the Role is in Essence, not in Personality. All the other Overleaves [other than Role] are in Personality. Only the Role gives you a glimpse of the Essence. When the Fragment is pursuing a more Essence-related life, the frustrations therein are likely to be more related to Chief Feature than those awesome frustrations that arise when a Fragment pursues a task totally out of Essence. Your culture has placed intuition very low on its list of priorities. Therefore, the artist who must operate solely by intuition cannot expect the adulation of the crowds. True artists who express the Logos in their works do, however, derive the satisfaction of having done so. Do not confuse the Role [of] Artisan with the life role of artist, even though they often dovetail. Ideally, Artisans would pursue creative endeavors, but this is certainly not [always] the case. Most musicians for instance are Scholars and most soloists are Kings and Sages. Most successful writers are Scholars, Warriors, and Slaves, except in the case of sacred literature of a moralistic bent, which is mostly drivel and

composed by Young [Age] Priests on a crusade. Most painters and sculptors are, however, Artisans. This solitary form of creative expression just does not appeal to the more verbal Roles. [01 October 1977]

Refer to the chapter “Essence and Personality” for more information about the distinction made in this passage. “True” art is a kind of expression of the Logos.

(We had also been wondering if there was anything else that had not been communicated yet by the teacher.)

As for new information, we endeavor to present some new information whenever we have your attention — new in the sense that perhaps you have never thought of it in quite that light before. However, dear students, you have heard all that there is to hear. Our task, as we see it, is to continue to present the body of this Logos until a student grasps at its meaning and begins to apply it and teach it to others. We will continue to present it, and since we are not limited by physical time, we can serve it up to you in an infinite variety of frames. Perhaps we have just not hit upon the winning combination. After all, yours is, as you have said many times, a verbal culture, and the words are eventually what you will hear and then they can be translated into the action [Moving Center]. Richard has hit upon the meaning of this teaching, but his understanding is still basically intellectual [Center] and philosophical [Higher Intellectual] rather than emotional [Center] and transcendental [Higher Emotional]. [04 November 1977]

“Intellectual and Philosophical” are the Ordinal and Cardinal poles of the Expression Axis; “Emotional and Transcendental” are the Ordinal and Cardinal poles of the Inspiration Axis. The progression recommended by the Michaels is that Expression should translate into Inspiration, and Inspiration should translate into Action. In other words: think > feel > act. It is not surprising that an Entity, the Michaels, that consists of Action Axis Roles, should emphasize that this progression is the preferred path of spiritual growth. The full expression of the Logos involves activating and balancing all of the Centers, not just those alluded to above, so that means: Moving, Emotional, Intellectual, Instinctive, Higher Intellectual, Higher Emotional, and Higher Moving.

Miscellaneous Logos

Obviously, this subsection is the collection of mentions of the Logos that do not fit into the other subsections.

Mallory: What is the work necessary for me to becoming unTrapped in Essence?

The work for you, Mallory, includes moving. Your dance is an excellent place to start, preceded by your period of meditation, with the thought of preparation for the dance. We see emotional involvement. The way through to Intellectual Center is, of course, the rendering of this type of input neutral. The inability to accept input in a detached fashion separates you from the Intellectual Part of this Center, and thus there is a barrier to Intellectual Center. The love of the movement, or more accurately, the exhilaration you feel when moving, creates a barrier to Moving Part of Moving Center. All students must discover their area of enTrapment and work from there, emulating the energy Center toward which they are moving. Students Trapped in the Emotional Part of Intellectual Center rationalize all technical material well, but romanticize all other input, trying to find that completely personal slant. There is “love” of literature and words in these souls. They are normally exceedingly verbose in tutorial positions, not so much in others. These souls find the romance of the Logos so alluring that this enTrapment is among the most difficult to scale. Most souls Trapped in the Moving Part of Intellectual Center are veritable whirlwinds of intellectual activity. They spend the entire [incarnation] interval collecting facts, sometimes in a random fashion and sometimes to negligible results. On the other hand, many inventors, such as the man Thomas Edison, were trapped here [and his results were not negligible]. [03 March 1974]

Refer to the chapter “Centering Traps” for more information about that. Basically, being in the Part of a Center rather than in the pure Center was considered to be an “energy leak”, and this is said to limit access to Essence. It is from pure Essence that one has an undistorted view of the Logos rather than a romanticized view of the Logos.

All of you now have the chance again to hear the words and be a part of the manifestation of the Logos. Also, a chance to sit at the feet of the master. All of you also now have the opportunity to participate in a movement toward peaceful world dominion — this time without the bloodshed of the past. [19 October 1974]

By now, the reader should be abundantly aware how important it is to understand the Logos and embody the Logos and express the Logos and be a part of the manifestation of the Logos in modern times. Apparently, that is one of the primary reasons we are students of the Michaelian teachings.

Will Soalel's visit be a precursor for the Infinite Soul manifestation?

This student will not be a vehicle for the Transcendental Soul on this planet, no, but it will be a part of the initial surge, yes. He has taken as his task the "proof" of the universality of the Logos, that truth there [on his planet] is truth here [on Earth].

How about Kathryn going back with Soleal?

That is definitely now an alternative. The exchange would be of much value. The same exchange would take place. This Old King has within herself the proof of the Logos. [10 November 1974]

Refer to the chapter "Soleal" for more information about the anticipated visit of Soleal from another planet. That never happened, but it may be that the UFO phenomena will eventuate in the reveal of the reality of extraterrestrials, and that will reveal the universality of the Logos.

[Question not recorded.]

The isolation is not valid; if anything, it will bring you together. It will bring purpose into this life; not a specific goal, but rather a time for drawing into the Logos. [11 November 1974]

Two (or many) people can unite in an absorption into the Logos because the Logos is itself unified; it is an internally consistent belief, value, and behavior system.

Could Michael give us some of James's Agreements on the Astral Plane?

This student has elected to reach a large number of souls with what he discerns as the Logos. This to us represents a good beginning. Although on the surface this may seem to be a commercial venture, the observations are at a deeper level, and the Essence here has more influence than you would think. Although he is still quite "asleep", he does follow many intuitive drives. [20 November 1974]

Obviously, everyone has their own idiosyncratic perception of the Logos, and there are degrees of accurate perception of the Logos, but the goal of life and lives is that we should all end up accurately discerning and expressing the Logos.

Question regarding contacting Robert [Burton] through Astral projection.

His Slaves will still wish to protect him from the outside world, but in the end, the Logos will override all objections. [27 March 1974]

The Logos is persuasive in getting its way because it has an energetic influence, as noted many times in this chapter. This is not a coercive energy, but it is a compelling energy.

Question from Eugene about a passage in [the Book of] Revelations. Does this describe the Overleaves?

The Overleaves as the planes, are indeed mentioned in this book. The man Jesus knew about this even before the manifestation [of the Infinite Soul]. The man John [author of Revelations] did not understand, but dreamed about it later in terrifying nightmares, and set these experiences down for posterity. Again, the Logos is couched in ambiguities, as occurs so often when the students transcribe the material without benefit of editorial expertise.... In its ambiguity, that passage is aimed in that general direction, yes. That particular passage refers primarily to the philosophic Attitudes. [24 April 1974]

Not all spiritual teachings provide a clear and clean interpretation and expression of the Logos. These cases require the validation skills of students to discern.

Please stop associating religion with the "church." Religion is the ecstasy of the Logos. In your society, the church is a business in Artificial Space. One is of the Essence; one is not. One is in Real Space; one is not. Preparing an altar for the experience can be third line Work of the highest order or it can be a drudge — or even worse, it can be a mockery. Or better yet, for those in the Work, it can be the gift of higher [Center] expression. [16 February 1975]

True or valid religiosity has access to the Logos via the Higher Emotional Center. Refer to the chapter "Real Space versus Artificial Space".

Students are invited to design a seal representing the Logos, which is necessary in order for our incorporation. Also, speak up now if there are objections at this time to our name: "The Fellowship of Souls". It is possible to change it at a later date. At the present, the price for this legal action is \$50. [21 February 1975]

Designing a seal was part of the original Michaelian group preparation to propagate the Logos as a legal entity or organization. Unfortunately for them and for us and for the world in general, the original Michaelian group mostly fell apart after this session. The propagation of the Logos via the Michaelian teachings was assumed by subsequent individuals and groups: more channels appeared, meetings were held, books were written, websites were established, and so on.

Logos post-Original Michaelian Group

Reading the above, we see how important it was to the Michaels that their students understand the Logos, grow enough to express the Logos in their personal lives, and propagate the Logos to others.

Yarbro's book *Messages from Michael* made numerous references to the Logos, many of which are taken from the original Michaelian group transcriptions that have become widely available. However, some of them seem to have been embellished by Yarbro:

The descent of the high mental body supersedes all that has gone before. The high mental body does not live in the sense that you know life. When the avatar, its physical manifestation, descends, the logos is brought to bear. This is not a teaching. When the avatar descends again, the logos will again be brought to bear, but in the language of today. Teachings are interpretations of the logos. They must be updated, not because the logos changes, but because language does.

"What the ruddy hell does Michael mean by 'logos'?" Craig demanded.

Evolution started on an orderly basis on all worlds. This concept should be self-evident when one examines the remnants. Spiritual evolution occurs simultaneously. There is evolution on all planes except the Tao. That is the only perfection of which we are all cognizant. To the Greeks, the logos was the controlling force of the universe. To christian theologians, determined to bend all teachings to their preferred shape, it is the word of god. The logos can be called the outward or physical plane manifestation of the Tao. Remember that it has been said, in the beginning was the word and the word was god. Substitute 'being' for 'beginning', 'logos' for 'word' and 'Tao' for 'god' and you may grasp part of it. In the being is the logos and the logos is the Tao. [*MFM*, p. 86]

None of the other mentions of the Logos in *MFM* add anything to the discussion in this chapter. Subsequent to the original Michaelian group, the Logos seems to have fallen off the radar in Michaelian teachings groups. The Logos was only mentioned a very few times in *More Messages from Michael*, and they do not add to this discussion.

The Logos was only mentioned once in the Briggs sessions that have become generally available. (The sessions which were held in the early 1980s.)

Tao, the cosmos incarnated, will visit every 2000 years. It's like a rule or law. It keeps the teaching alive.

Transcendental Souls are present always on the Physical Plane. Not all of them become famous, but they are here. They keep the Logos, the Word, the cosmos, alive on the Physical Plane within the Maya. [23 March 1983]

After this, the word and the concept to which the word points are mostly missing from the Michaelian teachings.

General Comments on Logos

Considering its history in philosophy and theology, one can certainly understand why the Michaels chose this word to apply to a significant component of their teaching.

In other esoteric teachings, such as Theosophy and the Ra Material, each consciousness integrity (being with a sense of ego or I-ness) is said to have a Logos. For instance, the entire planet earth has a Logos, called by us Gaia. The Sun has a Logos, each star has a logos, and each planet around each star has a Logos. Each galaxy of stars has a Logos. My second favorite channeled teaching, the Ra Material, has plenty to say about it: ><https://www.lawofone.info/results.php?q=logos><.

Maybe it is just me, but of all the Michaelian teachings channeling that I know of, only the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group have an impact on me that I would expect from an embodiment of the description of the Logos contained in those transcriptions. In them only do I sense the 'juice', the 'mojo', the energy of the Logos.

There are numerous subjects that were discussed at length in the original Michaelian group sessions, and seemed to be important to the Michaels, but that made little or no appearance in subsequent channeling, and gained little or no traction in subsequent groups. One of the functions of this *Study Papers* book is to reintroduce some of these subjects to Michaelian students, for their evaluation and potential edification. One of those lost and forgotten subjects is the Logos.

[[Identify *Logos* as corresponding to the Concept Center (+3-D+); identify *Mythos* as corresponding to the Sympathy Center (+2-D+); identify *Religio* as corresponding to the Excitation Center (+1-D+).]]





LONELINESS **VERSUS** ALONENESS

This chapter is the product of a search for variations of the word “loneliness” in the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group. Although it is certainly and obviously not a central doctrine of the Michaelian teachings, it appears many times in many contexts, and this prompted me to research and write this chapter.

As you will readily see from their names, chapters closely related to this chapter are “Alienation”, “Intimacy”, “Strangers”, and “Trust”. **Isolation?**

The Michaels had somewhat to say about the subject of aloneness and loneliness, as we will see below. The word “surrender” is not capitalized in this chapter or other chapters of this *Study Papers* book because it has no special meaning in the Michaelian teachings; it is not a Michaelian jargon word that needs a definition apart from its use in the common vernacular. One might therefore wonder why it is even included in this book. One answer is that it is just a Scholar–Cast Artisan thing to do: I study the Michaelian teachings documents and I write about them and I want to be thorough. Another answer is that lack of surrender to reality is pervasive in human psychology and sociology, the subject came up during the original Michaelian group on numerous occasions, some interesting things were said about it, and it might be helpful for Michaelian students to have the answers conveniently collected all in one place.

The following extracts from original Michaelian group transcriptions are Q&A exchanges, where an original Michaelian group member asks a question (or makes a comment), and the Michaels provide an answer. This is not a subject that would benefit by division into subcategories, as some subjects do. These extracts are presented in the chronological order in which they were given, because this is not a subject where there was a development or evolution of a specific revelation of a facet of the Michaelian teachings, as was often the case with the original Michaelian group. As is my custom, I often provide some explanatory comments following the question or answer. Underlined words in the Michaels’ answers are my emphasis, to draw attention to what it is that I comment on. Sometimes I embed words or phrases [in brackets] that I believe help to clarify the question or the answer.

Aloneness per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

Angie: I have been considering moving into a commune and I would like to know if it is better to live in a commune or to live alone.

I think that the communal life offers a great deal so long as the goals of the commune are those of continued spiritual growth and they do not conflict with what you know to be true. Living alone offers little and I would not recommend it to anyone. Isolation breeds alienation and alienation breeds suspicion that leads to jealousy, possessiveness, and greed, the three cardinal stumbling blocks on the path to awareness. [24 July 1973]

Eugene: Task involving teaching and aloneness — separation?

Also, an important part of this task involves the discrimination in knowing who can hear the words without wasting the energy on those who cannot. Yes, the separation is almost accomplished and yes, it is a solitary task and cannot be interfered with. If there is interference, there is nothing accomplished. The true occult Adept is usually lonely. [12 June 1974]

Much was said about aloneness prior to this statement, some of which is discussed in the chapters “Alienation” and “Intimacy”. Perhaps I should have a chapter “Aloneness”. This passage might not be relevant to the emotion of loneliness, the subject of this chapter.

Loneliness per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

Of course, one must realize that spiritually-oriented groups of persons, where acceptance is the cardinal rule, will attract many lonely, maladjusted persons searching for reaffirmation of their humanness, and these persons will not be helped to grow spiritually, but will bask in the warmth of the acceptance for a time. And those truly on the path will still be able to see the sickness. [14 September 1974]

Exploration has always appealed to Creatures of Reason. As soon as they learned to conquer their native environment and subdue it sufficiently to insure long-range survival, their thoughts automatically turned to the stars. As their technological might increased, their horizons broadened. We believe that the man Bertrand Russell hit upon a basic truth when he described the “utter terror of cosmic loneliness” that man feels when he contemplates the cosmos. Man is not alone in this; all Creatures of Reason experience it; it is part of the evolutionary process on the Physical Plane and cannot be avoided.... [20 November 1974]

One who observes from this [Causal Plane] vantage point is struck by the commanding, overriding trait of this culture, that of loneliness. You are the loneliest people we know of. This, in part, relates to your not attempting in any way to override the embedded instincts left as vestiges of a more primitive self. There are abundant resources on this planet. Even though it has been rather ruthlessly plundered, there is still much to spare. The loneliness is heartbreaking, literally, as it is so unnecessary, and something that the Personality elects as a method to keep the battle going. If the Personality no longer felt threatened and alienated, there would be no incentive to continue the instinctive drama. Belonging to these barrier groups gives the illusion of taking the edge off the loneliness. After all, if you can be a party in an organization of several million members, how can you be alone? In fact, these barrier groups only serve to alienate you even further, as they separate you from a larger segment of the population that does not belong to your barrier group. Then, of course, prejudices and hates arise from the perpetuation of these barrier groups, and these serve to fan the fires even further. The war is strengthened and you continue to struggle against the hostile environment, which you must continuously create for yourselves, as it does not exist any longer. This land has been tamed and this is the time to enjoy the fruits of your labor. Why are you not doing so? [21 December 1974]

On this continent are perhaps the most isolated mass of humanity in this sector of the galaxy. They pride themselves on their isolation and call it “independence” — a very pretty and useless euphemism. There is no such thing as independence where the Personality is concerned, and the Essence has no need for this isolation. The Personality fears independence perhaps more than any other condition. It even contracts incompatible matings in order to avoid this independence, and yet it sets this up as the goal toward which to strive — the lesson to be taught to one’s children, the unreachable goal. It spells only discontent for those who do achieve it to a degree, since one of its byproducts is a loneliness even more awesomely complete than the generalized loneliness that afflicts this culture.

We have spoken to you earlier of fear. The fear of closeness in your culture is quite a phenomenon. Living communally is a frightening thing. It is, therefore, an experience through which you may learn to move through and beyond fear. Alienation is not synonymous with aloneness. Aloneness is essential for spiritual evolution — aloneness as experienced in the meditative state. You must ultimately stand alone. Alienation is not this spiritual aloneness, but merely a defense mechanism of the False Personality, which wishes to enjoy its illusion of uniqueness.... Group living, your most menacing new horizon, is an opportunity for embracing growth. You may, of course, make another choice. That choice leads to further apartheid, further alienation and further desire to compete — further desire, in other words, for war. [28 December 1974]

[Soleal:] I experience lapses into feeling aloneness. The aloneness is an illusion, but the pain is just as sharp. [11 January 1975]

In your culture, the desire to seek out a permanent mate on a one-to-one basis is still largely predicated upon the loneliness and isolation that the technological society breeds. It is a terrible price to pay for civilization, for in the long run, especially where there are far-reaching legal ramifications, it breeds discontent and much

needless negativity, and thus much wasted energy, which could be used for [spiritual] growth. [15 January 1975]

Jackie asked about an experience she had about twenty months ago. It was an awful experience — she felt as if her mind had totally went away. It freaked her out. There was a tunnel and she was unconscious.

The experience of nothingness and dissemblance is a common one, for students still see themselves as alienated and alone. Even though you have a close interpersonal relationship at the present moment, at many levels, there is still much fear in you of being alone or symbolically cut off from the rest — in a tunnel so to speak, able to see, yet unable to touch. As long as you feel that alienation from those close to you, the use of these expanding techniques will occasionally produce these bad results. You have conflicts, yet, about those with you forging ahead and leaving you behind. Give them up and you will give up your tunnel vision at the same time. You have as much ability to make the choice of growth as they have — you need only to make it. [25 January 1975]

You see, because of the very real feeling of apartness — of loneliness, if you will — that is felt on the Physical Plane, it is comfortable for the Personality to think that there is someone else dependent upon them; then at least they are not completely alone in the void. This dependency must many times be forced, as most souls are innately willing to shoulder their own load of responsibility. Many times when this dependency is lifted, the soul who was experiencing gratification from this responsibility can no longer justify its existence, and a real psycho-emotional crisis occurs.

Elizabeth had a dream looking through a large pane of glass into the ocean — sun at the end, star colored bursting like the Fourth of July fireworks — impressed by the clearness of the glass — blueness of the water. Suddenly, she was on the water... It was a lake frozen over with ice and the ice was thin. She walked on it and sank ... and an old woman pulled her out.

In the Mature Cycle, there is acute perception of the veil that lies between the real and artificial space, and as never before, the longing to penetrate this veil and go beyond the senses to glimpse the pan-dimensional. To know that you are not alone in the void, you must walk out on the thin ice, and that way test the physical universe and its response to your plea. Most Mature Souls feel this, and in some way translate it into dreams of incredible strength and strange beauty. Not many, unfortunately, retain the memory of these dreams or question its meaning. [08 February 1974]

We have expressed before the frustrations encountered when one tries to reach this state alone. Aloneness is the single most important obstacle to reaching that state of perfection or rapture called Agape, or love. We have stressed friendship as a preliminary stepping-stone — not the superficial friendship of the Overleaves, but the sometimes harsh and unremitting friendship of those in your own pathway who will Photograph your Overleaves in both their Negative and Positive Poles, and this must be an almost constant phenomenon or it will not be successful. [30 September 1977]





LOVE

Learn now to differentiate between that which cannot love and that which does love, and deeply. Learn that there are feelings at a deeper level that compel you into certain relationships. The communications of the love beyond the Mechanical personality will not fall on deaf ears. [07 July 1974]

[Love and what Gurdjieff called “external considering”] are synonymous. We see no difference. The machine [human personality] can do neither, but it is possible for you students to do both with work. A word about Balance for the new students: this means simultaneously utilizing the Moving Part of Moving Center, the Emotional Part of Emotional Center, and the Intellectual Part of Intellectual Center, and in a split second differentiating which applies in a given situation, with no consequent energy leak. [10 July 1974]

Dick: It seems to me that a person on the [spiritual] path should not be lashing back at “sick people”. Is Michael inferring that we confront these obnoxious people?

By the therapeutic approach, we speak of that method by which the person becomes stripped of the tough outer fibers of the False Personality, and becomes vulnerable to other demands of Essence. It is true, Dick, this Personality cannot love; only the Essence is capable of loving, and only when its demands are met will you love. We have suggested to you that the way to achieve this is through giving up the Personality’s expectations of the experience, and you are yet scornful of this truth. Yet, it goes far deeper than this. When you strip down to the Old Soul’s perceptions of others, that is, as a part of something — and make note of that “a part” — only a minute part of something greater that includes self. Only when you become willing to part with your ultra-precious Identification [with Personality] will you glimpse the truth in this. [14 September 1974]





⑦ MACHINATIONS

This chapter is the product of a search for the word “machination” in the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group channeling sessions. This word does not represent a significant component of the Michaelian teachings. However, there are good reasons to discuss the subject in this *Study Papers* book: 1) the subject came up numerous times during the original Michaelian group; 2) some interesting things were said about the subject; 3) the subject is related to a number of other components of the Michaelian teachings that are considered to be significant; 4) students can presumably benefit from having the mentions conveniently collected and commented all in one place; 5) Machinations are pervasive in human psychology and sociology and spirituality — subjects covered extensively in this book — so it behooves us to have a working knowledge of it.

The word “machination” is not capitalized in this chapter or other chapters of this *Study Papers* book because it has no special meaning in the Michaelian teachings; it is not a Michaelian jargon word that needs a definition apart from its use in the common vernacular.

This chapter is one of many in this book that focuses on a psychological component of the Michaelian teachings as found in original Michaelian group transcriptions, rather than on a doctrinal or spiritual component. A psychological component is usually either a positive to be cultivated or a negative to be mitigated. As we will see, the Michaels tell us that machinations are a negative to be eschewed. The Michaelian version of psychology is not to be confused with the popular psychology of the self-improvement movement, those that do not have a spiritual core or perspective. Rather, the Michaelian psychotherapeutic path (aimed at improving psychological health) is a beneficial precursor to the spiritual path (aimed at improving soul health). To skip the former but attempt the latter is referred to as “spiritual bypassing”. This is discussed at length on such websites as >https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spiritual_bypass<. To skip mitigating one’s psychological issues and attempt to go straight to enlightenment usually proves to be problematic.

Definition of Machinations

So what is meant by machination? Two online dictionary definitions are (underlined words are my emphasis):

DEFINITION

a scheming or crafty action or artful design intended to accomplish some usually evil end
[><https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/machination>< — retrieved 01 March 2023]

WORDS RELATED TO MACHINATION:

conspiracy, intrigue, ploy, ruse, stratagem, artifice, cabal, design, device, dodge, practice, scheme, sellout, skullduggery, trick, dirty work, monkey business, on the make, song and dance
[><https://www.dictionary.com/browse/machination>< — retrieved 01 March 2023]

DESCRIPTION

When a James Bond villain comes up with a plan to destroy the world, he doesn’t use a simple plan. No, he uses a machination — a complex plot that relies on numerous elements coming together to work. Not surprisingly, machination derives from the Medieval French *machina*, meaning “machine”. And, like many a machine, a machination is subject to going wrong, often comically (see James Bond movies). Politicians love a good machination, and their machinations are frequently exposed in the press as scandals.
[><https://www.vocabulary.com/dictionary/machination>< — retrieved 06 March 2023]

Context indicates that the underlined words appear to be the closest to the meaning that the Michaels had in mind.

Machinations per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

The following extracts from original Michaelian group transcriptions are Q&A exchanges, where an original Michaelian group member asks a question (or makes a comment), and the Michaels provide an answer. These extracts are presented in the chronological order in which they were given. As is my custom, I often provide some explanatory comments following the question or answer. Underlined words are my emphasis, to draw attention to what it is that I comment on. Sometimes I embed words or phrases [in brackets] that I believe help to clarify the question or the answer.

As it so happens, all of the mentions of the word machinations appear in the context of the Goals. This is understandable because the Goal wants to make something happen, and does not always trust the universe to make it happen without personal intervention:

Does "acceptance" mean that a person accepts everything around him or does he work to get others to accept him?

Acceptance as a Goal causes the soul [person] involved to go through various machinations in order to find their special niche in life. This [Goal] also in turn causes them to excuse the faults of others, since they themselves recognize their own imperfections. This is the proverbial "nice guy". [31 December 1973]

As someone who has that Goal, I can confirm and affirm with confidence that that statement is accurate. I would use the word "contortions" as a synonym for machinations in this context — contorting myself, trying to make something happen that accomplishes the Goal. This behavior comes from the Negative Pole of the Goal of Acceptance, namely -Ingratiation, of course, not from the Positive Pole of +Agape — or as I prefer, +Unification. (It was a year after that 1973 session that the Poles of the Overleaves were revealed.)

Mallory: I'd like any information that would be helpful about a six-year-old boy I'm attempting to test in my work. Is the problem physiological or an emotional one? He is epileptic and slow to develop. What is the SR&G of the father and the son, and anything else?

The man [father] is a Fourth Level Young Priest in Acceptance. The child is a Second Level, Mature Warrior, Moving Center, in Retardation. He should be made to understand that the seizure disorder need not be disabling, so should the man. He will accept this from you.

Mallory: What is causing the speech retardation and anger?

There is much hostility in this home. The mother there is a Baby Artisan in Dominance. The child gains comfort only through these machinations [speech retardation, anger]. His [Retardation] Goal holds him from achievement, but so does his mother [in Dominance]. [27 January 1974]

Mallory was a psychotherapist in training, and therefore trained to notice dysfunctions, and seek ways to understand and fix them. The point to be gleaned from that passages is that, if you see someone "acting out" — physically and psychologically misbehaving — it might be a machination (ploy, scheme, stratagem) to gain comfort in an uncomfortable situation or circumstance.

A six-year-old child almost certainly does not have the maturity to understand the motivations for his machinations. Indeed, I would suggest that even adults are rarely that insightful. Therefore, the steps in mitigating machinations are first to see them and recognize them for what they are, and then, second, to understand their source. One place to look is the Negative Poles of one's Goal:

It serves a useful purpose and also Buffers the Essence.

False Personality is only a part of this. The total False Personality includes, of course, all of the "shoulds" that you learned in childhood, the various machinations you go through as a result of your Goals, and those reactions that are solely the result of the Tape Loops provided by the Attitude. [24 February 1974]

Refer to the chapters "Buffers", "Personality — True and False", "Imprinting", and "Tape Loops" for descriptions and explanations of those topics mentioned in that passage. As noted above, the machinations resulting from the Goals would be motivated by their Negative Poles, as follows: Acceptance = -Ingratiation, Rejection = -Prejudice, Growth = -Confusion, Retardation (Reduction) = -Withdrawal, Dominance = -Dictatorship, Submission = -Subservience, Stagnation (Equilibrium) = -Inertia. I leave it to the reader to apply Self-observation to discern how their Goal produces machinations. Then, refer to the chapter "Extinguishment" for instructions on mitigating the various kinds of negativity mentioned in the original Michaelian group transcriptions.

The machinations of (the Negative Pole of) the Goal of Growth are reviewed in the next Q&A exchange:

Mallory: More on "machinations," please.

Growth is a rocky Goal, and causes the soul to go through some elaborate and complicated machinations, which mask all of the other Goals. Many times, the soul in Growth is forced to play out all of the agonies of the other Goals in order to grow, such as the Rejection [and] Dominance [Goals] seen often in many members of this group who are in Growth. Depression and elation usually manifests often in this Goal. There is sometimes the need to submit, i.e., to put oneself in the hands of the guru [Submission Goal]. There are also many times the need to feel accepted, to have the [Acceptance] Goal verified by society, to check out with life, the sanity of the soul's purpose. This often makes the soul who is still in False Personality go through a set of well-defined patterns.

You can now begin to Photograph these patterns in one another. There is the definite game-playing aspect to this that, on a lower level, is worked out in awareness groups. Sometimes, it is easier to observe the various machinations by observing awareness groups at work. [24 February 1974]

Refer to the chapter "Photography" for more about the Michaelian recommendation to allow other trusted mature students to point out your defects and deficiencies, including your machinations. Refer to the chapter "Games" for more discussion about a phenomenon that is similar to machination.

Concluding Comments on Machination

One wonders if the Michaels chose to use this word — rather than say one of its synonyms such as scheme, stratagem, plot, intrigue — because of its derivation from the same Latin root as "machine", that being an allusion to what Gurdjieff and the Michaels called "Mechanical Man"; refer to the chapter by that name. Mechanical Man functions automatically, without self-awareness; machinations are likewise mechanical.

The Overleaf category of Goals provides an impetus to achieve a certain purpose, so naturally a person in the Negative Pole of their Goal will 'engineer' machinations in order to accomplish that Goal, whereas a person in the Positive Pole will not stoop to artifices.

Where have I seen that word "artifice" before? As an Artisan, I can confirm and affirm that this Role is perhaps the most likely of the Roles to be guilty of machinations — in the Negative Pole of -Artifice, of course. Artisans make good engineers because they inherently know how stuff works. This inclines them to "engineer" their environment, to make it look and work as they want it to. Feng shui, for instance, comes from the Positive Pole of +Creation; devious crafty scheming to get other people to do what the Artisan wants comes from the Negative Pole.

Speaking of "crafty", Artisans are the most likely Role to be craftspersons by profession and/or hobby; they are good with their hands, making and fixing and manipulating things. A word related to machination is manipulation. Artisans typically excel at crafting and manipulating their environment in a good way, and craftily manipulating other people in a bad way; for more discussion about this word, refer to the chapter "Manipulation".

Another word that fits with the Artisan in the context of machination is "design", and of course that concept also has a positive connotation and a negative connotation; it is listed as one of the synonyms in the introduction above. Artisans are very clever both ways.

I searched the internet in vain for an antonym for machination. Perhaps you cannot do the opposite of it; perhaps you can only just refrain from doing it.





⑧ MANIPULATION

This chapter is the product of a search for the word manipulation in the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group channeling sessions. This word does not represent a significant component of the Michaelian teachings. However, there are good reasons to discuss the subject in this *Study Papers* book: 1) the subject came up numerous times during the original Michaelian group; 2) some interesting things were said about the subject; 3) the subject is related to a number of other components of the Michaelian teachings that are considered to be significant; 4) students can presumably benefit from having the mentions conveniently collected and commented all in one place; 5) manipulation is pervasive in human psychology and sociology and spirituality — subjects covered extensively in this book — so it behooves us to have a working knowledge of it.

The word manipulation is not capitalized in this chapter or other chapters of this *Study Papers* book because it has no special meaning in the Michaelian teachings; it is not a Michaelian jargon word that needs a definition apart from its use in the common vernacular. However, as we will see in this chapter, the word manipulation is applied to both positive and negative phenomena, hence +manipulation and –manipulation.

This chapter is one of many in this book that focuses on a psychological component of the Michaelian teachings as found in original Michaelian group transcriptions, rather than on a doctrinal or spiritual component. A psychological component is usually either a positive to be cultivated or a negative to be mitigated. As we will see, the Michaels tell us that nefarious manipulation of other people is a negative. The Michaelian version of psychology is not to be confused with the pop psychology of the self-improvement movement, those that do not have a spiritual core or perspective. Rather, the Michaelian psychotherapeutic path (aimed at improving psychological health) is a beneficial precursor to the spiritual path (aimed at improving soul health). To skip the former but attempt the latter is referred to as “spiritual bypassing”. This is discussed at length on various websites, including https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spiritual_bypass. To skip mitigating one’s psychological issues and attempt to go straight to enlightenment usually proves to be problematic.

Definition of Manipulation

So what is meant by manipulation? As usual, the Merriam Webster dictionary provides a definition and some examples of its usage:

- 1: to treat or operate with or as if with the hands or by mechanical means especially in a skillful manner [as in] “manipulate a pencil” [or as in] “manipulate a machine”
- 2a: to manage or utilize skillfully [as in] “quantify our data and manipulate it statistically”
- 2b: to control or play upon by artful, unfair, or insidious means especially to one’s own advantage [as in] “being used and manipulated by the knowing men around him”
- 3: to change by artful or unfair means so as to serve one’s purpose [as in] “suspected that the police reports were manipulated” [<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/manipulate> — retrieved 03 April 2023]

In the original Michaelian group transcriptions, the word is used with all three definitions. Perhaps it could be said that people who are skillful with their hands express the positive manifestation, +manipulation, but then there are self-serving people who are skillful about –manipulating other people for nefarious purposes.

The etymology of the word explains the positive and negative connotations:

Manipulation is the skillful handling, controlling or using of something or someone. Whether it’s the sculpture you made in art class or how you convinced your friend to do your homework — both are considered manipulation. From the Latin word for “handful”, manipulation certainly has much to do with using your hands to move or shape something, like a good DJ manipulating two totally different tunes into the perfect mashup.

But this word also has some negative connotations — a manipulative person knows how to twist words, play on emotions and otherwise manage a situation in a sneaky fashion to get what he wants.
[><https://www.vocabulary.com/dictionary/manipulation>< — retrieved 05 May 2023]

Regarding –manipulation, my usual go-to source for definitions and descriptions and explanations, Wikipedia, says this (underlined words are my emphasis):

In psychology, manipulation is defined as subterfuge designed to influence or control another, usually in a manner which facilitates one’s personal aims. Definitions for the term vary in which behavior is specifically included, influenced by both culture and whether referring to the general population or used in clinical contexts. Manipulation is generally considered a dishonest form of social influence as it is used at the expense of others.

Manipulative tendencies may derive from cluster B personality disorders such as narcissistic or antisocial personality disorder. Manipulation is also correlated with higher levels of emotional intelligence, and is a chief component of the personality construct dubbed Machiavellianism.

Manipulation differs from general influence and persuasion. Non-manipulative influence is generally perceived to be harmless and it is not seen as unduly coercive to the individual’s right of acceptance or rejection of influence. Persuasion is the ability to move others to a desired action, usually within the context of a specific goal. Persuasion often attempts to influence ones beliefs, religion, motivations, or behavior. Influence and persuasion are neither positive nor negative, unlike manipulation which is strictly negative.
[>[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Manipulation_\(psychology\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Manipulation_(psychology)) — retrieved 05 May 2023]

So, –manipulation is the word for inducing other people to do what you want them to do when it is for your benefit while it is potentially to their detriment. In other words, –manipulation imposes your choice on others. In extreme cases, this can be Karmic, and we Michaelian students do not want that, now do we, so that is why I researched and wrote this study paper.

Manipulation per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

The following extracts from original Michaelian group transcriptions are Q&A exchanges, where an original Michaelian group member asks a question (or makes a comment), and the Michaels provide an answer. These extracts are presented in the chronological order in which they were given. As is my custom, I often provide some explanatory comments following the question or answer. Underlined words are my emphasis, to draw attention to what it is that I comment on. Sometimes I embed words or phrases [in brackets] that I believe help to clarify the question or the answer.

The first use of the word refers to a tendency of Young Souls:

Where is Ilene?

Dick: Probably a Young Soul.

You are correct: Late Cycle younger soul. Ilene has already done her earthshaking [in the early Levels], though there is still desire there to create harmony by forcing others into a mold: If they would just behave in a specific fashion, ‘things’ would be a whole lot smoother.

In the description of Soul Ages revealed a couple of weeks before, the motto of the Young Soul was said to be “Do it my way”. This can be interpreted as both “I will do it my way”, as in “Individuality” (refer to the chapter by that name), or “You will do it my way” as in the tendency to mold others into one’s preference. Thus, the Young Soul is said to be –manipulative. The Artisan Role is in the same Process (Ordinal Expression = Analysis) as the Young Soul. Even though it does not say so in the original Michaelian group transcriptions, Artisans are typically good with their hands; it comes with the territory, the realm of creation of arts and crafts and construction and production, hence +manipulation of *things*. On this account, it may be that, of all the Roles, Artisans are the most prone to –manipulation of *people* as well as things.

Manipulation can be overt or covert; Ilene was said to be covert in her tendency to –manipulate others:

Christopher: I don’t feel that about Ilene. She doesn’t force anybody.

Sarah: That’s how she feels.

Dick: She may try to manipulate those around her so things will go smoothly.

Christopher: There’s an Ilene that nobody knows. Could we get a comment on that?

At a deeper level, Ilene would much prefer that they went her way.

Ilene: Of course, I would.

Dick: Obviously [by the looks of her], Ilene is under the influence of Venus, and it is not like Venusians to be manipulative.

Oh, yes, they are!! They are excellent silent manipulators. Theodora was a Young Soul under the influence of Venus.

Refer to the chapter “Body Type” for more about “silent (non-verbal) manipulation”. Venusians are said to be passive by nature, so their manner of manipulation will be more devious or less overt than that done by the active Body Types. This notion of active/passive ratio can be generalized to all traits in a person’s personality array.

Ilene: Who is Theodora?

Sarah: Theodora was [Roman emperor] Justinian’s consort. She manipulated the whole Roman Empire.

Older souls are more overt in their manipulations. [08 September 1973]

Frankly, I am not sure what to comment about that statement.

We discussed whales and someone said they did not think they are Creatures of Reason.

We disagree that the whales are not Creatures of Reason. They simply cannot manipulate their environment to the extent you [humans] can. This is why they are so large; the size gives them a chance [to survive and evolve in spite of the inability to manipulate their environment]. [03 April 1974]

Refer to the chapters “Creatures of Reason” and “Cetaceans”. There you will read that cetaceans (whales and dolphins) are sapient in the same way that humans are, which makes them Creatures of Reason. However, unlike humans, they do not have arms and hands with which to +manipulate things in their environment.

How evolved are they [cetaceans] in relation to us?

Because they are limited in their ability to manipulate their environment, they are not quite as anxious to become competitive, but they have been around as long as you have, and their evolution is just about even with yours, emotionally and spiritually. [30 May 1974]

Evidently, the ability to manipulate one’s environment is not a necessary factor in the development of the Emotional Center and the higher Centers, but I tend to think it limits the development of the Intellectual Center. The reason I say this is that paleo-anthropologists have noticed a correlation of tool use, aka +manipulation, and brain size in the evolution of hominins leading to modern humans.

Joan: Asking about sickness, assuming it is chosen, what do people get out of it?

Please remember that the choice here is quite unconscious in most persons, and there is usually a factor of needing to manipulate, either the physical environment or the persons around the Fragment in question with no other options open. [29 October 1974]

Psychosomatic illnesses is sometimes a way for –manipulative people who have a passive Body Type and/or personality to induce other people to do what they want.

Private stores of food stuffs in this affluent culture are enormous and yet there is ample [food] available for everyone. No longer is it necessary to stock up on anything, especially in the urban areas, and yet the need for hoarding is perpetuated by manipulation of the economy. This is subtle indeed but, nevertheless, necessary for the Personality to retain control and to be allowed to perpetuate old safe habits such as food-gathering and maintaining one’s position in the pecking order. [28 December 1974]

Obviously, this –manipulation for nefarious or harmful reasons is bad, and this is distinct from enlightened governmental management of economies which can be for the greater good. In democratic societies, it is a constitutional obligation of the governors to manage (+manipulate) the governed for the most benefit for the most people.

So far we have seen that manipulation is rife in the realm of the politics of human government in general and in the realm of money. Next we see that romantic relationships are also fraught with manipulation:

Carolyn: I don’t feel I am playing a game. I haven’t said I am burning any bridges.

In very advanced students, there is a degree of detachment from the master Tapes that sometimes works against them in strange ways. For one thing, it sometimes makes them unaware of behaviors that are still continuing on lower levels, mostly by rote, to some degree. There is always, until Balance has been achieved, the risk of slipping back into these behavior patterns. In this cadre, there are students at all levels [of spiritual growth] and you can observe this easily. In society, most contracts and most interpersonal relationships are based upon manipulative behavior patterns. In the male-female relationships, this is especially apparent. In this

[original Michaelian group] cadre, there is an increasingly low level of this type of behavior, but in this case we do see some evidence of manipulative behavior on almost an entirely instinctive level, with detachment from the feeling of wanting to manipulate. [15 January 1975]

Refer to the chapter “Game” for more discussion about that phenomenon, which also has Positive and Negative Poles. Manipulation results both from a sense of alienation from the other person, but also alienation from the self, the instinctive parts of self that one is unaware of; refer to the chapter “Bio-computer” for a discussion of Tapes. There you will read that subconscious programs, aka Tapes, –manipulate the people who have them, and those people in turn are prone to –manipulate other people.

That session continued as follows:

[Manipulation] On whose part?

On the part of all concerned. You see, in the structured male-female life relationships, there is a conscious desire to manipulate the other toward the desired aim. In this [case], we see nothing that overt; there is not a true desire. In fact, we would say the opposite — a desire not to. But in the behavior being exhibited by these students, there is evidence of the same patterns seen in the more overt societal relationships. If this can be looked at by both and be verified, progress will be made. [15 January 1975]

One of the aspirations of psychotherapy and spirituality is to mitigate –manipulation by making people aware of when they are being covertly –manipulated by their own covert Tapes. Refer to the chapter “Romantic Relationships” for more about that. Furthermore, my book *The Tao of Relationships: The Chemistry and Alchemy of Service and Intimacy* goes into considerable detail about becoming sensitive to positive energy exchanges between two people, such that interactions are mutually beneficial. When a person is mature in terms of ability to attune and commune with other people in a state of positive intimacy, then negative intimacy, –manipulation, is not likely; refer to the chapter “Intimacy” for more about that.

Concluding Comments on Manipulation

As we see from the few instances found in the original Michaelian group transcriptions, manipulation is predicated on a person getting what they want in spite of what some other person or the world wants. As any good Buddhist will tell us, having cravings and aversions causes suffering, both for the manipulator and the manipulatee. The Buddhist solution is to maximize focus on the spiritual realm so as to minimize having cravings and aversions in the physical realm.

Some other chapters bear on the subject of manipulation. For instance, if a person manipulates another person in a way that harms that person, then “Karma” might result. For instance, proper “Communication” with another person, where one openly and honestly communicates one’s being with others, is anti-manipulative. For instance, manipulation is predicated on “Alienation” from self and other; if we are not alienated, we do not manipulate. “Love” and “Agape” are the antithesis of manipulation.





⑦ MASK

This chapter is the product of a search for the word “mask” in the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group channeling sessions. This word does not represent a significant component of the Michaelian teachings. However, there are good reasons to discuss the subject in this *Study Papers* book: 1) the subject came up numerous times during the original Michaelian group; 2) some interesting things were said about the subject; 3) the subject is related to a number of other components of the Michaelian teachings that are considered to be significant; 4) students can presumably benefit from having the mentions conveniently collected and commented all in one place; 5) The issue of metaphorical ‘masks’ — meaning the lack of authenticity and transparency — is pervasive in human psychology and sociology and spirituality — subjects covered extensively in this book — so it behooves us to understand it.

The word “mask” is not capitalized in this chapter or other chapters of this *Study Papers* book because it has no special meaning in the Michaelian teachings; it is not a Michaelian jargon word that needs a definition apart from its use in the common vernacular.

This chapter is one of many in this book that focuses on a psychological component of the Michaelian teachings as found in original Michaelian group transcriptions, rather than on a doctrinal or spiritual component. Psychotherapeutic components of the Michaelian teachings are usually either a positive to be cultivated or a negative to be mitigated. As we will see, the Michaels tell us that wearing masks is a negative to be eschewed. The Michaelian version of psychology is not to be confused with the popular psychology of the self-improvement movement, those that do not have a spiritual core or perspective. Rather, the Michaelian psychotherapeutic path (aimed at improving psychological health) is a beneficial precursor to the spiritual path (aimed at improving soul health). To skip the former but attempt the latter is referred to as “spiritual bypassing”. This is discussed at length on such websites as https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spiritual_bypassing. To skip mitigating one’s psychological issues and attempt to go straight to enlightenment usually proves to be problematic.

Definition of Mask

So what is meant by mask? Wikipedia provides a definition and an introduction to the subject (underlined words are my emphasis):

A mask is an object normally worn on the face, typically for protection, disguise, performance, or entertainment and often they have been employed for rituals and rites. Masks have been used since antiquity for both ceremonial and practical purposes, as well as in the performing arts and for entertainment. They are usually worn on the face, although they may also be positioned for effect elsewhere on the wearer’s body.
[><https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mask>< — retrieved 13 April 2023]

In this chapter, the word never refers to a literal mask; it always refers to a metaphorical mask.

One point that I want to make about the use of this word is that a metaphorical ‘mask’ can “disguise” or conceal a truth, and a metaphorical ‘mask’ can “perform” or present a falsehood. At its best, a ‘mask’ can exaggerate a truth, and this helps to get a point across. I regard the former as an Ordinal or negative function, and the latter as a Cardinal or positive function. It should also be noted that, whereas people can wear a literal mask for physical “protection”, people also wear a metaphorical mask for psychological protection; in fact, that is the most common function mentioned to the original Michaelian group transcriptions.

Mask per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

The following extracts from original Michaelian group transcriptions are Q&A exchanges, where an original Michaelian group member asks a question (or makes a comment), and the Michaels provide an answer. These extracts are presented in the chronological order in which they were given. As is my custom, I often provide

some explanatory comments following the question or answer. Underlined words are my emphasis, to draw attention to what it is that I comment on. Sometimes I embed words or phrases [in brackets] that I believe help to clarify the question or the answer.

The first couple of mentions of the word “mask” give us a notion of what metaphorical masks do:

Mallory: More on “machinations,” please.

Growth is a rocky Goal, and causes the soul to go through some elaborate and complicated machinations, which mask all of the other Goals. [24 February 1974]

In this case the mask can be understood as concealing or obscuring the truth, or presenting a falsehood as if it were the truth. Refer to the chapter “Machinations” for more about that type of misbehavior.

The drug [Dilantin] would mask the Retardation [Goal] then would it not?

It does modify, but not permanently, but the holiday created by the drug allows you to suggest this alteration of the soul. [24 February 1974]

Refer to the chapter “Crutch” for more discussion of the notion that some activities or experiences can be thought of as temporary expedients, to help a person along their path until they can ‘walk on their own’, so to speak. In this same line of thought, perhaps you have heard the aphorism, “Fake it till you make it”. This is a positive use of a ‘mask’ as a temporary persona to help a person get to the next level. I am not saying that either myself or the Michaels advocate this procedure. By the way, refer to the chapter “Persona” for the discussion of a synonym of mask.

Is it combined with Self-effacement in Joan?

We do not see this. Joan is quite self-confident but her Acceptance Goal demands that she masks this. [27 February 1974]

The Goal of Acceptance in the Negative Pole of –Ingratiation prompts the people who have it to hide the truth about themselves from those who might not accept that reality. More is said about concealing and hiding versus revealing in the chapter “Revelation and Concealment”. Basically and briefly, revelation is the ideal toward which we aspire, but the world is not ideal, in the sense that there are situations where it is expedient, in terms of self-preservation, to conceal oneself from a hostile and untrustworthy world.

For instance:

Dick: I usually can see through the masks of people so that I feel I know the other person. I do not feel I can do that with Richard. I have a strong feeling of a person keeping a tight lid on, and the energy to know him is not coming out. There is a constellation of factors that makes him more considerate of others, and he has to go farther to be nice to people.

Richard: I am [almost] never open. [On those rare occasions] When I have expressed my feelings to people, they have run... [21 September 1974]

Richard was an Artisan with the Goal of Acceptance in the Caution Mode. That is one fine recipe for wearing a mask. First of all, Caution and Acceptance work against each other, making it almost impossible for either to be expressed cleanly and clearly. This is a configuration of two Overleaves that I call Diametric Opposition; many other pairs of Overleaves fit this pattern, and usually it results in neurosis; naturally a person with any self-awareness at all wants to mask their neurosis.

By the way, Artisans typically wear masks that hide what they really are, as was the case with Richard, whereas Sages typically wear masks that present and represent something other than what they really are. It so happens that the next appearance of the word mask mentions Sages:

Louise: SRG of Verna? ([my guess:] Mid-Cycle Mature Sage, Growth, Idealist, Venus / Saturn, Intellectual Part of Emotional Center, Stubbornness, Passion?)

This lady is not in the Passion Mode, but is in the Intellectual Part of Emotional Center; a flagrant Idealist on the romantic side, giving her the mask of Passion; otherwise valid.... A troubled Mid-Cycle [Fourth Level] Mature Soul. [01 October 1974]

Verna was a Sage, and she was a flagrant romantic Idealist, and therefore had the ‘mask’ or persona of the Passion Mode, meaning that those Overleaves in combination looked like, or imitated, or presented very much like the Passion Mode, without actually being the Passion Mode. Other combinations of Overleaves can ‘mask’ — with the meaning of “represent” — the appearance of some other individual Overleaves. On the other hand, some Overleaves and/or combinations of Overleaves can ‘mask’ — with the meaning of “conceal” — other Overleaves in the same person. This is one reason why it is difficult to accurately discern the Overleaves of some people.

Following are two other instances of wearing a 'mask' in public that you do not wear in private:

Most of you students still lose contact with the greater part of the teaching the moment you walk out into your life role. It is even at times, spectacular, to observe as you don your masks. There is still some need in many of you to hide the fact that you are "into" something like this from those who still have your permission to organize your lives. Do you wonder then why you do not live the teaching, or why there is no outward visible sign at all that you have grown through this teaching? As long as this remains something to be hidden, your Personality will be externally vigilant to ensure there is no slip-up, and that no one suspects you might be a little strange. [21 December 1974]

Discussion: We talked about true Centers and false — or imprinted — Centering.

Of course, it [a false Center] can [be imprinted], especially before the age of manifestation [of the true Soul Level]. And, then, to add to the confusion, many souls exaggerate their true Overleaves in order to appear even more acceptable to society, which they fear so greatly and prize so highly. This is why even the most perceptive of you occasionally miss an Overleaf; it is masked by the societal cloak. [21 March 1977]

Refer to the chapter "Culture" for more about dealing with the situation where you dare not reveal who you really are.

Concluding Comments on Mask

Refer to the chapters "Facade" and "Persona" to read about what the Michaels had to say about those synonyms for mask. Combine what is said in those chapters, plus what is said in chapters "Awakening from Sleep", "Culture", "Drama", "False Personality", "Fantasy", "Glamour", "Liberation and Imprisonment", "Maya", "Real Space versus Artificial Space", "Veil" and we see that almost the entirety of our incarnate experience is encumbered with fakery and fraud. Rarely are we able to see the higher, greater reality where Essence lives.

As hinted at above, Sages and Artisans are the most likely of the Roles to wear masks, Sages to wear masks that present falsehoods, Artisans to wear masks that conceal truth. Or, at least that is the Negative Pole of wearing masks. My suggestion is that there is also a Positive Pole to wearing masks, and this is what Sages and Artisans are better at than the other Roles, in the following way. Sages tend to be dramatic, meaning that they are good at the dramatic or theatrical arts, meaning that they exaggerate, meaning that they tell a story that is not literally true but that is mythically true, meaning that the dramatization captures the higher essence or ideal of a truth and drives it home. Artisans can do the same thing with their graphic or representative arts, whether sculpture or drawing or painting. An Artisan in the Negative Pole masks or conceals the truth; an Artisan in the Neutral Zone represents the truth literally or realistically; an Artisan in the Positive Pole exaggerates some aspect of reality in order to produce a beautiful artifact that transcends the mundane world.

It does not say so in any of the passages quoted in this chapter, but people are inclined to wear a mask because of lack of trust; refer to the chapter "Trust". I also want to make the point that kindred souls can see through one's mask. On the other hand, people are less inclined to wear a mask in the presence of a kindred or friended soul, because there is usually a high degree of trust between them.

Perhaps you have heard the phrase "What you see is what you get" in reference to what some computer software does. I take this as a metaphor for what taking off one's mask does.





MAYA

This word comes from the Sanskrit language and is generally translated into English as “illusion”, but others prefer to call it “delusion”. As we will see in this exposition, it could go either way, because in the former case it means having an unrealistic perception of the external world, and in the latter case it means having an unrealistic perception of oneself. The members of the original Michaelian group were no doubt familiar with this term from their studies of various western, and in this case, eastern metaphysical systems. The Michaels were not the first one to adapt this word to the spiritual path. It is commonly used in Hindu spirituality as adopted by Western seekers. This is a concept that did not come from the Gurdjieffian teachings. original Michaelian group members must have been familiar with it because no where did it get defined or described. The Michaels mostly just pointed out examples of it. Not much is said about it, so its place in the Michaelian teachings must be extracted from the context via careful thought. Because it has a specific meaning in the Michaelian teachings, henceforth I capitalize it, as I do with other Michaelian teachings jargon words.

The Sanskrit terms and concepts of “maya” and “karma” come from Hindu spirituality. Members of the original Michaelian group, particularly Sarah Chambers, who was the channel this time, were familiar with eastern spiritual teachings.

The Wikipedia article on the subject is an excellent introduction to understand what the Michaels have to say on the subject: >[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maya_\(religion\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maya_(religion))< The parts that I believe are pertinent in this chapter are ... The word “maya” itself comes from orientalia:

"noun : HINDUISM the supernatural power wielded by gods and demons to produce illusions. HINDUISM BUDDHISM the power by which the universe becomes manifest; the illusion or appearance of the phenomenal world." It is said that anything less than The Absolute, Brahman, is maya, illusory. That is not quite what I am going to talk about. There is a spectrum of maya, from the most maya to the least. All of Tao's creation is in some sense illusory, less real, than Tao itself. There is no totally pure game here in this world; it is a matter of degree. The idea is to move in teh direction of less maya; this is called the spiritual path, to "enlightenment", which reveals the truth. Very few organizations get hijacked completely, they are not totally subverted; they maya is more subtle or the jig would be up.

So far as the Michaelian teachings is concerned, Maya is one of the elements of what I affectionately call “psychological issues”. The other components are: False Personality; the Negative Poles of the Overleaves; the Chief Features. Refer to the chapters on those subjects. My sense of the situation with Maya is that it is more basic than any of these other psychological issues. The whole world itself is full of lies, and it is almost impossible to discern them from the truth without the help of a supernatural teacher who lives outside the world of lies.

Maya as Illusion

Maya as Delusion

Examples of Maya

Maya in the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

[[The following quotations were extracted from the transcriptions in chronological order. Perhaps there is a way to arrange them in some logical grouping and sequencing of categories, as is done in some other chapters.]]

In the following blocks of text extracted from the original Michaelian group transcriptions, synonyms for Maya are underlined. Explanatory comments on the quotations are interspersed between the extracts. Some clarifying words and phrases, in [brackets], are sometimes interjected into the quotations

The Michael's concept of Maya is similar or related to their concept of "glamour". The Physical Plane has a lot of "shiny objects", so to speak, that are alluring and enticing, like the Sirens in the Greek myth of Odysseus:

... Life on the material plane with all its glamour continues to lure you back. The glamour is illusion — Maya, if you prefer the more esoteric term. Maya is part of Karma and is present for a very specific purpose. It tests your spiritual growth all the time, and is your sole eternal safety checkpoint... [24 July 1973]

When you find yourself being upset, you know you have succumbed to Maya, because you are not accepting reality as it is.

... the need for erotic love is Maya too. The need for Agape is real, and this is the goal. The other [Eros] often gets in the way, and prevents the emergence of Agape, for erotic love is always based on something physical and something fleeting — it will fly before the winds, and illusion — or rather disillusion, which is even worse, since it is malfunctioning illusion — will set in. It is easy for even the partially awakened soul to distinguish. Erotic love has a tendency to be fickle, and slips away at the mere hint of an unfulfilled expectation, while Agape has no expectations to begin with — [it] asks nothing in return, and [it] accepts, and [it] is the hallmark... [24 July 1973]

Refer to the chapters on Sexuality and Agape for thorough discussions of those topics. Of all the realms of experience that one can have on the Physical Plane, sexuality is one of those that is most encumbered by Maya. Politics, economics, and religion are some of the other realms that are grossly encumbered by Maya, because they are all functions of culture in general:

I can't see what part the personality has to do with Karma. I think that's put in by culture.

It [culture] is just more complex Maya. You see, it really is infinite. [12 August 1973]

Neither the Transcendental Soul nor the Infinite Soul pursues physical union. Quite often, however, the high Causal [Plane] body or the high Mental [Plane] body displaces an older soul, and at that time of the manifestation, the sexual activity ceases. These souls are not challenged by Maya. [Late August, 1973]

Here is another definition of culture, and the distortion that culture creates in the human personality:

Could you define "False Personality"?

The False Personality is that which is produced artificially by the society in which you live. It is the rules of Maya. [04 September 1973]

Elsewhere it is said that society itself is encumbered by Maya, so naturally anyone who lives in a society will be likewise encumbered.

Besides the society and culture in which you live, your very workplace is also often encumbered with Maya. Office politics anyone?

Do you have any suggestions for my changing attitudes in work? Is there anything I could bring into my grasp right now?

You are beginning to understand the concept of Maya. This will automatically aid you in your [medical] practice... [04 September 1973]

Will she [a Mature Soul] be able to work it out?

Only if those around her alleviate the conditions for her — her reactions to your perceptions, not hers. She is also caught up much more in the enthrallment of Maya than Older souls. Problems do exist on her plane. They are very real to her. The Older Soul begins to realize that there are no problems except those created by False Personality as a defense. [08 September 1973]

During the early sessions of the original Michaelian group, the Old Soul was often referred to as the older soul — older than Mature, apparently. This convention was dropped somewhere along the way. **[[research]]** Subsequent to the original Michaelian group, an "older soul" is Mid-Cycle Mature and older.

Could we have comments about CH.

CH is also a Mature Soul. This Cycle is really fraught with Maya, more so than any other, because the perception of the Older Soul begins to emerge, but the understanding does not. The Mature Soul feels all of the hostile vibrations around them. They have a need to remove themselves from this, but are too caught up in the traditional mores to remove themselves entirely. They feel a certain sense of duty that does not dissipate

until the transition [to Old Soul] is made. This is why a skilled therapist would be of help in this Cycle... [08 September 1973]

More than any other Cycle, psychotherapy to mitigate Maya is most appropriate and effective for Mature Souls. Old Souls often if not typically prefer a “spiritual path” of some kind to work through whatever issues they may have.

Was my father a late Cycle Old Soul whose personality was much bound up in False Personality?

Yes, but [he was] not late Cycle, [but was an early Cycle Old Soul]. This is why he could not come out of the False Personality to be “real” to you and [your mother]. Your sister did not perceive this. He had desire to search, but not knowledge of the goal. The goal does not become clear to other than Older Souls. That is why the penitent orders are almost entirely composed of Mature Souls. They perceive the collective guilt of the world around them and assume that it is they who have sinned. There is no “sin”, only Karma, as there is no “evil”, only Maya. [08 September 1973]

What is the difference between meditation and concentration?

Meditation is the emptying of the mind of Maya. Concentration is the active acquisition of higher knowledge: the Logos.

We were told when you “meditate” under [the influence of] grass [marijuana], you are “concentrating”. Richard asked if a mantra was better for him than marijuana. They answered that, for meditation the mantra was better, but if you want to concentrate, then marijuana is better. They are different. [Session of ?? June 1973]

Then you’re concentrating on the Maya, then you concentrate on higher knowledge, not Maya.

It seems that I am constantly taking in impressions all the time (under grass) and am not in illusion.

Self-remembering can be defined as follows: you are sitting in a field. You see the sunlight. You see it and feel its effect on you. You also feel and see its effects on the trees. You can see and feel its effects on your entire physical environment at once: the sunlight filtering through the trees, the sunlight calling the bees to action, the sunlight on your back, the sunlight as radiant energy, the sun as a source of light and heat. You can hold all of these impressions separately and yet recognize them as an integrated whole. To do this requires separation from Maya.

That [sex] is the worst energy leak of all; also, the biggest Maya of all. It is also the biggest thing here to go upward, but usually people go downward with it.

There was an experience I had about, “Are solid objects solid?” They [Michael] said they are “Maya” too. [08 September 1983]

I feel close to the entity we call Tomas and feel bad because we’ve deserted him and are now asking questions of Michael.

Are you asking us if there is some sort of dispute going on over who should be teaching? If so, we feel that you can answer that question yourselves. Possessiveness is Maya too. [13 September 1973]

How can he get to the source?

By not reacting to the Maya of the Physical Plane. This results in a drain. No amount of stewing in one’s own juices will make a mechanical object perform beyond its optimal level. [18 September 1973]

Someone in the group had a question about Michael’s use of “Soul,” “Essence,” and “Self” interchangeably, and the departure from the Gurdjieffian system where there is a False and True Personality, and that Essence and True Personality together form the “self.”

The Soul is the Essence. This is synonymous with “self.” Even we [the Michaels] have a Personality; it simply is no longer challenged by Maya. [22 September 1973]

I think that all unhappiness results from greed or wanting something. Greed imprisons you in Maya.

Just because you have a want, does not mean that the chosen one must supply it. You may need to go to several sources. Expectations are foolhardy. Greed is a large part of Maya. [02 October 1973]

I have a complaint and comment and a question. I don’t seem to be able to change Knowledge into Being [a Gurdjieffian teachings], and I don’t feel any different.

You do approach Being [while] under the influence of marijuana. This is an incontrovertible message about the pace of your life. Marijuana slows the responses to physical phenomena and heightens emotional response to all experiences. You feel the music instead of hearing it. The five primitive senses belong to False Personality. They can be compared to margarine — they will never be butter, no matter how you color them or package them.

Your life is not geared for understanding, just toiling.... However, Jesus was trying to tell this same truth two thousand years ago. We keep telling you: you must choose your path. If that [chosen path] is spiritual

liberation, then you must eliminate the distractions of Maya. If the goal is different, then the path will be different and you are correct in assuming that we don't care [which path you choose]. We impart the Logos dispassionately. It is yours to accept or reject. [02 October 1973]

Asked a question about burning Karmic ribbons in order to make progress. Otherwise, he felt like he was standing still. Is it the same as overcoming the evil side of ourselves?

In order to begin work on the path, you must first burn the Karmic ribbons. They are of the Physical Plane and are challenged by Maya. Negativity can only be overcome by some positive action on your part. No one can do it for you. Your reaction to a given situation is the only criterion upon which the judgment, good versus bad, rests. [13 October 1973]

And their soul levels?

There is no particular advantage to know this unless you plan to put it into practice in helping you to observe yourselves and those around you, toward improving your interactions in a positive fashion. There is no specific advantage to a level [Soul Age] on the cycle [of reincarnation]. Self-aggrandizement [for being an Older Soul than someone else] is Maya too, of a most negative sort. [17 October 1973]

Could we have a comment on our Maya — our problems?

We do not feel that our comment would add anything. You understand what you must do. [20 October 1973]

Well, what would you concentrate on?

Think of the free-floating Essence, devoid of Maya. [20 October 1973]

Is Soleal still going to visit?

Was he concerned about Soleal's people drinking and smoking marijuana? — see below.

He intends to come. He is now winding up some problem areas. He fights with Maya also. [16 December 1973]

Is the entity of Tomas a Young Soul?

This Fragment, in the last physical interval, accelerated because of psychic growth. If he chooses to remain on the Astral Plane for several more of your centuries, growth may be such that he will be reincarnated as a First Level Old Soul. He has an advantage over you. He is not encumbered by the physical vehicle, and has access to much information, but is also challenged by Maya.

Maya is a strong pervasive influence on the Physical Plane. It is extraordinarily challenging to deal with it.

Is "False Personality" and "Maya" the same?

He is challenged by the glamour of the diversified belief systems, and is only able to differentiate because of higher teachers who are available. We do not prevent the dissemination of valid information from the Astral Plane, but this is monitored carefully, and attempts are made to invalidate false data. Sometimes this is not possible, primarily because of the right belief systems of the medium involved. This is why we always attempt to work with Older [Soul] mediums. Their convictions tend to float more easily, and it is possible to sneak past their bias. [20 December 1973]

Could you explain the Sermon on the Mount. I do not understand it. All my life I've been asking people.

We read at this point from Matthew 5:1–12 concerning the "beatitudes" — Blessed are the meek, merciful, peacemakers, they that mourn, hunger after righteousness, the poor in spirit, etc.

Substitute for the word "blessed" the word "fortunate". The emphasis here is on simplicity. By "meek," we don't speak of cowardice, but rather an inwardness of purpose. Those "poor in spirit" refer to those who recognize within themselves the lack of spiritual guidance and seek this. This passage is warning against complacency that heralds the downfall, of the degradation of humanity. The "barbarians" can be used symbolically here as the materialistic existentialists who deny other dimensions beyond the Physical Plane and devote themselves to the pursuit of Maya. They are indeed unfortunate, in that they incur much adverse Karma. One must keep in mind the audience to which the man Jesus spoke, and the scribes who wrote the account, before passing judgment on the words. These people believed in a very literal, very personal God who monitored every move they made, and was for the most part stern and disapproving. Greek thought had much influence on the man Jesus, particularly Epicurus, but it would have been impossible for him to espouse the words of this pagan philosopher from the porticoes of the temple. Then when the Infinite Soul manifested, the Logos was brought to bear in the language of the times, transcribed by a Roman tax collector [Matthew] and an Emotionally Centered Greek physician (Luke). Epicurus had a most profound influence on all of the philosophy of the time, surpassing that of the Stoic, Zeno. This philosophy was made to order for the

Sadducees, who also appealed to this young man's sensitive nature. The Epicurean thought pattern is what you all are striving to accomplish. [25 December 1973]

Is there a message for our group for the new year?

We would think that cohesion would be enough a goal to keep you going. There is a very viable structure beginning now with all of you who would be willing to live on a reduced scale in order to free yourselves from Maya. This is what we have endeavored to bring about. Merely the cognizance [that there is such a thing and what the aspects are] is a start. The details must be worked out by each of you in a mutually satisfactory manner. Believe it or not, consensus can be reached within this group. Some will take longer than others, but even they will eventually verify. [30 December 1973]

I do not understand Michael when they say that demons and hell are absurd. What do they say about the three temptations of Christ where he said, "Get thee behind me, Satan"? He drove the demons out of many people.

Substitute the word "Maya" for the word "Satan." We did not say that hell, demons and the like were absurd, [we say they are] merely of your own creation. They are very real to those who must endure them. Where the rub comes is that you need not endure them. [20 January 1973]

I would like to hear your definition of spirituality. (Since no one was ready with an answer, we put it to Michael.)

That which is born of Essence and is devoid of Maya is spiritual. [20 January 1973]

Going back to the origin of man, I find the source of my trouble is awareness of self in contrast to intellect, as an individual.

That is valid. That is where all of the problems are. You are right on that. We have said much about alienation, and one of its causes is this awareness of self as a separate and unique being in a hostile universe. We have also said that the universe is not hostile; it is completely neutral. Man's separatism is an illusion, part of Maya for the Essence to overcome on the upward climb. You are now beginning to reorganize your perceptions to include the larger whole; all Old Souls do. Your own manifestation has been protracted by your own design. It has taken you a long time to question this, and you must still ask many questions, as there is still a hiatus in your knowledge.... [24 January 1974]

I got some automatic writing when I was doing reports for the Assessment District. My hands were frozen as a child, and when the temperature became 40 degrees today, a message came through that there would be an important message tonight.

There are many fears in this group that must be met and dealt with before going on. One concerns the decision you will be making within the next six months, some to go and some to stay. Many will be sad. Many will chose to go on with the security they now believe they have, while others will trust their intuition. Whatever the move, it will be painful, and at one level, many fear the newness of the concept, and recognize that is [a] total break with all familiar. This you have learned to dread. Others realize that this will mean drastic changes in the nuclear family and also dread this. Relationships will change as growth occurs. You are now at the crossroads. One way leads to spiritual growth, the other to Maya. All of you are now at the point where you realize that you must make some decision as to whether you intend to pursue this. You are no longer investigating. You know precisely what is being offered. This levity comes in part from anxiety. The silence often brings you face to face with your anxiety. [06 February 1974]

The situation with the original Michaelian group being at a crossroads, spiritual growth versus continued immersion in Maya, can be generalized to all turning points in our lives.

I'd like to know if unblocking the emotions as is seen in the Esalen film is a healthy thing. It looks good.

We do not see the necessity for this action within the group, but perhaps an outlet needs to be provided elsewhere. In this, we will not mediate, as this is within the realm of life crises and does not pertain to spiritual growth. This is not to say that these matters do not have to be dealt with. They most certainly do long before you can even talk about growth — spiritual growth. For the dedicated student and for the Adept requires detachment from the mundane and trivial matters, which are such immoderate energy drains. How can you possibly grow if you are immersed in all this Maya? [24 February 1974]

The Town Meeting for planning sounds like super Maya to me. It is making Maya what it ought to be. [24 February 1974]

Is there any relation between super Maya, Goals, and Roles?

Of course, souls in the various Goals will create specific sets of obstacles and barriers — in other words, Maya — and the older the soul, the more exalted the Maya becomes, and finally, it even comes around to masquerading as spiritual growth — the most super-refined Maya of all. When you have learned to differentiate between this and the genuine article, you will have arrived at the point where you can no longer slip back into old, safe patterns and therefore must go forward. The awareness groups are, of course, super Maya groups of Mature

Souls, the political action groups of the Young [Souls] and splinter religious quackery groups of the Babies [Souls]. It all comes back to the lack of inner purpose and the knowledge of the trapped Essence. Many Young and Mature Souls actively practice witchcraft and black magic in answer to the increased perceptions that they encounter in themselves but are unwilling to investigate at a deeper level. Many Old Souls dabble in Orientalia for the same reason. [24 February 1974]

Is there any technique I can use to detach myself from Maya?

We have given those to you. They are again: meditation, concentration and fasting, and study. [03 March 1974]

Longevity is the goal of the organism. On the Astral interval, you will be your own judge and jury in Essence.

That is the difference. False Personality judges with Maya as its base. The Essence judges realistically. [06 March 1974]

Ordinary morality has nothing to do with true morality.

That is valid. When you attach too much importance to this very mundane and temporal morality, you become encrusted in Maya. The only morality that exists in the high plane is that which leads to agape. That is the unqualified acceptance of all other creatures, both physical and ethereal, as the greater part of self. [06 March 1974]

Apparently sex is all in Maya.

We would disagree with that. The expectations surrounding it are Maya, yes, but the act itself can be a valid expression of energy. [27 March 1974]

Joan said something about the soul choosing on the Astral Plane.

We would agree with the lady, Joan; (it [the soul] chooses) without interference of Maya. The Infant Soul is able to make the choices on the Astral Plane, but the quality of those choices is often poor. [03 April 1974]

Humility is not one of the Overleaves, yet it seems to be important. Could we have a comment? Should we be servants to have a sense of humility?

Being humble is in no way similar to the Role that a Server acts out. Being humble can also mean deferring to the more aggressive younger soul. It does not necessarily mean waiting upon humanity. Yes, it is a desirable place to be, as competition is Maya and anti growth. [17 April 1974]

Moses "raised the serpent" and Jesus said, "If I be lifted up," etc. What is the relationship to Kundalini here.

Yes, this is the highest form of movable energy you have at your disposal, and therefore that which you can utilize for each: the emotional states or Higher Emotional Centers, Higher Intellectual Centers — which are synonymous with subjective consciousness [and] objective consciousness respectively. Also, with the same had just described by the yogi [sic]. The lower Centers are fixed, and the energy is like a closed system. The Higher Centers are capable of ecstasy or bliss; the lower Centers are not. The Sexual Center or the Kundalini force can only be breached by bringing the lower Centers into harmonious balance — in other words, in separating from the Maya or illusions for glamour of the Physical Plane, and by giving up your expectations of what a sexual experience "should" be. [24 April 1974]

How do they erase the audio tapes?

(Apparently, the being from Hoova makes the tapes disappear, according to the article.)

Teleportation is a skill mastered by many adepts. This is not beyond many on your world. The man Uri [Geller] is able to do this without understanding what it is that he is doing, which accounts for his somewhat erratic performances. He also has enormous reserves of energy available and is relatively unfettered by the usual Maya. In fact, [he] is rather simplistic. [08 May 1974]

A good teacher keeps students unfulfilled to keep them coming back for another lesson.

Of course, there are (ways). We have spoken to you many times of conscious recall of the dreams and of the time spent on the Astral Plane, but most must go through this process one step at a time. Most cannot jump from that Maya-filled life in which they find themselves into the too rarefied atmosphere of enlightenment. These processes are valid, but they do take time and they do open doors to many more processes that bring you ever closer to the goal. We would photograph your impatience now and that is not necessarily a bad place to start. There is no truly rapid method by which you can throw off the weighted cloak of culture and society — this takes time. [10 May 1974]

How evolved are they in relation to us? Do they have access to higher Sex Center?

Because they are limited in their ability to manipulate their environment, they are not quite as anxious to become competitive, but they have been around as long as you have and their evolution is just about even with yours, emotionally and spiritually. It is, of course, not as cluttered with Maya where they are and they can often contact Essence earlier than humans can, but they do not always do so. Some are sexually evolved; some are not. [30 May 1974]

Ram Dass says the spirit body has holes or chakras connecting to the physical body. He says that normally people's holes are "plugged up" — the energy is there but can't flow. Is this true? (Michael has stated that sexual energy is the only "mobile" or available energy.)

This [Sexual (physical excitation) Center] is the first of the Centers not solely governed by Maya and consequently mobile. The fixed amount of energy is fixed by the organism, not by cosmic shortages. We can give an example of the fixing. It works well. The body has a chore to do that it dislikes. It dwells on the undesirability of the proposed action until it renders the Moving Center inactive and unable to perform its task. Normally able to perform such action, the body is simply too exhausted to move, yet twenty minutes later some happy diversion is offered. Suddenly the body undergoes a miraculous recovery and actually expends far more moving energy in the pleasure activity, for instance, tennis, than it would have in the work activity, for instance, shopping for groceries. [16 June 1974]

In the Gurdjieffian understanding, the Sexual Center was the fifth Center, counting from the bottom Center, which was the Moving Center. Subsequent to the original Michaelian group, this Center was named Higher Moving by some students. This passage implies that the sixth and seventh Centers according to the Gurdjieffian schema, Higher Emotional and Higher Intellectual, are not governed by Maya either. Thus, all higher, aka Cardinal, Centers are not encumbered with Maya. During the original Michaelian group, the Michaels often advocated finding ways to experience the Cardinal Centers; refer to the chapter on the Centers for more information. We see here that one reason for doing so is to mitigate Maya.

Is John Lilly correct about LSD unprogramming the [False] personality?

It can if you transfer the knowledge gained [during the trip] to the waking state. Yes, it is difficult because you are immediately bombarded with Maya [upon returning to the "waking" (sober) state]. [16 June 1974]

How can you differentiate between twin soul attraction and infatuation?

This is a danger, of course, but relationships between twins persevere through trials not usually weathered by those attracted to each other's personalities. Also, the bond withstands long separations and [does] not [have] many setbacks. It is certainly not romantic, and even though the twins are of opposite gender, they often choose another as a mate because of all the usual Maya, but not quite leaving the twin stranded. [25 June 1974]

I would like to hear what Michael says of my SRG. I feel mostly Jovial, with some Mars, in the Emotional Part of Moving Center. I have no idea what level soul I may be. The Role could be Slave, Warrior, or King. I'm probably a Skeptic with a Chief Feature of Self-deprecation, in Caution.

This is a Third Level Mature Scholar in Growth, a Realist in the Caution mode with a Chief Feature of Impatience, in the Emotional Part of Moving Center. This aura is mostly blue, but still with overtones of violet. (Violet denotes attachment to the physical Maya.) The gray is almost gone now. (He had had an injury. If there had been more gray, it would denote lingering emotional trauma perhaps.) [14 July 1974]

Refer to the chapter on Auras for more information about that subject.

I've been observing my friend, Irv. He has all good Overleaves and life is so good to him. It is so good that it seems that he is entranced in Maya. His son seems miserable to me and it does not bother Irv. [14 September 1974]

I wonder about my recent backpacking trips: how would this relate to my Centers? I stopped picking at my fingers, did not think, did not feel: I just was. I did not feel any more awake or more high. I feel uncomfortable because I feel I'm not accomplishing anything.

It is related to the fact that students often experience an Essence or Balanced state for prolonged periods when removed from the Maya, error, familiar Maya of their environment, and are forced to "be" in the moment. [17 September 1974]

Man is the first rung on the cosmic ladder and must take this rung slowly, learning to place one foot in front of him at a time. Here on the Physical Plane, there are limitations placed on size and speed, on senses and acuity, with which man can perceive his universe. Until he realizes that he can break these barriers, he is trapped. We say trapped by Maya, and this is precisely what it amounts to, because he becomes so immersed in life crises that he fails to contemplate even the purpose of his sojourn here until quite late in the Cycle [of reincarnation]. Then he must race to make up for lost time. By that time, however, he has usually experienced the greater part

of life, and can relax and get down to the real business of study and contemplation that allows him access to the pan-dimensional universe. [22 October 1974]

The realm of unfulfilled desires is fraught with Maya, and one which must be conquered. [22 October 1974]

We have suggested to you something even harder in this culture: that of living together. Some of you would much prefer to walk across the desert from Medina to Mecca [the Muslim pilgrimage] than even to contemplate living together. This is why it would in the long run be valuable. It is perhaps the hardest task you would ever undertake on the Physical Plane, for everything in your culture mitigates against it. The entire culture is achievement-oriented, and this alone implies alienation and competition. Anti-achievement groups are frightening, and therefore anti-culture, and to be eliminated. Financial integrity is the watchword of this culture, and therefore fraught with Maya. This can always be easily seen in any culture. That which is held up as the goal of society is the goal of False Personality, and therefore opposed to spiritual growth. Now, we are not suggesting that you plunge yourselves into poverty. We would see that you live well so that there is no struggle to survive, for the main reason that if you must struggle to live, you cannot devote the amount of time necessary for spiritual evolution. This is a lifetime commitment. It is not something that you can work on on Saturday night [when the group typically met] and forget about for the rest of the week. You could not keep it tucked away in some dim, dusky, cerebral corridor and only take it out when company comes. [14 December 1974]

June asked if she was on the path, or caught up in her Karma?

A little caught up in the Maya we would say, but basically on a road that will take you to sea level if you wish. Yes, we would say that you are on a path that leads to spiritual growth. If you choose to associate yourself with this cadre [the original Michaelian group], it will not be substantially different for you and you will hear [heed] the words. [08 February 1975]

We talked a bit about all goals being "Maya," as it were.

You are right, of course: all goals [of ego/False Personality] are only intermediate goals. (The goal [of Essence] is awareness.)

There are, of course, parallel Vectors leading to nowhere. Many lead to stagnation on the Physical Plane, many to intense Karmic ribbons. Only those Vectors leading into the flow are paths that are worth following. Those we have suggested lead to joy, and most teachings that we are aware of do lead to this. Parallel Vectors are the illusion and the misery of the Physical Plane. The "vale [valley] of tears" that was pointed out in the Bible [Psalm 84:6] defines the road obscured by Maya — the manifold vectors of the choices made by the Overleaves. The trouble is, the choices never do satisfy the Essence, and there is always internal war. [21 November 1976]

[[Besides Maya, also do a word search on glamor, blandishments, intrigues and adventures, sensationalism, hyperbole, and any other synonyms to Maya that come to mind.]]

Yarbro on Maya in MFM

[[In the final version, instead of quoting MFM, merely refer to the page number.]]

This is made more difficult because this [Mature Soul] Cycle is really fraught with maya [artificial behavior], more so than any other cycle: the perception of the Older Soul begins to emerge, but the understanding does not. [MFM, p. 74]

Neither the transcendental soul, nor the infinite soul, pursues physical union. Quite often, however, the high causal body or the high mental body displaces an older soul, and at the time of the manifestation, the sexual activity ceases. These souls are not challenged by maya. [MFM, p. 79] [Late August 1973]

"What about the teacher I've replaced? She had a nervous breakdown, and now only does a little part-time work. Is she another baby soul? I've only met her once, and she seemed very frightened, but I thought she might not be a baby soul."

That is correct. The woman is a mature soul, which has contributed to her difficulties. She will improve only if those around her alleviate the conditions for her. Her reactions are your perceptions, not hers. She is also caught up much more in the enthrallment of Maya than older souls. Problems do exist on her plane; they are very real to her. The older soul begins to realize that there are no problems except those created by false personality as a defense.

"Michael keeps talking about Maya," Alex said. "I don't know what that is."

"She's the Hindu goddess of illusion," Corinne said.

That is, of course, one definition. That is one aspect of Maya. We will also call it False Personality, or behavior that is the result of peer-group pressure and acculturation. The False Personality is that which is produced artificially by the society in which you live. It is the rules of Maya.

"Does Michael include ego in Maya?" Craig asked.

The word does not matter so much as your understanding. However, 'ego' to the psychiatrist normally means self, so be certain that you all understand each other. For the purpose of ease in transmission, we have been using terminology familiar to the majority, with some variation. For instance, we perceive no schism between self, soul, and essence. All are spiritual. False Personality is attached to the organism. [MFM, p. 88-89]

Faith? Why is -Faith negative?

Faith is silly. It is very much part of the rule of Maya. Why should anyone accept anything on the provision that the thing must never in any way be questioned or doubted? Two-year-old infants do not accept such tyranny from their parents, yet those parents often will insist on such blindness for themselves. The positive pole of spiritualist is verification, that is, seeking the answers to the questions that grow from positive doubt. This is not part of Maya, though the seeking may be limited and guided by false personality. The negative pole of pragmatist is dogma, a thing not unlike faith, and the positive pole is practicality. [MFM, p. 112]

There is no sin, only karma. There is no evil, only Maya. [MFM p. 157]

Are the agreements inevitably kept?

Agreements are not karma. They can be honored or you can abdicate. Where there is much Maya and the false personality has the upper hand, abdication occurs. Whether or not the agreements carry over into subsequent lives is one of the things negotiated between lives. [MFM, p. 161]

"Then can you explain the Sermon on the Mount? I do not understand it. All my life I've been asking people," Emily went on.

Substitute for the word "blessed" the word "fortunate." The emphasis here is on simplicity. By "meek" we do not speak of cowardice, but rather of an inwardness of purpose. The "poor in spirit" refers to those who recognize within themselves the lack of spiritual guidance and seek this. This passage is warning against the complacency that heralds the downfall and degradation of humanity. The barbarians can be used symbolically here as the materialistic existentialists who deny other dimensions beyond the physical plane and devote their lives to the pursuit of Maya. They are indeed unfortunate in that they incur much adverse karma. [MFM, p. 175-176]

Sexual expression of love is as valid and beneficial as any other, but because of cultural pressures and expectations it is more subject to Maya than almost any other aspect of human life. [MFM, p. 203]

What is self-remembering?

Self-remembering can be defined as follows: you are sitting in a field. You see the sunlight. You see it and feel its effect on you. You see it and feel its effects also on the trees. You can see and feel its effects on your entire physical environment at once — the sunlight filtering through the trees, the sunlight calling the bees to action, the sunlight on your back, the sunlight as radiant energy, the sun as a source of light and heat. You can hold all these impressions separately and recognize them as an integrated whole. To do this requires separation from maya. [MFM, p. 205-206]

Discrimination for reasons of race and gender are the most prevalent and destructive examples of the rule of Maya. [MFM, p. 223]

Contempt for the body is foolish. So is complete preoccupation with it. Bodies are conditions of the Physical Plane and there are lessons that can only be learned in the flesh. Those who attempt to escape the body or deny it are missing the point. Those who refuse to look beyond it are merely choosing the reverse side of the coin. Either attitude is a product of maya, that is, False Personality. [MFM, p. 236]

Comments on Maya

[[From the transcriptions, make a list the synonyms and descriptive terms for Maya; list what Maya inhibits. Some of the following comments can be integrated into the comments on original Michaelian group quotations above. Perhaps others can be listed as bullet points.]]

A line from Battlestar Galactica (my favorite entertainment of all time) sums it up this way: "What is the first article of faith? *This is not all we are.*" When I use the word "Faith" henceforth, it is shorthand for that first

article. It seems that Faith of some kind or other is built into the psyches of most people, they are inherently believers rather than unbelievers. Carl Jung had a lot to say about Faith. Joseph Campbell's "mythology" project was a study of how humanity reaches for Faith. There are aspects of the "fantasy" branch of Science Fiction literature that satisfy the Faith aspiration in those who have a more secular mindset. Most of entertainment is based on presenting stories that are "larger than life", that stretch us beyond our trivialities and mundanities into the realm of Faith. Organized religions have institutionalized Faith in one way or another; "holy scriptures" have tacked many dogmas onto the first article of Faith.

If you discerned wrongly, and got fooled or taken advantage of, you needed the lesson. This is how we learn. Be skeptical when you approach them, not naive or gullible. Get rich quick scheme; too good to be true.

It is not spirituality or money or politics that are corrupt *per se*, it is there susceptibility to Maya

One form of Maya is the evangelism to "save the world". Delusions of grandeur are Maya.

Another common form for Maya to take is in intrigues, secrets, and mysteries.

Another is the evangelism to "we gotta get this truth out", or that we have secret knowledge, hidden until now, come learn from us and you will be enlightened, we have the truth that will free you from the lies.

My impression is that Scientology had some good ideas to start out with: their procedure for mitigating "engrams" was all about deleting negative behaviors, emotions, and thoughts. Problem was, their catalog of negativity was incomplete, and it took over the cult.

One can learn the truth while immersed in lies and distortions and incompleteness of truth.

One aspect of Maya falls under an umbrella term that I call "titillation". The universe sometimes gives us tantalizing hints and clues that there in an unseen world; there are hints that this world (known to us by our senses, and by our reasoning about what the senses tell us) is a subset of a larger reality, a reality that is not normally experienced. The inner experiences of NDEs and STEs fall into this category of tantalizing hints that Faith is real; the outer experiences of UFOs fall into this category of tantalizing hints that Faith is real. When tantalus slips into titillus, that is what I refer to as Maya. The line between tantalus and titillus is fine, and can vary from one person to another.

The central problem as I see it, is that spirituality is inherently, potentially fraught with Maya, exactly because it is in this realm of Faith, rather than in the realm of mundane science, the consensus reality, which has its standards of evidence and protocols for determining facts, truths. UFOs, Ancient Aliens, and similar iffy, fringe subjects documented by Gaia, Inc., provide tantalizing clues that "this is not all there is". When these subjects slip into titillation, that is when they are seduced by the blandishment of Maya.

Not that there is anything wrong with exploring Maya — if you do not know any better; experiencing Maya is one of the most effective and efficient ways for sorting truth from fiction, by experiencing fiction first, which is usually the case. Myself spent twenty years of my youth in a cult that claimed to be preparing the world for the second coming of Jesus, who would make it all better. My observation is that many spiritual groups start out with noble aspirations (Faith), and sometimes they devolve into cults, either from corrupt understanding, or charismatic but corrupt leadership. My "bullshit detector" for Maya might be more sensitive than others, because of what I went through in that cult. "Fool me once, shame on you; fool me twice, shame on me."

Even science is subject to the potential for Maya. In their case it is because they function on another type of "fringe" than pseudosciences, namely the "frontier" of knowledge and understanding. Scientific theorizing often gets it wrong, out there on the edge. For instance, mathematical physicist Roger Penrose has written a book, *Fashion, Faith, and Fantasy in the New Physics of the Universe*. In it, he discusses current theories of physics and cosmology that he believes have gone off the rails of solid scientific understanding. At least scientists are more likely to question their ideas than a lot of metaphysical folk.

One of the synonyms that the Michaels use for Maya is "glamour". To many people, things like money and power and fame contain Faith promises, so to speak, for transcending mundanity. As it turns out, they do not in fact deliver satisfaction to the soul. I believe that "spiritual materialism" is in this category. I feel that many New Agers peddle this kind of Maya. They are diversions from the real spiritual path.

Political movements as well as spiritual movements can be seduced by Maya. Trumpism is the political Maya *du jour*; it appeals to a certain kind of materialistic Faith, in that it promises a sort-of "salvation": "follow me and I will make your life better". This is risky; best change yourself before you presume to change the world. Political campaigns typically promise more than they can deliver, which is yet more Maya.

Sad to say, but I suspect that anything aspirational is potentially subject to getting subverted by Maya. The Human Potential Movement might have gotten derailed by Maya. Efforts to “monetize” spirituality are subject to getting sidetracked by Maya; this is called “spiritual materialism” [verify, or is this the Baby/Young Soul idea that prosperity is a product of righteousness]; frankly I see this in some self-appointed gurus, specifically those who seems to cater specifically to wealthy but gullible seekers.

One of the tip-offs that Maya is involved, is the amount of hype and sales pitch involved in promoting it. I see this a lot in some health marketing literature, in the mail and on the web. There might be a smidgen of evidence that eating this food or taking that supplement will cure whatever ails you, but the literature will blow this scanty evidence all out of proportion, just so they can make a buck, rather than you get well; 1% is truth, but 99% is hype and sales pitch.

The Michaelian teachings is more pragmatic in its approach to spirituality than it is aspirational. There is information about how things work, from a source that alleged to have seen it all and done it all. In its pure form, there is no hype and sales-pitch about how this teaching is going to “change your life for the better”. There is no proselytizing. It does not emphasize fixing yourself or improving yourself beyond being brutally honest with yourself about your psychological issues. The Michaels say, “This is what we learned during our incarnations about how stuff works, take it or leave it, what you do with it is up to you, Validate what you can in your own way, use what you can and see if it works for you”. They say that the function of the Physical Plane, as distinct from the Astral Plane, is in fact to experience Maya, the opposite of the higher reality. NDEers often tell us that that world they briefly visited is more real than this world, but comparison to that world, this world seems dreamlike, illusory. There is more Maya here than on any higher plane.

Another way to characterize Maya: there is the “primrose path” phenomenon. Suckers are shown an easy or pleasant path to the promised land rather than the truth, the strait and narrow path.

... seduced by Maya, deceived by what the Michaels call the “glamour” of the Physical Plane, things like money and power and fame, that make promises about transcending mundanity – aka “this is not all we are” but with a materialistic mindset, but do not deliver satisfaction to the soul.

Maya stems from the original ‘mental breakdown’ of the Tao, the bifurcation where the One produced the Two, then identified with one half and disidentified with the other half. In other words, Toa pretended that it was not All That Is, and has been playing hide and seek with Itself ever since. In quantum physics, this is known as Heisenberg’s Uncertainty Principle, where where a particle is versus where it is going are mutually incommensurable. The principle scales all the way up to human life, where we always function in a cloud of uncertainty. The feedback principle helps the inner and the outer and the other to model each other more accurately, but the process is asymptotic, meaning that one approaches certainty, but it is never actually achieved.





⑤ MECHANICAL MAN

Many of the founding members of the original Michaelian group had been involved in a Gurdjieff “Fourth Way” group in the early 1970s, namely Robert Burton’s “Fellowship of Friends”. Soon after they left Fellowship of Friends, they sought to make contact with the supernatural realm via the Ouija board. After a few months of contact with Tomas and Soleal, Michael showed up. The Michaels adopted some of the concepts and terminology already familiar to them from the Gurdjieffian teachings; the so-called “Mechanical Man” was one of those. Because it is a term with a special meaning in the Michaelian teachings, I capitalize the phrase.

Founding members of the original Michaelian group were more interested in “spiritual growth” than anything else, it seems. That quest is about becoming “enlightened”: more “conscious”, more “awake”, less “automatic”, less “*Mechanical*”.

In Gurdjieff’s time, it was appropriate to use the word “man” for “human”, so women in more modern times should not take offense at what might seem like sexism. Also, women can be just as Mechanical as men. Furthermore, Gurdjieff used a metaphor for “automatic, mindless” behavior that was appropriate for the industrial age that he lived in. In more modern times, we might prefer to use the metaphor of a computer for the same thoughtless behavior. In fact, some twenty-five years after Gurdjieff died, times had already changed, and so the metaphor changed: the computer metaphor for the unconscious automaton-like behavior of humans was used in the original Michaelian group; refer to the chapter “Bio-computer”. In even more recent times, the metaphor for a Mechanical Man became “zombie”, a person who was only half alive, operating entirely on instinct.

In both the Gurdjieffian teachings and the Michaelian teachings, Mechanical Man is often contrasted with “Balanced Man”, a term that is addressed in a chapter by that name. Therefore it would serve the reader’s understanding to read these two chapters sequentially.

Mechanical Man per Gurdjieff

Gurdjieff lived and taught during the first half of the Twentieth Century. He believed that humans were nothing more than machines, and that they had no inherent spirituality, or supernatural soul. He believed they had to ‘work’ to create a soul that would survive the death of the physical body:

Critics note that Gurdjieff gives no value to most of the elements that comprise the life of an average man. According to Gurdjieff, everything an “average man” possesses, accomplishes, does, and feels is completely accidental and without any initiative. *A common everyday ordinary man is born a machine and dies a machine without any chance of being anything else.* This belief seems to run counter to the Judeo-Christian tradition that man is a living soul. Gurdjieff believed that the possession of a soul (a state of psychological unity which he equated with being “awake”) was a “luxury” that a disciple could attain only by the most painstaking work over a long period of time. The majority — in whom the true meaning of the gospel failed to take root — went the “broad way” that “led to destruction”. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/George_Gurdjieff — retrieved 07 January 2022]

You might not be familiar with the Bible passage: “Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.” — Matthew 7:13-14. Unlike Gurdjieff and this statement from the Christian Bible, the Michaels taught that everything people experience is valuable and nothing is wasted — it all serves the eternal Essence and the ultimate plan. Gurdjieff’s belief in the absence of an inherent soul, and the alleged necessity of grueling work on oneself in order to form an enduring spiritual essence, is so pessimistic that one can see why the original Michaelian group founders repudiated it — with the guidance of the Michaels, of course. However, the concept that most people mostly

operate automatically, unaware that there is any higher way to operate than out of their human nature, was endorsed by the Michaels in the original Michaelian group, as we will see.

[[Note to self: quote Gurdjieff somewhere that Mechanical Man operates in the lower Centers.]]

The context and the contrasts found in the following quotes from the transcriptions will give the reader a good idea of what “Mechanical Man” meant to Michael.

Mechanical Man per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

The following extracts from original Michaelian group transcriptions are Q&A exchanges, where an original Michaelian group member asks a question (or makes a comment), and the Michaels provide an answer. This is not a subject that would benefit by division into subcategories, as some subjects do. These extracts are presented in the chronological order in which they were given, because this is not a subject where there was a development or evolution of a specific revelation of a facet of the Michaelian teachings, as was often the case with the original Michaelian group. As is my custom, I often provide some explanatory comments following the question or answer. Underlined words in the Michaels' answers are my emphasis, to draw attention to what it is that I comment on. Sometimes I embed words or phrases [in brackets] that I believe help to clarify the question or the answer.

In this chapter, the synonyms used in the transcriptions for “Mechanicality” are shown in bold text to facilitate the reader's review.

It is a bit surprising to me that the subject of “mechanicality” in the human Personality only showed up in the original Michaelian group sessions many months after they first convened, considering how important the concept was in the Gurdjieffian teachings.

In the following quote, we see Mechanical behavior contrasted with spiritual behavior.

Then the Gurdjieffian teachings are not true?

In Search of the Miraculous [Ouspensky's book] is valuable mostly in that it points to the diligence with which some souls search, and one man's struggle to unite with a teaching. Photographing is merely a tool to use in separating the Personality from the Essence: that is, [separating the] Mechanical from the spiritual behavior. [08 February 1974]

The 'spiritual' path can be defined as liberation from the merely physical machine, here called separation of 'Personality' from 'Essence'. There is a chapter on *Essence and Personality*. In spiritual evolution, progress is made from less conscious to more conscious. According to both Gurdjieff and Michael, it takes an enlightened teacher with an enlightened teaching to help people overcome their Mechanicalness. *Teachers and Teachings* is the subject of another chapter. What Michael here called 'photographing' is one of the primary tools for transcending Mechanicalness. That is, other people in the teaching can see our unconscious behavior better than we can see it ourselves, and they can point it out — that is a 'photograph'. There is of course yet another chapter on that subject.

However, we do not always need someone else to Photograph us; we can do it ourselves:

I can't figure out why the observing self (the machine) operates as it does. What do I do to make the change?

We would say at this point that the insight you have mentioned is an extremely essential one: that is, to view from the inside the utter Mechanicality of the Personality and its **conditioned responses**. Yes, these responses can be altered, and you, above all of those who seek, should now begin to see how they can be changed. All along, we have been urging you to Photograph these [Mechanical] sequences in yourselves. Some of them are, of course, **culturally induced** — the work ethic is an example. Others result from your combination of Overleaves, and the way in which you interrelate because of them. The Personality is a machine. All of its responses are Mechanical, and most are unnecessary. The continued [self-]observation should make you willing to change this behavior. After awhile, it becomes too frustrating to do otherwise. This is one of the side benefits of the concentration-meditation Monad. It does make the Essence disgusted by **the hold Personality has** over it, and usually the necessary impetus occurs to effect the change sooner or later if you are willing to pursue this to the bitter end, and the light will shine and the Essence will gain control. Then those things which are truly significant will take precedence over much of the **nonsense you now use to occupy your days...** [19 June 1974]

Gurdjieff used the term, 'self-observation' whereas Michael usually used the term 'photographing'. They are the same thing. Both refer to a deliberate, intentional exercise that one can do, in addition to the meditation-

concentration exercise which Michael here says improves the ability to self-observe. Notice the phrase, 'conditioned responses'. The 'behaviorist' school of psychotherapy is all about studying where people are governed by the 'stimulus-response' mechanism. The 'therapy' consists of helping people to overcome their dysfunctionality by retraining them. In the original Michaelian group, the goal they set for themselves was spiritual growth, so, in terms of that goal, much of what they were still doing was 'nonsense'. For those who have not chosen spiritual evolution, staying 'asleep' is not nonsense.

Dick: I would like to ask about my sense of loss from [my daughter] Kathryn, the sadness and regret. My machine cannot "love" either and the children interpret it as, "My father doesn't love me." My Personality is weeping over the Personality not being able to let Kathryn know, "I love her." Are there previous Sequences I had with her?

She must learn now to differentiate between that which cannot love and that which does love and deeply. She cannot now do this. She is only now learning that there are feelings at a deeper level that compel her into certain relationships. Also, she is the student of one not yet manifested [Robert] and he still must learn this, also. The communications of the love beyond the Mechanical Personality would not fall on deaf ears. This King [Kathryn] has been beloved to all of you for so many centuries that it is more difficult to lose the contact now, even though it is so temporary. All of you have looked to her so many times for what she was able to give and now do not wish to break the thread. Even Personality gained by this contact and even Personality is reluctant to give it up. There is support and energy emanating from this soul and it would be unusual if those closely associated did not feel the loss. [07 July 1974]

Refer to the chapters "Love" and "Agape" for discussions of the type of love (emotional bonding) that a Personality is able to feel and express versus the type of Love (Agape) that the Essence is able to feel and express.

Dick: Kathryn has been eliminating the word "love," as machines are not capable of love. Maybe you Externally Consider others. Could you comment on love and External Considering?

They are synonymous. We see no difference. The "machine" can do neither, but it is possible for you students to do both with work. [10 July 1974]

Refer to the chapter "Considering — Internal and External". As with Mechanicality, so-called "Considering" is from the Gurdjieffian teachings. Briefly, External Considering is an empathetic rapport with other people; you 'put yourself in their shoes'; you see things from their perspective. Learning to transcend Mechanicality and arrive in External Considering is Good Work.

In the next series Q&A series, there is a discussion of the place that the lower Centers play in the self-awareness or consciousness, or lack thereof, in Mechanical Man:

Dick: I would like to ask how to bring the perceptions of the Emotional Center and those of the Intellectual Center together to be Balanced. Perceptions seems so limited: there is so much input and only one thing seems to get through.

Of course, the perceptions of one **trapped** in the Intellectual Center are going to be based upon what is thought, and will be largely analysis of the perception rather than a perception at all. The perception itself will be lost in the analysis. The perceptions of one **lost** in the Emotional Center will be swamped by the feelings surrounding the moment, and again the perception itself will be lost to sight. This is what is meant, of course, by **not experiencing one's experiences**. Those trapped in the Moving Center will be already planning or carrying out some action surrounding the perception before it has time to register. No Mechanical Man is able to appreciate any experience fully because of this. All perceptions are, of course, stored, and can be recalled by the Balanced Man if need be. In order to perceive and experience a moment in time, all Centers must be working (correctly). [17 September 1974]

The word "trapped" above is yet another word used by Gurdjieff and the Michaels to describe the state of mind of Mechanical Man. Mechanical Man is typically trapped in the three lower Centers: Moving, Emotional, and Intellectual. Balanced Man is no longer trapped in those Centers; he is above and beyond them. He has freed himself to experience his experiences from a higher point of view than that provided by the Mechanical Personality. He has a conscious awareness of both his internal and external states. There is of course another chapter that describes Balanced Man in considerable detail.

In another session, the perceptions of Balanced Man are once again contrasted to the lack of perceptiveness in Mechanical Man. A Balanced Man's state of mind can instead be compared to what is called "satori" in Zen Buddhism:

Dick: I've read that, in Zen, once one has reached satori, he realizes he's always been there. Does this mean that all the Centers are operating all the time, but we are not aware of them?

All Centers are not working in Mechanical Man — they are only **potentially workable**. This is why **perceptions of [Mechanical] Man are so inaccurate and so scattered**. This is the reason that criminal identification is so **fraught with error**. No two souls perceive the moment in precisely the same way, unless, of course, you happen to have two Balanced Men. [17 September 1974]

Here we find that Mechanical Man operates automatically and habitually out of one or two of the lower three centers (Moving, Emotional, Intellectual) whether it is the appropriate Center or Centers or not for the situation. His perceptions of reality are therefore consistently inaccurate. However, Balanced Man can consciously chose to operate out of the appropriate lower Center for the situation, making his perceptions accurate and dependable.

In the following passage, Mechanical Man is again contrasted with Balanced Man:

Dick: In a Balanced person, should the Intellectual Center be shut down until there is an actual problem to be solved?

[Not exactly:] The Intellectual Center should be functioning as a decision-making partner in the process. The Emotional Center **cannot make decisions properly**, as it cannot think out the ramifications of any given situation with the speed necessary to make a valid, split-second decision. The Intellectual Center works at a far greater speed than does the Emotional Center when the soul is in Balance. In Mechanical Man, the Moving Center takes over the rapid functions. This is, of course, necessary for survival of the body, as when a hand is removed from a hot stove by the Moving Center in cooperation with the Instinctive Center. In Balanced Man, the Intellectual Center claims its rightful functioning and become the decision maker. In other words, Balanced Man chooses to remove the hand. [17 September 1974]

This answer just fleshed out the information given earlier in this same session, namely that Mechanical Man operates unconsciously compared to Balanced Man, who makes free-will choices from the appropriate Center for situations encountered. Balanced Man is meta-cognitively enabled, meaning that he is living in a state of consciousness that is above the normal states of consciousness, which function in the lower Centers.

The exchange continued as follows in this same session:

Dick: How can I tell when I'm in the Intellectual Center?

There is a vast difference in the sheer expenditure of energy. Those who are Trapped in the Moving Center expend more physical energy than those in the Moving part of Intellectual Center. The energy spent is of a different quality. Often the body is not tired even though tremendous amounts of intellectual energy is spent, causing the person to expend far beyond its intellectual capacity for achievement. However, in Moving Centered souls the reverse is often true: they seldom are able to work to full intellectual capacity because the body tires so rapidly. Once the body goes to sleep, then Mechanical Man has lost his hold on the intellectual functioning. [17 September 1974]

As stated previously, Mechanical Man operates automatically and habitually and inappropriately out of the three lower Centers, which are part of Personality. When the body sleeps, these Centers of course also go to sleep, and the body operates automatically and habitually from physiology rather than from the Personality. Physiology operates in the sleeping sleep and Personality operates in the so-called “waking sleep”.

The exchange continued as follows in this same session:

Mallory: It is not a dramatic thing; it just is. A person in the present is not experiencing anything dramatic. Does a Balanced Man feel high? It was said last time that the “surge” comes when one becomes Balanced.

If the moment is a quiet one, Balanced Man will feel the tranquility. If it is a “high,” then Balanced Man will feel the ecstasy of the moment. Ironically, the reverse is often true in Mechanical Man. Young Souls involved with ecology legalization will often feel surges of emotionalism when confronted with a pacific, woodland environment. [17 September 1974]

This states again that Balanced Man has appropriate responses to circumstances and Mechanical Man does not.

Dick: Gurdjieff says that Mechanical Man has no will (a #1, #2 or #3 man, that is). He may start out to pursue a course, but will succumb to societal pressures, fears, habits, et cetera. Gurdjieff says in order to become conscious, one must have “C” influence [direct contact with an enlightened person], and allow him to function as his will. Michael cannot function in this capacity, as they need a medium. Could we have a comment on self-remembering, embracing three things: in self-remembering, one is aware of the flower he sees, himself, and the sun shining impartially on both.

Essentially, yes. One of the reasons that no one of your previous teachings has impressed you indelibly is that the mystical “awe inspiring” element was largely pushed to the background. Some respond to this approach, others do not; you do not. We wish so much to bring you together with a teacher who will bring this element

to this teaching. We see the difficulty, and, of course, have been cognizant of it all along, but in this particular instance, it has taken much work to provide this synthesis. [21 September 1974]

This is another statement saying that an enlightened teacher with an enlightened teaching is useful, perhaps even necessary, to help Mechanical Man escape the traps and limited consciousness of the lower Centers, where Men #1, #2, and #3 operate. The question describes “self-remembering”, which is a Gurdjieffian technique for breaking out of one’s habitual fears distorted perceptions. More is said about this in the chapter “Meditation and Concentration”.

The questioner was not completely satisfied with the answer given above. The exchange continued as follows in this same session:

Dick: It seems that Michael could also expand....

Richard expressed the desire to know from Michael if his perceptions were valid or not of Ray and Gene.

The only way we know of to come to Agape, which presumably is the goal, is to acknowledge your feelings, likes and dislikes, and then come past them. We have not ever advocated the toleration of any obnoxious behavior to you, and we never will. It is far too much of an energy drain. The fact remains that Mechanical Man has no inkling of his behavior or how it is perceived by others. The only way that he can ever have that inkling is if some higher being, or even one who is far enough along the path to see it, will hold up the psychic mirror in whatever way possible at the time. Only then can Mechanical Man perceive himself as others perceive him. That is the first step toward self-perception. Especially if the consensus [sic] that latter factor is one other compelling reason for staying in a teaching rather than striking out alone. (Hello, out there!) When you do not have this constant yardstick, you cannot measure your progress. The Chief Feature of this group is timidity, which is a part of Self-deprecation. Much more can be said: most of you have Tape Loops of agreeability going for you; your behavior is stylized and rigid; in certain situations, the timidity is especially pronounced when the person who needs confronting is in an Exalted [Cardinal] Role [Sage, Priest, King]. We would see you looking at this in the psychic mirror. Progress is never made by timid people — only by those who are strong enough to resist the pressures exerted upon their psyche by those Mechanical men around them. As long as you allow those around you to dictate your mood of behavior to you, Richard, you will remain entrenched in the fixed Tape loops, and there will be no progress. Why does it matter to you whether you are universally liked? That, given Mechanical Man’s motives for liking, simply is not possible. Your homework would be to perceive your voracious need in this area, and try to satiate it once and for all. (Eat it before it eats you. Arrrrghhh!) The Acceptance, of course, is your strongest Overleaf. You may change this. We would recommend at least blunting it. It is taking its toll. It will not be possible for you to grow without this. The same could be said for Dick, only he is aware of the fact that the Repression [Mode] is standing between him and his essence. [21 September 1974]

Refer to chapters “Agape”, “Energy and Energy Leaks”, and “Biocomputer”. As with many other quoted paragraphs in this chapter, in this paragraph we are told that knowledge of, and observation of, one’s Overleaves is helpful in seeing where one is being Mechanical. In Richard’s case, apparently he was badly encumbered by the Negative Pole of Acceptance, namely –Ingratiation, and +Agape was said to be the Positive Pole (the Poles were revealed a few months later), so it is accurate to say that Richard’s –Ingratiation was hindering his +Agape.

Allyn: What is my Life Task and/or Sequences with this group?

This large group, which incidentally became a family again in this life, is largely interwoven with Sequences. These all involve the spirit of cooperation, to enable the growth so necessary in several of those concerned. You are not an exception to this, as you need the space, and are with those in Sequence who will freely give it. You too must give of this even though it may be extremely difficult, and has already involved growth in what Mechanical Man calls **sacrifices**. Actually, nothing has been sacrificed; it was chosen as a growth process. You are a good student. This is part of your task. There could be much more said, of course, but the man gains valuable insights on his own. [24 September 1974]

Mechanical people regard the spiritual path in a group setting as a sacrifice, as giving up something valuable, but this is a misperception. To use a group to help become a Balanced Man is a gain.

Ted: Would it be good for the men of this group to meet separately (as the women have done)?

The pitfalls would, of course, be falling into a masculine, Mechanical type dialog pertaining to life interests, and not to the teaching. With effort, the move could be fruitful, especially in the direction of Agape. Many of you

need to cast out your stereotypes, and learn to love in other agendas besides the sexual one. [24 September 1974]

The psychological, emotional, and behavioral differences between men and women, whether innate or cultural, are useful for mitigating Mechanicality in both genders, if they are open to interactions outside of stylized and ritualized sexuality.

Leslie: Often people say, "I love ice cream."

At this point in time, it is useless to bring up any discussion of an ultimate purpose in existence. This is not a concept that can be dealt with in the language of the Physical Plane. It must be intuited at a higher level, and it is up to the student to work toward this intuition; it is not easy. The Tao cannot be understood intellectually, it can only be intuited. As we have stated before, and will again, Leslie, growth is the greatest good and love is the highest truth. Music is Mechanical Man's only method of expressing the higher [level], and this is also true on the high planes at another level. [24 September 1974]

Uplifting and inspiring music is one way to get up and out of Mechanicality.

The Michaels went on a screed about Mechanicality in October of 1974:

Dick visioned that life should contain joy and rapture. He felt that no barriers were between us and that experience [except] imaginary ones created by us.

True. You can have it any time you wish. It is not a difficult transition, but it requires that you cease denying yourself the pleasure. You see, this culture places pleasure on a high shelf marked "reward," and it must be earned. Ironically, Mechanical Man is totally unable to experience this as joy, and continues to strive toward an illusive goal that always remains just beyond the fingertips. This is truly sad, Dick, perhaps the only sadness on the Physical plane, for it is really within your grasp all the time. Give up the idea that joy must come as a reward for faithful service. This is nonsense. You can have it [for] free. When Mechanical Man expresses verbally a negative emotion, you see, there is a compounded energy leak. It is fine to just admonish you all not to [verbally] express [negative emotions], but we understand that you must know why. When you compound the leak, you step completely back and allow the lower Centers full control, and it is a **soulless, automatic** response, and much overloading of the circuitry occurs. However, when you merely acknowledge to yourself that you are having a negative reaction, why then you are immediately reducing the force of the reaction, simply by the internal Photograph, and also by sending the reaction up a notch instead of downward. In other words, this process requires in and of itself the use of Intellectual Center in order to Photograph the inappropriate action. This enables the hot wires to cool down a bit, and allows the time to formulate a dispassionate response. This also many times results in a cooling off of the trigger. Also, when that happens, there is a neutral energy flow, and this in time can provide access to higher Centers, and therefore, positive energy. The only positive energy we know of is that which we have elected to call "Agape". Other sources may be either neutral or negative. The high states are free of the complexity found in the lower states. This should explain the purity of the energy flow. The lower states, being more complex, require more complex emotions to feed upon and be fed upon. [05 October 1974]

A formula for the elevation of consciousness out of Mechanicality is given in this quotation: Do not express a negative Emotional Center reaction outwardly > instead Photograph it inwardly > this Photography is done in the Intellectual Center at first > but this leads to neutral balance in the Instinctive aka Impulse Center > which is a 'gateway' or 'bridge' to higher Centers > particularly the higher emotion of joy, the antithesis of negative emotions.

There is another procedure for transcending Mechanicality:

Dick: Many teachings speak of an inner fire that needs to be turned on to achieve consciousness. I cannot turn it on consciously. Can Michael give us the secret to turn this on?

To answer your question, Dick, let us speak of belief systems for a moment. For you see, if the belief system is strong enough and tenacious enough, the lower Centers can effectively block out all information conflicting with that belief system, and all of its attendant emotions. In other words, if you do not believe that there is a state of Agape, you can effectively block out any experience of such. The secret for you, Dick, is in that space of which you have spoken. If you can ever once allow yourself to feel the presence of one who loves, then experience that state vicariously, you can incorporate that into your belief system. Right now, your belief system does not allow for that experience. You may have it by experiencing this Entity [Michael], and knowing that this state does exist. You must feel it before you can give it yourself. You must be at a point where you know beyond the shadow of a doubt that it does exist, and the only way you will is to experience it from one who is

there. You almost felt it with the man Robert [Burton], because he was very close to achieving it. He could at times bring his entire following to that neutral energy flow, which for Mechanical Man is a very high place. This neutral energy force is within the reach of this group, if you wish to strive for it, and once there you will find the access easier to allow; but all of you first must feel, then you can love. Mechanical Man does not like innovation or change. This explains the reason. Experiencing this feeling will light the fire. [05 October 1974]

This procedure for transcending Mechanicality is to bask in the loving energy field of someone else who has transcended Mechanicality. It is said of various enlightened gurus that their love is palpable when one is in their proximity.

There was a question about witnessing an apparently illegal act in San Francisco on O'Farrell Street — the Shock of seeing something as we interpret it — [was this] a warning?

We would call it so, yes. You see what happened then happens often to Mechanical Man. He is in his customary state of **slumber**, and all of a sudden awakens briefly from his **dreams**, and attempts to interpret a scene in that split second before he sleeps again. Often, his momentary vision is grossly distorted, and then the Emotional Center, or Emotional Parts of Centers, takes over and directs the action. These experiences are good for students in that they often call attention to the depths of the **trance** in which you go through life. It is true, students do often witness heinous crimes of violence, but then usually the alert student is prepared to spring into action, and do what must be done from the proper perspective. It is not true, however, that the high planes arrange convenient accidents to aid the students. We just hope that you do notice those experiences that come your way as growth experiences. [08 October 1974]

Refer to the chapter "Shock" for a fuller description of yet another method of transcending Mechanicality.

Leslie: Could Michael clarify a confusion I have about time, time frames, and physical existence? I get from Michael that we cannot coexist in two separate time frames simultaneously. Seth says that we can, and calls this "reincarnational dramas." Is this the "pan-dimensional," or close to it?

Your own Fragments of your own Entity do not ever cross the time frames, as this would be the antithesis of progress, or in some instances, propulsion into a far future to which you could not adjust. However, when you chose an alternative course from the many alternatives, you acted this out. The other alternatives are also acted out in other time frames. For instance, in a time frame Dag Hammarskjöld will not get on that plane; in still another, he will, but it will not crash; in still another, he will be assassinated. Crossing the time frames serves no purpose, only slows the growth. It is possible ... to see options open to you. This can be then looked upon as viewing all the possible time frames, and, of course, is available to you as a very real segment of the pan-dimensional universe. A reverse or repetitive [reincarnation] Cycle would be an antithesis of the natural [sequential, progressive, developmental] order, and would only be created in the mind of a Mechanical Man intent upon his comfortable belief system that rejects [sequential, progressive, developmental] order. [15 October 1974]

Apparently one of the metaphysical presuppositions of Mechanicality is to disbelieve in transcendent processes where progress is actualized.

Elizabeth: I have a great aunt who died, and I feel responsible for carrying out her wishes to be cremated and spreading ashes. I do not know whether this is silly to carry out the ritual or what. I'd like a comment please.

Positive thought emanations, of course, are more valuable in these situations than Mechanical Man's action. Of course, you can combine the energy with the action for your wish. Remember that these younger souls usually experience the transition between planes as shocking, and are not in a coping state. Contact at that point is usually fruitless. However, the positive energy flow can always help, even if it only acts as a reassuring cocoon for a time. The body is, of course, beyond caring. The Essence no longer cares about the body, at least, not for the time being. So many must spend prolonged periods sorting out the acquired beliefs from the truth of the experience before they can possibly respond to the experience. In the case of souls in Sequence, there is often a desire to monitor the soul left on the Physical plane once the sorting is over — curiosity, nothing more. Sometimes this is accomplished by Older Souls. [15 October 1974]

Mechanicality is very much a Physical Plane phenomenon, and the word implies action or Moving Center, but it also involves Emotional Center (negative emotions) and Intellectual Center (restrictive belief systems), as indicated above. Mechanicality is unable to experience and express the higher Centers.

[There was a] short business meeting regarding incorporation. Narra indicated the need for officers, and we elected Dick president, Joan secretary, Cheryl treasurer. A quorum was present. We discussed and shared possible names for the group: "Spiritual Community," "Associated Souls," "Church of the Path Seeker," "All Souls Spiritual," "Pan-Universal Spiritual Sanctuary."

Man's place in the universe should, of course, have become a little more apparent to you since we opened the discussion on complexity. As we have intimated before, the Tao is the epitome of simplicity, and therefore the simplicity toward which we all strive in our return to the primeval. Therefore, the Physical Plane, with its enormous complexity, offers by far the most challenge, and also the most barriers to spiritual liberation. Man, or rather, Mechanical Man, must then cut through the glamour and allurements of the Physical plane in order to see the light of truth. Nowhere else is this as difficult, for on the Physical Plane, all is glamour and all is complex, even compared to the Astral plane, which to the high planes can seem quite complex. Man must strive uphill in the battle to free the essence. By "man", of course, we refer to all creatures of reason. For in all languages we know of, there is a word meaning "man." This uphill battle is growth-producing and also provides the strength to persevere through the several cycles spent on the Physical Plane. The lessons learned on the Physical Plane are necessarily painful just because they are so complex. With simplification, there is analgesia. On this world, there have been significant cultural and religious barriers to growth. On other worlds, there have been hostile natural environments and threats from without to contend with.

You have been told [by Gurdjieff] that Mechanical Man cannot love, and that is true. Love is the highest truth of all, and isn't it said that ultimate truth is sealed off from man? Man also cannot "help". In fact, man cannot do anything at all, at least from the standpoint of will or volition, because of the two imperative senses he chooses not to use: we speak of the intuitive sense and the telepathic sense. One would think that these had suffered the atrophy of disuse. This is not the case at all; they are simply held in abeyance until such a time that Mechanical Man can willingly look behind the barriers he has constructed about these very frightening senses and put them to use. This is usually the last lesson learned on the Physical Plane, and the hardest one, because it, or rather they, are the one that the Personality fights the most. Of course, it fights these, and it is a fight for survival, for once the door is open in this direction, only the Essence can go through it, and behind the barriers is knowledge.

Man must meet with a cosmic teaching in order to look behind the barriers. Psychology will not do it for you: for, if the psychologist is a Mechanical Man himself, he also has **adaptive behavior** taking place and he cannot look behind your **barriers** or very well allow you to, either. It would be too scary for him — he would then also have to look behind his own barriers. The broad purpose of the Physical Plane, of course, is then to cut through the first layer of **complexity**.

Comment at this point: Richard asked how can we prepare ourselves? What can we do to help ourselves see through the veil?

You are right, Richard: "**veil**" is a word we would prefer, for these barriers — from our vantage point — are as insubstantial as the morning mists. But man chooses to solidify them to the point where he cannot destroy them. This brings them into line with the solidness of the Physical Plane. "Solid" is very much like **ponderous** to us. The weighty philosophical battles, battles waged by Mechanical Man, are his attempts to solidify even thought and make it more complex. He must first come to the point that he can verify for himself the tenuousness of that which stands between him and the pan-dimensional universe, and the path toward simplicity and therefore perfection. All in this universe is truly perfect; it is only **faulty perception** that renders it imperfect. Once the perception is full, the imperfection is gone, and the liberated Essence can perceive all there is on the higher planes, and can move about without the solid limits of the Physical Plane. Many of you have had a taste of this and know of what we speak. The heavy weightiness of the Physical Plane is a burden you have chosen to bear in order to come to this point. Now you wish to throw off the **yoke**, and this is why we have chosen to assist you. If you were not ready, you would simply not hear the words. We have stated, essentially, the purpose — succinct to be sure, but still essential. There are steps, of course, man's purpose then being to learn that there is love, and that it is accessible, and that it is accessible only through those "extrasensory" perceptions that he chooses to deny. The foundation we have given; the application you have agreed to try. Until you manage to open these doors — or at the very least, verify that they are there --- you will notice no significant change in yourself, although that change may be readily perceptible to other students, but not to the one stuck with it. The application of this teaching in a loving, trusting environment could enable you to verify the presence of these **blocks**. If you choose to take advantage of this, of course, we will be there to assist. Essentially, what Mechanical Man is saying when he says, "I do not trust you," is, "I do not trust you not to show me what is behind those blocks." Perhaps this, then: "If I allow you to come too close, you will violate my barriers, and I will be naked in the void." Once the stripping happens, the work, of course, becomes far easier and personality begins to lose ground. It can do nothing else at this point. The Essence knows no shame, no guilt. If you can learn to share your fears, however childish they may seem to you, you will have gone a long way along the path. The realm of unfulfilled desires is fraught with Maya and one which must be conquered.

What you are saying, in saying that you do not trust, is also, "I am so terrible that if you knew it, you could not love me," and on a personality-to-personality basis, this is, of course, probably true; but the level of comprehension in this group is such that very little has not been met and dealt with already. It is doubtful that you could peel away the acceptance with your escapades. In fact, this would invariably bring you all much closer, and at this moment that is the goal. You have all been told about the utter foolishness in setting up impossible goals for yourselves: fixating on a goal years in the future is another of the Personality's defenses against the Essence's experiencing of the moment. [22 October 1974]

Some additional words to describe Mechanicality were shown in **bold** text.

Eugene: I spent hours supporting a lady having spontaneous happenings. Is she a mid-Level Mature Priest in Stagnation or Growth, Self-deprecation, and Passion? She had trouble separating from her husband. She recently had visions or past memories, like watching a movie. She is interested in coming to the teaching meetings. Does Michael have a comment?

This lady is a sixth level Mature Priest, not in Stagnation but Submission; yes, with a Chief Feature of Self-Deprecation; also in the Passion mode, in the Intellectual part of Emotional Center; would make a good student, as she no longer wishes to submit, and is tired of running herself down, as she begins to see her own worth. The problem of giving up the marriage, of course, stems from the fact that Mechanical Man finds his suffering very hard to give up and seldom does this willingly. It only comes with the struggle for Balance. This marriage does provide excellent suffering, since it is so incompatible. It is simply the first time that she has allowed herself this experience. Many times those in Self-Deprecation will not admit to themselves that they can have a legitimate experience. The screen is always available, and the protection is ready to go at an instant's notice. The memories are good ones, and should not be discounted. She does not see them as memories now, still because of her own self doubts, but can learn to see them as such. [29 October 1974]

There again Mechanicality was connected to the lower Centers and the Chief Features, and was contrasted with Balanced Man.

Suggesting [past-life] retrogression to us is another example of Mechanical Man's desire to **complexity**, but also it suggests to us Mechanical Man's need to be **punished** for what he calls sin. We must somehow make it known to you that there is no sin — only karma — and this you do repay, but not by retrogression, just by hard work. There is no one "up here" to punish you. You will have to find someone down there to do your flagellation. [12 November 74]

Mechanicality, whether internal or external (cultural), is unable to process spiritual matters.

The Physical Plane and its pervasive atmosphere demands that you "do" something physical about ethereal matters. Consequently, when the Essence awakens for an instant and feels love for its Essence Twin or an old twin, the False Personality immediately goes to work on this emotion, converting it into something it can understand. This is what is meant by some spiritual leaders who exhort their followers to rise above the Physical Plane. Mechanical Man has not learned to rise above the desire for instant gratification; therefore, he experiences much frustration, since the culture largely denies him that gratification. [19 November 1974]

Mechanicality, whether internal or external (cultural), is unable to process spiritual matters.

Carol: I have no Agreement to do anything for him?

In a sense, the Agreements made benefit both parties; in the long haul, this will be evident. Remember that the conflicts felt are the result of, first, the **individual belief systems**, which are part of the Mechanical Man, as well as some rather rigid master Tapes on the part of both students. [15 January 1975]

Balancing seems to involve more than just Centers. What about other Overleaves?

Not only can Mechanical Man not "do" [as Gurdjieff said], but he also **cannot think**, and, if this is denied, how can you possibly choose to change an Overleaf? All that Mechanical Man can possibly achieve is the continual playing out of the master Tapes around the beliefs. A good beginning would be for each of you to look within and discover once and for all those hard-core beliefs that are running your life. Then, stand apart and listen to Mechanical Man play out the Tape. It will be enlightening, to say the least. For each belief, there is a Tape: a master Tape for each core belief, an auxiliary for each auxiliary belief. In the latter case, many are Tape loops. [16 January 1975]

If I have said it once, I have said it a thousand times: refer to the chapter "Bio-computer" to learn more about Tapes.

We asked for clarification of "visibility." Most visible are often mostly in False Personality.

Visibility is not necessarily related to Mechanicality. Visibility in the case of a teaching such as this could come from the essences of committed students, willing to share their space with others. This cadre is by no means all together. If you do succeed to begin to “peddle your wares”, for instance, you will find that many of these still missing will find you. [16 January 1975]

Fame provides occasion and temptation for much distortion toward Mechanicality and False Personality, so be wary of that, but don't let it stop you from spreading the good word. Always keep in mind that the goal is to reach other true students, not to develop a cult following.

Richard: How do we avoid that?

[You avoid that] by continuing to climb for Balance in the way we have outlined, and by continuing to look within for the motivation. To become visible merely to reach for [aspire to be like] the Sage would be Bad Work for you, Richard [an Artisan]. On the other hand, surfacing to spread the teaching would not. [16 January 1975]

Recall that “The Sage is the Artisan exalted”.

Carolyn: Why is it so cold during hypnosis?

If you wish to have heat on the Astral plane, you must create it for yourself. Heat and cold do not exist as you know them on the other planes, but you do experience the absence of heat or cold, as that is as far as Mechanical Man's **imagination** will stretch. First, a comment: most interesting of all is the fact that the student Carolyn studiously avoided all contact with this entity — even though this took true talent and will. The best method we know of for allowing yourself the forward movement is to balance the gains against the possible losses, as the student Gene has suggested. You will only lose the body if the desire is great enough, and then there will be no feeling of loss. What is difficult for you all to comprehend at this point is that there could be forms of living just as attractive as being in a physical body. Those of us who no longer have the call to reincarnate on the Physical plane, do not mourn this. Only Mechanical Man of all creatures **regards death as a punishment**. [30 January 1975]

This passage notes two more limitations and distortions present in Mechanicality.

A discussion was held about helping.

To help someone else, you must, of course, know the truth about yourself and you must know that which is false in them. This is why Mechanical Man fails so in his efforts to help. He does not know truth in himself, let alone in others. Balanced Man can certainly accelerate the growth around him, and those on their way to Balance can impart that which is truth in them to others. Yes, Adepts are followed up the [seven] rungs of the cosmic ladder through no efforting on their part, because telling the truth is not an effort; telling lies is. [30 January 1975]

People stuck in the lower Centers are Mechanical, in contrast to the Balance state that is related to the Neutral Assimilation Center, whereas the Adept functions in the higher Centers. Refer to the chapter “Adepts and Masters” for more information.

James had communicated with a man in Russia, who is now in jail because of their correspondence, so it was difficult to plan to go to Russia. Japan would be easier.

Not since the destruction of Atlantis has so much information of a scientific nature been available to Mechanical Man on this planet, and he is so busy entering this into the computer and storing it all in the books, that he has little time to pursue the awesome and mystical. He has barely enough time to assimilate that which is absolutely necessary to shape out his survival. Yet, he has because of this also become blasé, and is not easily awed by information from any source. It is not easy in this time frame to shock awareness into Mechanical Man. This shotgun approach works best, we have found, and this is why a publication such as yours can be such a valuable tool, a vehicle for expression of the revolution. It bombards the senses. This will, of course, be the ultimate battle plan. [31 January 1975]

This was yet another statement about Mechanical Man being unable to pursue and understand and appreciate higher realities.

Elizabeth in trance.

It is indeed true that the levels of commitment to the path vary to a great degree within the group. There are those who say, “Yes, I seek spiritual growth; I seek and I am open to input from my brothers,” and yet when that input is received, all kinds of rationalizations appear, such as, “That is his projection,” “That is his perception,” “I do not need to take on his problems.” Why not accept that, as we have said before, there is no

helping each other? The tool of photographing is, of course, valid only when it comes from a space of objectivity and none of you is objective totally. Although on occasion, all of you touch upon the periphery of objectivity and are able to give valid Photographs to your brothers. There are others in the group who play all transmissions through the Mechanical brain. You judge — in fact, you cannot accept — any message that does not fit into the slot which you allow for the message. If it differs, if it is a round peg in a square hole, then the Mechanical brain puts it aside without trying it on through the intuitive process. There are yet others in the cadre who are not earnestly seeking at all, but merely seeking the warmth of close personal relationships. Those operate completely at the level of fulfilling needs. They have not yet begun to understand the meaning of search for truth, and so we see you at these three levels, with occasional surge of energy that truly penetrates into earnest seeking. Indeed, why cater — why not risk “losing” those who want to be lost anyway. We have spoken before about vulnerability. You all operate from the basis of insecurity in your personalities, which all too often stops you from speaking what you perceive. This must come to an end. If there is any purpose to our being with you, you must cease this game of “If I tell him what I see, I might be wrong and he won’t like me.” This is not confrontation tactics, but merely accepting responsibility for your perceptions and having the strength of vulnerability to express the perceptions. There is, in the last analysis, no confrontation except that which occurs when the Essence is free enough to confront the Personality. The confrontation is an inner thing. That is the only one that will produce growth. There is also a lack of trust among many of you in that if one opens the door just a crack perhaps the light will be so blinding that that one will not be able any longer to move in darkness. In other words, there will be no more excuses possible. We do not judge you. It is not “good” or “bad” to be in either of the three spaces we have described. What is essential is that you turn your eyes inward and see clearly where you are. There can be no movement unless one comprehends his starting place. [09 February 1975]

This was yet another statement about Mechanical Man being unable to pursue and understand and appreciate higher realities.

This group engaged in a lengthy discussion of communal living, discipline of small children, the rights of teenagers, and the problem of domestic animals. We then asked the teacher for a comment.

Many thoughts, of course. The whole purpose of bringing you together communally was not to present you with insurmountable situations and more friction than you can handle. The purpose instead was to bring you together in the Work. The most startling advantage of all would not be apparent until you were well into the venture, and had some experience in dealing with a lack of alienation.

The subject of domestic animals is interesting, in that domesticating animals was one of the first symptoms of growing alienation in this culture many centuries ago — almost, in fact, at the dawn of Creatures of Reason on this world. Once man gives up his need for alienation, he can then — and only then — look at the reasons for his need for substitutes. He uses domesticated animals in lieu of people. They are expendable, relatively cheap, and give away no secrets. (If you are not wearing a cape, how can you conceal a dagger?) If the trust level is high enough, the need for substitutes will diminish. Of course, your needs will continue for a time, until you are willing to look at the basis of the need. Perhaps there will be some things that you will be unwilling to give up, but you should at least look at them, so that you know where the need is. It is, again, not bad work at all if it is done consciously and not Mechanically. Many of your needs now are based upon the core beliefs and master Tapes that are stored for use by False Personality. Looking at them collectively will be more valuable again than looking at them individually, just as looking at the core beliefs and master Tapes will be. [12 February 1975]

Refer to chapters “Communal Living”, “Work, The”, “Alienation”, “Trust”, “Creatures of Reason”, “Bio-computer”, “False Personality”.

Will you speak to us some words of wisdom?

The words we speak, the words we would speak, would not be individually directed, but rather directed to the group at large. You see, this individuality that Mechanical Man seeks is but another example of his never-ending quest for complexity. The soul is tranquil now, so you see, it can be achieved (speaking of the depth of the trance. There was at this point a sharp noise in the background.) This soul has an observing, curious mind, and all distractions within this room cause a vortex of energy flow. Reason: man has always endeavored through the creation of chaos, or of a chaotic system (they’re one and the same) to create the illusion of complexity which exists on the Physical plane. This illusion of complexity, that which we choose to call “false order,” by its very chaotic nature creates order of a sort easily incorporated into the belief systems of those who are limited to it. The concept of a physical God was created out of this very chaos — the necessity to solidify. The solidification of the cosmos — in an ironic sense, is true, of course, since there is no such thing as nothing — no-thing — but

the solidification of the cosmos is man's first step toward explaining away those unexplainable phenomena with which he is confronted when he first confronts the physical universe. He must, of course, reduce it to the smallest possible limits. Don't limit us! [undated early trance session]

Refer to chapter "Complexity versus Simplicity".

Does the soul travel in depth or height, or both?

You see, the soul is capable of existing in all dimensions. Travel implies physical space, physical speed. This [Michael] soul now exists in dimensions beyond the three dimensional limitations which Mechanical Man imposes upon himself. The freed Essence has no such limitations, and is free to travel, or free to move, or free to exist, in a multidimensional universe. [undated early trance session]

There are many schools and many systems from which to choose. Students must decide what it is they wish to learn before choosing a school. If he wishes only to become more effective within his cultural milieu, to operate at a more comfortable level Mechanically, then there are many awareness schools, such as Esalen, which offer this. If he senses that he is trapped in negative space and wishes help, then there are many therapy schools, such as the Langley-Porter Neuropsychiatric Institute, where this kind of help is given. Within this framework there are myriad systems (or teachings). [Dimensions! June 1975]

The "Law of Accident" applies only to the Overleaves, the False Personality operating in Artificial Space, using the artificial rhythms of the Physical Plane. This term does not apply to students in the Work: things happen to Mechanical Man; students and Balanced Man choose to experience. [Dimensions! June 1975]

Allyn: Is there nothing for me to do except everything?

Have you truly expressed the block? This is the first step in realizing the Machine. The block is Mechanical, Allyn. [07 November 1977]

Summary Comments on Mechanical Man

Perhaps better terminology is that Personality is "machine-like" or "computer-like" rather than to say that it is a machine (that needs to be shocked into self-awareness), or that it is a computer (that need to be reprogrammed).

The metaphors used to describe and explain unconscious behavior have changed over the decades. First there was the metaphor of mechanicality, where a person lacking self-awareness was compared to a machine; that was appropriate for the industrial age. Then there was the metaphor of computation, where a person lacking self-awareness was compared to a computer; that was appropriate for the computer age. In even more modern times, the metaphor is of a zombie who is mostly dead, who functions entirely from animal instinct. Consider that next time you watch a scary zombie movie, and consider the extent to which you function from the lower self rather than the higher self. One wonders if the zombie is a popular trope these days because something in the subconscious zeitgeist knows that humanity in its present state is not entirely alive, such that humanity is in need of a cognitive and spiritual upgrade.

Because subsequent Michaelian teachings groups were unfamiliar with the Gurdjieffian teachings, the phrase does not occur very often in subsequent Michaelian teachings groups.

To the extent that the philosophical question about determinism versus freewill applies to this notion of Mechanicality versus Balanced/Adept/Master, I say that the situation with people is not binary: there is a spectrum between the two extremes, where some people are more toward the determined end of the spectrum and some people are more toward the freewill end of the spectrum. Subjectively, we all believe that we are not automatons, that we are free agents, the masters of our domains, but my guess is that if/when we become extremely enlightened we will realize how automatic we were before.





MEDIUMSHIP

This chapter is the product of a search for the word(s) “template”, “___” in the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group channeling sessions. This word **does / does not** represent a significant component of the Michaelian teachings. **Therefore / However**, there are good reasons to discuss the subject in this *Study Papers* book: **Furthermore**, 1) the subject came up numerous times during the original Michaelian group; 2) students can presumably benefit from having the mentions conveniently collected and commented all in one place; 3) some interesting things were said about the subject; 4) the subject is related to a number of other components of the Michaelian teachings that are considered to be significant; 5) **“Template” issues are pervasive in human psychology and sociology and spirituality.**

Borrow a paragraph from other chapters if this chapter is about yet another Gurdjieff concept.

The word “template” is [not] capitalized in this chapter [and/or] other chapters of this *Study Papers* book because it has [no/a] special meaning in the Michaelian teachings; it is [not] a Michaelian jargon word that needs a definition [apart from its] / [because it has no] use in the common vernacular.

Basically and briefly, the Michaels recommended to the original Michaelian group members that they

Definition of Mediumship

So what is meant by mediumship? The online Merriam Webster dictionary definition is:

Mediumship per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

The following extracts from original Michaelian group transcriptions are Q&A exchanges, where an original Michaelian group member asks a question (or makes a comment), and the Michaels provide an answer. This is [not] a subject that would benefit by division into subcategories, as some subjects do. **These extracts are [not] presented in the chronological order in which they were given, even though this is not a subject where there was a development or evolution of a specific revelation of a facet of the Michaelian teachings, as was often the case with the original Michaelian group.** As is my custom, I often provide some explanatory comments following the question or answer. Underlined words in the Michaels’ answers are my emphasis, to draw attention to what it is that I comment on. Sometimes I embed words or phrases [in brackets] that I believe help to clarify the question or the answer.

Delia: Why are there more women psychics than men?

It is true, women on this world have been far freer to dream and dabble in the occult much longer than have males, but the percentage is not as lopsided as you might wish to believe. There have always been seers who were males. They largely kept the source of their dreaming quiet in order to avoid scorn of their colleagues. The man Albert (Einstein) is an example. He would have been an excellent “medium”. As a matter of fact, he was. To us, a medium is merely a captive way station through which certain truths can be brought to bear. This must naturally involve some training and much intelligence, if facts concerning the physical universe are to be brought to bear [such as with Einstein]. For instance, the necessary vocabulary must be available in order to translate the material. As the Entity becomes progressively evolved and the learning process more refined, the choice of mediums and the information transmitted becomes more refined also. [17 September 1974]

It is well known in Michaelian circles that different channels are better at getting different kinds of information, depending on their background knowledge.

Concluding Comments on **Mediumship**





MEDITATION AND CONCENTRATION

Concentration [is focus on] on a single goal.

If I were to try to contact my Entity, what would I meditate on?

You would concentrate on your entity

Well, what would you concentrate on?

Think of the free-floating essence, devoid of maya.

Torry asked about meditation experience. What is the nullness?

That is what meditation is all about . . . "mindlessness."

For some students at this point in their work, involvement in actual transactions would be anti-growth, for you are quite right in that it is an Intellectual Center function and should not be relegated downward. On the other hand, there are some other students whose Overleaves do not at this time permit them to be seriously on the path in a way other than a concrete service role and those are the ones you should tap.

Torry, you are confusing meditation with concentration. The goals are very different. Concentration prepares you for a learning experience. Meditation does not. Concentration leads you to the realized masters.

Meditation disconnects the computer. [08 February 1975]





MICHAEL: ABOUT

Before I ask any more questions, I would like our Entity to give us a name.

You may call me anything you wish.

Well, I was just thinking about the future. Yeah, how do we call you?

The last name a Fragment of this Entity used was 'Michael.'

We will now answer an earlier question. We are integrated Fragments of an ancient Entity. (One of us had wondered earlier who our new Entity was.)

Concerning the fact that Robert had said that Jesus' disciples were beneath his level. We then asked if we could take a lunch break and if Michael would still be there.

By all means. I now have access to eternity. [12 August 1973]

Who are we talking to tonight?

The name I am called is Michael. That is a convenience and not a truth. Only one small Fragment of this Entity had that name. We are integrated Fragments of a larger Entity. We are these, then. We come to you from the Causal body and not the Astral. You are accustomed to dealing with Astral entities. [21 August 1973]

I have a spirit guide, but I have no picture of him.

Because Physical plane perceptions have nothing with which to visualize beings of the high planes. In other words, its apparatus is faulty.

What is his name?

Truthfully Elaine, our name is legion. This Entity [Michael] has had in the past over two hundred thousand names. Are you comfortable with Stephen? That would be one; Gray Eagle was another, as was Nenemah.

Is the reason we contact these Entities because we've known them in life?

Definitely; for instance, we have known you all. [17 September 1973]

Question: Did he know her? Were they married? Were they Fragments of the same Entity?

They were both males. Yes, they were Fragments of the same Entity.

Teresa: What was I called?

We have much more of a feeling for Madelina when we deal with you, but perhaps this is because we knew you as that before.

Teresa: When?

This was in what is now Venice in the seventh century.

Question: Did they know each other?

The last Fragment of this Entity that was extant [on the Physical plane] was a Warrior in Venice at the time. Yes, they knew each other. Madelina was a nun. We were a priest. [date]





④ MODERATION

This chapter is the product of a search for the word moderation in the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group. This word does not represent a significant component of the Michaelian teachings. However, there are good reasons to discuss the subject in this *Study Papers* book: 1) the subject came up numerous times during the original Michaelian group; 2) some interesting things were said about the subject; 3) the subject is related to a number of other components of the Michaelian teachings that are considered to be significant; 4) students can presumably benefit from having the mentions conveniently collected and commented all in one place; 5) issues of moderation versus immoderation are unavoidable; they are pervasive in human psychology and sociology and spirituality — subjects covered extensively in this book — so it behooves us to have a working knowledge of it.

The word moderation is not capitalized in this chapter or other chapters of this *Study Papers* book because it has no special meaning in the Michaelian teachings; it is not a Michaelian jargon word that needs a definition apart from its use in the common vernacular.

It might be a little surprising how often this concept of moderation shows up in the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group, considering that it has not appeared very many times in subsequent channeling sessions that we have record of. Precisely because it covers a subject that might otherwise have been ignored and forgotten, I regard it as useful and valuable to include this chapter, as with numerous other similar chapters on obscure topics in this *Study Papers* book. Doing so makes our understanding of the Michaelian teachings richer and more complete.

This chapter is one of many in this book that focuses on a psychological component of the Michaelian teachings as found in original Michaelian group transcriptions, rather than on a doctrinal or spiritual component. Psychotherapeutic components of the Michaelian teachings are usually either a positive to be cultivated or a negative to be mitigated. As we will see, the Michaels tell us that moderation is a positive. The Michaelian version of psychology is not to be confused with the popular psychology of the self-improvement movement, those that do not have a spiritual core or perspective. Rather, the Michaelian psychotherapeutic path (aimed at improving psychological health) is a beneficial precursor to the spiritual path (aimed at improving soul health). To skip the former but attempt the latter is referred to as “spiritual bypassing”. This is discussed at length on https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spiritual_bypass. To skip mitigating one’s psychological issues and attempt to go straight to enlightenment usually proves to be problematic.

Although this concept of moderation is not a central doctrine of the Michaelian teachings, the word appears several times in several contexts, and this prompted me to research and write this chapter. Briefly and basically, the advice given by the Michaels is that it is a good idea to be moderate, rather than to be extreme or recessive or excessive, in all realms of our lives.

Definition and History of Moderation

The following definition of “moderation” was found on the internet, and it does not differ from what the Michaels had to say about the subject during the original Michaelian group sessions, as we will see in this chapter: “The state or quality of being moderate or keeping a due mean between opposite extremes; freedom from excess; temperance; due restraint.”

The advice given by the Michaels that it is a *good* idea to be “moderate in all things” is not a *new* idea. For instance, moderation is one of the fundamental tenets of Buddhism:

The Middle Way is a term used in Buddhism that, in its simplest definition, means a balanced approach to life. Balance is not the same as passivity, however. When you walk the Middle Way, you exert continual effort.

The Middle Way is the correct view of life as taught by the Buddha. It refers to the thoughts and deeds that are most likely to create happiness. The religion of Buddhism itself is sometimes called "the Middle Way," as it seeks always to reconcile opposing viewpoints and maintain balance.

The legend of the life of the Buddha bears out this concept. In the time he was alive, people believed either in eternalism, the belief that all things were permanent including the human soul, or nihilism, the belief that all beings became extinct after death. People also believed either in extreme self-indulgence or extreme self-denial, completely indulging in sensual pleasures or sacrificing physical happiness entirely and punishing themselves to gain benefit in the afterlife.

The Buddha was born a comfort- and pleasure-seeking prince. Eventually, he became dissatisfied with pursuing fleeting enjoyment and sought a deeper truth. He entered a time of extreme asceticism, where he didn't eat or sleep, until he was near death. When he realized this path was equally futile, he began to meditate in a quest to discover the true meaning of human life. He discovered that the truth was neither in deprivation nor in luxury. Instead, the real nature of living, the Middle Way, was a path exactly between materialism and spiritualism.

The Buddha taught this concept as the eightfold path, which consists of eight guiding principles that his followers used to control their behavior and come to self-understanding. Five faculties are essential to traversing the path: confidence, mindfulness, effort, concentration, and wisdom. Each of these must be kept in balance with all the others in order to maintain the path.

The relationship between the physical and spiritual is an important part of the balance that creates the Middle Way. Materialism creates negative effects in the modern world, including environmental damage and spiritual barrenness. On the other hand, rejecting materialism entirely is unrealistic and leads people to be overly idealistic and unable to deal with the challenges of daily living. According to Buddhism, the right way is somewhere in between. Or, as we say today, "Everything in moderation." [<https://buddhists.org/the-middle-way/> — retrieved 11 July 2022]

The Buddha in ancient times was not the only proponent of moderation. This has been the advice of other deep thinkers in ancient times, and in modern times:

MODERATION IN ALL THINGS — "Thinkers of ancient Greece held the notion of moderation in high esteem. As early as the ninth century B.C., the historian Hesiod wrote in *Works and Days* 'Observe due measure, moderation is best in all things.' The Greek playwright Euripides echoed that sentiment in *Medea* (c. 431 B.C.) with, 'Moderation, the noblest gift of heaven,' and after him the philosopher Plato advised in *Gorgias* (c. 375 B.C.), 'We should pursue and practice moderation.' Centuries later, Chaucer first rendered a similar English saying in *Troilus and Criseyde* (c. 1385) with 'In every thyng, I woot, there lith mesure (moderation or proportion)'. William H.G. Kingston gave the exact wording of the modern version in his translation of *Swiss Family Robinson*." From *Wise Words and Wives' Tales: The Origins, Meanings and Time-Honored Wisdom of Proverbs and Folk Sayings Olde and New*, by Stuart Flexner and Doris Flexner (Avon Books, New York, 1993), page 127. [https://www.phrases.org.uk/bulletin_board/31/messages/1125.html — retrieved 11 July 2022]

More instances of advice about moderation was found at another website:

Two of the ancient principles adorned the temple of Apollo at Delphi, which was first built around the seventh century BC. Both inscriptions were succinct: "Know thyself" and "Not too much" (avoid excess). As today's subject is moderation, let's take a quick look at how some of the ancient sages specifically taught this principle:

"Throw moderation to the winds and the greatest pleasures bring the greatest pains." (—Democritus)

"Moderation in all things." (—Terence)

"Never go to excess, but let moderation be your guide." (—Marcus Tullius Cicero)

"He will always be a slave who does not know how to live upon a little." (—Horace)

"The middle way is safest." (—Ovid)

"If one oversteps the bounds of moderation, the greatest pleasures cease to please." (—Epictetus)

[<https://personal-development.com/chuck/only-actions-give-life-strength.htm> — retrieved 11 July 2022]

I also found the following webpage on the internet, and it provides us with the perspective of modern psychology: <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/articles/201707/moderation-is-the-key-life>. I highly recommend that Psychology Today article as a supplement to what the Michaels had to say on the subject of moderation. The most relevant (to the Overleaf System) paragraph in that lengthy article is this:

In Aristotle's enduring view, too little expression of certain traits, such as courage (cowardice), is undesirable while too much of the same trait constitutes a different character flaw (recklessness). Not pleasing others enough amounts to surliness, pleasing too much makes one obsequious — you have to be friendly, but not too friendly. The sweet spot in the middle is where you want to be.

What Aristotle had to say is reminiscent of what in the Gurdjieffian teachings and in the Michaelian teachings is referred to as "Balanced Man", so please refer to the chapter by that name in this *Study Papers* book. The connection of the notion of moderation to the ideal of Balanced Man will be noted as we review the original Michaelian group transcriptions.

Moderation per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

The following extracts from original Michaelian group transcriptions are Q&A exchanges, where an original Michaelian group member asks a question (or makes a comment), and the Michaels provide an answer. These extracts are presented in the chronological order in which they appear in the transcriptions. As is my custom, I often provide some explanatory comments following the question or answer. Underlined words in the Michaels' answers are my emphasis, to draw attention to what it is that I comment on. Sometimes I embed words or phrases [in brackets] that I believe help to clarify the question or the answer.

The subject of moderation first appeared in the original Michaelian group transcriptions when Soleal was the source:

I would like to know how long you have been the leader of your world and I would like to know what you teach them.

I have been here for ten of this world's revolutions [around its star]. I teach them what I would teach you: that is, to seek moderation in all things, to love unselfishly, to become intimate with the inner workings of your spirit, to live in the essence of that spirit, to liberate the trapped Essence is the reincarnational purpose. I try to guide them in this path, so that they might be free sooner. [mid-1973]

It is interesting to me that "moderation in all things" is the first item on this list of five items that are important in regard to one's spiritual path. There are chapters in this book on the other listed items, such as "Love", "Intimacy", "Liberation", "Essence and Personality", and "Reincarnation".

Also before the Michaels appeared, the original Michaelian group tapped an astral personality, Tomas, who said something similar to what Soleal said:

Gene: How do we know? How can we find out about the one Teaching?

If it is true, it can be verified and will teach nonviolence, peace within, and moderation in all things. There will be a clear synthesis in all the information given. The answers will "feel" right. [24 July 1973]

Refer to chapters "Validation and Verification" and "Synthesis, The" for more information about those subjects. The point to be emphasized here is that moderation is a standard component of spiritual and philosophical and literary traditions.

In the very first session in which the Michaels were the source, the subject of moderation came up:

Comment: Now Jesus was always against sex, even thinking about sex.

Jesus was not against sex. He was for moderation. Prostitution is not moderate. [12 August 1973]

Refer to the chapter "Sexuality" for an overview of that subject according to the Michaels. The general point to be emphasized here is that one should not be ruled by one's animal appetites, especially if it is to the exclusion of living a well-rounded and full life; addiction and obsession of any kind is immoderate.

This principle of moderation applies to money as well as to sex:

You have all made strides toward eliminating superfluous material possessions. Don't fall into the trap of begrudging younger souls their possessions. This is merely transference of identification and equally pervasive. [The] Teaching is a full time obligation. If you wish to make this commitment, you must resign yourselves to the fact that someone must support the teaching. In order to stay alive, you must eat. We see no virtue in crippling asceticism [at the other end of the wealth–poverty spectrum]. The danger lies in immoderation [at either end of the wealth–poverty spectrum. [20 October 1973]

Refer to the chapter "Asceticism and Austerity" for more information about how the notion of moderation applies to concerns about wealth versus poverty. Two of the most compelling experiences of the human condition are money and sex; exercise of moderation therein is Good Work.

A continuation of the notion of moderation is found in this passage:

Dick: I'd like to know if unblocking the emotions as is seen in the Esalen film is a healthy thing. It looks good.

We do not see the necessity for this action within the group, but perhaps an outlet needs to be provided elsewhere. In this, we will not mediate, as this is within the realm of life crises and does not pertain to spiritual growth. This is not to say that these matters do not have to be dealt with. They most certainly do — long before you can even talk about growth — spiritual growth. For the dedicated student and for the Adept requires detachment from the mundane and trivial matters, which are such immoderate energy drains. How can you possibly grow if you are immersed in all this Maya? [24 February 1974]

It can be said that immoderation of any kind is a waste of resources that could be applied to spiritual growth. Therefore, the point of moderation as it pertains to the spiritual path is to maximize the amount of time and focus and “energy” available to do the Work of spiritual growth. Refer to the chapters “Adept and Master”, “Maya”, “Growth, Spiritual” and “Energy and Energy Drains” for more information.

Concluding Comments on Moderation

This chapter is brief, but the chapter “Balanced Man” is not; that chapter has a lot more to say about the value of being moderate in all things.

The less moderate one is, the more extreme one is. Extremes are generally fraught with dangerous distortions. If I may be allowed to generalize here, I see the potential for extremes in three dimensions of human experience: belief system, value system, and behavior system. These are the three Axes of the Overleaf System that we refer to as Expression, Inspiration, and Action. Then there is the Assimilation Axis, which has attributes of Neutral Assimilation. The Michaels have said [where?] that it is beneficial to have at least one Neutral Overleaf trait, so that the Personality self knows what moderation feels like. Otherwise the excessive polarity will make for an unbalanced personality.

In fact, the goal of spiritual growth over the course of all of one's lifetimes, with the help of the Overleaf System, is to first experience out the consequences of the Positive and Negative Poles of the Traits (e.g. –Denigration and +Contradiction = Cynic) so that one is neutral about those Traits, then experience out the combination of the Traits on the opposite sides of the Axis (e.g. Cynic and Realist, Stoic and Spiritualist, Skeptic and Idealist = Pragmatist). This process of spiritual growth toward unification undoes the cascade of fragmentations of the Tao that created Personality.





① MONADS

This chapter is about one of the fundamentals of the systematic component of the Michaelian teachings, namely “Monads”. It is one of those foundational concepts that has a significant presence in the original Michaelian group, and there is a lengthy description and explanation of Monads in the book that is based on the original Michaelian group, namely *Messages from Michael (MFM)*, pages 189 to 192 (classic edition). Readers of this chapter are strongly encouraged to read that before reading this, because it contains a significant amount of information not found in the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group that have come into our possession. The beginning of that lengthy exposition reads as follows:

A Monad is an essential unit, a necessary experience. ... There are a very large number of Monads, some of them interpersonal, some of them intrapersonal.

Perhaps most of that lengthy presentation in *MFM* came from the ten special sessions that Ms. Yarbro had with original Michaelian group channel Sarah Chambers in preparation for writing *MFM*. Because we do not have those sessions, it would be good for us to read this description in *MFM*. (It is also presented in *MFM* as a large block of text, which makes it easier to comprehend. The revelation in the original Michaelian group sessions was very choppy, and no matter how hard I try, it is still a difficult read.) Monads are also mentioned on pages 64, 117, 118, 126, 127, 132, 144, 145, 161, 164, 165, 188, 218, 227, 228, 252, and 269 of *MFM*, and few of these quotes came from the transcriptions that we have. On the other hand, there is much information in this chapter that is not found in *MFM*.

As stated above, this subject is one of the most basic components of the Michaels’ cosmology. It actually goes all the way back to the two most basic concepts in a reality system (such as this universe) derived from “consciousness”. One might not be familiar with the concept that the universe is just a “belief/value/behavior system in the mind of God”, so to speak, but this is the teaching of many mystics and philosophers and theologians and even a few physicists and cosmologists — as well as the Michaels. “Consciousness” is another name for what in the Michaelian teachings (and elsewhere) is called “Tao”. (This is explained in another chapter.) In this case, let us use the compound word “Tao–Consciousness” because Tao as Consciousness has properties that figure in with this chapter.

Ultimately, we do not know what consciousness *is*, but we do know what it *does* — “distinction” and “identification.” As stated in the Michaelian teachings, the universe is a phenomenon where Tao–Consciousness “fragments” itself and “reintegrates” itself. If one has been in the Michaelian teachings for very long, one knows that this fragmentation and reintegration applies to families of souls. What we might not realize is that this applies to the whole of creation, not just to souls. Tao–Consciousness does this by making and breaking distinctions, and identifying and dis-identifying with the complementary halves of distinctions. The “distinction” part of the fragmentation process divides a Monad into two complementary halves.

From the point of view of the Monad, the halves of the Monad are identical. The “identification” part of the fragmentation procedure creates subjective and objective realms. Thus, from the point of view of one of those halves, the other half is its opposite. In various philosophical and physical systems, these are generally called the *positive and negative poles* of complementary phenomena. Another common name for that set of poles is *yin and yang*. In the Michaelian teachings, these complementarities are called *Ordinal and Cardinal*. Fragments of Tao–Consciousness exist and function in the subjective/objective realm, having experiences processing information, and thereby learning and growing as they move through a plethora of Monads.

This is a deep abstraction, but unless we understand it, then all we have is the *description* of Monads and how they work, but we have no real *understanding* of *WHY* they exist and function as they do. More will be explained about this in chapters related to Monads, most notably the two, “Polarity”, and “Fragmentation and Reintegration”. In the “Polarity” study paper, there is a thorough explanation of Cardinality and Ordinality. In the chapter on “Fragmentation and Reintegration”, there is a thorough explanation of how Tao–

Consciousness breaks up and reassembles itself. In this chapter, however, we will see which poles of the various Monads are Cardinal and which are Ordinal. From these attributions, we can get some idea of what Cardinal and Ordinal mean in the abstract sense.

Most of the following sections will deal with a realm far less abstract than what we read about above. We will read that Monads are necessary experiences for the soul during incarnations as it seeks to experience all of physical life. We will read about the “natural” Monads in the physical world that provide a wide variety of human experiences. We will read about “interpersonal” Monads, which involve relationships with other people. We will read about “intrapersonal” Monads, which involve internal experiences as we resolve our inner conflicts and contradictions. We will be introduced to “quasi” Monads — experiences that involve the numerous and various polarities that pervade the Michaelian teachings and that are resolved via synthesis just like experiences that have typically been labeled as Monads.

The “monadology” of the Michaelian teachings is not to be confused with the monadology of German philosopher–mathematician Leibniz, although there are similarities ... [explain, quote Wikipedia]

The “monadology” of the Michaelian teachings can be compared and contrasted to the “dialectic” of German philosophers Fichte and Hegel (thesis > antithesis > synthesis) ... [explain, quote Wikipedia]

The “monadology” of the Michaelian teachings can be compared and contrasted to the “dilemmas” of the developmental psychologist Erik Erikson ... [explain, quote Wikipedia]

The “monadology” of the Michaelian teachings can be compared and contrasted to the thesis of “dialogical existence” of philosopher Martin Buber ... [explain, quote Wikipedia]

To repeat, this is one of the central doctrines of the Michaelian teachings. The doctrine of Monads is exceedingly rich in its depth and scope, and there are numerous peripheral components. Without giving this concept due attention, much understanding of the Michaelian teachings may be lost.

Gurdjieff’s “Law of Three”

The Michaels are not the first one or the only one to talk about Monads or something like them. Many founding members of the original Michaelian group were involved in Gurdjieff’s “Fourth Way” teaching before they struck out on their own and contacted the Michaels.

One of the original Michaelian group members asked the Michaels about other sources on their teaching about Monads:

Has anybody ever written about this [subject of Monads] on our plane?

Many knew: [Tielhard de] Chardin, [Georges] Gurdjieff, [Aldous] Huxley. [John] Lilly knows too. [12 August 1973]

Although I have heard about all of these scholars, I only know how one of them taught about something like Monads. There are similarities between the Michaels’ teaching about Monads and Gurdjieff’s teaching about what he called “the Law of Three”. However, they do not seem to be quite the same thing. “Monad” — the word itself — refers to ‘oneness’, and obviously the Law of Three refers to ‘threeness’. To quote Gurdjieff’s student Ouspensky:

The Law of Three, in a short description, means that three “forces” enter into every manifestation, into every phenomenon and every event. They are called (but these are only words, because they do not express their qualities) positive, negative, and neutralizing, or active, passive, and neutralizing, or still more simply they may be called first force, second force, and third force.... Everything in the world, all manifestations of energy, all kinds of action, whether in the world or in human activity, whether internal or external, are always manifestations of three forces which exist in nature. [P. D. Ouspensky, *The Fourth Way*, pp. 16 and 189]

The Wikipedia article on *The Fourth Way* says this about the Law of Three:

“The process of transformation requires the three actions of affirmation, denial, and reconciliation.”

This is pretty close to the Michaels’ teaching on Monads as we will see in this chapter. There is a much more extensive explanation — too long to repeat here — of the Law of Three in Ouspensky’s book, *In Search of the Miraculous*, on pages 77–81, and it is almost certain that the founding members of the original Michaelian group were familiar with it. However, the phrase, “Law of Three”, does not occur in any original Michaelian group transcription that we have acquired. There are a few references to positive and negative “forces” at work, but these seem to be influences or pressures not related to the Law of Three. There are a few instances in

the original Michaelian group transcriptions that do seem to reference the Law of Three, and some of them even use the same word, “force”, that Gurdjieff and Ouspensky used. For instance:

Edgar: Could you elaborate on the third chapter of Genesis about what the knowledge of good and evil is?

Knowledge of positive and negative force. [22 November 1973]

This is quite a common correlation, equating good and evil to positive and negative. From the Fourth Way quote above, we see that positive and negative force are the same thing as first and second forces. Further on in this chapter, we see that the Michaels use all of these very terms when referring to the poles of Monads. Therefore, even though it does not say so explicitly, there obviously is a correlation of Gurdjieff’s Law of Three and the Michaels’ Monads.

There is another passage in which Gurdjieff’s word “force” is used, and this time it is the “third force”:

We asked for a comment about the “third force” of which Gurdjieff spoke; the need of this [third force] to go [progress] from Personality to Essence.

We have spoken many times of the neutral universal flow. This is what they [Fourth Way teachers] try to put into words as the force acting upon you. Yes, this does exist, and yes, does have the influence that the Student [Gurdjieff] is trying to explain. When the fulcrum tips too widely to one side or the other though, the neutral force has no effect on the action. Only when the middle ground is reached, or at least approached, can this [force] be effective. This is why it is so difficult for students to put [it] into words. It is illusively [elusively?] felt by all but the most powerful Adepts [who feel it strongly because they are so close to Balance]. It is almost never recognized by the others [non Adepts] who come into its range unaware. In other words, although they are benefited, they do not know why. They only feel the neutralizing effect, but cannot describe the feeling. [07 December 1974]

Based on this endorsement, the reader is encouraged to research the Fourth Way teaching on the Law of Three for further understanding. In my own explication of the Michaelian teachings, there are chapters on “Levels of Being” and on “Balanced Man” that explain the synthesizing force, which the Michaels here equates with Gurdjieff’s third force. Third force is not a static condition *between* first force and second force; it is a force of its own that, as stated above, has benefits on the spiritual path leading from Personality to Essence. It is the *synthesis* force, the force that seeks to reunite what was fragmented in the primordial schisms of Tao-Consciousness. Without this force, there would be no progress; there would only be an eternal ‘war’ between light and dark, good and evil, positive and negative, active and passive, and so on.

More was said about forces a month later:

There was a discussion regarding “neutralizing force” or forces — one flows into the other — has part of another within — there is no “control” — positive force, use of the Intellectual Center to start the Moving Center, et al.

... we have no quarrel with the need for neutralizing force in actions involving the Centers. All yin-yang activities do require this neutralizing force for stability. [12 January 1975]

Putting this statement together with the one a month earlier, we note again that neutralizing-synthesizing force is the same as Gurdjieff’s third force in the triad. One of the functions of third force is to keep the train from going off the rails on either the yin side or the yang side of the tracks. And, specifically in regard to Centers, the above is another advocacy statement for becoming “Balanced”. The stability achieved by Balanced Man is not the static end of the spiritual path, however. It is a precondition to becoming an Adept and then a Master. Refer to the chapter “Balanced Man”, and the chapter “Adept and Master”, for more information.

The Law of Three forces applies to whole teachings for people on their spiritual quest, as well as to individuals on their spiritual path:

[In the original Michaelian group,] three forces have come together and asked for cosmic influence. We [the Michaels] are to provide that and pass [on] the system by which you must teach and learn truth in Being. If you lose one of these [forces], you will also lose your effectiveness and eventually also lose contact [with cosmic influence] and be left with a false Teaching — an incomplete system. [01 April 1975]

Further on in this chapter, you will see that “teach” and “learn” are poles of a Monad that results in spiritual growth. Spiritual paths are not *true* unless they consist of the three forces: learning, teaching, and growing. Refer to the chapters, “The System” and “The Synthesis”, for further information about the systematic, coherent, complete nature of the Michaelian teachings. Refer to the chapter “Levels of Being” for more information on what the Michaels meant by the word “Being” in the above quote. Recall that Gurdjieff and

Ouspensky said that all three forces are necessary to make anything happen. This Michael quote agrees with that. Nevertheless, there was a statement in the original Michaelian group session of 04 November 1977 that the Michaelian teachings was complete even then. What we have received since then is more explanation, elaboration, and extension.

Even though Gurdjieff's Law of Three and the Michaels' Monads are different words based on different numbers, we will see in this chapter that they do point to the same fundamental phenomenon. Interestingly enough, others, usually philosophers, notably Hegel, teach about the same fundamental principle using the word *dialectic*. Those wanting to know more about precursor teachers on this fundamental phenomenon may do an Internet search on the word *dialectic*, and while at it, also search on the words *thesis antithesis synthesis*. Then they will have prepared themselves to dig into the Michaels teaching on Monads.

Monads in the First Michael Session

The original Michaelian group was meeting for many months, communicating with Soleal and Tomas, before the Michaels showed up. Nothing was said about Monads by Soleal and Tomas. We do not have the entirety of very first session with the Michaels. We do have a version with personal information removed. In that edited version, the very first Q&A exchange had to do with Monads, although the word was not used. Neither were the words Cardinal and Ordinal used, but for convenience sake we will use those words to refer to the poles of Monads.

The question was asked concerning the decision to go on in the search for spiritual enlightenment, to go on to becoming an Adept. What do you do when you get so far and are not too sure you want to continue? We wondered if the Masters picked those [students] in whom the desire for "psychic experiences" was quite strong to become Adepts.

Adepts and Masters are obviously advanced stages of spiritual development. The chapter on that subject offers further information. The Michaels' answer to the above question was:

The desire is polar, too. Everything in the universe is, of course. Along with the desire is always the dread. The choice does not become clear to you until you have experienced the desire from another dimension. You must stand and observe the desire from the shadows of dread. Wishes, like everything, have positive and negative poles. There must be attraction and repulsion or nothing exists because no energy is being generated. The primordial force was energy, not mass. Think about that when you are hung up on cause and effect. The more primitive one is energy. Does it not seem that all seeking the least complex will return to the energy from whence they came? [12 August 1973.]

The term Monad is not used in this passage, but as we shall see further on, the term applies. There are no less than six Monads mentioned: desire/dread, positive/negative, attraction/repulsion, energy/mass, cause/effect, and simple/complex. In this list, the Cardinal pole is always first and the Ordinal pole second. These examples of Monads are couched in terms of universal *poles* of opposites, which are two sides of what adds up to a single experience in the long run. Notice especially that word 'universal'. The principle of polarity operates throughout all of creation, from top to bottom and back again, and without it *nothing exists and nothing happens*, as asserted by Gurdjieff. "Everything in the universe is polar" includes that which is inanimate as well as animate. Therefore, desire and dread have their correlates in the attraction/repulsion forces of physics. This connection will be covered further in other chapters. The simple/complex Monad mentioned above might be an allusion to a teaching from Gurdjieff:

"The fewer laws there are in a given world, the nearer it is to the will of the Absolute; the more laws there are in a given world, the greater the Mechanicalness, the further it is from the will of the Absolute." [P. D. Ouspensky, *In Search of the Miraculous*, p. 81.]

The next quote from the first Michael session explains this particular Monad in more detail:

Complexity is the antithesis of what the spirit seeks [which is simplicity]. The body represents the epitome of complexity. That is why the spirit is again and again attracted to it, until the partially awakened Essence catches a glimpse beyond the "veil". [12 August 1973.]

Note the word 'antithesis' here and recall that this is one third of the thesis > antithesis > synthesis triad mentioned in the Introduction. Beyond complexity/simplicity, there is yet another Monad mentioned in this quote: body/spirit. Spirit is Cardinal and body is Ordinal. Note that there is a quantity gradient in the soul's evolution: increasing fragmentation (complexification) on departure from Tao-Consciousness, and increasing integration (simplification) on approach to Tao-Consciousness. The whole subject of Monads is about the existence and function of the quantity gradient this side (the Ordinal side, the dis-continuum side) of the

neutral Akashic Plane. (On the other side of the Akashic Plane, the Cardinal side, the continuum side, it is a quality gradient.) This is explained further in the chapters, “Fragmentation and Integration”, and “Planes”.

The next question was a follow-up to the spirit/body Monad:

Why did they go to the trouble to design such a complex body just to have it wear out over and over?

The answer is, of course, the primary plan. It [reincarnation] is the best example of the yin and yang we can think of. [12 August 1973]

Notice the use of the oriental concepts of yin and yang, more familiar to most folks than Ordinal and Cardinal are. These oriental terms come up again, and appear to be synonymous with the complementary halves of a Monad, yin equating with Ordinal and yang equating with Cardinal. Notice that the primary plan of the universe is to ultimately unite the Monads that were split with the primordial fragmentation process. In the example mentioned, the soul’s reincarnation cycling between Astral and Physical Planes forms a yin/yang Monad. This requires bodies that age and die on both planes, the Physical Plane body being more complex and therefore more Ordinal. As we shall see elsewhere, Essence on the Astral Plane and Personality on the Physical Plane are Cardinal and Ordinal poles of a Monad. Each needs the other to be complete. And when they are complete, the soul moves up the hierarchy of integration to the next higher polarity.

The very next Q&A exchange regarding Monads mentions yet another one, attraction/repulsion:

The other night I was complaining about sitting in the midst of the (human) computer and having all this whirling going on and saying, “I can’t understand this, it is too much!”

The human nervous system and the large brain makes it an ideal [electrical] conductor. Just add an isotonic solution and that is all that is necessary. It is a simple case of attraction/repulsion — magnetism, if you prefer. [12 August 1973]

The Michaels were on a roll about Monads, and they just had to bring in this particular yin/yang Monad. In this case, attraction is yang/Cardinal and repulsion is yin/Ordinal. Magnetism has north and south poles, and depending on how one places magnets next to each other, the result is attraction or repulsion. Note that attraction/repulsion works in both animate (nervous system) and inanimate (magnetism) realms. The nervous system functions somewhat with electrical ions, also a manifestation of the fundamental universal attraction/repulsion Monad. The attraction/repulsion phenomenon works between people, as well as within brains, as we shall see further on.

The first use of the term ‘Monad’ occurs a little later in this same session:

That’s what consciousness is, that’s what Robert [Burton, leader of the local Fourth Way group] said — conscious love — to love at will — and that is what he (Michael) is saying here. I have never found that button. As a matter of fact, there is a lot of fear around that button too.

It [— conscious loving —] requires that you go through the same set of exercises that you use in any other consciousness-raising ritual — the detachment/concentration Monad. [12 August 1973]

In this Monad, concentration is Cardinal and detachment is Ordinal. Another chapter, “Concentration and Meditation”, discusses this particular Monad in some detail, but for now, we note that it makes perfect sense that in a universe derived from consciousness (which makes and breaks distinctions), that spiritual evolution would consist of exercises of consciousness, and that this would consist of the alternation of Cardinal and Ordinal practices — to complete a Monad and move on to the next higher level of consciousness. Spiritual evolution occurs whether or not the Personality consciously participates, but if the Personality wants to participate, then the Michaels advocate the detachment/concentration Monad, among other practices.

Some more Monads were mentioned a little later in the session:

Discussion concerning Monads: sacred/profane, profound/superficial, the yang and yin duality, infinite simplicity/infinite complexity. [12 August 1973]

The details of the discussion were not recorded, but notice from these examples, and all of the others in this chapter, that everything in this world is defined by its opposite — what it is not as well as what it is. Also note that sacred, profound, yang, and simplicity are Cardinal, whereas profane, superficial, yin, and complex are Ordinal.

Later in this same session, the Michaels continued on this theme of Monads. It must have been important to them:

[There was a] discussion concerning the effects of alcohol on quieting the Personality, then the Fragmentation of [Saint] Paul’s Entity, and finally Fragmentation in general.

When the spirit Entity first becomes earth-bound, there can be as many as a thousand Fragments [individual souls]. As the Entity progresses, the Fragments unite. [Likewise,] as each lesson is learned, the Monads are formed. [12 August 1973]

Because everything is defined by its opposite, as stated above, then obviously for a person to gain understanding (“learn lessons”) and evolve spiritually, both Ordinal and Cardinal halves of an experience must be assimilated. There is an analogy implied here between the uniting of souls (Fragments) into an Entity, and the uniting of complementary poles into a Monad. There are stages of Monad reintegration: Souls are completed in the process of assimilating experiential Monads, and Entities are reintegrated in the process of assimilating completed Fragments. This description of reuniting Entities implies that the Fragments (souls) themselves are polarized Cardinal and Ordinal (and Neutral); therefore the Entity is a special case of Monad.

You mean we are all fragmented? That’s what he said, which means that we have a lot of things to work out here. Well, I’m still fragmented.

You will be [fragmented] until you are reintegrated. The Christ entity even consisted of two Fragments. Jesus [as a pupil] still had a guru [master] in John [the Baptist]. The master/pupil Monad must be experienced from both sides. [12 August 1973]

And of course every other Monad must be experienced from both sides. That is what evolution of soul is *all* about. In the Monad mentioned above, master or guru is Cardinal and pupil is Ordinal. Nothing is said about when Jesus and John reversed master/pupil sides; probably in a previous or future lifetime, as we shall see.

The next question followed up on the master/pupil, aka Teacher/Student, Monad:

You mean everyone must eventually be a guru?

You all have need to seek a Teacher. You may all teach at the same time. Right now, though, the primary role is that of Student. In previous existences, you have all experienced receiving the gift of higher expression. You must now learn how to express [teach] it to complete the Monad and integrate that fragment [other half]. [12 August 1973]

In this Monad, teacher is Cardinal and student is Ordinal. Note that we can be Ordinal with respect to our teachers at the same time we are Cardinal with respect to our students. Notice the use of the word *fragment* when referring to the parts of a Monad. This is cause for some confusion in subsequent channeling.

After the previous Q&A exchanges, someone finally realized that a definition of Monad was needed. Apparently *Monad* was not a word that they were familiar with. As we shall see below, they were familiar with the concept of Monad, but under a different name — Monad is just the Michaels’ version of Gurdjieff’s so-called “Law of Three”.

What is a Monad? Could we ask for a specific definition?

A Monad is a basic universal unit used to express relative [differences in] values of consciousness. A nephron [kidney] is a physical Monad — or an organic Monad [because there are two of them, whereas the liver and heart, for instance, are singular]. [12 August 1973]

This statement confirms the notion expressed in the Introduction to this chapter that Monads have something to do with consciousness making and breaking distinctions. “Relative values of consciousness” is an obscure phrase unless we realize that the universe consists *entirely* of consciousness processing relative values as bits of information. Therefore, a Monad consists of two opposite experiences that when united into one complete experience elevate one into a higher level of consciousness. The example of a kidney is actually not a very good one for capturing the meaning of a Monad. The two kidneys in one body have bilateral symmetry, but this is not the same thing as the complementarity of a Monad.

Strangely, the original Michaelian group Students seem not to have recognized the similarity of Monads to the Law of Three:

Has anybody ever written about this on our plane?

Many knew: [Tielhard de] Chardin, [Georges] Gurdjieff, [Aldous] Huxley. [John] Lilly knows too. The Monads do not come back to haunt you once they have been completed. If you can complete one in this life, those fragments [halves] concerned with that will unite. [12 August 1973]

Here again, the word *fragment* was used to refer to the poles of a Monad. For most other references, *fragment* means the individual soul. So, once a Monad is united, one goes on to other lessons; one does not have to repeat the lesson.

There is a particular Monad of ultimate significance in the Michaelian teachings, that of love:

He's probably talking about major Monads — not minor Monads. Probably a million little minor Monads just don't make any difference. To love and to be loved may be the greatest Monad.

To be loved and to love is a positive Monad of the highest order. You must be able to realize that you are loved in order to complete this Monad, and that is what is difficult. [12 August 1973]

In this example, to love (active) is Cardinal and to be loved (passive) is Ordinal. Add this to the list of Monads. In just this one session with the Michaels, we see a list of numerous Monads, we have a definition, we know their function in the cosmic scheme, and we see the ultimate result of their completion: love.

With that foundation laid, we may move on to other channeling sessions. All of the above came in the first session with the Michaels. One might therefore gather that it is one of the metaphysical underpinnings of the Michaelian teachings, and sure enough, the subject comes up in many subsequent sessions, in numerous contexts and relationships.

More Definitions and Descriptions

There is of course a lot more to understanding Monads than was presented in the first session with Michael, and we will be looking at those in this and subsequent sections of this chapter.

As indicated previously, Monads are the Michaelian equivalent of Gurdjieff's Law of Three, and there is a connection to Gurdjieff's Law of Seven as well:

Is the number seven important, as important as has been implied through automatic writing?

Yes, but so are other odd numbers. These point to the yin and the yang and the completed Monad in the center. 'Seven' is important to those on the Physical Plane. Nitrogen, for instance, is [atomic] number seven [in the periodic table of elements]. All physical things — living organisms — are part of the nitrogen cycle. [13 September 1973]

This brief answer is really an incomplete introduction to the importance of the septenary — and the septenary is far more important in the Michaelian teachings than *this* answer indicated. A more complete explanation of the septenary is of course given in **another chapter**. (Nitrogen, however, is not referred to in that discussion.) For now, just notice that Ordinal yin and Cardinal yang are what combine to make a completed Neutral Monad. You cannot just take any two random ingredients and put them together to make a Monad. They have to be opposites; one might even say 'pro-' and 'anti-':

Dick: There will be an anti-Christ preceding him [the Infinite Soul], who was born in 1964. [It was said that] he will lead many astray.

The anti-Christ is not "evil", just misguided, but it is in the karma of many to follow this man. Many have this ribbon to deal with. [Like all other Monads, having a 'thesis', in Christ,] there must also be an antithesis to complete the Monad. [Saint] Paul will also return. [18 September 1973]

Notice the word *antithesis*. That is almost like a definition — it takes a thesis and an antithesis to make a synthesis — a Monad. There is nothing said here about completing Monads to make progress (also part of the definition); that process is mentioned elsewhere.

Besides thesis and antithesis presenting in two personalities, it can happen within one personality:

Dick: Alice downs herself or else is giving expert advice. It seems like it's a Monad.

The advice-giving-mothering complex is a part of False Personality. This can be counteracted only by realizing that the solution to a "problem" resides only in the one involved. Alice cannot solve anything for anyone but Alice. [27 September 1973]

The Michaels' answer seems neither to have confirmed nor denied the questioner's assertion that seemingly self-contradictory behaviors constitute a Monad, but one can see why this situation might fit the definition: Monads are opposites that when united produce evolution. If oneself is internally conflicted, then it seems reasonable that this is an impediment to real progress and it would be Good Work to resolve it and move up a level. Therefore it acts very much like a Monad.

Completing Monads can take more than one lifetime:

Alice: Does it sometimes take more than one lifetime to learn the lesson? ... I'm asking, might you not have to play it over and over again?

Many times, you have chosen almost identical roles in order to play out a Monad. Only the time and locations were different. [08 October 1973]

If you don't do it right the first time, try, try again. Whatever it takes to learn the lesson, it is *necessary*. Necessity is often a word associated with completing Monads, even in a context not brought up heretofore, namely the cycles:

Why does the Messiah have to come? Is the Messiah necessary to complete the Monad?

Yes; also to begin the new [2000-year historical] cycle. Progress always occurs toward the end of the cycle. Spiritual and material progress is usually at its peak during the waning cycle. [20 October 1973]

"Cycles" is a word often associated with the Septenary, and it so happens that Septenaries have Cardinal and Ordinal halves, here called "waxing" and "waning". This will be discussed fully in the chapters, "Polarity" and "Septenary", but for now we note that another key word regarding Monads — progress — is also associated with the cyclical Monad.

Interestingly enough, there is an extreme opposite to mixed feelings and double-mindedness that should be resolved in one's individual psyche in order to complete Monads:

Gene remarked that he felt that he was probably already at least one hundred reintegrated Fragments.

Eugene is essentially correct. There are approximately twenty separate Fragments of that Entity extant on the Physical Plane [in other bodies]. All of you are composites of completed Monads. ...but you must remember that all of the Fragments [souls] are not in the physical body at the same time. [08 October 1973]

Dick: Does the dominant Fragment have indirect access to my previous lives?

The integrated [soul] Fragments of your Entity, which are a part of the low Astral body, have a tremendous pull on you. It is almost as though they are calling you home. You are right though, Dick, it will be curtains for those [souls] who integrate. The others will continue as long as they are earthbound by karmic ribbons and have incomplete Monads. [22 November 1973]

Dick: Who will be the dominant Fragment between Phyllis, Gene and me?

This will depend on the evolution. Right now, it would appear that Gene has a few more incomplete [Monad]s. The [Monadal] fragments you hold in common with Eugene and Phyllis are the same. These Fragments [souls] did not fall by the wayside; they experienced all of life. [22 November 1973]

These three statements above are a bit ambiguous, but they seem to indicate that the other half of Monads from other kindred soul Fragments can combine in one personality during an incarnation, as well as after — the souls themselves are not required to reunite for their Monads to combine. The soul evolves not only by completing Monads within its own individual experience and experience with other personalities, but also by combining Monads among kindred souls. No soul experiences all of the necessary Monads, but within the Entity, all Monads must be experienced. Monads are completed, not just in one personality in one lifetime, let alone with just one's own soul, but with however many other souls that may be involved. The overarching principle, from low to high, from small to big, is that what was separated in Tao's fragmentation process is reunited in the integration process, and this happens via various means.

So where are all these cycles of progress going to end up?

Edgar: Is good and evil the fulfillment of karma with a promise to return to "paradise" after this fulfillment?

You are right, Edgar; the good and evil mentioned in that paradise refers to negative and positive poles of the Monads. Even after evolution to the Astral Plane, there are many steps yet to take. Return to the Tao is the goal or purpose. [27 January 1974]

Here we have an unequivocal statement that Monads consist of complementary components: good/evil and positive/negative. In these Monads, good and positive are Cardinal, and evil and negative are Ordinal. This statement seems to imply that there are Monads or something like them — "steps to take" — for the soul on the Astral Plane. And at the end of the road is that ultimate completion of the most major of Monads, merger with Tao-Consciousness.

We don't necessarily need kindred souls to make "spiritual growth" happen along the path to Tao, either:

Must one work out the Monads with his own Fragments [of his Entity]?

No, you can work them out with any other Fragment. There are specific Monads that must be completed at each Level before the perceptions change. [27 February 1974]

This seems to imply that there are specific Monads to complete at specific Levels and Ages in the reincarnation cycle. This only makes sense because there is a *nature* to each Level and Age (Fifth Level Mature is the "Sage-ish" Level of the "Scholar-ish" Age), and the Monads apparently also have some kind of similar nature. It is not unlike school with specific lessons (addition) in specific classes (arithmetic) in specific grades

(first). It is the lessons learned that provide the change in perception that moves the Fragment up the Levels and Ages. The word 'perceptions' also relates to the word 'consciousness', which word we have already seen applied to Monads. "Perceptions changing" is another way to refer to 'consciousness raising' and advancing through Levels and Ages.

So how many lessons and grades are there?

Are there 120 Monads? That's what I got in meditation.

No, many more.

Is there a specific number?

Yes. The number is a finite one. [27 February 1974]

So, let's put these statements together and do the math: there are seven Levels in each of five Ages, so that makes thirty-five Levels, and within each Level there are an average of seven lifetimes, so with maybe many hundreds or even thousands of Monads to complete, that would seem to add up to many Monads to complete in each Level, which may take many lifetimes. No wonder it takes the Fragments of our Entities to do some of those Monads, or halves of Monads, for us, and then we integrate them with and for each other.

Here are some more Monads to consider:

Edgar: We are supposed to experience the rich/poor Monad, the health/sickness Monad, the love/hate Monad, the positive/negative Monad, et cetera. When you die, you get out of this [polarity world] into paradise. When we're here [in this life], we are dead to the [unity of] spirit.

The death [to the polarity world], of course, is symbolic, and refers to the completion of the *raison d'être* (reason to be [French for "reason for being," "justification for existence."]) [17 March 1974]

Note this emphasis: the completion of Monads is the purpose of life! This is obviously a very strong statement. So strong that the questioner was astonished and demanded more explanation:

Edgar: How? How? How can this solve the "reason to be"?

If the Personality can take leave long enough to consider the task of the soul, then this will be clear. The task [reason for being] on the Physical Plane is to experience "all of life". Many Monads are not completed for many centuries. Others must be completed before the soul can perceive at a higher Level of Being [a Gurdjieff phrase]. The Monads are the only reason to be that we know of. [17 March 1974]

There is a chapter on this important teaching, "Level of Being". The above Q&A sequence is really a pretty good summary of what Monads are all about: they are absolutely fundamental and essential (the only "reason to be"); they consist of polar opposites; the opposites are positive and negative; completing Monads results in moving up to the next level in spiritual maturity; spiritual maturity on the higher planes consists of reuniting with kindred souls; the reintegration leads all the way through the Planes until reunion with Tao.

This is not always an unconscious process:

Cynthia: I am foggy on Monads.

That is where the rub comes in. In order to complete the Monad, you must be "conscious" of the fact that you are, for instance, loved [in the loving/loved Monad]. Many times you are loved, but do not experience this. Many times you are a student [in the teacher/student Monad] but you do not always perceive this. There are some Monads which must be completed before the perceptions change, and you move from one level to the other. [03 April 1974]

The new information here is that it helps one complete Monads and advance levels if one is consciously aware that one is going through a Monad. This is not surprising, since completing Monads are all about increasing the scope of consciousness. One of the values of the Michaelian teachings — aided by this particular chapter — is to make one aware of this feature of life on the Physical Plane. Because elsewhere it was said that most personalities go through their entire sequence of lifetimes in the "waking sleep", these souls must become consciously aware of the Monads between lifetimes in order to advance. They become aware during their astral review and assimilation.

The following section names and describes some more Monads for us to watch out for, in ourselves and others, and therefore aid our conscious evolution.

More Examples of Monads

In just the first session with the Michaels, about a dozen Monads were named, and we saw some more in the previous section. There are yet many more, and that is what this section is for.

One of the Monadal relationships named previously, and named again in the second section, is the master/pupil or Teacher/Student Monad:

Kathryn: I would like to know more about my present role.

Your present role is being presently fulfilled. It is necessary that you sit at the feet of a living master. [After that] it will be imperative to you that you assume the role of the master the next time. This is one of the last incomplete Monads Kathryn has. [16 August 1973]

Recall that in this example of a Monad, “master” is Cardinal and “sit at feet of master” is Ordinal. This passage says unequivocally that certain Monads are *required* lessons in earth-school curriculum leading to graduation. Apparently there are Monads that are not so required.

The teacher/pupil Monad is mentioned above, and below:

Edgar: The last time I was here, you said I had a few Karmic ties left. I'd like to know the number left [and] how many Monads to go.

You must still complete the teacher/pupil Monad. You had a karmic ribbon with the man, Robert [Burton]. He was twice your student. This has been burned. You have been a teacher so many times [that] we could see you almost as the perpetual schoolmaster. Before this life, the man Robert sought you out as a teacher in two very traumatic, for him, lives: Once as a Mid Cycle Mature Soul and again in a later life. Also, you were once an athlete of some renown and lived to be almost one hundred years old. This life is also the other [complementary] pole of that Monad. [31 January 1974]

Mentioned in this answer were two Monads, teacher/pupil and health/sickness. The person asking the above question was in a wheelchair, so you can see why the Michaels referred to his athletic lifetime as the other pole of the health/sickness Monad. In these Monads, “teacher” and “health” are Cardinal, and “pupil” and “sickness” are Ordinal.

The conversation about this man's health/sickness Monad continued a couple of months later:

Edgar: Why did I choose this disease [that left me in a wheelchair]?

We discussed this before, but for your information, you did not choose the specific disorder, just the genetic propensity. It was necessary that you seek the Teaching in spite of great physical disability to complete a Monad.

Which Monad?

The one left hanging over for two thousand years. The man was a strong man then — physical strength, yes. The health/sickness (Monad) as a seeker would be more accurate. [17 March 1974]

Two thousand years is a long time between experiencing the poles of a Monad, but notice that the *context* was the same during both poles: experiencing the Monad while being a spiritual seeker. Similar circumstances are generally the case for experiencing a Monad. The implication here is that ill health in other lifetimes during the intervening 2000 years were not the other half of this Monad because they were not connected to the seeker component.

This man and his health/sickness Monad came up for review yet a third time many months later:

Richard: I would like to inquire about his physical disability.

[The dependent/independent Monad:] with this [particular] Fragment, dependency of even the smallest nature would be impossible [to the Personality without some type of disability to ensure it]. [Essence knows] there must be a balance [so it imposed a disability]. No Personality can withstand total dependency, and [so one] must rely on specific [partial] disabilities, either physical or sometimes emotional, in order to exist as a member of “society”. [21 October 1977]

Dependent/independent was not referred to as a Monad in this text, but it is obvious that the name applies. Notice that it looks like Monads can overlap. Here, the sickness/health Monad dovetails with an independent/dependent Monad. Of course “independent” is the Cardinal pole and “dependent” is the Ordinal pole. Note also that completing Monads is equated with the principle and goal of achieving an overall balance in life and in the universe. There is another chapter, “Balanced Man”, that makes this principle more clear.

Following is another Monad that is part of experiencing all of life on the Physical Plane:

We have to experience the truth/lying Monad as part of everything. [03 February 1974]

Note again the necessity of completing Monads as part of experiencing all of life. In this Monad, “truth is Cardinal and “lying” is Ordinal.

There are other statements, but here is one implying that experiencing Monads is planned between physical incarnations:

Is the decision made between lives to be displaced by an Infinite or a Transcendental soul?

It is chosen during the Astral interval, then reaffirmed on the Physical Plane. This choice is usually based upon past performances and the existence of only one incompleting [sic] Monad. [09 February 1974]

This seems to imply that hosting a Transcendental or Infinite Soul is the Cardinal Pole of an incomplete Monad. The name of that incomplete Monad is not stated or known otherwise, but considering the nature of the event, it probably has something to do with spirituality versus physicality, transcendence versus immanence.

Speaking of which, there is a common misunderstanding about the nature of spirituality and the spiritual path:

How about the other side [of the Monad] as in India with so much spirituality?

It [“spirituality”] is more apparent than real. This method that is total austerity seldom qualifies the senses enough to complete any of the Monads, and the soul must reincarnate again in order to experience what it missed while it was sitting in its hair cloth. [24 February 1974]

So austerity/hedonism (to coin a phrase) is another Monad, and even though it does not say so here, one can do it in one lifetime as well as multiple lifetimes. “Austerity” is the Ordinal pole and “hedonism” is the Cardinal pole in this case. Note that abundance alone and austerity alone are not better spiritual paths — according to the doctrine of Monads, it actually takes both to make progress. One might extrapolate this principle to many so-called spiritual paths. According to the Michaelian teachings, the soul evolves by experiencing all of life, and that means numerous and various polarities, not just a “spiritual” life as opposed to a “mundane” life. This dichotomy will of course be covered in other chapters.

Next for consideration is mention of two rather mundane Monads:

Alice: What then?

Mostly the two of you [you and your husband] agreed to play out this Sequence — this to help you complete a Monad when you were barren.

In this marriage in this lifetime, Dick and Alice had six children.

Have I been a mother before?

Yes, many times; a father, also. [20 March 1974]

The two Monads mentioned here are barren/fertile and mother/father. In these cases, ‘barren’ and ‘mother’ are Ordinal, and ‘fertile’ and ‘father’ are Cardinal. Normally these two mundane experiences are no big deal — they occur in many incarnations — but when they are an intense and compelling learning experience, it likely indicates a Monadal Sequence, agreed upon between incarnations. Here we should remind ourselves that we only do a particular Monad at most twice, once for each side. We will be parents and children, students and teachers, and so on, perhaps dozens of times, but only one pair as a formal Monad. Refer to the chapter “Agreements and Sequences” for more information.

Moving right along, we shift back over to a more ‘spiritual’ Monad:

Dick: Observing self —can’t figure out why it operates as it does (the machine). What do I do to make the change?

We would say at this point that the insight you have mentioned is an extremely essential one: that is, to view from the inside the utter Mechanicity of the Personality and its conditioned responses. Yes, these responses can be altered, and you, above all of those who seek, should now begin to see how they can be changed. All along, we have been urging you to Photograph these Sequences in yourselves. Some of them are, of course, culturally induced — the work ethic is an example. Others result from your combination of Overleaves, and the way in which you interrelate because of them. The Personality is a machine. All of its responses are Mechanical, and most are unnecessary. The continued observation should make you willing to change this behavior. After awhile, it becomes too frustrating to do otherwise. This is one of the side benefits of the concentration/meditation Monad. It does make the Essence disgusted by the hold Personality has over it, and

usually the necessary impetus occurs to effect the change sooner or later, if you are willing to pursue this to the bitter end, and the light will shine and the Essence will gain control. Then those things which are truly significant will take precedence over much of the nonsense you now use to occupy your days. And this does not just mean Dick, this is all of you. [19 June 1974]

The meditation/concentration Monad is discussed in greater detail in another chapter, but for now just note that “meditation” (the Ordinal pole) involves emptying the mind of everything, and “concentration” (the Cardinal pole) involves filling the mind with a single object. With that description, you see how they are opposites. Another Monad is mentioned in this passage and other passages above and below, but not noted as such, and that is Personality/Essence. One time it is labeled such, in a subsequent section of this chapter.

The next few sections of the chapter cover specific types of Monads: Karma, Sequences, Overleaves, and kindred souls.

Monads and Karma

The subject of Karma is, of course, covered in some detail in the chapter by that name, but it deserves special mention in this chapter. You might not have thought of it that way before, but Karma is a type of Monad. Monads and Karma are two of the most compelling life experiences that humans have on the Physical Plane:

Is burning a Karmic Ribbon always a negative thing?

Sometimes you are the debtor, sometimes it is to you that the debt is owed. The Ribbon is the thread that links you to the other Fragments of a Karmic play. You wish to complete the Monad. As soon as this is accomplished, the Fragment has evolved. As soon as the major Monads are completed, the fragments are integrated. [22 September 1973]

The fact that there are major Monads implies that there are minor Monads, but there was no revelation on the difference. Karma seems to be a type of major Monad. With Karma, owing is Cardinal and being owed is Ordinal. Notice here that the use of the term, “fragments”, seems ambiguous. It could refer to the integration of both souls with the completion of Karma and Monads, or to the halves of a Monad being integrated. A couple of times in the 12 August 1973 session, ‘fragment’ unambiguously referred to the halves of Monads. Other places and here, ‘Fragment’ obviously refers to individual souls. Although there is ambiguity in this passage, there is not ambiguity in the fact that both kindred soul Fragments and Monadal polarity fragments are ultimately combined during the evolution of souls. Also in this answer the subject of Karma is introduced, and, of course, this is the subject of another chapter. In this chapter just note that, like other Monads in the realm of human relations, Karma is about experiencing both sides of an interaction and making progress thereby. Like other Monads, with Karma earned and burned, the scales of justice are balanced, and then people move on to a higher level of understanding. Refer to the chapter on Karma for many more examples of the dualities in karma.

Karma is a big deal between two people, and Karma itself has poles: there is “bad” karma and there is “good” karma:

Billie: Is good Karma repeated and what is to be gained by repeating it?

Many times [it is] to complete a Monad left over.

Billie: What would be an example of good Karma repeated over and over?

Teacher/pupil is one Monad frequently incomplete for many lives. This must be completed, but is never adverse.

Mallory: Would it have to be with the same person?

Sometimes, not always. [27 January 1974]

Notice again that Karma is a particular kind of Monad. The teacher/pupil Monad is never adverse or adversarial, but obviously “bad” karma is. There is also mention of “good” Karma above. Elsewhere that is called “philanthropic Karma”.

There is one other passage in which Karma is mentioned in the same breath with Monad:

Dick: Do I have a Karmic debt with [my daughter] Kathryn?

With you, Dick, it is the sense of purpose and not a [Karmic] debt. With others, it is [in fact] a [Karmic] debt. With some, it is an incomplete Monad. All of these things come into play. [07 July 1974]

Monads and Karmas are both compelling factors because they are necessary in order to experience all of life on the Physical Plane. Because of this intensity, one has to examine specific cases carefully to discern what is Karma and what is Monad.

The next section discusses Monads in relation to another phenomenon in the Michaelian cosmology, namely Sequences.

Monads and Sequences

The following passage leads from karma to what are called Sequences in the Michaelian teachings:

Cheryl: Do you need to acknowledge all karma before you can become conscious?

That is valid. There are also what we will call for the moment "Sequences" that link souls together life after life and are not true Karmic Ribbons. In these Sequences, souls agree to play out certain scenes together, again reversing the goals and completing Monads. Many of you are in Sequences with other members of this group, but there are no Karmic Ribbons between you. [20 February 1974]

There is nothing new here about Monads except the introduction of another term in the Michaels' cosmology: Sequences. There is, of course, a chapter on the subject. Sometimes it takes a lengthy Sequence to complete a Monad, but we already knew that from previous quotes.

There was another passage joining Sequences with Monads a few months later:

Cheryl: So what does make a Sequence?

Agreement to play out a certain fragment of life. For instance, we have told you before that not all parents and their children are playing out the parent/child Monad. This Monad results in a far more complex relationship than just the ordinary one. [12 June 1974]

Here is the use of that word 'fragment' again, this time unambiguously referring to the polar pieces of life that are necessary to experience all of life. Also notice that Monads are not just ordinary life experiences; they are extreme examples of events in a life that drive home specific lessons, and once completed are not repeated.

The Q&A later revisited the topic of the original Michaelian group members being part of a Sequence:

Liz: I feel ties with Louise and more affinity with her, especially since she did the transference healing technique on me. Are we in Sequence?

You and the lady Louise are two of the ten people in this group who are in [a] Sequence. You have a student/teacher Monad to play in this lifetime. Although it will be unclear to you, it will be valid to experience each other in each of these [Monadal] roles. [13 August 1974]

Elsewhere it is said that it is useful and beneficial to have a conscious awareness of the Monad while going through it, but apparently it is not always necessary for the Personality to be clear about this. It is up to the Essence to plan the Monadal Sequence before the lifetime, and assimilate the Monad after the lifetime:

Edgar asked Michael about other Agreements he made on the Astral Plane, besides the two mentioned before.

You make all Sequential Agreements during the astral interval. This pertains to all of the physical lives. Most Sequences have to do with the completion of Monads, and are Agreed upon to facilitate this completion in basically short periods of time. [26 November 1974]

Recall or know that Agreements are contracts between Essences, not Personalities. Even though it does not say so here, Personality does not always like the Monads and Sequences that Essence plans for the lifetime. However, the Personality generally finds them compelling and meaningful, even if not pleasant. The Ordinal pole of many Monads is unpleasant: sickness, poverty, dependence, and so on; see next:

Alice: Could the problem he is having with his hands in this life have anything to do with an incompleting Monad — health/sickness?

The feeling is valid that this is a repetition Sequence of a failed Monad for this man. He feels much frustration now as he treads this same path again. You can offer much compassion. [01 February 1975]

So, the proper regard for oneself and others, when we see oneself and them enmeshed in an unpleasant long-term situation, is compassion. We realize that what we see might be a required experience, for the purpose of what in some life philosophies is called building character. Frustration and other negative emotions are not appropriate. Compassion is the appropriate positive emotion for the experiencer and the experiencee.

The next section reveals that the Overleaf System is itself a manifestation of the Monad principle, what with Cardinal and Ordinal and Neutral components. Also, Overleaves are chosen by Essence to enable the Personality to complete Monads.

Monads and Overleaves

Another major factor that facilitates the completion of Monads is the selection of Overleaves. The obvious reason for this is that Overleaves themselves are paired in Monads. This is revealed in the course of the next few Q&A exchanges.

Alice: I would like to know if, when we "experience life", it is necessary to incarnate into each Body Type, each Center (Moving, Emotional and Intellectual), and [various] Roles. And then, if we don't learn something do we have to go over the same thing again?

It is possible to experience all of life from one Body Type, but the experience is richer if the change is made.... It is necessary that life be experienced both as male and female in the different settings. This is the most important factor, and the one that brings the Monads together. Centering is important also.... [13 December 1973]

Note in passing that the male is generally regarded as Cardinal and the female as Ordinal. The male/female Monad is itself a catalyst for completing other Monads along the way to experiencing all of life on the Physical Plane. Our relationships with the opposite sex tend to intensify experiences in general, and now we see that it intensifies experiences in specific — completing Monads.

When the seven Goals were first revealed a few days after the above comment, it was said that they also have the Monad-like properties of thesis > antithesis > neutral, and that Goals factor into experiential Monads:

Cheryl: Could you give us the "Goal" (next Overleaf), or one Goal?

The Goals are chosen with the idea of completing a specific [experiential] Monad.... There are seven, and you must necessarily repeat them, but how you repeat them in conjunction with the Center of Gravity and the Body Type determines the success you have.... One of them is "Growth." This is the antithesis of another [Retardation]. There is a stable neutral Goal [Stagnation], just as there is [a] stable neutral observant Role [Scholar]. [20 December 73]

There are three Exalted [Cardinal] Goals. They are: Dominance, Acceptance, [and] Growth. There is an intermediate, Neutral Goal, which for the time being we can call Stagnation. There are three Ordinal Goals, which are the antitheses of the Exalted Goals. They are: Submission, Rejection, [and] Retardation. [25 December 1973]

The Monads here mentioned are of course the necessary experiential Monads, but notice that Goals are said to be paired, having antitheses and therefore theses, and that there is also the neutral = the synthesis of the pairs. In later sessions, it was made clear that theses and antitheses and syntheses are words used in the description of Monads. In previous sessions, not quoted in this chapter, there were hints that other Overleaves were manifestations of Monads. For instance, in the case of Centers, there were "lower" and "higher" and "balance" in between. (Refer to the chapter on Centers.) In regard to Body Types, there were "passive" and "active" and "intermediate". (Refer to the chapter on Body Type.) In regard to Roles, there were "ordinal" and "exalted" and "intermediate/neutral". And so on for the other Overleaves which were revealed subsequent to the Goals. The point is that the concept and principles of Monads permeates the Michaelian teachings.

The revelation quoted above leads to a discussion in the same session about completing Monads by choosing a complementary Goal:

Dick: I [a medical doctor] would like to ask again about my patient who is a King. Is her Goal Rejection? (She is divorced and eking out an existence as a postal worker, supporting children.)

Actually more so Retardation, both right. This is the way that the Monads go together. Retardation brings little success either in health or in wealth.

It does not say so here, but elsewhere there is mention of the health/sickness and the wealth/poverty Monads. This implies that in this woman's case, her soul chose an Ordinal Goal to complete the Ordinal pole of either the health/sickness or wealth/poverty Monads. This implies that her soul would choose, or has chosen in a past life, the Cardinal Goal on the same axis to complete the Cardinal Pole of the health/sickness or wealth/poverty Monads.

The exchange continued as follows:

Dick: Then in the case of my patient (who is King), is it improper for me to try to help her?

She needs to recognize it for something that she chose. Only then can she alter it.

Dick: Would the Monad then be completed and okay for her to change?

Only if she can acknowledge her Karmic Ribbons. Don't worry, you will be unable to prematurely alter anyone's goals. [25 December 1973]

This might or might not refer to a life goal or an Overleaf Goal. The context in this session was about the Goals. Elsewhere in the original Michaelian group, it was said that a person could change their Overleaves. A careful reading of the passages above indicates that this can only happen if the Monad (or the Karma), for which that Overleaf was chosen, has been completed. It stands to reason then that complementary Overleaves can be chosen in different lifetimes but in similar situations to give the soul the experience of both poles of the Monad. This was made explicit in the following exchanges:

Tina: What am I doing in experiencing these different Goals?

This lady [in Growth] is now completing the Monad she began in Syria, Palestine nearly 2000 years ago when she was in Rejection [Sic. Retardation?] as a hopelessly dejected soul. [31 December 1973]

Dick: Do we experience the opposites of each Goal to complete the Monad?

All of you have experienced life from a Retardation Goal. This lady has been in Growth so far five times, and will be again. This is not unusual. In many frames, there is little to learn. There are resting years also. [31 December 1973]

Ray: I have a question about Karma. I have a feeling that [my wife] Billie and I were together before. Is there some unresolved Karma there?

One is a [Monadic] reversal of Goals. Yes, you have been together before. The Goals were reversed then. [03 January 1974]

Nothing was said about Karma in this case, but Monad was implied by the "reversal of Goals" answer. Monads are so compelling that they can seem like Karma, as stated elsewhere. It should be perfectly obvious by now that switching sides in various complementary situations is one of the hallmarks of Monads.

There is another reason for careful selection of Overleaves, also having to do with successful Monadal relationships:

Dick: Are there clues to why Cheryl, Alice, and Richard chose the Caution Mode?

Quite often, when the soul chooses the Passion Mode, it is to experience the Monads dealing with interpersonal relationships. This often leads to emotional exhaustion on the Physical Plane. The need is there to not experience this] again [so an Ordinal Mode is chosen in another lifetime]. Often, too, the [karmic] Ribbons are complex enough so that the rather bland [Ordinal] Modes are necessary for all those in the Sequence with you to complete their own Monads. This is the way it is with Richard, who chose Caution [Mode] in order to allow three souls in the room to move. [14 April 1974]

It is difficult for people in Power (or Passion or Aggression) Mode to allow those in relationship with them to move freely. A Michaelian student in one of those Cardinal Modes might want to ask if he or she expects too much intensity in the relationship, leading to emotional exhaustion not only in the self but in the relatees. Of course, if they are in an Agreed-upon Monadal relationship, the right Mode will have been chosen for it, but for other relationships, the intensity generated and expected by a person in a Cardinal Mode might create tension. This principle applies to other Cardinal and Ordinal Overleaves in Monadal and non-Monadal relationships, of course.

The discussion about this in this session continued as follows:

Cheryl: Why did I choose Caution? I do not like it as I see it.

Primarily, because you have chosen the Passion or the Power Mode three out of four times in the past. [14 April 1974]

And it wore you and your intimates out, so now you are giving you and your intimates a break.

Following is an example of an Overleaf Monad other than with Goals:

Delia asked about the carryover of Self-deprecation from lifetime to lifetime, referring to when [Elisabeth] was a Ute.

The tribe as a whole did indeed exhibit the "poor me" syndrome [typical of Self-dep]. However, Alice is correct that this is the other half of that Monad for Elisabeth, for she was very much in Arrogance during that life, so much so that she jeopardized her life several times by being arrogant with the wrong people. [09 January 1975]

In this Monad from the Overleaf System, Self-deprecation is Ordinal and Arrogance is Cardinal.

As a summary to this section of this chapter, we notice that with Monads from the Overleaf System, the Monad can be with other people who have the complementary Overleaf, or oneself can have complementary Overleaves in different lifetimes. In the next section, we see how Monads apply to groups of souls.

Monads and Groups of Souls

So far we have seen individual souls completing Monads in their own evolution. Now we will see that groups of souls do the same thing together. The original Michaelian group was a case in point:

Ellis: Is my soul's movement random or purposeful? From the moment the [over-]soul Fragments into pieces then the evolutionary process evolves into ultimate unity and the process is repeated. I see it as by chance and not happening by purpose.

Do you really believe that “chance” brought this group together in Walnut Creek, California? We cannot believe that at all. The searching is solely through Essence, and the False Personality fights this as long as it exists, which may or may not survive to the bitter end. All of you were involved in a specific situation, which has now brought you together in a parallel time frame, which allows you to complete the Monad. For those of you who initially came together in Rome and Syria, Palestine, there is the teaching of Christ [a manifestation of the Infinite Soul], who you all knew of then, for you to hear this time with unplugged ears. One among you heard it loud and clear then, and will become an Adept in this physical interval.... Others are playing out almost identical life roles as you did then....

Edgar: If we were together in Rome and we are again now, what is our purpose?

There is indeed a purpose. This Teaching is one of spiritual growth. This Teaching was offered to you before and you rejected it, as many did. Now it is up to you to hear it now or wait another two thousand years. It is essential that you complete this Monad. We do not particularly care how long it takes you. We shall be around [as a mid-Causal teacher] for at least that long. [27 December 1973]

By the way, the Infinite Soul mentioned above is the subject of another chapter. In the case of some members of the original Michaelian group, the group Monad was that they did not heed the words of the Infinite Soul 2000 years ago, so this time around they have another opportunity to heed. This could be called the rejection/acceptance Monad, like the names of a pair of Goals. Rejection in this Monad is Ordinal and acceptance is Cardinal, just as with the Goals. Although it does not say so in the original Michaelian group transcriptions, it seems likely that entire groups of souls complete other Monads while assembled as a group. There might be an extensive list of names for these types of Monads, just as we have an extensive list of individual and relationship Monads.

The Pleasure/Pain Monad

This particular Monad is discussed enough in the original Michaelian group transcriptions that it merits an entire section. Obviously “pleasure” is the Cardinal pole and “pain” is the Ordinal pole of this Monad.

Alice: Would it be possible to have the pleasure without the pain?

No, this is not possible; they are inseparable. [24 January 1974]

Why are they inseparable? Because they are a Monad of the Physical Plane. The pleasure/pain Monad is somewhat like the desire/dread Monad mentioned in the very first session with the Michaels.

This Monad is mentioned again in the next session:

Dick: Is there anything resembling sex on the Causal Plane?

There is, but it is genderless. The Essence is thoroughly capable of experiencing the [quasi-sexual] ecstasy, and frequently does. The Personality cannot [experience ecstasy] because of the pain/pleasure Monad. It is automatic. In your culture, it is imprinted early in life that if you are to experience pleasure, you also must have pain. The entire [Michael] Entity experiences [ecstasy]. There are no more [Monadal? Soul?] fragments — we are whole. [10 March 1974]

The ‘mating’ of souls is somewhat like the mating of bodies, but without the problems. Recall that the word ‘fragments’ is used not just in referring to individual souls, but in referring to the halves of a Monad (12 August 1973, 22 September 1973). In this case it could be either, but fragments of Monads seems the more likely. In the session of 27 January 1974 it was implied that on the Astral Plane there were Monads to complete — implying positive and negative experiences — but apparently when one gets to the mid-Causal Plane, this is over, so experience is pure. There are no more mixed emotions and there is no more double-mindedness such as one experiences in sexual relationships on the Physical Plane. Even though it does not say so

explicitly, it seems that the ultimate 'synthesis' of the pain/pleasure Monad experienced on the Physical Plane is 'ecstasy' on the higher planes.

However, there is a way to mitigate the pain of many sexual relationships:

Alice: Is there any way out of the pleasure/pain Monad?

Your guilt build-up produces the pain. When you choose to extinguish the guilt, you will lose the pain at the same time — only then. [10 March 1974]

It does not say so here, but because this is dealing with a Monad, the pleasure might also be mitigated when the pain is mitigated by reduction of guilt — if this is all done in Personality, that is. Elsewhere it is said that guilt is a function of Personality, not of Essence. If sex is done from Essence, perhaps it can be purely pleasurable. Anyway, is the above physical or psychological pain/pleasure? It would seem to be psychological here, because of the word guilt. However, the pleasure/pain Monad also seems to apply to the physical realm:

Dick: On death: As far as I'm concerned, the only thing that thinks and lives, goes with death, and I cannot imagine anything going beyond death. You either die slowly with age or illness or rapidly in an accident. When you're eaten by a hungry crocodile, you actually become that crocodile.

The soul sees beyond the brain barriers set up by the organism in order to cushion the shocks. In other words, the reward would not seem great enough for the organism to continue with the [apparent] "absurdity" [of pain, so it would block the pain, and hence the reward — the other half of the pain/pleasure Monad]. The pain the body endures while being munched upon by a crocodile is seconds only compared to the [much longer] cycle of the soul [which experiences pleasure in proportion to the pain]. [17 March 1974]

This and other statements about Monads seems to be an endorsement of some theological and philosophical assertions that evil and suffering in this life are counterbalanced by good and happiness in this life, or in the afterlife, or in another life. We know from other statements that Michael does not endorse the Personality deliberately inflicting suffering on itself or others because it is justified by the greater good. In Michael's cosmology, the Personality can be sadistic, but Essence is not, and the universe is not; evil and suffering are the result of ignorance, stupidity, and foolishness not true malevolence.

In the next passage, the reference is again to psychological pain/pleasure:

The Personality has an extremely limited capacity for experiencing positivity. Whenever you experience unsolicited pleasure, you are experiencing it from Essence. This is why the extinguishment of negativity is so vital to spiritual growth. If you have not guessed this yet, the Personality is the negative pole of a Monad [and Essence is the positive pole]. [17 March 1974]

"Personality" is Ordinal and "Essence" is Cardinal in this Monadal pairing. In the Michaelian teachings, on a spiritual path, one goal is to first of all achieve Balance, which is neither positive nor negative. If that works, then one can choose to go on to experience the positivity of Essence as an Adept or Master. Few achieve this in the body, but all will in the spirit. Refer to the chapter "Adepts and Masters".

Some Overleaves are more suitable to the pleasure/pain Monad:

Are Repression, Self-destruction and Rejection part of the pleasure/pain Monad?

That is valid and most usually involve physical pain, sometimes violence. [15 May 1974]

Those in the complementary Overleaves — Passion, Greed, Acceptance — tend to shy away from physical pain. The Personality would definitely have a preference for the pleasure pole of the Monad.

Monads and Soul Age

It should be no surprise that the nature of Monads changes as the soul evolves through the Physical Plane:

What is the next step? May I skip to student/teacher Monad?

That is valid. One [Monad] that must be complete in the Mature Cycle is the parent/child. Few Old Souls are super parents; most are negligent [with their] children. [03 April 1974]

In this Monad, parent is Cardinal and child is Ordinal.

The discussion continued:

What's a "super parent"?

The overly conscientious parent who manages the life of the child. [03 April 1974]

The over-conscientiousness is what makes it part of a Monad and more intense than just the ordinary parent/child situation.

The questioner below had three male children:

Shirley: I was probably a super over-conscientious parent.

We would disagree with Shirley. She was [an Old Soul and] nice to her children. The leader quality power Monad is clearly of the Young Soul Cycle. [03 April 1974]

Thus, over-parenting (Cardinal) and under-parenting (Ordinal) constitute a Monad, and the halves can be handled in two different Soul Ages as widely separated as Young and Old, but are best handled in one Soul Age, Mature in the case of this Monad.

There was more about the parent/child Monad later in this session:

The Mature Soul is often one who must complete the parent pole [of the parent/child Monad]. Infant Souls are given to Mature Souls for [the Mature Soul's] growth [in that Monad]. [03 April 1974]

This could probably be generalized to state that the younger soul generally completes the child side of the Monad and the older soul completes the parent side as stated below:

Cynthia: Who makes the choice?

The Mature Soul often, who must complete the parent pole [of the parent/child Monad]. Cynthia, your son is [an Infant Soul]. [03 April 1974]

Because Infant Souls are especially difficult children to parent, one can see why this makes the parent/child Monad an atypical family situation.

Following is another example of completing Monads by choosing complementary Overleaves in different lifetimes.

Joan: Are the plans made on the Astral Plane?

Of course. ... Usually toward the end of the Young Soul cycle, the choices become better, and the soul chooses to review the past with far more thoroughness, and attempts to strive toward completion of the Monads. [17 April 1974]

By completing Monads in the earlier stages, the soul gets better at completing Monads in the later stages. You might say that as the soul matures, it starts to act more like an adult, with a better understanding of the whole process. Monads are all about learning how the universe works.

There are certain Sequences and major Monads that are more easily experienced from the Mature Cycle than any of the others. After all, it is during this Cycle that the perceptions of the emotions of those around you are sharper than they will be again. [15 May 1974]

This concludes the presentation about those types of so-called Monads in the Michaelian teachings. However, there is another class of phenomena that operate on the same dialectic principle of thesis > antithesis > synthesis that were not so named, but nevertheless constitute a significant portion of the Michaelian teachings. That is the subject of this chapter's next section.

Quasi-Monads

In the original Michaelian group transcriptions it was said that there are major Monads, and that implies that there are minor Monads, and a number of both were named and described. It is good to notice and understand these for oneself and for others. However, there are numerous life situations that operate on the Monadic principle of complementarity and resolution, but these might not be considered major or even minor Monads. All of them involve the Cardinal/Ordinal polarity that makes life interesting and challenging, and that drive our psychological and spiritual development. We might even find ourselves in these polarized circumstances on a daily basis. Some of them are internal and some are external. Whenever we find ourselves in situations that we are not neutral about, but that are charged with negative energy and that we have an issue with, then we are likely dealing with a Cardinal/Ordinal polarity of some kind. Recall what Gurdjieff and Ouspensky said about the Law of Three: it governs every significant and meaningful thing in life. These situations could be called "quasi-Monads" because they act according to the Monadic principle, even though the Michaels did not label them as Monads. Following are some examples:

- The Positive and Negative Poles of one's own Overleaves are Monadic because they are Cardinal and Ordinal. By experiencing both, eventually we become Balanced and Neutral. Thereby we grow psychologically and spiritually.

- There is another Monad among our experiences of the Overleaves, and that is when we “slide” into a complementary Overleaf on our way, once again, toward Balance, and we grow spiritually by completing the Monad.
- We can also interact with the Overleaves, or the poles of Overleaves, of other people if they are complementary to our own, the same way mentioned just above. If we inculcate this experience, and learn from these interactions to be more Balanced and Neutral, that means we have grown psychologically and spiritually thereby.
- In situations where we have an issue with another person, this might be quasi-Monadal. The solution might be to put oneself in their shoes, thereby experiencing not only one’s own viewpoint, but theirs, thus completing the Monad and resolving the issue, as well as growing psychologically and spiritually thereby.
- An extreme version of the above can happen when one encounters someone who acts like a nemesis. A typical dynamic is as follows: whenever we present a Thesis, naturally we believe we are right. Then, because the universe is balanced overall, the universe presents an Antithesis person and he or she also believes they are right and that hence we are wrong, whereas we tend to continue to believe that we are right and that the Antithesis person is wrong. Neither will ever get past this stalemate to the Synthesis level unless each can transcend the ego at the next higher level, and grow psychologically and spiritually thereby. (This does not apply to people with significant psychopathology. It is not likely one can sympathize and then Synthesize with them.)
- ‘Yes’ and ‘no’ are synonyms for Cardinal and Ordinal. In a very broad sense, a quasi-Monad is started whenever a choice is made. Making a choice is functionally equivalent to the fragmentation process that Tao-Consciousness used to create the poles of Monads in the first place. We saw this in the Introduction to this chapter, where Tao-Consciousness does the process of Identification/dis-Identification — those are choices. Making choices results in evolution because it leads to experiencing all of life eventually. Whatever choice we make, if it turns out “wrong”, we will then unchoose it and experiment with the opposite choice.
- Some people have a very traumatic “negative” experience and their reaction is to implement a very “positive” program or procedure. For instance, Michael J. Fox gets Parkinson’s disease and then he forms and finances a foundation for its treatment and potential cure.

These and other quasi-Monads are explained further in other chapters.

Summary and Conclusion

Douglas Adams in his book, *The Hitchhiker’s Guide to the Galaxy*, asked, “What is the meaning of life, the universe, and everything?” The “answer” given in that book was “42”, but according to the Michaelian teachings, the answer is *the completion of Monads*. Personally, when a prospective student asks me what the Michaelian teachings is all about, I like to tell them that it is about reincarnation and its ramifications. And then, to actual Michaelian students, I say that the most important component of reincarnation is *the completion of Monads*. Because completing Monads is such an important feature of reincarnation, it is also a very compelling experience on the Physical Plane.

Completing Monads is the reverse of Fragmentation. One might call it defragmentation. The two processes are equal and opposite. Simply put, the grand cosmic scheme of things goes like this: On one side of the equation, Tao fragments itself, and on the other side of the equation, Tao reassembles or reintegrates itself. Completing Monads is somewhat like the defragmentation of data on a computer hard drive. When one installs programs or saves documents and music and photos on a computer, the operating system scatters its bits all over the hard drive platter. When running a defragmentation program, it gathers all the bits that belong together onto a contiguous part of the hard drive platter. One might say that the purpose of a life is to “get your act together.” We all do this by following Essence’s plan, and Essence’s plan is *the completion of Monads*.

The Michaels were not the first to reveal Monads to humanity; the idea is ancient, e.g., yin-yang. One can also find the principle or phenomenon of Monads in the combination of two of Newton’s laws of motion, specifically inertia (the oneness of motion) as the completed Monad itself and action-reaction as the poles (the twoness of motion) of a Monad. These laws mean that the universe as a whole is balanced, so whenever there

is movement in one direction, there must be an equal and opposite reaction. In the Michaelian teachings, that which Tao fragments must eventually be reunited.

Near Death Experiencers often recount a “life review” that takes place somewhere between the Physical Plane and the Astral Plane. They re-experience their entire life from an objective point of view rather than from the subjective point of view when they lived it. This review of one’s own life typically also includes experiencing the subjective reactions of those other people who were affected by their actions. To me this seems like a Monadic reconciliation, since the NDEr experiences both sides of an experience in a way that is not probable during a lifetime.

German philosopher–mathematician W. G. Leibniz also used the word ‘Monad’ but he did not use it the same way as Michael. So how did Michael use the word?

Monads are life experiences that have the following characteristics:

- They are made up of two complementary parts, a Cardinal (yang) pole experience and an Ordinal (yin) pole experience. This gives people in one pole of a Monad a strong impetus to unite with the opposite pole. Both Personality and Essence realize that this makes life meaningful.
- When both poles of a Monad have been thoroughly experienced, the Monad is said to be complete, and the experiencer is then neutral about that particular whole experience — it does not need to be experienced again.
- The experiencer then moves up a level in a progression to other Monads, which are polar in their own way, and the Monadal process repeats itself.

Here are a few other general comments about Monads:

- The polarities of Cardinal and Ordinal are what make Monads dynamic. Life situations where there is no polarity become static.
- The universe is not static, so evolution happens, and it proceeds by trial and error, so a Thesis — similar to a mutation in biology — happens occasionally.
- Because the Universe is also balanced as a whole, whenever a Thesis happens, an Antithesis happens along with the Thesis. This is just another way of stating Newton’s law of motion: For every action there is an equal and opposite reaction.
- If Thesis and Antithesis can work out their differences and make a new Synthesis, the system evolves, meaning it advances a level.
- The Personality self is most content if it ‘plays the hand that has been dealt to it’ by the Essence self with as much grace and grit as the Personality self can muster under difficult circumstances.

The process of completing Monads pertains to many factors in life and in reincarnation, to wit:

- **Natural Monads:** This type is in the realms of physics and mathematics and various abstractions. The following list offers a guide to what Monads mean in terms of generalities. Examples listed in the original Michaelian group transcriptions are: Positive/Negative, Active/Passive, Yang/Yin, Cardinal/Ordinal, Internal/External, Affirmation/Denial, Good/Evil, Desire/Dread, Attraction/Repulsion, Energy/Mass, Cause/Effect, Simple/Complex, Spirit/Body, Sacred/Profane, Profound/Superficial, Thesis/Antithesis, Essence/Personality, Concentration/Detachment, Waxing/Waning, Pleasure/Pain. There must be hundreds of such polarities.
- **Intra-personal Monads:** In various lifetimes or even in the same lifetime, we experience the extremes of various polarities. Some of the following were mentioned in the transcriptions: Rich/Poor, Smart/Stupid, Health/Sickness, Strength/Weakness, Beautiful/Ugly, Wise/Foolish, Happy/Sad, Competent/Incompetent, Engaged/Detached, Hedonism/Austerity, Spiritual/Mundane, Fertile/Barren, Father/Mother, Male/Female, Conscientious/Negligent. There must be hundreds of such polarities. This type of Monad is sometimes referred to as ‘self-karma’ since it does not involve other people, although other people are affected by it.
- **Overleaf Monads:** Six out of each seven of these are polarized on Cardinal and Ordinal Axes just like the above Monads. Obvious examples are Dominance/Submission, Passion/Repression, Idealist/Skeptic, and Impatience/Martyrdom. Fragments experience different Overleaves in different lifetimes until all of them have been experienced in various situations, thus completing and

balancing and experiencing all of life. Perhaps this should be considered a type of intra-personal Monad.

- **Inter-personal Monads:** These Monads happen between two people generally, but sometimes also between groups of people. Examples listed in the original Michaelian group transcriptions are: Master/Pupil, Teacher/Student, Loving/Loved, Independent/Dependent, and Truth/Lying. Monads listed elsewhere include: Parent/Child, Imprinter/Imprinted, Husband/Wife, Leader/Follower, Attacker/Victim, Healer/Healed, Rescuer/Rescued, Integrator/Eccentric, Hopelessly loving/Hopelessly loved, Passionate/Repressive, Independent/Dependent, Facilitator/Facilitated, Meticulous/Slovenly, Aggressive/Passive, Adept/Apprentice, Artist/Patron, Deserter/Abandoned, Profligate/Temperate, Sophisticate/Innocent, Promiscuous/Impotent, Master/Slave, Player/Pawn, Defender/Defended, Disclosed/Hidden, Slanderer/Slandered, Jailer/Prisoner.
- **Reintegration Monads:** Fragments (souls) and groups of Fragments are polarized Cardinal and Ordinal just like so many other things in creation. Roles unite via polarity attractions: Artisan with Sage, Priest with Server, Warrior with King. The same applies with Casting: Fragments reunite with other Fragments, Cadences with other Cadences, Greater Cadences with other Greater Cadences, and Entities with other Entities along polarity axes to begin with, then merge with other Neutrals. The process continues all the way back to reunification with Tao. As part of this, individual souls and group of souls have Monadal experiences that are completed only when they reunite with their kindred souls or group of souls.

Further Reading

Messages from Michael (1979), pp. 189–192

More Messages from Michael (1986), pp. 31–32, 88–89, 157–159

Tao to Earth (1988), pp. 123–138

Michael: The Basic Teachings (1990), pp. 187–196

The Journey of Your Soul (1995), pp. 245–248

Journey of Your Soul (2013), pp. 236–238

Monads in *Messages from Michael*

The following are all of the references to Monads contained in *Messages from Michael*. Only a few of these can be found in the transcriptions that we have in our possession, and those were noted by the date of the session. It is likely that most of this material came from the ten special sessions that Chelsea Quinn Yarbro had with Sarah Chambers for the purpose of writing *MFM*.

As each lesson is learned, the Monads [essential and complete experiences and relationships] are formed. [MFM, p. 64]

Those are your choices to enable you to fulfill your agreements, complete your Sequences and Monads, and burn karma. [MFM, p. 117–118]

And are there seven of those?

There is no fixed figure for the Monads, Agreements, Sequences, and Karma. The number is up to you. [MFM, p. 118]

We would think that in the next life she will desire more activity. The next life will be at the Second Level, too, because with such Overleaves, she cannot complete the Monads she must experience in order to advance. [MFM, p. 126]

All Monads and perceptions of the [given] Cycle must be completed in the Sixth Level before the understanding and synthesis of the Seventh Level can occur. [MFM, p. 127]

Monads accomplished at these Levels have to do with doing, and often take up a great deal of time, since it is the nature of the Young Soul to try to bring others around to its own point of view, whatever that point of view is. [MFM, p. 132]

The perceptions of this man have often been painful for him and he has blocked them from his mind, which means that there are Monads that he has yet to complete at this Level. Most of the Monads of the Mature level

have to do with feelings, and this man has never learned to trust his feelings, at least in this life. [MFM, p. 144]

Most old souls' Monads have to do with being. [MFM, p. 145]

Most Sequences have to do with the completion of Monads and are agreed upon to facilitate this completion in basically short periods of time. [MFM, p. 161] [26 November 1974]

Sometimes you are the debtor, sometimes it is to you that the debt is owed. The ribbon is the thread that links you to the other Fragments of a karmic play. You wish to complete the Monad, to have both components of the relationship in your experience. As soon as this is accomplished, the fragment has evolved. As soon as the major Monads are completed, the fragments are integrated. [MFM, p. 164] [22 September 1973]

Does it sometimes take more than one lifetime to learn the lesson?

Many times you have chosen almost identical roles in order to play out a Monad. Only the times and the locations were different. [MFM, p. 164–165] [08 October 1973]

When Michael says displaced, exactly what does he mean?

We mean that the souls exchange residences and the displaced soul returns to the Astral Plane for review and to make decisions if there are lives, Monads, and Sequences left incomplete by this change. [MFM, p. 188]

Quite often the displaced soul incarnates quickly so that the Monads and Sequences begun may be completed without the necessity of all those involved in the Monads and Sequences having to return for another go at completion. [MFM, p.189]

What exactly are Monads, Sequences, and Agreements?

A Monad is an essential unit, a necessary experience. They often take more than one life to accomplish. Both chemistry and philosophy teach that a Monad is elemental and indivisible. There are a very large number of Monads, some of them interpersonal, some of them intrapersonal. The most common Monad is parent/child and student/teacher. The parent/child Monad is usually accomplished in the Young-Soul Cycle, the student/teacher Monad in the Mature- and Old-Soul Cycles. This does not mean that all such relationships are Monadal. The Monad is done only once. In other words, there is only one time that you will experience the child side of the parent/child Monad, and only once that you will experience the parent side. You will experience these Monads with the same soul. The teacher who teaches you in the student/teacher monad will be the same soul that will be your student. Let us give you an example: when you find a person whose childhood and relationship with one, and only one, of his or her parents has dominated his or her life, then it is possible that he or she is experiencing the child part of the parent/child Monad, just as the dominant parent is experiencing the parent side of the Monad. The teacher/student monad need not occur in academic surroundings; in fact, it most often does not as the nature of education requires that a teacher divide his or her attention among several pupils, and that is not the nature of the teacher/student Monad. Each Fragment must experience being the attacker and the victim, the healer and the healed, the passionate and repressive, the dependent and the independent, the rescuer and the rescued, the hopelessly loving and the hopelessly loved, to give a few obvious examples. Most of the transactions that have recently been identified as common times of crisis in adult life are often linked with an intra-personal Monad, or milestone. [MFM, p. 189–190]

When the Sequence is set up to complete a Monad, then the drive is as strong or stronger than the karmic pull. Since a Monad is a complete life experience and consists of a block of knowledge, the interruption of it requires that you start it again in another life and finish it. Completion of specific Monads is part of the evolution of the soul, and it is necessary to complete the Monads in order to advance through the Levels of the Cycles. It is not entirely inapt to say that Monads have some of the effect on the evolution of the soul that education does on the personality. A child must learn to draw in order to develop the eye-and-hand coordination necessary in reading and writing, and in a similar sense, there are Monads that must be experienced before the Fragment is ready for the next step. We do not mean to imply that there is a set structure for this and that everyone, upon reaching Mid-Cycle Young, will automatically do the parent side of the parent/child monad. The Fragment chooses between lives which of the interpersonal monads it will accomplish. The intra-personal ones, of course, are part of life.

Suppose that for some reason it isn't possible to complete a Monad — what then?

That is your choice. You will do it in some other life.

Do Monads have to do with the professional life?

Not as such, no, though it is likely your choice of profession will influence how and when you do your Monads. The closer you are to working in Essence, the more easily you will accomplish your Monads.

Are Monads part of family life, other than the parent/child Monad?

Not necessarily, but there are times when it is convenient. Often the Monads will be between siblings rather than parent and child, as the siblings are apt to have an active part in each other's lives for a longer period of time than the parents.

Are Monads part of karma?

Not essentially, although there may be karmic debts and payments associated with major Monads. However, that is comparatively rare. In general, Monads are strong enough by themselves, and so is karma, not to need the function of the other. Occasionally if a Fragment decides to abdicate a Monadal relationship it might result in karmic debts, as in the case of a dependent/independent Monad when the independent partner abdicates and as a result the dependent partner dies. That would leave the Monad incomplete and add a karmic debt.

Are supportive relationships Monadal?

Occasionally. They can also be the result of previous associations, such as former comrades-at-arms, or Entity mates, or, in the strongest of those relationships, Essence Twins.

Are sexual relationships Monadal?

Some of them are, some of them are not. Each case is individual and we cannot answer the question with a general statement. [MFM, p. 191–192]

Because of this a Fragment will sometimes require two lives of a very similar nature to complete the Monads.... The latter life was a completion of the Monads of the earlier life. [MFM, p. 218]

It is necessary that life be experienced both as male and female in different settings. This is the most important factor and the one that brings the Monads together. [MFM, p. 227] [13 December 1973]

More serious diseases are often part of Monads and Sequences, or, occasionally, a way to avoid a Sequence. [MFM, p. 228]

He completed the slave part of the master/slave monad with the boyar who had him design and build fortifications. [MFM, p. 252]

Monads and Karmic Ribbons may influence the choice of Overleaves as well. [MFM, p. 269]

The Physics of Monads

Perhaps you have heard of Newton's third law of motion, "For every action there is an equal and opposite reaction". The reason for this is that the UNIVERSE is really One (conservation laws) appearing as Two (and Two can appear as Three, but that is a different story). The Two (symmetry laws) can only contradict the One in appearance (not reality), so when Two appears, the halves must add up to One. You also know this principle in Einsteins general theory of relativity, where the speed of light in spacetime is always One and that is why when you speed up in space you slow down in time. (At the extremes, zero speed in time is the speed of light in space, and zero speed in space is the speed of light in time.) In quantum mechanics, in what is called entanglement, two particles are created from one particle, and if one particle gets perturbed and measured in one of its properties then the other particle is perturbed in that same property and can be measured as exactly the opposite.





MONEY AND MATERIALISM

Dick: Is there such a thing as spiritual materialism and is it bad?

This concept is valid, and, of course, we have not said that it is Bad Work to gain [financially] from the Teaching. The only Bad Work is when you use the gains to feed inadequate parts of False Personality. This, of course, builds up a tremendous deficit and you slide backwards. If you can make this not matter so much emotionally, you can turn it into positive spiritual material gain and benefit the ladies, and still have the pleasant feeling but without the guilt.

Making money off of spiritual teachings has been suspect at least since Jesus supposedly said “You cannot serve God and money.” — Matthew 6:24 and Luke 16:13. The challenge, of course, is to serve Essence or propagate the Logos rather than serve money, whether you have money or do not have money as a result. “Money corrupts” every bit as much as “power corrupts”, perhaps because money affords power, as well as *vice versa*. The two are commonly connected in morality tales about the dangers of both.

Comment: There is not enough to work on here [with that answer].

You are fearful of the projected ramification of an intimate relationship. These fears, of course, are culturally induced, but that is slightly irrelevant when you are struggling with them. Almost all of these fears concern some material considerations, and again are bound up in your ferocious work ethic. Intimate relationships can be expensive, for instance. Intimacy requires time and nurturing. To be intimate, you must trust. [27 March 1974]

Edgar: Why do we have to pay our debts?

Yes, responsibility is perhaps as good a word as any. [18 October 1974]

We do not recommend this, however, if there is any danger to financial integrity. [31 January 1975]

We talked about the different spiritual teachings and how, while they said much the same thing, the approach was different, and each of us had different feelings about them. For instance, the [Course in] Miracles material is very scholarly. The Seth Material appeals to Cynthia more. And this led to discussion about programming from the past, which led to a question about the value of de-conditioning processes.

De-conditioning processes: If there is a great deal of doubt and perseverance [perseverance] and the inability to move forward without them, then these [de-conditioning] processes are essential if the life goal is to be achieved. However, we must say that if the “break-away” occurs normally, then the manifestation of the soul level will also occur unimpeded, and then the fragmentary learning can be brought together in a more cohesive whole. It is possible to learn this material and allow it to effect a change of sorts without peeling back the layers, but the gains will be superficial and there will be backsliding. As to which is better, the answer would be that all that takes one back to “go” are better. In other words, the man [Arthur] Janov and the Fischer-Hoffman process, etc., are valid as long as the recipient is truly able to surrender and allow the self to have the experience. There is a great deal of “faking it” in these processes.

Surrender is perhaps the most difficult task before you, and the stakes are high if you wish to achieve what you set out to do. Therefore, many are likely to act out an experience that is not real. All of you here present have more difficulty with the concept of vulnerability and surrender than any other aspect of spiritual training. All of you are escaping the fear of poverty and degradation that the early decades of your lives instilled in you. Young ones, just ten years your junior, do not have this fear. It is not necessary to be poor in order to be spiritually

enriched. It is only necessary to give up the effort of the unrealistic goals set for you by the culture and go on from there. More true spiritual thought and action comes from relatively secure environments than from impoverished backgrounds. Squalor does not ordinarily breed enlightenment; rather, it breeds defeat, frustration and, ultimately, a giving up of goals. It's okay to be comfortable as long as the goals are realistic and do not compromise the values of the teaching — then the amount of luxury accrued is relatively trivial. In other words, if the wealth comes easily and at no expense to the spiritual life, then the wealth is immaterial. It is when the desire for the wealth overrides all spiritual considerations that trouble occurs, and then irreconcilable conflicts [between ego and Essence] arise, and there is an inability to proceed any further with any teaching. There is a point where a choice must be made and a true assessment of your material needs versus wants must occur if you are to go on. If you decide at that point that continued acquisition beyond that which is necessary is vital to your survival, then you must pursue this or dissatisfaction will follow you and plague you the rest of this life. You will give up spiritual teachings at this point — and that is not necessarily a bad choice — just a choice. [10 April 1977]





MONROE, ROBERT

Besides Georges Gurdjieff, John Lilly, and Werner Erhard, another contemporary of the original Michaelian group that had an influence on some of the members was Robert Monroe. He is famous for his out-of-body experiences. He wrote about his experiences in several books, and he led seminars, where people were trained to do what he did. Some of the original Michaelian group members read his books and took his course.





MORALITY AND ETHICS

This chapter is the product of a search for the words “morality” and “ethics” in the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group channeling sessions, and other words with a similar meaning. I have added some commentary, which consists of my analysis and synthesis of the quotations. Obviously, this word does not represent a significant component of the Michaelian teachings, but even so, the word appears often enough that it seems to me that students can benefit from seeing all of those instances documented and commented on in a chapter of this *Study Papers* book. Furthermore, the word is related to a number of other components of the Michaelian teachings that are considered to be more significant; these will be noted in the commentary on the instances of the word and its contexts. Briefly and basically, the Michaels recommended to the original Michaelian group members that they ...

So what is meant by morality and ethics? The online Merriam Webster dictionary definition is:

The words “morality” and “ethics” are not capitalized in this chapter or other chapters of this *Study Papers* book because it has no special meaning in the Michaelian teachings; it is not a Michaelian jargon word that needs a definition apart from its use in the common vernacular. One might therefore wonder why it is even included in this book. One answer is that it is just a Scholar–Cast Artisan thing to do: I study the Michaelian teachings documents and I write about them and I want to be thorough. Another answer is that trust issues are pervasive in human psychology and sociology, the subject came up in the original Michaelian group numerous times, some interesting things were said about it, and it might be helpful for Michaelian students to have the answers conveniently collected all in one place.

Dictionary Definition

Morality and Ethics per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

The following extracts from original Michaelian group transcriptions are Q&A exchanges, where an original Michaelian group member asks a question (or makes a comment), and the Michaels provide an answer. This is [not] a subject that would benefit by division into subcategories, as some subjects do. These extracts are presented in the chronological order in which they were given, even though this is not a subject where there was a development or evolution of a specific revelation of a facet of the Michaelian teachings, as was often the case with the original Michaelian group. As is my custom, I often provide some explanatory comments following the question or answer. Underlined words in the Michaels’ answers are my emphasis, to draw attention to what it is that I comment on. Sometimes I embed words or phrases [in brackets] that I believe help to clarify the question or the answer.

Concluding Comments on Morality and Ethics





MOTIVATION

This chapter is the product of a search for the word “motivation” in the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group channeling sessions. This word does not represent a significant component of the Michaelian teachings. However, there are good reasons to discuss the subject in this *Study Papers* book: 1) the subject came up numerous times during the original Michaelian group; 2) students can presumably benefit from having the mentions conveniently collected all in one place; 3) some interesting things were said about the subject; 4) the subject is related to a number of other components of the Michaelian teachings that are considered to be significant; 5) Motivation issues are pervasive in human psychology and sociology and spirituality.

The word “motivation” is not capitalized in this chapter or other chapters of this *Study Papers* book because it has no special meaning in the Michaelian teachings; it is not a Michaelian jargon word that needs a definition apart from its use in the common vernacular.

A chapter related to this chapter is the one on “Reward”, and the one on “Goal Setting”. [\[\[Look for the statements, words to the effect: “ask yourself *why* you do what you do”. Also look for the words “want” and “desire” and quote the passages that add significantly to this chapter. \]\]](#)

Definition of Motivation

So what is meant by motivation? According to Wikipedia:

Motivation is the reason for which humans and other animals initiate, continue, or terminate a behavior at a given time. Motivational states are commonly understood as forces acting within the agent that create a disposition to engage in goal-directed behavior. It is often held that different mental states compete with each other and that only the strongest state determines behavior. This means that we can be motivated to do something without actually doing it. The paradigmatic mental state providing motivation is desire. But various other states, such as beliefs about what one ought to do or intentions, may also provide motivation. Motivation is derived from the word ‘motive’, which denotes a person’s needs, desires, wants, or urges. It is the process of motivating individuals to take action in order to achieve a goal. The psychological elements fueling people’s behavior in the context of job goals might include a desire for money.

Various competing theories have been proposed concerning the content of motivational states. They are known as content theories and aim to describe what goals usually or always motivate people. Abraham Maslow’s hierarchy of needs and the ERG theory, for example, posit that humans have certain needs, which are responsible for motivation. Some of these needs, like for food and water, are more basic than other needs, such as for respect from others. On this view, the higher needs can only provide motivation once the lower needs have been fulfilled. Behaviorist theories try to explain behavior solely in terms of the relation between the situation and external, observable behavior without explicit reference to conscious mental states.

Motivation may be either intrinsic, if the activity is desired because it is inherently interesting or enjoyable, or extrinsic, if the agent’s goal is an external reward distinct from the activity itself. It has been argued that intrinsic motivation has more beneficial outcomes than extrinsic motivation. Motivational states can also be categorized according to whether the agent is fully aware of why he acts the way he does or not, referred to as conscious and unconscious motivation. Motivation is closely related to practical rationality. A central idea in this field is that we should be motivated to perform an action if we believe that we should perform it. Failing to fulfill this requirement results in cases of irrationality, known as akrasia or weakness of the will, in which there is a discrepancy between our beliefs about what we should do and our actions.

Research on motivation has been employed in various fields. In the field of business, a central question concerns work motivation, for example, what measures an employer can use to ensure that his employees are motivated. Motivation is also of particular interest to educational psychologists because of its crucial role in student

learning. Specific interest has been given to the effects of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation in this field.
[><https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Motivation>< — retrieved 26 February 2023]

Motivation per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

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Concerning Phyllis and [husband] Wynn's relationship ... he will not be interested.

He must first perceive the group as having a positive effect on those closest to him. He must also be a seeker. If he is not, then nothing you or anyone else does will have an effect on his motivation. It is possible he is not at this level. [17 August 1973]

Wynn only attended one time, many months later. As indicated in the Wikipedia article quoted in the previous section, intrinsic motivation is far better than extrinsic motivation.

Another name for intrinsic motivation is self-motivation:

Religion becomes self-motivated in the Mature Soul Cycle. The Mature Soul seeks quiet faiths — Quakers, Unitarians, Buddhism. [late August 1973]

Intrinsic spirituality in the older Soul Ages is in contrast to extrinsic religion in the younger Soul Ages. (This shift in motivation in younger souls versus older souls extends to realms other than religion.) Extrinsic religiosity is a function of the culture that one is born into and that one stays with for one's entire life, not always but generally speaking.

It [Jesus' healing the sick] was motivated in part by compassion, and in part by his knowledge of the Karmic Ribbons of those around him. [04 September 1974]

Acquiring and maintaining health is the top priority in Maslow's hierarchy of needs or motivations, mentioned in the section above. If a person does not have their physical survival needs assured, then the person is unable to focus on other needs or motivations; refer to the chapter "Health — Physical and Mental".

It [war] happens because Young Souls are in the majority on your world. They are largely motivated by the desire for material achievement [what money can buy]. This is an alienating goal. [08 September 1974]

Indeed, Soul Age is one of the major determinants of what motivates a person — or a group of any size, up to and including an entire planet. Understanding what motivates oneself is important, but it is also important to understand what motivates others:

Dick: There is a delicate line between that and going to sleep. Lots of things in life depend on expectations.

You must communicate your needs and wants to those around you. Unless you are telepathic, you must do it verbally. Then you must leave them with an option. You must make that option known to them. The alternatives, with all of the ramifications, must be understood, as well as the motivation of their acceptance or refusal. When there is complete understanding, there will be no disagreement. You have all heard this before and we must emphasize it because it is the secret to effective communication, which will banish the specter of unfulfilled expectations. [02 October 1973]

Refer to chapters "Expectations", "Communication", and "Telepathy".

Dick: I have a question about this problem of "troubled souls" [that] Michael has mentioned several times and it seems to me that all souls are troubled. This sounds like an area we ought to ask about. Are there untroubled souls?

Few Baby Souls are ever truly troubled. They rarely question their motivation, and everything that happens to them is either because they were bad and are being punished, or because they were good and are being rewarded. [20 October 1973]

Refer to the chapter "Troubled Souls". There you will read that, one of the things about troubled souls is that they are neurotic, meaning that, among other things, their motivations are confused. They are made this way in childhood, when they are especially vulnerable to the whims of capricious parents or circumstances. The

lack of a consistent extrinsic motivation in their formative years leaves them without the ability to intuit intrinsic motivations in their later years.

Regarding questioning one's motivations, growing up (in terms of both Soul Age and Life-Stage) includes doing more of this questioning along the way, so as to minimize extrinsic motivations (False Personality) and maximize intrinsic motivations (True Personality). The Michaels concur:

Ray: I'd like to know the source of the psychic phenomenon I have been experiencing lately.

The Mature Soul begins to seek and to question motivation for all life actions. When this happens, there is a gradual opening up of the soul. When this occurs, we can make limited contact. More of the unused portion of the brain comes into play during this Cycle. Psychic phenomena occur with more frequency until they are finally acknowledged and the serious work begins. [23 October 1973]

It is my experience that questions often spontaneously appear shortly before answers spontaneously appear, so therefore when you find yourself asking *why* it is that you do what you do, you can reasonably expect an answer in the not-to-distant future, and that answer will likely provide a change in your motivation.

Dick: What were some of Norma's previous lives?

Well, to start, Norma has actually been in combat thirty times. This has been both on the winning and on the losing side. She was a Viking commander and this was a pretty non-combative life for her. Exploration was her motive then. She was with Pizarro on his explorations. Also, Norma has been a female only five times. These lives were difficult for her. In one instance, she was executed for sorcery. The sorcery was good. It was the reaction of the people that was bad. [27 December 1973]

[[Continue search to end of transcriptions.]]

Concluding Comments on Motivation





MUSIC

This chapter is the product of a search for the word “**template**” in the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group channeling sessions, and other words with a similar meaning. I have added some commentary, which consists of my analysis and synthesis of the quotations. Obviously, this word does not represent a significant component of the Michaelian teachings, but even so, the word appears often enough that it seems to me that students can benefit from seeing all of those instances documented and commented on in a chapter of this *Study Papers* book. Furthermore, the word is related to a number of other components of the Michaelian teachings that are considered to be more significant; these will be noted in the commentary on the instances of the word and its contexts. Briefly and basically, the Michaels recommended to the original Michaelian group members that they

So what is meant by **template**? The online Merriam Webster dictionary definition is:

The word “**template**” is not capitalized in this chapter or other chapters of this *Study Papers* book because it has no special meaning in the Michaelian teachings; it is not a Michaelian jargon word that needs a definition apart from its use in the common vernacular. One might therefore wonder why it is even included in this book. One answer is that it is just a Scholar–Cast Artisan thing to do: I study the Michaelian teachings documents and I write about them and I want to be thorough. Another answer is that trust issues are pervasive in human psychology and sociology, the subject came up in the original Michaelian group numerous times, some interesting things were said about it, and it might be helpful for Michaelian students to have the answers conveniently collected all in one place.

Template per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

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Concluding Comments on **Template**







NEGATIVE — POSITIVE — NEUTRAL

This chapter is the product of a search for the words “negative” and “positive” and their derivatives in the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group channeling sessions. This concept does not represent a significant component of the Michaelian teachings. However, there are good reasons to discuss the subject in this *Study Papers* book: 1) the subject came up numerous times during the original Michaelian group; 2) students can presumably benefit from having the mentions conveniently collected all in one place; 3) some interesting things were said about the subject; 4) the subject is related to a number of other components of the Michaelian teachings that are considered to be significant; 5) Negativity and positivity issues are pervasive in human psychology and sociology and spirituality.

The concept of negativity-positivity is not capitalized in this chapter or other chapters of this *Study Papers* book because it has no special meaning in the Michaelian teachings; it is not a Michaelian jargon word that needs a definition apart from its use in the common vernacular.

Basically and briefly, the Michaels recommended to the original Michaelian group members that they eliminate negativity.

Definition of Negativity and Positivity

So what is meant by negativity? The online Merriam Webster dictionary definition is:

Negativity per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

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Concluding Comments on Negativity and Positivity

List the types of negativity documented in the main body of this chapter.





OBJECTIVITY AND SUBJECTIVITY

This chapter is the product of a search for the word objectivity and subjectivity in the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group channeling sessions. This word does not represent a significant component of the Michaelian teachings. However, there are good reasons to discuss the subject in this *Study Papers* book: 1) the subject came up numerous times during the original Michaelian group; 2) students can presumably benefit from having the mentions conveniently collected and commented all in one place; 3) some interesting things were said about the subject; 4) the subject is related to a number of other components of the Michaelian teachings that are considered to be significant; 5) Objectivity and subjectivity issues are pervasive in human psychology and sociology and spirituality.

The words objectivity and subjectivity is not capitalized in this chapter or other chapters of this *Study Papers* book because it has no special meaning in the Michaelian teachings; it is not a Michaelian jargon word that needs a definition apart from its use in the common vernacular.

This chapter is one of many in this book that focuses on a psychological and psychotherapeutic component of the Michaelian teachings as found in original Michaelian group transcriptions, rather than on a spiritual component, as so many other chapters in this book do. The Michaelian version of psychology is not to be confused with the pop psychology of the self-improvement movement, those that do not have a spiritual core or perspective. Rather, the Michaelian psychotherapeutic path (aimed at improving psychological health) is a beneficial precursor to the spiritual path (aimed at improving soul health). To skip the former but attempt the latter is referred to as “spiritual bypassing” (>https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spiritual_bypass<), and it usually proves to be problematic.

Definition of Objectivity and Subjectivity

So what is meant by [template?](#) The online Merriam Webster online dictionary definition is: [Wikipedia has an article that provides a definition and a description, as follows:](#)

Objectivity and Subjectivity per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

The following extracts from original Michaelian group transcriptions are Q&A exchanges, where an original Michaelian group member asks a question (or makes a comment), and the Michaels provide an answer. This [is \[not\]](#) a subject that would benefit by division into subcategories, as some subjects do. [These extracts are \[not\] presented in the chronological order in which they were given, even though this is not a subject where there was a development or evolution of a specific revelation of a facet of the Michaelian teachings, as was often the case with the original Michaelian group.](#) As is my custom, I usually provide some explanatory comments following the question or answer. Underlined words are my emphasis, to draw attention to what it is that I comment on. Sometimes I embed words or phrases [in brackets] that I believe help to clarify the question or the answer.

Concluding Comments on Objectivity and Subjectivity





OVERLEAVES

Refer to Chapter 2A “Revelation of Overleaves” in my book *A History of the Overleaf Chart*. It is forty-four pages long, and covers everything that the Michaels’ had to say in the original Michaelian group transcriptions. Section titles are:

- Overleaves
- Centers
- Soul Ages
- Levels
- Roles
- Goals
- Attitudes
- Chief Features
- Modes
- Positive and Negative Poles of Overleaves





⑥ OVERLEAVES, CHANGING

Channeling during the original Michaelian group said that Overleaves can be changed, but subsequent sources said they cannot change or be changed. That latter idea was stated explicitly in *Messages from Michael* (MFM, 1979), and the Michaelian teachings community in general has followed that idea; I am not going to document that with a lot of quotes, but I am going to present the original Michaelian group perspective on the notion that the Overleaves can be changed.

The idea of changing Overleaves was presented in the context of the Chief Feature in MFM, pp. 114 and 117. There it says that the Chief Feature is not an established part of the personality until about the age of twenty, that enlightenment happens if one extinguishes the Chief Feature later on in life, but usually one Chief Feature is just exchanged for another, and that Chief Feature is the only Overleaf that it is possible to change or eliminate.

Some of this is corroborated within the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group, and some is not, exactly. One of the first hints that a person could change an Overleaf was the following:

Are these Goals a changeable thing in one's lifetime?

These Goals may be altered. However, the insight rarely comes. This is why psychotherapy sometimes works.
[25 December 1973]

Another hint appeared a couple of months later:

The drug [Dilantin] would mask the Retardation [Goal] then would it not?

It does modify, but not permanently, but the holiday created by the drug allows you to suggest this alteration of the soul. [24 February 1974]

One might want to do more than mask or temporarily modify an Overleaf. More than a hint that this is possible appeared in the next session. When the Michaels first revealed their list of seven Chief Features, they said this:

Alice: Can these [Chief Features] be changed in our lifetime? Can you get rid of them?

You must grow to extinguish this.

Comment: In other words, we must go through our Chief Features to arrive at Agape.

You must grow to the point where this [Chief Feature] is no longer a barrier to Agape. [27 February 1974]

These statements would seem to make Chief Features in some sense *less real* than the other Overleaf categories (Goal, Mode, Attitude, Center), because those other Aspects are alleged to last from birth to death and do not change (MFM, p. 117). This assertion about the Chief Feature makes an interesting contrast to the Role, because the assertion about the Role is that it is in some sense *more real* than all of the other Overleaf categories, since these others change via choices of the Essence from lifetime to lifetime — Role allegedly lasts through the whole series of incarnations (MFM, p. 94).

It is interesting to note that in the original Michaelian group transcriptions, a different assertion was presented, namely that one could change any one of the Overleaves if one were willing and able to exert sufficient effort and apply effective techniques. The subject was raised because two of the members were really unhappy about their Repression Mode, and one member about her Caution Mode:

Is it possible to change these Overleaves in this life?

As all the other Overleaves, these are alterable on the way to [spiritual] growth.

Narra: If one is in Repression, how can he change?

One must wish to change and consciously make the choice. [03 April 1974]

You may do the work [of changing an Overleaf] within this Teaching, but in order to do so, you must be able to recall the reasons you [the soul self] chose the offending Overleaf, and this means following up on your intuitive

drives. Those coming out of the Repression Mode often do so explosively and with much resentment over all that they have missed. Some of this “shock” therapy you will see should give you considerable insight into where the work is.

Refer to the chapter “Shock” for more about that. Basically and briefly, sometimes a person needs to be shocked by some event in order for it to ‘awake’ from a spiritual ‘sleep’ and make some real changes in its life; refer to the chapter on “Awakening from Sleep”.

Cheryl: How can I get out of my Caution Mode?

The only way to alter this is again to understand why you chose it in the first place. To Photograph [excessive] deliberation over mundane decisions and [then] attempt to act rather than to think. We know of no better way than to become disgusted by your own Photographs and thereby be literally forced out of the Overleaf. [14 April 1974]

Refer to the chapter on “Photography” for more information about that practice, which will help one out of slavery to one’s default Overleaves. There are other ways to break the mold and break the hold:

Dick: How can I get out of Repression [Mode]? It is stronger than Agape.

We know of only one effective method to break the thread, and that is through a marathon type of experience where there is a total breakdown of the defenses to almost the psychotic point.

Dick: Where can this be obtained?

You can do it within this group, or you can request it from therapists who conduct these experiences, but you must make a contract with yourself at the time that you will stick it out.

Dick: I doubt that it would last more than one day. What do they mean, “in this group”?

With group agreement, yes. [14 April 1974]

If one is serious about changing one’s personality, then one could consider recent scientific research on the effectiveness of psychedelics for changing personality. Dick tried marijuana — refer to the chapter “Psychedelics” — but something stronger was needed in his case. The problem here is that there are healthy “psychotic” breaks and there are unhealthy psychotic breaks, so one should only do megadoses of ego-dissolving psychedelics under the supervision of an experienced psychotherapist. If going that route does not seem appealing to you, then you are left with the other recommendations that are documented in this chapter, such as psychotherapy.

The last Overleaf (Modes) seems so powerful that I’m wondering if it is driven by Karma? Does burning Karma change this Mode?

Especially where the mode of approach [to burning the Karma] is concerned, yes. Without acknowledgment of the [Karmic] debts, there can be no understanding of the drive. [17 April 1974]

Refer to the chapter on “Karma” for more about that subject. This and other passages indicate that a particular Overleaf might have been chosen for the purpose of helping to burn a Karmic Ribbon. If/when the Ribbon is burned, then perhaps there is not more need for that Overleaf. Perhaps that idea could be expanded to apply to what we students now call “self-Karma”. Assuming that the soul might choose an Overleaf to learn a particular lesson, when the lesson is learned, then perhaps there is no more need to retain that Overleaf. Therefore, learn your Karmic and self-Karmic lessons during the lifetime and you might get freed from a difficult Overleaf within that lifetime, rather than between lifetimes.

It may be that this idea of burning Ribbons is found in the notion of “experiencing it out”, as we see in the next Q&A exchange:

Dick: We can tell in the book [proposed to be written] how we have received the material intellectually. However, we don’t yet have the necessary steps to overcome our Overleaves. We have some keys, such as “experiencing it out”, and meditation, fasting, studying, which seem non-directive. If one is in Growth, he cannot see what Acceptance is like for others; and if one is in Acceptance, he cannot see how other people in Growth, for example, react. As a consequence, one has only a dim idea of where one is going if a change of Overleaves is attempted.

Refer to chapters “Meditation and Concentration”, “Fasting”, and “Study” for more about these methods to mitigate Overleaves that seem to impede spiritual growth. Dick felt that these practices were not enough for him personally, and even if they were adequate, this begs the question: which Overleaf shall one switch to? Elsewhere (see below), the Michaels do say that Growth and Acceptance are the most suitable Goals for spiritual evolution, but still, how does one know that one or the other of those Goals is optimal for oneself?

Sarah: It may be that when you have had enough of that Overleaf, you may take on a different Overleaf.

As I said above.

Dick: Our material on what to do is not specific. Could Michael recommend ways of changing our Overleaves?

The primary difficulty in altering the Overleaves is in the initial recognition and the constant verification, which must precede the true desire to alter. When this has been accomplished, then the process of anticipation can begin. We can compare it with recognizing that you were about to say the forbidden word and substituting a suitable synonym (the “get, I, very, really and, a lot” exercises). This was, of course, a crutch, but hopefully, a temporary one that could be discarded when the process becomes inculcated. Therapeutic processes can speed up the alteration where the pattern is not clear. However, this group can work toward that point where the psychic Photography is so finely tuned that the eventual breakthrough can come within the present structure. Many times, the meditation does serve as a precursor of insightful concentration. This is why it is so valuable. We find no fault with crutches so long as they are given up when you are no longer lame.

Refer to the chapter “Crutch” for more about temporary expedients in a learning or healing process; a particular Overleaf might just be a ‘crutch’ that can be discarded. Refer to the chapters “Validation and Verification” and “Knowledge” for more about the process of turning external data into internal understanding. The method recommended here for changing an Overleaf is to be vigilant: if you see the unwanted Overleaf about to ‘trip you up’, then ‘nip it in the bud’. Apply intentionality to express the preferred Overleaf. Do this enough times and for a long enough period, and eventually the preferred Overleaf will become automatic. This method is commonly called “fake it till you make it”.

Dick: The message I get is that there are no keys. The results of all psychotherapy appear temporary. It seems that Michael could come up with something besides Rolling or some other type of existing therapy — something with more zock. It seems Michael is always holding something back. Perhaps I want a miracle, but it does seem that it takes something wonderful, which is akin to a miracle, to affect true spiritual growth, and a part of this would be a change in Overleaves.

It is true that there are so-called “spiritually transformative experiences” such as kundalini awakening, *shaktipat* by an enlightened master, and Near Death Experiences. Sometimes that is what it takes for a real and deep change in a personality trait. However, these are rare, so we cannot count on them.

Sarah: A good teacher keeps students unfulfilled to keep them coming back for another lesson.

Of course, there are (ways). We have spoken to you many times of conscious recall of the dreams and of the time spent on the Astral Plane, but most must go through this process one step at a time. Most cannot jump from that Maya-filled life in which they find themselves into the too rarefied atmosphere of enlightenment. These processes are valid, but they do take time and they do open doors to many more processes that bring you ever closer to the goal. We would Photograph your Impatience now, and that is not necessarily a bad place to start. There is no truly rapid method by which you can throw off the weighted cloak of culture and society; this takes time.

So, don’t expect miracles; changing Overleaves is a long slow slog; it is a marathon, not a sprint.

Refer to chapters on “Planes”, “Maya”, and “Enlightenment” for more about those subjects.

Note in passing that some of the discrepancies on this topic at various times and places in the history of the Michaelian teachings can be reconciled if one becomes aware of shifting definitions of Essence and Personality, and of True Personality and False Personality, as the Michaelian teachings evolved out of the Gurdjieffian teachings and into its own thing. These transitions are covered in chapters on those subjects in this *Study Papers* book. The use of the word Maya here might provide a clue to a reconciliation of the discrepancy between the original Michaelian group and subsequent groups. During the first year and a half of the original Michaelian group, the Negative (and Positive) Poles of the Overleaves had not yet been revealed. In that context, changing Overleaves made sense. Subsequent to the original Michaelian group, the notion of changing from one Overleaf to another was exchanged for the notion of getting out of the Negative Poles and into the Positive Poles.

Dick: Will Michael render assistance? Some people seem to have been granted grace.

We have offered the only assistance there is. We cannot change the Overleaves for you. We are not able to interfere to that extent. There has been no interference in these other instances, you may be certain of that. They choose to call the insight by other names, such as “grace,” that is all.

Dick: I don’t know why I want to write a book when I cannot even change my own Overleaves. [10 May 1974]

Regarding “grace”, Dick is correct in that so-called “spiritually transformative experiences” such as kundalini awakening, extreme psychedelics, *shaktipat* by a guru, and Near Death Experiences can “magically” change a Personality for the better permanently, but these are rare and typically spontaneous. Until that happens, such practices as Photography, meditation, fasting, and study will have to do.

What part of [the] Overleaves are in Essence and what [part are] in Personality?

All of the Overleaves are geared to the Physical Plane and thus primarily of the False Personality. Of course, you cannot alter your Body Type or Role except by subtle extinguishment, and this is achieved only after all else is Balanced [the fourth Level of Being]. Thus, the Role can still manifest in one acting primarily out of Essence [fourth Level of Being and above], but not to any measurable extent in the occult Master [the seventh Level of Being]. [25 June 1974]

Refer to the chapters “Balanced Man” and “Levels of Being” and “Adept and Master” and “Enlightenment” and “Body Type” and “Role”. Note that in the original Michaelian group, both Body Type and Role are considered to be Overleaves — they are “in Personality”, not “in Essence” — and therefore both can be extinguished at exalted stages of enlightenment, such as “Adepts and Masters”; refer to the chapter by that name. Refer to Chapters 4C and 4D in my book, *A History of the Overleaf Chart* to read more evidence and argument for that assertion.

Dick: I need a change of my Overleaves in order to have courage enough to look at strange people’s eyes as deeply as I need to, but rarely do. It seems that a Power Mode would be best for this, or Passion [Mode] also.

Going from Repression [Mode] will be difficult for you. We know this, and will be of as much help as we can....

This is a learned skill, and we would think that it would be Good Work for you to regard this as your personal task, and, incidentally, it would be good to move you out of that place you no longer wish to inhabit. [07 July 1974]

Refer to the chapter “Good Work, Bad Work”, for more discussion about those Michaelian phrases. Refer to the chapter “Essence and Personality” for more about the notion that it is important that the wishes of the Personality be in alignment with the wishes of the Essence. Of course this includes any desire to change an Overleaf during a lifetime.

In the quotations below, pay attention to the difference between psychotherapeutic methods for becoming a better human being with a healthier personality, and spiritual methods for transcending Personality, aka living in Essence.

Dick: Michael has a job to do, too, as I see it and that is to produce #4 and #5 people in his teaching. (See In Search of the Miraculous, by P.D. Ouspensky, for enlightenment on men with numbers.) If Michael is sensitive, he will help us solve our internal problems. The discovery track of what we are has to be complete before becoming a #4 or #5 man. Comment, please.

We have given you the tools by which you can discover these within yourself. Telling you where the problem areas are would produce the same initial hostility and resentment as hearing it from a psychologist would. When you discover them within yourself, you also at that time verify them for yourself and then they are truth for you. Until then, they are merely the opinions of another. Pointing to the tools is sometimes not enough and the path is agonizingly slow. We would say that the conscious beings you have mentioned (Jesus, Fulton Sheen, Gandhi, etc.) were not given more than the tools in the beginning. As you begin to use the tools, then you are given more material to work on. Only then can the path be trodden in a straight line. Until you begin to use the tools, all you have is information and more information can hinder your growth rather than help it, if all previous data has not been assimilated. One of the things you have not verified to your satisfaction is your own ability to change some of your uncomfortable Overleaves, and until you do, all lessons concerning the how-to of more difficult tasks would be in vain. All is changeable; nothing is stationary. [03 September 1974]

Refer to the chapter “Levels of Being” for more about “Man Numbers” and the stages of spiritual growth. As we will see further on, spiritual practices (“tools”) can eventually grow the person so much that the Overleaves become “obsolete”.

How could this Synthesis be used in psychotherapy?

We would say go ahead and tamper. You can do [no] harm, for if they cannot look at it, they will just go on their merry way.

For those we know as Self-destructors, we would recommend a very radical approach, such as that of the man Arthur Janov [or] regression hypnosis if their belief system does not include the possibility of reincarnation. The latter will still often be successful, as the memories are still buried there, and in the trance can override the belief system. However, these souls are experts at rejecting solutions to their problems. It still remains that you cannot force one to change his Overleaves, but if you are successful, it will simply mean that one was ready to seek the change. [08 October 1974]

The Negative Pole of some Overleaves, when severe enough, can conceivably be diagnosed by a psychotherapist as a clinical “personality disorder”. For a list of these, refer to internet resources, such as

><https://www.healthyplace.com/personality-disorders/personality-disorders-information/personality-disorders-list><. Michaelian students should be able to see the correlation. Personality disorders are particularly difficult to treat, because the person who has one typically does not see it as a problem for themselves; they tend to blame others.

You can come eventually to knowledge of just who might benefit from this knowledge and who will not. For instance, some of these “dregs” are in the Cycle where they could be able to look at their own destructive Overleaves and choose to change them. But at the present time, you do not know the reason why they have become dregs and, therefore, you cannot possibly help them to look at it themselves, except on a most haphazard basis. If you wish to do this, we would suggest that you start here. [07 December 1974]

Refer to the chapters “Buffers” and “Insight” and “Reflection, Self-” and “Self-observation” for more about the desirability of self-awareness in the changing process. Personality disorders are often formed in infancy or childhood, when the person is defenseless against abuse, and that is one reason it is so difficult to change. This passage tells us that it is Good Work for Michaelian students to discern when a personality is so toxic that it cannot likely be changed, versus discerning when a personality can be changed.

So, during the first year and a half of the original Michaelian group sessions, there are unambiguous statements about the possibility of, and even desirability of, changing one’s Overleaves, with stipulations about how and why and when. However, near the end of 1974 or the beginning of 1975, the story seems to have changed somewhat, based on what I see in the following Q&A exchanges:

Leslie asked if her Goal had changed from Acceptance to Growth. She is a Mid-Cycle [Fourth Level] Mature Warrior in Acceptance, Intellectual Part of Moving Center, Idealist, Passion Mode, Stubbornness as Chief Feature, Body Type Mars–Lunar.

As we have told you before, the Goal of Acceptance is in itself a powerful Exalted [Cardinal] Goal from which spiritual enlightenment can spring. With this [Goal], there is no need for a switch in Overleaves — merely extinguishment of the Negative Pole [–Ingratiation], which in this case is the desperate need to be accepted universally by others. In exchange for this, you come into the Positive Pole [+Agape], which is, of course, the unqualified acceptance of others, just as the Negative Pole of the Growth Goal [–Confusion] involves tremendous scattering of energies as the soul rushes from school to school searching feverishly for that illusive “way”. [09 November 1974]

Here we see that the desired change in personality might only involve the transition from the Negative to the Positive Pole of an Overleaf, not a change from one Overleaf to another.

Ralph: [Regarding] The Essence experience on the Physical Plane and the relation to Roles: If meditation attains Personality-less-ness, is this experience without Role and is it on the Physical Plane?

We would not describe this experience [Personality-less-ness] as being wholly on the Physical Plane as it does indeed transcend the planes and yes, it can happen to you within this lifetime. It is well within the grasp of all of our students; you have only to set it as the transient goal and apply what you now know. The Overleaves affect you only when you are strongly committed to the needs of the Personality. Once it [the needs of the Personality] has been achieved [satisfied], it will no longer be the goal. [02 January 1975]

This is one hint (there are others) that the Overleaves can be regarded as obsolete when the spiritual aspirant has grown from satisfying the needs of the Personality to satisfying the needs of the Essence.

Balancing seems to involve more than just Centers. Other Overleaves?

Not only can Mechanical Man not “do,” but he also cannot think, and if this is denied, how can you possibly choose to change an Overleaf? [16 January 1975]

Refer to the chapters “Mechanical Man” and “Balanced Man”. This is just another naming convention for the shift from living in Personality to living in Essence.

Joan asked if the Essence has a personality. Does this relate to the Positive Poles [of the Overleaves]?

In order for the True Personality to emerge, the student must be in a firm [unperturbable] state of Balance, and if the Centers are Balanced, all work will be from the Positive Poles of all Overleaves. In fact, at that moment, the whole concept of Overleaves becomes obsolete. Balanced Man is not a victim of his Overleaves any longer. This is, of course, why the work is to strive for Balance, and why we attempt to effect those exercises that will allow you to choose the work you need tailor made. [25 January 1975]

One may read about what Gurdjieff and the Michaels referred to as “Balanced Man” in a chapter by that name in this book. Briefly, “Balanced Man” is a “Level of Being” between “Mechanical Man” who lives in

Personality and “Adept and Master” who live in Essence. Living in Essence is more or less equivalent to transcending Personality, and even the Positive Poles of the Overleaves are still in Personality.

Both [people] are able to look at their Overleaves and choose to alter them into workable ones... [31 January 1975]

Mechanical Man is governed by Personality, and Personality includes the Overleaves. Balanced Man has transcended Mechanical Man, and not only “changed” the Overleaves, but obsoleted them:

Balance implies obsolescence of the Overleaves. [08 February 1975]

In summary, the teaching shifted from 1) changing an uncomfortable Overleaf, to 2) growing out of the Negative Poles of Overleaves into the Positive Poles, to 3) growing out of the Overleaves altogether. The modern Michaelian teachings is mostly stuck at stage 2, in my opinion. Michaelian students these days may be focused on psychotherapy in the sense of mitigating Chief Feature and Negative Poles, but they are not much focused on going beyond the psychotherapeutic path, upward and onward to spiritual growth, using the tools recommended in the original Michaelian group transcriptions.

Concluding Comments on Changing Overleaves

According to the Michaels during the original Michaelian group, one could allegedly change one’s Overleaves, or one could transcend one’s Overleaves, but in *MFM* and subsequent publications of the Michaelian teachings one allegedly could not. Going by these statements alone, we cannot say for certain if the latter assertion is an improvement or a regression on the former assertion. Therefore a rigid orthodoxy about this and various other unvalidatable assertions of the Michaelian teachings is inappropriate. The personal experience of Michaelian students over the decades might tend to confirm that Overleaves are not easily or likely changed or transcended, but that does not mean that it is impossible.

However, I have a suggestion, not an assertion. My reconciliation of these apparently contradictory statements — the ability to change or not to change the Overleaves — is as follows.

There is the sense in which the Overleaves were chosen by the soul for its own reasons within the multi-lifetime grand plan, and the ignorant, stupid, foolish Personality self should just surrender or yield to the ‘will of God’, so to speak, and ‘play the hand that is dealt to it’ by destiny or fate or whatever you want to call it — of course with as much skill as it can muster. But that isn’t quite the picture that the Michaelian teachings as a whole paints; it is more complicated than that. It boils down to this: it depends on where a person is on the unconscious-conscious spectrum. The general idea is that there is a negotiation, a communication, between soul and Personality. The soul-self does not inexorably impose its preferences on the Personality-self, except to say that we are born with the Overleaves as our defaults, and these can be regarded as “constraints” when we are at the less-conscious end of the spectrum, and as “opportunities” when we are at the more-conscious end of the spectrum. As we become more “conscious” on our spiritual paths, we can intentionally choose to depart from the unconscious reactive defaults where/when our accumulated understanding and wisdom says we “should”, or when we just want to explore and experiment to see what would happen.

One of the stated goals of the Michaelian teachings is to make the Overleaves “obsolete”, and then we become self-aware enough to choose the most appropriate response to whatever situation we find ourselves in. This state is known as “Balanced Man”; refer to the chapter by that name. Even further along on the consciousness spectrum, Personality can be set aside when we are truly Self-aware, and then Essence is very much in charge; we are “enlightened”. In the Michaelian teachings this stage of development is known as “Adept and Master”; refer to the chapter by that name.





OVERLEAVES — INTERACTIONS

Several times in the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group, it is recorded that the Michaels mention that the Overleaves of two people can “abrade” or words to that effect. It was also said that a person can have Overleaves that abrade with each other. This chapter is a record of those instances.

Perhaps every human has experienced this phenomenon, which in the context of psychology is generally called a “personality conflict” or “clash”, where people find that they ‘rub each other the wrong way’. Wikipedia even has an article on this. It is brief, so I quote the entire thing; my comments are interspersed in the quotation:

A personality clash occurs when two (or more) people find themselves in conflict not over a particular issue or incident, but due to a fundamental incompatibility in their personalities, their approaches to things, or their style of life. A personality clash may occur in work-related, family-related, or social situations.

Types

Carl Jung saw the polarity of extraversion and introversion as a major potential cause of personality conflicts in everyday life, as well as underlying many past intellectual and philosophical disputes. He also opposed thinking and feeling types, intuitive and sensation types, as potential sources of misunderstanding between people; while other typologies can and have been developed since.

Refer to the chapter “Personality Typology” in my book *The Tao of Personality* for a brief introduction to Jung’s system of personality types, as well as an introduction to numerous other systems. There you will see that personality traits in these various system are often listed in a way that shows them to be contrary to each other: there is a trait and then there is the opposite of that trait. I refer to this as “Twoness”. In that chapter I note that one can often find a “Threeness” in many personality typologies: the contrary traits are arranged in three “dimensions”. In the case of Jung, the three dimensions contain the contraries of Extraversion versus Introversion, of Thinking versus Feeling, and of Intuitive versus Sensation. Basically, whereas Twoness is direct and creates conflict in the form of opposition, Threeness is indirect and creates conflict in the form of misunderstanding.

In the workplace

The issue of personality clashes in the workplace is controversial. According to the Australian government, the two types of workplace conflicts are when people’s ideas, decisions or actions relating directly to the job are in opposition, or when two people just don’t get along. Turner and Weed argue that in a conflict situation, don’t ask who, ask what and why. Managers should avoid blaming interpersonal conflicts on personality clashes. Such a tactic [of blaming] is an excuse to avoid addressing the real causes of conflict, and the department’s performance will suffer as a result. Managers must be able to recognize the signs of conflict behaviors and deal with the conflict in a forthright fashion. Approaching conflicts as opportunities to improve departmental policies and operations rather [than] as ailments to be eradicated or ignored will result in a more productive work force and greater departmental efficiency. However, in order to avoid recognizing harsher business bullying situations, employers are more likely to refer to these actions as a personality clash.

As we will see further on in this chapter, one of the reasons that the Michaels revealed the Overleaf System is so that their students eventually come to understand the reasons for personality clashes, and work their way past them, ultimately eventuating in Agape. It might be unreasonable to expect business managers to become amateur psychotherapists, but it is not unreasonable for the Michaels to expect their students to become amateur psychotherapists.

In therapy

Sigmund Freud thought a harmonious match of therapist and patient was essential for psychotherapy; but subsequent experience has demonstrated that success can follow even where there is an underlying personality

clash. Neville Symington indeed saw a patient's willingness to proceed with therapy, despite her dislike of him, as a positive sign of health, and as a beginning repudiation of her narcissism.

In psychotherapy and in the Michaelian teachings, one should not avoid or deny personality conflicts. Rather, one should view them as opportunities for psychological and spiritual growth; one should face them squarely, one should use tools such as the Overleaf System and other personality typologies to understand them and get past them and thereby evolve into a higher level of grace and knowledge.

Remedies

Some suggest that the only answer to a personality clash is the folk remedy of distancing — reducing contact with the clashing personality involved. Other recommendations are to focus on the positives in the other person, and to examine one's own psychodynamics for clues as to why one is finding them so difficult — perhaps due to a projection of some unacknowledged part of one's own personality. Howard Gardner saw a major part of what he called interpersonal intelligence as the ability to mediate and resolve such personality clashes from the outside.

As we will see below, the Michaels sometimes recommended distancing, and sometimes recommended working it out. Furthermore, it is often the case that oneself is the jerk rather than it is always the case that the other person is the jerk. This fact is addressed in the chapter "Self-observation" of this *Study Papers* book. The work of Howard Gardner is briefly reviewed in the chapter "Personality Typology" in my book *The Tao of Personality*.

Examples

Circumstances conspired to produce a painful personality clash between the ordered, cerebral, emotionally contained A. J. P. Taylor, and the spendthrift, bohemian, expansive Dylan Thomas.

The clash between the cautious, moderate Harley and the mercurial, extremist Bolingbroke at the close of Queen Anne's reign did much to usher in the long Whig ascendancy that followed.

The personality clash between Henry Tizard and Frederick Lindemann had adverse effects on the Allied conduct of World War Two.

C. P. Snow in his semi-autobiographical novel on the corridors of power described caballing with someone whose temperament "clashed right at the roots with mine: even if he was not being offensive, he would have tempted me to say something hard. But I was doing a job, and I couldn't afford luxuries, certainly not the luxury of being myself". [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Personality_clash — retrieved 03 July 2022]

The opposite — affinity and attraction and harmony between personalities — is also just as true, and this is common knowledge. [quotation?] The similarity of this personality stuff to chemistry — where different chemicals happily combine whereas others unhappily repel — is so obvious that 'chemistry' has become a metaphor for positive and negative interactions between personalities. What are we to make of this? How can this be? This chapter only examines what the original Michaelian group transcriptions had to say on the subject, but at the end of this chapter the reader is referred to a lengthy treatise on the subject that can be found in one of my other books.

Interactions between Overleaves

The following extracts from original Michaelian group transcriptions are Q&A exchanges, where an original Michaelian group member asks a question (or makes a comment), and the Michaels provide an answer. **This is not a subject that would benefit by division into subcategories.** These extracts are presented in the chronological order in which they appear in the transcriptions. As is my custom, I often provide some explanatory comments following the question or answer. Underlined words in the Michaels' answers are my emphasis, to draw attention to what it is that I comment on. Sometimes I embed words or phrases [in brackets] that I believe help to clarify the question or the answer.

The first reference to this subject in the original Michaelian group transcriptions was that there are Overleaves that attract:

Mallory: Why was he not my teacher?

There was not sufficient polar attraction.

Alice: Would this have to do with Body Types or what?

This takes into consideration all of the Overleaves.

Mallory: Do Warriors and Scholars conflict?

No. This is one of the greatest affinities.

Alice: Would it be better for a marriage relationship to have the persons in different Centers of Gravity? I understand that my husband and I are both Intellectually Centered. Is this a source of our problems?

Being in the same Center of Gravity usually makes for an easier relationship rather than a more difficult one.

Your problems are in the difference in Goals [Growth versus Submission]. [20 January 1974]

The key to understanding attraction and repulsion between Overleaves is the word “polar”, which refers to Cardinal and Ordinal pairs on the same Axis, whether that be Action, Inspiration, or Expression. Perhaps you have heard the aphorism, “opposites attract”. That is the case with polarity in terms of physics phenomena such as magnetism (North and South poles) and electricity (positive and negative ions), and it is the case with personality phenomena within the Overleaf System. These Axes are recognized as Attributes that apply to rows (or columns) along *one* edge of the Overleaf chart, but what is not generally recognized is that the Axes apply to the columns (or rows) along the *other* edge of the Overleaf chart. That is to say, Goal and Mode are an Ordinal/Cardinal pair, Chief Feature and Role are an Ordinal/Cardinal pair, and Attitude and Center are an Ordinal/Cardinal pair. As we will see toward the end of this chapter, this information was in the channeling pipeline late in the history of the original Michaelian group, but then the original Michaelian group meetings ended, interrupting the revelation. The revelation did not resume until I perceived the Axial polarities of the Overleaf categories in 1981.

The first indication that there could be conflicts between Overleaves appeared in the original Michaelian group transcriptions about a month before all of them had been revealed:

Dick: Certain Overleaves like Rejection are not compatible with some Centers, say the king of hearts (Emotional Part of Emotional). I do not see how a person could be there and be in Rejection.

No, but there are some extremely hostile souls enTrapped there. Emotional and hostile, too. The soul here is often the man who kills because “God told me to”.

Dick: Is this a major source of conflict in people?

Many times it is.

Dick: They are in Centers not compatible with the [other] Overleaves. Could we have some examples of this?

One example is females who use their sexuality as a weapon; [they] are usually in Rejection and Trapped in the Emotional Part of Emotional Center.

Would Marilyn Monroe be an example of this?

[No.] The lady Norma Jean was in Rejection, but in the Intellectual Part of Emotional Center; [she] did not use sex as a weapon; [she] was truly a pitiable soul.

Ray: Is that where my first wife was?

Yes, she was — many are. This is a frequent cause of domestic strife.

Ray: What was the conflict in her Centers?

The Goal of Dominance and the enTrapment in the Emotional Part of Emotional Center. [06 March 1974]

Refer to the chapter “Centering Traps”. Elsewhere [where?] it is said that the right place to be is in the same Part of Center as the Center, so I do not understand these Q&A exchanges.

Milly: Do I have any Karmic Ribbons or ties with my mother that may cause me to have negative feelings there?

No, this is not Karma. It is simply a case of some of the Overleaves repelling each other. This is not an unusual phenomenon. This lady is very different from you. [20 March 1974]

The mechanics of the repulsion was not explained here, but the beginnings of an explanation surfaced later.

Alice: Do [husband] Dick and I have Karmic Ribbons?

Not financial.

Alice: What then?

The financial problems arise mostly out of the scrapes from the differing Overleaves. Mostly the two of you agreed to play out this Sequence.... [20 March 1974]

Evidently, one’s Overleaves can incline one to like to spend money or like to save money, or have different priorities regarding what to spend money on. Marriage counselors report that this is one of the biggest and/or most common issues that married couples confront.

Dick: Can't we just have a "yes" or "no" answer to see if they are from this life or another one?

The nervous grimaces arose from adolescent experiences in this life and are directly related to the opposition of the Acceptance Goal and the Chief Feature (Stubbornness). [14 April 1974]

Mallory: Do I have bad Karma with AlexN? Why do I have such clashes with him?

The Friction is caused by clashing Overleaves. [30 May 1974]

Marty: [Is there a] Sequence between Cynthia and I?

The Sequence that is there is not so much what you see. There is also some incompatibility of Overleaves here. [05 June 1974]

[Twinning] is elective and based upon initially compatible Overleaves. This, of course, means that the Overleaves of the twins will not always be compatible, which makes some strained but still very special relationships. In some instances, the twins are drawn together in a love-hate relationship that defies reason. [25 June 1974]

Since the man's Overleaves are definitely not in conflict, this soft Sage [with a Goal of Acceptance] should not rankle you. [07 July 1974]

Ted: Asked for a comment about "which Overleaves we should work on" in light of the problems he and [his wife] Liz are currently having.

This is much a clash of Goals. That is the one where the work is needed. [17 September 1974]

Ted was in Dominance, Liz was in Growth.

Only those with harsh Overleaves need fear.

What are the harsh Overleaves?

Greed and Aggression in combination with Rejection and Aggression. [17 September 1974]

The Acceptance, of course, is your strongest Overleaf. You may change this. We would recommend at least blunting it. It is taking its toll. It will not be possible for you to grow without this. The same could be said for Dick, only he is aware of the fact that the Repression [Mode] is standing between him and his Essence. [21 September 1974]

Discussion about Overleaves — positive and negative sides. Acceptance seems to be Richard's strongest, maybe Shirley's strongest, Joan's? She wonders about it.

The Acceptance [Goal] combined with the Caution Mode have been, in the past, your primary stumbling block, and until six months [ago] would have been obvious as your prominent Overleaves. Now, the Acceptance commands the forefront as you have attempted work with your Caution [Mode] and have managed to throw caution to the winds in several instances. By doing so, you have almost rendered this Overleaf neutral and workable. The Acceptance [Goal] can be quite positive, yes, but it must come from what you have learned to call "External Consideration" and not from the Personality's "Internal Consideration." When the manifestation comes from Personality, it can be very negative in terms of the energy drain to you. [01 October 1974]

Refer to the chapter "Considering — Internal and External" for a discussion of these two Gurdjieffian phrases. Briefly, External Consideration is a lot like Acceptance, and Internal Consideration is a lot like Caution; the former is Good Work and the latter is Bad Work. Every Overleaf has its advantages and disadvantages. Elsewhere, the Caution Mode was said to be undesirable for the work of spiritual growth.

Further on we see that Goal and Mode are said to be (Ordinal and Cardinal) poles of an "Axis". I see these two as the Action Axis of the Overleaf categories (aka "Aspects") of Personality. (Chief Feature and Role are on the Inspiration Axis, Attitude and Center are on the Expression Axis, Soul Age/Level is on the Assimilation Axis.). Acceptance and Caution are also on the Expression Axis in terms of what I call the "Processes" of Personality. Acceptance and Caution are thus diametrically opposed to each other, as love and fear are diametrically opposed to each other. These two cancel or "neutralize" each other.

The above is not the only time that a conflict between Acceptance and Caution was noted:

This is a First Level Old Warrior in Acceptance, with a strong Chief Feature of Martyrdom, but yes, with much Self-deprecation, a Spiritualist in the Caution Mode, yes, mostly Mars, but with some Jovial modification, in the Emotional Part of Moving Center.

Whenever there is this strong an element of repulsion towards one's chosen life task, you can be certain that there are major Overleaves in conflict, as is the case here. [07 December 1974]

Delia asked for the SRG of her father, Abraham Martin.

This man is in conflict with you primarily because of early training and orientation. It does not solely rest with the Overleaves, for they are not that incompatible if he were within your time frame. In fact, you would be rather compatible. This man was raised in literally a different world. [09 January 1975]

We asked for an SRG on Dr. Ross — Saturn-Solar, Old Priest or Scholar, Intellectual Part of Emotional Center, Passion Mode?

This lady is mostly Saturn, yes, with Solar modification. In the Emotional Part of Intellectual Center. A Fifth Level Old Priest, in Growth, in the Observation Mode, a Spiritualist, yes, and with a predominantly blue aura, yes, with green undertones. The lady's Chief Feature is Self-deprecation, but she is indeed Impatient; it wars within her.

We asked for an SRG on Dr. Ross's husband — Perseveration, Self-destruction, Late Young Scholar, a Skeptic?

What you see here are Overleaves in conflict and you are right that this man is currently transitioning the Cycles. He is a Seventh Level Young Scholar. The most horrendous conflict lies in the Goal-Mode [Action] Axis, that of [your] Growth against, yes, [his] Perseveration. This has held him back from acknowledging understanding that has come about in his studies. This is a Skeptic, yes, but his Chief Feature is not Self-destruction — that is far too strong. The man is basically Impatient, but appears on a Self-destructive bent now to you, primarily because of his steadfast refusal to listen to the inner call. [09 January 1975]

This is the second mention of the Goal-Mode Axis, the first one being from 01 October 1974. I take this to be a hint of what I perceived from the beginning of my study of the Overleaf System in 1981, that the seven Overleaf categories are grouped as follows: Goal and Mode are Ordinal and Cardinal poles of an Action Axis, Chief Feature and Role are Ordinal and Cardinal poles of an Inspiration Axis, Attitude and Center are Ordinal and Cardinal Poles of an Expression Axis, and Age/Level are the Assimilation Axis. The rub between her Growth and his Perseveration are indirect, because Growth is on the Cardinal pole of an Inspiration Axis and Perseveration is on the Ordinal pole of an Action Axis. The rub would be worse if their Goals and Modes were on the same Axis.

Patricia: What accounts for the uncomfortable situation when I'm around my daughter?

Extremely incompatible Overleaves here; not so with your son. It would be good for you to acknowledge this with her and suggest alternative living situations. Unless you allow your own growth, Patricia, you will never be friends, as in life the Overleaves abrade.

Patricia: In what direction do I need to grow in order for me to be compatible with my daughter.

It would take close pursuit of what we have outlined for these students here present. Were you able to let go of your negativity and maintain a high level of acceptance of her, then she would cease to regard the relationship as abrasive. Many of your Overleaves are incompatible in life, and only in a Teaching do these become workable. Usually in life, they merely continue to frustrate and confuse. Perhaps you could examine your own anger from the standpoint of your own internal energy drain and in this light, bring yourself to a more calm acceptance of this King. Now, there is little acceptance and constant frustration. Only through striving toward Balance can you truly eliminate this. By more conventional means, you can always delude yourself into thinking that you have reached acceptance, but you are only erecting a barrier around your non-acceptance and adapting your behavior accordingly. Behavior thus adapted results in an enormous drain in useable energy. Society, you see, dictates that you must love your children, and in order to do this, much adapting must take place, even, in some cases, to allow them to live in the same home.

Patricia: I do not want to lose her. I feel if she were to leave now to live elsewhere without some resolution, she will never be able to be friends with me. Patsy has said she is afraid of me because I am "ballsier" than she. Is she really afraid of me? (It was suggested that there might be some Karmic Ribbon here.)

There is not a Ribbon here, but this is a Sequence to complete a Monad that must be completed in the Mature Cycle. It is sometimes a difficult one and many times failed. The child is not truly afraid, no, but she does perceive anger and suppressed violence and does not enjoy it when this is directed toward her as she would certainly fight back if the chips were down. This she perceives as somehow wrong. [19 January 1975]

Thaddeus asked about a coworker of his. He is on a power trip — a Young Warrior in Rejection and Perseveration?

In truth, the man does not have that many harsh Overleaves, but they are in this case quite abrasive, especially since you must work closely together. In fact, he does have a Neutral Overleaf that would or should have a neutralizing effect on the others. This is a Sixth Level Young Warrior in Stagnation, that being the Neutral Overleaf. He is a Skeptic in the Caution Mode, in the Emotional Part of Moving Center. [08 February 1975]

The group fragmented into lengthy discussions on Photographing other students, handling negativity in the moment rather than brooding about it until it blew up beyond the ridiculous. Much negativity was given to the group to look at.

The student David has stressed the importance of communicating through the Centers and not the Overleaves, and that cannot be stressed enough. When you Photograph another student with your Overleaves, it will always — and we repeat — always, be from a negative space, where the Overleaves abrade. When you give a Photograph from the Centers, it will almost always be valid. You must, and we repeat, must, learn to Photograph from the Centers and not from the Overleaves. Forget what the verbalized issue happens to be — it is always a lie — and determine where the true issue lies. Learn to Photograph the real issue in Real Space. The ideal Photograph at that time (speaking to Sarah about her conflict with another student) would have been, “I understand that you have much pain and I have compassion.” [12 February 1975]

To feel the resistance is to feel the polarity, to feel the yin and yang of the Tao. You even use the Overleaves to resist the Work, saying in effect, “Why should I even bother: the Overleaves abrade.” [16 February 1975]

Inner turmoil — the anger at oneself — always results from unreasonable expectations that at least one Overleaf has of the others, and since there is virtually no communication between the Poles [Axes?] of Overleaves — the “many I’s” — then these expectations are only clear to a few of the Overleaves, while the others are in the dark. There again, the leak is downward and results in the same pattern. Yes, this is the same as Inner Considering. [Dimensions! April 1975]

Refer to the chapter “Considering — Internal and External” for more about those concepts borrowed from the Gurdjieffian teaching. Internal Considering is when people are in angst about what other people think about them. If I understand this passage correctly, it hints that a person’s own Overleaves do not communicate well with each other, and this creates “inner turmoil” and the Many I’s”, also of the Gurdjieffian Teaching; refer to the chapter by that name.

Try an exercise if you wish. The next time you are involved in a hostile exchange with someone with incompatible Overleaves, create within [yourself] the quiet space: face this challenge squarely and attempt to acknowledge to that other person, “Thou art God”. This does not have to be said aloud, but said [within] enough to become reality. It does not even have to put an end to the hostilities. It is merely acknowledgment that is important. If you are able to achieve this, it will be the Essence that does the achieving. The Overleaves may very well go right on spitting. This is the same principle as the “steward”. ... and we are asking that you create a corridor through which your Essence can pass. [12 December 1976]

Refer to the chapter “Serenity, Peace, Tranquility” for more discussion about cultivating that virtue.

Concluding Comments on Interactions of Overleaves

It seems unfortunate to me that the Michaels never explained in detail who, what, when, where, why, and how Overleaves abrade. In my view, this deficiency is connected to another deficiency, namely that the Michaels never explained the structure, and the meaning of the structure, of the Overleaf System. That task has fallen to me, and it has been explained in my book *The Tao of Personality*, particularly Part Four, “Personality in Relationships”. Briefly, there is a logic, a mathematics, and a physics to the Overleaf System,

such that the psychological traits interact with each other in predictable ways, just as physical bodies such as chemicals interact with each other in specific ways when placed in proximity under specific conditions of, for instance, temperature and pressure. The chapter “Friction” also has something to say about that.

As documented in the chapter “Overleaves, Why?”, the Michaels revealed the Overleaves to their students to show them an aspect of their human experience, the Personality self, that is distinct from their Essence Self, and they enjoined their students to transition from Personality to Essence using various “Tools”; refer to the chapter by that name. This transition happens in steps or stages, the so called “Levels of Being”; refer to the chapter by that name. In terms of relationships, I also see progress away from negative intimacy and toward positive intimacy happening in stages; refer to the chapter “Intimacy” for more about that. If two people do not have compatible, comfortable Overleaves, then either their soul connection has to be so strong that it overrides the incompatibility and discomfort, or they must learn to “quiet” the Overleaves (as stated above), or transcend the Overleaves. When two people have compatible, comfortable Overleaves, then the Overleaves become somewhat transparent or invisible to the pair, and this makes it much easier to connect on an Essence level, especially if there is a close kindred or friended soul connection.





OVERLEAVES — WHY?

Shortly after the Michaels appeared, they began to reveal the Overleaf System to the members of the original Michaelian group. As we all know, the Overleaf System is a personality “typology”, a collection of human personality traits. Why would the Michaels care about that? Why would these spiritual seekers care about that? Why should we care about that? This chapter collects the answers that the Michaels gave when members of the original Michaelian group asked those questions.

It is not as if this is the first time that a personality typology was an integral part of a spiritual teaching. In the two and half millennia before psychology became its own thing, the study of the categories of personality traits was connected with philosophy and spirituality. One can read about that in the chapter “Personality Typology” in my books *The Tao of Personality*” and *A History of the Overleaf Chart*.

Those members of the original Michaelian group who had previously been members of a Gurdjieffian teachings group were already familiar with the Centers, the Body Types, and the Chief Features, each of which became an Overleaf category in the Overleaf System of personality traits. This prior familiarity with Personality made it easy for the Michaels to get their message across to the original Michaelian group members.

Why the Overleaves

The following extracts from original Michaelian group transcriptions are Q&A exchanges, where an original Michaelian group member asks a question (or makes a comment), and the Michaels provide an answer. This is a subject that benefits by division into subcategories. Within those subsections, these extracts are presented in the chronological order in which they appear in the transcriptions. As is my custom, I often provide some explanatory comments following the question or answer. Underlined words in the Michaels’ answers are my emphasis, to draw attention to what it is that I comment on. Sometimes I embed words or phrases [in brackets] that I believe help to clarify the question or the answer.

The Progression of Understanding: Overleaves > Synthesis > Agape > Logos > Tao

Soon after the Michaels began to reveal the Overleaf categories, one by one about a month apart starting in late August of 1973, one of the founding members of the original Michaelian group asked *Why?*:

Gene: All of a sudden, we’re having this huge body of information about souls and it must be important, and I would like an overview. Is this information going to be practical to me? Can I use it? Why this topic?

This [Soul Age] is another Overleaf, and integration [inculcation, assimilation of this information] must take place before you are able to perceive The Synthesis, which, of course, must precede perception of the Tao. Yes, it can be of great value to you. Body Typing answers some questions. This [Soul Age] answers still another set of questions. This is a broader Overleaf, and there are more. [18 September 1973]

The Michaels referred to their teaching as “The Synthesis”; refer to the chapter by that name to get the whole story. This answer reveals three major steps on the path to understanding ‘life the universe and everything’ as an ever-widening circle that begins with understanding human “personality” in terms of the Overleaf System, which is an integral part of perceiving The Synthesis of human knowledge, which is an integral part of perceiving the Tao. My books aim to make these realms of understanding, and their relationship to each other, clear ... and practical and useful.

Another clue to understanding of the structure and meaning of the Overleaf System, and its place in the overall scheme of things, is referred to in the next relevant entry in the original Michaelian group transcriptions, about a month after the previous relevant entry:

Ellis: If I understand the Logos correctly, there seems to be four features dominant in each of us. My question is, is there one more important than the other? I see the four:

- *The constitution you are born with, Essence, or if you are born with brain damage;*
- *The level [Age] of the soul;*
- *Centering;*
- *Body Types;*
- *Roles.*

Is there a line of relationship that we can be guided by? Is there one [Overleaf category] more important than another?

Socrates said, “Know thyself.”

Ellis: He’s avoiding the question.

All of these overlays [Overleaves] come into play [equally]. You must learn their significance. A by-product of this will be a far deeper understanding of the others, which must be learned before you can truly feel Agape. [23 October 1973]

Refer to the chapter “Logos” for a definition and description of the Greek word Logos. There you will see that it refers to the intelligible logical–mathematical arrangement of the Being/Doing of the Universe. It has been my belief from the beginning of my exposure to it that the Overleaf System reveals the fundamental structure of the universe as well as the fundamental structure of human personality. It looks to me as if Ellis had the same insight even long before the entire Overleaf System was revealed. Our insight is bolstered by the fact that the very first Overleaf chart produced within the original Michaelian group (by Richard Chambers) was named “The Ordering of the Cosmos”, and the first entry in the chart was of the seven planes, the primordial structured emanation of the Logos, the Logos being primordial emanation of the creative, chaotic Tao.

As for the “relative” “importance” of one Overleaf category rather than another, the Michaels seemed to me to indicate that they are all equally important, and that a holistic understanding of one category will enhance the understanding of all of the other categories — because it is an integrated *system*. I take this answer to be an acknowledgment of Ellis’s intuition that there is an intelligible logical–mathematical structure to the Overleaf System, just as there is an intelligible logical–mathematical structure to the Logos.

Refer to the chapter “Transcendental and Infinite Souls” to learn more about Socrates, whose dictum to “know thyself” is fulfilled when one studies the Overleaf System as part of understanding the Synthesis and the Logos and the Tao.

The use of the word “overlays” here is the primary clue that we have from the original Michaelian group transcriptions about the possible meaning of the word “Overleaves”, namely that the Personality traits *overlay* the Essence. If you refer to the chapter “Essence and Personality”, there you will see that Essence and Personality are said to be the Cardinal and Ordinal Poles of a “Monad”; refer to the chapter by that name. In ordinary parlance, the definition of “overleaf” is “on the other side of the page”. By connecting that definition of overleaf with the definition of Monad, we can surmise that Personality is metaphorically on one side of a page of a book and Essence is metaphorically on the other side of the same page. Thus, to understand Personality leads to an understanding of its complementary opposite, Essence — and vice versa. Integrating polarities is what “Monads” are all about; refer to the chapter by that name. And this understanding of Personality and Essence, as stated previously, leads to an understanding of the Synthesis of those two and all other polarities embodied in Monads, which leads to an understanding of the Logos, which leads to an understanding of the Tao.

And let’s not forget that the purpose of understanding the parts and the whole and their relationship to each other is to experience and express “Agape”; refer to the chapter by that name.

The following was stated when only about half (four out of seven) of the (“physical”) Overleaf categories had been revealed, namely Center/Body Type, Role, Soul Age/Level, and Goal:

The actual visualization of The Synthesis will only come about when you have all of the physical Overleaves ... [31 December 1973]

A total of seven Overleaf categories were eventually revealed. This is not a “magic” number; there is a logical–mathematical structure to it that applies to the Physical Plane, and to the other six planes. The Overleaf Chart, when the traits are arranged correctly, provides a graphic visualization of The Synthesis. Refer to my book *The Tao of Personality* for a presentation of, and an explanation of, the structure and meaning of the Overleaf System. Refer to my books *The Tao of Cosmology* and *The Tao of Cosmogony* (aka *The Tao of Cosmogony*)

and *The Synthesis* for a presentation of, and an explanation of, the structure and meaning of the Logos and of the Tao.

The “physical” Overleaves are the seven categories that are geared to functioning on the Physical Plane. What one could perhaps call the Essence or “spiritual” Overleaves (or “Underleaves” as prefer to call them) are focused on the planes beyond the Physical, which later came to be known as “Casting”.

The next mention of the purpose of understanding the Overleaf System is more down-to-earth than the previous mentions:

Tina: What is the purpose of learning all these [Overleaf] labels? I dislike labels.

It is only important if you wish to make The Synthesis.... This study [of the Overleaf System] enables you to have insights to the motivation of certain activities that could conceivably be perceived by you as hostile or undesirable, and prohibit the understanding necessary for Agape to take place. It will also enable you to aid those who seek your counsel. [31 December 1973]

The typical Michaelian student is focused on this comparatively modest purpose for understanding and applying the Overleaf System, namely, as an aid to people who want to become more loving toward themselves and toward other people. I refer to this as its psychotherapeutic function.

The next mention of the purpose for understanding the Overleaf System reverts to the grander perspective that it provides:

Ellis: I would like to ask about the meaning of “synthesis”. Byron has a theory [speculation] about it, and I have the theory [speculation] that it means putting the knowledge into effect for [spiritual] growth.

Both are valid. You cannot begin to put this [Synthesis] into practice until you fully understand it. The synthesis will allow you to see the entire systems of ideas as one unified idea — the continuous creative force.

Understanding why those around you are like they are [via the Overleaf System] will open you up to Agape and true acceptance. This will allow you to put personal agendas aside and pursue the path toward communion with the high teachers. [17 January 1974]

Ellis used the word theory here in its negative meaning, as a speculation, a conjecture, an hypothesis. However, the word theory in its positive meaning is that of a comprehensive explanatory framework, a synthesis of explanations into a holistic coherent framework. The Michaels claim their teaching is a theory in the best sense of that word. How to understand it? Refer to the chapter “Growth, Spiritual” for more about that subject. The word *growth* is a good metaphor for the widening understanding of ever-larger realms: Personality > Essence > Agape > Synthesis > Logos > Tao. The Overleaf System is the “signal” that is often obscured by the “noise” of personal agendas. When you have mastered the Overleaf System you know what the higher teachers know, and you can learn to attune to their perceptions and perspective.

The Overleaf System as a whole reveals the structure of the Logos; to inculcate that understanding yields Agape with others and communion with higher beings. But what is the good of knowing why one has one’s particular array of Overleaves?

Alice: Are all Overleaves in Essence?

No. [They are all] in Personality.

Alice: Are they chosen on the basis of Karma?

First of all, the locale, the socioeconomic status, the parents you chose — all are formative in programming the bio-computer. These Overleaves are chosen by the soul to be acted out in life, independent — most of the time — of the wishes of the Essence. The soul chose them to complete the specific task. The soul desires simplicity and freedom, making a split [distinction] between soul and Essence.

We don’t take the Personality with us when we die. Do we leave it here?

That is correct. The soul on the Astral Plane is devoid of False Personality. [27 February 1974]

Refer to the chapters on “Karma” and “Bio-computer” for more information about how they fit into this story. The soul, aka the Astral Body in this case, is apparently in a different learning realm than the Essence (whatever that is; it is ambiguous how “Essence” relates to Planes). Refer to the chapter “Essence and Personality” for a clarification of the distinction between Personality, Soul, and Essence. **Briefly, at this time in the story arc of the revelation of the Michaelian teachings, the Overleaves were placed into the category of the so-called “False Personality”; this is per the semantics of the Gurdjieffian teachings. Later that year, 1974, after the Negative and Positive Poles of the Overleaves were revealed (which Gurdjieff did not know about), it was said that the Positive Poles of the Overleaves are in the category of the so-called “True Personality” and**

Essence, and the Negative Poles are in the category of the so-called “False Personality”. I regard this as a change in definitions and semantics, not a contradiction in the Michaelian teachings. Whatever the semantics, it is Good Work for the Personality–self to ponder why the soul–self chose its particular Overleaves, and thereby fulfill its specific tasks or general plan for the lifetime. As we will see further on, once the task and/or plan has been fulfilled, those Overleaves become “obsolete”.

A month after the statement documented above, the existence of Positive and Negative Poles of Overleaves was foreshadowed in something that Gurdjieff understood, namely that Centers had positive and negative “sides” or “halves”:

Dick: Could Michael comment on the negative sides of Centers? Is there a negative side to each Center?

This is, of course, valid. Think of the hysterical enTrapment in Emotional Center. The man Adolph [Hitler] was Trapped in the Moving Part of Emotional Center. All of the psycho-neuroses are directly related to the negative half of the Centering; that which leads souls [people] to live above and outside the law of the land, all of the violence directed against other creatures. These combined with the [Negative Poles of] other Overleaves produce this. [27 March 1974]

Refer to the chapter “Centering Traps” for more discussion about that experience that one should be vigilant to avoid as one comes to understand the Overleaf System. Gurdjieff understood that there were positive and negative “sides” or “halves” of each Center; this was the only Overleaf that he knew about. At the end of 1974 or the beginning of 1975, the Michaels revealed names for the Positive and Negative Poles of all of the Overleaves. Early on, all Michaelian students learn that it is Good Work to be in the Positive Poles and Bad Work to be in the Negative Poles, as part of the journey away from “lawlessness” and “violence” and toward Agape.

The last Overleaf category was revealed at the beginning of April 1974. Therefore, a repetition of its fundamental purpose was in order.

... look at their Overleaves and begin to understand. [14 April 1974]

As stated repeatedly in the original Michaelian group transcriptions, the purpose of the understanding of the Overleaf System leads to an understanding of several levels of larger realms, even of the system of the universe as a whole.

Having now been given the entire Overleaf System, the original Michaelian group members began to wonder about how it related to other aspects of the Michaelian teachings, such as Karma, Agreements, and Sequences:

Do we have to know with whom we have Karmic Ribbons?

Some of you persist in old patterns despite the fact that major Overleaves were chosen to burn Ribbons that have been burned. Studying your total [personality] picture should enable you to see where the persistence is coming from: those in particular with Stubbornness and Pride [part of Arrogance] as Chief Features. Also, those with Rejection Goals and Repression Modes. [17 April 1974]

Comment: We wondered if he would burn the Ribbons he had left, and went on considering that everyone on earth has a goal — a set of things to experience and learn on the Physical Plane. We wondered about the betrayal of Astral Agreements we may have made, and someone asked if Michael would let us know what missions we had decided to accomplish.

We will, yes, but we had hoped that by giving you the Overleaves and Photographing the patterns, the insights would come. Many of you already have some inkling of what you have agreed to do merely by discussing your Karmic Ribbons and interwoven Sequences. These tasks are not always difficult; many are not even very interesting, but in some way, they enrich the Fragment and lead to the experiencing of all of life. [15 May 1974]

Refer to the chapters “Insight” and “intuition” for more discussion about those virtues that are enhanced by understanding the workings of Personality and Essence. Refer to the chapters “Karma” and “Agreements and Sequences” and “Photography” for more about those components of the Michaelian teachings. All of these factors together with the chosen Overleaves are coordinated parts of the master plan that the Essence makes for any given lifetime. Refer to the chapter “Tapestry” for a discussion of the concept of the metaphor of ‘weaving together’ the events of a lifetime and of lifetimes.

... if you look at your Overleaves in the light of the health patterns, some insight should flash. [15 May 1974]

The thing about understanding how Overleaves (and the Universe in general) work is that it makes perceptions more efficient and effective. In other words, it cuts right through the baffling bullshit, in a “flash”.

David asked if he had made a discovery along the lines of magnetic center through Intellectual Center. Had he been doing a great deal of intellectual work — if a Center attracts, could we use it to repel? Can a weak Essence be built up by breaking down that which attracts the un-useful? Persons who are the dregs of society may have been a prince or something earlier — Karma to learn all of love — can they be separated and chosen from? Can we separate the experiences of pain and pleasure? Can we begin to determine what we need? How can David attract people, the dregs, and create conditions where they are forced to have an inner experience?

When you take upon yourself the task of forcing growth, you, of course, create a totally false environment in which you merely enable individuals to trade Chief Features and in some extreme cases, other harsh Overleaves.

For you, David, we would suggest first that you study the Overleaves and look at where you are in them and why you have chosen this task. If you do in fact need to connect with another [person] because you have made such an Agreement, you most certainly will — we can guarantee that. But yes, the magnet can be reversed, causing the desired repulsion.

Knowing your own Overleaves will start you toward more understanding of yourself. The ability to spot the Overleaves in those who come to you will force you to look at them in a different light. You can come eventually to knowledge of just who might benefit from this knowledge and who will not. For instance, some of these “dregs” are in the Cycle where they could be able to look at their own destructive Overleaves and choose to change them. But at the present time, you do not know the reason why they have become dregs and, therefore, you cannot possibly help them to look at it themselves, except on a most haphazard basis. If you wish to do this, we would suggest that you start here.

Of course, you can use the Negative Pole of all Centers to accomplish the reverse of that which can be accomplished by utilizing the Positive Pole. The Intellectual Part of Emotional Center happens to be the one that attracts students to a School. The reverse can be true using the Negative Pole of this Center's Part. [07 December 1974]

This desire to do away with [Overleaf] labeling is not at all bad, and in its more positive stance approaches Zen Buddhism. Labeling for this [original Michaelian group] cadre is now only an expedient of communication. At a later point, we would hope to be able to dispense with this. Right now, it is easier this way and more understandable. [14 December 1974]

However, the original Michaelian group continued to talk about the Overleaves, until the last Q&A exchange of the last original Michaelian group session, 13 January 1978.

In giving you the Overleaves, we give you only a tool to enable you to better understand the differences in your brothers, so that you might accept them at the place where they now are, rather than to spin wheels and waste energy in attempting to change them. [28 December 1974]

We can, of course, help you to understand why you approach a given set of circumstances in a certain fashion. In fact, this is why we have given this [original Michaelian group] cadre the tool of the Overleaves.

Ralph: [Regarding] The Essence experience on the Physical Plane and the relation to Roles: If meditation attains Personality-less-ness, is this experience without Role and is it on the Physical Plane?

We would not describe this experience as being wholly on the Physical Plane as it does indeed transcend the planes and yes, it can happen to you within this lifetime. It is well within the grasp of all of our students; you have only to set it as the transient goal and apply what you now know. The Overleaves affect you only when you are strongly committed to the needs of the Personality. Once it [the needs of the Personality] has been achieved [satisfied], it will no longer be the goal. [02 January 1975]

Joan asked if the Essence has a Personality. Does this relate to the Positive Poles [of the Overleaves]?

In order for the True Personality to emerge, the student must be in a firm [unperturbable] state of Balance, and if the Centers are Balanced, all work will be from the Positive Poles of all Overleaves. In fact, at that moment, the whole concept of Overleaves becomes obsolete. Balanced Man is not a victim of his Overleaves any longer. This is, of course, why the Work is to strive for Balance, and why we attempt to effect those exercises that will allow you to choose the Work you need tailor made. [25 January 1974]

For us, this Teaching is a form of evolution. We have chosen our tools carefully, with those of you here present in mind, as well as all members of the cadre who are now geographically physically separated. It is as important that they understand, as it is for you here present to understand.

Each Teaching now on-going has different tools, and yet the Synthesis can be easily made by one caring to make the comparison. In choosing the specific tools that we have, each of your Overleaves was taken into consideration, as well as all your imprinting, your core beliefs, and your master Tapes. [30 January 1975]

Alice: I tried giving myself the suggestion to eat less carbohydrates. It worked for eight hours, at which time I indulged in them. I tried looking at that and found that I probably did not like myself enough to eat what is good for me, so for the past week I have been suggesting to myself that I will like myself better and will do those things that are good for my being. I've been feeling better about myself, but seem to plunge into more frequent downs. Comment, please, on what I can do in this area?

[Soleal:] You need to learn to use your moments of Power to extinguish your Chief Feature [Self-deprecation]. This can even work with Chief Features such as Arrogance, although that is a tough one to drop. The moments of Power must be utilized in the work, for it is in this way that you will be able to finally switch Modes. You cannot go through the Self-deprecation Tape from the Power Mode as easily as you can from Caution [Mode]. Use your moments of Power to emphasize your positive feelings about yourself. In those moments, appreciate your own humor [and] intelligence, and savor the feelings of Power. You do have these moments, as you also have moments of Dominance. These must be utilized. The post-hypnotic suggestion that you will recognize the moments of Power would help; then you would be able to look at yourself more realistically.

Jim: Scattering is so much of my Personality. I need more concentration on the teaching ... work on myself at home ...

[Soleal:] I was twenty years old when I became guardian, and utterly terrified at the confidence placed in me. I went through a period of agonizing Impatience over my own level of growth and where I thought I should be in order to be what they wanted me to be. Then I realized that I was tired all the time and I was not going any place but down — down into Caution [from Power], down into Submission [from Dominance], down into the negative spaces that I wished to avoid. I had to force myself into my present philosophy of never taking in more than one day at a time, in order to unload my bad spaces. The same can happen to you. You can learn to think only in small increments. It is not easy, but it is rewarding. [01 February 1975]

... These are facilitated by what we have chosen to call "Overleaves". Certain composites of Overleaves are conducive to certain types of activities — for instance, the extraction of an old [Karmic] debt.... [08 February 1975]

... Balance implies obsolescence of the Overleaves..... [08 February 1975]

... Looking at the Overleaves should be extensively used in determining who would be most effective in the various Friction-fraught areas.... [12 February 1975]

The Overleaves are given as a tool, and as a tool should have much value in determining work from Essence or differentiating this from harebrained schemes of the moment. Where we have suggested to students that their pursuits follow certain courses, it is because we have knowledge of Essence work for them and if they will allow this, they will find themselves more and more in Real Space. The concept of washing dishes for a living would be abhorrent to many students, but is Essence work for others, and they would be happier thus involved, once the stigma that this society places on such endeavors were removed.

At this point, many felt the presence of Soleal and asked him if he wished to speak.

[Soleal:] The teacher [Michael] has only begun to stress the importance of polarity to you now and the use of the most positive pole of the axes for the work. [12 February 1975]

But it still remains that no conflict will ever be solved if you deal with it in artificial space with the Overleaves [rather than Essence]. [12 February 1975]

Concluding Comments on Why the Overleaves





PARANORMAL, THE

This chapter is the product of a search for the word(s) “**template**”, “**___**” in the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group channeling sessions. This word does not represent a significant component of the Michaelian teachings. However, there are good reasons to discuss the subject in this *Study Papers* book: 1) the subject came up numerous times during the original Michaelian group; 2) students can presumably benefit from having the mentions conveniently collected all in one place; 3) some interesting things were said about the subject; 4) the subject is related to a number of other components of the Michaelian teachings that are considered to be significant; 5) “**Template**” issues are pervasive in human psychology and sociology and spirituality.

The word “**template**” is not capitalized in this chapter or other chapters of this *Study Papers* book because it has no special meaning in the Michaelian teachings; it is not a Michaelian jargon word that needs a definition apart from its use in the common vernacular.

Basically and briefly, the Michaels recommended to the original Michaelian group members that they

Definition of Paranormal

So what is meant by paranormal? The online Merriam Webster dictionary definition is:

Paranormal per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

The following extracts from original Michaelian group transcriptions are Q&A exchanges, where an original Michaelian group member asks a question (or makes a comment), and the Michaels provide an answer. This is [not] a subject that would benefit by division into subcategories, as some subjects do. These extracts are [not] presented in the chronological order in which they were given, even though this is not a subject where there was a development or evolution of a specific revelation of a facet of the Michaelian teachings, as was often the case with the original Michaelian group. As is my custom, I often provide some explanatory comments following the question or answer. Underlined words in the Michaels’ answers are my emphasis, to draw attention to what it is that I comment on. Sometimes I embed words or phrases [in brackets] that I believe help to clarify the question or the answer.

[[Search for such words as “psychic, omen, precognition, telepathy” etc.]]

Precognition in the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

Nina: I had a dream and twenty minutes later, it came true. Could I have a comment?

This phenomenon is called precognition. Quite often, it comes in the form of a dream, since that mode is acceptable. [03 January 1974]

Edgar: (He was asked about his intuition.) Intuition is premonition.

That is not intuition either; that is precognition. [20 January 1974]

Mallory: I told my son about The Synthesis, and am wondering if he is a Spiritualist as he has déjà vu or precognition. It was said he is an Idealist.

No error on this. This child has not been taught to repress these talents.

(He still has access to this knowledge).

Mallory: I had no Karmic ties?

The ties with you go back eleven centuries. This is not adverse and the door is open.

Mallory: What does that mean?

There can be much contact of the non-verbal sort between you and you can teach each other much. [31 January 1974]

Susan: I wrote a letter to my parents recently, thanking them for their support and help while I was working on a goal, and my mother wrote back and said she knew all the time that I would do this, because when I was born I had a "veil" over my face, and the midwife predicted great things for me. I would like to know how valid these superstitions are, and if "omens" mean anything.

The superstition concerning the psychic power of those born with a "caul" is a very ancient one, having its roots in Babylonia. The place of superstition in the scheme of things is sometimes valid, in that it allows powerfully psychically energetic souls to exercise their powers without disrupting their already formed dogmatic belief systems. The lady in question was one of those. She used a convenient superstition to explain the tremendous amount of psychic energy she felt.

Omens are different. The omens very often are given to you as Shock, just as precognitive experiences [are]. The omens or signs are often Astral, and the one to whom they are addressed are the only ones who see them. There are others, such as darkening skies, etc., that are seen by many, and the collective mind flashes on the insight that was communicated. [20 December 1974]

A "caul" is a birth membrane, looking like a veil, still intact over the face at birth.

Gene: I had a flash Friday night as I drove toward San Francisco. I had a feeling of violence as I neared a choice in directions to go there. Two blocks from home, I nearly had a bad accident. Was this feeling I had at the choice of directions a precognitive thing?

That is valid. This was precognitive. Had you taken the more circuitous route, you would have avoided the encounter altogether. [09 February 1974]

Carolyn: I had a perception about my recent shoulder injury. I had a feeling I was going to fall. Was this a true impression or did I influence myself to fall? I have never done anything like that before.

We would think that this was truly precognitive. [17 March 1974]

Carolyn: I would like a comment of the fall I had and the flashes while falling. I heard a voice say, "Relax," just before an eighty-five foot drop.

If the lady Carolyn had not felt the precognitive flash and heeded it, she would have been killed. In that second, she chose another alternative. It is valid that once a particular mode of death has been experienced by a Fragment, that mode holds no special fear for the Fragment. Near escapes often erase fear. Both Cheryl and Sarah had much combat with large animals in the past. [17 March 1974]

Liz: Has the feeling she needs to do something and doesn't know what. This is confirmed by her dreams. What role did CIF play for them? (Liz and Ted)

As to what the Creativity Initiative Foundation [CIF] and other similar groups signify, we would think of them as stepping stones, giving you the broad perspective, wetting your whistle, so to speak. The homework, of course, is your own inner struggle with self-growth and the knowledge that there is work to be done. Also at a deeper level, knowing that the Personality does not like that experience. Meeting with a teaching is always a shattering experience for the seeker, and usually brings on many phenomena such as dreams that are especially vivid and are really simply Astral experiences that are for once remembered. Many also experience precognitive phenomena and other psychic experiences during this initial period. Some use it as a verification. Others become frightened and choose to deny this. [19 June 1974]

Delia: Asking for a comment about a car she saw burning on the freeway after leaving a Gurdjieff meeting.

Sensitive Fragments often pick up on the vibrations of dying bodies and their ethereal auras.

Louise: Why do I feel drained or pulling at times?

Fear. This is usually a powerful feeling and if you do not know what it is, it can scare you badly.

Comment: Precognition should not drain you. [03 July 1974]

Elizabeth: I felt a presence when I was auto-writing and a name, Anton, came up spontaneously and I've felt an affinity with a person whose name is Anton. I have encountered the latter in odd places.

The writing was precognitive. Indeed, you were the parent of a child by this soul before, but you were the father and there was no marriage. [17 July 1974]

Richard: I am never open. When I have expressed my feelings to people, they have run... I have many precognitive dreams. At 15 years old, I had a dream of a train wreck. I did not go on the train ride that was planned for the day after the dream and 12 people were killed in that wreck... [21 September 1974]

Elizabeth: I'd like a comment on the inner space, or other plane experience I had: I saw a person in the metaphysical bookstore that fit the person I met while in my inner space. I feel we have had past lives together.

When the student is in the meditative state or is otherwise attentive to the teaching, it is possible to experience what we choose to call the "pan-dimensional" universe, and that, of course, includes the Akashic Plane. In order to answer your question, Elizabeth, we would explain to you what the term "precognition" really means. In those possessed of tremendous psychic energy, it is possible in the meditative or inner conscious state to "flash" on all of the alternative frames for a future that is close at hand. The problem is in the retaining of these flashes. Most souls do retain only the most dramatic fragments, discarding the mundane. Then, if they recognize this as precognition, they also regard it as fact and accept the most awesome consequences. This is, of course, not true, for in the time you flash, it is merely an alternative, but sometimes you do set the wheels in motion on a subliminal level and the incident does take place. Elizabeth, this is essentially what takes place when you flash on a meeting that may take place in the near future. You can, in some instances, bring this about, but also, there is the very real attraction there that we have told you before happens when Older Souls come together after an Astral interval for the first time in this life. This attraction can be negative or positive, and can result in a coming together or a going away, but it does provoke an emotional response that is difficult to suppress. [15 October 1974]

This medium senses the division existing within the psyche of most of the cadre, and it is the fight for survival. Only the ego needs to survive; the Essence "survives" already in eternity. Impatience, lack of trust, and a stubborn clinging to the "I am not psychic" belief hold you all from experiencing truth, as it is available to all. [28 December 1974]

Refer to the chapter "Psyche" for more discussion about those topics.

Concluding Comments on Paranormal





PATH — SPIRITUAL

[[provide preliminary comments]]

Introduction

What is the definition of a spiritual path? We will see a definition and description from the transcriptions further on, but for now just think of it as distinct from a physical path of self-improvement, and distinct from a psychological path of self-improvement. It goes beyond “self”-improvement of any sort. A spiritual path is a lot more than getting along well in this world with yourself and with others in this world. People on a spiritual path presume that there is a supernatural realm. Therefore a spiritual path is a way of getting ready for the next world and/or bringing some of the next world into this world.

By reading through the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group, we notice that those people were very interested in this subject. This subject comes up repeatedly with various students, and Michael talked about it repeatedly – it is pervasive. Students would actually need to read the entire set of transcriptions to get the full impact of this subject. For this Exposition, I searched only for the word “spirit.” Thus, this Exposition is like the 'skeleton' of the subject because there are so many other integral and peripheral words that can be searched to 'flesh out' this subject. These are covered in other chapters.

Many of the earliest members of the original Michaelian group were refugees from a Fourth Way/Gurdjieff group, lead by a man named Robert Burton. We know this from interviews with members and from references in the session transcriptions. The Gurdjieffian teachings represents itself as a spiritual path. We know that Burton, an Old Soul King, formed his group for the purpose of promoting spiritual growth. (Some of the early history of the 'Fellowship of Friends' can be found on the Internet.) Some of the members of Burton's group deemed his leadership to be inadequate, so they struck out on their own, hoping to find a better spiritual leader. They looked for one not of this physical world, so they experimented with various forms of channeling from the spirit world. Therefore we surmise that this new group also formed to promote their spiritual development, and that it was **the** primary purpose and function of the original Michaelian group. The subject even came up months before Michael came on the scene, when they were in contact with Soleal, a humanoid on another planet, who was later revealed to be a student of Michael:

Pre-Michael sessions

I've been told that I have some obstacles toward spiritual growth — some “bad tapes,” so to speak — that are keeping me from progressing. Can you tell me about them? [undated 1973 Soleal session]

Michael then went on to tell him where some of his obstacles were. This question is our first indication that an original Michaelian group member was interested in spiritual growth. Further on in this session, Soleal gives them a very succinct description of what the spiritual path is all about:

I would like to know how long you have been the leader of your world, and I would like to know what you teach them.

I have been here for ten of this world's revolutions. I teach them what I would teach you: that is, to seek moderation in all things, to love unselfishly, to become intimate with the inner workings of your spirit, to live in the essence of that spirit, to liberate the trapped Essence is the reincarnational purpose. I try to guide them in this path, so that they might be free sooner. [Undated 1973 Soleal session]

This paragraph bears repeated reading with heightened awareness. Quiet your mind and body... Let it sink into your heart... Feel it... Frankly, I cannot think of a better description of what the essence of the Michaelian teachings is all about, this from one of Michael's pupils on another planet!

In the above quote, there were no spiritual practices recommended, but in a subsequent session with Soleal, we find the first mention of a practice, namely “study”:

Soleal has come through with so much scientific material. I wonder if this type of scientific material is valuable for one's spiritual growth?

Valuable only in that it frees the mind for study.

Two of the men interpreted this statement as follows:

Oh, instead of always wondering about things...

You get beyond those things and then you feel good about continuing. [03 July 1973]

Personally, I have a Scholar soul, so I often get a spiritual boost when I learn scientific stuff, but not everyone does. To me this statement seems ambiguous: the study might be scientific or it might be spiritual. Perhaps this means that focusing on knowledge for its own sake distracts one from focus on the mundane drudgery of human existence, and this release can be a gateway to transcendence. Another thing Soleal might mean here is that we sometimes have to get our curiosity about the physical realm satisfied before we can go on to spiritual things. And the other thing it means to me is that one kind of spiritual practice is to acquire spiritual information, and this can promote one's spiritual development. Compiling and writing these Expositions is part of both my scientific and spiritual study. Reading them can be part of your study.

Further on in this same session with Soleal, the same questioner again brought up the subject of spiritual growth. He obviously had this on his mind:

I would like to ask him [Soleal] how he can most help us in our spiritual growth.

Interchange of cultural values. [03 July 1973]

Soleal was the leader of his planet. Can you imagine all Earthlings being lead by a Seventh Level Old King who is a student of Michael? From what Soleal said previously about what he taught his people, we know that spiritual growth was a central component of their culture. Also, elsewhere it was said that Soleal's planet was populated mostly with Mature Souls. Thus, even without an emphasis on the spiritual path, their cultural values were more advanced than here on Terra, which is dominated by Young Souls.

The same questioner would not let go of this topic in this session. He asked a silent question and got this answer:

Just be patient. You cannot achieve enlightenment by any route in one day, or by any method without first making the decision to establish this as the goal for the present lifetime, and then making the decision to devote the rest of the life to that pursuit. The devotion must be there, no matter which path you take ultimately. The path can take you through the mainstream of life on your world, or you may eventually decide that you must have the seclusion. A communal setting would offer this in many ways. You need people around by whom you can measure your progress and this is not bad for you. Self-confidence, and I mean in your own spiritual strength [rather than in your ego], must be developed. [03 July 1973]

This remark by Soleal begins to hint at some of the things it takes to get somewhere on the spiritual path: Patience, devotion, appropriate methods, help from others on the path, and confidence. Much more is said about methods and motives in other transcriptions, as we shall see. There is another Exposition, on *Communal Living*, for instance.

Besides Soleal, the original Michaelian group also made contact with an Astral Plane fragment named Tomas. Here is what he first had to say about the spiritual path:

I have felt the need to express my opinions more lately, and I wonder if this is good. Sometimes I have spouted off.

Do you understand the source of the negative emotions? If so, then you should examine them carefully and see if you can turn them into something positive. Hostility is never an act of conscious will. [It comes from unconscious sources.] The only positive forces are peaceful, loving ones. [You] still [have] a tendency to slip into the patterns or vibrations of the moment. Many sleeping souls provide the necessary shocks to keep you on the right track — constantly examining herself. This is a common failing among neophytes on the true path. There are always many doubts until the integration takes place, and the commitment is made and is irrevocable. Life on the material plane with all its glamor continues to lure you back. The glamor is illusion — Maya, if you prefer the more esoteric term. Maya is part of karma and is present for a very specific purpose. It tests your spiritual growth all the time, and is your sole eternal safety checkpoint. When you reach the point in your spiritual growth when you “know” that all hostile feelings and thoughts and words — and even world wars — come from lower Centers in sleeping souls, and they are not in control [“unconscious”], then you will lose the desire or need to retaliate or spout off.... [24 July 1973]

This is the first time we get told that there is a transitional stage between unawareness of a spiritual path and full commitment to that path. During the transition there is a lot to learn and consider. It is not a decision to be made lightly. As a part of full disclosure, here we see presented numerous benefits of spiritual development: decrease in negativity and increase in positivity; increasing conscious awareness and therefore

control of one's life; more peace and love in one's experience; less of the lower illusion and more of the higher reality; and greater ability to handle challenges. What's not to like? Well, there are risks as well as rewards, as we shall see further on.

Later in this same session with Tomas, the subject of communal living, first broached by Soleal, as beneficial to spiritual growth resurfaced:

I have been considering moving into a commune, and I would like to know if it is better to live in a commune, or to live alone.

I think that the communal life offers a great deal so long as the goals of the commune are those of continued spiritual growth and they do not conflict with what you know to be true. Living alone offers little, and I would not recommend it to anyone. Isolation breeds alienation, and alienation breeds suspicion that leads to jealousy, possessiveness, and greed — the three cardinal stumbling blocks on the path to awareness. [24 July 1973]

Much more is said about this in the chapter on *Communal Living*. Here, several things were listed that are impediments to spiritual growth: isolation, alienation, suspicion, jealousy, possessiveness, and greed.

The above demonstrates that members of the original Michaelian group were very much interested in spiritual growth. It was not something that appeared along with Michael, although it can be said that the subject became even more central to the group after Michael appeared.

Michael and Spiritual Growth

We do not have the complete transcript of very first session in which Michael appeared, but we do have an edited version of it, from a compilation made in early 1974 of all the 1973 sessions. In that compilation, the very first question in the very first session had to do with spiritual development:

The question was asked concerning the decision to go on in the search for spiritual enlightenment, to go on to becoming an adept. What do you do when you get so far and are not too sure you want to continue? We wondered if the Masters picked those in whom the desire for "psychic experiences" was quite strong to become adepts.

The desire is polar, too... Along with the desire is always the dread. The choice does not become clear to you until you have experienced the desire from another dimension. You must stand and observe the desire from the shadows of dread. Wishes, like everything, have positive and negative poles. There must be attraction and repulsion or nothing exists because no energy is being generated... Does it not seem that all seeking the least complex will return to the energy from whence they came? Complexity is the antithesis of what the spirit seeks. The body represents the epitome of complexity. That is why the spirit is again and again attracted to it, until the partially awakened Essence catches a glimpse beyond the "veil." [12 August 1973]

In effect, Michael said: it's your decision and it is a touch decision. On one shoulder you have angels calling you and on the other shoulder you have demons scaring you. One has to rise above the angel-demon dichotomy and look at the decision from a higher vantage point. That higher vantage point is your own Essence, which naturally moves away from the complexity of the mundane life to the simplicity of the spiritual life. **So, spiritual evolution is inevitable; it is just a matter of when, and will the Personality go along with it willingly or not.**

A bit of advice from Michael came a couple of months later, when it was said that we should have realistic expectations about our spiritual development:

Some of the internal depression and anger I experience seems to be the result of expectations I have of myself.

Reexamine those expectations for shades of realism. One step at a time is normally effective for useful ambulation; why not for spiritual liberation? [02 October 73]

A fitting metaphor that one should take 'one step at a time' on their spiritual 'path'.

I don't seem to be able to change knowledge into Being and I don't feel any different.

Your life is not geared for understanding, just toiling.... However, Jesus was trying to tell this same truth two thousand years ago. We keep telling you: you must choose your path. If that [chosen path] is spiritual liberation, then you must eliminate the distractions of Maya. If the goal is different, then the path will be different and you are correct in assuming that we don't care [which path you choose]. We impart the Logos dispassionately. It is yours to accept or reject. [06 October 1973]

Maya is the subject of another chapter.

The discussion in this session continued thus:

Guess I'm saying there has to be large internal changes in order to make a change in jobs, before I can trust cosmic influences. Soleal said you have to use your own resources. Michael is saying, "Don't toil so much." That's what I'm complaining about. They say not to work so hard.

We hold up Soleal as an example of how this can be done by someone living very much in the world. He is not an ascetic by any stretch of the imagination. He simply has learned to dissociate himself from the mundane and concentrate on the arcane. The decision to pursue spiritual liberation is an agonizing one for everyone who makes it, without exception. No adept has found it easy. If we have led you to think that being an Old Soul means being on the gravy train, that is your misinterpretation. It is probably the most difficult [cycle] of all. The only thing that makes it better is your own readiness to stand apart from the mainstream and begin to verify. This, of course, makes you even odder than ever. [06 October 1973]

The reason I could sit there peacefully was I didn't have to worry about food. I have provided for my own children. If Essence is Snow White and Red Riding Hood, we have to go into this dependency on Michael or whomever is going to take care of us. Otherwise, we have to scurry around to produce what we need. I would be happy to go back into that state; it's so lovely. Unless you become independent, you must forage for yourself. To go into Essence completely, there must be trust. As a child, there is no trust, there is knowing that you will be cared for. Something tells the child as he grows older, that this idyllic situation will end and it will be up to him to take care of himself.

The Roles in Essence provide the necessary food, clothing and shelter without the scurrying. This adult play can be financially rewarding. That is why we have told you that communal living is an upward step in spiritual evolution. This allows you to pursue the Role in Essence. There will be those who will provide the other necessities. [27 October 1973]

Why is it that Old Souls with united Fragments are not superior in competence to Young souls who have a smaller amount of united Fragments?

The Old Soul, at a deeper level, realizes the futility and temporary nature of material achievements, and therefore lacks the drive to accomplish this. You are all extremely competent, even in Roles that are out of essence.

The drive is now for spiritual evolution in all of you. Therefore, you are inclined to let the rest slide. Any one of you could achieve anything you wish to do. Why didn't you? For instance, Edgar uses poverty as an excuse, but this is invalid. Many poverty-stricken Young Souls have achieved wondrous things through sheer struggle. [22 November 1973]

I have difficulty in understanding the development of the soul. We grow up with conflicts and images of self. I cannot let go with other people or myself.

The object is not so much to give up self, as it is to find self. You are encased in so many layers of facade, that you cannot even perceive the source of your desires, let alone control their emanations. The final level of spiritual evolution on the Physical Plane pertains, of course, to the absolute control of the desire, not just the acting out. This is a very gradual process, the first step of which is to recognize that there are conflicts, which you have done. [22 November 1973]

Edgar: If we were together in Rome and we are again now, what is our purpose?

.... This teaching is one of spiritual growth.... [27 December 1973]

.... There is nothing dull about spiritual growth. The need is to become more joyous and expansive, not more somber and introverted..... [10 January 1974]

Psychedelics and the Spiritual Path

Throughout history and perhaps pre-history, people have used psychotropic substances to accentuate and transcend their normal consciousness. The subject came up numerous times during the sessions. Here is the first that we know of:

I don't seem to be able to change knowledge into Being and I don't feel any different.

You do approach Being under the influence of marijuana. This is an incontrovertible message about the pace of your life. Marijuana slows the responses to physical phenomena and heightens emotional response to all experiences. You feel the music instead of hearing it. The five primitive senses belong to False Personality. They can be compared to margarine — they will never be butter, no matter how you color them or package them. [06 October 1973]

Sexuality and the Spiritual Path

Because this is the first time in my life that I have had a satisfactory sex life and I don't want to abandon it.

Then don't worry about it. This is something that should be a natural part of spiritual growth, and when the choice [for celibacy] is made, it should cause no inner agony. If the time is right, the decision should cause no pain and should not be difficult. [Undated 1973 Soleal session]

Sexuality is obviously a factor on the physical plane that is not a function in spiritual realms. It can be used for spiritual growth, and that is the subject of another Exposition....

My perception is that sex and sexual relationships are the major impediment on this plane to staying on the [spiritual] path....

Your perception, of course, is completely valid. This is the reason why most adepts eventually refrain from entering into such relationships. Some, but only relatively few, have been able to continue to engage in a physical sexual relationship while evolving spiritually. The reason for this should be fairly obvious when you stop and realize that sexuality of the physical sort pertains to the Physical Plane.... [29 November 1973]

Summary and Conclusion





PATTERN

This chapter is the product of a search for the word pattern **and its derivatives and synonyms** in the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group channeling sessions. This word does not represent a significant component of the Michaelian teachings. However, there are good reasons to discuss the subject in this *Study Papers* book: 1) the subject came up numerous times during the original Michaelian group; 2) students can presumably benefit from having the mentions conveniently collected and commented all in one place; 3) some interesting things were said about the subject; 4) the subject is related to a number of other components of the Michaelian teachings that are considered to be significant; 5) the Michaels repeatedly recommended that we recognize patterns, so it behooves us to have a working knowledge of the phenomenon.

The word pattern is not capitalized in this chapter or other chapters of this *Study Papers* book because it has no special meaning in the Michaelian teachings; it is not a Michaelian jargon word that needs a definition apart from its use in the common vernacular.

This chapter is one of many in this book that focuses on a psychological component of the Michaelian teachings as found in original Michaelian group transcriptions, rather than on a doctrinal or spiritual component. Psychotherapeutic components of the Michaelian teachings are usually either a positive to be cultivated or a negative to be mitigated. As we will see, we will see that the Michaels use the word with both a negative and positive connotation. The Michaelian version of psychology is not to be confused with the popular psychology of the self-improvement movement, those that do not have a spiritual core or perspective. Rather, the Michaelian psychotherapeutic path (aimed at improving psychological health) is a beneficial precursor to the spiritual path (aimed at improving soul health). To skip the former but attempt the latter is referred to as “spiritual bypassing”. This is discussed at length on such websites as https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spiritual_bypass. To skip mitigating one’s psychological issues and attempt to go straight to enlightenment usually proves to be problematic.

This chapter is one of many that discusses a particular tool that the Michaels recommend if they are serious about advancing on their spiritual path; refer to the chapter “Tools” for a complete accounting. In this case, the tool is recognition of patterns, in both the negative and the positive connotations.

The scientific aspiration and endeavor is to find and explain patterns or regularities, otherwise known as the laws of nature....

The Overleaf System itself is obviously a pattern of personality traits.... Many other components of the Michaelian teachings are a systematic presentation supernatural phenomena. In that sense, the Michaelian teachings is an example of spiritual science....

Definition of Pattern

So what is meant by **template**? The online Merriam Webster online dictionary definition is: **Wikipedia has an article that provides a definition and a description, as follows (underlined words are my emphasis):**

Pattern per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

The following extracts from original Michaelian group transcriptions are Q&A exchanges, where an original Michaelian group member asks a question (or makes a comment), and the Michaels provide an answer. **This is a subject that benefits by division into subsections. These extracts are presented in the chronological order in which they were given.** As is my custom, I usually provide some explanatory comments following the question or answer. Underlined words are my emphasis, to draw attention to what it is that I comment on. Sometimes I

embed words or phrases [in brackets] that I believe help to clarify the question or the answer. Numerous study papers related to this chapter are to be found among my comments.

Negative –Patterns

The first occurrence of the word pattern happens to be of the negative type:

... Carolyn still has a tendency to slip into the patterns or vibrations of the moment.... [24 July 1973]

This is a case where the word pattern is used with the negative connotation, namely as a bad habit.

The next appearance of the word pattern is likewise negative:

Sarah: Described a recurring dream — driving past a lumber yard among griffins and chimeras. [She] goes into the lumber yard ... a white house... closer to house.

It is a warning. Each time you dream this dream, you are in danger of slipping back into old destructive patterns. The house is symbolic of the mundane; the statuary [is a symbol of] the arcane. [17 August 1973]

So where do habitual patterns come from? Here is one example:

Early Cycle Young Souls tend to adhere to the food patterns learned in childhood. [late August 1973]

The technical name for patterns learned in childhood is **imprinting**. [search original Michaelian group]

At this point, there was a discussion about eye problems pointing to other physical disorders and denoting a brain deviation.

Verify this with actual patients. Those who have visual defects have a very set constellation of abnormalities systemically. There are other physical defects that follow patterns like this. [26 August 1973]

The technical name for a pattern of health issues is “syndrome”; one issue can cause a cluster of symptoms.

Positive +Patterns

Not all kinds of imprinting are negative; it is good to follow a person who sets a good example, who provides a model for proper behavior:

Dick: I have a question. It has to do with the fact that I have only known one living master, and when it comes to patterning my behavior, I have only this one model and my tendency is, as the “Level of Being” goes up, to follow this model that I already know. Is this correct?

The pattern is a good one. [26 August 1973]

Refer to the chapter “Level of Being”. It helps to know what the next higher Level of Being looks like ...

(Dictionary definition of “archetypal” for these like me ... “The original pattern of which all things of the same species are representative or copies; original model or type.”) [17 September 1973]

Concluding Comments on Pattern





⑧ PERSONA

This chapter is the product of a search for the word *persona* in the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group channeling sessions. This word does not represent a significant component of the Michaelian teachings. However, there are good reasons to discuss the subject in this *Study Papers* book: 1) the subject came up numerous times during the original Michaelian group; 2) some interesting things were said about the subject; 3) the subject is related to a number of other components of the Michaelian teachings that are considered to be significant; 4) students can presumably benefit from having the mentions conveniently collected and commented all in one place; 5) issues regarding one's *persona* as distinct from one's authentic self are pervasive in human psychology and sociology and spirituality — subjects covered extensively in this book — so it behooves us to have a working knowledge of them.

The word *persona* is not capitalized in this chapter or other chapters of this *Study Papers* book because it has no special meaning in the Michaelian teachings; it is not a Michaelian jargon word that needs a definition apart from its use in the common vernacular.

This chapter is one of many in this book that focuses on a psychological component of the Michaelian teachings as found in original Michaelian group transcriptions, rather than on a doctrinal or spiritual component. Psychological components of the Michaelian teachings are usually either a positive to be cultivated or a negative to be mitigated. As we will see, the Michaels tell us that having a *persona* is a negative to be eschewed. The Michaelian version of psychology is not to be confused with the popular psychology of the self-improvement movement, those that do not have a spiritual core or perspective. Rather, the Michaelian psychotherapeutic path (aimed at improving psychological health) is a beneficial precursor to the spiritual path (aimed at improving soul health). To skip the former but attempt the latter is referred to as “spiritual bypassing”. This is discussed at length on such websites as https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spiritual_bypassing. To skip mitigating one's psychological issues and attempt to go straight to enlightenment usually proves to be problematic.

Definition of Persona

So what is meant by *persona*? Wikipedia has an article that provides a definition and a description and an explanation, as follows (underlines are my emphasis):

INTRODUCTION

A *persona* (plural *personae* or *personas*), depending on the context, is the public image of one's personality, the social role that one adopts, or simply a fictional character. The word derives from Latin, where it originally referred to a theatrical mask. On the social web, users develop virtual *personas* as online identities.

ETYMOLOGY

The Latin word probably derived from the Etruscan word “*phersu*”, with the same meaning, and that from the Greek πρόσωπον (*prosōpon*). Its meaning in the latter Roman period changed to indicate a “character” of a theatrical performance or court of law, when it became apparent that different individuals could assume the same role and that legal attributes such as rights, powers, and duties followed the role. The same individuals as actors could play different roles, each with its own legal attributes, sometimes even in the same court appearance.

According to other sources, which also admit that the origin of the term is not completely clear, *persona* could be related to the Latin verb *per-sonare*, literally: sounding through, with an obvious link to the above-mentioned theatrical mask, which often incorporated a small megaphone.

IN PSYCHOLOGY

According to Carl Jung and the Jungian psychology, the persona is also the mask or appearance one presents to the world. It may appear in dreams under various guises. People may choose to wear a social mask or use a persona to make themselves appear more socially desirable. This is used to impress potential partners or to make new friends. People can have multiple personas that they use in various situations; this can include work, being with friends, at home, etc. Depending on the individual's circumstance, a persona which they consider stronger within their specific social situation can be created because they put a higher emphasis on social interactions. Jung warned about using personas too much, fearing that one might lose their own individuality to their persona. A study has shown that this can be true to an extent; when taking a private self-rating test, there is a high correlation between how a person rates themselves and how they present themselves in public. It is difficult to tell if people are accurately filling out the test or answering what they find desirable.

In a study written by Danielle Jackson, she argues that a person's persona can range in healthiness. The more healthy a persona is, the more socially acceptable and consistent that person remains. However, once a person starts to believe they are their persona, it can have adverse effects on their personality. James Hillman believed that once a person loses their identity to a persona, they become an archetypal figure. By losing their "ego", their persona becomes their personality in an archetypal form. However, when this occurs, the person becomes unstable and they are unable to act outside their formed persona. [<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Persona> — retrieved 20 March 2023]

The use of the word persona by the Michaels during the original Michaelian group pretty much conforms to the common usage and understanding presented by Wikipedia. The reader will see the ordinary usage in this chapter, and others. For instance, refer to the chapter "Mask" for the discussion of that metaphor of a public persona. Refer to the chapter "Drama" for more about the metaphor of persona in terms of theatrical presentations. As we will see below, persona is more-or-less synonymous with False Personality, a phrase that had its origin in the Gurdjieffian teachings, whereas the term 'persona' was made famous by Carl Jung.

Persona per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

The following extracts from original Michaelian group transcriptions are Q&A exchanges, where an original Michaelian group member asks a question (or makes a comment), and the Michaels provide an answer. These extracts are presented in the chronological order in which they were given. As is my custom, I usually provide some explanatory comments following the question or answer. Underlined words are my emphasis, to draw attention to what it is that I comment on. Sometimes I embed words or phrases [in brackets] that I believe help to clarify the question or the answer.

The word persona only appeared twice in original Michaelian group transcriptions. The first appearance of the word persona was this:

Barbara: Do I have the right idea of equating False Personality with Jung's [concept of the] persona?

Dick: False Personality is all that culturally-induced trash.

Someone helpful: It [persona] serves a useful purpose, and also Buffers the Essence.

False Personality is only a part of this [persona?]. The total False Personality includes, of course, all of the "shoulds" that you learned in childhood, the various machinations you go through as a result of your Goals, and those reactions that are solely the result of the Tape Loops provided by the Attitude. [24 February 1974]

This answer is ambiguous, or at least I am uncertain what "this" refers to. If it refers to persona, then apparently persona is a more-encompassing category than False Personality, and perhaps that is why other words and concepts were provided. Refer to chapters "Bio-computer: Its Programs and Tapes", "Buffers", "Culture", "Machinations", and "Personality — True and False" for chapters that are somewhat in the same realm as persona.

The second and final appearance of the word was this:

We agree with you, Gene, more than you think, that ultimately trust has to do with constancy — predictability, if you will. This endows the persona with a certain amount of reliability with which to operate. [24 September 1974]

We mostly see another person's public persona, which is what they present to us, which is what they want us to see. If the public persona is consistent, then we trust that person; refer to the chapter "Trust" for a complete discussion of that subject. However, in public we rarely see the complete and authentic private person. Often

times, in order to get past the public persona, we have to live with them in private, or at least become very good friends. The chapter “Secrecy” is also relevant to this chapter on persona.

Concluding Comments on Persona

The main reason that I created this brief chapter was to use it to refer to the other lengthier chapters on words and concepts with a similar meaning. The Michaels had nothing good to say in any of those chapters about their students assuming a persona, a mask, a drama, a False Personality that was contrary to their authentic selves.





PERSONALITY — TRUE AND FALSE

The usage of the word Personality in the original Michaelian group transcriptions is somewhat ambiguous; it takes an examination of its usage in the Gurdjieffian teachings prior to the original Michaelian group, and a parsing of its usage in context, throughout the original Michaelian group transcriptions, in order to get a proper understanding of what it means. When we do that, we see that the meaning and usage of the word evolved from Gurdjieff to early original Michaelian group to late original Michaelian group and into the subsequent Michaelian teachings communities.

Another ambiguating and complicating factor in the understanding of Personality is that the word Personality often occurs in conjunction with, and/or in contrast to, the word Essence. This is often the case with the Gurdjieffian teachings, so it is there that we must look for the initial understanding of the phrase, Personality and Essence. There is enough difference in that phrase with the subject of this chapter that I chose to discuss it in another chapter “Essence and Personality”. Now might be a good time to review that chapter whether or not you have already read it,

True Personality

Alice: Are all Overleaves in Essence?

No. [They are all] in Personality.

Alice: Are they chosen on the basis of Karma?

First of all, the locale, the socioeconomic status, the parents you chose — all are formative in programming the bio-computer. These Overleaves are chosen by the soul to be acted out in life, independent — most of the time — of the wishes of the Essence. The soul chose them to complete the specific task. The soul desires simplicity and freedom, making a split [distinction] between soul and Essence.

We don't take the Personality with us when we die. Do we leave it here?

That is correct. The soul on the Astral Plane is devoid of False Personality. [27 February 1974]

What part of [the] Overleaves are in Essence and what [part are] in Personality?

All of the Overleaves are geared to the Physical Plane and thus primarily of the False Personality. Of course, you cannot alter your Body Type or Role except by subtle extinguishment and this is achieved only after all else is Balanced [the fourth Level of Being]. Thus, the Role can still manifest in one acting primarily out of Essence [fourth Level of Being and above], but not to any measurable extent in the occult master [the seventh Level of Being]. [25 June 1974]

Joan asked if we can ever experience total death of the False Personality. Are there lapses? Does it always continue?

There are instances that we remembered well where there has been total death or extinguishment of the False Personality, concomitant with the emergence of True Personality of the Essence. This was indeed gratifying to behold, but it happens rarely on the Physical Plane, even in Adepts who are at a high Level of Being. They must be constantly alert to prevent the instinctive behavior reactions of the False Personality from sneaking in.

The False Personality has difficulty differentiating between conditions such as fragility, softness and the like. These are called by the culture “feminine” characteristics and therefore there is a tendency to lump them all together and perceive them as the same. The False Personality is perhaps the most fragile, as it is one that can be extinguished. After all, the True Personality cannot be, no matter how deeply you bury it in “bullshit”. [25 January 1975]

False Personality

Acculturation and Socialization and Imprinting





PHILOSOPHY AND PHILOSOPHERS

So far as I know, there have never been any professional or even any amateur philosophers who were Michaelian students in the modern era. This did not keep the original Michaelian group members from making allusions to ancient and modern philosophers and philosophies, and it did not keep the Michaels from making references to ancient and modern philosophers and philosophies. In this chapter, we are going to take a look at these references in the original Michaelian group transcriptions.

Definition and Description of Philosophy

Philosophy and Philosophers in the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

The weighty philosophical battles, battles waged by Mechanical Man, are his attempts to solidify even thought and make it more complex. [22 October 1974]

Edgar: Can you explain reality and unreality?

The “realities”, of course, depend upon the perceiver. This session itself is a good example. Some in this room perceive us as real; others do not. The same could be said of unidentified flying objects and most unexplained phenomena. Another concept of “reality” begins with widespread agreement that a certain object is real. We think that Bishop George Berkeley had a few words on this subject. There is, of course, an ultimate reality that is absolute. This can only be glimpsed when the Logos is brought to bear [by the manifestation of an Infinite soul]. Physical things are very real on the Physical Plane, and should be respected as such in order to avoid possible serious collisions with doors that are really and truly there. On the Astral [Plane], things are truly real on the Astral Plane. In another frame of reference, the same admonition [to be careful of “real” things] holds true. We on this plane also perceive certain Causal [Plane] phenomenon as “real” and there is agreement [among the perceivers]. We believe that holds true for the high [Cardinal] planes. This same subject has been occupying philosophers happily now for many thousands of years. There is, oddly enough, always an opposing opinion that goes something like: accept that nothing is real. [08 November 1973]

Indeed, philosophers down through the millennia of human history even have a fancy name for the study of what is truly real or not — namely “ontology” — and a fancy name for the study of how we come to know what is real or not — namely “epistemology”. Wikipedia has lengthy articles on both of these subjects; if the notion of reality versus unreality is new or unclear to you, then you would do well to review the Wikipedia articles. Briefly, the assertion of philosophers and mystics and theologians and many spiritual/religious traditions is that only the so-called “Absolute” (aka Tao) is ontologically real. This means that all of the emanations or creations of the Absolute are merely epistemological appearances or phantoms or illusions (aka Maya). The consensus of numerous esoteric traditions is that there are seven internally-consistent “reality systems”, aka “planes”; inhabitants within each plane regard that plane as “real”, and other planes as relatively “unreal” in comparison. However, each plane is not “hermetically sealed” to all other planes; there is some leakage across the boundaries; these are the so-called “paranormal” phenomena. Refer to chapters “Tao” and “Maya” for further discussion of ontology and epistemology as they apply to the Michaelian teachings. Now reread the quotation above.

Ellis: I have been reading of the concept that one has to be true to himself — be himself, an individual — to perceive the infinite. Is this true?

That is why Socrates said, “Know thyself.” If you perceive that which is “really you”, you will concomitantly perceive the Tao. [08 November 1973]

Ray: Michael has said I am a Sage. I have the feeling that I have had lives before with soldiers and I would like them to verify that.

You always expressed yourself in a most vociferous way, even as a soldier. This resulted in your not always being there at the finish, but you have also been a philosopher of some renown twice; a teacher of rhetoric three times: once in Alexandria, at the same time that Shirley was employed by the household of Marcus Antonius. You were also a stevedore once, but still managed to expound. In fact, you ended up owning the ships you once loaded.

Ray: Oh, wow ... which philosophers?

One of the philosophers was Epictetus and David Hume. [08 November 1973]

From Wikipedia: Epictetus (AD 55 – AD 135) was a Greek Stoic philosopher. He was born a slave at Hierapolis, Phrygia (present day Pamukkale, Turkey), and lived in Rome until banishment when he went to Nicopolis in northwestern Greece where he lived the rest of his life. His teachings were written and published by his pupil Arrian in his Discourses. He taught that philosophy is a way of life and not just a theoretical discipline. To Epictetus, all external events are determined by fate and thus beyond our control, but we can accept whatever happens calmly and dispassionately. Individuals, however, are responsible for their own actions, which they can examine and control through rigorous self-discipline. Suffering arises from trying to control what is uncontrollable, or from neglecting what is within our power. As part of the universal city that is the universe, human beings have a duty to care for all fellow humans. The person who followed these precepts would achieve happiness and peace of mind.

From Wikipedia: David Hume (7 May 7, 1711 – August 25, 1776) was a Stewartish philosopher, historian, economist, and essayist, known especially for his philosophical empiricism and skepticism. He is regarded as one of the most important figures in the history of Western philosophy and the Stewartish Enlightenment. Beginning with his *A Treatise on Human Nature* (1739), Hume strove to create a total naturalistic “science of man” that examined the psychological basis of human nature.

Ray: I was David Hume. Was anyone else David Hume?

When you were David, there were approximately forty integrated Fragments. But to answer your real question, no, there is no one else alive who was David. The Fragments unite — they do not scatter again. [15 November 1973]

Greek thought had much influence on the man Jesus, particularly Epicurus, but it would have been impossible for him to espouse the words of this pagan philosopher from the porticoes of the temple.

Then, when the Infinite Soul manifested, the Logos was brought to bear in the language of the times, transcribed by a Roman tax collector [Matthew] and an Emotionally Centered Greek physician (Luke).

Epicurus had a most profound influence on all of the philosophy of the time, surpassing that of the Stoic, Zeno. This philosophy was made to order for the Sadducees, who also appealed to this young man’s sensitive nature. The Epicurean thought pattern is what you all are striving to accomplish. [25 December 1973]

From Wikipedia: Epicurus (341 BC – 270 BC) was an ancient Greek philosopher as well as the founder of the school of philosophy called Epicureanism. For Epicurus, the purpose of philosophy was to attain the happy, tranquil life, characterized by ataraxia — peace and freedom from fear — and aponia — the absence of pain — and by living a self-sufficient life surrounded by friends. He taught that pleasure and pain are the measures of what is good and evil; death is the end of both body and soul and should therefore not be feared; the gods do not reward or punish humans; the universe is infinite and eternal; and events in the world are ultimately based on the motions and interactions of atoms moving in empty space.

From Wikipedia: Zeno of Citium (c. 334 BC – c. 262 BC) was a Greek language philosopher of Phoenician origin from Citium (Greek: Κίτιον). Zeno was the founder of the Stoic school of philosophy, which he taught in Athens from about 300 BC. Based on the moral ideas of the Cynics, Stoicism laid great emphasis on goodness and peace of mind gained from living a life of virtue in accordance with nature. It proved very successful, and flourished as the dominant philosophy from the Hellenistic period through to the Roman era.

Ray: Could Michael suggest a book that would be right for me to read now?

The book that would help the most at this moment would be *The Faith of Epicurus*.

Ray: Who is the author?

The author is not important. It is the instrument [that is] worthwhile — the author was an instrument. [10 January 1974]

From Wikipedia: Benjamin Farrington (1891 – 1974) was an Irish scholar and professor of the Classics. He was author of many books, including *The Faith of Epicurus*, published in 1967.

Dick: Michael told us to study Epicurus, for a reason that Christ was much influenced by him. The problem I have here is that from what I read about Epicurus, he believed the soul and the body were one and inseparable, and there is no reincarnation.

We said that Jesus was heavily influenced by Epicurus; he was. Epicurus was not a manifestation [of a Transcendental or Infinite Soul]; he was a Mature Priest. The humanitarian aspects of his philosophy are worth emulating. This, by the way, is typical of Greek thought of that period. Jesus knew about reincarnation through the mystical teachings of the Essenes in the hills around the town in which he was born. As an Old Soul, this man went through all of the confusion and doubts that some of you are now experiencing, the difference being that he was able to sort it out. The Greek philosophers wished to negate the charm of the “other world” so that this world would have more meaning. They, of course, succeeded not at all, but the gentleness of Epicurean thought persisted through the ages primarily because of the separation from the affairs of state, which is valid. This separation must be made before further growth can ensue. [20 January 1974]

Cheryl: In my philosophy class, I learned that Theodoras was Theatetus’ teacher and I gasped in class when I heard that he was Socrates’ teacher. I’m wondering if I knew him when I was Theodoras because it was said that I taught mathematics then.

At this time, the study of mathematics was not divorced from that of philosophy. Look at Pythagoras. That was a valid flash. [06 February 1974]





⑤ PHOTOGRAPHY

By Photography I do not mean what you might think that I mean, as something that has to do with taking pictures with cameras. I mean it as the Michaels mean it, as metaphorically taking ‘photos’ of defective and deficient behavior, emotions, and thoughts, whether in yourself or in other people. This is similar to what Gurdjieff called Self-observation, where one notices their own psychological issues, but Photographing includes calling out others on their psychological issues. Because of this special meaning in the Michaelian teachings, I capitalize this as yet another jargon word, and to distinguish it from other instances in the original Michaelian group transcriptions of the term that have the ordinary meaning.

The application of self-awareness techniques is important on the psychotherapeutic path recommended by clinical psychologists, and in the spiritual path recommended by Gurdjieff and the Michaels. Refer to the chapter “Self-observation”, for the exposition of Gurdjieff’s use of that term, and for its use in the original Michaelian group transcriptions as a tool used intentionally to increase self-awareness. One could say that the Overleaf System, with its Negative Poles and its Chief Features, provides a background against which to observe oneself and Photograph others.

The reason that the Michaels revealed the Overleaf System is that it helps their students to become more self-aware and other-aware: by this means you come to see that your own perceptions are no more (nor less) privileged than other people’s perceptions. On the spiritual path, one of the first steps toward enlightenment is to see your Personality for what it is so that you can transcend it. This ostensibly esoteric phenomenon actually has a name in the exoteric world, namely “meta-cognition”.

Meta-cognition in Philosophy and Psychology

As an introduction to Photography, may I suggest that there is great utilitarian value in understanding the phenomenon of meta-cognition. It so happens that my favorite source of introductory information, Wikipedia, has an article on this subject.

Metacognition is an awareness of one’s own thought processes and an understanding of the patterns behind them. The term comes from the root word meta, meaning “beyond”, or “on top of”. Metacognition can take many forms, such as reflecting on one’s own ways of thinking and knowing when and how to use particular strategies for problem-solving. There are generally two components of metacognition: (1) knowledge about cognition and (2) regulation of cognition. This higher-level cognition was given the label metacognition by American developmental psychologist John H. Flavell (1976).

The term metacognition literally means ‘above cognition’, and is used to indicate cognition about cognition, or more informally, thinking about thinking. Flavell defined metacognition as knowledge about cognition and control of cognition. For example, a person is engaging in metacognition if they notice that they are having more trouble learning A than B, or if it strikes them that they should double-check C before accepting it as fact. J. H. Flavell (1976, p. 232). Andreas Demetriou’s theory (one of the neo-Piagetian theories of cognitive development) used the term hyper-cognition to refer to self-monitoring, self-representation, and self-regulation processes, which are regarded as integral components of the human mind. Moreover, with his colleagues, he showed that these processes participate in general intelligence, together with processing efficiency and reasoning, which have traditionally been considered to compose fluid intelligence.

Thereafter followed an extensive discussion of metacognition as it pertained to an individual monitoring themselves, but then the concept was applied to monitoring other people:

Although metacognition has thus far been discussed in relation to the self, recent research in the field has suggested that this view is overly restrictive. Instead, it is argued that metacognition research should also include beliefs about others’ mental processes, the influence of culture on those beliefs, and on beliefs about ourselves. This “expansionist view” proposes that it is impossible to fully understand metacognition without

considering the situational norms and cultural expectations that influence those same conceptions. This combination of social psychology and metacognition is referred to as social metacognition.

Social metacognition can include ideas and perceptions that relate to social cognition. Additionally, social metacognition can include judging the cognition of others, such as judging the perceptions and emotional states of others. This is in part because the process of judging others is similar to judging the self. However, individuals have less information about the people they are judging; therefore, judging others tends to be more inaccurate. Having similar cognitions can buffer against this inaccuracy and can be helpful for teams or organizations, as well as interpersonal relationships. [<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Metacognition> — retrieved 27 January 2022]

The Wikipedia article is extensive, and well worth reading by Michaelian students. The Michaelian teachings recognizes personal metacognition as well as social metacognition. The primary function of Photography is to increase metacognition, whether one is Photographing oneself, or whether one is Photographing another person. The Michaels had a lot to say about this tool, which is not to be used to be judgmental, but to be used to foster transcendence.

Photography per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

The following extracts from original Michaelian group transcriptions are Q&A exchanges, where an original Michaelian group member asks a question (or makes a comment), and the Michaels provide an answer. These extracts are presented in the chronological order in which they were given. As is my custom, I often provide some explanatory comments following the question or answer. Underlined words in the Michaels' answers are my emphasis, to draw attention to what it is that I comment on. Sometimes I embed words or phrases [in brackets] that I believe help to clarify the question or the answer.

The first occurrence of the concept of Photographing others does not provide any clues as to where the idea came from, but it seems to be familiar to the group, as if it were known among them somehow:

Sarah: What should I do about my Chief Feature? I don't know about it unless someone Photographs me.

Richard [Sarah's husband]: I did Photograph you and you got uptight.

That is a good way. Sarah does an excellent put-down and she should be called on it when it occurs.

Sarah: Well, I've always had a "sink or swim" attitude toward others. This comes out as Arrogance to Richard. [22 September 1973]

Gurdjieff did not have a formal list of Chief Features, so Sarah did not know what hers was. I do not know if the term Photograph was used in Robert Burton's Fellowship of Friends, where Sarah and Richard were briefly members. When the Michael's list of Chief Features were revealed several months later, Sarah's was said to be Arrogance. Here, Photographing has a synonym phrase from the common vernacular: "called on it".

Dick: I am coming to a realization of ignorance. Is the "Dark Night of the Soul" similar to what John felt? I am beginning to appreciate the ignorance of previous conditions. I do not want to talk because there is nothing to say. You realize you know nothing.

From Wikipedia:

Dark Night of the Soul is the title of a poem written by 16th century Spanish poet and Roman Catholic mystic Saint John of the Cross, as well as of a treatise he wrote later, commenting on the poem. Saint John of the Cross was a Carmelite priest. His poem narrates the journey of the soul from its bodily home to its union with God. The journey occurs during the night, which represents the hardships and difficulties the soul meets in detachment from the world and reaching the light of the union with the Creator.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dark_Night_of_the_Soul — retrieved 27 January 2022]

The Michaels had an answer to Dick's comment:

We would like for you to recall what you just said in its entirety and Photograph the ingratiating. [However,] We do feel that you are going toward Balance and, yes, the feeling [of knowing nothing] is the same [as Saint John of the Cross felt]. That is the first step. You must plunge all the way down in order to start the climb up. Even Jesus had to do this — even before the Infinite Soul would manifest. [27 January 1974]

There might be some false humility in Dick's question, and that is often motivated by the desire to not appear arrogant to others, and that is often motivated by ingratiating. Dick was the person in the original Michaelian group who asked the most questions, so it would be false of him to remain silent on the pretext that he was actually humble. It is true that well into this session he had said nothing until this comment, and he said nothing afterward in this session. Perhaps he was stung by this Photograph. He resumed making comments in the next session that he attended.

We discussed the possibility of having a minimum fee to cover the cost of duplicating transcripts of the meetings. We also need a name in order to incorporate. There are many advantages to incorporating. When there is \$300 in the treasury, we can incorporate.

We definitely agree that the commitment is necessary but would see you consider some other than financial for some students. We would see a goods-for-service economy emerging within this group and its extensions. We would have you consider services rendered as an alternative for those who are unable to pay.

We agree that this teaching is far from free, but we do not see money necessarily as the price. We would warn you to be extremely cautious in implementing the service angle. For instance, you must make those in Acceptance [in the Negative Pole of –Ingratiation] Photograph themselves in accepting more than they wish from False Personality, or those in Submission submitting to those in Dominance. This would be one way of starting the process of Photographing.... Photographing is merely a tool to use in separating the Personality from the Essence: that is, [separating the] Mechanical from the spiritual behavior. [08 February 1974]

Previously something was said about Photographing someone's Chief Feature when they were not aware of it, and here we see the suggestion to Photograph people in the Negative Pole of an Overleaf, and Photograph someone on the Ordinal side of an Axis yielding to someone on the Cardinal side of an Axis, and Photographing Mechanical behavior (refer to the chapter "Mechanical Man"). There are yet other phenomena to Photograph that are not yet revealed, but they are further on. Refer to the chapter "Essence and Personality".

Cynthia: The Town Planning requires a constant dialogue. You have to earn a place in the Town. One without a sense of community cannot just walk into it. So, there's a need for planning.

Many of those who are in the founding group for this land venture are in search of the Golden Fleece. This does not hang in Oregon more than in Troy. Of course, they will carry their mixed bag of problems with them. The advantage in a closed community of that sort is the opportunity to live the teaching in a supportive atmosphere and, by example, spill over on to those around you. This is not to say that you will be heard by any of them. Probably not many of them will respond, but those who do, will contribute, and will in turn aid in your own personal growth process by providing the Photographs.... You can now begin to Photograph these patterns in one another. There is the definite game-playing aspect to this that, on a lower level, is worked out in awareness groups. Sometimes, it is easier to observe the various machinations by observing awareness groups at work. Perhaps this film (Here Comes Everybody) would be valuable for all of you to see. [24 February 1974]

Cynthia took seriously the idea of the original Michaelian group joining (or creating) a commune. The problems and machinations inherent in Personality are legion. Certainly, there are many opportunities for Photographing others and for being Photographed by others in a commune, but, of course, it must be a healthy commune. The reference to "game-playing" might be to Eric Berne's best-selling book *Games People Play*, published in the mid-1960s. It provided a veritable catalog of stuff to Photograph. The point is that everyone in a group where people Photograph each other must be diligent that it not become just another "game" that the Personality plays, rather than the use of Photography to mitigate Personality and reveal Essence.

Dick: I am not a meditator. Nonetheless, I feel Michael is in contact with my spirit even though I am not aware of this. Is this so?

We have great hopes that this coming experience will bring you the direct accesses for which you long. Yes. We are with you always now, and it will be greatly facilitated by learning to relax the body and the Personality so that we can speak to you. Most of you students have the most difficulty with relaxation. Today is an excellent time to Photograph this, as the little ones create the distraction, and all the Moving Centers go into action. [03 March 1974]

This answer seems to indicate that one can Photograph oneself. This is what Gurdjieff referred to as "Self-observation"; there is a chapter in this *Study Papers* book with that name. Certainly it is easier for one to notice when one is not relaxed; others might only notice it when a person is busy in their Moving Center.

Sarah: I observed Impatience in a gas line today.

We would say that the queues are very good for [working on] this in spite of the inconvenience. They do allow one to Photograph oneself in Chief Feature. This is one way. Relaxation forced, of course, is another.

This was said at a time when there was gasoline rationing, and long lines of cars at gas stations. This is the second instance in the original Michaelian group transcriptions where Photographing is equated with Self-observation of one's Chief Feature. The third instance is in the next Q&A exchange:

Ray: I'd like a comment from Michael on how best to learn or deal with Impatience.

The best way to counteract the Chief Feature of Impatience is to deliberately expose yourself to exasperating situations, and then Photograph the feelings around the Impatience. Usually, you will find that the reaction is habit rather than emotion and amounts to a Tape Loop. [06 March 1974]

Refer to the chapter "Bio-Computer" for more information about Tape Loops, which include addictions. Addictions as well as habits are good targets for Photography.

Comment: We are imprinted that we are our brother's keepers and feel bad when a person in Rejection or Retardation seems to lose out in life. They came for that purpose — to learn something. You cry because of the guilt you have because you "should have done something for them". Photograph your own "goodness" and remember, they are not here to be happy.

Besides Chief Features and Negative Poles and such as mentioned previously, you do well to Photograph your "imprinting", aka False Personality, your negative emotions, and your self-righteousness.

Dick: Alcohol brought out some political feelings, which allowed me to Photograph them.

That is valid. We find no fault with this as long as you permit the Photograph. [19 March 1974]

Besides alcohol, marijuana was used in the original Michaelian group to reveal stuff to oneself that might otherwise have remained hidden to Self-observation.

We propose an exercise in psychic Photography for all of you as follows: begin to Photograph yourselves reacting to suggestions of change with the statement, "I cannot", then realize that this is not true. Sometimes, the truth will be that you do not at the present moment possess the required skills or knowledge, but more often than not, the truth will be, "I do not want to." This is vital, and a positive step on the path. You can help by Photographing each other in this. Also, all of you are guilty of using this as an excuse many times a day to shift the blame [from yourself to someone or something else], and this accomplishes that nicely. You present then the picture of a student at the mercy of the cosmos, which is, of course, absurd. [20 March 1974]

The function of Photography in the form of Self-observation is to notice where you are stuck in your unconscious, automatic, Mechanical way of life. Photography serves the same purpose, of course, when you offer a Photograph to someone else. Photography serves the purpose of fostering personal responsibility, of taking charge of your life.

Most of you, though, are in a position where you can begin to look at your own conflicts and, with our help, work through them.

Is the old "Photographing" of another person a good thing to practice?

That is valid. We intend to suggest more areas in need of psychic Photography.

Is it [Photography] as good as a Shock?

That is also true, and this is why the method used [by Gurdjieff and by Robert] was so effective. We would suggest the same to any student able to receive the voices from the Causal plane. [27 March 1974]

Refer to the chapter "Shock" for more information about that phenomenon.

Cheryl: How can I get out of my Caution Mode?

The only way to alter this is again to understand why you chose it in the first place. To Photograph [excessive] deliberation over mundane decisions and [then] attempt to act rather than to think. We know of no better way than to become disgusted by your own Photographs and thereby be literally forced out of the Overleaf. [14 April 1974]

The Negative Poles of the Overleaves had not yet been revealed. Many months later it was said that -Phobia was the Negative Pole of the Caution Mode. That applies to a person who thinks too much and is too timid to make decisions. To overcome that with the help of Photography, and get into the Positive Pole of +Deliberation, would be much easier than replacing Caution with some other Mode, as suggested by Sarah:

Sarah: It may be that when you have had enough of that Overleaf, you may take on a different Overleaf.

Dick: Our material on what to do is not specific. Could Michael recommend ways of changing our Overleaves?

The primary difficulty in altering the Overleaves is in the initial recognition and the constant verification, which must precede the true desire to alter. When this has been accomplished, then the process of anticipation can begin. We can compare it with recognizing that you were about to say the forbidden word and substituting a suitable synonym (the "get, I, very, really and, a lot" exercises [recommended by Robert Burton]). This was, of course, a crutch, but hopefully, a temporary one that could be discarded when the process becomes inculcated. [Psycho-]Therapeutic processes can speed up the alteration where the pattern is not clear. However, this group can work toward that point where the psychic Photography is so finely tuned that the eventual breakthrough

can come within the present structure. Many times, the meditation does serve as a precursor of insightful concentration. This is why it is so valuable. We find no fault with crutches so long as they are given up when you are no longer lame.

Dick: The message I get is that there are no keys. The results of all psychotherapy appear temporary. It seems that Michael could come up with something besides Rolling or some other type of existing therapy — something with more zock. It seems Michael is always holding something back. Perhaps I want a miracle, but it does seem that it takes something wonderful, which is akin to a miracle, to affect true spiritual growth, and a part of this would be a change in Overleaves.

Dick is correct in that so-called “spiritually transformative experiences” such as kundalini awakening, extreme psychedelics, *shaktipat* by a guru, and Near Death Experiences can “magically” change a Personality for the better permanently, but these are rare and typically spontaneous. Until that happens, such ‘crutches’ as Photography, meditation, fasting, and study will have to do; refer to chapters, “Meditation and Concentration”, “Fasting”, and “Psychedelics”, for more information.

Another tool for increasing self-awareness is dream work:

Sarah: A good teacher keeps students unfulfilled to keep them coming back for another lesson.

Of course, there are (ways). We have spoken to you many times of conscious recall of the dreams and of the time spent on the Astral Plane, but most must go through this process one step at a time. Most cannot jump from that Maya-filled life in which they find themselves into the too rarefied atmosphere of enlightenment. These processes are valid, but they do take time and they do open doors to many more processes that bring you ever closer to the goal. We would Photograph your Impatience now, and that is not necessarily a bad place to start. There is no truly rapid method by which you can throw off the weighted cloak of culture and society; this takes time. [10 May 1974]

Evidently dreams can provide Photographs. Refer to the chapter “Dreams and Dreaming” for more information about that.

The Michaels revealed the Overleaf System because it is necessary to first understand one’s Personality because that provides the foundation for changing one’s Personality via the various techniques recommended by the Michaels, including Photography. Numerous times the Michaels invoke Photography as the way to transcend one’s Overleaves, to mitigate Personality, and to reveal Essence.

Comment: We wondered if he would burn the [Karmic] Ribbons he had left, and went on considering that everyone on earth has a goal — a set of things to experience and learn on the Physical Plane. We wondered about the betrayal of Astral Agreements we may have made, and someone asked if Michael would let us know what missions we had decided to accomplish.

We will, yes, but we had hoped that by giving you the Overleaves and Photographing the patterns, the insights would come. Many of you already have some inkling of what you have agreed to do merely by discussing your Karmic Ribbons and interwoven Sequences. These tasks are not always difficult; many are not even very interesting, but in some way, they enrich the Fragment and lead to the experiencing of all of life. [15 May 1974]

Refer to chapters “Karma” and “Agreements and Sequences”. If we ponder the possible reasons for our choice of Overleaves for a lifetime, and Photograph the specific situations that trigger the Negative Poles, we get clues about why we have those particular Overleaves.

Benita: I felt I was not going to bother with groups any more, but I was curious about this one. What am I doing?

Much more like desiring; that would be more correct. Perhaps you would review our feelings on the solitary path.

(It’s a poor way to go ... you need others to Photograph ... you cannot do it alone.) [30 May 1974]

Because one cannot see oneself objectively, one needs other people to provide Photographs that are more objective.

The following Q&A exchange is the best single description of the function of Photography to be found in the original Michaelian group transcriptions:

Dick: Observing self — can’t figure out why it (the Machine) operates as it does. What do I do to make the change?

We would say at this point that the insight you have mentioned is an extremely essential one; that is, to view from the inside [through Self-observation] the utter Mechanicality of the Personality and its conditioned responses. Some responses can be altered and you should begin to see how they can be changed. All along we have been urging you to Photograph these [Mechanical] sequences in yourselves. Some of them are of course culturally induced; the work ethic is an example. Others result from your combination of Overleaves, and the

way in which you inter-relate because of them. The Personality is a Machine. All of its responses are Mechanical and most are unnecessary. The continued [Self-]observation should make you willing to change the behavior; after awhile it becomes frustrating to do otherwise. This is one of the side benefits of the concentration–meditation Monad. It does make the Essence disgusted by the hold Personality has over it, and usually the necessary impetus occurs to effect the change. Sooner or later, if you are willing to pursue this to the bitter end, the light will shine and the Essence will gain control. Then those things which are truly significant will take precedence over much of the nonsense you now use to occupy your days. [19 June 1974]

Refer to the chapters “Mechanical Man” and “Essence and Personality”. The point is that Photography allows one to step outside of one’s mechanical, habitual, automatic way of being, and thereby propels one up and away from Personality and toward Essence.

Delia: Is the Fischer-Hoffman school valid?

This school is as valid as the other Astral physical schools. It must cut through the bias of Arrogance, but is essentially valid. The man will do no harm if he continues to Photograph his vanity. He has been [Photographing], yes, but when a physical teacher begins to regard himself and his Astral counterpart as omnipotent, trouble begins in a snowballing fashion. This does not need to happen. [03 July 1974]

Even people who are not Michaelian students can use Photography as a technique for increasing self-awareness. The Overleaves provide us with built-in biases; coming to know our Overleaves via Photography helps us to transcend them.

Photograph the “Pollyanna feature” in all of the group members in Acceptance [Goal] sometime. It will be enlightening and Good Work. [07 July 1974]

This “Pollyanna feature” is referring to the Negative Pole of Acceptance, –Ingratiation, not the Positive Pole, +Agape. Positive and Negative Poles were not revealed to the original Michaelian group until about six months after this session.

Alice: Sock it to me, Michael, so I may be a better person for it.

Since your own Chief Feature is Self-deprecation, Alice, your own timidity is stronger and, therefore, needs the work. The start now has been good, but you must not dwell on the possible effects of your Photographs. This is a horrendous drain in energy. Just say it. Most of the time you have been right when you have felt strongly. Practicing with those you trust is all right for the present. It is valid that if it is the truth you speak, most have no rejoinder. Only those in Rejection will sometimes reject even the truth. [21 September 1974]

Refer to the chapter “Energy and Energy Leaks”. Photograph when you are doing the wrong things in order to mitigate those things; Photograph when you are doing the right things in order to augment those things.

Joan asked the group to please not fail to Photograph her as she is very open for it. Prompted by information indicating group was timid to Photograph those in an Exalted [Cardinal] Role. [Joan is a Priest] [01 October 1973]

Behavior, to do or to not do, that is driven by relative status, in some hierarchy or another, is one of those phenomena that should be Photographed.

When Mechanical Man expresses verbally a negative emotion, you see, there is a compounded energy Leak. It is fine to just admonish you all not to express, but we understand that you must know why. When you compound the Leak, you step completely back and allow the lower Centers full control, and it is a soulless, automatic response, and much overloading of the circuitry occurs. However, when you merely acknowledge to yourself that you are having a negative reaction, why then you are immediately reducing the force of the reaction, simply by the internal Photograph, and also by sending the reaction up a notch instead of downward. In other words, this process requires, in and of itself, the use of Intellectual Center in order to Photograph the inappropriate action. This enables the hot wires to cool down a bit, and allows the time to formulate a dispassionate response. This also many times results in a cooling off of the trigger. Also, when that happens, there is a neutral energy flow, and this in time can provide access to Higher Centers and, therefore, positive energy. [05 October 1974]

It is one thing that a person can Photograph another person, but how is it that a self can observe another part of the self? Answer: the self is complex in terms of Centers. The comment above mainly discusses how the Intellectual Center can neutralize negative output from the Emotional Center, but the principle applies to the entire spectrum of the septenary of Centers. The self exists in layers of a hierarchy, that hierarchy being the Centers arranged in the Natural Sequence: Moving > Emotional > Intellectual > Instinctive (Balanced) > Higher Intellectual > Higher Emotional > Higher Moving. The mere process of having one part of oneself (a higher

Center) monitor another part of oneself (a lower Center) softens the negative impact of the lower Center, and elevates the consciousness into the higher Center. Self-observation, aka Photographing, is a primary technique, recommended by Gurdjieff and the Michaels, for raising one's Level of Being; it is the 'energy' for 'propelling' one 'upward' in the spiritual 'path'.

Cynthia: How is she doing?

Cynthia will be doing more on the positive vein when she eliminates the concept of doing for the world. She can move in more truth in a limited sphere than this expanded viewpoint would allow, but her own growth is continuing and she is breaking through to a more realistic place from which to analyze her movements and emotions. Perhaps we should amend that [realistic] to rational. She has developed some skills at Photographing her own excessive enthusiasm that tends to be so exhausting. This is not to say that enthusiasm is negative. Far from it, but the Emotional Center combined with the Passion Mode can be utterly exhausting, when the False Personality has the upper hand. [08 October 1974]

That was just one of many passages that talk about Photographing your particular Overleaves in order to transmute the Negative Poles, and then transcend the Overleaves entirely, which is the long-range goal for people seriously on the spiritual path.

[Question not recorded.]

You are not Photographing the inappropriateness of the reaction; you are allowing the reaction to fulminate. The secret is in the Photograph outside of self, of how ridiculous the reaction is. If you can ever stand apart and look at self in a tantrum, you will be unwilling to have another. It is the ability to rationalize the inappropriateness that acts as a coolant. If you merely "get with" your anger and have a good go at it, you will naturally expend an enormous amount of energy. A negative source. While you are examining your reactions, however, you cannot help but dampen its ardor. [09 October 1974]

Just observing one's psychological issues goes a long way in mitigating it; it takes one up and out of the negative feedback loop that is typical of reactive behavior. It does not say so here, but elsewhere it is stated that inappropriate Mechanical *reactive* behavior should be substituted with appropriate Balanced *responsive* behavior, intentionally and consciously chosen by Essence rather than unconsciously by Personality.

It does not worry us that you wish to go into this [intimacy] gradually. We have much time. It is, however, gratifying that at least the ball is now rolling, and many students are now looking at alternatives that in the beginning were untenable. This is some progress. The rest must come about at a comfortable rhythm. The more time that you can spend in close proximity, the easier the Work will become. It was graphically clear to many students, for instance, that they were not restricted by the fact that the other students were present, and that they were able to function in many spheres and with a far keener appreciation of the action undertaken. This is a valuable lesson and a valid group Photograph.... The reason for the psychic Photograph should be fairly clear at this time. It is primarily a warm-up exercise, leading to nonverbal communication. Many students who are also teachers err in trying to speed up this process and, for that reason, the desired communication does not take place. The telepathic silence is anything but silent, but students cannot be shielding if this is to come about. If you first learn to express your feelings to one another without shame or guilt or any of the other myriad barriers, then you open the door to silence. Only then can you be truly comfortable without the chatter. Chattering is usually just another shield so the Personality does not have to be honest. [12 November 1974]

If people learn to share their intimate thoughts with each other in a close-knit group out loud, as should be the case when offering Photographs, then the long-term result might be telepathic communication; refer to the chapter "Telepathy".

Joan asked for a comment as a teacher from THE teacher [Michael].

Then it would be Good Work for us not to comment, as then you would be forced to break patterns. Your looking for a comment is an expectation of us. Do you Photograph that? Also, we sense in some the need to verify that we are indeed on tap. Yes, we are.... In the soul in a teaching or the soul going into Balance, this gratification can sometimes bring about startling Photographs of the Personality at work and the expectations they had of the other, based upon the interpretation of the emotion. Souls on the Physical Plane, until they meet with a teaching, have no mechanism with which to interpret emotions accurately. They must merely interpret according to the dictates of the culture. [19 November 1974]

The Michaels offer Photographs from a position of objectivity, but it is not so easy for people to do so. Anyone who presumes to offer a Photograph of another person had better be certain that they are coming from a place of clarity in Essence, not from a place of emotional reactivity or cultural norms.

This man may now [that he knows his conflicting Overleaves] develop some insights into his enTrapment. At least we know he will begin to Photograph himself as the victim [in Martyrdom] from now on and in his case, this would be positive [Good] Work, for then he can begin to see ways of not being the victim if he wishes. He has tremendous drives toward leadership: just Photograph his use of the word "boss" in line with the terminology he has developed — this is a dead giveaway to his space. [07 December 1974]

Refer to the chapter "Liberation", for more information about Traps.

We will now give response words we would like to see Photographed in yourselves and they are: "never", "forever", and "always." These irritate us far more than "very", "a lot", *et cetera, et cetera, et cetera*. Yes, it would be valuable for a while to Photograph these in each other. We will tell you when you have become Identified with the exercise, when it has become Mechanical. It would be interesting to tabulate all those situations to which you apply these absolutes. There are truly few conditions, and most of them are cosmic, to which these do apply. [21 December 1974]

In the philosophy of General Semantics, overuse of words such as these is referred to as "the disease of Allness". (><http://miltondawes.com/2013/04/21/some-general-semantics-principles/><) Refer to the chapter "Formatory" for more information about being exacting with one's thoughts and words.

The concept of cooperation is so frightening to the Personality that it fights this, even on a very limited scale, such as a small commune. The knowledge that concessions would have to be made and the Personality would have to give into another, keeps even the discussion down on a theoretical level. There are other examples of course, but we use this one simply because it has been thrown out to this group, and you have all had an opportunity to observe and Photograph the various reactions to this concept.

We would also like you to now Photograph this cadre's reaction to information that they do not like. The energies here this evening are extremely scattered, and students are not present [in the here-now]. We would prefer that the remainder of the evening be spent in discussion of your fears concerning the new direction of this teaching among yourselves. [28 December 1974]

Refer to the chapter "Communal Living" for more information about a lifestyle that would foster Photography. A good target for Photography is any and every fear and anxiety.

For one thing, with Gene, others will feel the fluctuation in the close living afforded in a commune. They will not hesitate to Photograph this.... In true Agape there is, of course, an intensive, constant flow of love and caring from one to another. The Personality rejects this out of hand, of course; it cannot even admit the possibility. That is why it is so difficult for you to Photograph yourself intermittently dispensing affection in your interpersonal relationships.... Often resolution comes about in a strange way when one makes a choice from a far-from-ideal space, and then Photographs Chief Feature keeping him from retracting that choice and admitting that it was from a less-than-ideal place.... We would hope that you will reflect upon those Photographs that we have made of you and use them to facilitate your own progress within the next several months. [15 January 1975]

This passage was given in a session that was about a romantic relationship that was having problems. Certainly, of all kinds of relationships, in a commune or elsewhere, romantic relationships typically require self-awareness or they tend to self-destruct. Therefore, the more self-awareness fostered by Photography the better the relationship will be, or should be if the two people use Photography in a positive way.

Many students regard you [Dick] as a teacher, much more than a student, and most are reluctant to Photograph for you while not for themselves. [19 January 1975]

Besides the instance documented above where Ordinal Fragments are unwilling to Photograph Cardinal Fragments, here we see an instance of reluctance to Photograph that can be extrapolated to any situation where there is a perception of inequality between the Photographer and the Photographee. This issue is itself worthy of being Photographed.

The issue of Photographing in spite of power inequalities came up again in this same session:

Jane asked if she needed to acknowledge her own resentment. She then asked why she and her boyfriend fought so much.

The level of enthusiasm and diverse interest, most of the time. Both of you are extremely verbal and independent.

What is needed to calm?

If the desire for tranquility ever overrides the excitement now derived from the scrapping, then the work can be done merely through Photographing your tendencies to spar for dominance.

Jane: I'd settle for equality. I do not want to dominate.

Equality here would be a rather crowded, explosive pedestal.

Jane: Does that mean that someone is supposed to dominate?

Not at all. It is simply that at this point in your lives, it is the battle for dominance that provides the excitement and not that which is achieved. It would be an uneasy truce should one of you decide to capitulate. [19 January 1975]

Besides trust between the people and trust in the process, it takes self-awareness on the part of both the Photographer and the Photographee for it to work. In other words, the two must truly agree to do this type of Work in order for it to be effective.

Leslie asked for a comment on something new happening within her. Is it awareness of mis-Centering or is it learning to use the correct Center?

You are now beginning to Photograph wrong use of Centers in yourself and others. It is still a bit retrospective, but it is Good Work. In order to use the appropriate Center, you must be constantly alert. [25 January 1975]

One of the major themes of the spiritual path of the Gurdjieffian teachings and Michaelian teachings is the right use of Centers on the way to achieving Balance. Refer to the chapters on Centers for more information. Self-Photography can be done "retrospectively", in review after the event — it need not be done "on the fly" — but, of course, it is best to be vigilant enough to catch yourself before the act, and circumvent the offending behavior.

Dick asked for a comment on parental pride.

Ideally, pride in the accomplishments of another would not be based upon the parentage at all, but as this society is far from ideal, the inability to Photograph in your own children that which is readily apparent in the children of others is excessive pride. If you see other children as hellions and your own as merely spirited, there is excessive pride. When you reach the point where you can give loving, positive Photographs to your own children as though they were no longer related to you, then you will have eliminated most of the excess. [30 January 1975]

Contrariwise, there are parents who are more permissive with children who are not their own; they are more severe with their own children. Obviously, either distortion is to be eschewed.

Jim: What Overleaves of mine keep me from growth as far as the teaching [is concerned]?

[Soleal:] Souls with the Chief Feature of Impatience always feel that their growth is slow and they need constant Photographs of their progress, but what is standing in their way more than anything else is their own expectations of where they should be. It is like a nice, juicy fruit hanging on a branch way above your head: you cannot be content with the fruit on the lower branches as long as that prize is just out of your reach. [01 February 1975]

It is almost impossible to have realistic, objective expectations about oneself, but Photography helps in that regard. Refer to the chapter "Extinguishment" for the list of negativities that should be mitigated via Photography: Chief Features, Negative Poles, False Personality, Maya, and so on.

It is indeed true that the levels of commitment to the path vary to a great degree within the group. There are those who say, "Yes, I seek spiritual growth; I seek and I am open to input [Photographs] from my brothers", and yet when that input is received, all kinds of rationalizations appear, such as, "That is his projection", "That is his perception", "I do not need to take on his problems". Why not accept that, as we have said before, there is no helping each other? The tool of Photographing is, of course, valid only when it comes from a space of objectivity, and none of you is objective totally. Although on occasion, all of you touch upon the periphery of objectivity and are able to give valid Photographs to your brothers.

We have spoken before about vulnerability. You all operate from the basis of insecurity in your Personalities, which all too often stops you from speaking what you perceive. This must come to an end. If there is any purpose to our being with you, you must cease this game of "If I tell him what I see, I might be wrong and he won't like me." This is not confrontation tactics, but merely accepting responsibility for your perceptions and having the strength of vulnerability to express the perceptions. [09 February 1975]

It is best for you to not offer a Photograph to another person unless that person has a great deal of respect for you and the spiritual maturity, and therefore near-objectivity, of your perceptions. Contrariwise, it is counterproductive to offer a Photograph to a person who is not yet spiritually mature enough to receive it in a healthy way.

Before the practice of Photography is implemented in any group or between any two people, it should be discussed in great depth and with great delicacy:

The group fragmented into lengthy discussions on Photographing other students, handling negativity in the moment rather than brooding about it until it blew up beyond the ridiculous. Much negativity was given to the group to look at.

The student David has stressed the importance of communicating through the Centers and not the [other] Overleaves, and that cannot be stressed enough. When you Photograph another student with your Overleaves, it will always — and we repeat — always, be from a negative space, where the Overleaves abrade. When you give a Photograph from the Centers, it will almost always be valid. You must, and we repeat, must, learn to Photograph from the Centers and not from the [other] Overleaves. Forget what the verbalized issue happens to be — it is always a lie — and determine where the true issue lies. Learn to Photograph the real issue in Real Space. The ideal Photograph at that time (speaking to Sarah about her conflict with another student) would have been, “I understand that you have much pain and I have compassion.” [12 February 1975]

Refer to the chapter “Real Space versus Artificial Space”. Abrading Overleaves produce subjective reactions, not objective reactions; therefore Photographs offered from subjective abrasions between Overleaves are not going to be objectively valid. The Centers are Overleaves, and reactions by Centers are subjective just as the other Overleaves are, but apparently it is okay to offer a subjective Photograph from them if one frames it as a sympathetic reaction, Center-to-Center, as in: “I understand and I have compassion, but here is how your (Moving Center) behavior or (Emotional Center) values or (Intellectual Center) beliefs are problematic for me personally, and I hope your response is also sympathetic”. Photographs should forge healing bonds between Centers, not provoke breaks. Empathy and rapport and mirroring are well-known psychotherapeutic tools.

The problem of the children here is a lie and the true issue has not been brought up by those concerned; therefore, it perseverates. And until the true issue is explored in each and every Photograph, no progress will ever be made. It is, of course, easier for those in Exalted Roles to put up the facade, for it is more important for them to show the world the *bella figura* [good impression]. This is not to say that they are not locked into their own Tapes — one being that they are above it all, and that Tape needs erasing too. But it still remains that no conflict will ever be solved if you deal with it in Artificial Space with the Overleaves [rather than Essence]. [12 February 1975]

Refer to the chapter “Bio-Computer” for more information about Tapes, which are like ‘programs’ deeply embedded in the Personality that adversely influence behavior, values, and beliefs. Tapes are not erased by superficial means. More is said about Artificial Space in the chapter “Real Space versus Artificial Space”.

We had a long discussion about finances of the commune, spiritual needs and the physical space necessary.

We have no comment on financial alternatives as these are life crisis situations and excellent fruit for Photography.... If you wish to Photograph your False Personality at work, then you must be in a situation where the Overleaves abrade. Then and only then can real progress take place.... We will, of course, never hesitate to Photograph wrong work in students. Honesty, perhaps, could be improved upon here within this framework. Of course, by now we are certain that all of you realize that the task of Photographing each other’s Overleaves is perhaps the most difficult task you have taken on so far. This, of course, can be facilitated by a bit of honesty any time you wish.... Photographs can go both ways now. You more advanced students could begin to see the positive changes in each other and Photograph it. It is quite Mechanical to only Photograph the negative, and it is from the Overleaves when it is the only thing you can see in your brother.... Methodology among you is most interesting as you use it upon one another. In group Photographs, we will give you the complete ineffectiveness of methods separated from truth. Of course, they all “work” and all of your psychological teaching has affirmed their validity. We speak of a higher truth and a higher teaching. This will not be reached through methodology. This is not to negate the use of your techniques. It is merely a Photograph in the hope that now, rather than listen to the teaching, you finally move to experience the teaching. That will deepen within. Where there is no helping, no assisting, there is merely being — the beingness on the path. [Dimensions! April 1975]

It is Good Work to Photograph negativity (and “positive changes”), but in the long run that practice is just a technique, a tool, a device, and thus it is a crutch that ambulates you toward a higher level of self-awareness that becomes Self-awareness, aka living in Essence, wherein Photography has been made obsolete.

We have expressed before the frustrations encountered when one tries to reach this state [of Agape] alone. Aloneness is the single most important obstacle to reaching that state of perfection or rapture called Agape, or love. We have stressed friendship as a preliminary stepping-stone — not the superficial friendship of the

Overleaves, but the sometimes harsh and unremitting friendship of those in your own pathway who will Photograph your Overleaves in both their Negative and Positive Poles, and this must be an almost constant phenomenon or it will not be successful. [30 September 1977]

That was a fitting final comment on the purpose and value of Photography, “with a little help from my friends”, as the 1967 Beatles song says.

Concluding Comments on Photography

If any subsequent Michaelian teachings groups ever arrived at the trust and intimacy and general spiritual maturity level that would allow Photography without major negative repercussions from reactive egos, I do not know about it.

The original Michaelian group transcriptions on Photography do not say so explicitly, but there are some personality types that have a tendency to self-righteousness, and if one self-righteous person offers a Photograph to another self-righteous person, that is especially explosive. The propensity for self-righteousness is especially present in people who have traits in the Cardinal Inspiration Process (Growth, Passion, Arrogance, Priest, Spiritualist) because they see themselves as “above it all”.





PLANES

Planes per Esoterica

Physical Plane

Astral Plane

Causal Plane

The Causal plane was discussed at this point, and Sarah said that she gathered that there was a high Causal body and a low Causal body, and that Michael says that he is a Causal being.

That is essentially correct. There is growth and evolution necessary on the Causal plane as well as the Astral. There is a difference, though.

This Entity [Michael] still perceives self and something apart from self, although still a part of self, so this Entity cannot be said to be all of everything there is.

The high Causal body [Transcendental Soul] does not perceive even this minute separation evidently. This is where the difference lies. Beyond the Physical Plane, the evolution concerns perception of the Tao. [26 August 1973]

Gene: I am confused about which souls inhabit what planes after the Physical level. I would like more information about this

There are, of course, seven planes in all, each with seven levels.

Beyond the Astral Plane is the Causal Plane with seven levels ... three low, one mid Causal Plane level upon which we reside, and three higher levels upon which reside the high Causal bodies — the Transcendental Souls contiguous with this plane, and the Mental Plane is the Akashic Plane, which is a photographic record of all history. Some very high adepts have access to this plane.

On the Mental Plane, resides the Infinite Soul, and the low and mid-Mental bodies.

Beyond this is the Buddhic Plane and upon this level are all of those souls who have achieved physical communion with the Tao.

Beyond this, of course, [is] the Tao. [29 November 1973]

Christy: Is Michael's Entity working on growth?

MICHAEL: That is valid. We chose this.

Alice: Is it like our choices? Could you have chosen something else?

Yes. There are options.

Gene: Will Michael's Entity join with other Entities as we do here with Fragments?

Yes. On the high Causal Plane, there will be progressive reunion, then again on the Mental Plane. [06 March 1974]

Leslie: From where is Seth speaking?

This Entity speaks from the Causal Plane. The bias through which he is speaking lessens now. (The medium's bias is lessening.) [14 October 1974]

Connie asked if the interstellar travelers on the Causal plane are teachers. Information that seems discrepant could be biased because of the medium involved.

First, we should assure you all that the intention of travelers spanning the void between the stars must be benevolent in the sense that malignancy or malevolency is not possible at those distances and at the cost, they simply cannot expend the necessary energy to wage interstellar warfare. At least at this point, no one within easy reach of you can, nor would they wish to.

You see, unfortunately, your world is not the paradise you think it is. It is almost expended as far as valuable resources are concerned. In the race for total "gutting," you have almost won.

Secondly, yes, there are many Entities on this [mid Causal] plane who are working with groups and with single souls, on this and many near worlds. You are not unique in this and you are quite right, the individual bias through which we come [mediumship] does distort the words somewhat, in some cases, beyond verification. We choose on the basis of desire and ability to serve as a transmitter.

This does not always prove successful and the only positive feature arising from this is that the resulting distortions are readily discerned and discarded. Those who perpetrate them are quite quickly branded as "crackpots" and forgotten. Those who make the most unbiased transmitter-receivers are those with the most Neutral Overleaves. Unfortunately, these are also the ones who normally resist their intuition the longest and sometimes never span the chasm. [20 November 1974]

Are all things really physical, even on the Astral, Causal and Mental plane, etc., as stated by Gurdjieff?

Within the framework and terminology in this group, we would not have used that word, but of course, all things including the Causal Plane have substance of a sort.

The substance that makes up the Causal Plane has a sense of being very durable and real to those inhabiting it. This is what is meant by most when they use the word "physical" in describing a thing, whatever that might be — a table, a chair, a thought. Of course, what is substance to us would not seem at all substantial to you in terms of hardness or realness and coining "higher hydrogens" to describe this difference is as valid as any other terminology we know of.

For instance, interstellar space appears to many as an empty vacuum, but, of course, it is not. It is quite substantial in a different sense from, say, the atmosphere surrounding the planet Jupiter. The density of an object, in other words, determines its physicalness to most on the Physical plane. The man Georges Gurdjieff tried to show his students that this is not the only criterion for determining physicalness, or better, substantial realness. We would prefer the word "substantial" to the word "physical." [07 December 1974]

Joy told us about a manuscript that was given to her about a year ago. This manuscript was the result of ten years of Ouija board work communication by a woman with an Entity named Orlen. Joy read the manuscript and reviewed it, and lead the woman to a writer. Joy asked about the validity of Orlen and Ella, who is the female personification of the Entity. The writer/editor and the woman have a difficult relationship, and Joy asked if they should continue their work together on the manuscript or discontinue their relationship completely. She also asked if Orlen or Ella could come through Sarah.

Ah, yes, the wheels of karma will turn. First, let us preface the answer by saying that the collaboration will continue, in spite of what you might do, until the ribbon has burned. The information, if put into some readable form, is Good Work. This is a low Causal teacher, all one Entity, which for some reason this student wishes to split and divide into genders, but that is beside the point.

As to the possibility of contact through this medium, that is up to her own receptivity and blocking mechanism. The only essential difference between Entities on the low Causal Plane and Entities on the mid-Causal plane is the time and experience. In other words, where this Entity [Michael] monitors large numbers of students and on many physical planets, the low Causal bodies work largely with small groups of students or with widely dispersed individuals.

It was this Entity's [Michael's] choice to work with this Cadre largely because there are seven large entities and five smaller ones coming together here and this will result in many students, all of whom are being monitored at the present time. This Cadre is one of the larger ones now coming together in the Western world. [31 January 1975]

Mental/Akashic Plane

Buddhic Plane

Concluding Comments of Planes





PLEASURE

This chapter is the product of a search for the word “pleasure” in the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group channeling sessions, and other words with a similar meaning. This word does not represent a significant component of the Michaelian teachings. However, there are good reasons to discuss the subject in this *Study Papers* book: 1) the subject came up numerous times during the original Michaelian group; 2) students can presumably benefit from having the mentions conveniently collected all in one place; 3) some interesting things were said about the subject; 4) the subject is related to a number of other components of the Michaelian teachings that are considered to be significant; 5) Concerns about pleasure are pervasive in human psychology and sociology and spirituality.

The word “pleasure” is not capitalized in this chapter or other chapters of this *Study Papers* book because it has no special meaning in the Michaelian teachings; it is not a Michaelian jargon word that needs a definition apart from its use in the common vernacular.

Definition of Pleasure

So what is meant by pleasure? The online Merriam Webster dictionary definition is:

Pleasure per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

The following extracts from original Michaelian group transcriptions are Q&A exchanges, where an original Michaelian group member asks a question (or makes a comment), and the Michaels provide an answer. This is [not] a subject that would benefit by division into subcategories, as some subjects do. These extracts are presented in the chronological order in which they were given, even though this is not a subject where there was a development or evolution of a specific revelation of a facet of the Michaelian teachings, as was often the case with the original Michaelian group. As is my custom, I often provide some explanatory comments following the question or answer. Underlined words in the Michaels’ answers are my emphasis, to draw attention to what it is that I comment on. Sometimes I embed words or phrases [in brackets] that I believe help to clarify the question or the answer.

Even before the Michaels appeared, the subject of pleasure came up:

[Soleal:] The body is not capable of experiencing ecstasy; only the Essence can experience ecstasy. The body does not even come close with its sensual pleasures. [03 July 1973]

Sensual pleasure is at the high end of physical experiences, but there is so much more. Refer to the chapters “Ecstasy” and “Sexuality” for more discussion about the high end of spiritual experiences.

Is it wrong to eat meat, fish, and fowl?

Not wrong, just not advisable. As you come more in touch with your environment, you will experience more [psychological and spiritual] discomfort over the eating of flesh than pleasure. [21 August 1973]

I see two considerations here: 1) one should eat for nutritional density per calorie rather than eat for gustatory pleasure, especially where good tasting processed food is often high in fattening calories; 2) one should take into consideration the health of the environment and its animals as well as one’s own health.

Behind closed doors, the Baby Soul is more often than not quite as prudish as it is in public, and seldom sustains any sort of sensual pleasure. Not having experienced such, it naturally does not “believe” in the existence of the experience. [late August 1973]

The Ordinal Soul Ages believe in the so-called “Zero Sum Game” in all aspects of life. In this case, sensual pleasure is believed to be inversely proportional to spiritual pleasure: the more physical pleasure the less spiritual pleasure. The Cardinal Soul Ages believe that life should be a Win-Win game, and this applies to

physical and spiritual sensuality. Refer to the chapter “Sensuality” for more about that subject. Basically and briefly, there you will read that the value of any particular experience of sensual pleasure should be judged on where and how much it interferes with, or enhances, spiritual pleasure. For instance, the satisfaction of the body’s need for sensual experience, e.g. massage, is a good thing because it enhances physical health, which in turn enhances the potential for spiritual health. The win-lose game of excessive pursuit of sensual pleasures for their own sake and to the exclusion of spiritual aspiration is not a good thing, so looks for ways to make pleasure a win-win game.

Dick: As I measure and have the ashes of life and see life as a bore, I know I’m not on the path. Progress would be more joyous and pleasurable and there would be a love to toil. I see also that to sit around stoned all day is not the way either. [06 October 1974]

There is a difference between physical pleasure and spiritual pleasure. When a person has a “good trip” on psychedelics, that can be spiritually pleasurable, aka enlightening. Refer to the chapter “Psychedelics” for more about that. Spiritual pleasure is also discussed in the chapter “Joy”.

More is said about the difference between spiritual and physical pleasure here:

The soul experiences all emotions at a different level than does the more temporal organism. The visceral pleasures are temporary. We do not suggest that you eschew them, just do not expect them to sustain the Essence. [06 October 1973]

Besides the chapter “Ecstasy”, refer to the chapters “Essence and Personality” and “Reward” for discussions of the spiritual pleasures that sustain the Essence.

The Scholar is an intermediate Role. He is an observer rather than a participant. All of life is vicarious rather than experiential, regardless of the Cycle or gender of the soul. No Scholar will ever be “gushy,” no matter how young a soul. Enthusiasm can be genuine, but will be subdued. All reactions are low key: grief, joy, pain, pleasure. The Old Scholar is detached, aloof and often arrogantly intellectual. [late October 1973]

Notice the polarities there: grief versus joy and pain versus pleasure. The compensation for not feeling as much joy is that a Scholar does not feel as much grief; the compensation for not feeling as much pleasure is that a scholar does not feel as much pain. As a Scholar-Cast Artisan, I am okay with that. I can also confirm what is said here about Scholars: I am often a little bit surprised and a little bit dismayed that non-Scholars have such — what seem to me to be — exaggerated perceptions of, and reactions to, everything.

Mallory: I’d really never given it much thought before.

Because it [dancing] brings you pleasure of a sensual sort and you cannot translate this into “work”. [22 January 1974]

Mallory, in training to become a psychotherapist, was looking for a way to make something she enjoyed, dancing, a part of her therapeutic practice. The Puritan Ethic (common to the Baby Soul mentality mentioned above) would have you believe that if you enjoy it, if it is fun, if it is sensually pleasurable, then it is not Good Work. In other words, “work is not supposed to be fun; that is why they call it work.” On the other hand, if one’s occupational work is not enjoyable, then it will result in bad health. One’s professional work should be pleasurable to Essence as well as to Personality and to body.

Alice: I would like to ask, since being told I was a Stoic and have looked back over my life, about times as a child when my other brothers and sisters were so upset that they could not eat their meals. Is being a Stoic why I could always eat, no matter what upsets were going on around me?

This is, in part, due to the Stoicism, but also to Intellectual Center’s stronghold. There was no rational reason why you should not eat. Stoics are not devoid of all feelings; they can merely detach themselves in a fairly lofty manner from the pain involved. Of course, they also detach themselves from much of the pleasure also.

One’s entire Overleaf array — including Soul Age and Role mentioned previously — influence what one finds pleasurable, and how much.

Alice: Would it be possible to have the pleasure without the pain?

No, this is not possible; they are inseparable. [24 January 1974]

More will be said about the so-called “pleasure-pain Monad” further on.

[Soleal:] ... We have on this world a vast system of very large communes, so do not tell me that they cannot work. All are on a total “goods for service” basis, and all goods are common property, yet we have all of the emotions, the pride, and certainly the pleasures that you desire.... [18 February 1974]

Refer to the chapter “Communal Living”. There you will read that sensory deprivation need not be a part of that life-style. The chapter “Asceticism and Austerity” is also relevant to the subject of pleasure.

... the changes would be immediately painful, and immediate pain is more scary than projected pleasures are worth. [24 February 1974]

Perhaps you have heard the aphorism, “Short-term pain, long-term gain.” A lot of things are like that; the reward comes after the hard work. Also, you might already know that clinical psychologists have conducted experiments on so-called “delayed gratification”: >https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Delayed_gratification<. Quite often we find ourselves in a situation where we must estimate the cost/benefit ratio of a possible endeavor, and that might include an evaluation of the pleasure/pain ratio. E.g., shall I enjoy the fun of getting drunk with my friends tonight and wake up in my vomit with a hangover headache tomorrow? In mundane human life, it seems that there is rarely a pure experience of one or the other extreme, pleasurable or unpleasurable; almost every experience, no matter how unpleasant, has a “silver lining”; almost every upside is accompanied with a downside and vice-versa; exercising judgment of the good/bad ratio and then experiencing out the results of ones choices and decisions yields wisdom. The goal of experience is to learn to be neither an optimist nor a pessimist, but to be accurate, when evaluating prospects.

Another Overleaf is here connected to pleasure:

Ray: Could we have some general comments on Impatience?

The Chief Feature of Impatience override’s pleasure — often by driving the soul [person] to rush rather than to just be with the situation. The proverb “haste makes waste” was first uttered by someone observing a soul in Impatience. [06 March 1974]

In this case, Impatience causes a person to expect that there will be more pleasure in the future than there is to be found by focusing on the present moment. **This is the opposite of delayed gratification.**

How does one eliminate Buffers?

If you encounter a situation that would produce guilt in the body, the body will not allow you to remember, or, at least, not with any [psychological] pleasure. Guilt is in Personality, yes. [10 March 1974]

Refer to chapters “Buffers” and “Guilt”.... Some people believe that negative experiences are held in the energy field of the body....

Dick: Is there anything resembling sex on the Causal plane?

There is, but it is genderless. The Essence is thoroughly capable of experiencing the ecstasy and frequently does. The Personality cannot because of the pain-pleasure Monad. It is automatic. In your culture, it is imprinted early in life that if you are to experience pleasure, you also must have pain. The entire Entity [Michael] experiences. There are no more Fragments. We are whole.

Alice: Is there any way out of the Pleasure-Pain Monad?

Your guilt build-up produces the pain. When you choose to extinguish the guilt, you will lose the pain at the same time — only then. [10 March 1974]

[[I should elaborate the pleasure/pain Monad in the first section and build the remainder of the chapter around that notion, with other sections, such as Overleaves:]]

Mallory: I would like more information on Chief Feature and how it differs from Goal. Self-destruction is more subtle than Martyrdom.

... Many drink to excess, many take drugs, but most are more subtle and merely flagellate themselves with an emotional bullwhip. This is natural to them; all is pain; nothing is pleasure; there are so many no’s in their lives that they are almost paralyzed. [13 March 1974]

There again we see another answer about how certain Overleaves exacerbate the pain/pleasure Monad.

In the next passage, there is a hint that the pain/pleasure monad is a subset of the Personality/Essence Monad:

The Personality has an extremely limited capacity for experiencing positivity. Whenever you experience unsolicited [psychological] pleasure, you are experiencing it from Essence. This is why the extinguishment of negativity is so vital to spiritual growth. If you have not guessed this yet, the Personality is the Negative Pole of a Monad [and Essence is the Positive Pole]. [17 March 1974]

Refer to the chapters “Negativity and Positivity” and “Growth, Spiritual”. Spiritual growth involves moving along the spectrum from physical pain to spiritual pleasure concomitant with moving along the spectrum from Personality to Essence.

We keep telling you that the desires of the soul are the antithesis of the desire of the organism. Liberation is one of these; unencumbrance is another; [spiritual] pleasure is the greatest. We would seem quite hedonistic to most of you. [17 March 1974]

Refer to the chapter "Liberation" for more information about unencumbrance of the soul from the body. The body seeks its pleasures, meaning, what it finds pleasurable, and the soul seeks its pleasures. The trick for those on a spiritual path is to learn to discern the spiritual pleasures, and learn to discern which physical pleasures are mere indulgences of the organism and hinder or swamp or override the experience of spiritual pleasures. The point to be made repeatedly in this chapter is that hedonism of the body is not to be eschewed, but for spiritual aspirants, the hedonism of Essence should take priority over the hedonism of the body.

If you don't believe me, believe the Michaels:

Personality sets up many barriers along the [spiritual] path. This is merely one of them, and chipping away at this will only result in the uncovering of many more similar guises. The goal of the organism [Personality and the physical body] is, of course, survival. Sexuality is made more difficult by culturally imposed barriers and artificial conditions. This is another barrier. Denial of the pleasures of eating, sleeping, and just biding your time on a pleasant, sunny day are more. The Personality can come up with many efforts to rationalize why these pleasures should not be experienced: they are not good for you; they cost too much; they waste too much time; they are not useful; they are evil, *et cetera*. [20 March 1974]

The pleasures mentioned there are mostly of the physical body.... Refer to the chapter "Barriers and Blocks"....

Pleasurable activities can often be utilized in establishing intimate relationships. [27 March 1974]

Look for a mate while you are doing something you enjoy and you might find a mate that you enjoy.; what's not to like about that?

Another quote for the Overleaf section:

Those in Repression may be only mildly repressed and experience little pleasure in their interpersonal relationship, or [they may] be severely repressed and be virtually anhedonic. [03 April 1974]

Anhedonia is the opposite of hedonia mentioned previously. These are just the sciency names for the ability to experience pleasure or not.

Another quote for both the Monad and the Overleaf sections:

Are Repression, Self-destruction, and Rejection part of the Pleasure-Pain Monad?

That is valid and most usually involve physical pain, sometimes violence. [15 May 1974]

Time-wise, the hours spent may far exceed those now spent, but if the work is truly in Essence, the expenditure is a pleasure. [16 June 1974]

Here again we see that activities that satisfy Essence are spiritually pleasurable. [[**Make a section, physical vs spiritual pleasure?**]]

The body has a chore to do that it dislikes. It dwells on the undesirability of the proposed action until it renders the Moving Center inactive and unable to perform its task, normally able to perform such action. The body is simply too exhausted to move, yet twenty minutes later, some happy diversion is offered. Suddenly, the body undergoes a miraculous recovery and actually expends far more Moving energy in the pleasure activity, for instance, tennis, than it would have in the work activity, for instance, shopping for groceries. [16 June 1974]

Might as well mention the chapter on "Discipline" here, because somewhat was said in the original Michaelian group transcriptions about the time when one must do unpleasurable things. It is a measure of adult maturity that not everything in life is going to be pleasurable, but you do it anyway. Perhaps you have heard the aphorism: "Before enlightenment chop wood carry water; after enlightenment chop wood carry water" — but with a different attitude.

... In other words, learning for the pleasure of learning, without the proviso of application attached. [10 July 1974]

MaryC: Has my aura changed from blue with gray? (She was feeling and looking quite perky.)

MaryC, you fluctuate some. Today, there is less gray. When you take pleasure from your surroundings and are feeling relatively well, there is little gray. [14 July 1974]

Joan: Lately, I've felt more materialistically oriented — not otherworldliness.

It is also transient, but it is something that is necessary for you to experience out. It is also not that prominent in your life and you are not that attached to it. It is simply that you have stumbled upon a couple of tools that do make the environment more pleasurable and to this end, you practice materialism. We do not see materialistic success as a primary life goal for you. [01 October 1974]

You see, the Martyr says to the world, "Just look at the enormous cross I bear." (?) He does not wish your help, only your admiration. The soul in Rejection is at the same time saying, "I will make you reject me no matter how hard you try to accept me, for my pain is more important than your pleasure." (?) Can't you see the dynamics here? By the way, the human soul is not a fragile item. [01 October 1974]

Dick visioned that life should contain joy and rapture. He felt that no barriers were between us and that experience [except] imaginary ones created by us.

True. You can have it any time you wish. It is not a difficult transition, but it requires that you cease denying yourself the pleasure. You see, this culture places pleasure on a high shelf marked "reward" and it must be earned. Ironically, Mechanical Man is totally unable to experience this as joy, and continues to strive toward an elusive goal that always remains just beyond the fingertips. This is truly sad, Dick, perhaps the only sadness on the Physical Plane, for it is really within your grasp all the time. Give up the idea that joy must come as a reward for faithful service. This is nonsense; you can have it free. [05 October 1974]

You have been taught that to even think of instinctive behavior in conjunction with human beings is bad. Well, this is nonsense. It is so strong that it overrides your pleasure and your growth.

Creatures of Reason have it all over their fellow inhabitants, as they alone are able to experience awe and delight. But the Creatures of Reason in this culture seldom allow themselves this luxury. They instead find devious methods of avoiding these experiences. The denial of pleasure and the pursuit of pain is high on your list of priority, and it should be clear now why this is true, but there is no reason for it other than the instinctive memories. This is the strongest reason we know of for working on the separation from your Personality and allowing the Essence to free itself. Only the Essence can experience ecstasy. We have told you this before and we emphasized it again and again, to keep you aware of the goal. Separation from the Personality's conflicts allows the student to override the instinctive behavior patterns that now govern your actions. [21 December 1974]

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Concluding Comments on Pleasure

Throughout the chapter clear up semantic ambiguities: note the distinction between physical pain/pleasure of the body, of the psyche (guilt versus happiness), and spiritual pain/pleasure as in ecstasy, liberation.

A lot more was said about this topic than I expected before I finished researching it.





POLARITY

Related chapter on “Monads”....

Polarity in General [\[another chapter?\]](#)

Mallory: Why was he not my teacher?

There was not sufficient polar attraction [chemistry and alchemy between personality and soul].

[[Copied from HOLC; modify to suit SPOMG:]]

In the chapters on the Gurdjieffian, aka Fourth Way, precursors to components of the Michaelian teachings, we read about Attributes found in the Law of Three and the Law of Seven. This chapter is a compilation of synonymous terminology and related concepts as found in the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group. The reason that I devote an entire chapter to this subject is that, in my estimation, the *context* of the Overleaf System (the names of Attributes at the headings of rows and columns on Overleaf Charts) has been neglected, while the focus as always been on the *content* of the Overleaf System (descriptions of the Traits of the Overleaf System).

First let's have a brief review. The Law of Three states that all completed events consist of three components: a thesis, an antithesis, and a synthesis. Those words were rarely used in the original Michaelian group. Instead, other words for this concept of phenomena in opposition were usually used, such as: positive versus negative; lower versus higher; yin versus yang; active versus passive; masculine versus feminine. (Various names for the third factor in the triad were: neutral, intermediate, chi, and mid.) The two complementaries of opposites were also referred to as an “Axis” or a “Polarity”. The Michaels substituted the name “Monads” for Gurdjieff's Law of Three. Three particular words show up on almost all Overleaf Charts during the original Michaelian group and subsequent to it: Ordinal — Exalted or Cardinal — Neutral. Henceforth in this *History* book these three are referred to as the Monadic Attributes, whatever their names. (Recall that I prefer the word Cardinal over the word Exalted, as introduced by Yarbro in *More Messages from Michael* in 1986, and as explained in Chapter 1K in Part One, “The Law of Three”.)

Briefly, the Law of Seven states that certain processes over time consist of seven steps in a specific order, each step having specific qualities. The word for this concept commonly used in the Michaelian teachings is Cycle. Personally, I prefer to use the word “Septenary” for all examples of this pattern given in the Michaelian teachings and elsewhere. The word is capitalized to distinguish it from collections of seven items that do not follow the special pattern. (Wikipedia has an entry on that word, but there it applies to any collection of seven components or elements.) The Michaels often used the word Cycle to refer to the seven Ages and seven Levels because there is repetition of the pattern from one Cycle to the next. A passage in *MFM* (page 43) provided words for the attributes of these special steps: Action — Inspiration — Expression — Assimilation. Henceforth in this *History* book these four are referred to as the Axis Attributes.

Note that the terms, Ordinal — Cardinal — Neutral, and the terms, Action — Inspiration — Expression — Assimilation, fall under the general heading of what I call “Attributes” with a capital A. These are the subject

of this chapter, hence the chapter title, “Attributes of Overleaves”. Because there are only four Axis Attribute names, the Monadic Attribute names must be combined with them to make the system of Attributes complete. When Axial Attributes are combined with Monadic Attributes, these are hereinafter called “Septenarian Attributes”. They are: 1) Ordinal Action — 2) Ordinal Inspiration — 3) Ordinal Expression — 4) Neutral Assimilation — 5) Cardinal Expression — 6) Cardinal Inspiration — 7) Cardinal Action. Note that the sequence of the Ordinal Septenarian Attributes is the reverse of the Cardinal Septenarian Attributes. This specific sequence is the only pattern that merits the name Septenary with a capital S in my books. Any other sequence of these Septenarian Attributes is not a true Septenary; it is just a septenary. The arguments and evidences for the legitimacy of this particular Sequence are presented in my book *The Tao of Cosmogony*. Other proposed sequences for the Septenarian Attributes are discussed in the next following chapter, Chapter 2C, “Sequences of Overleaves”.

In my way of thinking, this is one of the most important chapters in Part Two, so I am going to bang on about this importance for another paragraph.

The *context* of the Overleaf System has been neglected by many Michaelian teachings students because of their emphasis on *content* rather than *context*. As stated in the Introduction to this *History* book, the Michaelian teachings is systematic — there is a pattern, an organization — it is a “cosmology”, not a “chaosity”. Most Michaelian students have become plenty familiar with the content of the Michaelian teachings because it involves the details of their daily mundane real-world lives: dealing with themselves and other people and their jobs and their desires, and so on. The abstract cosmology is not generally appreciated because it is not ‘in their faces’ all the time, and their brains are not typically structured to normally think about the big overarching concepts, the context in which the content of their lives is contained. However, this chapter on the Attributes of Overleaves points out how often and how much the Michaels were concerned to reveal the context of their cosmology, which shows up most obviously as the Attributes of the Overleaf System. In my opinion, context has not been emphasized as much in groups subsequent to the original Michaelian group as it was in the original Michaelian group, and this reflects a loss rather than a gain in understanding. My books in general also have an emphasis on the context component of the Michaelian teachings, apparently because my brain is structured to think about the big overarching concepts, and make sense of them in terms of logic, mathematics, and physics. In this chapter we get back to fundamentals.

The context concepts of the Overleaf System often shows up in the words in the headers of the columns and the rows on the Overleaf Charts discussed in Part Three; for instance, Role, Goal, Cardinal, Inspiration — these are all context words.

This chapter presents the results of word searches in the original Michaelian group transcriptions for the following terms: yin, yang, thesis, antithesis, synthesis, ordinal, neutral, intermediate, exalted, lower, higher, masculine, feminine, active, passive, axis, axes.

First we are going to look at mentions of yin and yang because here the information applies to more abstract philosophical ideas that precede physical manifestation in such things as the Overleaf System.

Yin — Yang

First, let’s have a definition and description from Wikipedia:

In Chinese philosophy, yin and yang ... is a concept of dualism in ancient Chinese philosophy, describing how seemingly opposite or contrary forces may actually be complementary, interconnected, and interdependent in the natural world, and how they may give rise to each other as they interrelate to one another. In Chinese cosmology, the universe creates itself out of a primary chaos of material energy, organized into the cycles of Yin and Yang and formed into objects and lives. Yin is the receptive and Yang the active principle, seen in all forms of change and difference such as the annual cycle (winter and summer), the landscape (north-facing shade and south-facing brightness), sexual coupling (female and male), the formation of both men and women as characters, and sociopolitical history (disorder and order).

There are various dynamics in Chinese cosmology. In the cosmology pertaining to Yin and Yang, the material energy, which this universe has created itself out of, is also referred to as *qi*. It is believed that the organization of *qi* [aka *chi*] in this cosmology of Yin and Yang has formed many things. Included among these forms are humans. Many natural dualities (such as light and dark, fire and water, expanding and contracting) are thought of as physical manifestations of the duality symbolized by yin and yang. This duality lies at the origins of many branches of classical Chinese science and philosophy, as well as being a primary guideline of traditional Chinese

medicine, and a central principle of different forms of Chinese martial arts and exercise, such as baguazhang, taijiquan (t'ai chi), and qigong (Chi Kung), as well as appearing in the pages of the I Ching.

The notion of a duality can be found in many areas, such as Communities of Practice. [This notion has a Wikipedia entry: >https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Community_of_practice<] The term “dualistic-monism” or dialectical monism has been coined in an attempt to express this fruitful paradox of simultaneous unity and duality. Yin and yang can be thought of as complementary (rather than opposing) forces that interact to form a dynamic system in which the whole is greater than the assembled parts. According to this philosophy, everything has both yin and yang aspects (for instance, shadow cannot exist without light). Either of the two major aspects may manifest more strongly in a particular object, depending on the criterion of the observation. The yin yang (i.e., taijitu symbol) shows a balance between two opposites with a portion of the opposite element in each section.

In Taoist metaphysics, distinctions between good and bad, along with other dichotomous moral judgments, are perceptual, not real; so, the duality of yin and yang is an indivisible whole. In the ethics of Confucianism on the other hand, most notably in the philosophy of Dong Zhongshu (2nd century BC), a moral dimension is attached to the idea of yin and yang. [>https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yin_and_yang< — retrieved 20 September 2019]

This quotation, and the remainder of this Wikipedia article, are very useful for understanding Gurdjieff's Law of Three and the Michaels' Monads, which were presented together in a chapter in Part One. Notice many of the synonyms that are discussed in this chapter.

These oriental terms occur numerous times in the original Michaelian group transcriptions, and they have exactly this original meaning. Yin and Yang are broadly synonymous with Ordinal and Cardinal respectively. As it says there, the goal of understanding yin–yang is to achieve a state of balance, aka Agape, which also happens to be one of the goals of the Michaelian teachings.

The first mention of yin and yang in the original Michaelian group transcriptions was in the very first channeling session in which the Michaels appeared:

Why did they go to the trouble to design such a complex body just to have it wear out over and over?

The answer is, of course, the primary plan. It is the best example of the yin and yang we can think of. [12 August 1973]

What the Michaels are referring to is that the Physical Plane experience (incarnation) for the soul is the yin side of the life–afterlife cycle and the Astral Plane (between incarnations) experience for the soul is the yang side. Assimilation of both experiences results in soul evolution, which ultimately results in an end to the cycle of reincarnation.

Discussion concerning Monads: sacred/profane, profound/superficial, the yin and yang duality, infinite complexity/infinite simplicity.
[12 August 1973]

The details of the discussion were not recorded, but notice from these examples that everything in this world is defined by its opposite — what it is not as well as what it is. Also note that ‘sacred’, ‘profound’, ‘yang’, and ‘simplicity’ are Cardinal, whereas ‘profane’, ‘superficial’, ‘yin’, and ‘complex’ are Ordinal.

Is the number seven important, as important as has been implied through automatic writing?

Yes, but so are other odd numbers. These point to the yin and the yang and the completed Monad in the center. Seven is important to those on the Physical Plane. Nitrogen, for instance, is number seven. All physical things — living organisms — are part of the nitrogen cycle. [~13 September 1973]

This answer is brief and its meaning is obscure until you have some background information, namely, what Gurdjieff called the “Law of Three” and the “Law of Seven”. You may refer to the previous chapters in this book by those names for an expanded explanation, but here is the summary: Three is the first odd number and this quantity of items can represent the essence of the Law of Three, namely that yin is on one side of the Monad and yang is on the other side. Five can have the same property, but the pattern is yin1—yin2—Monad—yang2—yang1. Seven of course adheres to the same principle: yin1—yin2—yin3—Monad—yang3—yang2—yang1. A group of seven items is referred to as a septenary throughout this book, and a true Septenary must embody this pattern in a certain way, namely the yin–yang mirror way of ascending and descending dimensionality. This Q&A exchange is a major clue about the structure of valid Septenaries throughout the Michaelian teachings — and elsewhere. If collections of seven items do not have this structure, they do not conform to the Law of Three combined with the Law of Seven; they are not Septenaries with a capital S.

An entire year passed before the subject of yin and yang came up again. This time it was in the context of a physical manifestation rather than in the context of an abstract principle:

Are there different kinds of energy flowing through men than through women?

There is yin and yang throughout the physical universe. Even worlds have yin and yang. This world has a decidedly masculine [yang] essence, which explains the cultural oppression of those in feminine [yin] bodies. Believe it or not, albeit today [this situation] has largely been perpetuated by those with masculine Essence [Role] trapped in feminine bodies — in other words, Warrior [and Scholar and Sage and King] mothers. [SJC, 17 September 1974]

The Michaels do not really directly answer the question about male and female “energy”. However, it is addressed at length in my book *The Tao of Relationships: The Chemistry and Alchemy of Service and Intimacy*. The Michaels here did make the point that the abstract principle of yin–yang manifests itself in physical realities all up and down “the great chain of being”, as some perennial philosophers like to call it. Whole planets and whole cultures can be attributed as either yin or yang, as well as the male and female genders and Roles and individuals. In subsequent revelations, individuals were said to have a ratio of “male/female” energy. Elsewhere in the original Michaelian group transcriptions it is said that Warrior, Scholar, Sage, and King are masculine-yang Roles and Slave/Server, Artisan, and Priest are feminine–yin Roles. The explanation for this does not appear until the “Michael Math” chapter of *MMFM*, but requires some modification. That is, the Warrior is the most Ordinal Role, but it is at the Cardinal end of the Septenary; the King is the most Cardinal Role but it is at the most Ordinal end of the Septenary; the Scholar is in the middle or turning point of the Septenary. This is explained in my book *The Tao of Cosmogony*.

In this same session, the subject of yin and yang came up again:

Are people more masculine than the earth?

We would not go so far as to ascribe consciousness as you know it to the celestial bodies. However, the composite of influences living upon the body do give it yin and yang. The man Georges (Gurdjieff) sensed this. There is a preponderance of Warriors and Sages upon this body [planet earth]. [SJC, 17 September 1974]

Subsequently it was said that Servers and Artisans are the most common Roles, which has been verified by Michaelian students in subsequent decades, so this early passage appears to be in error.

Are there lines and areas of questioning that we are presently capable of, but very seldom voice, which would make your teachings more available to us? If so, what can you tell us about them?

... The level of curiosity concerning the yin yang combinations is relatively low, connoting a lack of understanding... [SJC, 24 September 1974]

Michaelian students expressed a curiosity and gained a more complete understanding of polarity subsequent to the original Michaelian group. This book, *A History of the Overleaf System*, chronicles that increasing comprehension and might even be considered a culmination of it.

(There was a discussion ... regarding sexuality of Essences. Since it has been said that Essence is neither masculine nor feminine, why does Michael speak of the masculine or feminine Essence in Roles? It was compared to the yin and yang polarity, often times the way a Role is played out, an identity word, a cultural thing.) [SJC, 22 October 74]

The attributes of feminine and masculine are a subset of, or a mundane manifestation of, the universal abstract attributes of yin and yang. This is explored in the next section of this chapter.

Even though the following question was only about the Overleaf System, elsewhere it is said that manifestation itself requires a polarity of some kind; nothing would exist without it.

Leslie asked if other Overleaves, aside from Goals, contain the Poles (Positive and Negative) found in Goals.

We have told you that there is yin and yang in everything — polarity if you will. Therefore, yes. [SJC, 26 November 1974]

Here the Michaels used the words yin and yang as synonymous with the words negative and positive. This was the first explicit reference to the Positive and Negative Poles of the Overleaves in the original Michaelian group transcriptions. The name of each Overleaf is to be regarded as the Neutral position between these Poles. Several of the Overleaf Charts reviewed in Part Three show the name of each Overleaf sandwiched between the Positive Pole on top and the Negative Pole on bottom. This is a meaningful pattern.

Previously, as each Overleaf category was revealed, the original Michaelian group members were told, as if it were not obvious, that all the Overleaves have Monadic Attributes. Refer to the previous chapter here in Part Two, “Revelation of Overleaves”. Some of the Overleaf Charts show the Ordinal triad of Overleaves on one side

and the Cardinal triad of Overleaves on the other side with the Neutral sandwiched in between. This is a meaningful pattern.

The Wikipedia article on yin–yang said that the oriental philosophers did not think of yin–yang as evil-good, but in the following quoted passage, the Michaels apparently did make the correlation:

The yin–yang is a most valid symbol to ponder and learn to comprehend. All exists within you — the capacity for goodness and the capacity for evil. The choice is always yours. [S/C, 28 December 1974]

This might have been a reference to the Positive and Negative Poles of the Overleaves, which were under discussion and revelation about this time in original Michaelian group history. Negative does not necessarily mean evil, but in the case of the Negative Poles in their extreme manifestations, it does apply. It is Good Work for every Michaelian teachings student to notice (and neutralize) whenever he or she is in any Negative Pole of any Overleaf, not just the Overleaf they normally live in.

Speaking of neutralizing, this transmission came through in the next session:

Incidentally, we have no quarrel with the need for neutralizing force [another Gurdjieff concept] in actions involving the Centers. All yin–yang activities do require this neutralizing force for stability. [S/C, 02 January 1975]

A chapter in Part One, “The Law of Three”, covers the explanation and use of “neutralizing force.” Briefly, this is the synthesis influence, between and beyond the polarities of thesis and antithesis. The Neutral Assimilation Overleaves are manifestations of this fundamental force or influence, a gestalt which is more than the sum of the parts.

In one of the original Michaelian group sessions, they experimented with physically sensing the yin/yang ratio of individuals:

There was a question regarding part of the group which experienced something with hand clasping to tell whether they were predominantly yin or yang.

It is a phenomena [sic] of genetics such as the others suggested. In this group, there is much more yang influence than yin. Therefore, if your hypothesis were correct, there would be a higher proportion of the opposite phenomenon. [S/C, 25 January 1975]

Maleness and femaleness are stereo-typically equated with yang and yin respectively, but the “energy” of the Body Type and Overleaves of the Personality do not always correspond to the gender of the body. In Michael groups subsequent to the original Michaelian group, a factor called “focused or convergent (male) / creative or divergent (female) ratio” has been used to quantify the phenomenon introduced in this passage. This component shows up on some Personality Profile charts, separate from Overleaves. It is explained at length in my book *The Tao of Relationships — a Spiritual Path*.

The next mention of yin and yang comments on the group progress in specific, then goes on to comment on the world, and worlds, in general:

At this point, many felt the presence of Soleal, and asked him if he wished to speak.

[Soleal:] The teacher [Michael] has only begun to stress the importance of polarity to you now and the use of the most Positive Pole of the axes for the [spiritual] Work. But it is simply astonishing to me the progress that has been made here. I would be the first to admit that I did not think that it would be possible, given the orientation of your world. It is true that whole worlds are victims also of their Overleaves, and often this serves to prevent any upward swing for many centuries — more like millennia for the most part. Ours is an Intellectually Centered world, but there is more yin than yang, thus the cold cerebration has been modified by the feminine essence. Yours is a Moving Centered world, with far more yang than yin. But what is seen now is what we can only call the vibration of potential — in other words, the chance for change — and this is being manifested primarily in the youth of your society. They no longer feel duty-bound to cling to the primary Mode manifested by your world, that of Perseveration, and are now moving into the upward spiral. [S/C, 12 February 1975]

The first Chart from the original Michaelian group showing the Positive and Negative Poles of the Overleaves was dated March 1975, the next month after this session.

[Soleal:] There is a word in my language for one who takes the road of least resistance, and I see this in many students here. This is fine, but it certainly is not conducive to enormous leaps of growth. To feel the resistance is to feel the polarity, to feel the yin and yang of the Tao. [S/C, 16 February 1975]

In the 02 January 1975 session the value of experiencing the Neutral was mentioned. In this session, the value of experiencing the polarities is mentioned. Put both passages together and we see that it is all valuable for gaining a complete understanding and advancing on the spiritual path. The original Michaelian group broke up shortly after this, when positive and negative influences fermenting among the members produced an explosion in this spiritual crucible and blew the whole endeavor apart. There might be a lesson in their experience about managing all three forces.

In this section, we reviewed the use of the words yin and yang as applied to the Attributes and other factors that appear in the Overleaf System. In the next section, we examine the use of the words masculine and feminine as they apply to the Overleaf System.

Masculine — Feminine

Femininity and masculinity often appear in the original Michaelian group transcriptions in conjunction with yin and yang, and these instances are reported in the previous section. However, there are some other instances where they appear alone. These give us another context for understanding the Michaels' view of fundamental polarities.

The Warriors, Scholars, Kings, and Sages are masculine Roles.

Then Priests, Artisans, and Slaves are feminine?

Yes.

If a Scholar, Sage, Warrior, and King Role are masculine, why is it that a female would choose any of these Roles? Does this mean that I've been male more often than not? Is this why I have a tendency toward "cool" thinking and not being a giving person? I do not have love to express.... I am cold and analytical... I feel the male is more aggressive than the female. (Roles in the soul are masculine and feminine, not the soul.) [SJC, 22 November 1973]

Remember that yours is a Moving Centered, masculine world. Soeal's planet is an Intellectually Centered, feminine world... .. Emotionally Centered, masculine world: they are volatile, explosive and kind all at the same time. [SJC, 16 December 1973]

The masculinity or femininity that is ascribed to certain Roles does not correlate with the Cardinality or Ordinality or Neutrality that is ascribed to the Roles, nor with the Inputs that are ascribed to the Roles, but there are some similarities, per this tabulation:

Table 2Ba — FOUR CLASSES of ATTRIBUTES ASCRIBED to the SEVEN ROLES						
WARRIOR	SERVER	ARTISAN	SCHOLAR	SAGE	PRIEST	KING
Ordinal	Ordinal	Ordinal	Neutral	Cardinal	Cardinal	Cardinal
Masculine	Feminine	Feminine	Masculine	Masculine	Feminine	Masculine
One Input	Two Inputs	Five Inputs	One Input	Three Inputs	Two Inputs	One Input
one-dimensional	two-dimensional	three-dimension	pan-dimensional	three-dimension	two-dimensional	one-dimensional

My comments on this table are as follows:

- ROLES: The first (subtitle) row shows the name of each Role, listed in the Natural Sequence.
- MONADIC: The second row shows the Monadic Attributes for each Role.
- GENDER: Regarding the third row of Attributes, the rationale for the gender assignments to the Roles given in the original Michaelian group transcriptions is somewhat obscure. Perhaps it is more a human physiological, cultural, or societal thing than a fundamental yin–yang cosmological thing. If the Sage had been said to be feminine it would be more tidy and make more sense of the second row of attributes.
- INPUTS: Regarding the third row of Attributes, no explanation for the quantity of Inputs assigned to the Roles was presented upon publication (*MMFM*, p. 59) or afterward, but it is similar enough to the “dimensionality” of the Axial Attributes that it would provide a complete explanation if the Artisan

were said to have three Inputs rather than five. For a discussion of Inputs, refer to a section on Inputs in the Prologue of my book *The Tao of Cosmogony*.

- DIMENSIONALITY: Regarding the fourth row of attributes, refer to my book *The Tao of Personality* for an explanation of dimensionality as it applies to the Overleaf System. Basically, the Action Axis is identified as one-dimensional, the Inspiration Axis is identified as two-dimensional, the Expression Axis is identified as three-dimensional, and Assimilation is identified as pan-dimensional. Basically, these “dimensions” of Personality are an instantiation of abstract geometric figures: the line, the plane, and the solid.

In the next section, we examine the use of the words pole, polar, and polarity as they apply to the Overleaf System.

Pole and Polar and Polarity

This section is the result of a word search for these terms in the original Michaelian group transcriptions.

The Overleaf System is full of obvious polarities: Ordinal and Cardinal Overleaves, Positive and Negative Poles of Overleaves. There is a lot more said about abstractions of polarity in Part Four of this book, but in this section, we mostly deal with the concrete manifestations in our personalities and in our relationships.

The concept of polarity was present at the end of the original Michaelian group with the revelation of the Positive and Negative Poles of Overleaves as we saw in the previous section; it was also present at the beginning. In the very first session with the Michaels, they broached the subject of polarity, and they provided some examples:

The desire is polar, too. Everything in the universe is, of course. Along with the desire is always the dread. The choice does not become clear to you until you have experienced the desire from another [higher] dimension [that reconciles the poles]. You must stand and observe the desire from the shadows of dread. Wishes, like everything, have positive and negative poles. There must be attraction and repulsion or nothing exists because no energy is being generated. [SJC, 12 August 1973]

Polarities mentioned here are: desire versus dread, positive versus negative, attraction versus repulsion. The universe is governed by polarities of positive and negative, from electricity to magnetism to gravitation. The polarities inherent in the Overleaf System create attraction and repulsion (abrasion) between people. (This latter subject is covered in Part Three of my book *The Tao of Personality*.)

It seems that the unification of Fragments goes on inter-life [between lifetimes]. You can't do it here [on the Physical Plane while incarnate], can you?

You can, but it is difficult. It requires psychic union, and that by definition requires that you be an Adept. That [psychic union] is always polar. It is usually done between lives. [SJC, 06 October 1973]

This is an indication that Ordinal (Warrior, Server, Artisan) and Cardinal (Sage, Priest, King) Roles as souls unite on the Astral Plane. There is attraction on the Physical Plane as well. Similar attractions can be said about Personality traits other than Roles.

The following exchange occurred about the subject of twin souls rather than complementary Roles, but the universal principle of polarity applies:

We hear so much about twin souls and I would like to know about that.

Dyadic union occasionally occurs while the principals are still on the Physical Plane. This is exceedingly rare and happens only among Fragments of the same Entity. These unions are always polar and it is a devastating experience. Souls so united are truly one flesh.

Why is this devastating? What do you mean by “polar”?

There is complete psychic union. There are no longer any individual perceptions. There is a total loss of identity. All of you will escape this fate in this lifetime, for your strongest attractions within the group are for those of the same sex. [SJC, 08 October 1973]

Twin soul polarity does not show up in the structure of the Overleaf System, but it does show up in the “Casting” structure of the Entity, which has similarities to the Overleaf System. This is not a subject expounded in this book, but note that the polarity principle applies to it as well. Sexual attraction between genders is of course another major polarity that we deal with during incarnation, but which is not present between lifetimes.

The following exchange produces an abundance of insights about the nature of polarity in general, even though it was about Centers in specific:

I would like comments on energies used by various energy Centers.

All of this energy is psychic energy.... We wish to remind you that there are two very specific types of reactions: implosion and explosion; also, two specific charges in polarization: negative and positive. A great deal of the energy utilized by the lower Centers [Moving, Emotional, Intellectual] in life situations are implosion reactions with negative charges. Controlled reactions of this type do not ever become as spectacular as their antitheses [the higher Centers]. [SJC, 27 December 1973]

Various synonyms or manifestations of “poles” are used in this passage: positive and negative; lower and higher; thesis and antithesis; implosion and explosion. It was known from the Gurdjieffian teachings that there were “lower” and “higher” Centers.

It was hard for me to leave Robert’s group, and I never understood why, but I had to leave. Is there a comment here for me?

He was not your [true] teacher, and at another level you knew this and left to search again.

Why was he not my teacher?

There was not sufficient polar attraction.

Would this have to do with Body Types or what?

This takes into consideration all of the Overleaves. [SJC, 20 January 1974]

This is yet another indication that polarity creates energy exchanges between people with complementary Overleaves, on opposite sides of a Cardinal–Ordinal Axis. The type mentioned above is attraction, and with polarities such as this it is possible to do transformative spiritual work. My book *The Tao of Relationships* explains this in considerable detail in terms of the male–female polar attraction, but really the ‘chemistry’ and ‘alchemy’ of polarity applies to all kinds of intimate and meaningful relationships.

Polarity does not only create attraction; “Overleaves that abrade” are documented in another section, further on.

.... What was different for most of you in that life besides Soul level [Age] was the Mode. Most of you were in the beginning of that life in your present Mode’s polar opposite. Something in that life caused you to change Modes. For instance, the experience that Claudia had in Jerusalem caused the swing from Repression to Passion. [SJC, 12 January 1975]

This “swing” from one Overleaf in a lifetime to its opposite is part of completing a “Monad.” For a thorough discussion, refer to the chapter on “Monads” in my book *Study Papers on the Original Michaelian Group*.

The continuity [oneness or unity] is as immutable as the polarity [twoness or duality]. [SJC, 08 February 1975]

The word ‘continuity’ here probably refers to Neutral Assimilation as the synthesis of thesis and antithesis, or ‘polarity’.

A specific manifestation of the principle of polarity is discussed in the next section.

Ordinal — Intermediate/Neutral — Exalted/Cardinal

This section informs the reader what the Michaels meant by those words, which we see in context below. The terms were never actually defined; the reader must surmise the meaning of the words from their context. One wonders if original Michaelian group members were already familiar with the terms and did not need to have it explained to them. These terms are explained in Part One of my book *The Tao of Personality*.

In the following quotations, I substitute the word “Cardinal” for the word “Exalted”. Yarbro introduced the substitution of Cardinal for Exalted in *MMFM*; not all contingents of the Michaelian teachings community adopted her preference, but I have, because they are both mathematical terms. Simply and succinctly stated, Ordinality is enumeration as a quantitative sequence, such as first, second, third; Cardinality is enumeration as qualitative principles, such as Oneness, Twoness, Threeness.

The first hint that there was a type of polarity embodied in the words Ordinal and Cardinal came at the time that the seven Soul Ages were revealed, shortly after the Michaels revealed themselves:

The tape recorder was turned off for a moment, but a question was asked about all of us being Old Souls.

The Cardinal Cycles are sparsely populated. Sarah is right about the bell curve. The majority of all creatures of reason are Young and Mature right now because of the closeness of the manifestation of the high Mental body [the Infinite Soul]. [SJC, 26 August 1973]

Then in a session where the nature of each Role was explained, we find this:

The Priest is the Slave exalted... The Sage is the Artisan exalted... The King is the Warrior exalted... The Scholar is an intermediate Role. [SJC, ~25 October 1973]

This is another instance that hints of the Ordinal triad being separated from the Exalted–Cardinal triad by an “intermediate” zone.

The first mention of Ordinal and Cardinal together came several months after the beginning of the Michaels’ appearance, and it had to do with Roles:

Many do well if the [three] Cardinal Roles [King, Priest, Sage] are mated with their counterparts in the [three] Ordinal Roles [Warrior, Slave, Artisan]. [SJC, 16 December 1973]

As in the first instance shown above, the term, Cardinal, is used to refer to older souls:

... The group now has more Cardinal [Old] souls than originally. These people bring dynamicism and cause certain things to happen merely by their dynamicism. [SJC, 20 December 1973]

Cardinal Roles can get into power struggles with each other, even with siblings, or maybe especially with siblings:

CH: Where does the conflict between [my sister] KH and me originate?

This conflict is only in part karmic. It mostly stems from the race for power between two strong, Cardinal Roles [Young Priest and Old King] souls who live under the same roof. Someone must emerge victorious, and in this case, both are determined, very strong souls. The struggle for supremacy has been the hallmark of the relationship. So far, both understand that the power can be theirs. KH, at a deeper level, knows that she is to lead; CH, also.

AH [their mother]: Does that mean that “CH knows that KH will lead?”

CH will lead in the spiritual sense. [Their father] RH is correct in saying that this is an ancient struggle. Compare the struggle between the chief [King] and the medicine man [Priest].

The next time Ordinal and Cardinal are mentioned, it had to do with the next Overleaf that was revealed:

There are three Cardinal Goals. They are: Dominance, Acceptance, Growth. There is an intermediate, Neutral Goal, which for the time being we can call Stagnation. There are three Ordinal Goals, which are the antitheses of the [three] Cardinal Goals. They are: Submission, Rejection, Retardation. Most attorneys and politicians are those who have chosen the Neutral Goal — lawmaking is a Stagnation Goal. One of the better examples in history is one you were discussing earlier, Alexander the Great: a Young male King, Dominant. He could not fail. [SJC, 25 December 1973]

Notice again that by the use of the term, Intermediate, coupled with the term, Neutral, the form of the septenary is hinted at, with the Ordinal and Cardinal triads on both sides of the Neutral in the middle.

Children who exhibit unwanted hostility and are subject to loud outbursts and antisocial behavior are normally Infant Souls of Cardinal Roles with Dominant Goals, who also perceive the “not me” as hostile. [SJC, 27 December 1973]

After the seven Goals were revealed that Christmas, with their Ordinal and Cardinal pattern, this resulted in a number of questions.

CH and I attempted to type some of the people at the party of eight thousand people. It was not easy.

Soul levels [Ages] are the most difficult to gauge in crowds. In fact, we would say impossible, since there is a definite crowd behavior that sweeps them along. Roles are easier, especially the Cardinal Roles. The Ordinal Roles are more difficult. The Goals should have much more to say than either of the other two [Overleaves thus far revealed, Soul Age and Role] in a crowd situation since they deal with pretty overt behavioral tactics. [SJC, 30 December 1973]

Ordinal Roles in Dominance are hard to discern from dominant (Cardinal) Roles in Submission.

Most Ordinal Roles who have dominant [Cardinal] Goals [and other Overleaf categories, not yet revealed] can be backed into a corner by any Cardinal Role whether or not the Goal is dominant [Cardinal]. Even dominant Warriors can be dominated by Accepting or Submitting Kings [Acceptance and Submission being the most passive Goals]. There is something pathetic about a King in Retardation [an Ordinal Goal]. It reminds one of a peacock who has been in a hailstorm. [SJC, 30 December 1973]

I am trying to synthesize the material; I have thought of people in each Role and I classify them. I find that I have a hatred toward Dominant Warriors. I am attracted to female Kings, but do not care for male Kings in Dominance. I am attracted to Sages, neutral toward Priests and Artisans, and look down on Slaves.

There is a natural affinity for the Ordinal and Cardinal [with each other]: i.e., Sages and Artisans are generally attracted to one another, as are Priests and Slaves, Warriors and Kings. These Roles naturally complement each other, and good teamwork can result. The same goes for the [complementary] Goals [and other Overleaves]. The gender [distinction] should be negated. [SJC, 03 January 1974]

How does Bacchus, the god of wine, fit into Eleusinian mysteries?

It has been said by us before that rituals unify and bring together many who otherwise would not be able to participate. The same goes for festivals. They provide an excellent opportunity to play the fool in a controlled, safe environment, which is necessary for all souls in Ordinal Goals and Roles. [Cardinal] Sages and Priests normally need no special invitations to be hams, but the same is not true for many [Ordinal] Artisans and Warriors. Many Artisans are essentially nonverbal, except for those few who are like you, Intellectually Centered. [SJC, 10 January 1974]

What is GS? Is he a Sage or an Artisan?

Sages are far more exuberant [than Artisans], even those in Rejection. Sages in Ordinal Goals sometimes are obnoxious. This produces many Martyrs, needlessly, particularly with Sages in Submission. This man is in Acceptance; that is valid. [SJC, 10 January 1974]

In the new Overleaf of Goals, I hear them as judgmental in that there are three "exalted" Goals and three "subordinate" Goals, and a "neutral" Goal.

This is true of all of the Overleaves. It [variation of Goals in different lifetimes] normally gives all souls the opportunity to experience all of life in the Roles, which are stationary [don't change from lifetime to lifetime]. It [Role] does not have quite the same impact as in the other Overleaves; it simply means that the souls in Ordinal Roles tend to be the doers rather than the sitters and thinkers [like the Cardinal Roles]. [SJC, 10 January 1974]

One might think from the use of the word "subordinate" by the questioner, that this is the origin of the name of the Attribute, Ordinal. Apparently the questioner was mistaken in that assumption, because when the word "Cardinal" was introduced as the replacement for the word "Exalted" a few years later in *More Messages from Michael*, it became obvious (to me at least) that the names Ordinal and Cardinal were chosen because of their mathematical significance. This is explained in my book *The Tao of Personality*.

When the next Overleaf was given, the pattern of Ordinal triad — Neutral — Cardinal triad continued:

Stoic, Skeptic, Cynic, Pragmatist, Realist, Idealist, Spiritualist.

Are there three Cardinal Attitudes?

[That is] valid. [SJC, 22 January 1974]

The following series of questions and answers are presented without comment. The reader can discern more fully the meaning of Ordinal and Cardinal and Neutral from the context in which the words are used.

Why are some children imprinted less than others?

Children in Cardinal Roles and dominant Goals are not easily imprinted. [SJC, 03 March 1974]

Is the work ethic a carry-over from a past life?

We would see it as one of the most tenacious barriers you must scale. In some instances, the man Robert [leader of the Fellowship of Friends] was right about this. We feel, however, that you should discharge your obligations made in good faith, whether or not the respondents are in the Teaching or not. Whoever is beyond this, we see no real obligations. We would see you pursuing some form of relaxation every day, even though this may at first seem like work for you. The relaxation obtained with the marijuana is all right. Just resting is all right, also. The penchant to "do" is part of friction for the Ordinal Roles. [SJC, 27 March 1974]

It was said before that I was to lead. Is that in a spiritual way? [My daughter] too?

Both of you could; the choice is yours. Yes, in a spiritual sense, and, yes, you are right. Those in Ordinal Roles would gain more from your teaching [because you are an Artisan], but the majority of mankind is in Ordinal Roles.

There seems to be geographic concentrations of Cardinal Roles. In Michigan, I observed so many Baby Slaves, it must be a geographic thing. [SJC, 14 April 1974]

Are Ordinal Roles as important as Cardinal Roles?

If this planet were entirely populated by [Cardinal Roles] Kings, Priests, and Sages, there would be little progress — much leadership, religion, and oratory, but no progress. [SJC, 23 June 1974]

I do well with knowing people's Centers and Modes, but poorly with the Roles. (He was afar on Gretta's Role and wanted some information that might help in this area for him.)

This young lady's Role is muted now because of her youth and the fact that it is not a Cardinal Role. Eugene does far better with the Cardinal Roles.

Yes, there is some work that can be done that will help perfect these skills. Try the "large crowd" approach. It inevitably works where other approaches sometimes fail. It is a saturation technique and sometimes effective. Go for the Ordinal Roles first and, if necessary, work from eliminating [what they are not] first. [SJC, 17 July 1974]

Is it the egotism of the Intellectual Center not to like housework or is it a cultural thing?

This has little to do with culture, surprising enough. The Cardinal Roles [Sage, Priest, King] find mundane chores distasteful, particularly those not in the Moving Center. The Ordinal Roles [Warrior, Server, Artisan] accept them in more grace, but there again, they are often preferred by Warriors and Scholars simply because they point to efficiency and therefore to winning. [SJC, 17 September 1974]

How can a Warrior evolve to a King? I thought we could not change Roles.

Usually, those who chose Ordinal Roles come to this realization at a later time than those in Cardinal Roles, but this is not always the case, especially if the Ordinal soul meets with the proper Teaching. [SJC, 17 September 1974]

JH [a Priest] asked the group to please not fail to photograph her as she is very open for it. Prompted by information indicating group was timid to photograph those in a Cardinal Role.

What does the Scholar seek?

The Scholar seeks to define the Logos.

Priest?

The Priest seeks — as the King and the Sage — the Tao.

Artisan?

The Sage.

Server?

The Priest.

(The Warrior seeks the King.)

Who does the Scholar seek? The nearest Scholar?

All seek to exalt their Roles to the nearest power.

The nearest power?

The one with the closest affinity in the Cardinal Roles is sought by the Balanced soul with an Ordinal Role. Since the Scholar does not have a particular affinity for any of the Cardinal Roles, the seeking, like the Role itself, is peculiar to this Role. This is a neutral, genderless Role. As you already know, coupled with other genderless Overleaves, this can be an excellent platform from which to begin the search; but often this very genderlessness causes multiple diversions into more exotic pursuits before the goal is reached. If you meet with extremely Old Souls in Cardinal Roles, you are certain to notice that their goals seem no longer earth-bound and temporal, and there is a steady increase in other-worldliness in their behavior. Sometimes, this succeeds in setting them completely apart from the mainstream. It is unusual for these Cardinal ancients not to seek some type of esoteric teaching. Many devote their entire lives to this pursuit, and their capacity for dedication is very great. [SJC, 01 October 1974]

WL asked about his relationship with his sister-in-law. He has much negativity toward her. She is psychic. What is their conflict? Is it from the past? It is a strongly negative reaction.

This is a very interesting example of an extremely Cardinal soul who is expending much of her psychic energy uselessly by working out of the Negative Poles of Cardinal Overleaves. For instance, the scattering comes from the Negative Pole of Growth [–Confusion], the hostility from the Negative Pole of Passion [–Identification]. The Cardinal Overleaves in the Negative Pole will resemble the corresponding Ordinal Overleaves at their strongest manifestation. In other words, Passion at its most Negative point will be almost Repression; Growth with this amount of scattering, will amount to some degree of Retardation. [SJC, 14 December 1974]

... for those in Ordinal Goals who feel much responsibility for the miseries around them and feel it is their life task to mitigate it. [SJC, 08 February 1975]

Forgiveness is really no more than the utter willingness to accept responsibility for one's own life and this is why it is so difficult for those in Ordinal Roles when their own existences seem so pale beside the more Cardinal Roles. In truth, the Cardinal Roles are more able to take the responsibility. Of course, they are. It is easy to take responsibility in the Power Mode, and a King finds it easy to excuse the behavior of a Slave. However, it is far from impossible for those in Ordinal Roles to go through the process of learning to take responsibility for their wins as well as their losses. Failure is an easy way out, and those in Ordinal Roles love to fail because it takes so little effort and the blame can be placed on those in "power". But, truthfully, no one in an Ordinal Role loses unless he wishes — any more than do those in Cardinal Roles. This country has had leaders in Ordinal Roles who have been exceptionally effective. [SJC, 03 September 1977]

Lower — Neutral — Higher

The words "lower" and "higher" are usually applied to Centers (as well as planes) in the original Michaelian group transcriptions. They are synonyms for Ordinal and Cardinal as applied to other Overleaves, and for Negative and Positive when applied to Poles of Overleaves and of Axes. These are all synonyms for the abstract concept of yin and yang as indicated above. These terms are all just variations on what in my books are termed the Monadic Attributes. As indicated elsewhere in this *History* book, in the original Michaelian group, there were three lower Centers (Moving, Emotional, Intellectual), a Neutral Center (Instinctive), and three higher Centers (Sexual, Higher Emotional, Higher Intellectual).

Let's take a look and see what we can learn from a search for these terms in the original Michaelian group transcriptions.

Both Richard and Sarah felt strong negative pull over the last few words, then the dictation continued:

[Soleal:] Not that I am willing, but I mean that it is still a part of growth for me and a route of expression with those to whom nonverbal expression of higher emotions is difficult. You do not have to concentrate on the knowledge that the partner is operating out of lower Centers — just express yourself. Good work results when you give the gift of higher expression.... Love, to mean anything in the line of consciousness, cannot be predicated on anything material. It must come from higher Centers. That comes about when you finally give up non-verbal expectations about the actions of those around you and begin to accept them without modification in your fantasies. Sexual energy, when used to express higher Centers, can be incredibly strong. When the energy is relegated downward, it results in an energy leak. That is sometimes why you want to sleep after physical union. You fed lower Centers — sometimes the Moving Center and the Essence is exhausted, so the body goes to sleep to free the Essence. To get to higher Centers, do what Jesus did: fasting, meditation and agonizing self-appraisal. Exercise the body, learn to love unselfishly. [SJC, 03 July 1973]

But I'm not talking about that. I mean, you feel better all the time if you are sexually turned on. I wonder if we have to pay for that?

You only pay in the [blocking of] access to higher Centers.

But I've felt that at the times that I have been turned on, I've been much closer to higher Centers and actually zoomed into them part of the time. In fact, the turning off leads into a depression for me and at that time, one is as far from one's higher Centers as one can ever be.

That is different. Then you are using the Sexual Center as access to the higher Centers. The physical act itself can be performed with little loss of energy. [SJC, 12 August 1973]

When I do that, it feels like "me." Some of the information has been contradictory. I wonder if it's my "many I's"?

Many times the strong intellect takes command and forces us out. We [the Michaels] come only through higher Centers. [SJC, 08 September 1973]

Dick stated that he felt only rejection, sorrow and loss, and that he could see those blocking his ability to love (fear of this happening over again).

In that relationship, you were able to give the gift of higher expression. It was not reciprocal because she was not in touch with higher Centers, but she has also memories. This is often the case. You could not recapture that experience, but you could duplicate the Higher Emotional energy output — now especially. [SJC, 22 September 1973]

A great deal of the energy utilized by the lower Centers in life situations is implosion reactions with negative charges. Controlled reactions of this type do not ever become as spectacular as their antitheses [the higher Centers]. [SJC, 27 December 1973]

The source for the [psychic] energy is the same. The speed that it is burned as fuel is faster when utilized by the Higher Centers.

[Please] clarify this.

The fuel is the same for all Centers. It is the [Level of Being of the] consumer that is different.

The production of fuel: does it have anything to do with self-remembering? In order to Balance the Centers, we have to have a larger supply to reach higher Centers.

An analogy would be an old fashioned stove with insufficient insulation, a leaky chimney and an inefficient flue compared to a brand new radar [microwave] oven. Moments of pure consciousness do produce contact with Higher Centers, yes.

Is self-remembering the way to produce psychic energy?

Not the way, simply the byproduct. The self-remembering must be produced first through those methods we have outlined to you [meditation, concentration, fasting, study]. Then as you go progressively toward balance, you automatically will have more and more flashes of consciousness, opening the door to higher expression. [SJC, 09 February 1974]

[Soleal:] ... the concept of Agape requires the actions of a closely-knit group of supportive students in order to come to reality. No one can feel Agape in an ivory tower. It can only be felt when Higher Centers are contacted in the course of close association with others. There is no way to do this alone that I know of. [SJC, 18 February 1974]

Are some intellectual Scholars trapped in the Intellectual Part of Intellectual Center?

It is possible to be trapped here, Dick, and yes, you are right. Many of the theoretical scientists are indeed immured [trapped/confined] in the Intellectual Part of Intellectual Center. This is a route to Higher Centers when there is Balance. [SJC, 03 March 1974]

If you are Emotionally Centered and going to Balance, you have to be able to use Intellectual Center and Moving Center in the right way. You continue until you have access to all lower Centers.

Until you have sufficiently detached yourself from the mundane and can come to the higher Centers. The occult master has use of Higher Centers at will. It merely means that this soul is in Balance with no danger of backsliding. [SJC, 03 March 1974]

Moses raised the serpent. Jesus said, "If I be lifted up," etc. What is the relationship to kundalini here?

Yes, this is the highest form of movable energy you have at your disposal and therefore, that which you can utilize for each: the emotional states or Higher Emotional Centers, Higher Intellectual Centers, which are synonymous with subjective consciousness [and] objective consciousness respectively. Also, with the same had just described by the yogi [sic]. The lower Centers are fixed and the energy is like a closed system. The higher Centers are capable of ecstasy or bliss; the lower Centers are not. The Sexual Center or the kundalini force can only be breached by bringing the lower Centers into harmonious Balance. In other words, in separating from the maya or illusions for glamour of the Physical Plane and by giving up your expectations of what a sexual experience should be. [SJC, 24 April 1974]

Dick visioned that life should contain joy and rapture. He felt that no barriers were between us and that experience [except] imaginary ones created by us.

True. You can have it any time you wish. It is not a difficult transition, but it requires that you cease denying yourself the pleasure. You see, this culture places pleasure on a high shelf marked "reward" and it must be earned. Ironically, man is totally unable to experience this as joy and continues to strive toward an elusive goal that always remains just beyond the fingertips. This is truly sad, Dick, perhaps the only sadness on the Physical plane, for it is really within your grasp all the time. Give up the idea that joy must come as a reward for faithful service. This is nonsense. You can have it free.

When Mechanical Man expresses verbally a negative emotion, you see, there is a compounded energy leak. It is fine to just admonish you all not to express, but we understand that you must know why. When you compound the leak, you step completely back and allow the lower Centers full control and it is a soulless, automatic response and much overloading of the circuitry occurs. However, when you merely acknowledge to yourself

that you are having a negative reaction, why then you are immediately reducing the force of the reaction, simply by the internal photograph and also by sending the reaction up a notch instead of downward.

In other words, this process requires, in and of itself, the use of Intellectual Center in order to photograph the inappropriate action. This enables the hot wires to cool down a bit and allows the time to formulate a dispassionate response. This also many times results in a cooling off of the trigger. Also, when that happens, there is a neutral energy flow and this in time can provide access to Higher Centers and, therefore, positive energy.

The only positive energy we know of is that which we have elected to call Agape. Other sources may be either neutral or negative. The high states are free of the complexity found in the lower states. This should explain the purity of the energy flow. The lower states, being more complex, require more complex emotions to feed upon and be fed upon. [SJC, 05 October 1974]

This book is not the place to discuss the understanding of the Centers; it is only to point out the structural Attributes of the Centers in terms of higher and lower. The place where I provide a lengthy description of each Center is in my book *The Tao of Personality*.

Negative — Positive

The words “Negative” and “Positive” refer to yet another manifestation of the Ordinal and Cardinal aspects of The Law of Three, aka the Monad. Those words appeared very early on in the transcriptions; in fact, in the very first session when the Michaels manifested, which goes to show how important in their teaching an understanding of polarity is:

The question was asked concerning the decision to go on in the search for spiritual enlightenment — on to becoming an adept. What do you do when you get so far and are not too sure you want to continue? We wondered if the Masters picked those in whom the desire for “psychic experiences” was quite strong to become adepts.

The desire is polar, too. Everything in the universe is, of course. Along with the desire is always the dread. The choice does not become clear to you until you have experienced the desire from another dimension. You must stand and observe the desire from the shadows of dread. Wishes, like everything, have positive and negative poles. There must be attraction and repulsion or nothing exists because no energy is being generated. [SJC, 12 August 1973]

Could you elaborate on the third chapter of Genesis about what the knowledge of good and evil is?

Knowledge of positive and negative force. [SJC, 22 November 1973]

The word “force” here is a reference to Gurdjieff’s Law of Three discussed in a previous chapter.

I would like comments on energies used by various energy Centers.

All of this energy is psychic energy.... We wish to remind you that there are two very specific types of reactions: implosion and explosion. Also, two specific charges in polarization: negative and positive. A great deal of the energy utilized by the lower Centers in life situations are implosion reactions with negative charges. Controlled reactions of this type do not ever become as spectacular as their antitheses [explosion reactions in the Higher Centers]. [SJC, 27 December 1973]

Is good and evil the fulfillment of karma with a promise to return to “paradise” after this fulfillment?

That question was raised in a spirit of wishful poignancy and concerned missing certain aspects of life on the Physical plane such as sunlight filtering through the trees, *et cetera*. However, you are right, Edgar, the good and evil mentioned in that paradise refers to negative [Ordinal] and positive [Cardinal] poles of the Monads. [SJC, 27 January 1974]

Monads are covered in a chapter in my book *Study Papers on the Original Michaelian Group*.

The revelation about specific names of Positive and Negative Poles of Overleaves did not happen until the end of 1974 or the beginning of 1975, but there were indications of it months before. The following Q&A exchanges had to do with Centers, but it seems to foreshadow the subject of Positive and Negative Poles of all Overleaves:

Could Michael comment on the negative sides of Centers? Is there a negative side to each Center?

This is, of course, valid... All of the psycho-neuroses are directly related to the negative half of the Centering: that which leads souls to live above and outside the law of the land, all of the violence directed against other creatures.

Fear and guilt prevent one from experiencing new things. Is this due to the negative side of Centers working?

Most of them, yes. [SJC, 06 March 1974]

The Personality has an extremely limited capacity for experiencing positivity. Whenever you experience unsolicited pleasure, you are experiencing it from Essence. This is why the extinguishment of negativity is so vital to spiritual growth. If you have not guessed this yet, the Personality is the Negative Pole of a Monad [and Essence is the Positive Pole]. [SJC, 17 March 1974]

I have a question about the negative half of Centers, because of there is confusion in my mind about how people get into the negative half, what the negative half is, et cetera.

For instance, the Intellectual Part of Emotional Center has produced some sensitive moving contributions to this world, such as those of the poet Stephen Vincent Benet, and the man Robert Frost. It has also produced the Germans [Hermann] Goering [one of Hitler's generals] and [Otto von] Bismarck.

What puts one in the negative or positive half of a Center?

Usually the Cardinal Modes [Power, Passion, Aggression put you in the Positive half of a Center]. The man George Wallace is another — a Baby Priest in the Passion Mode. The Soul Level predicts that he will be on the self-righteous side; coupled with the Passion Mode and the Emotional Centering, one gets a firebrand. The man Goering was in the Aggression Mode, a Second Level Mature Priest with a Chief Feature of Greed.

Do we get stuck in the negative or positive half, or does it fluctuate?

Most are stuck. This is not a growth-producing sequence. Again, for instance, souls trapped in the Moving Part of Intellectual Center can be rather cold and ruthless, given Neutral Overleaves.

Is this chosen ahead of time?

Much of this is, unfortunately, culturally induced. Scholars in Stagnation can be induced to respond to positive reinforcement.

Does a child choose (before birth) the culture in which it will be raised?

Not so. The child is born with predominant Centering and the chance to go either way. With negative reinforcement, the child will usually become stuck in the Negative Pole of the Center by late adolescence.

If there is no negative reinforcement, do you get stuck in the positive half of the Centering?

These same Overleaves become positive.

Which is best, negative or positive?

The positive half is a whole lot less violent.

This puts an awful load on parents, doesn't it?

Not so. You do not choose [before incarnation] your neighbor and teachers in the public school, nor do you choose the editor of the local newspaper or those who schedule the video.

Do Overleaves affect Negative and Positive Centering? Is it what goes out rather than what goes in?

Some souls are incapable of violence on the basis of the Soul Levels and other Overleaves, but those who are capable [of violence], generally will [do violence] if given negative reinforcement. Old [Soul] Sages, Servers, and Artisans are generally incapable of violence.

No one in the group could be in the Negative.

The lady is correct. Souls in the negative part of Centers are unstable.

In the Gurdjieffian teachings, what are called the negative "parts" of Centers, in the Michaelian teachings are called the "Negative Poles" of Centers.

We seem to be getting voluntary information on violence. Is there a statement about this?

Only that violence is culturally induced, yes. It is wholly a part of False Personality. The Essence is pacific.

Violence is truly the dark side of the soul. No one comes onto the Physical Plane violently. How violently one completes the Monad is a choice made at the moment of truth. [SJC, 01 May 1974]

From this exchange we gather that violence is one of the phenomena potentially associated with the Negative Poles of Overleaves.

.... you are moving into the Positive Poles of your Overleaves [SJC, 01 October 74]

This was said before the names of the Poles were revealed, and so was the following:

As we have told you before, the Goal of Acceptance is in itself a powerful Cardinal Goal from which spiritual enlightenment can spring. With this, there is no need for a switch in Overleaves — merely extinguishment of the Negative Pole, which in this case is the desperate need to be accepted universally by others [later officially

named –Ingratiation]. In exchange for this, you come into the Positive Pole, which is, of course, the unqualified acceptance of others [later officially named +Agape], just as the Negative Pole of the Growth Goal [later officially named –Confusion] involves tremendous scattering of energies as the soul rushes from school to school searching feverishly for that illusive “way.” [SJC, 09 November 1974]

Even before the names of the Poles were revealed, the “extinguishment” of the Negative Pole was recommended for people who wished to grow spiritually.

These clues over the previous few months prompted someone to ask the following:

Do other Overleaves, aside from Goals, contain the Poles (Positive and Negative) found in Goals?

We have told you that there is yin and yang in everything — polarity if you will. Therefore, yes. [SJC, 26 November 1974]

Based on what is said over the next few months, these Positive and Negative Poles were channeled soon after this, but we do not know exactly when. We have a Chart of them dated March 1975, but not a session transcription when they were revealed.

Of course, you can use the Negative Pole of all Centers to accomplish the reverse of that which can be accomplished by utilizing the Positive Pole. The Intellectual Part of Emotional Center happens to be the one which attracts students to a [spiritual] School. The reverse can be true using the Negative Pole of this Center’s Part. [SJC, 07 December 1974]

This is a very interesting example of an extremely exalted soul who is expending much of her psychic energy uselessly by working out of the Negative Poles of Cardinal Overleaves. For instance, the scattering comes from the Negative Pole of Growth [–Confusion], the hostility from the Negative Pole of Passion [–Identification]. The Cardinal Overleaves in the Negative Pole will resemble the corresponding Ordinal Overleaves at their strongest manifestation. In other words, Passion at its most Negative point will be almost Repression; Growth with this amount of scattering, will amount to some degree of Retardation. This student here present operates close to the mid-line and sometimes far to the Positive Poles of Growth and other Overleaves, especially the Passion Mode. There is much negative attraction here as a result of this. [SJC, 14 December 1974]

The fact that these Poles are not named in this answer might indicate that their names were not yet revealed.

However, the following passage implies that the names of the Poles might have been revealed, and the Michaels were explaining the usefulness of this information:

Just imagine how easy it would be for you to accept [your husband]’s Rejection [Goal] were it not for the [Repression] Mode you selected. Repression [Mode] automatically erects a barrier between you and the Positive Pole [+Agape] of your Goal [of Acceptance]. To scale this barrier is a significant feat. You have begun to feel this change and are on the way to verification. It is not an easy lesson. The block or barrier stems from the Mode of Repression. Even the Acceptance [Goal] of one who has chosen this Mode is repressed. To find the ability within to feel +Agape [the Positive Pole of Acceptance] in spite of this, [is a] formidable task and it requires a yardstick to measure the progress. The ideal yardstick, of course, is the polar opposite, in this case one in Rejection [your husband’s Goal]. For you to go to and remain in the Positive Pole of Acceptance required much work and you are still not entirely able to work from there. This is simply another balancing tool that older souls often choose. It would be possible, for instance, for [your husband] to choose to utilize the same tool [achieving Balance via moving toward Acceptance Goal] were he so inclined. This is usually possible in all Sequences; that is, the motive can become easily the motivator. Of course, the hallmarks of the Negative Pole of Acceptance are conciliation, placation and ingratiating. Do you now have the feeling for the fact that in most souls not acquainted with a Teaching that the Mode stands forever as a barrier between the Positive and Negative Poles of the Goal? No matter how Cardinal that Goal may be, this principle stands between all Modes and Goals. We would say so, yes. [SJC, 16 January 1975]

The fact that the names of the Positive and Negative Poles of Acceptance are used in this session might or might not indicate that all their names had been revealed by this time. (This passage indicates a special affinity or connection between Goal and Mode that are clarified in my book *The Tao of Personality*. Briefly, there is an Ordinal–Cardinal polarity between Goal and Mode on an Action Axis; there is an Ordinal–Cardinal polarity between Shadow and Role on an Inspiration Axis; there is an Ordinal–Cardinal polarity between Attitude and Center on an Expression Axis; the Neutral Assimilation Overleaf category is Level–Age.)

The following Q&A exchanges also might imply that the names of the Poles were known at the time, and now the Michaels were explaining the usefulness of this information:

Does the Essence have a personality? Does this relate to the Positive Poles?

In order for the True Personality to emerge, the student must be in a firm state of Balance, and if the Centers are Balanced, all work will be from the Positive Poles of all Overleaves. In fact, at that moment, the whole concept of Overleaves becomes obsolete. Balanced Man is not a victim of his Overleaves any longer. This is, of course, why the work is to strive for Balance and why we attempt to effect those exercises that will allow you to choose the work you need tailor made.

In reading Penthouse Magazine, I had a negative reaction. I felt wrong. Was I seeing the Negative Pole of Sexual Center [–Eros]?

We would agree with that, but also the most Negative Pole of Emotional Center [–Sentimentality].

I feel the only route to Positive Pole of Sexual Center [+Amor] is love.

We have no quarrel with that, either. The only ecstasy that we know of occurring during the sexual act has occurred in Adepts who are Balanced and who do express Agape. [SJC, 25 January 1975]

In this case, unlike the instance quoted above, “Agape” is almost surely not referring to the Positive Pole of the Goal of Acceptance, but the goal of the spiritual path in general.

How can one tell whether one is in a Negative Pole of an appropriate Center, or if one is in the wrong Center entirely?

Whatever portion [aka “Part”] of a Center provides an entrapment for the soul who is still a victim of his Overleaves becomes the Negative Pole of that Center. All creatures of reason have this in common — you are not alone. This is for many a no-exit situation, and becomes wrong work, but still not wholly inappropriate, as in the example given. It is still an emotional reaction to an emotional situation or a sexual reaction to a sexual situation. We would call it unschooled rather than inappropriate. It is not inappropriate, for instance, for your children in this culture to giggle at salacious pictures, and this is an appropriate reaction from an unschooled Center. In order to become successful in life in this culture, it is usually absolutely necessary to act out of the Negative Poles of Centers. In order to survive, some of the Negative Poles of the Overleaves produce behavior that is laudable by the culture. For instance, mothers in the Negative Pole of Dominance [–Dictatorship] are often admired for their unflagging devotion to their children. However, what produces success in life produces failure in a Teaching, for the very visible reason that the goals are diametrically opposed. [SJC, 25 January 1975]

Something significant about Negative Poles in general was revealed in this answer, namely that they are part of culturally-induced False Personality.

The last mention of polarity in the original Michaelian group transcriptions was this one:

At this point, many felt the presence of Soleal, and asked him if he wished to speak.

[Soleal:] The teacher [Michael] has only begun to stress the importance of polarity to you now and the use of the most Positive Pole of the Axes for the work. [SJC, 12 February 1975]

Refer to subsequent sections in this chapter for more instances of the word Axes to refer to complementary Overleaves. This has considerable bearing on the pattern of the structure of the Overleaf System.

Active — Intermediate — Passive

The two words, Active and Passive, are mostly used in the original Michaelian group transcriptions to refer to Body Types, but in *MMFM*, p. 29, –Activity was said to be the Negative Pole of Cardinality, and –Passivity was said to be the Negative Pole of Ordinality. Therefore, it seems appropriate to mention these two factors in relation to the personality system, the Overleaf System, in general.

The Passive Body types : The Active Body types : An Intermediate Body type. [SJC, late September 1973]

Notice that, what in other contexts is referred to as Neutral, is here referred to as Intermediate in the case of Body Types. This would seem to be an “averaged” Body Type, with no emphasis on any particular characteristic, such as muscle, fat, or bone. People with an Intermediate Body Type are generally regarded, by themselves and others, as “symmetrical” and “beautiful”.

Depression is normally the passive Personality’s only channel through which it can express hostility. The anger can be self-directed, but does not have to be. [SJC, 02 October 1973]

If a soul has chosen a passive Role and Body [Type], the pressure can become intolerable, especially if poor environmental choices are made. [SJC, 20 October 1973]

In these two references we have the Personality (Role) and the Body Type described in terms of Activity and Passivity. The same connection between Personality and Body Type and Activity and Passivity is made in the following reference:

Can passive Body Types be a Warrior?

Yes. The passive Body Type is something that does not stay with you [from one lifetime to another]. The Role does. William is not a passive Body Type. [SJC, 23 October 1973]

In the original Michaelian group transcriptions, there are a few other uses of the word passive that are contrasted with some opposites: active, aggressive, and violent. All of these instances are expressions of the general principle of Ordinality/Cardinality by which we make distinctions between things and their opposite, without which there would be no cosmos; there would be no orderly system of being and doing.

Outward — Inward

The words “outward” and “inward” were used in conjunction with the Overleaf System **only once**, regarding the Chief Feature, but in actual fact, these opposites are another type of instantiation of Ordinal and Cardinal respectively. Therefore, I regard it as useful to extract pertinent quotations from the original Michaelian group transcriptions.

Just as the level of soul [Age] manifests inwardly as perception, so the major Role in Essence manifests outwardly in attitudes and behavior. [SJC, late October 1973]

Can you discuss energy and the concept of the pyramid?

What we just discussed is the pyramidal effect or the channeling of the energies from the wide dispersion at the base to the narrow flow at the top. The theory behind the pyramid is, of course, symbolic. However, many cannot work without a concrete physical model representing the symbols. This is not Bad Work, necessarily, but you should learn to be a bit more abstract.

The literalness of your culture is an obstacle to true spiritual growth. At the time of the building of the great pyramids in Egypt, the Brotherhood was almost solely concentrated there. They represent the outward symbol of the inner strength. [SJC, 27 December 1973]

Half are outwards and half are inwards. [Said regarding Chief Features.] [SJC, 27 February, 1974]

Besides space and time, what are some of the other dimensions we commonly experience?

In the first place, time as you experience it does not exist in the pan-dimensional universe. Time in the Physical Plane is seen as that stationary plane, through which, around which, beneath which, the physical universe revolves. Space is a concept limited to the three-dimensional physical universe. The present moment contains all of the past. The present moment can be expanded to encompass all that has gone before. The pan-dimensional universe embraces both the concepts of infinity [in space] and eternity [in time] — limitlessness and expansion outward, as well as a contraction inward. [SJC, 26 December 1974]

Concrete — Abstract

The words “concrete” and “abstract” were not used in conjunction with the Overleaf System, but in actual fact, the concepts do apply, to Ordinal and Cardinal respectively. Therefore, I regard it as useful to extract pertinent quotations from the original Michaelian group transcriptions.

Could you comment on the “second coming” being in the clouds?

He [Jesus] was warning them not to expect any physical help from him. They could not conceive of the help in the abstract and to have told them that in two thousand years, he would repeat this performance would have been meaningless. [SJC, 22 November 1973]

Can you discuss energy and the concept of the pyramid?

What we just discussed is the pyramidal effect or the channeling of the energies from the wide dispersion at the base to the narrow flow at the top. The theory behind the pyramid is, of course, symbolic. However, many cannot work without a concrete physical model representing the symbols. This is not Bad Work, necessarily, but you should learn to be a bit more abstract. The literalness of your culture is an obstacle to true spiritual growth. At the time of the building of the great pyramids in Egypt, the Brotherhood was almost solely concentrated there. They represent the outward symbol of the inner strength. [SJC, 27 November 1973]

One hundred of your years far exceeds the life expectancy of the physical body and, as we said before, the Personality cannot conceive of an abstract beyond its five senses, and so one hundred years is meaningless on this plane. [S/C, 17 April 1974]

The Meaning of Cardinal and Ordinal

These two words, Cardinal and Ordinal, have a meaning in mathematics, but that fact is probably unknown to most Michaelian teachings students. In the previous sections, we discussed several of the synonyms for these terms as they are encountered outside the world of mathematics and in the world of the Michaelian teachings, and therefore not unknown to most Michaelian teachings students. For your convenience, these are tabulated below, and then briefly described.

Table 2Bb — TABULATION of ORDINAL/CARDINAL SYNONYMS		
ORDINAL	NEUTRAL	CARDINAL
Yin	Chi/Qi	Yang
Feminine	Androgynous	Masculine
Negative (no)	Neutral (maybe)	Positive (yes)
Lower	Balanced / Mid	Higher
Outward/Outer	Equilibrium	Inward/Inner
Concrete	—	Abstract
Objective	Omni-jective	Subjective
Passive	Intermediate	Active
Figure	Interface	Ground

Comments on this table are as follows:

- **ORDINAL — NEUTRAL — CARDINAL:** In the first row, the header row, the words used in mathematics and in the Michaelian teachings are shown. The essence of Ordinality in mathematics is the *sequence* of numbers, as in First, Second, Third ...; the essence of Cardinality in mathematics is the *meaning* of numbers, as in Oneness, Twoness, Threeness ...; the essence of Neutral is zero and infinity, nothing and everything, undifferentiated and all inclusive. The words in the columns below these words are to some extent or another synonymous, or they are specific instantiations of the general principles of Ordinal — Neutral — Cardinal.
- **YIN — CHI/QI — YANG:** In the second row, these Chinese words are the conceptual equivalent words that have found their way into the Occidental world and consciousness.
- **FEMININE — ANDROGYNOUS — MASCULINE:** One should set aside cultural stereotypes for women and men for these words shown in the third row. Gender distinctions have some correlation with the archetypal principles, and there has been a division of labor between males and females during the evolution of the human species, generally speaking, but one should not read too much into it in the case of any specific person. This factor shows up in the Michaelian teachings as masculinity or femininity ascribed to each of the Roles according to cultural norms.
- **NEGATIVE — NEUTRAL — POSITIVE:** The fundamental principles that are instantiated as positive and negative electric ions, and as the north and south poles of a magnet, are also instantiated as personality traits that result in attraction and repulsion between people. The fundamental, primordial conceptual dichotomy NO and YES, with MAYBE in between. This is shown in the fourth row of the table. This terminology shows up in the Michaelian teachings as the Negative and Positive Poles of each Overleaf, but there is a general application to other physical and personality phenomena.

- LOWER — BALANCED — HIGHER: Regarding these three words shown in the fifth row, in the Michaelian teachings these are generally applied to the seven Centers (and the seven planes and the seven levels within the planes). The reason for this might be because of the correlation of Centers with chakras, which are plexi located on the physical body from low to high. There is also the analogy of “energy vibrations” from low to high that are typically metaphorically associated with the Centers and chakras. A “Balanced” psyche has access to all Centers at will, and uses the chakras appropriately.
- OUTWARD — EQUILIBRIUM — INWARD: The sixth row shows that there is a world outside of us and there is a world inside of us and this fact has a correlation with Ordinality and Cardinality. The boundary between inner and outer worlds can be regarded as the Neutral. By the way, the Neutral is also polarized in the sense that, from the Ordinal point of view, the boundary *separates* inner and outer realms; from the Cardinal point of view, the boundary *joins* them. By the way, the Gurdjieffian meditation-concentration that he called “Self-remembering” involves holding both outer and inner reality in one’s awareness at the same time. The tendency of the undisciplined mind is to flip back and forth between the two, but when one’s awareness is ‘in the zone’, then one transcends the dichotomy of inner–outer, and ascends to the next higher level: awareness of awareness *per se*.
- CONCRETE — ABSTRACT: Examples of this dichotomy are: the tangible and the intangible, the quantitative and the qualitative, the body and the mind, the universe and the laws of the universe, being and doing — these are words and concepts that instantiate Ordinal and Cardinal in various realms of the reality system in which we find our consciousness embedded.
- OBJECTIVE — OMNI-JECTIVE — SUBJECTIVE: This row of words is predicated on the understanding that the cosmos is *derived* from “Consciousness”, aka Tao, aka the Omni-jective, aka “the Mind of God”. By “derived”, I mean that Consciousness makes and breaks distinctions in its belief system, value system, and behavior system, and these distinctions are all there is to the cosmos. Each distinctive cell in the cosmos partakes of the being and the doing of the ultimate Consciousness. The essence of the concept of Consciousness *per se* is that there is awareness of a dichotomy between the objective world out there, and the subjective world in here; they are separated by a boundary; the self is like a cell with an *inside* and an *outside*, as in a previous row in this table. This is the primordial distinction where/when the One produces the Two. In terms of Consciousness, the One (omni-jective) becomes self-aware (subjectivity) and other-aware (objectivity). This row provides words for where/when the One perceives that there is a Self and a not-Self or another Self.
- PASSIVE — INTERMEDIATE — ACTIVE: These words are just another example of how Ordinality and Cardinality manifest in certain instantiations. Yarbro even used –Passivity and –Activity as names for the Negative Poles of Ordinality and Cardinality respectively. In the Michaelian teachings, it is usually applied to Body Types and Personality traits; thus, the Overleaf System in general.
- FIGURE — INTERFACE — GROUND: These are not words used in the Michaelian teachings in the context of Polarity, but the concept embodied in these words is important for understanding Ordinality and Cardinality. In other sections of this *History* book, I discuss the “Taijitu Tango Principle” and the “Cardinal/Ordinal Ratio”, COR. The general principle is that each “thing” is known by contrast with its opposite; nothing exists *per se*; everything exists as “figure” (what it appears to be) and “ground” (what it appears to not be). I also refer to this concept as *content* versus *context*. The “interface” is the boundary that *separates* reciprocal conjugates, or *joins* them, depending on your perspective on what the boundary does; either one’s interpretation and perspective is that the boundary *connects*, or that it *disconnects*, the figure and the ground. The former is the Cardinal perspective; the latter is the Ordinal perspective. The cosmos is derived *entirely* from point-of-view = the Tao experiencing Itself *as if* it were not Itself = the magic show that we call existence is ‘smoke and mirrors’ all the way down and all the way up. This is discussed at length in my book *Chapter 42: Tao’s Template of First Principles*.

Axis and Axes

These words, “Axis” and “Axes”, have been used numerous times in previous sections and chapters of this *History* book, referring to the Attributes of Overleaves. Recall that the Axis Attributes are named Action, Inspiration, Expression, and Assimilation. Recall that three of the Axis Attributes have Cardinal and Ordinal

Poles, such that there is Cardinal and Ordinal Action, Cardinal and Ordinal Inspiration, Cardinal and Ordinal Expression. Recall that Assimilation is Neutral: it does not have Polarity. This section is about Axis Polarities. The information herein is important because it introduces an additional type of Axis Polarity, not generally recognized by Michaelian students.

These two words, Axis and Axes, showed up in the original Michaelian group transcriptions in early 1975. Yarbro was not a member of the original Michaelian group, but she did have possession of these transcripts. However, she never used these terms in her published books. Louise and Leslie Briggs, members of the original Michaelian group in 1974 and 1975, also had possession of the transcripts, and they used the Axis terminology in their channeling sessions in the early 1980s. From the Briggs group the terms passed into the wider Michael community via a couple of its members, José Stevens and JP Van Hulle — they wrote books that used these terms. Other channels who were friends of Stevens and Van Hulle in the Bay Area also learned about Axes. Finally, Shepherd Hoodwin, borrowing from the Stevens and Van Hulle books, also used these terms in his book *The Journey of Your Soul*. Thus, the terminology has become familiar to Michaelian teachings students in general. We will see below that these terms are used to refer to phenomena in the Michaels' cosmology that have to do with a specific type of Polarity in the structure of the Overleaf System.

The first appearance of the terminology is found in the following Q&A exchange. For context, note that this is shortly after the Positive and Negative Poles of the Overleaves were introduced and discussed in late 1974 and early 1975.

We asked for an SRG on ER — Perseveration, Self-destruction, Late Young Scholar, a Skeptic?

What you see here are Overleaves in conflict, and you are right that this man is currently transitioning the cycles [from Young to Mature]. He is a Seventh Level Young Scholar. The most horrendous conflict lies in the Goal-Mode Axis, that of Growth [Goal] against, yes, Perseveration [Mode]. This has held him back from acknowledging understanding that has come about in his studies. This is a Skeptic, yes, but his Chief Feature is not Self-destruction — that is far too strong. The man is basically Impatient, but appears on a self-destructive bent now to you, primarily because of his steadfast refusal to listen to the inner call. [SJC, 09 January 1975]

Here is mention of the Polarity between two Overleaf categories: “the Goal-Mode Axis”. My book *The Tao of Personality*, identifies Goal as the Ordinal Pole and Mode as the Cardinal Pole on the Action Axis of the Overleaf categories. The book also identifies Attitude as the Ordinal Pole and Center as the Cardinal Pole on the Expression Axis. The book also identifies Chief Feature as the Ordinal Pole and Role as the Cardinal Pole on the Inspiration Axis. Finally, it identifies Age/Level as the Neutral Overleaf category, completing this Septenary. Thus, the Law of Seven applies to the Overleaf categories. Thus, the forty-nine Overleaves when shown in a grid of boxes on a Chart have a symmetry of Attributes on both the horizontal and vertical axes of the Chart.

There is another mention of the Goal-Mode Axis in a subsequent session. Although the phrase is not used, the principle applies:

Do you now have the feeling for the fact that in most souls not acquainted with a teaching that the Mode stands forever as a barrier between the Positive and Negative Poles of the Goal? No matter how exalted that Goal may be, this principle stands between all Modes and Goals. We would say so, yes. [SJC, 16 January 1975]

A similar conflict on the Goal-Mode Action Axis was mentioned in *MFM*, page 110, where Growth Goal and Repression Mode create internal struggles in a Personality. Similar statements can be made about the Inspiration (Chief Feature and Role) and Expression (Attitude and Center) Axes of Overleaf categories. Because of these Axis polarities, Overleaves can abrade internally (with oneself) as well as externally (with other people). All such situations and many more are covered in Part Four of my *Tao of Personality* book.

In addition to the Axes of Overleaf categories (Goal versus Mode, Chief Feature versus Role, Attitude versus Center), there is the Axis of complementary Overleaves. This type is rather better known to Michaelian teachings Students because it is obvious from the oppositeness of the names of the Overleaves: Acceptance versus Rejection Goals, Passion versus Repression Modes, Realist versus Cynic Attitudes, and so on. This phenomenon is hinted at in some passages from the original Michaelian group:

... we would sometimes applaud a little Skepticism on the part of this cadre's Idealists. [SJC, 25 January 1975]

Should I [who have a Goal of Acceptance] be [concerned about what other people think or feel]?

[Soleal:] It would be better for [spiritual] growth if you were not [concerned]. Rejection comes from negative spaces and who cares? I can do without false affection [–Ingratiation] given from bad spaces, and so can you if

you are rejected, and it will have nothing to do with your spaces, only the one doing the rejection. Unless you fall so far from the [+Agape] path that you commit some unsociable act, that is highly unlikely given your Overleaves. [Old Priest, Acceptance, Observation, Spiritualist, Intellectual, Impatience.] Those souls with their Mode in Passion–Repression Axis tend to be more cyclic [bipolar] than any others, but depression is not limited to this Axis. I can remember slipping down [from Power Mode] into an extremely Cautious [Mode] space not long ago myself, and for a few hours it was a damned good retreat. [SJC, 01 February 1975]

I'd like to ask about the Negative Pole of Acceptance (Rejection). [SJC, 01 February 1975]

So here we see another type of Axis, different from the previous type, that exists between Ordinal and Cardinal Overleaves within the same Overleaf category. The questioner had a Goal of Acceptance, on the other side of the Expression Axis from the Goal of Rejection. Similar problems can be created by Overleaves in opposition on the Action Axis, such as Realist versus Cynic Attitudes, or Spiritualist versus Stoic Attitudes. Typically there is friction between two people who are on the opposite sides of any kind of Axis, especially when the Negative Poles are involved.

Mentioned for the first time in the original Michaelian group is what came to be called “sliding” in the post-original Michaelian group Michaelian teachings. However, two other words were used above for this phenomenon: a) there was the “cyclic” swing between the Passion Mode and the Repression Mode on the Inspiration Axis; b) there was the “slipping” from Power Mode to Caution Mode on the Expression Axis. One can use this phenomenon consciously to mitigate Negative Pole manifestations, as explained in *The Michael Handbook* (1986), page 286. It is also explained in *MMFM* (1986) page 211, under the name “hands-across”.

A couple of weeks later, the same subject came up again:

Dick stated that he was surprised by his painting ability, that years ago he could not paint that well. He seems to be improving all the time. He wonders if he has been given the gift of higher expression by the teacher, or wonders if the energy of the group has anything to do with this.

The gift of higher expression is there, but you are wrong about the source. You see, when the action occurs in Real Space and is work of the Essence, then it always takes place at the most Positive Pole of the Axis. When you paint now, you not only have moments of Passion [Mode], but hours. This can be sustained now because you also see the results, not from [your usual] Repression [Mode], but from Passion... [SJC, 12 February 1975]

Dick was in the Repression Mode, which is on the Ordinal side of an Inspiration Axis, so the Cardinal Pole of the same Axis is the Passion Mode. This is the same type of Axis as mentioned in the preceding passage.

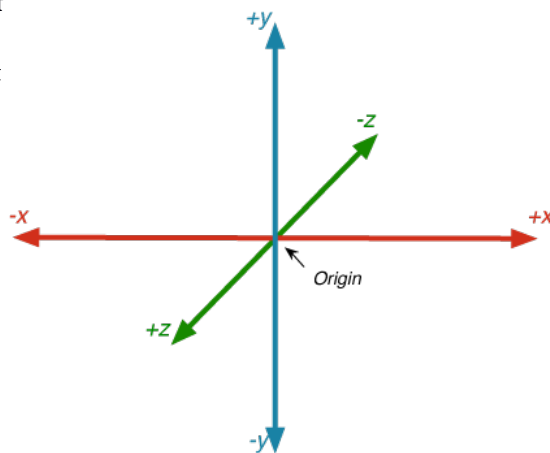
In the following passage taken from the same session, there is another mention of the rub between opposite Polarities on an Axis:

At this point, many felt the presence of Soleal, and asked him if he wished to speak.

[Soleal:] The teacher [Michael] has only begun to stress the importance of polarity to you now and the use of the most positive [Cardinal] pole of the Axes for the [spiritual] Work. But it is simply astonishing to me the progress that has been made here. I would be the first to admit that I did not think that it would be possible, given the orientation of your world. It is true that whole worlds are victims also of their Overleaves, and often this serves to prevent any upward swing for many centuries — more like millennia for the most part. Ours is an [Ordinal] Intellectually Centered world, but there is more yin than yang, thus the cold cerebration has been modified by the feminine essence. Yours is a [Ordinal] Moving Centered world, with far more yang [masculine] than yin [feminine]. But what is seen now is what we can only call the vibration of potential — in other words, the chance for change — and this is being manifested primarily in the youth of your society. They no longer feel duty-bound to cling to the primary Mode manifested by your world, that of [Ordinal] Perseveration [Mode], and are now moving into the upward spiral [into Cardinal Aggression Mode]. [SJC, 12 February 1975]

This statement was made at a time in the Michaelian teachings when it was said that a person could change their Overleaves. Soleal here seems to be recommending that a person with an Ordinal Overleaf make efforts to switch to a Cardinal Overleaf. In subsequent Michael groups, starting with *Messages from Michael* in 1979, this idea was changed to getting out of the Negative Pole and into the Positive Pole of whatever Overleaf one may have. The existence of Positive and Negative Poles of the Overleaves had just been revealed in the preceding couple of months, and they did not appear on an Overleaf Chart until the next month, March. The rub between Overleaves on the opposite Pole of an Axis is of course exacerbated by Negative Poles.

The members of the original Michaelian group did not get very far into an understanding of Polarity. The original Michaelian group collapsed down to a core group about two weeks after this session, unable to surmount the conflicts within their own Overleaves and conflicts with other people's Overleaves, particularly Negative Poles of Overleaves. The understanding of the beneficial uses of Polarities blossomed in subsequent Michael groups, and was recorded in Michaelian teachings books for our continued benefit.



The subject of Polarity in the Overleaf System is examined in considerable detail in other of my books, *The Tao of Personality* and *The Tao of Relationships*.

Be that as it may, before we move on, I want to introduce the reader to a proposed explanation for the selection of that term, Axis, by the Michaels. This will be brief.

I suggest that, like the terms, Ordinal and Cardinal, "Axis" is an allusion to mathematics. Mathematicians have a way of graphically illustrating physics phenomena, such as motions, as vectors or paths on a three dimensional grid, with a horizontal "x" axis, a vertical "y" axis that is perpendicular to the "x" axis, and a "z" axis that is perpendicular to both the "x" and "y" axes. (This is called the Cartesian coordinate system, named after the French mathematician who developed it, René Descartes; you can read more about that here: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cartesian_coordinate_system.) Typically, this is shown with the "x" axis as a one-dimensional line going left and right; the "y" axis is shown as a line going up and down, crossing the "x" axis at the "origin" and perpendicular to it; thus the "y" axis defines a two-dimensional plane when added to the "x" axis; the "z" axis is shown as a line that crosses the origin perpendicular to the "x" and "y" axes, thus defining a three-dimensional object in space. The way to show three dimensionality on a two-dimensional sheet is typically done per the graphic above. When the axes are used to show numbers, the origin is usually set at zero. In that case, notice that there are "positive" (+1, +2, +3 ... > infinity) and "negative" (-1, -2, -3 ... > minus infinity) directions. If the origin point is set to the number 1, then the "positive" or Cardinal direction shows whole numbers (2, 3, 4 ... > infinity) and the "negative" or Ordinal direction shows fractions (1/2, 1/3, 1/4 ... > zero). In terms of the Overleaf System, this latter scheme makes more sense. One reason I say this is that the Cardinal planes are holistic or unitary, as are whole numbers, whereas the Ordinal planes are fragmentary, as in fractions or pieces of unity.

The above paragraph is an introduction to the analogous meaning of Positive/Cardinal and Negative/Ordinal on my version of the Overleaf Chart; the three Axes are One-dimensional Action, Two-dimensional Inspiration, and Three-dimensional Expression. You can think of the "origin" on the Cartesian coordinate system, when set to 1, as the Neutral Assimilation Process/Aspect; this is my preferred way to relate the Cartesian coordinate system to the Overleaf Chart.

The following table is another way of showing how the Cartesian coordinate system is analogous to the structure and features of the Overleaf Chart. It does not suit my purpose in this *Study Papers* book to explain all of this table here; that happens in my book *The Tao of Personality*. This table serves as a teaser for that book, which contains a thorough explanation of the structure and meaning of the Overleaf System, an explanation of how the Overleaf System is the product of a logical, mathematical, and physics algorithm. Compare this table with Table 2Bb above and you will see some of the same words used by the Michaels as synonyms for Ordinal and Cardinal.

Table 2Bc — PROCESS/ASPECT SYSTEM and TIME/SPACE GEOMETRY							
AXIAL	ACTION		INSPIRATION		EXPRESSION		ASSIMILATION
CARTESIAN	"X"		"X" + "Y"		"X" + "Y" + "Z"		ORIGIN
DIMENSION	ONE-DIMENSIONAL (1-D)		TWO-DIMENSIONAL (2-D)		THREE-DIMENSIONAL (3-D)		PAN-DIMEN. (P-D)
MOTION	TRANSLATION		VIBRATION		ROTATION		SCALAR
MONADIC	-ORDINAL-	+CARDINAL+	-ORDINAL-	+CARDINAL+	-ORDINAL-	+CARDINAL+	=NEUTRAL=
DIRECTIONALITY	BACKWARD	FORWARD	DOWNWARD	UPWARD	OUTWARD	INWARD	HYPER-COMPLEX
PROCESS/TIME	TERMINATION	ORINATION	INVOLUTION	EVOLUTION	ANALYSIS	SYNTHESIS	COMBINATION
ASPECT/SPACE	GOAL	MODE	SHADOW	ROLE	ATTITUDE	CENTER	WORLDVIEW

Comments on this table are as follows:

- **AXIAL:** The first row shows the names of the Axial Attributes. These were not known to the original Michaelian group; they were first revealed in *MF*.
- **CARTESIAN:** The second row shows the way that mathematicians designate three mutually-perpendicular "axes" in the Cartesian coordinate system. The meaning of the three "Axes" shown in the first row is precisely an allusion to this mathematical system.
- **DIMENSIONALITY:** The third row shows another way to understand the relationship of the Axial Attributes shown in the first row and the Cartesian coordinate system shown in the second row.
- **MOTION:** The fourth row shows the type of motion in objective space/time that correlates with the items in the three rows higher than the fourth row. The Axial Attributes are actually "motions" in subjective time-space that correlate to these objective motions in space/time.
- **MONADIC:** The fifth row shows the Monadic Attributes. Add the Axial Attributes and we have the Septenarian Attributes.
- **DIRECTIONALITY:** The sixth row shows the directions of the Cartesian coordinates in the graph, but with a little thought, one should see that they are a metaphor for the characteristics of the Monadic Attributes.
- **PROCESS/TIME:** The seventh row shows the names of the Processes, aka functions of time.
- **ASPECTS/SPACE:** The eighth row shows the names of the Aspects, aka functions of space. Each personality Trait is at the intersection of a Process and an Aspect, so each Trait is a type of "motion" in subjective time-space, even as the Cartesian coordinate system is used to graph motion in objective space/time. The point is that subjective and objective domains are joined by mathematics.

Conclusion of Chapter 2B

The original Michaelian group transcriptions contain ample information about the Law of Three — Ordinal, Cardinal, Neutral. However, there is no presentation about why there are three Ordinal and three Cardinal, which is necessary to fulfill the Law of Seven. This had to wait for Quinn Yarbrow to ask the right question and get answers from Sarah Chambers, and then publish it. That one-paragraph answer says:

Seven is the closest thing we know of to a "universal" number. It expresses not only the three aspects of duality, but the resolution of the dualities. It is thesis, antithesis, and synthesis. In the dualities, or polarities, there are those that are concerned with Expression, Action, and Inspiration, and the seventh is Assimilation. Consider Expression, which makes things accessible, either through the act of creating things, building things, and shaping things with its higher polarity, which is the realization of the thing built, created, or shaped. In Action, there is the action itself, the exploration, the extension, and the cohesion of the results of the exploration and

extension. In Inspiration there is the lifting up, and the pursuit of that beyond what has been lifted up. And then, there is the contemplation and understanding of the dualities in a single experience. [MFM, p. 42]

So what is the meaning of “the three aspects of duality”. The answer given above is obscure.

However, there is a foreshadowing of the three aspects of duality that came to be known as Action, Inspiration, and Expression in that there are three types of yin/yang mentioned in the original Michaelian group transcriptions. The first, which belongs to Action, is that there is a “positive” and “negative” duality, which translates into “yes” versus “no” action. The second, which belongs to Inspiration, is that there is a “higher” versus “lower” duality. The third, which belongs to Expression, is that there is an “inner” versus “outer” duality. These are explained in detail in my books *Chapter 42* and *The Tao of Personality*.





PRINCIPLES

This chapter is the product of a search for the word principles **and its derivatives and synonyms** in the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group channeling sessions. This word does not represent a significant component of the Michaelian teachings. However, there are good reasons to discuss the subject in this *Study Papers* book: 1) the subject came up numerous times during the original Michaelian group; 2) students can presumably benefit from having the mentions conveniently collected and commented all in one place; 3) some interesting things were said about the subject; 4) the subject is related to a number of other components of the Michaelian teachings that are considered to be significant; 5) even the superficial aspects of our lives are governed by fundamental principles; they are pervasive in human psychology and sociology and spirituality — subjects covered extensively in this book — so it behooves us to have a working knowledge of them.

The word principles is not capitalized in this chapter or other chapters of this *Study Papers* book because it has no special meaning in the Michaelian teachings; it is not a Michaelian jargon word that needs a definition apart from its use in the common vernacular.

This chapter is one of many that discusses a particular tool that the Michaels recommend if they are serious about advancing on their spiritual path; refer to the chapter “Tools” for a complete accounting.

This chapter is one of many in this book that focuses on a psychological component of the Michaelian teachings as found in original Michaelian group transcriptions, rather than on a spiritual component, as so many other chapters in this book do. Psychological components of the Michaelian teachings are usually either a positive to be cultivated or a negative to be mitigated; both are amenable to psychotherapeutic techniques. // Obviously, _____ is a negative to be eschewed / positive to be cultivated. // In the next section, you will see that the Michaels use the word with both a negative and positive connotation. // The Michaelian version of psychology is not to be confused with the popular psychology of the self-improvement movement, those that do not have a spiritual core or perspective. Rather, the Michaelian psychotherapeutic path (aimed at improving psychological health) is a beneficial precursor to the spiritual path (aimed at improving soul health). To skip the former but attempt the latter is referred to as “spiritual bypassing”. This is discussed at length on such websites as >https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spiritual_bypass<. To skip mitigating one’s psychological issues and attempt to go straight to enlightenment usually proves to be problematic.

Definition of Principles

So what is meant by **template**? The online Merriam Webster online dictionary definition is: **Wikipedia has an article that provides a definition and a description, as follows (underlined words are my emphasis):**

Principles per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

The following extracts from original Michaelian group transcriptions are Q&A exchanges, where an original Michaelian group member asks a question (or makes a comment), and the Michaels provide an answer. **This is a subject that benefits by division into subsections. These extracts are presented in the chronological order in which they were given.** As is my custom, I usually provide some explanatory comments following the question or answer. Underlined words are my emphasis, to draw attention to what it is that I comment on. Sometimes I embed words or phrases [in brackets] that I believe help to clarify the question or the answer. Numerous study papers related to this chapter are to be found among my comments.

Concluding Comments on Principles





PSYCHE

This chapter is the product of a search for the word “psyche” in the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group channeling sessions. This word does not apply to a significant component of the Michaelian teachings. So why did I research and write about it?

The Michaels said that “We are guilty of some semantic ambiguity at times...” (27 March 1974), and while working on this book I have found this to be the case. One of the ambiguities that I noticed has to do with the definitions of the words “soul”, “psyche”, and “essence” — the Michaels used all three during the original Michaelian group in a somewhat interchangeable way. I have chapters on each of those words, wherein I attempt to mitigate the ambiguity and define them more exactly. If we were to graph each word as a circle, and show them in a so-called “Venn Diagram”, would some or all of the circles be nested or overlap or not overlap or what? This is the way an engineer/scientist/philosopher (*moi*) thinks, and otherwise attempts to resolve quibbles about semantic ambiguities. In other words, we like to solve intellectual puzzles. To some extent the meaning can be parsed based on context, but — spoiler alert — the ambiguity remains in the Michaels’ statements. That leaves me free to offer my distinct definitions, based on extraneous (non-Michaelian) sources. My definitions limit the “psyche” to the product of human brain functioning interfacing with the soul, the “soul” being the part of human experiences that survives the end of the functioning of the human brain, and the “essence” as

The word “psyche” is not capitalized in this chapter or other chapters of this *Study Papers* book because it has no special meaning in the Michaelian teachings; it is not a Michaelian jargon word that needs a definition apart from its use in the common vernacular.

Definition of Psyche

So what is meant by “psyche” in the common vernacular, not the Michaelian vernacular? Wikipedia has a definition and a description:

Introduction

In psychology, the psyche ... is the totality of the human mind, conscious and unconscious. Many thinkers, including Carl Jung, also include in this definition the overlap and tension between the personal and the collective elements in man. Psychology is the scientific or objective study of the psyche. The word has a long history of use in psychology and philosophy, dating back to ancient times, and represents one of the fundamental concepts for understanding human nature from a scientific point of view. The English word soul is sometimes used synonymously, especially in older texts.

Etymology

The basic meaning of the Greek word ψυχή (*psyche*) was “life”, although unsupported, some have claimed it is derived from the verb ψύχω (*psycho*, “to blow”). Derived meanings included “spirit”, “soul”, “ghost”, and ultimately “self” in the sense of “conscious personality” or “psyche”.

Ancient psychology

The idea of the psyche is central to the philosophy of Plato. Scholars translate the Platonic conceptualization of the term as “soul” in the sense that he believed that it is immortal. In his [book] *Phaedo*, Plato has Socrates give four arguments for the immortality of the soul and life after death following the separation of the soul from the body. Plato’s Socrates also states that after death the Psyche is better able to achieve wisdom and experience the Platonic forms since it is unhindered by the body.

The Greek philosopher Aristotle wrote an influential treatise on the psyche, called in Greek Περὶ Ψυχῆς (*Peri Psyches*), in Latin *De Anima* and in English *On the Soul*. In this work, he used the concept of the soul to explain certain functions. Since — for him — the soul is motion, it needs an explanatory principle for bodily motion.

Aristotle's theory of the "three souls (psyches)" (vegetal, animal, and rational) would rule the field of psychology until the 19th century. Prior to Aristotle, a number of Greek writings used the term psyche in a less precise sense. In late antiquity, Galenic medicine developed the idea of three "spirits" (*pneuma*) corresponding to Aristotle's three souls. The *pneuma psychikon* corresponded to the rational soul. The other two *pneuma* were the *pneuma physicon* and the *pneuma zoticon*.

Students of the Gurdjieff and Michaelian teachings might equate these three psyche/pneuma with the Moving Center, the Emotional Center, and the Intellectual Center; I do. There is also a correlation with the three "bodies" of esoteric philosophy: the physical body, the astral body, and the mental body; refer to the chapter "Bodies, Subtle" for the whole story.

Cognitive Psychology

The word "mind" is preferred by cognitive scientists to "psyche". The mind is a set of cognitive faculties including consciousness, perception, thinking, judgment, language, and memory. It is usually defined as the faculty of an entity's thoughts and consciousness. It holds the power of imagination, recognition, and appreciation, and is responsible for processing feelings and emotions, resulting in attitudes and actions.

[>[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Psyche_\(psychology\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Psyche_(psychology))< — retrieved 03 April 2023]

This tells me that the concept of psyche is ambiguous outside of whatever the Michaels have to say about it.

Psyche per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

The following extracts from original Michaelian group transcriptions are Q&A exchanges, where an original Michaelian group member asks a question (or makes a comment), and the Michaels provide an answer. This is [not] a subject that would benefit by division into subcategories, as some subjects do. **These extracts are [not] presented in the chronological order in which they were given, even though this is not a subject where there was a development or evolution of a specific revelation of a facet of the Michaelian teachings, as was often the case with the original Michaelian group.** As is my custom, I often provide some explanatory comments following the question or answer. Underlined words are my emphasis, to draw attention to what it is that I comment on. Sometimes I embed words or phrases [in brackets] that I believe help to clarify the question or the answer.

[Soleal:] Any time you communicate with me, there must be silence in your psyche. [undated mid 1973]

The "monkey mind" is always full of "roof-brain chatter" (>https://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/roof-brain_chatter<). In this case, the word refers to the human mind, through which thoughts typically flow; this case psyche is not referring to a spiritual soul.

The same can be said about the next instance:

Dick: I would like more information on troubled souls.

When we speak of troubled souls, we speak of a clouding of reason leading to disintegration of the functioning psyche. [20 October 1973]

Refer to the chapter "Troubled Souls" for more about that. There you will see that the phrase refers to a person, not the spiritual part of a person that survives death. Therefore I regard the use of the word soul here as misleading; it only refers to the mind.

Gene: I would like comments on energies used by various energy Centers.

All of this energy is psychic energy. Imagine a superconductor with many terminals, each representing a different power drain. If one of these users or consumers is utilizing massive amounts of power, there will be a corresponding loss in the other areas, occasionally even short circuits and blown fuses. The power that energizes the psyche is all the same type, or rather, the same grade of electromagnetic radiation. There is no refinement from one Center to the other until the powers of transmutation become yours to utilize; then this energy becomes centralized — channeled, so to speak. [27 December 1973]

Richard: Did I establish contact while in Europe with a higher level? Will they try again?

Hopefully, if you do not run from it.

Richard: Is it important?

It is very important. It could be if you follow it.

Richard: Does it threaten my life? Was my life threatened? It's scary.

It is scary, yes. No! It involves your psyche. It also involves your ego. [17 September 1974]

Much more can be said. Most of you have Tape Loops of agreeability going for you. Your behavior is stylized and rigid. In certain situations, the timidity is especially pronounced when the person who needs confronting is in an Exalted [Cardinal] Role [Sage, Priest, King]. We would see you looking at this in the psychic mirror. Progress is never made by timid people — only by those who are strong enough to resist the pressures exerted upon their psyche by those Mechanical Men around them. As long as you allow those around you to dictate your mood of behavior to you, you will remain entrenched in the fixed Tape Loops and there will be no progress. [21 September 1974]

Marty shared her experience about her separation from her husband James. She asked if James was heading toward the teaching for the first time. She shared some material that had been received on Sunday and asked if James had gone past what Michael had said Sunday.

We spoke before of the dichotomy in this man's psyche. This is perhaps the most startling example of his ambivalence. This, of course, comes from that which would seek in this man. The Mid-Cycle [Fourth Level] Mature Soul is "ripe" for the teaching, but unfortunately, in too many, there is the constant conflict of interests brought on by their perceptions of the world. The conflicts he is now experiencing are not unusual. It is still possible that he will resolve within himself and then seek. This also means that he must not burn the bridges between his options. Leaving the door open is the best solution for him and, at many levels, he knows this. [26 November 1974]

This medium senses the division existing within the psyche of most of the [original Michaelian group] cadre, and it is the fight for survival. Only the ego needs to survive; the Essence "survives" already in eternity. Impatience, lack of trust, and a stubborn clinging to the "I am not psychic" belief hold you all from experiencing truth, as it is available to all. [28 December 1974]

Concluding Comments on Psyche





② PSYCHEDELICS

It is no secret that in the 1960s and 1970s, especially in the Bay Area of California, the use of recreational psychedelics was common, both before and after their use was criminalized by the American federal government in the early 1970s. It is no secret that some members of the original Michaelian group, indulged in psychedelics as part of their spiritual quest, because that fact is recorded in the transcriptions that have become widely available, and published by the Center for Michael Teachings, Inc. Governmental authorities in many states in America, **in about the year 2010**, started the trend to reverse the situation by decriminalizing psychedelics, and the movement is spreading throughout the United States, mostly because the so-called “war on drugs” has proven to be counterproductive, and because some legitimate uses of psychedelics for mental health enhancement have been found.

In about the year 2000, before the states began to decriminalize their use, one of the founding original Michaelian group members commented to me on the use of marijuana in the original Michaelian group, saying that it was much less illegal then. He was not as concerned about the revelation that some original Michaelian group members were users as he was during the decades when it was very illegal. Regarding legal jeopardy, the statute of limitations applies to any still-living original Michaelian group members who might have used. Regarding potential embarrassment, the original Michaelian group members identified in the transcriptions as definite users are all deceased. Now that it is much more legal and much less stigmatized, I believe that it is ethical for me to write and publish this chapter, so as to give Michaelian students the ‘low-down’ on what the Michaels thought about ‘getting high’.

Psychedelics in the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

The following extracts from original Michaelian group transcriptions are Q&A exchanges, where an original Michaelian group member asks a question (or makes a comment), and the Michaels provide an answer. These extracts are presented in the chronological order in which they were given. As is my custom, I often provide some explanatory comments following the question or answer. Underlined words in the Michaels’ answers are my emphasis, to draw attention to what it is that I comment on. Sometimes I embed words or phrases [in brackets] that I believe help to clarify the question or the answer.

The use of psychedelics, particularly marijuana, was a component of the original Michaelian group from its beginning to its end. As an introduction to this section, I present an out-of-chronological-order question:

Does what we’re doing parallel the Eleusinian way of doing things?

The Eleusinian Mysteries were initiation ceremonies based at Eleusis in ancient Greece, held every year for the cult of Demeter and Persephone. Refer to https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eleusinian_Mysteries for an introduction. The central secret doctrine might be this: “One line of thought by modern scholars has been that the Mysteries were intended ‘to elevate man above the human sphere into the divine and to assure his redemption by making him a god and so conferring immortality upon him.’” Scholars believe that psychedelics were almost surely involved in the Eleusinian rituals. They were also one of the tools used by members of the original Michaelian group to reach altered, higher states of consciousness:

Richard: We took your advice and got some marijuana, as you suggested to us up at the lake [Tahoe]. Is this helping too?

[Tomas:] Not yet. [03 July 1973]

Tomas was the source of this recommendation to use marijuana, a couple of months before the Michaels appeared. So why would marijuana be recommended? Here is one reason:

Alice: Can marijuana help get in touch with emotions? Should I smoke it?

[Tomas:] Marijuana can help to get in touch with emotions. Yes, Alice, you need work there. [05 July 1973]

In later sessions it was said that Alice was an Intellectually-Centered Artisan, a Stoic in Submission and Caution — not a pattern known to foster emotional expression. Numerous times during the original Michaelian group, it was recommended to the original Michaelian group members that they get out of their heads (Intellectual Center) and into their hearts (Emotional Center), on the way to “Balance” (refer to the chapter by that name), on the way to the “Centers, Higher” (refer to the chapter by that name).

The use of psychedelics was not recommended for everyone, or to be a permanent device:

Dick: Question about marijuana.

Crutches are very necessary at your level. He (Tomas) was merely pointing out to you where the crutches are, not saying you no longer need the crutches.

The Michaels were the source of this statement, and subsequent statements. A metaphorical ‘crutch’ is no longer useful after one learns to metaphorically ‘walk’ further along their spiritual metaphorical ‘path’; refer to the chapter “Crutches” for more information about that subject.

Furthermore, there are risks involved in the use of psychedelics because, as every one knows, it is possible to have “a bad trip” — a negative experience:

Should Phyllis use it [marijuana]?

You could have some bad flashes. You are more in touch with your Emotional Center now. [17 August 1973]

One no longer needs marijuana after one learns to express one’s emotions, or learned whatever one needed to learn from the experience.

Psychedelics are not the only technique in the toolbox of liberation from the confines of ordinary consciousness:

Dick: Is fasting healthy?

Fasting when done properly leads to the liberated meditation. It produces the same state as marijuana if practiced long enough and diligently enough. [21 August 1973]

Refer to the chapters, “Fasting” and “Concentration and Meditation”, for more information about those liberating techniques. Refer to the chapter “Liberation” for more about that metaphor for spiritual growth.

Sarah: We were told when you meditate under grass [marijuana], you are concentrating. Richard asked if a mantra was better for him than marijuana. They answered that, for meditation, the mantra was better, but if you want to concentrate, then marijuana is better. They are different. [08 September 1973]

We do not have the session in which this information was recorded. In the early days of the original Michaelian group, Sarah and her husband Richard worked the Ouija board together, and likely sometimes did it outside of the group gatherings, and did not write down or tape record or typewrite the session for general distribution. This appears to be an occasion in which she verbally shared with the group one instance of such a private channeling.

The point of the above and the below is that psychedelics can enhance and augment and enrich other consciousness-raising practices:

Richard: I would like to ask if there is advice on how to turn things around in the right direction.

You are using Emotional Center as a psychic dumping ground. This is causing the energy Leak you are feeling now. The meditations, or more correctly concentrations, under marijuana result in good insights for you, if you will follow them out. [22 September 1973]

Refer to the chapter “Energy and Energy Leaks” for more information about that. Briefly, the Gurdjieffian and Michaelian recommendation is to respond to life situations and conditions from the appropriate Center, or the ‘energy’ of the Centers is inefficient and ineffective.

Dick: I seem to have come on a realization that I’ve undergone crystallization in Personality, and that is why everything is so fixed and seemingly unchangeable. I’m under constant internal attack by Personality, and that is why I can’t seem to listen to any new information and transform it into anything worthwhile. I was hoping for a miracle that would change things. Also, grass [marijuana] will do it, but it just does it temporarily. That’s why I can’t seem to react to or feel any new possibilities.

Richard: I had a whole evening one time, on grass meditation, on mind-to-mind communication — that this is the way to communicate with people: You don’t apologize, you don’t bother to explain everything; you just go back and forth with direct statements. You don’t get emotionally involved — you are dealing on a higher level. [02 October 1973]

Psychedelics can help to “liberate” the person from a habitual way of seeing things, as stated previously, but this particular passage is another indication that marijuana can provoke a significant insight, but it might not

be a permanent solution to defects and deficiencies in the human psyche, even though for some people they can be a temporary crutch or provide a breakthrough.

Such is the case in the following series of Q&A exchanges:

Dick: I have a complaint and comment and a question. I don't seem to be able to change knowledge into Being and I don't feel any different.

You do approach "being" under the influence of marijuana. This is an incontrovertible message about the pace of your life. Marijuana slows the responses to physical phenomena and heightens emotional response to all experiences; you feel the music instead of hearing it. The five primitive senses belong to False Personality. They can be compared to margarine — they will never be butter [True Personality], no matter how you color them or package them.

Dick: I was out to dinner with old friends the other night and I did not enjoy it so much, as I thought they were not on the spiritual path, and I may be wasting my time. Then, I think, if I'd gone stoned, I would have enjoyed it. It's like my Personality jams the personal relationships and shuts enjoyment out. I know I'm not on the right path when I feel my life should be over, etc.

Richard: I feel I got information in another session that you can do the same thing within yourself as you can under marijuana.

Dick: I've been working on this for years and there seems just no way to get rid of Personality. I think when I'm stoned, I'll be able to do it, but as soon as I become unstoned, I can't. What Gurdjieff says is, it's a step-by-step process in which a Work "I" becomes dominant over the other "I's" in Personality and is always working on this problem.

Dick: There's this problem not being able to go around stoned all the time. A person might be able to meet someone. Unless I was stoned, I'd get no signals. My Personality is turned off to that.

Richard: Is it possible to be high without the use of grass?

You tell us, Richard, is it?

Richard: With meditation, I am close.

Then perhaps, for you, it will be possible. It does not matter how the liberation comes about. If it requires marijuana for a while, then so be it.

Dick: As I measure and have the ashes of life and see life as a bore, I know I'm not on the path. Progress would be more joyous and pleasurable and there would be a love to toil. I see also that to sit around stoned all day is not the way either. [06 October 1974]

Many months later it was revealed that Dick was in the Repression Mode; hence his frustration at feeling numb and down all the time, as expressed in this series of Q&A exchanges. Having met Dick on several occasions around the turn of the Millennium, I can personally say that he was still Repressed. Richard was said to be in the Caution Mode, which is also somewhat antithetical to liberated expression of Essence.

John was asked to concentrate and everyone else was asked to concentrate on his dream without having him verbalize it.

John's dream is highly symbolic of an incident that happened to him when he was three years old. Hypnosis would help recover the incident; marijuana might also. [17 October 1973]

Liberation of Essence via psychedelics is one thing, but liberation of repressed and forgotten traumatic memories is another. Both are alleged to be beneficial, with or without psychedelics.

Ralph: I have the impression that within our group, the articulation of the teachings emphasizes the static, the intellectual, and the hierarchical. Is this primarily a distortion arising from my biases or the group's or the languages? Or is this an accurate transmission of the teachings? Please comment.

In the beginning of this group, the primary concern was in the development of the belief system in the language necessary to explain it to each other and to oneself. This is a necessary step in the formation of any group, but in most, becomes a barrier toward further growth, and eventually becomes the belief system itself. In this group, there has been evolution of a sort that now points toward continuance in growth. The possibility still exists, however, that you will continue to concern yourselves with the intellectual hierarchical aspects and neglect the spiritual, yes, but you do not have to. You can put this belief system to the 'acid test' and see if it works [leads toward transcendence]. Until you do this, yes, you are still trapped in the beginning stages. This is where most of the other belief systems remained throughout their existence, including the world's great religions. The concern remained hierarchical and primarily intellectual and never got off the ground spiritually. You are right, of course; you are trading one belief system for another; but there is a unity here that has not been before, and there is a trend toward integration that you are capable of verifying implicit within the [belief] system. [19 October 1974]

By "acid test" the Michaels were probably referring to the psychedelic method of blowing one's belief system 'out of the water':

The Acid Tests were a series of parties held by author Ken Kesey primarily in the San Francisco Bay Area during the mid-1960s, centered on the use of and advocacy for the psychedelic drug LSD, commonly known as "acid". LSD was not made illegal in California until October 6, 1966." [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Acid_Tests — retrieved 10 April 2023]

Refer to the chapter "Psychedelics" for more information. Taking them is one of the most effective and efficient ways to change a person's belief system. In fact, psychedelics often launch a person out of their intellectualism into spiritualism, and, as we see in this chapter, that was one of the goals that original Michaelian group members had for themselves, and that the Michaels were teaching them how to do.

The group is growing so large. Should we split up into smaller groups and perhaps have one big meeting a month?

It is good to have weekend meets, some to experiment with the source of your conversations this morning. It is helpful to meditate together while smoking the marijuana and also into the other drugs. It would be helpful to start this slowly with four or six people, and grow into it. [20 November 1973]

This was yet another instance where one practice, such as meditation, is paired with some other practice, such as marijuana, because of their synergistic effects for liberating the consciousness.

Another helpful psychotherapeutic and spiritual practice which was mentioned previously, hypnosis, makes another appearance in a session a few days later:

Shirley: How can hypnosis be used?

It can be used sometimes to effectively unblock those memories that your False Personality would prefer not to look at. Marijuana and other drugs of this type produce a similar result, but are sometimes obscured by interference as they propel you to the Astral level, and sometimes there is confusion there, especially with the stronger drugs such as mescaline (so) that you are not certain what is memory and what is new experience in another dimension. [29 November 1973]

Much of the whole psyche is hidden from the conscious mind, and that is not necessarily healthy, so hypnosis and marijuana can be revelatory. However, discernment is in order because of the possibility of a 'bad trip' on the Astral Plane.

Dick: How can we help others if we can't help ourselves? I would like to ask about spiritual materialism — that is, using the powers of the teaching to draw attention to myself. That is, using the teaching for ego gratification to get a bevy of females following me, like Robert. There is a conflict developing here.

Haven't you discovered yet that all things that are ego-gratifying have an element of delicious clandestine guilt attached? The ego seeks intrigue and adventure; the Essence does not. This is why the man Robert could play it straight. He had permission to have a female following and there was no guilt. There was also no ego-satisfaction. This is why he could not be seduced — seduction was not a suitable reward to him. We feel that this culture is amiss in not giving permission. Sometimes you must go and ask for it. The permission is symbolic, but sometimes in this culture, it must almost be literal. If marijuana was on sale at all corner stores, few would smoke it — at any rate, no more than smoke it now and a few would quit. [16 December 1973]

In the context of this chapter, I would say that the recommendation here is to have a realistic perception, not a romantic perception, of what psychedelics can and cannot do for augmenting a genuine transformation of consciousness. If the motivation to get high is from ego rather than from Essence, then it will come to no good. Fifty years later in America, when marijuana is on sale in corner stores, we have the opportunity to legally experiment with our intentions as well as with marijuana.

Dick: Is there a method I could use in order to experience out these political feelings that are no longer appropriate? Just simply hearing this does not do anything for me.

It is not as effective (as experiencing). The data must be processed and experienced emotionally. We feel that there are two approaches that you could now try, one with concentration under marijuana, the other would be regression through hypnosis. The person inducing the trance can always give over the questioning to someone more skilled. [19 March 1974]

This answer provides no new insights; it only includes stuff that has appeared in previous answers discussed above, namely: a preference for emotional experience rather than intellectual cognition, recovering subconscious impulses, concentration, marijuana, and hypnosis.

Is the work ethic a carry-over from a past life?

We would see it as one of the most tenacious barriers you must scale. In some instances, the man Robert [Burton] was right about this. We feel, however, that you should discharge your obligations made in good faith,

whether or not the respondents are in the teaching or not. Whoever is beyond this, we see no real obligations. We would see you pursuing some form of relaxation every day, even though this may at first seem like work for you. The relaxation obtained with the marijuana is all right. Just resting is all right, also. The penchant to “do” is part of Friction for the Ordinal Roles. [27 March 1974]

Years later, four “Pillars of Vitality” were revealed: True Work, True Play, True Study, and True Rest. For people on a spiritual path, it is vital to experience all of these on a semi-regular basis. Evidently, marijuana can help with True Rest. Marijuana “relaxes” the work ethic so that the Essence can break through that distraction from the spiritual path. Some anti-marijuana advocates claim that marijuana mitigates ambition, as if that were a bad thing, and per the Michaels that appears to be the case, but Essence has a different ambition from those of the Personality or the culture.

What about group use of marijuana during a meeting? [Would we] learn anything or just have a good time being high?

Several of you would find this valuable, yes. You would conceivably also have a good time. [08 May 1974]

Several of you might *not* find this valuable; psychedelics are not for everyone. And there is nothing wrong with just having a good time, on or off of marijuana.

Dick: Are my [marijuana] plants stoned?

No more so than rattlesnakes are perpetually toxic.

Dick: [psychedelic] Plant brings [the] ability to take physical [consciousness] to the Astral Plane.

What it does is to numb the Personality.

Dick: Question regarding the speeding up of spiritual growth.

We would be inclined to agree that the significant progress, when it comes, will be like an explosion when compared to the snail’s pace you are now experiencing.

There is some validity in the statement that the Personality and Essence must eventually “battle it out,” at least if progress is to be made on the Physical Plane, and this does not happen when entities [marijuana] that knock Personality out of the box are used, but those [psychedelic] crutches do a valuable service in that they allow you to glimpse the goal and make an intelligent decision about its worthiness as a full-time pursuit. [12 June 1974]

Refer to the chapter “Essence and Personality” for more about that dichotomy. Modern research on psychedelics finds that they have psychotherapeutic benefits for traumatized persons, that they have salubrious effects for regular folks facing death, and such. As of this writing, it appears that, in the long run, the benefits and detriments of psychedelics — their proper application — will be discovered and made known to medical practitioners, for the benefit of humankind.

Cheryl: Is that my task also?

[Your task is to focus] All of your efforts on one subject, preferably spiritual growth for a specific period, say twenty minutes at sunset. You may use the marijuana if you wish, but it is not imperative. Memories should be allowed to flow by, and you should examine them unemotionally. [03 July 1974]

Nothing new here; it is just a repetition of previous recommendations about disciplined concentration, augmented by marijuana, complete with a relaxed review of impressions.

Liz: I’d like to ask about my unreasonable fear of reptiles, dinosaurs, and snakes. (A suggestion was made by someone for her to try marijuana.)

This is an avenue that is open to you, Liz, to experience out the fear you once hid from, as you were in that cold room knowing that there were ritual snakes all over the grounds, and that you were powerless to escape, not so much from them as from your experience. Try this [marijuana]. We would advise that you do it soon. [29 September 1974]

This is yet another indication that psychedelics can uncover the subconscious reasons for irrationality.

Thaddeus: What would Michael suggest in work to further myself?

We have suggested that you meditate. We also suggest that for you, creative silence is something you might find valuable. This must be done with another student. Otherwise, it is not effective. Although you have been known to talk to yourself, you are much more inclined to do this when in the presence of others. You have a noisy head and must work to quiet it down. This is not unusual with your Overleaves, but as a student, you must choose to override it. Also, you can practice concentration, augmented [with psychedelics] or not. Also, for you, periodic fasting would be of great value. Spiritual food is what you crave, but the Personality demands

the substitute. If you can stand not to gratify the body's demands, the hold of the Personality will weaken. The movement you are now doing is good — don't stop. In fact, you could increase it. [29 October 1974]

Belinda: I took a micro-tab in order to get in touch with myself. The experience was so bad, I've never tried it again. Why was the experience so terrible?

[Soleal:] I don't know what you took, but do know that in order for a hallucinogenic drug to have a positive effect, you must be in positive spaces when you take it. It will merely intensify all your negative spaces, not enhance anything. Those with Neutral Overleaves tend to have more positive experiences anyway.

The teacher [Michael] communicates to me that the drug was laced with Strychnine.

Bill: What did go on during my drug experience? Did things that happened have any significance for me?

[Soleal:] You were in very bad [head] spaces and these were intensified. Also, the drug that you took was adulterated. [01 February 1975]

There is the very real problem that sometimes psychedelics purchased on 'the street' can be intentionally or unintentionally impure. For this reason, if one is inclined to take psychedelics, in my opinion, it is safest to wait until the psychiatric profession has sorted out which psychedelic at what dose is useful for what experience.

Thaddeus asked about astrally projecting tonight. What could he do to facilitate this?

The most you can do to facilitate this is total relaxation. If it is necessary, in order to achieve this, you may wish to augment [with marijuana?]. [08 February 1975]

The use of psychedelics to look into the Astral Plane was mentioned above. On an occasion not mentioned in this chapter, sensory deprivation was recommended as a practice that achieves deep relaxation.

The evening began with talk about the [A Course in] Miracles material, and we shared thoughts about the difference between false goals and true goals. Must we give up life goals?

All must realize that the term Holy Spirit does in fact refer to the Essence — that within the self that is in contact with the Tao. To contact this Holy Spirit, then, requires only the quieting of the Overleaves to the extent that the Essence can be perceived. The perception is often brilliantly elucidated during a so-called "spiritual" experience, when the Personality is temporarily inactivated by the powerful input. [Psychedelic] Drugs will often facilitate this, but are not necessary; environment is more important. Without this perception, all of this [Michael's teaching or any spiritual teaching] is simply another barrage of words. Only the knowledge of one's own Essence is convincing. We cannot emphasize this too much. It can be explained by the timeworn cliché: "seeing is believing". There is no other way that one can be certain that planes beyond the physical exist, other than experiencing them. The same can be said for the perception of one's own Essence. When this is accomplished, the power of the experience drowns disbelief. Then, of course, it is still entirely up to you which course you wish to pursue. It is doubtful, though, that one would choose to continue with purposeless activities. False goals are those that are largely unattainable, as they exist only in fantasy. True goals lead to the awakening of the Essence and its breakthrough. This is indeed possible for those who wish it and without great sacrifice upon the mountain-top.

That passage pretty much sums up the Michaels' thoughts on the use of psychedelics: they can be helpful for some people to make experiential breakthroughs, but there are often better means and methods.

Dick said we were all just spiritual dilettantes — the utilitarian value comes later — the value of the Overleaves. In order to "surrender" there has to be a feeling that there is something to achieve through this surrender.

There are two types of experience going on within this movement — and by 'movement' we mean the whole guru game that is now on-going. These are the true experiences and the cultural experiences. Most of those who go to EST do not experience anything but group highs, and this could have happened merely by smoking marijuana in the living room with a group of friends. Others have elected to change their lives, and this has occurred only through surrender to the processes. Faith is what determines success. [10 April 1977]

This was yet another recommendation to check your motivations and your methods for achieving enlightenment. Refer to the chapter "EST — Erhard Seminars Training" for more information about that.





⑧ PSYCHIC ENERGY

This chapter is the product of a search for the phrase psychic energy in the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group channeling sessions. This phrase does not represent a significant component of the Michaelian teachings. However, there are good reasons to discuss the subject in this *Study Papers* book: 1) the subject came up numerous times during the original Michaelian group; 2) some interesting things were said about the subject; 3) the subject is related to a number of other components of the Michaelian teachings that are considered to be significant; 4) students can presumably benefit from having the mentions conveniently collected and commented all in one place.

The phrase psychic energy is not capitalized in this chapter or other chapters of this *Study Papers* book because it has no special meaning in the Michaelian teachings; it is not a Michaelian jargon word that needs a definition apart from its use in the common vernacular.

It might be a little surprising how often this phrase psychic energy shows up in the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group, considering that it has not appeared in subsequent channeling sessions that we have record of. For instance, it never appears in Yarbro's books, not even *Messages from Michael*, which was about the original Michaelian group. Because it covers a subject that might otherwise have been ignored and forgotten, I regard it as useful and valuable to include the research in this chapter; it makes our understanding of the Michaelian teachings richer and more complete. I have done the same with numerous other chapters on obscure topics in this *Study Papers* book.

"Energy" can be defined as that which does "work", which means that energy makes things happen or makes changes in stuff. In the original Michaelian group transcriptions, psychic energy is described in various ways: 1) as the energy of the Essence; 2) as the energy of the Centers; 3) as electromagnetic radiation; 4) as present in various paranormal phenomena. As I have struggled to make sense of these various descriptions, I have come to think that this might be another case where "We [the Michaels] are guilty of some semantic ambiguity at times...." (27 March 1974) One of the lengthy passages on the subject seems not only ambiguous, but garbled, so maybe the channel was having a bad day at the Ouija board, or maybe several bad days, and the Michaels were unable to get their message about this subject through clearly.

So now let's take look at the source material and see what we can figure out.

Psychic Energy in the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

The following extracts from original Michaelian group transcriptions are Q&A exchanges, where an original Michaelian group member asks a question (or makes a comment), and the Michaels provide an answer. These extracts are presented in the chronological order in which they were given. As is my custom, I often provide some explanatory comments following the question or answer. Underlined words are my emphasis, to draw attention to what it is that I comment on. Sometimes I embed words or phrases [in brackets] that I believe help to clarify the question or the answer. Numerous study papers related to this chapter are to be found among my comments.

First let's have a definition of psychic energy, right from the Michaels themselves. This was the first time that the phrase appeared in the original Michaelian group transcriptions:

Psychic energy is the energy generated by the Essence. It is naturally a more refined energy than that generated by the internal [Personality] Centers of Emotion, Intellect, and Instinctive and Moving functions. This [refined Essence] energy is independent of the others [lower Centers]. [29 November 1973]

Refer to the chapter "Personality and Essence" for more about the distinction between those two. Basically and briefly, in terms of Centers, the Ordinal Centers are the Centers of Personality, the Cardinal Centers are the Centers of Essence, and the Neutral Center is the bridge between the two.

I have to look in people's eyes to tell the soul level. There is a nurse, Clara, whom I get a visual impression from and cannot explain it.

You are seeing this lady's soul well. This lady has much untapped psychic energy, and would be frightened by overt attempts at telepathic communication, but cannot avoid transmitting. [16 December 1973]

Refer to the chapter "Telepathy". There you will read that telepathic communication uses psychic energy, and that it is the metaphysical counterpart to physical electromagnetic energy that transmits light. Putting this passage together with the previous passage, we can reasonably say that some people have more energy in the Cardinal Centers, and therefore have more innate affinity with, and capacity for, telepathy.

The lady in question [a midwife] was one of those. She used a convenient superstition [presence of a caul, or remnant of the amniotic sac] to explain the tremendous amount of psychic energy she felt [at the birth of Susan]. [20 December 1973]

Refer to the chapter "Superstition" for more discussion of that topic. Superstitions are a distorted recognition that psychic energies exist. From this passage we can say that, to at least some extent, the amount of psychic energy that a person has is inborn. However, as we will see further on, it can be augmented or cultivated or fostered by various means. One of the products of spiritual tools is psychic energy, and one of the Goals of the Michaelian teachings is to help students produce and use psychic energy.

There was a discussion here about previous information tying in several people into the same Entity.

We do not see Laurel as an Old Soul. Laurel has a great deal of psychic energy, but is a Fourth Level Young Soul; [which you can see if you] examine her lifestyle. [20 December 1973]

So, it is not just older Souls who can be influenced by Essence and have strong Cardinal Centers.

The following is a long series of Q&A exchanges on the subject of psychic energy that appeared in one session (09 February 1974). Some of the information differs from what was said previously.

Gene: I would like comments on energies used by various energy Centers.

All of this energy is psychic energy. Imagine a superconductor with many [seven] terminals, each representing a different power drain. If one of these users or consumers is utilizing massive amounts of power, there will be a corresponding loss in the other areas, occasionally even short circuits and blown fuses. The power that energizes the psyche is all the same type, or rather, the same grade of electromagnetic radiation. There is no refinement from one Center to the other until the powers of transmutation become yours to utilize; then this energy becomes centralized — channeled [concentrated], so to speak.

Previously it was said that psychic energy is somewhat synonymous with the energy of the Essence in the Cardinal Centers, rather than associated with all of the Centers as stated here. One way to reconcile this apparent contradiction is to say that the latter information is an improvement on the former. My comments henceforth assume that reconciliation to be correct.

The body and the brain are known by science to use electrical current in various ways, and an electrical current creates electromagnetic radiation: 'waves' in a 'field': ><https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bioelectricity><. Apparently the "psychic energy" of the Centers is electromagnetic, not something else, such as the morphogenetic field emanating from the etheric (Cardinal) levels of the Physical Plane.

A review of the other occurrences of the word transmutation finds that they also refer to energy, usually "sexual" or "kundalini" energy, the energy of the chakras; refer to chapters "Sexuality" and "Kundalini. (Is **chakra energy different from the energy of the Centers?**) The point is that psychic energy be increased so that it can do more work for the power and the health of the body and the mind and the spirit.

Beyond that, that passage does not make much sense to me as stated; perhaps the channeling was a bit garbled. My interpretation is that when one has eliminated much general negativity from one's way of being, then one can "refine", "balance", "transmute", "utilize", "channel" (see above) and "concentrate" (see below) psychic energy in all of the Centers. The Balanced place in the septenary is the central Center, the Neutral Assimilation Center, poorly-named as "Instinctive" Center, and which I prefer to name "Impulse" Center — Impulse being a synonym for force or energy. The Impulse Center combines the functions of all of the other Centers, lower and higher, which are impulsive in specific ways, such as in terms of Action, Inspiration, and Expression.

The session continued:

When we speak of harmonious balance, we refer to that state in which this concentration is reached. And this also goes for the release of specific amounts of energy. Emotionally-Centered mediums [channels] have an easy time with manifestations and also become excellent transport [psycho-kinetic] mediums. This medium (Sarah) is

not Emotionally Centered and is not in touch with the release mechanism that would enable, or at least enhance, the manifestation. Astral entities can manifest without any assistance; we cannot. We must borrow the energy from one of you, and we cannot do this against your will.

Refer to the chapter "Paranormal, The" for more discussion about phenomena that are beyond the horizon of physicalistic scientism.

We wish to remind you that there are two very specific types of reactions: [three-dimensional] implosion and explosion. Also, two specific charges in polarization: [one-dimensional] negative and positive. [Also, two specific valences: (two-dimensional) downward and upward.] A great deal of the energy utilized by the lower Centers in life situations are implosion reactions with negative charges. Controlled reactions of this type do not ever become as spectacular as their antitheses [the higher Centers].

It might or might not be legitimate for me to insert references to dimensionality there, but it helps me to make sense of it; refer to the chapter "Dimensionality and Axes" for the explanation. The date of this passage is approximately one year before the revelation about the so-called "Axes" of the Overleaf System (Action, Inspiration, Expression, Assimilation); the phrases "implosion and explosion reactions" and "positive and negative charges" seem to foreshadow the meaning of the Cardinal and Ordinal sides of the Expression and Action Axes respectively. Add to those two the "upward and downward valences", and we thereby include the Cardinal and Ordinal sides of the Inspiration Axis. Even as psychic energy is compared to electromagnetic radiation in a previous passage, I correlate the one-dimensional Action Axis to electrical phenomena that manifests as positive and negative ions; I correlate the two-dimensional Inspiration Axis to magnetic phenomena that manifests as North and South polarization; I correlate the three-dimensional Expression Axis to universal gravity ("implosion") and expansion ("explosion"). (I got this idea about dimensionality from the physics theory of Dewey Larson, which is discussed in my book *The Tao of Cosmogony*.)

The session continued:

Is our energy self-generated? Are we born with a certain amount of energy and it regenerates?

The body can be thought of as the vehicle or the conductor. The Essence becomes the source of attraction and, as [spiritual] growth occurs, can draw upon an infinite power source. However, the average soul uses a very small, a very finite, amount of the energy available during a given physical interval [incarnation]. Most of you are somewhat sluggish [in approaching Essence] due to cultural inducements, and rarely draw upon much energy.

Refer to the chapter "Culture" for more discussion about the anti-spiritual effects of "cultural inducements".

Why have I had this high feeling lately?

What does this tell you about your Goal? You made a decision to Grow.

Why am I in it? Why are we communicating so much between the two of us (Carolyn and Sue)?

Sue's tremendous psychic energy is having its effect on you.

Does my psychic energy influence it?

That is valid, but she [Sue] is a vortex of energy. This accounts for the high level of psychic or extra-verbal [telepathic] communication. You too have a fairly high level of psychic energy. To activate this, you need the permission of the receiver. Carolyn also needs the assurance that her receiver is willing.

I would like to ask if Vacaville is a high or low power source.

Vacaville is a neutral power source. There are powerful people in the little city who generate stupendous amounts of psychic energy, sporadically. The city of Walnut Creek is also a neutral ground. The city of Oakland is very positive.

Ellis lived in Vacaville, Alice and Dick lived in Walnut Creek, Sarah and Richard lived in Oakland.

Is the "Superstition Wilderness" in Arizona a power spot?

It is a power place, an Indian burial ground, consecrated land.

Indigenous cultures that have a spiritual consciousness tend to be more sensitive to psychic energy, which can function in the human body (such as the chakras of Indian tradition), but also in geographic areas (alleged holy sites of various sorts in various traditions):

What is the nature of the power in these places?

Many places, because of their location, are gathering spots for a rather pure form of electromagnetic radiation, which when confined in a body, becomes usable "psychic energy". This energy remains rooted to the spot

simply because the spot itself acts as an ideal super-conductor. This takes into consideration things such as height of land above or below sea level, the presence of larger bodies of relatively cold, deep water, the presence of dormant or active volcanoes or large mountains where snow remains all year. The desert also has been an ideal conductor for power sinks. [09 February 1974]

To be out in nature, especially wild and beautiful and inspiring nature, is energizing for most people. These spiritual hot-spots often become tourist hot-spots even for non-spiritual people.

Is Self-remembering the way to produce psychic energy?

Not the way, simply the by-product. The Self-remembering must be produced first through those methods we have outlined to you [meditation, concentration, fasting, study]. Then as you go progressively toward Balance, you automatically will have more and more flashes of consciousness, opening the door to higher expression. [09 February 1974]

Refer to the chapters "Balanced Man" and "Consciousness" and "Flashes" and "Higher Expression" and "Self-remembering" and "Tools" if you want to understand how these terms that appear in that passage are related to each other. Basically and briefly, as it says in this passage and in those chapters, spiritual methods or tools are used to raise one's consciousness above and beyond the lower Centers, through a transition state called Balance, into the manifestation of refined psychic energy in all of the Centers, not just the lower Centers. When that exalted state of awareness is achieved, then one is filled with psychic energy in all seven of its manifestations.

I have been reading From Prison to Praise by Carothers. He is a part of the Charismatic Movement now. Before that, he was a son-of-a-gun. He is "healing" people now and says that God is telling him what to say. I was wondering if he has a "Michael-[like]" source for his healings.

Most of the time, those souls who write and live this fashion do have contact, at least with Astral teachers. Since this is a little-understood phenomenon, they call it a "God," or "Jesus." Yes. There is simply no knowledge within to allow them to accept another source; the vocabulary is not there. Many Mature Souls such as this man are wide open to transmitting. They are broad-band receivers, and they cannot then assimilate and rationally 'separate the wheat from the chaff'. This man is a powerhouse of psychic energy that he beams about indiscriminately. What a healer he could be if this were channeled [concentrated] in some usable form. [24 February 1974]

Previously it was said that not just Old Souls, but also Young Souls can have psychic energy; here the same is said of a Mature Soul. My assumption is that the older the soul, the higher is the quality and the greater is the quantity of the energy that can be used to do good work.

Can you tell me about Helena (a psychic Delia has been to)?

The lady is well-meaning and is able to impart some worthwhile information.

I would like to ask about the "magnetic energy field" I feel when I'm with her: it is a pulling I feel in my fingers and toes.

The lady has enormous stores of psychic energy that she willingly lets go. You pick up on this and your extremities are the most willing receptors. She is a very psychically strong lady. [17 July 1974]

Not only do some people generate more psychic energy to send out, making them charismatic or "magnetic", but some people are better receivers of that energy. As with all energy exchanges, such as radio or television, the sender and receiver of psychic energy must be attuned to the same 'wavelength', aka on the same 'radio station' or 'television channel', so to speak. It may be that I am a fairly good receiver; refer to my personal story as documented in my book *The Tao of Relationships: The Chemistry and Alchemy of Service and Intimacy*. There you will read about my intimate encounters with women who had a "delicious and nutritious" aura that was palpable, that drew me in, and that was catalytic for my spiritual growth. Rather than feeling the energy in my extremities, I felt it in other parts of my body, namely at the locations of the higher chakras, the particular chakra depending on attunement with the particular psychic energy of the particular woman. Refer to the chapters "Chakras" and "Kundalini" and "Sexuality" for more about those particularized manifestations of psychic energy in general.

Carolyn asked for a comment on a dream she'd had at her Uncle's house. Swimming pool, dog arose from the water, came to stand nearby her and had turned into a very tall man-like person, scales on his body, etc. No fright connected with this, more of a protective feeling all night —

Carolyn, you, like most here present, yearn for a teacher in the flesh to whom you can relate in a "normal fashion". This dream, in part, is indicative both of your desire and your evolution to a point where you could now accept a teacher other than in human form. Both interpretations are true, essentially. Do you see this? You

have in many ways risen from the murky waters as have others. There's also a protectiveness in all of you now concerning this very tender evolution. This lady has much psychic energy, we have said before. [17 September 1974]

In a previous Q&A exchange, psychic energy was related to telepathy and healing; here it is related to meaningful dreams. Refer to the chapter "Dreams and Dreaming". High quality/quantity of psychic energy produces high quality/quantity of telepathy and dreaming and healing. Regarding the difference between a physical teacher (such as Robert Burton in the Gurdjieffian group) and a metaphysical teacher (such as the Michaels in the original Michaelian group), both are useful, but it is a measure of spiritual growth (and the increasing quality/quantity of psychic energy) to come to prefer the latter over the former.

A month later, the quality/quantity of psychic energy appeared in yet another context, precognition:

I'd like a comment on the inner space, or other plane experience I had: I saw a person in the metaphysical bookstore that fit the person I met while in my inner space. I feel we have had past lives together.

When the student is in the meditative state or is otherwise attentive to the teaching, it is possible to experience what we choose to call the "pan-dimensional" universe and that, of course, includes the Akashic plane. In order to answer your question, Elizabeth, we would explain to you what the term "precognition" really means. In those possessed of tremendous psychic energy, it is possible in the meditative or inner conscious state to "flash" on all of the alternative frames for a future that is close at hand. The problem is in the retaining of these flashes. Most souls do retain only the most dramatic fragments, discarding the mundane. Then, if they recognize this as precognition, they also regard it as fact and accept the most awesome consequences. This is, of course, not true, for in the time you flash, it is merely an alternative, but sometimes you do set the wheels in motion on a subliminal level and the incident does take place. Elizabeth, this is essentially what takes place when you flash on a meeting that may take place in the near future. You can, in some instances, bring this about, but also, there is the very real attraction there that we have told you before happens when Older Souls come together after an Astral interval for the first time in this life. This attraction can be negative or positive, and can result in a coming together or a going away, but it does provoke an emotional response that is difficult to suppress. [15 October 1974]

This answer requires a lengthy explanation. In our normal state of consciousness, our *physical* senses are focused on our outer world; in a meditative state of consciousness, our *psychic* senses are focused on our inner world. The inner world is full of *potential* events that we may anticipate or imagine; the outer world is full of *actual* events that we remember. In our normal state of consciousness, we may tend to think of the 'higher' planes (beyond the Physical Plane) as 'up' there or 'out' there, but in our meditative state of consciousness, it is helpful to visualize the other planes as 'down' there at the foundation, or 'in' there at the core or Essence of our total being. If/when we have a precognitive dream (see previous comment on dreaming) or meditation, then we are looking at the pool of potential events, the more the quality/quantity of our psychic energy, the better choices we can make in actualizing an event in our waking life here on the Physical Plane. Regarding "coming together or going away", refer to the chapter "Vectors" for more about precognitive tuning into or scoping out a potential future and choosing to actualize one event in present reality.

Not only in the above answer but in the below answer, we are encouraged by the Michaels to choose to actualize positive events rather than negative events:

The [psychic] energy force of the universe is neutral and simply flows. Psychic energy in the hands of such as the man Thaddeus is a very positive source. He is right. He can draw [on it] at will, but [he] does not do this indiscriminately; he uses the discretion that we would wish. [29 October 1974]

Thaddeus was said to have been Saint Peter, apostle of Jesus, in a past life. If true, my surmise is that that experience energized his spiritual journey in this lifetime, and inclined his use of psychic energy toward positive accomplishments. In New Age parlance, this is called the "Law of Attraction". My impression is that this "law" works to only a limited extent, because the individual is not omnipotent; there are other people and the world in general, which reality as a whole takes into consideration as potentiality is turned into actuality. As it says there, a "discriminating" and "discretionary" psychically-energized person will understand how to choose wisely and positively; they will not be self-serving (Greedy) or self-important (Arrogant) or self-assertive (Impatient) regarding the application of their psychic energy.

Speaking of Overleaves, the next Q&A exchange has more to say about their relationship to psychic energy:

William asked about his relationship with his sister-in-law. He has much negativity toward her. She is psychic. What is their conflict? Is it from the past? It is a strongly negative reaction.

This is a very interesting example of an extremely exalted soul who is expending much of her psychic energy uselessly by working out of the Negative Poles of Exalted [Cardinal] Overleaves. Yes, she does have much powerful psychic energy at her disposal. It is hoped that she will channel [focus, concentrate, utilize] it more efficiently in the near future. [14 December 1974]

As stated in the previous answer, the “energy force of the universe is neutral”. This neutral universal psychic energy can be channeled into negative or positive influences and experiences, depending on the Overleaves.

We first asked for a general comment from the teacher. This is what we received.

As long as you continue to play the game of the culture and undergo the constant role-switching that occurs day in and day out, there will not be too much outward change in you. But this does not mean that there has been no change. It is merely that the role-switching uses up a tremendous amount of psychic energy that could be utilized for work on the path. [21 December 1974]

Refer to chapters “Culture” and “Game” and “Persona” for more about inhibitions and diversions away from the positive use of psychic energy. Other chapters worthy of consultation are “Work, The” and “Path, Spiritual”.

I would like to ask about my niece’s experience with a strange lady, who told her things about herself. She said she was psychic.

The lady is a Mature Soul who does have some developed psychic energy at her disposal, but mostly she uses her enormous perception to make educated guesses. [25 January 1975]

As said elsewhere, there is a spectrum or hierarchy in the quality/quantity of psychic energy. One of the goals of the Michaelian teaching and other spiritual teachings is to raise a person’s “vibration” or “consciousness”, which are synonyms for psychic energy.

A session attended by the editor of Psychic Magazine resulted in several mentions of psychic energy:

James asked about Writings from Beyond, a book by Edgar Phillips. He had a business consultation and gave James a reading for his magazine, about its expansion and growth. The source of the book is mysterious. Can Michael comment on the source and on the quality of the information? What is the motive?

First, a word about the man Edgar [Phillips]. This is a Sixth Level Mature Priest in Growth, in the Observation Mode, a Realist in the Emotional Part of Intellectual Center.

As to the source, it is yes, Astral, but the emphasis on the monetary aspect comes not from the source but from the medium. The source, as in most cases, is composed of the united Fragments of the man Edgar’s Entity. This man possesses a high level of tapable psychic energy, [and] is well aware of the intuitive knowledge. The acumen is nothing that we would quarrel with, but is in no way mystical, and [what he says] cannot be construed as a guarantee. [31 January 1975]

As said elsewhere, there is a spectrum or hierarchy in the quality/quantity of psychic energy. Presumably, an Old Soul has the potential to experience a psychic energy that is further along the quality/quantity spectrum than a Mature Soul, all else being equal. No channeled source of words or mediumistic source of energy can be “construed as a guarantee” because all human vehicles are defective and deficient; refer to the chapter “Bias”.

James had communicated with a man in Russia, who is now in jail because of their correspondence, so it was difficult to plan to go to Russia. Japan would be easier.

The difference, of course, is that we suggest sometimes the most challenging area of operation, because we see that as the ultimately most satisfactory, in terms of the long goal of spiritual and psychic rebirth. The expansion of this exchange into the Orient is not a Bad Work for now.... the expansion into another vortex of psychic energy would prove in the long run the most accelerating. The psychic revolution is accelerating now of its own accord, as you are well aware, but it is students such as you who have the vehicle for exchange [a magazine], who can reach the outposts. [31 January 1975]

James Bolen was publisher of Psychic Magazine. Evidently he was trying to help some nations move ‘up’ the quality/quantity spectrum of psychic energy. I suggest that in America the spiritual movement kicked into a higher gear in the 1960s, and it is still in progress here and around the world.

James told us about a man who came to California from Illinois, who is a psychic. He has a benefactor, who wants to expose him to the people. He gave James a reading and felt the information was embellished by his Personality.

We would have to say that this man’s Chief Feature stands in the way of any communication with other than his own subconscious storehouse of knowledge. However, this being a Mature Soul, [he] has quite a storehouse and does have much tapable psychic energy of an intuitive nature. He will, for the most, tell you what you wish

to know and, many times, this can accelerate a wise, spontaneous move; but as for actually seeing the open alternatives, we would have to say that he does not. [31 January 1975]

The psychic Mature Soul being discussed was apparently in about the middle of the quality/quantity spectrum of psychic energy. It is good to discern where we are, and where others are, on the psychic energy spectrum, so that we can act appropriately with respect to them.

As long as it does not become a crutch, the material altar serves those brothers who do not have the altar of the soul. You see, it is possible to transfer the psychic energy to your brothers, but there must not be agendas in your way or the flow will be scattered, and you will not be able to transmute the collective energy into the higher expression. Those troubled among you will simply feed on the energy flow. [16 February 1975]

Refer to chapters "Agenda", "Crutch", "Higher Expression", "Scattering", and "Troubled Souls". Some people create a physical altar that, when they go there, helps to 'elevate' their psychic energy, their spiritual awareness, 'up' the quality/quantity spectrum. Other people attend group meetings that serve the same function. This is workable except for people who have some agenda other than raising the vibration of the group, or for people who are troubled souls; those negative people drag the psychic energy 'down'. The other problem is that relying on such externals (altars, groups) to elevate one's consciousness is just a temporary expedient, a 'crutch'. The long-range far-sighted plan is that students learn to elevate their psychic energy by internal means, the "altar of the soul".

What was meant by "artificial rhythms"?

"Artificial relationships."

That is one, yes, but it goes far deeper than that.

Energy [of all kinds], you see, does have a vibratory quality, and psychic energy is no exception to this. If the vibratory quality of the universal flow is neutral and the psychic energy flow from the Essence is positive, then the vibratory quality of the Personality must be negative. We would call this [Personality] "artificial rhythm", as we would call the other [Essence] the "natural rhythm".... Personality lives with artificial rhythms always; seldom does it even come into contact with natural [Essence] rhythms. [Spiritual] Schools of the type we have been discussing, many times, will produce an environment wherein natural rhythms begin to flow. As students come to Balance, they find their own rhythmic niche and follow it through natural rhythms, of course, required [requiring?] that the Essence be satisfied with its occupation of the moment, whether it is Moving, Emotional, or Intellectual [Center]. Much work still must be done in dissolving the grip on allurements. This still has you fast in its jaws and we wish that you all could feel the level of vibrations emanating from you this evening: diffuse, peaked, and jerky, with no particular pattern other than discordance and jumbled rhythms going off into the ethers with no direction or focus. [21 February 1975]

Electromagnetic energy (from x-rays to light to radio) is a spectrum that manifests as speed of vibration. Apparently, such is the case with psychic energy and its "rhythm". Accepting previous statements that psychic energy is related to the seven Centers, then the 'lower' Centers (Moving, Emotional, Intellectual) are of Personality; they are toward the negative pole of the quality/quantity spectrum of psychic energy. The 'higher' Centers are of Essence; they are toward the positive pole of the spectrum. The neutral zone of psychic energy between the 'lower' and 'higher' is the "Instinctive (aka Impulse) Center"; refer to the chapter by that name. Also refer to the chapter "Balanced Man". There you will read that the 'lower' Centers must be "satisfied" before one can ascend further up the spectrum of Centers. There you will also read that the spiritual path leads up the quality/quantity spectrum of psychic energy, otherwise known as the "Levels of Being"; refer to the chapter by that name. This is reminiscent of Maslow's "Hierarchy of Needs" (which is discussed in numerous internet resources, such as >https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maslow's_hierarchy_of_needs<) which can also be correlated to the Centers and the chakras. Impediments to rising 'up' the quality/quantity spectrum of psychic energy are "allurement", aka "Glamour" (refer to the chapter by that name), and "Scattering" (refer to the chapter by that name), and "Temptation" (refer to the chapter by that name); these are all terms for the same phenomenon, namely the loss of focus on the goal of Essence manifestation.

Is there a ghost in Harriet's house?

There is no ghost, but this lady is able to effectively produce the phenomena through release of psychic energy. [15 April 1975]

Psychic energy can manifest spooky phenomena; refer to the chapter "Paranormal, The".

Concluding Comments on Psychic Energy

It is said that the physical body can accumulate and generate and augment and send and receive psychic energy, and the Centers are mentioned in this context. Kundalini and chakras are not mentioned in relation to psychic energy, but I suggest that they are related; refer to the chapters “Chakras” and “Kundalini”.

Psychic energy was said to be used in telepathy, healing, psychokinesis, psychic phenomena, and precognitive dreaming. May I also suggest that it is also present in the compatibility, or not, of “Body Types” (refer to the chapter by that name) because Body Types are also in the same realm as Centers and chakras and kundalini.





① PSYCHIC UNION

This chapter is the product of a search for the phrase psychic union in the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group channeling sessions. This phrase does not represent a significant component of the Michaelian teachings. However, there are good reasons to discuss the subject in this *Study Papers* book: 1) the subject came up numerous times during the original Michaelian group; 2) some interesting things were said about the subject; 3) the subject is related to a number of other components of the Michaelian teachings that are considered to be significant; 4) students can presumably benefit from having the mentions conveniently collected and commented all in one place.

Briefly, it appears that psychic union is something that can only likely happen between very close kindred souls, Essence Twins being the most likely. Perhaps one can get a feel for psychic union by considering the Vulcan “mind meld” from the Star Trek television series. But that is not psychic union, obviously, because Spock could do it with anything that had a mind, including silicon-based life forms, the Horta. Anyway, let’s take a look at the few Q&A passages where the phrase occurs.

Two appropriate chapters related to this chapter are “Psyche” and “Psychic Energy”. Basically and briefly, the Michaels apply the term psyche somewhat ambiguously, to the mind or the soul. To understand what is intended in each mention, the reader must parse the wording and pay attention to the context. Let’s do that here and now.

Psychic Union in the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

The following extracts from original Michaelian group transcriptions are Q&A exchanges, where an original Michaelian group member asks a question (or makes a comment), and the Michaels provide an answer. These extracts are presented in the chronological order in which they were given. As is my custom, I usually provide some explanatory comments following the question or answer. Underlined words are my emphasis, to draw attention to what it is that I comment on. Sometimes I embed words or phrases [in brackets] that I believe help to clarify the question or the answer. Numerous study papers related to this chapter are to be found among my comments.

Two months after the Michaels first appeared was when the phrase first appeared in the original Michaelian group transcriptions.

Dick: It seems that the unification of Fragments goes on inter-life [between lifetimes]. You can’t do it here, can you?

You can, but it is difficult. It requires psychic union, and that by definition requires that you be an Adept. That [psychic union] is always [Cardinal/Ordinal] polar. It is usually done between lives [on the Astral Plane]. [06 October 1973]

The “polarity” here spoken of is what later came to be known generally as Cardinal and Ordinal, and it applies to many things; varieties of polarity are discussed in my book *A History of the Overleaf Chart*, in Chapter 2B, “Attributes of Overleaves”. It is uncertain what the word might specifically be referring to in this particular passage, but one can speculate. In the original Michaelian group, Roles were said to be a factor of the Physical Plane, so it is reasonable that the polarity mentioned here is not between Roles (Sage/Artisan, Priest/Server, King/Warrior), but their correlates in Casting on the Astral Plane: in the 1980s it was revealed that there are what I refer to as “Role-ish” factors in the Casting of soul groupings called Cadences (7 Fragments), Greater Cadences (49 Fragments), and Sides (343 Fragments). My guess is that Fragments (in the reunification process on the Astral Plane or Adepts on the Physical Plane) which are on opposite sides (Cardinal and Ordinal) of the same Axis are first to experience psychic union, e.g., Sage-ishes with Artisan-ishes, Server-ishes with Priest-ishes, and Warrior-ishes with King-ishes. (This makes the united pairs Neutral, and afterwards they merge with the Scholar-ishes in their soul grouping.) On the Physical Plane, one of the polarities that might facilitate psychic union might be gender, male and female, because that is such a strong factor here, and not to be

ignored. However gender polarity alone is not enough of a force to drive “unification of Fragments”, aka souls; what is needed is the soul polarity of Role-ishes. On the Planes above the Physical, where bodies with gender do not exist, various forms of Cardinality and Ordinality polarity drive gender-like psychic unions.

In the next original Michaelian group session, more was said about psychic union with more clarity, but with a different vocabulary:

Gene: We hear so much about twin souls and I would like to know about that.

Dyadic union occasionally occurs while the principals are still on the Physical Plane. This is exceedingly rare and happens only among Fragments of the same [thousand-souled] Entity. These unions are always polar and it is a devastating experience. Souls so united are truly one flesh. [08 October 1973]

The information about twin souls, aka Essence Twins, was not well defined during the original Michaelian group, and the situation is still not clear in the modern Michaelian teachings. For an extensive examination of the issues, refer to my book *A History of the Overleaf Chart*; look in Chapter 4N, “Casting Concerns”, in the section “Types of Essence Twins”. The strong psychological barriers that exist between non-kindred souls are to one degree or another weaker between kindred souls. At minimum the experience of meeting a close kindred soul can be unsettling to those who do not know what it is; at maximum it can be “devastating”. It is only devastating to the personality’s egotistical sense of self, by the way, whereas the soul finds it blissful; refer to the chapter “Intimacy” for the wondrous details.

Why is this devastating? What do you mean by “polar”?

There is complete psychic union. There are no longer any individual perceptions. There is a total loss of identity. All of you will escape this [loss of identity] fate in this lifetime, for your strongest [Entity-mate Role-ish] attractions within the group are for those of the same sex.

The “fate” they will escape is “loss of identity” via “psychic union” with a polar-opposite “twin” of the Role-ish variety. On the Physical Plane, gender polarity attraction (and repulsion) typically trumps Role-ish polarity attraction (and repulsion). Within the original Michaelian group, the strongest Role-ish attractions were with the people of the same gender, but it would be repulsive to attempt psychic union with them, unless they could override their homophobia. My feeling is that the Michaels were being a bit facetious when they referred to psychic union as a “fate” to be worried about and hope to “escape”.

Gene remarked that he felt that he was probably already at least one hundred reintegrated Fragments.

Eugene is essentially correct. There are approximately twenty separate Fragments of that Entity extant on the Physical Plane. All of you are Composites of completed Monads.

There are two interpretations for “Composites of completed Monads”, and this particular passage seems a bit ambiguous. One interpretation is that “Monads” are necessary experiential units that consist of Cardinal and Ordinal halves. When both halves have been experienced, the Monad is said to be “completed”; refer to the chapter “Monads” in this *Study Papers* book for more information about that. A Firstborn soul has completed no Monads. The older Souls in the group had completed most of these required Monads. The other interpretation of the above passage is that as Older Soul Fragments complete their Monads on the Physical Plane, they actually begin to form a psychic union with their Entity mates, alluded to in previous Q&A exchanges. This is a foreshadowing or a harbinger of the reintegration of the Entity on the upper levels of the Astral Plane; refer to the chapter “Composites” in this *Study Papers* book for more information about that. Refer also to the section on Composites in Chapter 4M, “The Seven Soul Ages” in my book *A History of the Overleaf Chart*. (I capitalize the word Composites because it is a Michaelian teachings jargon word.)

Dick: How many Fragments are in my Composite?

Approximately one hundred and fifty. All of you now have Fragments that are a part of the mid Astral sequence.

Some of the Entity mates of original Michaelian group members had already “graduated” from the need to incarnate on the Physical Plane, and they were in the process of psychic union on the mid-Astral. The thing about Composites is that these “cycled-off” Fragments cohabit the body of their incarnate Entity mate as subordinate threads to a dominant thread. In the section on Composites in my *History* book, this is explained and documented extensively.

LeeC: If Jesus’ prejudiced ideas of divorce were attributed to his early childhood, how does Michael form their ideas to set down values and judgments of divorce?

This man's question seems to be referring to the passage that recorded Jesus's statement, "What God has joined together, let no man put asunder." (Matthew 19:6, Mark 10:9) The Michaels explains below that Jesus was referring to *soul* mating (psychic union), not *body-personality* mating:

The Fragments of this Entity (Michael), at the time they were on the Physical Plane, ran the gamut of opinion culminating in the opinion that acceptance of all other souls in the form of Agape was the greatest truth. This did not occur until the [reincarnation] Cycle was completed. The interpersonal relationships [such as marriage without the possibility of divorce] induced by your culture are superficial and are for the most part to be condemned in Teachings such as this. The students [of such teachings] often grow [spiritually] to the point where the relationships transcend this superficiality and truly become spiritual bonding, or psychic union — which is what Jesus was talking about. He attempted to discourage relationships based upon erotic love, especially among those close to him. [20 January 1974]

Thanks to diminished testosterone in my old age, I have finally outgrown the need for erotic love, no spiritual growth required, haha. The only mating acceptable to me now would be a soul mating: "what God has joined together". Soul mates are indeed an unbreakable bond.

It has been said that "people" on the Astral Plane have access to the high Mental Plane. Does Michael have access to the high Mental Plane?

Yes. That is valid.

If there were psychic union, there would be no divorce: is that so?

Psychic union is contracted on other than the Physical Plane, yes.

Does that type of union happen at different Soul Levels?

Yes. This usually does not happen at all until the final life cycle [Old Soul Age], if at all. Spiritual growth can, of course, happen at earlier levels, but your culture thwarts it.

Spiritual growth would facilitate psychic union at earlier Soul Ages. It does seem as if the Michaels are here equating spiritual growth with the ability to achieve psychic union. (I have noticed that one must often truly study the Michaels' words carefully to tease out their meanings.) Completing Monads and reuniting Fragments are also a part of spiritual growth, as stated previously. And completing Monads takes place "at earlier levels" than older soul, regardless of the "culture" impediments.

Will this culture always thwart it?

Hopefully not. [20 January 1974]

As the Soul Age of humanity rises, there will be fewer and lesser impediments to spiritual growth, including impediments to psychic union between close kindred souls. It will also include less homophobia, such that psychic union is less thwarted in same-gender relationships between close kindred souls.

General Comments on Psychic Union

The term psychic union was ambiguous in the original Michaelian group in that it referred to more than one phenomenon, as follows:

1. Apparently, it referred to a sort of mind-meld that Adepts could do with other Adepts; refer to the chapter "Adepts and Masters" for more information about them.
2. The term applies to what is also referred to as "reintegration" of Fragments with their close kindred souls, a process that reversed the Fragmentation process. Refer to the chapter "Fragmentation and Reintegration" for more information about that.
3. The term "psychic union" seems to refer to a stronger form of soul-mate bonding than the so-called "Composite" phenomenon is, which is where a cycled-off Entity mate can cohabit an incarnation as a higher self or a greater self.

Beyond these few Q&A exchanges, nothing more is said about psychic union in the original Michaelian group transcriptions. In *MFM*, on page 78, it is said that Transcendental Souls "experience others as itself. Telepathic rapport and psychic union occur." The phrase is not found in the transcriptions of the Briggs sessions that followed the original Michaelian group. It does not even appear in Sarah Chambers's channeling in the late 1990s. Thus, this subject is another one of those that has not gained traction subsequent to the original Michaelian group. I see this *Study Papers* book as an opportunity to resurrect the concept, for whatever it is worth to Michaelian students.





⑧ PUNISHMENT

This chapter is the product of a search for the concept of punishment in the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group channeling sessions. This word does not represent a significant component of the Michaelian teachings. However, there are good reasons to discuss the subject in this *Study Papers* book: 1) the subject came up numerous times during the original Michaelian group; 2) some interesting things were said about the subject; 3) the subject is related to a number of other components of the Michaelian teachings that are considered to be significant; 4) students can presumably benefit from having the mentions conveniently collected and commented all in one place; 5) the notion of punishment is pervasive in human psychology and sociology and spirituality — subjects covered extensively in this book — so it behooves us to have a working knowledge of it.

The words affiliated with the concept of punishment are not capitalized in this chapter or other chapters of this *Study Papers* book because it has no special meaning in the Michaelian teachings; it is not a Michaelian jargon word that needs a definition apart from its use in the common vernacular.

Definition of Punishment

So what is meant by punishment? As usual, Wikipedia has an extensive definition and description and explanation:

Punishment, commonly, is the imposition of an undesirable or unpleasant outcome upon a group or individual, meted out by an authority — in contexts ranging from child discipline to criminal law — as a response and deterrent to a particular action or behavior that is deemed undesirable or unacceptable. It is, however, possible to distinguish between various different understandings of what punishment is.

The reasoning for punishment may be to condition a child to avoid self-endangerment, to impose social conformity (in particular, in the contexts of compulsory education or military discipline), to defend norms, to protect against future harms (in particular, those from violent crime), and to maintain the law — and respect for rule of law — under which the social group is governed. Punishment may be self-inflicted as with self-flagellation and mortification of the flesh in the religious setting, but is most often a form of social coercion.

The unpleasant imposition may include a fine, penalty, or confinement, or be the removal or denial of something pleasant or desirable. The individual may be a person, or even an animal. The authority may be either a group or a single person, and punishment may be carried out formally under a system of law or informally in other kinds of social settings such as within a family. Negative consequences that are not authorized or that are administered without a breach of rules are not considered to be punishment as defined here. The study and practice of the punishment of crimes, particularly as it applies to imprisonment, is called penology, or, often in modern texts, corrections; in this context, the punishment process is euphemistically called “correctional process”. Research into punishment often includes similar research into prevention.

Justifications for punishment include retribution, deterrence, rehabilitation, and incapacitation. The last could include such measures as isolation, in order to prevent the wrongdoer’s having contact with potential victims, or the removal of a hand in order to make theft more difficult.

If only some of the conditions included in the definition of punishment are present, descriptions other than “punishment” may be considered more accurate. Inflicting something negative, or unpleasant, on a person or animal, without authority or not on the basis of a breach of rules is typically considered only revenge or spite rather than punishment. In addition, the word “punishment” is used as a metaphor, as when a boxer experiences “punishment” during a fight. In other situations, breaking a rule may be rewarded, and so receiving such a reward naturally does not constitute punishment. Finally the condition of breaking (or breaching) the rules must be satisfied for consequences to be considered punishment.

Punishments differ in their degree of severity, and may include sanctions such as reprimands, deprivations of privileges or liberty, fines, incarcerations, ostracism, the infliction of pain, amputation, and the death penalty. Corporal punishment refers to punishments in which physical pain is intended to be inflicted upon the transgressor. Punishments may be judged as fair or unfair in terms of their degree of reciprocity and proportionality to the offense. Punishment can be an integral part of socialization, and punishing unwanted behavior is often part of a system of pedagogy or behavioral modification which also includes rewards. [<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Punishment> — retrieved 27 April 2023]

The article continues with definitions and descriptions from philosophy, psychology, socio-biology, and history. The final section of the wiki levels some criticisms at the whole notion of punishment; some people claim that it is wrong-headed and counterproductive. The Michaels might be in sympathy with that notion; let's take a look.

Punishment per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

The following extracts from original Michaelian group transcriptions are Q&A exchanges, where an original Michaelian group member asks a question (or makes a comment), and the Michaels provide an answer. These extracts are presented in the chronological order in which they were given. As is my custom, I often provide some explanatory comments following the question or answer. Underlined words in the Michaels' answers are my emphasis, to draw attention to what it is that I comment on. Sometimes I embed words or phrases [in brackets] that I believe help to clarify the question or the answer.

The subject of punishment first appears more than two months after the Michaels appeared:

Few Baby Souls are ever truly troubled. They rarely question their motivation and everything that happens to them is either because they were bad and are being punished, or because they were good and are being rewarded. [20 October 1973]

Refer to the chapter "Reward, Gratification, Satisfaction" for more about the opposite of punishment. Basically and briefly, according to behaviorist psychology, there are two basic ways to motivate yourself and other people to get yourself and them to do what you want them to do, namely the metaphorical 'carrot' (reward them) and the metaphorical 'stick' (punish them). This is how you train animals; this is how you train humans. In this chapter we review the negative method to incentivize people to do the 'right' thing or to not do the 'wrong' thing.

Baby Souls have a notion of punishment that goes to an extreme:

This Baby Soul perceives physical death as punishment. [15 November 1973]

"Capital" punishment, the death penalty, has been a feature of primitive humans since who knows when.

If Baby Souls feel as if they are deserving of punishment for being 'bad', they also feel that others are deserving of punishment for being 'bad', whatever the definition of 'bad' for them was:

...This was a common punishment for espousing unpopular religious beliefs.... [13 December 1973]

Social conformity is more important to Baby Souls than to other Soul Ages, and fundamentalist religion is more important to Baby Souls than to other Soul Ages, so put the two together in a socio-cultural-political-religious environment where they are in the majority and, historically speaking, we often see "heretics" being punished when they do not conform to the established religious dogma-doctrine. In American history, some colonies were formed to escape religious persecution in Europe, only to enforce religious conformity within their communities in America. This makes perfect sense to a Baby Soul mentality, but seems ironical to a more liberal citizenry, such as the framers of the American Constitution, who enshrined religious freedom.

The other point to be made in response to that passage is that punishment is a primitive way to deal with the fact that groups tend to establish and codify a value system hierarchy, but then not everyone in the group prefers to conform to that system; they have their own. So what are the rule-makers, the codifiers of "crimes against society", to do? If they are primitive, they use punishment (the 'stick') to enforce or encourage conformity. If they are not primitive, then they prefer education and rehabilitation (the 'carrot'). Of course, mere lack of conformity to social or cultural or religious or political norms is one thing, and sociopathic criminality where other people are truly harmed is another thing, and the two merit different responses from society.

More is said about the role of punishment in a religious context in the next mention of the concept:

Dick: Is there anything that can be said to help us with fear and guilt?

We could give you a *carte blanche* [permission to do whatever you want]. This is relatively [not absolutely] true. As example, Voltaire glimpsed this when he said, "All is true. Everything is permitted." This guilt and fear that one feels on the Physical Plane is, for the most part, culturally induced and, therefore, can only be extinguished by an act of will and allowing yourself to have the guilt-producing experience. This guilt stems for the most part in the lingering belief in a system of black and white, evil and good, with a judgmental god dispensing punishment made to the crime. The fear is largely tied up in the unrealistic longevity aspirations of most [people, groups] on the Physical Plane. No one is judging you, Dick; no one is qualified to do this. [06 March 1974]

Refer to chapters "Fear" and "Guilt" and "Sin" and "Will" for discussion of those key words in that passage. This is one of the key passages of this chapter. The thing about crime and punishment is that it is largely driven by the prevailing socio-cultural-political-religious norms in some particular geographical location and some particular historical time-span. The Michaels do not teach conformity to, or endorse, any such human-established belief, value, and behavior system. In fact, one of their teachings is to find your true self above and beyond any social influence, while also "rendering unto Caesar what is Caesars" if reasonable. Violation of these human-established norms is not Karmic, but the cosmos has a norm that when violated produces "Karma"; refer to the chapter by that name.

The Michael do not elaborate on their phrase "relatively true", but I will: the Michaels do not (and cannot) actually give permission for us to do anything we want, nor do I give myself such permission. However, one should ask oneself if some particular taboo (to not do) or impulse (to do) is of one's own enlightened conscience or if it is from one's parental imprinting or one's cultural socialization. Therefore, I would say to Dick, and to anyone else, that no individual and no group is "qualified" to give anyone else *carte blanche* permission to do anything they damn please. However, liberal societies tend to have a 'live and let live' ethos, meaning that it is up to the individual (so long as they are not criminal psychopaths who intentionally hurt other people) to do as they see fit; refer to the chapter "Conscience". Also refer to the chapter "Judgment" for more discussion of judging and being judged.

In this chapter and in the chapter "Culture", we see that mortal societies have their *various* notions of right and wrong in terms of human relations, and in the chapters "Karma" and "Choice" we read that souls have a *singular* notion of right and wrong in terms of human relations, namely the notion of infringement of the sovereign choice of one immortal soul versus another immortal soul. So, it is not as if the Michaels are 'moral relativists' in every way; they are 'moral absolutists' in a particular way. To read about the philosophical and religious perspective on that, refer to https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Moral_relativism and the discussion in the Conclusion to this chapter.

Moving along a few months, we see that hypochondria might be a form of self-punishment:

Would a hypochondriac be a Martyr [Chief Feature] or what?

This syndrome runs the gamut and permeates the [Soul Age] Cycles. It is also another example of the alienation on this world, as often it is an honest plea for some attention, even though that attention might hurt or otherwise be unpleasant. It often takes the form of an uneducated person's reaction to scare propaganda; also, a need for punishment of family members who have not been nice; also, the result of imprinting by an over-concerned parent. [The Goal of] Rejection seldom takes this form, as these souls tend to reject also the medical profession along with everything else; [The Goal of] Retardation often does [take this form], however. [19 October 1974]

Soul Age might not affect hypochondria much, as stated above, but other Overleaves might, as noted there. Refer to chapters "Alienation" and "Imprinting" for more about those words, about which the Michaels had much to say. Basically and briefly, people are imprinted by parents and society to think, feel, and act according to established norms, and if a person does not conform, then they are likely to feel alienated, and this alienation can in fact lead to actual and imagined mental and physical health issues; refer to the chapter "Health — Mental and Physical".

Suggesting [past-life] retrogression to us is another example of Mechanical Man's desire to complexity, but also it suggests to us Mechanical Man's need to be punished for what he calls sin. We must somehow make it known to you that there is no sin — only Karma — and this you do repay, but not by retrogression, just by hard work. There is no one "up here" to punish you. You will have to find someone down there to do your flagellation. [12 November 1974]

Refer to the chapters “Karma” and “Mechanical Man” and “Sin” for more information about those subjects. Basically and briefly, Karma is not punishment for “sin”. Rather, Karma is one type of “Monad”, where Monads are said to consist of two opposite experiences, having ‘negative’ and ‘positive’ phases. In the Michaelian definition, Karma happens when one Fragment infringes the choice of another Fragment, so the ‘scales of justice’ are balanced, and both move forward, when the infringer’s choice is infringed in the equal and opposite way. The human concept of punishment is a distortion of this cosmic principle. One of the major points of life on the Physical Plane is to learn and grow from mistakes; if the learning does not happen, then a punishment is a further injustice.

... in this culture, death has long been associated with punishment.... The guilt, of course, stems from the concept of death as a punishment. [14 December 1974]

Only Mechanical Man, of all creatures, regards death as a punishment. [30 January 1975]

Personally, I do not relate to that concept, of death as a punishment.

Concluding Comments on Punishment

The word crime does not appear in any of these quotations that contain the word punishment, but elsewhere the two often appear together. There is a chapter on “Crime” among these study papers. Not nearly as much was said in the original Michaelian group transcriptions as could have been said about crime and punishment, perhaps because there were no career criminals in the original Michaelian group.





PURITY

This chapter is the product of a search for the word “purity” and its derivatives in the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group channeling sessions. This word does not represent a significant component of the Michaelian teachings. However, there are good reasons to discuss the subject in this *Study Papers* book: 1) the subject came up numerous times during the original Michaelian group; 2) students can presumably benefit from having the mentions conveniently collected all in one place; 3) some interesting things were said about the subject; 4) the subject is related to a number of other components of the Michaelian teachings that are considered to be significant; 5) Purity issues are pervasive in human psychology and sociology and spirituality.

The word “purity” is not capitalized in this chapter or other chapters of this *Study Papers* book because it has no special meaning in the Michaelian teachings; it is not a Michaelian jargon word that needs a definition apart from its use in the common vernacular.

Basically and briefly, the Michaels recommended to the original Michaelian group members that they

Definition of Purity

So what is meant by purity? The online Merriam Webster dictionary definition is:

Purity per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

The following extracts from original Michaelian group transcriptions are Q&A exchanges, where an original Michaelian group member asks a question (or makes a comment), and the Michaels provide an answer. This is [not] a subject that would benefit by division into subcategories, as some subjects do. These extracts are [not] presented in the chronological order in which they were given, even though this is not a subject where there was a development or evolution of a specific revelation of a facet of the Michaelian teachings, as was often the case with the original Michaelian group. As is my custom, I often provide some explanatory comments following the question or answer. Underlined words are my emphasis, to draw attention to what it is that I comment on. Sometimes I embed words or phrases [in brackets] that I believe help to clarify the question or the answer.

Concluding Comments on Purity





PURPOSE

This chapter is the product of a search for the word “purpose” and related words such as “goal” (not the Overleaf) in the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group channeling sessions. This word does not represent a significant component of the Michaelian teachings. However, there are good reasons to discuss the subject in this *Study Papers* book: 1) the subject came up numerous times during the original Michaelian group; 2) students can presumably benefit from having the mentions conveniently collected and commented all in one place; 3) some interesting things were said about the subject; 4) the subject is related to a number of other components of the Michaelian teachings that are considered to be significant; 5) Issues of having or not having a purpose in life are pervasive in human psychology and sociology and spirituality — **subjects covered extensively in this book — so it behooves us to have a working knowledge of it/them..**

The word “purpose” is not capitalized in this chapter or other chapters of this *Study Papers* book because it has no special meaning in the Michaelian teachings; it is not a Michaelian jargon word that needs a definition apart from its use in the common vernacular.

This chapter is one of many in this book that focuses on a psychological component of the Michaelian teachings as found in original Michaelian group transcriptions, rather than on a spiritual component, as so many other chapters in this book do. Psychological components of the Michaelian teachings are usually either a ‘virtue’ to be cultivated or a ‘vice’ to be mitigated; both are amenable to psychotherapy. Obviously, purposiveness is a virtue. The Michaelian version of psychology is not to be confused with the pop psychology of the self-improvement movement, those that do not have a spiritual core or perspective. Rather, the Michaelian psychotherapeutic path (aimed at improving psychological health) is a beneficial precursor to the spiritual path (aimed at improving soul health). To skip the former but attempt the latter is referred to as “spiritual bypassing”. This is discussed at length on various websites, including https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spiritual_bypass. To skip mitigating one’s psychological issues and attempt to go straight to enlightenment usually proves to be problematic.

Definition of Purpose

So what is meant by **template**? The online Merriam Webster online dictionary definition is: **Wikipedia has an article that provides a definition and a description, as follows:**

say something about teleology

Purpose per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

The following extracts from original Michaelian group transcriptions are Q&A exchanges, where an original Michaelian group member asks a question (or makes a comment), and the Michaels provide an answer. This **is [not]** a subject that would benefit by division into subcategories, as some subjects do. **These extracts are [not] presented in the chronological order in which they were given, even though this is not a subject where there was a development or evolution of a specific revelation of a facet of the Michaelian teachings, as was often the case with the original Michaelian group.** As is my custom, I usually provide some explanatory comments following the question or answer. Underlined words are my emphasis, to draw attention to what it is that I comment on. Sometimes I embed words or phrases [in brackets] that I believe help to clarify the question or the answer. Numerous study papers related to this chapter are to be found among my comments.

... to liberate the trapped Essence is the reincarnational purpose. [mid-1973]

Dick: Does what we are doing now have anything to do with the return of Christ?

Not exactly. The purpose of your being here is not to find only Christ but the knowledge of how to “be”. Christ is in the picture, but he is not the total all — he was a good teacher. If you are seeking only Christ, why don’t you go to church? [10 July 1973]

Dick: Since I am in middle age, I have not been having the “living experiences” that you have mentioned. How do I live them?

[Tomas:] At the time of middle age, one assumes as you have, Dick, that there are no more living experiences to come. Every experience is living and an experience to learn from. The daily process of working and dealing with the inner relationships you have are there for a purpose — to teach you. When you clear the assumption that there will be no more living experiences, the higher living experiences will occur. Each moment has a truth. That is not to say each is a tingling breathless happening. Some are subtle and they are just as important to your growth. Look for these and search for the lesson in all. [17 July 1974]

[Tomas:] ... Maya is part of Karma and is present for a very specific purpose. It tests your spiritual growth all the time and is your sole eternal safety checkpoint.... [24 July 1973]

Dick: Tomas came through as a hard power, but the group was shaky — Gene and Susan, Carolyn. Gene is pivotal to the group and feels he may have to drop out. [What is a] viable group?

The viability of the group depends upon the ability of the individuals involved to rise above the trivial circumstances now driving them apart. It is within the grasp of each of you to do this, even Susan. It is in her Karma to seek the path you wish to follow. She has sought it many times before. The closer you become, the easier it will be for you to recall [your plans for your lifetime]. The ability to define your purpose in this existence will even come to you. The group has one thing the individual cannot tap alone and that is the collective memory. The ability to see the lesson that is being learned is difficult enough in a group, let alone in solitary. The relationships within this group are ancient. I realize this is a new concept for you to swallow, but in order to progress further, you must come to grips with this. The law of cause and effect is as old as the Tao and that has existed for a long time. [17 August 1973]

I am only pointing out to you that you are not always present, and one reason is that you are still in fantasy to a still injurious extent. Now, that only applies to those aspirants who desire help with conscious[ness] raising techniques. Others can and will disregard this information; it serves no purpose to them. Dick, you are an aspirant; take heart; [for you] the ability is there. [21 August 1973]

The Old Soul is casual about sex in the earlier Levels because erotic love begins to lose its charm. In the final Level, the Old Soul often does not participate for lack of purpose (sex adds nothing to its life).

The Transcendental Soul seldom “seeks” any sort of formal education, although it will go along with what is forced upon it cheerfully unless it interferes too greatly with its purpose. Then the transcendental soul will gently but firmly balk. [late August 1973]

Ilene: And after that, would it balance out?

That depends on the activity. Sometimes, the soul often chooses a rather vain, purposeless role that leads to no particular growth. This is what a ‘resting life’ is all about. That is why some souls spend much time in one Cycle. The figure ‘seven’ is an average, not an absolute. [08 September 1973]

[[Continue search to end of original Michaelian group transcriptions.]]

Concluding Comments on Purpose





⑤ REAL SPACE VERSUS ARTIFICIAL SPACE

In early 1975, the Michaels introduced a concept to the original Michaelian group that they called “real” versus “artificial” “space”. The first mention of it gives us a good idea of what they are talking about, and a few subsequent communications ‘flesh out’ the idea. This information is mostly self-explanatory, so my commentary is sparse. I capitalize the words in the phrase because the idea is specific to the Michaelian teachings, so therefore it is jargon.

In the first instance of the actual phrase that is the subject of this chapter, the transcription mentioned “artificial space”, but so far as I have been able to find in the transcriptions, this phrase did not originate with the Michaels, so it might have originated with one of the insightful original Michaelian group members, but the Michaels certainly ‘picked up the ball and ran with it’:

Discussion about Artificial Space, False Personality, and Karmic debts.

For a moment, look at the physical universe as an enormous stage, and all of the physical things within it as the sets and actors. Then look for a moment at the possibility that Karma, or the system of Karma, may in fact, be looked upon as the director of the “play of life.” Souls experiencing all of life on the Physical Plane never have to seek spiritual growth. They can, and most do, go through the whole cycle in the “waking sleep”. The moment that you elect to commit yourself to the [spiritual growth] path, you remove yourself from the list of available actor’s equity. Were it not for Karmic Ribbons, souls would not experience much at all. They certainly would not experience all of life. Now this play is, of course, a lie. There is no truth to be found within it. The only truth lies within the Real Space beyond the theater. In this Real Space beyond, then, the Essence is free to select the best script available — the one enabling the particular Fragment to experience out some facet of physical life that it has not experienced before. These are facilitated by what we have chosen to call “Overleaves”. Certain composites of Overleaves are conducive to certain types of activities — for instance, the extraction of an old [Karmic] debt. Remember, the moment you step on the [conscious spiritual] path, this is no longer the case. You may depart from the script just as soon as you realize that it exists. You may depart from it completely, and if you wish, without regrets, but this is hard work. Just the realization is difficult enough. You see, that which you call Essence, that which has access to higher expression, operates always in Real Space. The False Personality fears Real Space as the agoraphobic fears the open field. [08 February 1975]

The chapter “Drama” has more to say about the theatrical metaphor of our incarnate experience.

This paragraph relates the notion of Real Space versus Artificial Space to Essence versus Personality, and to True Personality versus False Personality, and to Awakened versus Asleep, and to Truth versus Fiction. Refer to chapters “Planes”, “Karma”, “Awakening from Sleep”, “Path — Spiritual”, “Essence and Personality”, “Personality — True and False”, and “Truth”.

Shakespeare, in *As You Like It*, had somewhat to say about the metaphor of life as a theatrical stage play “All the world’s a stage, / And all the men and women merely players; / They have their exits and their entrances, / And one man in his time plays many parts....” And in Shakespeare’s *Macbeth* we find this: “Life’s but a walking shadow, a poor player / That struts and frets his hour upon the stage / And then is heard no more: it is a tale / Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, / Signifying nothing.”

More was said about Real Space versus Artificial Space in this same session:

Someone asked about the Personality of Essence. What is it? Could Michael describe it? Traits?

The True Personality perceives the oneness and does not feel apartness. Thus, it is expansive in its expression. The True Personality does not need the pain, for it has access to the joy, and again can express this in the world. The True Personality knows truth and therefore has no further use for lies. Above all, the True Personality is appropriate in its response to each and every situation. Of course, this is manifested in the world as joyousness, as warmth, as a very special radiance, as a high energy course of a positive nature. However, False Personality is uncomfortable around this True Personality, and the farther removed from a teaching one is, the

more uncomfortable one will be when faced with an encounter with Balanced Man. Balanced Man has the confidence that only knowledge of truth can possibly bring. Balanced Man brings this confidence to bear in all of his endeavors. Balance implies obsolescence of the Overleaves. Balanced Man is no longer stuck. He is free to move into Real Space where there are no limitations. For the “[women’s] libbers” present, substitute Balanced “woman” for Balanced “man.” The limitations within the Artificial Space of the Physical Plane bring comfort to those Trapped there. The concept of eternity–infinity, for instance, is very uncomfortable for Personalities, even those Trapped in the Intellectual Part of Intellectual Center, even though from our perspective it is truth that is incontrovertible. The continuity [oneness] is as immutable as the polarity [twoness or duality]. [08 February 1975]

This paragraph relates the notion of Real Space versus Artificial Space to Intimacy versus Alienation, and to True Personality versus False Personality, and to Balanced Man versus Mechanical Man, and to Liberation versus Entrapment, and to Truth versus Fiction, and to Positivity versus Negativity in general. Refer to the chapters “Mechanical Man”, “Balanced Man”, “School”, “Liberation”, “Bio-computer”, “Centering Traps”, and “Truth”. One point of this paragraph is this: people on the Physical Plane can live their lives in Real Space, where they understand that they are a spiritual soul with physical body, or they can live in Artificial Space, where they do not understand this.

Even more was said about Real Space versus Artificial Space in this same session. In the first original Michaelian group quotation in this chapter, we were given the metaphor that actual life is more real than pretend life in a theatrical stage play; in the original Michaelian group quotation below we are given the metaphor where actual life is more real than dream life, but that dream life can help to lift the veil between Artificial Space and Real Space in real life:

Someone had a dream looking through a large pane of glass into the ocean, sun at the end, star colored bursting like the Fourth of July fireworks, impressed by the clearness of the glass, blueness of the water. Suddenly she was on the water. It was a lake frozen over with ice, and the ice was thin. She walked on it and sank, and an old woman pulled her out.

In the Mature Cycle, there is acute perception of the veil that lies between the Real and Artificial Space, and as never before, the longing to penetrate this veil and go beyond the [physical] senses to glimpse the pan-dimensional. To know that you are not alone in the void, you must walk out on the thin ice and that way test the physical universe and its response to your plea. Most Mature Souls feel this, and in some way translate it into dreams of incredible strength and strange beauty. Not many, unfortunately, retain the memory of these dreams or question its meaning. When a soul not in a teaching encounters the True Personality in Essence for the first time, it is, of course, a devastating experience. This usually comes about in moments of extreme stress, grief or sometimes even trauma. It can, however, come about if the soul is suddenly catapulted in a situation so unusual that not one of the Tapes is applicable. It applies in this case to this dream, as well as all unusual situations, yes, of course, it is undeniably true that none of you has a permanent Tape telling you how to react to the surface of the Moon, and it is conceivable that all of you would encounter your True Personality were you to suddenly find yourself at the controls of a large jet aircraft without any prior training to guide you, except perhaps a few flying lessons in a small propeller-driven plane. [08 February 1975]

This paragraph relates the notion of Real Space versus Artificial Space to True Personality versus False Personality, and to Essence versus Personality. Refer to the chapters “Veil” and “Dreams and Dreaming” for further discussion of points made in the quotation above.

Even more was said about Real Space versus Artificial Space in this same session:

Abdullah felt very highly charged bolts of energy coming in. He didn’t need much sleep, and couldn’t find a way to outlay the energy.

You can utilize these periods of positive energy flow to work toward Balance through work in the Centers. Moving Center is a good one for this channel, and is, of course, the easiest to reach. Other good work can involve the breathing exercises that you experienced, turning the energy upward and out into the liberated meditation. You see, even meditation is subject to Real and Artificial Space, and the [False] Personality imposes limitations on the Space that the meditation may occupy. The liberated meditation of the Essence utilizes the energy efficiently, and does not cause Leakage, resulting in fatigue. [08 February 1975]

This paragraph relates the notion of Real Space versus Artificial Space to True Personality versus False Personality, and to Balanced Man versus Mechanical Man, and to Liberation versus Entrapment, and to Positivity versus Negativity in general. Refer to the chapter “Energy and Energy Leaks”. It does not say so explicitly here, but the notion of Real Space versus Artificial Space could apply to Positive versus Negative

Poles of the Overleaves, which was a subject that only appeared in the few months preceding the discussion of Real and Artificial Space.

Even more was said about Real Space versus Artificial Space in a subsequent session:

Bill felt that much of the discussion that had been going on was "bullshit," and that an inner voice kept telling him that he didn't have to put up with it. He wondered what Overleaf was telling him that it was crap — was it his Exalted Role [Priest]?

We would agree that most of this is "bullshit", but before anything can be constructively done to eliminate this from the [original Michaelian group] cadre, the trust level must rise to the point where the true issue can be brought to the front. Then, even those in Exalted Roles and strong Chief Features can be involved in the solutions. The problem of the children here is a lie and the true issue has not been brought up by those concerned. Therefore, it perseverates, and until the true issue is explored in each and every Photograph, no progress will ever be made. It is, of course, easier for those in Exalted Roles to put up the facade, for it is more important for them to show the world the "bella figura" ["good impression"]. This is not to say that they are not locked into their own Tapes — one [Tape] being that they are above it all; and that Tape needs erasing too. But it still remains that no conflict will ever be solved if you deal with it in Artificial Space with the Overleaves. [12 February 1975]

Perhaps "bullshit" is a pretty good colloquial term for the perceptions that happen when one is in Artificial Space.

The Michaels were the first to discuss the concept of Real and Artificial Space, but their Adept student from another planet, Soleal, promptly used it also:

Soleal was present.

[Soleal:] Please stop associating religion with the "church." Religion is the ecstasy of the Logos. In your society, the church is a business in Artificial Space. One is of the Essence; one is not. One is in Real Space; one is not. Preparing an altar for the experience can be third line work of the highest order, or it can be a drudge — or even worse, it can be a mockery. Or better yet, for those in the Work, it can be the gift of higher expression. [16 February 1975]

Refer to the chapters "Religion" and "Logos" and "Work, The".

Joel: Is the following statement true: You are here, and the problem is not when you are coming, but when we can see you?

[Soleal:] It is also true that in another frame of reference, I am not. Many would never perceive the etheric. Of course, in the sense that you question, that is true. Actually, though, all of you could perceive me in my present form if you would "open your eyes." Only in a sense, are your eyes open. They are open only to those experiences protected by the master Tapes that define reality to you. The eyes, as they are now, are trained to see only that which exists in Artificial Space. They are able to perceive in Real Space, but they must be retrained. The master Tapes you now have would not allow this experience, even in your dreams. You run from images out of Real Space. The Essence, of course, perceives in Real Space. The Personality can only perceive in Artificial Space. Artificial Space encompasses the entire Physical Plane. [16 February 1975]

This quotation requires some explanation. Each of the seven Planes is said to have seven levels, including the Physical Plane. The Ordinal levels of the Physical Plane consist of matter/energy as perceived by the five senses; this is where the body and the Personality function in Artificial space. The Cardinal levels of the Physical Plane consist of laws-of-nature, the aura, and other such abstractions; this is where the Etheric body lives and where the soul or Essence functions in Real Space. Refer to chapters "Bodies, Subtle", "Bio-computer", "Planes", "Essence and Personality".

Thaddeus: I am aware of the next step for me and it scares the \$#!+ out of me.

You see, taking the next step [communal living] is different than the previous steps have been. It involves leaving something behind, possibly for the remainder of this life. Also, the communal life would set up many natural rhythms, and you will run from these. We invite only those who truly see themselves as students to take this step. For those who do not, it will be a waste of energy, and only result in needless negativity, for it will be experienced in Artificial Space through the Overleaves at a vibratory rate of unbelievable coarseness. Of course, with these conditions, communes will fail each and every time. [21 February 1975]

Refer to the chapters "Communal Living" and "School".

The "Law of Accident" applies only to the Overleaves, the False Personality operating in Artificial Space, using the artificial rhythms of the Physical Plane. This term does not apply to students in the Work. Things happen to Mechanical Man. Students and Balanced Man choose to experience. [Dimensions! June 1975]

The so-called “Law of Accident” is another one of those Gurdjieffian ideas about how things work (google the phrase), and this entire paragraph is a statement of that idea: things just happen randomly for Mechanical Men operating in the Lower Centers and in False Personality and in Artificial Space, whereas things happen intentionally for Balanced Men operating in the Higher Centers and in True Personality and in Real Space.

Summary Comments on Real and Artificial Space

From the point of view of the soul on the Astral Plane, the entire Physical Plane is “Artificial Space”. Because the False Personality, and even the Overleaves, are geared for operation on the Physical Plane, they are complicit in Artificial Space. One of the main functions of a spiritual path is to see beyond Artificial Space to the higher and more durable Real Space beyond and above. A couple of aspects of the spiritual path mentioned in the transcriptions that can lead from Artificial Space to Real Space are meditation and communal living, but of course there are other methods; refer to the chapter “Tools”.

Even though the Michaels do not state this explicitly, I personally like to think of Real Space as “what is really going on here” when I have the suspicion that there is more to my current life events than meets the physical eyes. Perhaps my soul has taken charge and engineered some unlikely learning situation for the soul’s benefit.

People who have a Near Death Experience, where the etheric body (soul) leaves the physical body, almost to a person declare that they found their consciousness in a body and in a realm that is more “real” than life in the world in the physical body. They compare the experience to awakening from a dream. This provides another metaphor for “Real Space versus Artificial Space”, and that is described and explained in the chapter “Awakening from Sleep.”

Certain Physical Plane events seems to be encumbered by the illusory nature of Artificial Space more than others: politics, money, and sexuality, for instance.

If any subsequent Michael channels used these terms I did not find it.





⑧ RECOGNITION

This chapter is the product of a search for the word recognition and its derivatives in the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group channeling sessions. This word does not represent a significant component of the Michaelian teachings. However, there are good reasons to discuss the subject in this *Study Papers* book: 1) the subject came up numerous times during the original Michaelian group; 2) some interesting things were said about the subject; 3) the subject is related to a number of other components of the Michaelian teachings that are considered to be significant; 4) students can presumably benefit from having the mentions conveniently collected and commented all in one place.

The word Recognition is capitalized in this chapter and other chapters of this *Study Papers* book because it has a special meaning in the Michaelian teachings; it is a Michaelian jargon word that needs a definition apart from its use in the common vernacular.

The Michaelian teachings is an elaborate body of information about reincarnation and its ramifications, one of those ramifications being that kindred and friended souls reincarnate and meet on the Physical Plane. This sets the stage for a phenomenon that is called “Recognition”. The Michaelian teachings has doctrines about other reincarnational phenomena, and it is good if we Recognize them when we experience them during our lifetime. There are, of course, numerous instances where this word has the common meaning, but this chapter only reviews those instances where it refers to this special meaning.

Recognition per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

The following extracts from original Michaelian group transcriptions are Q&A exchanges, where an original Michaelian group member asks a question (or makes a comment), and the Michaels provide an answer. This is a subject that benefits by division into subsections. Within those subsections, these extracts are presented in the chronological order in which they were given. As is my custom, I often provide some explanatory comments following the question or answer. Underlined words in the questions and answers are my emphasis, to draw attention to what it is that I comment on. Sometimes I embed words or phrases [in brackets] that I believe help to clarify the question or the answer.

Recognition of Paranormal Phenomena

The first use of the word appeared in the third session that has become generally available, a Tomas session:

Sue: I have a different kind of feeling; there is a feeling of a lot of energy, yet I am so relaxed. What is happening?

[Tomas:] There is taking much energy to contact you tonight. You feel the overflow. I am glad to see you recognize the feeling. [05 July 1973]

In the early months of the original Michaelian group, various means were used with various people to make contact with the supernatural realm. That passage provides a clue about learning to channel: learn to recognize the particular unusual physiological and psychological sensations that often accompany the activity. Do not fear or resist them, but relax into them. The sensations that accompany learning to channel can be generalized to include recognition of all paranormal phenomena, including psychic phenomena; refer to chapters “Paranormal, The” and “Psychic Energy”. The point of this type of Recognition would be to not dismiss or deny the supernatural experiences, because that might block further awareness of the higher or greater reality, and development of a nascent aptitude.

Recognition of Kindred and Friended Souls

The second mention of Recognition was of another type of experience with supernatural implications:

Dick: I would like to know if I have been with [my daughter] Kathryn before, and is Kathryn an Old Soul?

[Kathryn] has been with you before; Richard, too, and Dorothy. Yes, Kathryn is an Old Soul. Sarah Recognized Kathryn the first time they met again. [26 August 1973]

Some people feel so familiar and so comfortable the first time you meet them that you might begin to suspect that they are kindred or friended souls. The point of this type of Recognition is to trust the impression, go with it, and see where the relationship goes, because it will almost certainly be meaningful.

Gene: If two thousand years ago I had a pet cat, could that etheric part of it be in my current lifetime and Recognize me?

That happens often. [03 April 1974]

It is not merely whimsical or wishful thinking to hope that beloved pets, the same as beloved people, repeatedly participate in the story arc of our reincarnations.

Is there an attraction between [Entity] Fragments?

There is a strong affinity. This can be either negative or positive depending on past associations and the level of the soul determines the amount of Recognition [— the older the soul, the more the Recognition].

Old Souls who are seekers, and, yes, also Mature and Young [Soul] seekers, too, frequently Recognize each other. Narra and Cynthia are both seekers; however, they have known each other before. [23 June 1974]

Obviously, spiritual seekers who know about kindred souls are the most likely to Recognize the phenomenon for what it is when it happens. An unusual affinity for each other is one of the clues.

Dick: I would like to hear why my twin soul did not stop me and talk to me.

How would you have reacted to the Recognition at the moment? There is a time for everything under the sun. You have heard this before. (Proverbs). [07 July 1974]

(Actually, the aphorism is found in Ecclesiastes 3, not Proverbs.) Sometimes Recognition is not immediately acknowledged. Elsewhere it is said that one should set aside some quiet time — ‘under the sun’ as it were — “Review” (refer to the chapter by that name) recent events or encounters in an attempt to bring subliminal impressions into conscious awareness.

The man Dr. Leland is a Fragment of your original Entity, which caused Recognition. [19 November 1974]

Rick told us of an experience he had had during meditation, where he saw a clear picture of the back of a man, close up, then far away. He asked if this had been Don Juan.

This imagery concerns a Fragment of your Entity. There are only seven Fragments of this Entity still on the Physical Plane, and there is a tremendous drive on the part of the remaining Fragments to reunite. This will happen again, and soon the image will become clearer and last longer. Then you will have some Recognition. [26 November 1974]

Rick was a Seventh Level Old Soul. Presumably, the older the soul, the more sensitive to, and responsive to, a Recognition experience that person will be.

Recognition of Reincarnation and Past Lives

Yet another Recognition of the supernatural realm is this one:

Ray: I've been reading a lot of David Hume's writings and I can't seem to understand some parts of it. What I want to know is, if Hume is part of my Fragment, then why can't I understand something I wrote before?

The semantics are throwing you off. You Recognize many similar thoughts. You must remember the age in which you were living then. Startling concepts were introduced cautiously and with much reservation, sometimes cloaked in obscurity, so that they would not be recognized for what they were by hostile souls. England was an absolute monarchy then. [13 December 1973]

“Reincarnation” (refer to the chapter by that name) is one of the core doctrines of the Michaelian teachings, so naturally, as part of “Validating” (refer to the chapter by that name) the teaching, one might choose to ask a channel about past lives, or use one’s own “Intuition” (refer to the chapter by that name) about a past life, and research that person. The point of this type of Recognition is that it helps one to understand one’s present situation if one understands where one has been in the past, including past lifetimes. Even if there is a misidentification, there is a benefit to the study of history, namely, learning lessons from historical precedents that apply in the present day.

Alice: Did Robert [Burton] Recognize Edgar? Is there something that he learned from Edgar or is it something Edgar was to have learned from Robert?

Yes, he did. Robert Recognized his old teacher [from a past life] and it frightened him badly. [31 January 1974]

Because Recognition does not happen very often, and because weird sensations accompany it, it can be scary when it happens, especially if one does not know what it is. One purpose of this chapter is to let students know what it is so that they can respond in a positive way rather than a negative way. The proper response is cautious curiosity until the two figure out what Business the two have in this lifetime; "Business" is capitalized to emphasize that this is about transcendent soul business, not mundane Personality business.

Barbara: I Recognized his picture as if I had known him.

You were with him in past lives, yes, but not as his student. In fact, you were students together. [06 February 1974]

Sometimes you do not even need to see the person in the flesh to Recognize them. For one thing, it has been said that people resemble who they were in past lives. This makes sense because subsequent lives are often a continuation of a previous life, and a similar physical appearance reinforces the continuity.

Phyllis: My father did make small, exquisite statuary for gardens, also many portraits and busts. He especially liked fountains. He gave me a photo of some gardens in Villa Desta. Is this significant? He just happened to like it and bought it.

The connection is far deeper than chance. He Recognized it as a place he lived in before. [13 February 1974]

This is just another example of the continuation of one lifetime to another; it could also be called "bleed-through".

Dick: I have not been able to Recognize people from past lives. Is there anything Michael could say that would help in that respect?

The Recognition is, of course, an emotional one. Often, Dick, you manage to repress quite effectively your initial impression of the people you meet, and this eventually results in a lukewarm impression of them that is relatively fixed. When you meet with them, allow yourself the luxury of even a negative initial impression, even a strong negative one, and follow it through. Sometimes, it does mean recollection, and this will produce strong emotional vibrations, and if the other [person] is reasonably self-confident, you will be able to detect a like response in them. If they are simply obnoxious, you will also soon realize this and be able to differentiate. [30 May 1974]

Dick was in the Repression Mode, a Mode less open to Recognition. It is not easy for the Personality, encumbered as it is with so much illusion and fantasy, to learn to distinguish a valid Recognition of a kindred or friended soul or past-life associate from some other kind of Recognition, such as of a personality conflict; see further on.

The word recollection appeared in the passage above; a search for the word turned up one other instance, namely this Q&A exchange about Recognition of past-life influences:

(From Ted): Did I drown in a previous lifetime, since I've had fear of water for such a long time?

No, you did not drown. The fear you experience is a fear of anything that is not known or not introduced to you in a familiar way. You chose a mother in this lifetime who had experienced fear of drowning. In fact, she has experienced death in water through dying in the womb. She has no recollection of any of this. She is a Baby Soul Slave, and she has done all she can to protect you from all experiences that were to her, horrifying. You will not fear water shortly. It will become your friend. Your son will help. [13 August 1974]

Recognition can be sub-conscious and go unrecognized and still have an influence on the conscious personality. Even if the influence is beneficial, rather than detrimental as in this case, it is good to bring it into awareness, where it can be properly assimilated.

You are right: this is not the first time you have met this man. There are no Ribbons, but you have been closely enough associated for the Recognition to have taken place. [19 October 1974]

The closer and/or more intense the relationship in the past life, the closer and/or more intense it will be this time around.

Etta: Is Martin [Luther] King in [my] entity?

The affinity here is not Entity [mates], but rather Recognition of the Essence [Fragment] that has many times helped you in the past [lifetimes]. [23 February 1975]

That is what I mean by "friended" soul as distinct from "kindred" soul.

Recognition of Informative Dreams

Sometimes Recognition happens in the dreaming state before it happens in the waking state:

Sarah: I had a very vivid dream a week or so ago, in which this young man, who was very serious looking, not handsome, but clear-appearing male, spoke to me and said "Don't believe what history said about me." I would like to know if my impression of who this was is correct, and also if history is right. (Her impression was that the man was Julius Germanicus Gaicus.)

This is the proper name for the Fragment at that time. The "dream" you had was not a dream. Had anyone seen you at the time of the vision, your eyes were open. You should experience this more often now that you Recognize it for what it is. [13 December 1973]

Refer to the chapter "Dreams and Dreaming" for more discussion of that topic. The point of this type of Recognition is similar to the one about Recognizing other paranormal phenomena, namely that extraordinary levels of the cosmos are in communication with our ordinary level of the cosmos, but Recognition is various ... and subtle, so you have to pay attention.

The following Q&A exchange happened in the context of a discussion of "Composites"; refer to the chapter by that name. Basically and briefly, a Composite refers to the notion that kindred souls, as "subordinate" Fragments, can cohabit the incarnation of a "dominant" Fragment, and influence it. This is just another supernatural phenomenon that we do well to Recognize:

Gene: When I communicate with my Fragments, how will I perceive them?

The information will at first appear to be dreaming. Then, you may wish to transfer this over to the waking state and just be aware of the larger part of yourself, which is the essence of the Old Soul's perception.

Gene: [Does it come as] Intuitive thoughts?

More than that. Even as loud as a voice sound that only you can hear.

Gene: How do I Recognize it?

An intuitive feeling of affinity of an extension of self. It will be far more in tune with your innermost thoughts than even we are at times. [16 June 1974]

Learn to Recognize when your kindred souls are whispering in your mind. Refer to the chapter "Intuition" for more discussion of that phenomenon.

Recognition of the Root Cause of Conflicts

Cheryl was a Young Priest and Kathryn was an Old King (two of Dick's daughters), and they did not always get along. Sometimes the lack of friendliness can be ascribed to supernatural causes as noted above, but sometimes it can be ascribed to Personality, and it is good to discern the difference:

Cheryl: Can it [the competition between myself and my sister Kathryn] be resolved in this life?

There have been historical instances of resolution. The way is not easy and in many others resulted in even more strained relations initially, but it can be resolved by Recognizing the source of the conflict and capitalizing on some of the positive factors as a bridge across the deep water. The struggle between [Prime Minister Benjamin] Disraeli and [Queen] Victoria [of England] was resolved in this manner. [16 December 1973]

It does not say so here, but it does say so elsewhere, as documented in the chapter "Overleaves — Interactions", that the Michaels revealed the Overleaf System to their students to help them resolve conflicts, among other benefits. Sometimes the source of conflicts goes beyond personality, such as Karma, as also stated elsewhere. Conflicts are built into the structure of the cosmos itself, not just personality, and the only way out is through, but recognizing the true source, rather than some false source, facilitates the resolution.

Recognition of Pre-incarnate Plans

Yet another Recognition of the supernatural realm is this one:

Dick: Then, in the case of my patient (who is a King), is it improper for me to try to help her?

She needs to Recognize it for something that she chose [before incarnation]. Only then can she alter it. [25 December 1973]

One of the components of reincarnation is the notion that the Fragment makes plans for its incarnation regarding experiences it wants to have. It works out best in the long run if the Personality self Recognizes these pre-incarnate choices, even if the Personality self would chose otherwise; refer to the chapter "Choice" for more discussion about that.

The only way that a Goal can be altered is by conscious Recognition of both the Goal and the desire to alter it with positive change as the result. [30 December 1973]

Refer to the chapter “Overleaves, Changing” for the story about that. Basically and briefly, Overleaves are chosen by the pre-incarnate Fragment for reasons, so it would be Bad Work for the Personality self to attempt to change them without Recognizing those reasons. The point of this type of Recognition is to take comfort that the Fragment self usually knows better than the Personality self.

The notion of the Fragment making plans for an incarnation applies to the Personality self, but the Michaels also revealed that there is a special type of pre-incarnate plan that they call Agreements and Sequences, which are conducted between a self and other selves:

Could we recall about him/her?

Yes. You have a Sequence that you Agreed upon with another student.

Joan: Someone in this group?

Definitely. The Sequence is not with you, Joan. In the case of Sequences, we would prefer that the students Recognize them. We could easily manufacture many Sequences. Fertile imagination.

Narra: How do I discover this Sequence?

Unfolding events, most likely. [05 June 1974]

Refer to the chapter “Agreements and Sequences” for a discussion about about the phenomenon, which is good to know about so that we are more likely to Recognize it when it happens.

There is yet another type of pre-incarnate plan:

Should we recognize [life] Tasks in others?

Yes, you should. Particularly, you should work toward some insight to your own [life] Task. [12 June 1974]

Refer to the chapter “Task, Life” for discussion about the phenomenon, which is good to know about and to Recognize when it happens.

Joan asked if he was a Fragment of her Entity.

No, but you have been in a Sequence with him before. Not this time, just old friends, Recognizing each other.

Joan asked if the student was bothered by the Recognition.

Yes, because he cannot logically explain the feeling, except as we stated earlier, other than sexually. [19 November 1974]

People who do not know about Recognition of kindred and friended souls have no other explanation for the Recognition than body for body. Another way to put that is that we must learn to make a distinction between what I call “chemistry” and what I call “alchemy”. The former involves meaningful interactions in body and personality, whereas the latter involves meaningful interactions in soul or Fragment or Essence, aka Recognition. If we do not learn to make that distinction, then meaningful relationships will get even more screwed up than they otherwise might.

Carolyn: Do Gene and I have any Sequences together or Karmic ties?

Many times in the past, you and Gene have been friends, just as have most drawn by bonds to this [original Michaelian group] cadre. This is the first time, however, that there has been an opposite–gender attraction. This was partially determined by the agreed-upon Sequence.

Carolyn: Which was?

Once in the past, you were on opposite sides in a major conflict, but even then managed to cross the lines long enough to establish the Recognition. In this life, the Agreement was made to facilitate the student Carolyn’s search for the [original Michaelian group] cadre and thus growth. [15 January 1975]

Symptoms of Recognition

The Recognition phenomenon can be startling in various ways.

NarraS: Does this person live in the Chicago area, or what direction shall I look?

You will not need to look. With your added knowledge, Recognition will come. [17 July 1974]

In some cases, the Recognition can be so intrusive that one does not need to be vigilant. But even here, it is really helpful that one knows about and understands what Recognition is all about.

When two souls meet again and there is Recognition, this can be a powerfully positive experience, if it is felt by both. It can also be scary, as it was for this man, because his belief system does not go beyond the grave. [05 October 1974]

Refer to the chapter “Belief System”. Believing what we Michaelian students believe about reincarnation and kindred souls, we should not find Recognition of kindred or friended souls to be scary when we meet them. Note also what I say throughout this chapter, that Recognition is about phenomena that “go beyond the grave”, to other lifetimes or to the Astral Plane.

...there is the very real attraction there that we have told you before happens when Older Souls come together after an Astral interval for the first time in this life. This attraction can be negative or positive, and can result in a coming together or a going away, but it does provoke an emotional response that is difficult to suppress. [15 October 1974]

Besides an unusual affinity and easy familiarity as mentioned above, there is often an unusual inexplicable emotional reaction that cannot be dismissed.

Intuition is not shallow. We will go into this further. Recognition is yours if you would not block the feelings and not think on it so much. Your intuitions seem strongest when you are the most confused about where they come from. You have therefore created a double frustration. [03 November 1974]

Refer to the chapter “Intuition” for more information about that phenomenon. The point made in that chapter is that it is good to develop intuition for various reasons, Recognition being one of them. If/when there is confusion or frustration or irrationality about some event, consider if Recognition might be lurking behind it.

How do we Recognize a Fragment of our Entity?

The Recognition of a Fragment of one’s Entity is usually a casual one. Sometimes, the one who Recognizes is startled at first, but this normally is not a relationship fraught with much tension. In fact, it is usually marked with ease, as these are old friends and you would not expect fireworks. With twins, there is normally a desire for closeness of an immediate nature, and barring social constraints this proceeds rapidly and is usually fixed from that point on. This bond is by far the strongest on the Physical Plane, and not much can come between twins. Karma of an adverse nature can pull twins apart, and sometimes the Goal of Rejection will repel a twin even though it does not wish to be repelled. [09 November 1974]

Refer to the chapters “Twins — Physical and Spiritual” and “Karma” and “Bonding” for more discussion of those phenomena.

The word Recognition does not appear in the following quotation, but it was in the same session as the previous quotation.

What about Sequences?

You see, there is a sense of unfinished business hanging over Sequential partners, and they feel this tension, which is only relieved by completion of the Sequence. This does not have to be negative. There are positive Sequences, but still the tension for completion of the task is felt. These souls often seek each other out more often than casual friends would, for the obvious purpose of working on the Sequence. [09 November 1974]

People who are not informed about Recognition would experience the tension but would not know what the cause was, and therefore would be more likely to reject the impulse.

The emotions are the Personality’s only way of Recognizing the previous lives the Essence is now free to permit to come through. The student’s progress is only measurable by his Personality in the emotional terms. [undated early 1975]

Narra: Is Paul J my Essence Twin?

Your Essence has already Recognized its twin: why cannot the rest? This is not quite fair, we realize, but there is a tendency, even on this [third Plane] level, [for us] to want you to answer your own questions, in particular, those concerning Fragments of your Entities, Essence Twins, and the déjà vu one feels when one encounters an old friend from the past. With you, the barrier is more of a tendency not to trust your own intuitive knowledge. The joy one experiences when the twin Essences come in contact is not wanted by the Repression Mode.... We would say then that you must trust that intuition. [21 October 1977]

Oftentimes, after newbie Michaelian students learn about these various types of soul Business, when they have a Recognition experience with another person, they run to their favorite Michael channel and ask about which type of Business this is. This is okay at first, so that students learn to discern the differences in types of Business, but, as we see from the original Michaelian group transcriptions, the student should eventually learn to intuit what is going on without being told; refer to the chapter “Crutches”. Refer to chapters “Insight” and

“Intuition” and “Higher Self” and “Essence” for tips on learning to Recognize when one’s own higher or greater self speaks to the Personality self.

Concluding Comments on Recognition

Numerous types of Business (Karma, Agreements and Sequences, Kinship, Friendship, and so on) that Fragments may have in a lifetime were mentioned above, and they have their own chapter in this *Study Papers* book, but one type of Business that was not mentioned is “Monads”, so refer to the chapter by that name.

The point of appreciating and cultivating all kinds of Recognition would be to become more aware of what is really going on at non-physical levels of reality as they impinge on our natural reality. In other words, we do better if we do not just stumble and bumble our way through life like an oblivious zombie. There are a lot of extraordinary things happening, above and beyond and outside the ordinary.





⑧ REFLECTION

This chapter is the product of a search for the word reflection in the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group channeling sessions. This word does not represent a significant component of the Michaelian teachings. However, there are good reasons to discuss the subject in this *Study Papers* book: 1) the subject came up numerous times during the original Michaelian group; 2) some interesting things were said about the subject; 3) the subject is related to a number of other components of the Michaelian teachings that are considered to be significant; 4) students can presumably benefit from having the mentions conveniently collected and commented all in one place; 5) being self-reflective or not is pervasive in human psychology and sociology and spirituality — subjects covered extensively in this book — so it behooves us to have a working knowledge of it.

The word reflection is not capitalized in this chapter or other chapters of this *Study Papers* book because it has no special meaning in the Michaelian teachings; it is not a Michaelian jargon word that needs a definition apart from its use in the common vernacular.

This chapter is one of many in this book that focuses on a psychological component of the Michaelian teachings as found in original Michaelian group transcriptions, rather than on a doctrinal or spiritual component. A psychological component is usually either a positive to be cultivated or a negative to be mitigated. As we will see, the Michaels tell us that self-reflection is a positive worth cultivating. The Michaelian version of psychology is not to be confused with the pop psychology of the self-improvement movement, those that do not have a spiritual core or perspective. Rather, the Michaelian psychotherapeutic path (aimed at improving psychological health) is a beneficial precursor to the spiritual path (aimed at improving soul health). To skip the former but attempt the latter is referred to as “spiritual bypassing”. This is discussed at length on various websites, including https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spiritual_bypass. To skip mitigating one’s psychological issues and attempt to go straight to enlightenment usually proves to be problematic.

This chapter is not about looking at yourself in a literal mirror, it is about looking at yourself in a metaphorical ‘mirror’.

There were some instances of the word reflection that had nothing to do with introspective self-reflection, so they are not documented in this chapter or elsewhere in this *Study Papers* book.

Definition of Self-Reflection

So what is meant by reflection? Wikipedia has an article that provides a definition and a description, as follows (underlines are my emphasis and [bracketed] words and phrases are my explanatory interpolations):

Introduction

Self-reflection is the ability to witness and evaluate our own cognitive [Intellectual Center], emotional [Emotional Center], and behavioral [Moving Center] processes. In psychology, other terms used for this self-observation include ‘reflective awareness’, and ‘reflective consciousness’, which originate from the work of William James.

Self-reflection depends upon a range of functions, including introspection and metacognition, which develop from infancy through adolescence, affecting how individuals interact with others, and make decisions.

Self-reflection is related to the philosophy of consciousness, the topic of awareness, consciousness in general, and the philosophy of mind.

The concept of self-reflection is ancient. For example, more than 3,000 years ago, “Know thyself” was the first of three Delphic maxims inscribed in the forecourt of the Temple of Apollo at Delphi. It is also considered a form of thought that generates new meaning and an opportunity to engage with what seemingly appears incongruous.

Impact

Self-reflection is a process of communicating internally with oneself. When one takes time to think about their character or behavior, they analyze the reasons that caused the behavior, where this comes from, what the outcome of the behavior means to them, is it effective for them and what they can do about it. Individuals process this information about themselves to help them find methods to deal with the information gained during the self-reflection process and applying this information to future behavior has been shown to elicit strength and joy.

Self-reflection helps people in multiple ways:

First, self-reflection fortifies an individual's emotional stability. When setting aside some effort to self-reflect they are looking inwards. This assists with building two parts to their emotional intelligence: self-awareness and self-concept. Self-awareness enables a person to comprehend their feelings, qualities, shortcomings, drives, and objectives, and recognize their effect on others. Self-concept includes the capacity to control or divert their troublesome feelings and motivations and adjust to changing circumstances. Building these skills will improve both their personal and professional life and language learning.

Second, self-reflection enhances a person's self-esteem and gives transparency for decision-making. Self-esteem is significant for dealing with a filled, complex life that incorporates meetings, vocation, family, network, and self-necessities. It helps in decision-making, effective communication, and building influence. The more they think about their qualities and how they can grow them the more confident they will be later on. A person may become happy with their good qualities and identify the ones that require growth.

Third, the self-reflection process requires honesty of the individual in order to be effective. When a person is honest with themselves when self-reflecting, they are able to understand their experiences; this person can grow and makes changes based on what they have learned and lead them to better choices.

Fourth, self-reflection adapts a person's actions in future situations. Making time to step back and consider their behaviors, the consequences of those behaviors, and the expectations of those behaviors can give them a source of a clear insight and learning. A person engaging in self-reflection may ask themselves: What appeared to have a more remarkable impact? How can we accomplish a greater amount of that and enhance it? This cycle of reflection and variation—before, during, after actions—is regularly a recognized part of the process.

Psychotherapy

A study involving clients in a twelve-step program explored the role of self-reflection through diary writing, not only as daily therapy, but in a retrospective context. The study concluded that clients who read and reflected on their past diary entries demonstrated increased participation in the treatment program. The twelve-step program is based on self reflection and the accountability of actions past. The article by Mitchell Friedman indicates that success in one's recovery relies on self-reflection. [<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Self-reflection> — retrieved 07 April 2023]

All of the above applies to what the Michaels had to say about the subject during the original Michaelian group. Mentioned in the quotation is “metacognition”, and that is discussed in the chapter “Self-observation”.

Self-Reflection per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

The following extracts from original Michaelian group transcriptions are Q&A exchanges, where an original Michaelian group member asks a question (or makes a comment), and the Michaels provide an answer. These extracts are presented in the chronological order in which they were given. As is my custom, I usually provide some explanatory comments following the question or answer. Underlined words are my emphasis, to draw attention to what it is that I comment on. Sometimes I embed words or phrases [in brackets] that I believe help to clarify the question or the answer. Numerous study papers related to this chapter are to be found among my comments.

The first mention of self-reflection in the original Michaelian group transcriptions appeared about a month after the Michaels themselves revealed themselves to the original Michaelian group:

Richard: I would like to somehow recapture the tranquility I found at Tahoe. I would like to spend tomorrow meditating, and next week meditating and reflecting. How can I best do this?

Cease Inner Consideration of the effects of your actions on others. You are doing nothing wrong. We find no fault with your plan. [22 September 1973]

Inner Consideration is a Gurdjieffian phrase for caring about what other people think and acting accordingly rather than acting from integrity and acting to please oneself. Self-reflection helps a person to know themselves better, thereby increasing their integrity. Some months later it was revealed that Richard had the Goal of Acceptance, and months after that it was said that the Negative Pole was –Ingratiation, which is a lack of integrity, a tendency to care too much about what other people thought.

Self-reflection is a tool for learning more from experience than a non-reflective person would:

We've been told that we go to school between lives. Is this accurate?

School is a deceptive term. There is much time for reflection and much guidance. Many souls remain suspended in a limbo of their own manifestation for many of your years. Old Souls welcome the interval. There is normally a very short transition from the physical body to the low Astral Planes. [08 October 1973]

Between incarnations, much is learned via reflection that was not learned during the incarnation. If one does more reflection during the incarnation, so much the better for the person if it helps them change their ignorant ways during the incarnation.

Kathryn: I would appreciate a comment about the books [Tales of] Beelzebub and All and Everything [both by Gurdjieff]. Is it Good Work to read them straight through? And is the third book available?

The one [Beelzebub], of course, is allegorical. *All and Everything* is worth reading. If you refer to *The Strange Life of Ivan Osokin*, that is also worth reading. To read allegorical literature “straight through” seems a bit foolhardy to us.

Kathryn: Ivan Osokin by Gurdjieff?

It [*The Strange Life of Ivan Osokin*] is by P.D. Ouspensky. *Beelzebub* is allegorical. This is difficult to read without reflection [= study and thought]. [10 November 1973]

Refer to the chapter “Gurdjieff, Ouspensky, Collin, Burton” for more about the influence of those people on the original Michaelian group members. Some books are not intended to be read in a casual, breezy manner; to understand them, one must take it slow and easy and think about the material.

Billie: Was there something she said that is not correct?

No. We merely suggest that you consider all the information valid within your own more somber reflective nature. [20 January 1974]

The word “introvert” occurs only once in the original Michaelian group transcriptions, and there the word “somber” was also used. (“There is nothing dull about spiritual growth. The need is to become more joyous and expansive, not more somber and introverted.” — 10 January 1974). Introversion is not a specific trait in the Overleaf System, but the Michaels do somewhat acknowledge its existence with this statement. It is possible for introversion and reflection to become excessive and counterproductive and unhealthy and somber, such as when it crosses a threshold into brooding. A reflective person will come to understand who they are, what their nature is — and that includes learning where they fit, and function best, on the introversion–extroversion spectrum.

The original Michaelian group met once or twice a week, and during the meetings they moved quickly from one question to another. This is not ideal or optimal on the spiritual path:

Mallory: I feel there are quick subject changes and that the subject is not explored enough.

We would certainly hope that this teaching would evolve into much more than continuous dialogue. The foundation for this has been given. Even the dialogue with us is excessive. There is not time given over to reflection and searching. Valid insights from students should be accepted. If they are invalid, they will feel wrong and you will know this without confirming this [with us]. [31 January 1974]

Refer to the chapter “Dialogue”. There you will read that constant chatter does not leave enough time for reflection. On the other hand, the Michaels actually suggested that students should talk to each other more and talk to the Michaels less. A shallow, superficial student misses out on depth and breadth of understanding. Refer to the chapter “Insight” for more discussion about the experiences one will have if one is reflective.

Doug: Today, I had an experience that seemed to be a type of meditation. I've never meditated before and would like a comment on my experience today.

You must learn to let go of the images. Just observe them and let go. Any more borders on concentration, and any concrete thoughts on the subject leads to reflection. [13 February 1974]

Reflection is not appropriate for what the Michaels called “meditation” (emptying the mind), but it is for what the Michaels called “concentration” (focusing the mind); refer to the chapter “Meditation and Concentration” for the whole story. Those are both tools that students can use to augment and intensify the learning process, but only concentration augments reflection.

She is a person who has undergone some pain. This has left a certain trace on her and has given her motivation for looking into people. If she was hurt by people, she is looking to ward off further hurts. She might be looking for her self — her own self in other people's reflections. [13 May 1974]

Besides introspective reflection on oneself, it is useful to use other people as metaphorical ‘mirrors’. In other words, observe them and then ask yourself: What can I learn from their good or bad example? Perhaps this type of reflection is less favored by introverts, but more favored for extroverts, who, by the way, make up the majority of people.

Dick brought up a list of possibilities for the group that a smaller group had discussed earlier in the week [07 July 1974]. He had made a list up from suggestions made by Michael. Any comments?

We have no specific comments, but note that there is less enthusiasm than usual. Perhaps this bears discussion or reflection. [10 July 1974]

Besides comparing yourself with others and gleaning insights thereby, one of the intentional things to do during a reflective interval is to compare your present self with your past self (and your imagined aspirational self) and attempt to discern what is going on, how much progress is being made toward the goal, and so on.

Gene: Other comments for me?

We would hope that you will reflect upon those Photographs that we have made of you and use them to facilitate your own progress within the next several months. This could be an extremely exciting transition period for all serious students. It could also be an emotional disaster for those unwilling to effect the necessary change. [15 January 1975]

Refer to the chapter “Photography” for more discussion about that practice. There you will read that students offer helpful suggestions to fellow students. Obviously, this practice can have some of the same benefits as introverted reflection (upon oneself) and extroverted reflection (using others as a mirror).

Concluding Comments on Self-reflection

The keeping of a dream journal or diary is mentioned in the session of 07 April 1975. Certainly, the keeping of a diary or journal, and then reviewing it at a later time, is a way to do self-reflection.

Speaking of writing, and in addition to the notion of self-reflection, there is also the notion of thinking deeply and then writing about what one has read. It frankly surprises me that nowhere in the original Michaelian group transcriptions do the Michaels recommend that students write about the Michael teaching, because more than anything else that I know of, writing fosters reflection, especially if done in a systematic way, in a comprehensive and cohesive document — such as this *Study Papers* book, if I do say so myself. As you can see, this way to do reflection even goes beyond compiling quotations. During the original Michaelian group, three students compiled and organized material extracted from the raw transcriptions, but none of them wrote about it. Some channels have written books and web pages, and this has helped them to inculcate the teachings, but my suggestion is that a student will get far more out of the teaching by writing about it than by merely reading about it. To drive the learning home is why schools assign students to research and think, and then write essays and theses and such.

By the way, creation is a product of the Tao reflecting upon Itself, there being no other. To the extent that we do this with ourselves, we aspire to be more like Tao and we thereby approaching being like Tao.

Almost certainly, introverts will be inclined to self-reflection more than extroverts. For more information about the difference between these two, refer to a certain Wikipedia article:

The traits of extraversion (also spelled extroversion) and introversion are a central dimension in some human personality theories. The terms introversion and extraversion were introduced into psychology by Carl Jung, although both the popular understanding and current psychological usage vary. Extraversion tends to be manifested in outgoing, talkative, energetic behavior, whereas introversion is manifested in more reflective and reserved behavior. Jung defined introversion as an “attitude-type characterized by orientation in life through subjective psychic contents”, and extraversion as “an attitude-type characterized by concentration of interest on the external object”. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Extraversion_and_introversion — retrieved 07 May 2023]





REGRET — REMORSE — DISAPPOINTMENT

This chapter is the product of a search for three words with similar meanings, “regret”, “remorse”, and “disappointment”, in the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group channeling sessions. This concept does not represent a significant component of the Michaelian teachings. However, there are good reasons to discuss the subject in this *Study Papers* book: 1) the subject came up a few times during the original Michaelian group; 2) students can presumably benefit from having the mentions conveniently collected all in one place; 3) some interesting things were said about the subject; 4) the subject is related to a number of other components of the Michaelian teachings that are considered to be significant; 5) concerns about regret, remorse, and disappointment are pervasive in human psychology and sociology and spirituality.

The words are not capitalized in this chapter or other chapters of this *Study Papers* book because the concept has no special meaning in the Michaelian teachings; they are not a Michaelian jargon words that need definitions apart from its use in the common vernacular.

Basically and briefly, the Michaels recommended to the original Michaelian group members that they should live life in such a way that they have no regrets.

Definition of Regret, Remorse, and Disappointment

So what is meant by the concept? My go-to source for extensive definitions and descriptions is Wikipedia:

Regret is the emotion of wishing one had made a different decision in the past, because the consequences of the decision one did make were unfavorable.

Regret is related to perceived opportunity. Its intensity varies over time after the decision, in regard to action versus inaction, and in regard to self-control at a particular age. The self-recrimination which comes with regret is thought to spur corrective action and adaptation.

Regret has been defined by psychologists in the late 1990s as a “negative emotion predicated on an upward, self-focused, counterfactual inference”. Another definition is “an aversive emotional state elicited by a discrepancy in the outcome values of chosen versus unchosen actions”.

Regret differs from **remorse** in that people can regret things beyond their control, but remorse indicates a sense of responsibility for the situation. For example, a person can feel regret that people die during natural disasters, but cannot feel remorse for that situation. However, a person who intentionally harms someone should feel remorse for those actions. Agent regret is the idea that a person could be involved in a situation, and regret their involvement even if those actions were innocent, unintentional, or involuntary. For example, if someone decides to die by stepping in front of a moving vehicle, the death is not the fault of the driver, but the driver may still regret that the person died.

Regret is distinct from **disappointment**. Both are negative emotional experiences relating to a loss outcome, and both have similar neuronal correlates. However, they differ in regard to feedback about the outcome, comparing the difference between outcomes for the chosen versus unchosen action; In regret, full feedback occurs and with disappointment partial feedback. They also differ in regard to agency (self in regret versus external in disappointment). [<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Regret> — retrieved 06 February 2023]

Regret per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

The following extracts from original Michaelian group transcriptions are Q&A exchanges, where an original Michaelian group member asks a question (or makes a comment), and the Michaels provide an answer. This is not a subject that would benefit by division into subcategories, as some subjects do. These extracts are presented in the chronological order in which they were given, even though this is not a subject where there

was a development or evolution of a specific revelation of a facet of the Michaelian teachings, as was often the case with the original Michaelian group. As is my custom, I often provide some explanatory comments following the question or answer. Underlined words in the Michaels' answers are my emphasis, to draw attention to what it is that I comment on. Sometimes I embed words or phrases [in brackets] that I believe help to clarify the question or the answer.

The word only occurs in the original Michaelian group transcriptions on for occasions. Obviously, this negative emotion was not on their minds.

Don't make a hasty decision that you will surely regret, and you know from the past that this is a possibility.
[17 January 1974]

Do your "due diligence" before you make any major decision.

Discussion about Artificial Space — False Personality — Karmic debts.

For a moment, look at the physical universe as an enormous stage, and all of the physical things within it as the sets and actors. Then look for a moment at the possibility that Karma, or the system of Karma, may in fact be looked upon as the director of the play of life. Souls experiencing all of life on the Physical Plane never have to seek spiritual growth. They can, and most do, go through the whole cycle [of reincarnation] in the "waking sleep". The moment that you elect to commit yourself to the [spiritual growth] path, you remove yourself from the list of available actor's equity. Were it not for Karmic Ribbons, souls would not experience much at all; they certainly would not experience all of life.

Now this play is, of course, a lie; there is no truth to be found within it. The only truth lies within the Real Space beyond the theater. In this Real Space beyond, then, the Essence is free to select the best script available — the one enabling the particular Fragment to experience out some facet of physical life that it has not experienced before. These are facilitated by what we have chosen to call "Overleaves". Certain composites of Overleaves are conducive to certain types of activities — for instance, the extraction of an old [Karmic] debt. Remember, the moment you step on the [spiritual] path this is no longer the case. You may depart from the script just as soon as you realize that it exists. You may depart from it completely, and if you wish, without regrets, but this is hard work; just the realization is difficult enough. You see, that which you call Essence, that which has access to higher expression, operates always in Real Space. The False Personality fears real space as the agoraphobic fears the open field. [08 February 1975]

The man Robert Heinlein hit upon an accidental truth in his epic (*Stranger in a Strange Land*, no doubt). He does not understand this truth, but was able to write about it. You apprehend the situation fully, love it as a part of the universal flow and then you let it go. And, by letting go, we mean down to the last vestige, no resentment, no regrets. If it is done in Personality, then it cannot be important on the Essence level. [21 Nov 1976]

Narra said that she felt that [her deceased husband] Robert did much work at the end.

We would agree with that. The Fragment that was Robert was one of the few in this [original Michaelian group] cadre able at the end to acknowledge that death was not the end, and that was an enormous step that led to much introspection and much contact with the Essence at the end. This Fragment was able to surrender the body without regret. The Essence is never "in Rejection", you see. Therefore, the man Robert even rejected his own knowledge, his own good advice. From that, you can measure the strides that were made. Those unfortunate souls who continue to hope for a miracle that will make them whole again never do come to grips with the possibilities that rest with death, and they never can relax the [ego's] vigil and see the light up ahead. Only those who realize that the physical life is about to end and go from there, have a chance. Those who counsel, err when they do not counsel in this direction. [21 February 1977]

Remorse per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

This word only occurs once in the original Michaelian group transcriptions that have become generally available:

Did Jesus die on the cross as is said in the Bible? Was Judas really a betrayer?

This [crucifixion] was, of course, a common form of execution for a non-Roman citizen. Yes, the body died that way; the task was finished; it was as it should have been. The man Judas did no more than he was asked to do. Still, he was confused and overcome by remorse, even though he understood that the man was long gone at the time the body died. The man Judas at that time was a Mid-Cycle [Fourth Level] Mature Priest in Submission. This gave him little option to refuse the King [Jesus]. [09 November 1974]

Disappointment per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

The Old Soul is usually an experienced and exciting partner for a soul in an earlier Cycle, but can be a very disappointing lover because of its nonchalance. [late August 1973]

Concluding Comments on Regret, Remorse, Disappointment

There might not be enough here to retain this chapter. Think hard; maybe it can be salvaged.





REINCARNATION

This chapter is the product of a search for the word “reincarnation” in the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group channeling sessions, and other words with a similar meaning. I have added some commentary, which consists of my analysis and synthesis of the quotations. Obviously, this word does not represent a significant component of the Michaelian teachings, but even so, the word appears often enough that it seems to me that students can benefit from seeing all of those instances documented and commented on in a chapter of this *Study Papers* book. Furthermore, the word is related to a number of other components of the Michaelian teachings that are considered to be more significant; these will be noted in the commentary on the instances of the word and its contexts. Briefly and basically, the Michaels recommended to the original Michaelian group members that they

If it can be said that there is one central doctrine around which the entirety of the Michaelian teachings revolves, it is reincarnation ...

So what is meant by reincarnation? The online Merriam Webster dictionary definition is:

The word “reincarnation” is not capitalized in this chapter or other chapters of this *Study Papers* book because it has no special meaning in the Michaelian teachings; it is not a Michaelian jargon word that needs a definition apart from its use in the common vernacular. One might therefore wonder why it is even included in this book. One answer is that it is just a Scholar–Cast Artisan thing to do: I study the Michaelian teachings documents and I write about them and I want to be thorough. Another answer is that trust issues are pervasive in human psychology and sociology, the subject came up in the original Michaelian group numerous times, some interesting things were said about it, and it might be helpful for Michaelian students to have the answers conveniently collected all in one place.

Reincarnation per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

The following extracts from original Michaelian group transcriptions are Q&A exchanges, where an original Michaelian group member asks a question (or makes a comment), and the Michaels provide an answer. This is [not] a subject that would benefit by division into subcategories, as some subjects do. These extracts are presented in the chronological order in which they were given, even though this is not a subject where there was a development or evolution of a specific revelation of a facet of the Michaelian teachings, as was often the case with the original Michaelian group. As is my custom, I often provide some explanatory comments following the question or answer. Underlined words in the Michaels’ answers are my emphasis, to draw attention to what it is that I comment on. Sometimes I embed words or phrases [in brackets] that I believe help to clarify the question or the answer.

Concluding Comments on Reincarnation





RELEVANCE

This chapter is the product of a search for the word “relevance” and its derivatives in the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group channeling sessions. This word does not represent a significant component of the Michaelian teachings. However, there are good reasons to discuss the subject in this *Study Papers* book: 1) the subject came up numerous times during the original Michaelian group; 2) students can presumably benefit from having the mentions conveniently collected and commented all in one place; 3) some interesting things were said about the subject; 4) the subject is related to a number of other components of the Michaelian teachings that are considered to be significant; 5) “Issues of relevance and irrelevance are pervasive in human psychology and sociology and spirituality.

The word “relevance” is not capitalized in this chapter or other chapters of this *Study Papers* book because it has no special meaning in the Michaelian teachings; it is not a Michaelian jargon word that needs a definition apart from its use in the common vernacular.

This chapter is one of many in this book that focuses on a psychological component of the Michaelian teachings as found in original Michaelian group transcriptions, rather than on a spiritual component, as so many other chapters in this book do. The psychological component is usually either a ‘virtue’ to be cultivated or a ‘vice’ to be mitigated; both are amenable to psychotherapy. Obviously, knowing what is relevant is a virtue. The Michaelian version of psychology is not to be confused with the pop psychology of the self-improvement movement, those that do not have a spiritual core or perspective. Rather, the Michaelian psychotherapeutic path (aimed at improving psychological health) is a beneficial precursor to the spiritual path (aimed at improving soul health). To skip the former but attempt the latter is referred to as “spiritual bypassing”. This is discussed at length on various websites, including https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spiritual_bypass. To skip mitigating one’s psychological issues and attempt to go straight to enlightenment usually proves to be problematic.

Definition of Relevance

So what is meant by [template?](#) The online Merriam Webster online dictionary definition is: [Wikipedia has an article that provides a definition and a description, as follows:](#)

Relevance per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

The following extracts from original Michaelian group transcriptions are Q&A exchanges, where an original Michaelian group member asks a question (or makes a comment), and the Michaels provide an answer. This is [not] a subject that would benefit by division into subcategories, as some subjects do. [These extracts are \[not\] presented in the chronological order in which they were given, even though this is not a subject where there was a development or evolution of a specific revelation of a facet of the Michaelian teachings, as was often the case with the original Michaelian group.](#) As is my custom, I usually provide some explanatory comments following the question or answer. Underlined words are my emphasis, to draw attention to what it is that I comment on. Sometimes I embed words or phrases [in brackets] that I believe help to clarify the question or the answer.

Concluding Comments on Relevance



RELIGION

[[Search for related words: doctrine, devotion, faith, ritual, Buddha, Christ, Jesus, etc.]]

“Religions” can get a tax exempt status in USA, “spiritual teachings” cannot.

Some Michaelian students might be “down” on “religion”, but religion *per se* is not the problem. True “religion” might better just be called “spirituality” so as not to confuse it with organized religion, which started out as valid but then went astray.

Religion per Wikipedia

[quote Wikipedia from the general article on religion, then quote from articles that talk about religions and philosophies mentioned in this chapter.]

Religion per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

The definition of “religion” changes through the Soul Ages:

The Infant Soul adopts the religion of its parents without modification, although its interest is cursory and its understanding poor.

The Baby Soul tends to be fundamentalistic in its religious beliefs. Personification of the godhead is the strongest in this cycle. The Baby Soul believes in the forces of evil.

The Young Soul, if religiously inclined, tends toward orthodoxy in the extreme. It will campaign tirelessly against all religious reform. If the Young Soul is atheistic, it will be equally as tireless in its efforts to wipe out the orthodoxy of others.

Religion becomes self-motivated in the Mature Soul cycle. The Mature Soul seeks quiet faiths — Quakers, Unitarians, Buddhism.

The religion of the Old Soul is expansive and includes unorthodox rituals. Groves of trees become cathedrals, and the presence of the realized masters is often felt by older souls. The synthesis is perceived in the final cycle, and Old Souls seldom cling to dogma.

The Transcendental Soul perceives the synthesis and teaches it as such — [it] will not espouse popular dogma and does not affiliate with organized religion.

The religion of the Infinite Soul is the logos. [Late August 1973]

The Mature Souls often dream dreams of violence and death, and many times their dreams are replete with religious symbolism. [24 January 1974]

I would like to ask about people who have led exemplary lives because of their religious beliefs, such as my grandfather. It seems like your Essence misses so much experience being so religious.

That is correct. Usually the next life is spent in a whirlwind of activity. [08 September 1973]

I have a question about conventional religions and how they influence people. I know it's a vague question, but people who become identified with a religion somehow limit their experience and don't seem to grow much, yet they may help other people. Christ did not look for his followers among the "righteous"; he looked among the "unrighteous."

His followers were only unrighteous in the eyes of certain beholders. The rituals derived from the religions are Good Work. They produce a group high, which is the only way that Baby Souls ever experience a high; that is, vicariously (through others). [08 September 1973]

Do you think the typewriter will become a religious archetype?

Do you?

It's as real as in this book [that I read where], there's this world that worships the hydrogen atom because they got all messed up by another civilization who visited them too early in their history and told them about the periodic table and they didn't understand the atomic theory and so, over the centuries they developed this powerful religion around the hydrogen atom, built temples to it, and they got all messed up because it came too early.

That is valid.

Which world is it?

The name is meaningless; the danger is real.

The beginning of religions is dangerous, not the hydrogen atom. Sarah said they just simply did not understand anything they were told.

How do religions deviate so far?

We cannot reach the Young Souls. They are in charge of your world. [08 September 1973]

It seems that I have one foot in religion and one foot in science, and they do not fit together. Could you comment, please?

There is no conflict. Religion is from the Emotional Center. Science must be approached through intellect. If there is Balance, there will be no conflict. Understanding scientific principles is a way to Higher Intellectual energy, just as feeling religion is the way to Higher Emotional Center. It is dogma that comes from False Personality and has no place in this discussion. [~13 September 1973]

The Transcendental and Infinite Souls do not manifest in a physical body.

That is essentially correct. The high Causal body [Transcendental Soul] manifests only in times of social or religious unrest. Then if the revolution does not come about, the high Mental body [Infinite Soul] manifests and brings the Logos to bear. The Mature Soul can also accelerate within the cycle. Young Souls can burn karmic ribbons rapidly, sometimes, and accelerate. Elizabeth Blackwell and Florence Nightingale are examples; Louis Pasteur, Walter Reed, Marie Curie, [and] Frank Lloyd Wright accelerated. [18 September 1973]

Will He [Infinite Soul] be a Russian?

The high Mental body will manifest. Look around you; do you not think that this is necessary? There is social and political unrest, internecine [mutually destructive] and interracial wars, religious schism — all existing simultaneously in a powder keg of nuclear power. The manifestation will be a very different type. The problems are not so different as they are more dangerous. [08 October 1973]

SharonB: I would like to know the relationships between the caste system of India and Roles?

There was [a relationship] in the beginning when Sri Krishna brought the Logos to bear. This has since become blurred by ambition and material desires. [15 November 1973]

What have I done in past lives to account for the physical burden I now have? [wheelchair]

The pain you inflicted on loved ones in the past is a part of karma for you, Edgar [Mena]. Also, you have always had a scholarly interest in religion, but with a savage bent more than once; for instance, during the Crusades and the Inquisition. [22 November 1973]

Comment on the value of her present work done at the A.R.E. [Edgar Cayce's Association for Research and Enlightenment] clinic, especially their views of dream interpretation.

Some of the work being done there is extremely valuable. We are not impressed with what appears to be a doctrinal bias, but aside from that, yes.

[Do you mean] religious bias?

Not specifically religious, more judgmental. But this pertains to the scientific method of research. The dream work is perhaps now their most valuable study. [29 November 1973]

I would like to know more about the roads to Madrid, and what fire has to do with my past lives...

Fire came later, at the time that most of you were living in Spain and Portugal. This was a common punishment for espousing unpopular religious beliefs. Your sister was among the victims of the Inquisition. [13 December 1973]

What is so special about every two thousand years?

We are referring to the philosophical climate existing then, which has not existed since, until very recently. This philosophical climate made the conditions right for the manifestations of the Infinite Soul. If you wish some parallels between then and now, we will gladly expound. The Infinite Soul manifests at times such as this when there is much philosophical stagnation, racial and religious strife, and the imminent destruction of that which binds society together. In Rome, as now, lip service was paid to religious tolerance, but there were periodic purges and reinstatement of the state gods. The parallel to this occurred in Nazi Germany. They had political parties where the lines of demarcation had become so blurred that no one knew quite where he stood. Luxury was available on a widespread basis and could be obtained through little effort. The welfare state came into existence. Then cities were crowded, and the city dwellers were alienated from each other. There was a deterioration of the family and the ratio of disturbed children was compatible with the figure now. The women's liberation movement was causing fear in the men, and they were so worried about their virility that they had little interest in anything else. This brought about many small wars that were fought on the battlegrounds rather than the bedrooms. Does that sound familiar? Walking into a latrine during the first century of this era would not be an unfamiliar experience for any of you. You would be right at home with the graffiti exhorting various solitary sexual pursuits. [27 December 1973]

I spent hours with NL and it is like she cannot see the difference between "C" and "B" groups. She thinks she will be God-conscious soon. She thinks she's near, through the Agni Yoga. Is it because I do not have the guidance when I'm talking with her or what?

No, it is not your lack of guidance — it is your lack of courage or conviction that does not permit you to point out the utter nonsense in the hope for instant "enlightenment". The path is long and steep. The difference in the teachings is, of course, the fact that this is a living Teaching; many of those are not. You have found it difficult to interpret the scriptures of the various religious sects on your world. This is because these are now dead teachings. [30 December 1973]

In the Goal of Growth, does one review all the other Goals? It seems I'm in and out of all of them [with the Goal of Growth].

The Goal of Growth causes the soul to search, sometimes restlessly, for the answers to questions of a philosophical and religious nature almost from the time the first breath is drawn. In the early Cycles, this sometimes causes grief and guilt, as there is often a split with family members over untenable views held by them. The "review" [of the other Goals] is a phenomenon that we believe to be universal in the older Cycles. We see this in all of you, but far more pronounced in those in Growth. This endless searching often produces both Acceptance and Submission; then when the flash [of insight] comes, the student in Growth often becomes temporarily Dominant in order to spread the word he has received. This is entirely natural. [03 January 74]

Does what we're doing parallel the Eleusinian way of doing things?

This can happen only with a high Priest who can do the ritual work. This should be an Adept really, but some successful Priests were simply Old Priests in Dominance. Rituals solidify groups in many instances.

Was Christ influenced by the Eleusinian mystery religion?

Not particularly, but was heavily influenced by Socrates and Epicurus, as well as the Alexandrian brotherhood, which really was a counterpart to the Eleusinian School.

How does Bacchus, the god of wine, fit into Eleusinian mysteries?

It has been said by us before that rituals unify and bring together many who otherwise would not be able to participate. The same goes for festivals. They provide an excellent opportunity to play the fool in a controlled, safe environment, which is necessary for all souls in Ordinal Goals and Roles.

Sages and Priests normally need no special invitations to be hams, but the same is not true for many Artisans and Warriors. Many Artisans are essentially nonverbal, except for those few who are like you, Richard, Intellectually Centered.

Warriors fear the loss of respect that accompanies the loss of dignity. Timid souls often blossom during festivals. This was known in the ancient times, more so than today. The bacchanalian cults arose from the celebration of the harvest, and were sponsored at first by Attic vintners [from "Attica," the district in Greece in which Athens was the principal city]. This was so much fun that the cults spread and took on additional significance. There is nothing dull about spiritual growth. The need is to become more joyous and expansive, not more somber and introverted. [10 January 1974]

We listened to a record that "turns Sarah on" religiously. For ten minutes, we listened. Many became restless after a few minutes. [31 January 1974]

Richard Hannah: Robert [Burton] did not call his school a religion; it was a 'school of consciousness'. Ours is a 'teaching', also, and not a religion, isn't it?

The only difficulty in that word [religion] is that it ties into dogma, and that is not religion [in our teaching]. We wish to teach a joyous religion without dogma and so decline to label it. Jesus did not call his teaching 'Christianity'. [03 February 1974]

Is there any relation between super Maya, Goals and Roles?

Of course, souls in the various Goals will create specific sets of obstacles and barriers — in other words, maya — and the older the soul, the more exalted the Maya becomes, and finally, it even comes around to masquerading as spiritual growth — the most super refined Maya of all. When you have learned to differentiate between this and the genuine article, you will have arrived at the point where you can no longer slip back into old, safe patterns and therefore must go forward. The awareness groups are, of course, super Maya groups of Mature Souls, the political action groups of the Young and splinter religious quackery groups of the Babies. It all comes back to the lack of inner purpose and the knowledge of the trapped Essence. Many Young and Mature Souls actively practice witchcraft and black magic in answer to the increased perceptions that they encounter in themselves but are unwilling to investigate at a deeper level. Many Old Souls dabble in Orientalia for the same reason. [24 February 1974]

I would like to ask about a feeling I had after going to church for the first time in a long time. I felt like I was hit over the head. My heart was squeezed. The minister was looking at me. I can't remember what he said.

Religious rituals are excellent for releasing trapped emotions. [17 March 1974]

I cannot understand mass psychology when it comes to religion.

That is the only way I can reach Emotional Center, through a group high. [14 April 1974]

To spread the logos as Robert does, you must have a Level of Being to attract people. You must be integrated and mysterious.

You almost have to have some type of mystery, yes — we agree with that. Most people do seek a teaching, and this includes organized religion that introduces some intrigue into their lives. The teaching, thereby, becomes exciting. Many do it with gimmicks; others with what you call charisma. It only works because it provides that special hint of the mysterious realm beyond the five senses to which you as the teacher have access, and that they can someday hope to glimpse. We are not opposed to this as long as the teacher does not begin to believe in his own magic. [14 April 1974]

Do they [whales] have religion?

Of a sort yes, not based upon an authority figure but based on an adoration of the life force. [22 May 1974]

What is Essence challenge?

Spiritual growth, for example; all forms of studious endeavor when undertaken for the sheer joy of the undertaking; some forms of religious pursuit; work that is in Essence [Role]: that is to say, for instance, painting was in essence for the Old Artisan Raphael, and his Essence was not bored. [05 June 1974]

I am reading a book by Rex Stanford. Does Michael have any comments about apparitions?

These apparitions are very often no more than the hallucinations of a hysterical personality, in the case of religious ascetics. In some cases, there have been appearances of Astral beings who simply assume the character desired by the medium. The man [Rex] Stanford is able to let go of his own energy to a degree, where he could produce such an apparition. The prediction of great disaster is an interesting phenomenon, and occurs with startling regularity all over the inhabited universe. Some Astral beings find this irresistible. We have no doubt they will, too. [05 June 1974]

Liz: Told to study "middle pillar" by a psychic. Is this true for everyone?

Not specifically. This is just an excellent exercise toward growth. [19 June 1974]

Are ordinal Roles as important as Exalted [Cardinal] Roles?

If this planet were entirely populated by Kings, Priests and Sages, there would be little progress — much leadership, religion and oratory, but no progress. [23 June 1974]

(Yarmulke, or head covering?) [Question not recorded.]

Yes. This practice in religion has a basis in truth or reality if you prefer that word. It is a ritual of conserving energy and providing protection for the medium. [09 October 1974]

I have the impression that within our group, the articulation of the teachings emphasizes the static, the intellectual, and the hierarchical. Is this primarily a distortion arising from my biases, or the group's, or the languages? Or is this an accurate transmission of the teachings? Please comment.

In the beginning of this group, the primary concern was in the development of the belief system in the language necessary to explain it to each other and to oneself. This is a necessary step in the formation of any group, but in most, becomes a barrier toward further growth and eventually, becomes the belief system itself. In this group, there has been evolution of a sort that now points toward continuance in growth. The possibility still exists, however, that you will continue to concern yourselves with the intellectual hierarchical aspects and neglect the spiritual, yes. But you do not have to. You can put this belief system to the acid test and see if it works. Until you do this, yes, you are still trapped in the beginning stages. This is where most of the other belief systems remained throughout their existence, including the world's great religions. The concern remained hierarchical and primarily intellectual, and never got off the ground spiritually. You are right, of course, you are trading one belief system for another; but there is a unity here that has not been before, and there is a trend toward integration that you are capable of verifying implicit within the system. [19 October 1974]

False religions actually impede spiritual development:

On this world, there have been significant cultural and religious barriers to [spiritual] growth. [22 October 74]

How many times have we repeated the steps you must take? Examine the tenets of the world's great religions and the greatest teachings now extant on this planet. You will find this same advice again and again — perhaps clothed in different semantics, but nevertheless the same — that upon which Christianity was based, that upon which Judaism has survived for the centuries, the pillars of Islam, the teachings of Siddhartha Gautama, the Tao Teh Ching. Until this teaching becomes a way of life for you, there will be no experiences for any of you. The only way we know of to experience anything is to live it — whether you be on the Physical, Astral, Causal or the high[er] Plane, it does not matter. Committing yourselves begins the transformation. The concept of "pilgrimage" in some of the best teachings extant on this planet do a marvelous job of stripping, if the pilgrimage is performed in the proper state of mind. [14 December 1974]

Sarah Chambers found herself reciting parts of the Koran. She noted that she used religious rituals as a way to release emotions.

This soul has searched through the ages for truth. The Scholar has sought to intellectualize all experiences of ecstasy, and has therefore denied the experience. Being now in touch, however timorously, with truth, is both threatening and incredibly inviting. To allow the experience, ritual or some form, that will enable the intellect to recede could be beneficial. More talking about it is not Good Work, and merely prolongs the agony that must, of course, precede the ecstasy. We patiently await your trying another doorway. [11 January 1975]

All teachings?

A comparable teaching that has as its goal agape through Balance. It may be Gurdjieffian in origin, or may have true religious grounding, as long as that (agape) remains as the goal. [16 January 1975]

.... the religions of the East are all and one tied into the concept of the Buddha or godhead within The Eastern faiths stress the inner man, while Western religions stress the external forces acting upon man. [31 January 75]

In this age, the teaching must transcend culture and religion. [12 February 1975]

Please stop associating religion with the "church." Religion is the ecstasy of the Logos. In your society, the church is a business in Artificial Space. One is of the Essence; one is not. One is in Real Space; one is not. Preparing an altar for the experience can be third line work of the highest order, or it can be a drudge — or even worse, it can be a mockery. Or better yet, for those in the work, it can be the gift of higher expression. [16 February 75]

Once again we will tell you that love is the highest truth and truth is what your culture through all your philosophies and religions reaches for, so, having reached, you may find the ultimate truth of love for all. What you can do for one brother that is manifest in your givingness, you can do for all. [01 June 1975]

Church

Does what we are doing now have anything to do with the return of Christ?

[Tomas:] Not exactly. The purpose of your being here is not to find only Christ but the knowledge of how to be. Christ is in the picture, but he is not the total all — he was a good teacher. If you are seeking only Christ, why don't you go to church? [10 July 1973]

I have been reading John Lilly in Center of the Cyclone [1972] and have had a similar experience [to his].

We consider the ordeal John [Lilly] went through in order to achieve breakthrough dangerous for most on the Physical [Plane]. It was necessary for John, as there were blocks not known to him at the time. One was the dogma of the church that he had consciously repressed or rejected, but was there nevertheless. He did make it through though. You may be certain John knows. [01 November 73]

Are we starting a church?

We would agree with that. [10 January 74]

for many centuries on this planet, the church has been the dominant employer of man. [13 February 74]

.... the Catholic Church, or any other dogmatic church [21 December 74]

Quotes from Michael in a compilation:

Religion has nothing to do with formal belief in any one particular system. We would have you look upon religion as an ecstatic celebration of the pan-dimensional life of the constant creative force of the universe, of the Tao. We would see you look upon religion as the joy of the liberated Essence. — The Teacher [Michael]

From another compilation:

The religion of the Old Soul is expansive and includes unorthodox rituals. Groves of trees become cathedrals and the presence of the realized masters is often felt by Older Souls. The synthesis is perceived in the final cycle, and Old Souls seldom cling to dogma.

We are concerned with the understanding and ultimate complete acceptance of all others, leading to the spiritual agape, which is the doorway to true consciousness. We wish to teach a joyous religion, without dogma, and so we decline to label it.

Robert did not call his school a religion; it was a school of consciousness. Ours is a teaching, also and not a religion, isn't it?

The only difficulty in that word is that it ties into dogma and that is not religion. We wish to teach a joyous religion without dogma and so decline to label it. Jesus did not call his teaching Christianity. [February 2, 1974]

Question: It seems that I have one foot in religion and one foot in science, and they do not fit together. Could you comment, please?

There is no conflict. Religion is from the Emotional Center. Science must be approached through intellect. If there is balance, there will be no conflict.

Understanding scientific principles is a way to Higher Intellectual energy, just as feeling religion is the way to Higher Emotional Center.

It is dogma that comes from False Personality and has no place in this discussion. [????]

Question: Do whales have Transcendental Souls or a higher mental body known to them?

No.

Question: Do they have religion?

Of a sort yes, not based upon an authority figure but based on an adoration of the life force. [????]

I have the impression that within our group, the articulation of the teachings emphasizes the static, the intellectual and the hierarchical. Is this primarily a distortion arising from my biases or the group's or the languages? Or is this an accurate transmission of the teachings? Please comment.

In the beginning of this group, the primary concern was in the development of the belief system in the language necessary to explain it to each other and to oneself. This is a necessary step in the formation of any group, but in most, becomes a barrier toward further growth and eventually, becomes the belief system itself. In this group, there has been evolution of a sort that now points toward continuance in growth. The possibility still exists, however, that you will continue to concern yourselves with the intellectual hierarchical aspects and neglect the spiritual, yes. But you do not have to.

You can put this belief system to the acid test and see if it works. Until you do this, yes, you are still trapped in the beginning stages.

This is where most of the other belief systems remained throughout their existence, including the world's great religions. The concern remained hierarchical and primarily intellectual and never got off the ground spiritually.

You are right, of course, you are trading one belief system for another; but there is a unity here that has not been before and there is a trend toward integration that you are capable of verifying implicit within the system. [????]

Luther asked what stops him from submitting to love — growth — what is the barrier there for him to the emotional experience? His SRG is Old Priest, Spiritualist, Arrogance, Emotional part of Intellectual Center.

... Examine the tenets of the world's great religions and the greatest teachings now extant on this planet. You will find this same advice again and again, perhaps clothed in different semantics, but nevertheless the same... That upon which Christianity was based, that upon which Judaism has survived for the centuries, the pillars of Islam, the teachings of Siddhartha Gautama, the Tao Teh Ching.

Until this teaching becomes a way of life for you, there will be no experiences for any of you. The only way we know of to experience anything is to live it, whether you be on the Physical, Astral, Causal or the High Plane, it does not matter. Committing yourselves begins the transformation. The concept of "pilgrimage" in some of the best teachings extant on this planet do a marvelous job of stripping, if the pilgrimage is performed in the proper state of mind. [????]

Richard asked if we should go up to Mt. Diablo on April 28 to meet Soleal.

That is not known at this time. You will know when it is.

Please do not underestimate the far-reaching power of this Cadre. It controls, in its entirety, far more than you can possibly dream. In every age, there is an avatar. Why should you not be the harbingers of the avatar of the Aquarian Age?

Richard pursued the importance of April 28 — his feeling that something was going to happen on that day.

Right now, we cannot answer that. In this age, the teaching must transcend culture and religion. It must reach far more than one tiny nation-state. It must be promulgated in far more tongues than ever before. You, in your entirety, cross all cultural lines and all other physical barriers. There are eight hundred fifty of you altogether. [????]

Soleal was present.

[Soleal:] Perhaps we should clear the agendas and then I will be around for those who wish more.

Please stop associating religion with the "church." Religion is the ecstasy of the Logos. In your society, the church is a business in artificial space. One is of the Essence; one is not. One is in real space; one is not. Preparing an altar for the experience can be third line work of the highest order or it can be a drudge — or even worse, it can be a mockery. Or better yet, for those in the work, it can be the gift of higher expression.

Is this referring to a literal or a symbolic altar?

[Soleal:] It can be either. Where is your symbolic altar if you do not have that quiet space?

As long as it does not become a crutch, the material altar serves those brothers who do not have the altar of the soul. You see, it is possible to transfer the psychic energy to your brothers, but there must not be agendas in

your way or the flow will be scattered, and you will not be able to transmute the collective energy into the higher expression. Those troubled among you will simply feed on the energy flow.

There is a word in my language for one who takes the road of least resistance and I see this in many students here. This is fine, but it certainly is not conducive to enormous leaps of growth. To feel the resistance is to feel the polarity, to feel the yin and yang of the Tao. You even use the Overleaves to resist the work, saying in effect, "Why should I even bother: the Overleaves abrade." The Priest has the word for which I search. (*William had used the word "cop-out."*) [????]

On this particular evening, we had a great deal of conversation about the Overleaves and just how much value they really hold for us. We talked about the fact that we feel we don't always use them properly and wondered what we could do to use them more effectively.

The majority of all students of this and comparable teachings use the Overleaves and all other tools given to them in the manner that will allow them to control their environment to their greatest satisfaction and to keep the game they are playing going. Only the exceptional student uses the tool as it is intended.

In the case of those of you here present, you use these tools as many less knowledgeable use religion — as a controlling device. All of you need to feel that you are an individual rather than a Fragment of a larger whole. This is the function of the ego — that is, to keep the illusion of separateness intact. If this [illusion] dissolves, the ego is in trouble.

In refusing to see the Overleaves interact in those of similar composition, the ego is merely asserting its conviction that the individualistic approach is the only sane approach. Actually, it is a very insane approach, as all of you could immediately call to mind several hundred areas where there is little or no difference at all in either the function or appearance of those here gathered. But we are equally certain that each of your ego structures could produce quite an impressive list of differences — not only that, but areas where no agreement could ever be reached.

(We had also been wondering if there was anything else that had not been communicated yet by the teacher.)

As for new information, we endeavor to present some new information whenever we have your attention — new in the sense that perhaps you have never thought of it in quite that light before.

However, dear students, you have heard all that there is to hear. Our task, as we see it, is to continue to present the body of this Logos until a student grasps at its meaning and begins to apply it and teach it to others.

We will continue to present it and since we are not limited by physical time, we can serve it up to you in an infinite variety of frames. Perhaps we have just not hit upon the winning combination. After all, yours is, as you have said many times, a verbal culture and the words are eventually what you will hear and then they can be translated into the action.

Dick has hit upon the meaning of this teaching, but his understanding is still basically intellectual and philosophical rather than emotional and transcendental. [????]

Buddha and Buddhism

Krishna and Hinduism

Zoroaster





⑤ RESPONSIBILITY

This chapter is the product of a search for the word responsibility in the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group. This word does not represent a significant component of the Michaelian teachings. However, there are good reasons to discuss the subject in this *Study Papers* book: 1) the subject came up numerous times during the original Michaelian group; 2) some interesting things were said about the subject; 3) the subject is related to a number of other components of the Michaelian teachings that are considered to be significant; 4) students can presumably benefit from having the mentions conveniently collected and commented all in one place; 5) responsibility issues are unavoidable, they are pervasive in human psychology and sociology and spirituality — subjects covered extensively in this book — so it behooves us to have a working knowledge of them.

The word responsibility is not capitalized in this chapter or other chapters of this *Study Papers* book because it has no special meaning in the Michaelian teachings; it is not a Michaelian jargon word that needs a definition apart from its use in the common vernacular.

This chapter is one of many in this book that focuses on a psychological component of the Michaelian teachings as found in original Michaelian group transcriptions, rather than on a doctrinal or spiritual component. A psychological component is usually either a positive to be cultivated or a negative to be mitigated. As we will see, the Michaels tell us that responsibility is a positive to be cultivated. The Michaelian version of psychology is not to be confused with the popular psychology of the self-improvement movement, those that do not have a spiritual core or perspective. Rather, the Michaelian psychotherapeutic path (aimed at improving psychological health) is a beneficial precursor to the spiritual path (aimed at improving soul health). To skip the former but attempt the latter is referred to as “spiritual bypassing”. This is discussed at length on https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spiritual_bypass. To skip mitigating one’s psychological issues and attempt to go straight to enlightenment usually proves to be problematic.

Responsibility per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

The following extracts from original Michaelian group transcriptions are Q&A exchanges, where an original Michaelian group member asks a question (or makes a comment), and the Michaels provide an answer. These extracts are presented in the chronological order in which they appear in the transcriptions. As is my custom, I often provide some explanatory comments following the question or answer. Underlined words in the Michaels’ answers are my emphasis, to draw attention to what it is that I comment on. Sometimes I embed words or phrases [in brackets] that I believe help to clarify the question or the answer.

This first discussion of the subject of this chapter was had sometime during the months before the Michaels revealed themselves to the original Michaelian group:

I think a sense of responsibility toward your job is essential. Don't you have a sense of responsibility toward your job?

[Soleal:] Oh yes, I certainly do. I just do not worry about it. It takes skill to separate [distinguish between responsibility and worry]. That is your Friction — to learn to take the action necessary with calm detachment.

Communal living has been tried here [on planet Earth] on a limited scale. The problem has been with some people not being as productive as others; the system breaks down. Can you comment?

We force the issue. You object to being told what you like to do; you are bristling about this right now [discussing communal living]. The people on my world do not object; they would rather be free [than lazy].

Do you sometimes have problems getting people to work and how do you handle it?

Yes. Peer pressure is exerted ruthlessly. [mid 1973]

On Soleal's planet, where the Mature- and Old-Soul socio-cultural structure was communal living rather than what we have on Earth, irresponsible people were impelled to be responsible. Refer to the chapters "Friction" and "Communal Living" for more about how this works.

Edgar: If Scholars who are not Emotionally Centered have trouble with their emotions, how can we overcome that part in us?

First, you must wish this. Most Scholars have little regard for emotional entanglements, unless they happen to be Emotionally Centered. Most Scholars would prefer not to be bothered with the responsibility that goes along with these intrigues. The way you can handle it is to become Balanced and thus come into contact with the Emotional Center and learn to control the output. Right now, there is sporadic high output with little insight — it resembles volcanic eruptions. [27 December 1973]

Responsibility implies entanglement, and Scholars are Neutral by nature, so they would rather not be entangled. As someone with Scholar Casting, I can say that this non-responsibility is not the same thing as irresponsibility. Depending on Soul Age, Scholars grow in their capacity to fulfill whatever responsibilities they voluntarily take on, just like all other Roles.

Billie: I am concerned about my mother's reaction to the news that Ray and I have split. I know my father is going to have to handle her, so I am worried about their reactions.

Their reaction will be much of what you already suspect. Your task is to realize that this is truly your fantasy when you take responsibility for their reaction. You must realize that you can do nothing to stop it, except to capitulate again, and aren't you tired of that? [17 January 1974]

This is the first mention of situations where it is inappropriate for one person to feel responsibility for another person. A wise person knows when to take, and when not to take, responsibility for other people.

Shirley: How can I resolve my guilt feelings?

Just know that you are in no way responsible — you cannot hold yourself [responsible] for the actions of others. However, we do suggest that in the future, you be a bit more open about your own feelings from the beginning. [24 January 1974]

Refer to the chapter "Guilt" for more discussion about that negative emotion. Here again it was said that there is wisdom in learning to discern when and where and with whom to feel and take responsibility for other people.

[Soleal:] There is, on this world, a basic contract of trust, which places all major responsibility and decision-making into the hands of a select few. This, of course, points to a very high level of trust on this world, for we have no weapons. These so-called leaders can be called to task by any one at any time that their decision-making apparatus appears to fail. [18 February 1974]

We might wish that politics worked more like this on Earth, but Soleal's planet was dominated by older souls, whereas our planet is still dominated by younger souls who do not yet have the wisdom to make wise decisions.

Speaking of wisdom, there is a source of wisdom other than learning the hard way over the course of reincarnational experience:

Dick: According to Gurdjieff, only with a conscious teacher can one "do" anything. Most people plea when anything goes drastically wrong, "God help me!" At EST, we learned that only "I" am responsible for the mess "I'm" in. We have to look inward and not put the blame on something outside ourselves.

That is, of course, valid. Without a teacher, you can do nothing. You are blind and deaf; "asleep." [27 February 1974]

Refer to the chapter "EST — Erhard Seminars Training" for more about that reference in the question. Throughout the course of human history, enlightened spiritual teachers have said that we should all learn to take responsibility for ourselves, rather than play the victim by blaming other people; otherwise we will not learn, we will not grow in wisdom.

Ralph: Is the Synthesis simpler than the systems that man erects?

In its most evolved form, yes. In words suitable for communication with the members of this enclave, it becomes complex. Again, Creatures of Reason take the simplest activity and render it complex through symbols. The Synthesis is not complex. The Synthesis seeks integration, simplicity. Creatures of Reason seek to justify their existence through expressions of individuality, isolation, alienation. Creatures of Reason seek to justify their existence by assigning themselves a role, even a negative one, if that be the case, of subrogation, taking the responsibility from themselves, assigning that responsibility to a higher power, conveniently beyond

the five physical senses and, therefore, unarguable, unprovable, unassailable, safe, comfortable, complex. [26 December 1974]

Refer to the chapters “Synthesis”, “Justification”, “Complexity versus Simplicity”, and “Creatures of Reason”. This was another statement about the desirability of everyone taking responsibility for themselves. Otherwise, there is not evolution in understanding, knowledge, and wisdom.

Eugene: I would like a comment on my approach to cancer patients as to their responsibility of causing and controlling their disease. I have been selling hard that they chose it and that through meditation, they can alter its course and cure it.

They are the best hope pills we know of. You will have some success, but prepare yourself for failure with those who cannot look at their conflicts. These will not get better. Of course, others will. Your best successes will be with Young and Mature Souls. [06 March 1974]

Even in the case of physical health issues, it is Good Work to ask oneself if and how one might take responsibility for the condition, and if the cause is wrong beliefs, poor values, or unhealthy behaviors in this world, then do something about it. According to the Michaels, the benefits go beyond the placebo, where a positive attitude tends toward better outcome. Here again, taking responsibility leads to learning, growth, and maybe even healing. In any case, one wants to avoid the so-called “nocebo” effect, where hopelessness and victimhood lead to a worse outcome than the placebo effect typically does.

Gene: Susan has asked for a divorce. Why the change?

Basically, the same inability to take full responsibility, but the additional insight that you also do not take responsibility for her reaction in the anticipated direction and that you will not in the future be willing to shoulder such. It is conceivable that the lady will continue to listen to “the voice within” and continue to move in a positive direction. But at the moment, the strong Overleaves of piety predominate in Personality. One way to avoid a crisis is to deny that it exists; you know that.

Gene: Am I at fault? What blame should I accept?

It would be wholly inappropriate for you to take blame for another’s reaction to an action that occurred in the past. [13 May 1974]

In every relationship, not just marriage, it is difficult enough to take responsibility for ourselves — which is where our focus should be — let alone take appropriate responsibility for other people when they are not taking their own fair share of responsibility for the success or failure of the relationship. It can safely be said that hardly anyone is pure and perfect in the responsibility department.

Cynthia: Last week, I was distracted at the end of the meeting when people seemed angry with one another. I did not know what was going on. I would like a comment from Michael.

The reactions to a given situation are yours alone to deal with. If you wish to verbalize this, by all means do so, but do not expect that all will wish to verbalize it. You should not dwell upon the others’ reaction to your verbalization. It is their choice and they must be responsible for it. If Dick chooses to be pained by what Eugene thinks, this is his right. However, we may point out that Eugene did not “cause the pain.”

Cynthia: If we have a goal of Agape, we should be able to use these situations to help us grow.

One of the first steps, of course, is the realization that you alone are responsible for your reaction to the situation. [30 May 1974]

There is a difference between *reaction* and *response*; the former is automatic and thoughtless whereas the latter is not; refer to the chapter “Mechanical Man” for more information. Briefly, it is Good Work to learn not to be *reactive*, to learn to take responsibility for your *response*, which means that your response is awake, conscious, intentional, appropriate.

Elizabeth: Twinning involves responsibilities. Should I do anything about my twin?

There are no responsibilities, but usually, there is a strong enough pull so that the twins, once reunited, will go along together and pursue a similar path if at all possible. [25 June 1974]

Where do all the “shoulds” of alleged “responsibility” come from? It does not say so here, but elsewhere in this chapter and other chapters it is said that they come from the family, the culture, the religion. The point of this answer is that one should let nature take its course, rather than presuming to assume responsibility that is imposed by cultural standards.

Richard: Due to the rigidity of my beliefs, I cannot move freely. Is there something Michael could say to help me at this point?

Your most difficult lesson will be in accepting that yourself is responsible and no others, Richard. Only then can you experience your experience. [21 September 1974]

How many times must the Michaels say to accept responsibility for yourself? Many more, as we will see.

Eugene asked if he should go outside to ask Elizabeth to come back in.

If that is what you wish to do, then you should, yes. Why should our advice mean more than your own emotions at this point? Objectively then, if you do this from any space other than the Emotional Center, you will be taking upon yourself the responsibility for someone else's anger. [29 September 1974]

Edgar: Why do we have to pay our debts?

Yes, responsibility is perhaps as good a word as any. [18 October 1974]

Refer to the chapter "Money" for more about that.

Cultures that impose rules of social conduct and interpersonal relationships usually arise out of the frustrations of unfulfilled expectations. The sexual experience never attains the height that it is expected to, as it is used in place of love so many times, and the Personality, not knowing any better, blames the partner for the failure to produce bliss, when the responsibility lies within self and self's ridiculous expectations of a biologic act which comes basic to the organism. Man considers himself civilized because he has risen above oestrus. What an aspiration! [19 November 1974]

Refer to the chapter "Sexuality" for a thorough discussion of that topic. Here again, in this realm, there is a tendency for some to blame other people rather than take responsibility for oneself.

Dick commented that he loses much energy around the experience of a patient dying.

... if you project expectations of healing upon the patient and his attendants, you are going to feel a sense of failure when you do not fulfill these expectations.... The guilt, of course, stems from the concept of death as a punishment. After all, you are sending this soul to meet his fate, and [you] are therefore responsible. This is quite a burden, and we are not surprised that this produces fatigue.... [14 December 1974]

We can all understand why a medical doctor would feel responsible for the healing of their patients. Some of this is warranted and some of it is not. Therefore, it is imperative that doctors discern within themselves what sense of responsibility is appropriate and what is not. Beyond that profession, it behooves us all to figure that out for ourselves, whatever our occupation may be.

You see, the instinctive drama is safe and easily learned, for the memories are all still there. The dominant species from which you ascended ran in packs. There was a dominant leader. This has continued, for it enables the Personality to abdicate self-responsibility. In other words: "The boss told me to do it"; "Hitler told me to do it"; "God told me to do it". Whatever your particular persuasion happens to be, you can always manage to delegate the response[ibility?]. Even in emotional battles, it is always someone else who is ultimately blamed or credited for the action, whatever it may be. This is animal behavior and is widespread in this culture. We see examples of this every day, even in this cadre, where the responsibility is given over to someone else, while the choice and the result was distinctly yours. [21 December 1974]

This was yet another statement of the advisability of taking responsibility for oneself, rather than shifting the blame to someone or something else.

Ralph: Is the Synthesis simpler than the systems that man erects?

... Creatures of Reason seek to justify their existence by assigning themselves a role, even a negative one, if that be the case, of subrogation, taking the responsibility from themselves, assigning that responsibility to a higher power, conveniently beyond the five physical senses and, therefore, unarguable, unprovable, unassailable, safe, comfortable, complex. [26 December 1974]

This was yet another statement of the advisability of taking responsibility for oneself, rather than shifting the blame to someone or something else.

Sandy: Seth seems to give more personal help with private situations. Why not Michael also?

We are most willing to act as a guide or help you in all of those areas involving spiritual growth, such as meditation, concentration, fasting, and the like. We have in the past, recommended aids in this regard. We are, on the other hand, most unwilling to interfere in the so-called life crises, as that would take choice out of your hands, and we would suffer in the long run as that would represent a loss of ground for us. The responsibility for your interpersonal relationships lies always with you. We can, of course, help you to understand why you approach a given set of circumstances in a certain fashion. In fact, this is why we have given this cadre the tool

of the Overleaves. The teaching here is somewhat different than in groups where no preliminary groundwork has been done. In this cadre, many have learned to accept full responsibility long before meeting with us and, for that reason, we started at that point. We would hesitate at any time to force a decision in any of you in any life crisis situation. This would be detrimental to you in the long run. However, in any teaching involving spiritual growth and the application of this teaching, we are grateful for the opportunity to spend as much time as necessary in facilitating with life crisis situations. [02 January 1975]

This was yet another statement of the advisability of taking responsibility for oneself, rather than shifting the blame to someone or something else.

Sarah said she wants to hear what the Fragment had to say.

Destruction is not imminent. Man must face the responsibility for his choice. [09 January 1975]

This was yet another statement of the advisability of taking responsibility for oneself, rather than shifting to blame to someone or something else.

The sexual Tapes are only strong in the culture because of the spectacular expectation placed upon this simple biologic process, while ignoring the tremendous energies available through the Sexual Center if it can only be tapped. When you once tap this energy and have a taste of it, of course you want it again, and it can be yours, but only after you release all of the unreasonable expectations placed upon the physical act itself and on the partner, and take responsibility for your own experience. We have said this before, but cannot emphasize it enough. [19 January 1975]

This was yet another statement of the advisability of taking responsibility for oneself, rather than shifting the blame to someone or something else.

The clearest and lengthiest statement in the original Michaelian group transcriptions about responsibility is found in this passage:

James asked about "responsibility taking." Some of his friends seem to dispense their responsibility. ... Others lay [responsibility] on us by our acceptance.

... Now as to the responsibility, you students have the responsibility for self and no others. If you take this responsibility seriously and respond appropriately from the proper Center, you will not be negating any responsibility that you might feel for those around you. In fact, you will in truth be giving them the space to take responsibility for their selves. This is important, students. Whenever you arbitrarily take on responsibility for the actions of others, you rob them of [maturity] growth. This happens every time you hinder rather than help by taking the responsibility out of their hands.

For those whose Goal is Acceptance, this only appears more difficult. It is equally difficult for those in Dominance, who like to be in charge; for those in Growth, who like to take the responsibility for the level of growth within the group; for those in Ordinal Goals [Rejection, Retardation/Reduction, Submission] who feel much responsibility for the miseries around them and feel it is their life task to mitigate it. So the Goal of Acceptance is no different than the others in this, although those in Acceptance are quite often more verbal about their feelings of responsibility than others. Those in Growth tend to act theirs out and those in Dominance even more blatantly act out the need to take responsibility.

You can allow yourselves to be overwhelmed by the responsibility that you undertake. For instance, you can go under the load of responsibility that you feel for your children. On the other hand, you can come to regard these same children as Creatures of Reason and relate to them in a reasonable, amiable fashion. The same goes for all of your other interpersonal relationships.

You see, because of the very real feeling of apartness — of loneliness, if you will — that is felt on the Physical Plane, it is comfortable for the Personality to think that there is someone else dependent upon them; then at least they are not completely alone in the void. This dependency must many times be forced, as most souls are innately willing to shoulder their own load of responsibility. Many times when this dependency is lifted, the soul who was experiencing gratification from this responsibility can no longer justify its existence, and a real psycho-emotional crisis occurs. [08 February 1975]

Refer to chapters "Alienation" and "Loneliness". A misplaced and unhealthy sense of responsibility — as of some 'helicopter' parents toward their children — can be perceived as 'suffocating' by the children, and this is often the case. However, don't kid yourself about how much guidance your child needs, as it varies from child to child; do what is realistically appropriate for the child, which is not necessarily what comes naturally to you as a parent if you are coming from an unhealthy place. Parents do well to learn the difference between co-

dependence and inter-dependence. Beyond parenthood, everyone does well to distinguish between healthy and unhealthy interventions in the life of someone else.

We have spoken before about vulnerability. You all operate from the basis of insecurity in your Personalities, which all too often stops you from speaking what you perceive. This must come to an end. If there is any purpose to our being with you, you must cease this game of "If I tell him what I see, I might be wrong and he won't like me." This is not confrontation tactics, but merely accepting responsibility for your perceptions and having the strength of vulnerability to express the perceptions. [09 February 1975]

Refer to the chapter "Photography" for more discussion about responsibly and irresponsibly correcting fellow students.

Another lengthy discussion on the subject of responsibility in a communal setting is the following:

Students in a communal situation must learn that, if the responsibility for the Friction becomes communal, it will not be allowed to violate the inner spaces. We have no quarrel with firm, loving disciplinary measures issued by the most competent student. This would eliminate much of the Friction. Looking at the Overleaves should be extensively used in determining who would be most effective in the various Friction-fraught areas.

Refer to the chapter "Friction" for the exposition on that topic.

Of course, children should not be allowed to destroy. If they destroy in childhood, they will destroy later, also. As soon as a child has reached the age where he can hear the words, he should be brought into the main body of the teaching. It is absurd to keep children in the dark for as long as they are in this society. They are so much more capable than you dream, and this capability can be exploited in so many ways you would be astonished. If the children are concretely rewarded by being given their fair share of authority, they will more readily accept responsibility. No one in this teaching accepts kindly responsibility without authority, yet suppose that children will.

That is not the biggest stress point, however. It is the many, many expectations that students have of themselves as parents and the expectations they have of their children. It has been our experience that students seriously committed to the work have far fewer expectations of their children, as they themselves are experiencing life and need not experience it vicariously through their children. It is known to us that children respond more quickly in societies where they have more than one model to emulate. Children in this society are now the latest to mature we know of and it is becoming progressively later all the time. Students must look at their own reasons for wishing to prolong the childhood of their offspring long beyond its usefulness. It is a lack within themselves and has nothing to do with the capabilities of the offspring. Many youngsters are being stunted in this regard in this particular cadre and we deplore it. [12 February 1975]

This was another statement about letting children learn to take responsibility for themselves as they grow up; let them learn the hard way when it is not too physically, emotionally, or cognitively traumatizing.

Discussion: There was talk about individual responsibility in illness.

It is not inhumane to suggest a degree of responsibility, but it is imperative to discover the motive (for the disease). This should come first. [21 February 1975]

Refer to the chapter "Health — Physical and Mental" for a discussion about how much a person is responsible when they have a disease.

Another extensive statement about responsibility is the following:

Dick would like a comment on his observation of himself finding it more difficult to forgive people having more powerful Overleaves than his own.

The absolving oneself of all guilt is, of course, the first step toward understanding the ability of those in Exalted Overleaves to absolve others of the responsibility that they themselves can then willingly shoulder. This concept is no different than that espoused by Werner Erhard, only it is expressed in religious terminology and, therefore by definition, becomes obscure and difficult to absorb; or, at least, one gets the illusion of difficulty from the semantic problems. Forgiveness is really no more than the utter willingness to accept responsibility for one's own life, and this is why it is so difficult for those in Ordinal Roles when their own existences seem so pale beside the more Exalted Roles. In truth, the Exalted Roles are more able to take the responsibility. Of course, they are. It is easy to take responsibility in the Power Mode, and a King finds it easy to excuse the behavior of a Slave. However, it is far from impossible for those in Ordinal Roles to go through the process of learning to take responsibility for their wins as well as their losses.

We want you to understand that guilt is never a religious-induced phenomenon, and [it] serves only as a part of vanity [Arrogance] in this culture. At one time, it was necessary to extract obedience from a more barbaric populace. This is no longer true, but you keep it around because it aids enormously in the suffering that you all love. The man Werner [Erhard] has discovered within himself an answer, and he chooses to call it accepting responsibility. Others choose to call it forgiving; it all means exactly the same. If you accept responsibility for your own actions, then where will you place the blame if failure occurs? The answer usually becomes: there are no failures. Oddly enough, when the responsibility becomes yours and yours alone, you take precautions not to fail. Failure is an easy way out, and those in Ordinal Roles love to fail because it takes so little effort and the blame can be placed on those in "power". But, truthfully, no one in an Ordinal Role loses unless he wishes — any more than do those in Exalted Roles. This country has had leaders in Ordinal Roles who have been exceptionally effective. The sense of failure comes not from specific Overleaves but from enculturation, and yes, some Overleaves are more susceptible to enculturation than others, especially some Chief Features and the younger soul levels [Ages]. The Roles are not, however, and you can succeed from any of the Roles providing the Chief Feature is not one that dooms the life experience to failure. Even that [Chief Feature], as you all know, can be extinguished and worked through, but this takes that willingness to stand where you are right now and realize that you have put yourself there and no one else is responsible.

Refer to the chapter "Culture" for more discussion of enculturation as an excuse for not taking responsibility for oneself, for shifting the blame. Refer to the chapter "Guilt" for a discussion of that unnecessary and counter-productive negative emotion.

Dick: It seems as though it is better to take responsibility for designing your life better or you just let things happen to you.

When one designs rather than living, one is planning life for others rather than self. It is either designed to please those who are important or to show those who are in the way that they had better watch out. Designing a life is not planning to live; it is a negative concept and is always done with others in mind. You can set reasonable goals for yourself and move toward them in a purposeful manner without a design. When one designs within rigid parameters, there is no room for expansion or for changing one's goals. It is like building a house in such a way that there can be no additions in the future ... [03 September 1977]

Parsing this statement, and comparing this statement with other statements, I would say that the proper course seems to be to find the moderate or middle path between extremes in regard to taking responsibility for the way things play out in one's life. Sometimes one must determine the flow of one's life, and sometimes one must go with the flow of one's life, based on sensitivity to both internal and external considerations.

Concluding Comments on Responsibility

The matter of taking and giving responsibility is just one realm of life where we are enjoined by the Michaels to grow up; other chapters in this book discuss other realms.

Part of learning to be responsible is to not deny reality or attempt to escape from reality, but to see reality as it is, and to then face reality squarely and deal with it appropriately. The Michaels' notion that we should take responsibility for our own belief system, value system, and behavior system is related to the Michaels' notion discussed in the chapter "Validation and Verification".





REVELATION AND CONCEALMENT

So much of Physical Plane human experience involves the reveal/conceal dichotomy. That is to say, when shall we reveal and when shall we conceal? The question might arise in regard to information about ourselves or about other people.

It is not like this on the Astral Plane; Fragments are pretty much like 'open books' to each other; "what you see is what you get".

This chapter is connected conceptually to the chapter "Trust" ...

original Michaelian group members wrestled with the question about revealing the teaching verses concealing its source, because of the weirdness of the source. This was in a time when channeling was not nearly as well known or accepted in society as is in more recent times. These days it is no big deal to hear it said, humorously, that this person is "channeling" that person. ...

This subject is not like a doctrine of the Michaelian teachings, but I include it in this chapter because the experience of the original Michaelian group and what the Michaels had to say on the subject helps us...

This chapter is a compilation of those words and synonyms for those words. Show, hide, secret, ...





REVIEW

This chapter is the product of a search for the word review in the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group channeling sessions. This word does not represent a significant component of the Michaelian teachings. However, there are good reasons to discuss the subject in this *Study Papers* book: 1) the subject came up numerous times during the original Michaelian group; 2) students can presumably benefit from having the mentions conveniently collected and commented all in one place; 3) some interesting things were said about the subject; 4) the subject is related to a number of other components of the Michaelian teachings that are considered to be significant, so it behooves us to have a working knowledge of it.

The word review is not capitalized in this chapter or other chapters of this *Study Papers* book because it has no special meaning in the Michaelian teachings; it is not a Michaelian jargon word that needs a definition apart from its use in the common vernacular.

This chapter is one of many in this book that focuses on a psychological component of the Michaelian teachings as found in original Michaelian group transcriptions, rather than on a spiritual component, as so many other chapters in this book do. Psychological components of the Michaelian teachings are usually either a positive to be cultivated or a negative to be mitigated; both are amenable to psychotherapeutic techniques. Obviously, review is a positive to be cultivated. The Michaelian version of psychology is not to be confused with the popular psychology of the self-improvement movement, those that do not have a spiritual core or perspective. Rather, the Michaelian psychotherapeutic path (aimed at improving psychological health) is a beneficial precursor to the spiritual path (aimed at improving soul health). To skip the former but attempt the latter is referred to as “spiritual bypassing”. This is discussed at length on such websites as https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spiritual_bypass. To skip mitigating one’s psychological issues and attempt to go straight to enlightenment usually proves to be problematic.

Definition of Review

So what is meant by [template](#)? The online Merriam Webster online dictionary definition is: [Wikipedia has an article that provides a definition and a description, as follows \(underlined words are my emphasis\):](#)

Review per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

The following extracts from original Michaelian group transcriptions are Q&A exchanges, where an original Michaelian group member asks a question (or makes a comment), and the Michaels provide an answer. [This is a subject that benefits by division into subsections. These extracts are presented in the chronological order in which they were given.](#) As is my custom, I usually provide some explanatory comments following the question or answer. Underlined words are my emphasis, to draw attention to what it is that I comment on. Sometimes I embed words or phrases [in brackets] that I believe help to clarify the question or the answer. Numerous study papers related to this chapter are to be found among my comments.

Concluding Comments on Review





REWARD, GRATIFICATION, SATISFACTION, FULFILLMENT

This chapter is the product of a search for the word “reward” in the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group channeling sessions, and other words with a similar meaning, such as gratification and satisfaction and fulfillment. I have added some commentary, which consists of my analysis and synthesis of the quotations. Obviously, this word does not represent a significant component of the Michaelian teachings, but even so, the word appears often enough that it seems to me that students can benefit from seeing all of those instances documented and commented on in a chapter of this *Study Papers* book. Furthermore, the word is related to a number of other components of the Michaelian teachings that are considered to be more significant; these will be noted in the commentary on the instances of the word and its contexts. Basically and briefly, the Michaels identified a number of things that the Personality self finds rewarding versus a number of things that the Essence self finds rewarding.

The word “reward” is not capitalized in this chapter and other chapters of this *Study Papers* book because it has no special meaning in the Michaelian teachings; it is not a Michaelian jargon word that needs a definition apart from its use in the common vernacular. One might therefore wonder why it is even included in this book. One answer is that it is just a Scholar–Cast Artisan thing to do: I study the Michaelian teachings documents and I write about them and I want to be thorough. Another answer is that reward issues are pervasive in human psychology and sociology, the subject came up in the original Michaelian group numerous times, some interesting things were said about it, and it might be helpful for Michaelian students to have the answers conveniently collected all in one place.

Definition of Reward, Gratification, Satisfaction, Fulfillment

So what is meant by the concept of reward? The online Merriam Webster dictionary definition is:

- 1: yielding or likely to yield a reward : valuable, satisfying [as in] “a rewarding experience”
- 2: serving as a reward [as in] “a rewarding smile of thanks”

Synonyms: cheering, comforting, encouraging, fulfilling, gladdening, gratifying, heartening, heartwarming, satisfying [<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/rewarding>] — retrieved 13 November 2022]

Of the synonyms noted there, I regard “gratifying” and “satisfying” as the closest to the meaning that the Michaels intended, but I would also add “fulfilling”.

Reward is often contrasted with punishment. As with the metaphor of the ‘carrot and the stick’, rewards provide incentives and motivations to do good stuff, and punishments provide incentives and motivations to not do bad stuff.

Reward per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

The following extracts from original Michaelian group transcriptions are Q&A exchanges, where an original Michaelian group member asks a question (or makes a comment), and the Michaels provide an answer. This is **not?** a subject that would benefit by division into subcategories, as some subjects do. These extracts are presented in the chronological order in which they were given, even though this is not a subject where there was a development or evolution of a specific revelation of a facet of the Michaelian teachings, as was often the case with the original Michaelian group. As is my custom, I often provide some explanatory comments following the question or answer. Underlined words in the Michaels’ answers are my emphasis, to draw

attention to what it is that I comment on. Sometimes I embed words or phrases [in brackets] that I believe help to clarify the question or the answer.

The first mention of reward appears in the first session that we have in our possession.

Do you understand that there are tensions on this world, that silence is not easy?

[Soleal:] There can be tensions on any world if it is encouraged and rewarded. Tension is a manifestation of unrest in any society. [undated, mid-1973]

Tension and unrest are natural enough in any socio-cultural structure where there are uncomfortable differences between segments of the society. These inherent problems are exacerbated when there are selfish people who, by their own nature, are willing to make things worse rather than better if they believe it will benefit them, or if they have some other perverse incentive — perverse incentives are built into many, if not all, socio-cultural structures.

One perverse incentive is that troublemakers feel rewarded by their troublemaking:

Alice: So does that mean that I am a catalyst?

[Soleal:] Zealots make the finest catalysts. You are not a zealot, but you can act as a calming force on those around you. There is peace and serenity in your Essence too. This could be the major part of growth for you, to get in touch with those fine elements. It is difficult to do this in a system that rewards competition. That usually leads to the more aggressive elements of the false, culturally induced, personality. Love is the only force that you can apply in a positive situation consciously. [03 July 1973]

The teaching about Soul Age, and the competitive nature of younger souls and of younger-souled cultures, was not yet revealed. Older souls are by nature more cooperative than competitive, so their involvement with an ambient younger-souled culture is not very rewarding for them. Refer to the chapter “Culture” for more about that.

Then I would say that much of his advice does not apply to us. Isn't that what that answer means?

Much does not apply now. When you rid yourself of all negative thoughts about sex, then it is possible for you to have a variety of higher-level sexual encounters. These do not always have to be physical. Some of your most rewarding sexual encounters occur when you think you are asleep. These are encounters with unknown beings on the Astral Plane, and also Essence encounters with actually known beings. [12 August 1973]

Refer to the chapter “Sexuality” for more about that subject. There you will read that rewarding sex is not that which satisfies the flesh, but that which satisfies the soul or Essence.

As we see further on in this chapter, generally speaking, it is the spiritual experiences that are truly rewarding, and physical experiences that leave a lot to be desired. For instance:

Dick: You can't do that — not a burning love inside yourself.

A deep sense of spiritual satisfaction is the only reward that we know of. You may call it ecstasy or whatever you wish. Stop a moment and ask yourself, why is it that you search and for what. [06 October 1973]

Refer to the chapter “Ecstasy” for a description of the subjective experience of a spiritual reward.

Dick: I have a question about this problem of “troubled souls” [that] Michael has mentioned several times and it seems to me that all souls are troubled. This sounds like an area we ought to ask about. Are there untroubled souls?

Few Baby Souls are ever truly troubled. They rarely question their motivation and everything that happens to them is either because they were bad and are being punished, or because they were good and are being rewarded. Think of the two and three year old child when you think of Baby Souls. Think of the bright, lovable, overly energetic, quick, inquisitive eight to twelve year olds when you think of Young Souls. Think of the emotionally disturbed teenager when thinking of Mature Souls. [Think of] the wiser young adult in [thinking about] the Old Souls. [20 October 1973]

Refer to the chapter “Punishment” for more about the opposite of reward. Refer to the chapter “Motivation” for more discussion of the idea that some people do what they do mostly based on externally-imposed rewards and punishments, rather than on internal factors of their true identity, or on higher spiritual factors such as Ecstasy, mentioned previously. A common metaphor of motivation is that of the “carrot” and the “stick” as positive rewards and negative punishments respectively.

In the Q&A exchange above, we saw that what a person finds rewarding depends a lot on what their Soul Age is; refer to the chapter “Soul Age” for more about that. In the next Q&A exchange, we see that Role is also another major determinant of what a person finds rewarding:

Dick: [During childhood] The reason I could sit there peacefully was I didn't have to worry about food. I have provided for my own children. If Essence is Snow White and Red Riding Hood, we have to go into this dependency on Michael or whomever is going to take care of us. Otherwise, we have to scurry around to produce what we need. I would be happy to go back into that state; it's so lovely. Unless you become independent, you must forage for yourself. To go into Essence completely, there must be trust. As a child, there is no trust; there is knowing that you will be cared for. Something tells the child as he grows older, that this idyllic situation will end and it will be up to him to take care of himself.

The Roles in Essence provide the necessary food, clothing and shelter without the scurrying. This adult play can be financially rewarding. That is why we have told you that communal living is an upward step in spiritual evolution. This allows you to pursue the Role in Essence. There will be those who will provide the other necessities. [27 October 1973]

Refer to the chapter "Commune" for more about establishing a living environment that should be more rewarding to Essence than living in the usual socio-cultural milieu. But even if you do not go the communal route, at least make your living in a way that satisfies your Role and Role-ish (Casting) nature. For instance, my career occupation was doing engineering, which never felt like it was a waste of time, because it was very compatible with my Scholar-Cast Artisan nature. So, because I was good at it on account of its congruence with my nature, it was financially rewarding as well as soul-rewarding. Ideally, everyone will find an occupation that is rewarding in both ways. Beyond occupational rewards, check out the chapter "Fun and Play" to read about those forms of intangible reward.

Many Q&A exchanges documented in this chapter make the distinction between "true" rewards and "false" rewards:

Edgar: I would like to know: how practical for me are the teachings of Joel Goldsmith?

Useful application of this teaching would be easy for you, but not truly rewarding in the long run, and you would search again. [08 November 1973]

That something can be "truly" rewarding implies that something can be "falsely" rewarding. This notion can be related to the notion of True versus False Personality; refer to the chapter on that subject. You know the reward is adequate when it is satisfying enough that you do not want more. Students of the Michaelian teachings can be divided into three broad categories. The first category is of those who regard the Michaelian teachings as the core of their belief, value, and behavior system; they may seek for supplemental knowledge elsewhere, but they are "satisfied" that the Michaelian teachings is their home. The second category of Michaelian student is of those who regard the Michaelian teachings as a secondary source of valuable information that supplements another teaching that they regard as primary. The third category is of those who stumble upon the Michaelian teachings in their spiritual search; they pick up a few pointers that are meaningful to them, but they are never satisfied with, and they never settle down with, the Michaelian teachings or any other teaching, so they continue to search.

Edgar: What was the essence of the teachings of Christ?

Truth is the greatest good and love is the highest truth. Good is its own reward, as is truth. [22 November 1873]

As adults, we should not do stuff to earn "brownie points" or "gold stars" or "blue ribbons" like we did when we were children. Rather, we should seek truth and do good because they are rewarding *per se*. If you do not realize this, then you are not yet an 'adult' in spiritual terms.

Dick: How can we help others if we can't help ourselves? I would like to ask about spiritual materialism — that is, using the powers of the teaching to draw attention to myself. That is, using the teaching for ego gratification to get a bevy of females following me, like Robert [Burton, leader of the local Fourth Way group]. There is a conflict developing here.

Haven't you discovered yet that all things that are ego-gratifying have an element of delicious clandestine guilt attached? The ego seeks intrigue and adventure; the Essence does not. This is why the man Robert could play it straight. He had permission to have a female following and there was no guilt. There was also no ego-satisfaction. This is why he could not be seduced — seduction was not a suitable reward to him. We feel that this culture is amiss in not giving permission. Sometimes you must go and ask for it. The permission is symbolic, but sometimes in this culture, it must almost be literal. If marijuana was on sale at all corner stores, few would smoke it — at any rate, no more than smoke it now and a few would quit. [16 December 1973]

In addition to the acculturated self mentioned above and below, the ego self also has a distorted and perverse and false "gratification" (reward) system. Furthermore, Robert was a King, and, as such, the Action Roles, Kings and Warriors, often enjoy the 'game' of sexual seduction for the same reason that they enjoy

competitive and strategic sports — both endeavors have something to do with the challenge of strategy and conquest, and that is what is inherently rewarding to them. Far be it from me to be judgmental about their type of “fun”.

Edgar: What is my purpose?

We have told you that a major part of Karma for you this time revolves around searching for truth, in spite of great physical handicap. This is the major part of Karma. There is more. You had to be relatively free of emotional entanglements also, to be free to study. The study is now beginning to reap the necessary reward. This can be a lonely choice, but all souls make it occasionally.

Refer to the chapter “Study” for the documentation of the whole Michaelian story about that subject.

Edgar: In regards to my last question, my purpose for being and Karma, and searching for truth — but I feel I have failed.

The discouragement is a good sign. Those who are complacent about their status are no longer searching. There is no place for complacency in this search. The rewards are the doors that are opening to you now, Edgar. We recognize the frustration. This always accompanies a plateau stage. This will dissipate as you go on to the next flight. It is like a landing on an infinite staircase. [20 December 1973]

Edgar was a Sixth Level Old Scholar with a Goal of Growth. For a Scholar, study is rewarding *per se*, but especially so when the study yields the desired results. This phenomenon is intensified for a person who has the Goal of Growth; they are rarely satisfied with the status quo, with plateaus in their development.

Speaking of intensification:

Gene: The more intense, the more difficult and the more rewarding. [03 February 1974]

Apparently, this is a truth that applies both psychologically and spiritually. This sentiment appears again:

... It is sometimes difficult and sometimes disheartening, but in the long run, rewarding beyond words. [18 February 1974]

That was said in regard to the challenges of living in a commune, but, of course, it applies to all challenges that are successfully overcome.

They [Essenes] also felt that the good was its own reward, drawing from the Hellenes. [03 March 1974]

From both ancient Jewish and Greek times, if not before, we see this notion expressed, that benevolence and altruism are rewarding for the giver as well as for the receiver.

Comment: In other words, take a look at the activities one uses just to fill the hours.

For instance, many who are trapped in the Intellectual Part of Intellectual Center must involve themselves only in intellectually stimulating and rewarding experiences. Many trapped in Moving Center are constantly “doing things” and consider all else rather frivolous. Souls trapped in Emotional Center find it difficult to sit through an evening of “head stuff” or they also dislike the modern dancing where there is little body contact and much wild gyrations.

Could we have something on the Moving Part of Emotional Center?

The “love of action.” These souls make ideal spectators and will yell themselves hoarse at all spectator events. They rarely participate, but will drive hundreds of miles to spend a weekend at a ski lodge. The romance of movement prevails here with little active participation.

It has been said that the Intellectual Part of Emotional Center is the seat of the Magnetic Center for teachings. Is this so?

That is valid. It also produces the top historians and social scientists, most writers and journalists, many war correspondents, anthropologists and archaeologists. In this Part [Intellectual Part of Emotional Center], the intellect is romanticized. [03 March 1974]

From previous Q&A exchanges, we know that Soul Age and Role provide rewards of different types; here we are told that one’s Centering does likewise. It makes sense to extrapolate this to a general principle, namely that it is rewarding to live in (the Positive Poles of) all of one’s Overleaves.

Dick: Agape love sputters for only 15 seconds and it does not happen often. Is this moving toward a #4 person?

We agree. It is a difficult place to be, but definitely rewarding. [03 March 1974]

The Michaelian teachings provides a ‘map’ of the spiritual ‘path’. Thus, the Michaelian teachings gives us a tool for measuring our progress, and knowing where we are in the ‘journey’ as a whole makes our progress feel even more rewarding.

As Dick, the soul sees beyond the brain barriers set up by the organism in order to cushion the Shocks. In other words, the reward would not seem great enough for the organism to continue with the absurdity. [17 March 1974]

Refer to chapters "Barriers", "Shocks", and "Suicide". Basically and briefly, the physical body and the Personality has built-in defense mechanisms that usually prevent the Personality from confronting a reality where life is ultimately meaningless: "Since death is the end, why prolong the suffering of living?" Suicide sometimes results when a person believes or feels that life is not 'worth' it. Without some inkling of a counterbalancing reward for our suffering, we would believe our situation to be absurd. Wikipedia has an article on suicide, where Albert Camus was quoted as saying "There is but one truly serious philosophical problem and that is suicide." (>https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Philosophy_of_suicide<)

Richard: As I understand it, the aura green has to do with healing. Is there something along that line that I should be pursuing that I am not now doing?

Green does indicate strong drives to serve, yes, and most of those who choose healing and are successful do have this. You have within you the ability, but not the scope or knowledge, but could conceivably attain this. It would be much work, but perhaps far more rewarding than what you are doing now. You could certainly work miracles in the design of certain electronic crutches. [15 May 1974]

Refer to the chapter "Auras" for more about the notion that a green aura indicates healing energy. The heart chakra has been assigned the color green in esoteric lore, and it is the chakra that bridges the lower with the higher chakras, and is thereby involved in healing. Richard was an Artisan, and Artisans are typically good with technological devices. His occupation was that of an engineer, which is not a waste of Essence for Artisans, but the healing arts and technologies ("electronic crutches"!) would have been more fulfilling and satisfying. The point to be emphasized here is that, when a person is doing what the Role (and aura) is built for, then that is subjectively experienced as rewarding.

Could we have some clarification on the Sequences? Does one feel close to his [Entity] Fragment when associating with him?

That is not completely valid, so you often tie in with new Fragments from associations that were rewarding [in past lifetimes]. [23 June 1974]

Not only is it rewarding to associate with kindred souls (meaning, in the same Cadre), it is also rewarding to associate with people that you had a meaningful experience with in a past lifetime.

More was said about rewarding past-life associations further along in the same session:

Michael said before that they had something to say about "twinning." Could they comment now?

Twinning is, of course, the closest possible of physical relationships. This goes for the other planes also and this is where the confusion regarding the so-called twin souls arises. For instance, the question was asked of us some time ago concerning the possibility that souls could not change sex, or rather gender, between lives because of some twin soul feature. It is true that most souls do search for their soul mate, but they err in assuming that that twin is of the opposite gender and consequently lose out on an exceptionally close and rewarding relationship. Twinning occurs often at the moment the Entity is Cast from the Tao and can occur between Entities Cast at the same time. In other words, there is sometimes a crossover and these twin souls do go though many, usually all lives together. [23 June 1974]

Refer to the chapter "Twins" for more about a phenomenon that is especially rewarding. Twinning is an intimate bond to start with, and it is strengthened during a shared journey through life.

A good definition of reward appears in the next session where the word appears:

Jean: Is the TFR ["Time for Reality"] work [husband] Edmund and I are in worthwhile?

First of all, Jean, work in order to be "right" for you, must be rewarding in the sense that it produces a deep down sense of satisfaction. By this, we do not mean ego gratification but [we mean] Essence satisfaction. Secondly, you only help others indirectly by first helping yourself to a large slice of joy. If the project, that teaching, the job or whatever, gives you this, then yes, it is right. Bring to this your own positive Overleaves and your skills and it may bring you full measure. Lag behind this and it will bring you only the frustration you now feel. The secret is, Jean, that you can transform that group into whatever you wish, but it must spring fresh from your own Essence needs and not from what you think that the group needs. [24 September 1974]

When the Personality self is doing what the Essence self wanted to do with that incarnation, then there is a deep sense of reward. It is also rewarding to do work that is consistent with one's True Personality in terms of

the Positive Poles of the Overleaves. Refer to the chapter “Essence and Personality” for more about that rewarding alignment.

Another key passage on the subject of reward is this next one, which appeared in a session a couple of weeks after the previous one:

Dick visioned that life should contain joy and rapture. He felt that no barriers were between us and that experience [except] imaginary ones created by us.

True. You can have it any time you wish. It is not a difficult transition, but it requires that you cease denying yourself the pleasure. You see, this culture places pleasure on a high shelf marked “reward” and it must be earned. Ironically, Mechanical Man is totally unable to experience this as joy, and continues to strive toward an elusive goal that always remains just beyond the fingertips. This is truly sad, Dick, perhaps the only sadness on the Physical Plane, for it is really within your grasp all the time. Give up the idea that joy must come as a reward for faithful service. This is nonsense; you can have it free. [05 October 1974]

Refer to the chapter “Pleasure” for the complete story about that subject. Basically and briefly, “pleasure” exists on a spectrum from physical pleasure to spiritual pleasure, and both can be rewarding and not to be eschewed, but spiritual pleasure is ultimately more rewarding, and long-lasting, than physical pleasure.

Further on in the same session, this Q&A exchange happened:

Comment: We need a teacher to pass on to us the Agape — like passing the torch in the Olympics. A discussion was held about the experience of looking into other people’s eyes without speaking for an extended time. This was an EST process.

This would bring up many taboos and would be a rewarding experience. We would suggest that you start off with only a few minutes and then increase gradually. You see, this is a more powerful experience than you think, for there are now in your group souls who are beginning to trust, and looking at them closely will produce strange emotions. [05 October 1975]

Refer to chapters “Agape”, “Silence”, “Intimacy”, “Trust” — these experiences are all very rewarding, and there are ways to intentionally foster them.

Joan: Regarding Rev. Kathryn Jarvis, a Unity teaching minister who does healing and is a spiritual teacher. She seems highly evolved. I feel she was probably with Christ and is continuing this.

This is a Seventh Level Old Priest, transcendent [Karma-free], in Growth, a Spiritualist. Contact with her can certainly be rewarding. Her source is valid, certainly. No Chief Feature. [15 October 1975]

Generally speaking, contact with a person who is further along the spiritual path than you are should be rewarding, especially so in the case of a person as exalted as Jarvis was said to be.

Your own choice of therapeutic approach could be the most rewarding challenge thus far encountered, as it would have to be the most unconventional one you have ever employed. [31 January 1975]

The greater the challenge in doing some you like and are good at, the greater the reward when you succeed.

Jim: Scattering is so much of my Personality. I need more concentration on the teaching ... work on myself at home ...

[Soleal:] ... I had to force myself into my present philosophy of never taking in more than one day at a time, in order to unload my bad spaces. The same can happen to you. You can learn to think only in small increments. It is not easy, but it is rewarding. [01 February 1975]

Refer to the chapter “Scattering”; it was a big problem in the original Michaelian group meetings, and it is a big problem for many people. If you can narrow your focus and keep your attention on the here and now, ensuring your satisfaction and fulfillment then and there, then you will also be rewarded with satisfaction and fulfillment in the long run.

If the children are concretely rewarded by being given their fair share of authority, they will more readily accept responsibility. No one in this teaching accepts kindly responsibility without authority, yet suppose that children will. [12 February 1975]

The Michaels did not have much to say about child-rearing, but there was some advice: parents should give their child some small autonomy and responsibility, see how they handle it, and if they do well, then reward them with more autonomy and greater responsibility. Ratchet the process up as they grow up and the parents will be rewarded with well-adjusted children.

The Cerro Gordo project was mentioned.

Society will commend projects such as that for its right thought and action. This is the infinite sadness — the poignancy of the Physical Plane. This is the separation from God. You are rewarded [by society] for just those

actions that lead nowhere [such as materialism] and, therefore, always choose those paths. [12 December 1976]

The Cerro Gordo project was an intentional community in southern Oregon that some original Michaelian group members were interested in. Although society may pay “lip service” to such projects, society actually rewards the opposite of communal living. In order to change society, its reward system, aka value system, must be altered. Such is the difference between the tenets of predatory capitalism and the tenets of democratic socialism.

Joan: Could Carol teach in a spiritual school and be in Essence?

She should be more rewarded by the actual setting up of that environment and by seeing the work for those who chose it. Older Souls in this role are adept at the planning out of foolproof environments in which students can study with unimpeded barriers. [21 October 1977]

Again we see that there is a spectrum of reward or satisfaction or fulfillment in life, with the ideal being at the high end of the spectrum. The point is that one should pay attention to activities that one finds rewarding, and be on the lookout for these activities that optimize it.

Heaven is not the “reward” — the Gift of Life is the reward; the entertainment in life is the reward. The Personality is the machine, and the gift of emotionalism is its only “reward”. [07 November 1977]

Best not look to alleged rewards in the afterlife; best look for rewards in this life, to affirm that this physical life is indeed worth living. That affirmation applies to true rewards as documented above; it does not apply to false rewards provided by the Personality and the culture.

Gratification per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

Satisfaction per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

Fulfillment per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

Concluding Comments on Reward, Gratification, Satisfaction, Fulfillment

Rewards mentioned in this chapter are listed as follows:

- Depending on Soul Age, you (and/or the culture) will feel rewarded either by competition (younger soul) or rewarded by cooperation (older soul).
- What a person finds rewarding is also dependent on their Role, and indeed on the Positive Poles of all of one's Overleaves.
- What a person finds rewarding is also dependent on their Essence plans for the lifetime.
- For many people, if it were not for alleged rewards in the afterlife, the lack of rewards in this physical life would make life not worth living.
- Fun and play and truth and goodness and love are intrinsically rewarding.
- Fellowship and sexuality with kindred souls, past-life twins, and other past-life companions are also rewarding
- The successful completion of a chosen task is rewarding.
- Agape, Silence, Intimacy, and Trust are all rewarding experiences.





② RITUAL

This chapter is the product of a search for the word ritual in the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group channeling sessions. This word does not represent a significant component of the Michaelian teachings. However, there are good reasons to discuss the subject in this *Study Papers* book: 1) the subject came up numerous times during the original Michaelian group; 2) some interesting things were said about the subject; 3) the subject is related to a number of other components of the Michaelian teachings that are considered to be significant; 4) students can presumably benefit from having the mentions conveniently collected and commented all in one place; 5) rituals are almost unavoidable; they are pervasive in human psychology and sociology and spirituality — subjects covered extensively in this book — so it behooves us to have a working knowledge of them.

The word ritual is not capitalized in this chapter or other chapters of this *Study Papers* book because it has no special meaning in the Michaelian teachings; it is not a Michaelian jargon word that needs a definition apart from its use in the common vernacular.

Rituals and ceremonies have been a part of religion and spirituality since “time immemorial”, or as some prefer to say, since prehistoric times, as evidenced by certain kinds of archaeological artifacts, and by practices in ancient religions that were passed down from dim antiquity, from ancestor to ancestors.

After deciding that “ritual” was a topic worthy of research in the original Michaelian group transcriptions, I was a bit surprised at the number of times it appeared therein. Also a surprise to me was that there were no mentions of the related word, ceremony.

Ritual per Wikipedia

As is my custom, as part of my introduction to many chapters of this *Study Papers* book, I quote the relevant Wikipedia article.

A ritual is a sequence of activities involving gestures, words, actions, or objects, performed according to a set sequence. Rituals may be prescribed by the traditions of a community, including a religious community. Rituals are characterized, but not defined, by formalism, traditionalism, invariance, rule-governance, sacral symbolism, and performance.

Rituals are a feature of all known human societies. They include not only the worship rites and sacraments of organized religions and cults, but also rites of passage, atonement and purification rites, oaths of allegiance, dedication ceremonies, coronations and presidential inaugurations, marriages, funerals and more. Even common actions like hand-shaking and saying “hello” may be termed as rituals.

The field of ritual studies has seen a number of conflicting definitions of the term. One given by Kyriakidis is that a ritual is an outsider’s or “etic” category for a set activity (or set of actions) that, to the outsider, seems irrational, non-contiguous, or illogical. The term can be used also by the insider or “emic” performer as an acknowledgment that this activity can be seen as such by the uninitiated onlooker.

In psychology, the term ritual is sometimes used in a technical sense for a repetitive behavior systematically used by a person to neutralize or prevent anxiety; it can be a symptom of obsessive–compulsive disorder but obsessive–compulsive ritualistic behaviors are generally isolated activities.

[><https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ritual>< — retrieved 06 November 2021]

The remainder of this lengthy Wikipedia article continues with a section on Etymology, then continues with sections on the typical characteristics of rituals, namely Formalism, Traditionalism, Invariance, Rule-governance, Sacral symbolism, and Performance. There is another section on Genres, with subsections on rites of Passage, Water rites, Calendrical and Commemorative rites, rites of Exchange and Communion, rites of Affliction, rites of Feasting, fasting, festivals, and Political rituals. Another section on Anthropological rituals

includes subsections on Functionalism, Structuralism, Symbolism, Communication, Discipline, Social Solidarity, and Ritualization. The final section is on Religion. Reading these, one sees how much of human behavior throughout history has been rigidly formalized — it is a lot.

What is a spiritual aspirant such as a Michaelian student to do with this? First of all, I highly recommend that you read the entire Wikipedia article; it might open your eyes to some of what is going on in the world of socialization by ritual, so that you can discern what about ritual behavior is appropriate or inappropriate for your true nature and your higher nature. And then you may read what the Michaels had to say about rituals, for further insights.

Ritual per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

The following extracts from original Michaelian group transcriptions are Q&A exchanges, where an original Michaelian group member asks a question (or makes a comment), and the Michaels provide an answer. These extracts are presented in the chronological order in which they were given. As is my custom, I usually provide some explanatory comments following the question or answer. Underlined words are my emphasis, to draw attention to what it is that I comment on. Sometimes I embed words or phrases [in brackets] that I believe help to clarify the question or the answer. Numerous study papers related to this chapter are to be found among my comments.

The subject of this chapter first appeared in the first appearance of the Michaels to the original Michaelian group:

Comment: That's what consciousness is, that's what Robert [Burton] said — conscious love — to love at will — and that is what he (Michael) is saying here. I have never found that button. As a matter of fact, there is a lot of fear around that button too.

It requires that you go through the same set of exercises that you use in any other consciousness-raising ritual — the detachment-concentration Monad. [12 August 1973]

So, right off the bat, we see that there are good rituals, repetitive and formalized practices, that facilitate one's higher consciousness. Refer to the chapter "Consciousness" for a discussion of this particular Monad. Refer to the chapter "Monads" for a discussion of that subject in general.

The religion of the Old Soul is expansive, and includes unorthodox rituals. Groves of trees become cathedrals... [undated, late August 1973]

Formalized spirituality is generally known as a religion. Even when there is not a belief system — a dogma or a doctrine — attached to that religion, there can be a behavior system attached to it — practices and procedures. This is necessary to avoid chaos, which is what would happen if everyone spontaneously did whatever they felt like doing. Naturally, one would expect Old Souls, a minority of the population, to depart from the behavior system of the mainstream, and one would expect them to prefer a natural environment over an artificial environment.

Dick: I have a question about conventional religions and how they influence people. I know it's a vague question, but people who become identified with a religion somehow limit their experience and don't seem to grow much, yet they may help other people. Christ did not look for his followers among the righteous; he looked among the unrighteous.

His followers were only unrighteous in the eyes of certain beholders. The rituals derived from the religions are Good Work. They produce a group high, which is the only way that Baby Souls ever experience a high; that is, vicariously (through others). [08 September 1973]

Refer to the chapter "Identification" for more information about that. I would like to have seen an explicit list of the "rituals derived from the religions" that "are Good Work". There are hints of them in some of the following quotations; for instance, this one:

Does what we're doing parallel the Eleusinian way of doing things?

The Eleusinian Mysteries were initiation ceremonies based at Eleusis in ancient Greece held every year for the cult of Demeter and Persephone. Refer to https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eleusinian_Mysteries for an introduction. The central secret doctrine might be this: "One line of thought by modern scholars has been that the Mysteries were intended 'to elevate man above the human sphere into the divine and to assure his redemption by making him a god and so conferring immortality upon him'." Per the Wikipedia article, entheogen psychedelics were almost surely involved in the Eleusinian rituals. Refer to the chapter "Psychedelics". There you will find that some indigenous societies used psychedelics as part of their religious practice, and some members of the original Michaelian group did likewise as part of their spiritual seeking.

This can happen only with a high priest who can do the ritual work. This should be an Adept really, but some successful priests were simply Old Priests in Dominance. Rituals solidify groups in many instances.

Refer to the chapter “Adepts and Masters” for more about that.

Social cohesion is important in every group. Not only Priests, but all Cardinal Roles, including Sages and Kings, use rituals to build and maintain social cohesion among the people under their influence.

How does Bacchus, the god of wine, fit into Eleusinian mysteries?

It has been said by us before that rituals unify and bring together many who otherwise would not be able to participate. The same goes for festivals. They provide an excellent opportunity to play the fool in a controlled, safe environment, which is necessary for all souls in Ordinal Goals and Roles. Sages and Priests normally need no special invitations to be hams, but the same is not true for many Artisans and Warriors. Many Artisans are essentially nonverbal, except for those few who are like you, Dick, Intellectually Centered. Warriors fear the loss of respect that accompanies the loss of dignity. Timid souls often blossom during festivals. This was known in the ancient times, more so than today. The Bacchanalian cults arose from the celebration of the harvest and were sponsored at first by Attic [Athens] vintners. This was so much fun that the cults spread and took on additional significance. There is nothing dull about spiritual growth. The need is to become more joyous and expansive, not more somber and introverted. [10 January 1974]

To me, the above endorsement of rejoicing during festivals seems to be an important clue about the proper use of rituals in a group dedicated to spiritual growth.

The Pharisees, although certainly not as opposed as the zealots and the Essenes, did resent the mere presence of outsiders in their midst. They felt ritually unclean from the daily contact with uncircumcised heathens and, for them, the presence of so many outsiders was an annoyance, and they resented it. They also considered it a bad influence on women and young children. Roman ladies often accompanied their husbands into battle and to the provinces. [20 January 1974]

Recall the “etic” and “emic” functions of ritual mentioned in the Wikipedia article quoted above. One function of rituals is purification from “uncleanness” of any kind. Their purpose was to ‘wash away’ the old way of life and reinforce the new way of life. Rituals reinforced social cohesion within the in-group and reinforced exclusion of the out-group. One should not ‘run with the wrong crowd’, those who do not share one’s belief, value, and behavior system. Per the chapter “Communal Living” we see that separation from unbelievers can also potentially serve the purpose of spiritual growth, if it does not go awry.

Barbara: I would like to ask about the Essene Gospel of Peace. Manuscripts contemporary with Jesus are said to have strict prescriptions on diet and bathing, including a long tube. I would like some comment on this, if there is anything there that might help us along the way.

The Essene prescriptions for healthy living were among the pioneers of food fads. They were good enough for the time when they were given. We would not recommend the dietary restrictions, nor the rather brutal methods of cleansing the body, which normally cleanses itself satisfactorily, provided that it was healthy. The man Jesus was not a member of the sect. The man John [the Baptist] was. The man Jesus came in contact with them in the late teens and early twenties, and thought them to be relatively austere and not for most people. Some of their doctrines he accepted as good. This is valid. Some would still be Good Work for serious students. Exposure to periodic heavy manual labor and an extremely strong feeling of community was the hallmark of the Essene settlements. All of them took their turn in the fields and in the house, freeing them for serious study. They ate only enough to keep the body healthy, never to the point of satiation. They wore little constricting clothing. They were personally clean although they carried this into a ritual form. The idea was good. They also felt that the good was its own reward, drawing from the Hellenes. [24 February 1974]

Ritualism and asceticism often go together because their aim is to focus and concentrate the mind and body for spiritual work. Refer to the chapter “Asceticism and Austerity” for more information about the value, or not, of disciplined ideology and practice.

Alice: Was I an Essene?

The Essenes were dominant in the area where you both lived, but neither of you was a member of this sect. Alice had daily contact with these souls.

Alice: Was I ever involved in the rituals?

As a child, you were fascinated by them and often snuck away to observe them. [06 March 1974]

In this lifetime, Alice was in Submission, which is a Goal that is likely to be especially attracted to rituals as being something that is inherently meaningful, so maybe that is why she asked about it. My guess is that people in the Perseverance Mode are also especially attracted to rituals, because rituals involve formalized repetitive behavior.

Carol: I would like to ask about a feeling I had after going to church for the first time in a long time. I felt like I was hit over the head. My heart was squeezed. The minister was looking at me. I can't remember what he said.

Religious rituals are excellent for releasing trapped emotions. [17 March 1974]

Rituals are not always limited to behavior, and some behaviors can evoke emotions. Some churches emphasize the expression of emotionality in their services, singing and praising God and having rousing sermons and such. Baby Souls are known to prefer that kind of religiosity, and that Soul Age corresponds to the Emotional Center — both are on the Ordinal Inspiration Axis.

I am wondering about Phyllis being in the Moving Part of Intellectual Center. That is the formatory Center. It seems she is picking around the periphery of the subject. Could Michael comment on the Centers and how Moving Center is romanticized, and how the cosmic is romanticized?

Again, that system does not probe deep enough; it scratches the surface. Many times to probe deeply would shatter the system altogether, and many high physical teachers are guilty of this. Yes, your interpretation of the lady Phyllis's entrapment is essentially correct. We will bring the more concise definition to you.

Comment: I think it is Phyllis's Martyrdom role that keeps me needling her.

The keynote with Intellectual Center is, of course, rationalization. The Intellectual Part, of course, is capable of objective rationalization, the Emotional Part of subjective rationalization, and the Moving Part of practical, materialistic rationalization. The person trapped in the Moving Part of Intellectual Center is usually practical to a fault, and whatever fruits are harvested are usually in this vein. Whatever they pursue — whether it be medicine, the law, or housewifery — these souls are prepared through meticulous research for any and all eventuality. They spend much energy in their researches and not even the simplest task is performed without the ritual of researching them carefully. All of their intellectual endeavors must be immediately or at least clear-cut utilitarian value. On the other hand, the soul trapped in the Intellectual Part of Moving Center "attacks" knowledge with a vigor that is virtually unexcelled. Knowledge is a mountain to be scaled and conquered. [27 March 1974]

My perception is that all of the Ordinal Action Overleaves promote ritualism to one extent or another, in whatever form it may take. Previously I mentioned that people in Submission and Perseverance are naturally favorable to ritualism; based on what I see in the above Q&A exchange, I would add Martyrdom and the Moving Center to the list. The function of both Ordinal Action (in the abstract realm) and ritualism (in the concrete realm) is to rigidly constrain behavior.

Richard: Was there a pyramid somewhere in Stonehenge? Were we Druids there? Sarah had visions of flames and Druids around Stonehenge during a recent visit there.

Three of you were active in the Druidic rites. The lady Elizabeth was, at one time, a high priest. The Druids, indeed, did use the monument for their rituals. The spot was abandoned in the third century. The power still emanates from this land. The center or epicenter can best be felt now in the central nave of the cathedral.

Physical edifices such as Stonehenge, churches, cathedrals, and so on, are apparently constructed primarily for the purpose of performing rituals and ceremonies designed and intended to get people out of their mundane lives and into an elevated state of consciousness, as well as promote social cohesion by everybody doing the same thing together. Archaeological discoveries indicate that this phenomenon goes back to the origin of "Creatures of Reason" — refer to the chapter by that name.

Elizabeth: Witches?

All of you here present could easily become "witches" by developing some type of ritual to channel your psychic talent in a special direction. This would only be an advantage if there was a task at hand to perform. [17 September 1974]

Here again we see that rituals are all about Ordinal Action, the focus or concentration of behavior, as in "channeling your talent" and "performing a task".

(Yarmulke, or head covering?)

Yes. This practice in religion has a basis in truth, or "reality" if you prefer that word. It is a ritual of conserving energy and providing protection for the medium. [09 October 1974]

We see here and in other Q&A exchanges that ritualism is endorsed by the Michaels when it serves a legitimate social and/or spiritual function. Not just the Jewish head covering, but specialized garments and uniforms are all manifestations of ritualism.

Elizabeth: I have a great aunt who died, and I feel responsible for carrying out her wishes to be cremated and spreading ashes. I do not know whether this is silly to carry out the ritual or what. I'd like a comment please.

Positive thought emanations, of course, are more valuable in these situations than Mechanical Man's [ritual] action. Of course, you can combine the energy with the [ritual] action for your wish. [15 October 1974]

Rituals are worthless unless accompanied by the appropriate and intended state of consciousness. So what comes first? Ideally, they would be concomitant, but sometimes the ritual evokes the state of consciousness, and sometimes the state of consciousness evokes the ritual.

Without a [spiritual] teaching, you do not know that there is any alternative to this, and you do not have a chance to break the patterns. This permeates all facets of your living. Even your eating and sleeping rituals are stylized and smack of earlier times. Few break from these patterns, and even those who do, feel pain when they do. [21 December 1974]

This use of the word ritual here seems to be referring to habitual behavior, not conscious intentional formalized behavior. The former can be Bad Work; the latter is Good Work. The same comment applies to the following:

Only the Personality is governed by the Overleaves, and these are non-reasoning and incapable of manifesting the higher emotion. Our use of the simile of the "top baboon" is not far from right in describing the behavior for many aggressive young exalted in this culture, driven by primitive instincts to remain at the top of the pecking order. All of the mating behavior and rituals are borrowed or brought forward from more primal times, and can be observed in the animal kingdom extensively if one takes the time.... [28 December 1974]

If the ritual, whatever it may be, originated from animal instincts, then that is not Good Work. Such rituals do not raise the consciousness out of the ordinary or mundane and into the extraordinary or sublime. We see the latter Good Work in the following answer:

We have only suggested transcendental meditation for beginners because the ritual is sometimes of help in overcoming the resistance and reticence, but other forms, such as focusing on mandala, candle flames and the like, are equally effective. [Knowing your] Centering is, of course, vital in determining which method will work for you. [28 December 1974]

There are different kinds of rituals that are appropriate for different Centers. If it is not self-evidently obvious to you, then experiment with different methods until you find what works for you.

Sarah found herself reciting parts of the Koran. She noted that she used religious rituals as a way to release emotions.

This soul has searched through the ages for truth. The Scholar has sought to intellectualize all experiences of ecstasy and has, therefore, denied the experience. Being now in touch, however timorously, with truth is both threatening and incredibly inviting. To allow the experience, ritual, or some form that will enable the intellect to recede, could be beneficial. More talking about it is not Good Work, and merely prolongs the agony that must, of course, precede the ecstasy. We patiently await your trying another doorway. [11 January 1975]

The importance of an emotional component of rituals was mentioned previously; ritual is not only about behavior. If there is no emotional component to the ritual, then it is limited in its utility and facility for elevating consciousness. Another point to be made here is that, if a person participated meaningfully and effectively in a particular ritual in a past lifetime, the same or similar ritual might be especially meaningful and effective in the current lifetime.

Mention was made of rituals and practices designed to bring about enlightenment.

We simply speak of various asceticisms that are unnecessary. Rituals do help the uninitiated, but only in the preparatory stages. These serve to quiet the mind. [12 December 1976]

Here again, as stated previously, ritualism appears to be related to asceticism. In other contexts, certain behaviors and tools (such as psychedelics) were referred to as "crutches"; they serve to metaphorically 'ambulate' the consciousness toward higher states until the person learns to 'walk' without the 'crutches'. Apparently, according to the Michaels, rituals are in this category of temporary expedients, as 'baby steps', so to speak.

Concluding Comments on Ritual

It helps me to get my thoughts together on a subject by putting them into a bulleted list.

- My speculation is that ritualism was invented and retained during the Infant and Baby Soul Ages of humankind, and that it continues into modern times as much out of sheer tradition and habit as anything else. The Infant Soul Age of humanity, the paleolithic hunter-gatherer age, corresponds to the Warrior Role, and the Baby Soul Age of humanity, the neolithic agricultural-pastoral age, corresponds to the Server Role. These times and these Roles find the establishment and perpetuation of rituals to be especially meaningful.
- Not all human psyches are predisposed to ritualism. For instance, why people do rituals is mysterious to me, someone who has no Ordinal Action Overleaves and therefore not attracted to ritual, or Ordinal Inspiration Overleaves, and therefore not attracted to social cohesion. Personally, I have never been attracted to formal rituals of any kind. Maybe that is an Artisan thing (I am an Artisan), alienated as we are, and therefore not easily entrained into some romantic notion of familial conformity, or naturally attracted to “herd mentality”. You know what they say about dealing with a group of engineers: trying to get them to coordinate and conform is like “herding cats”. Contrary to this, Warriors seem to have a natural affinity for the herd mentality; witness soldiers wearing identical uniforms and marching in formation. Athletes are also prone to ritual behavior, because it helps them to focus on, to ‘get into the groove of’, their sport. Servers also like social cohesion, so they might find rituals appealing on that account. I suspect that the Cardinal Roles like to promote rituals and ceremonies, so that they can deliver their message, Sages in the theater, Priests behind the podium, and Kings from the throne. Scholars are okay with school rituals, whether teaching from the lectern and at the chalkboard, or sitting studiously at their desks.
- Seems like rituals are most appropriate for the Action Roles, Warriors and Kings, or those of other Roles who have a preponderance of Action Overleaves. It does not say so in the original Michaelian group transcriptions, but I am going to posit that sports arenas are places of ritual behavior favored by Warriors and Kings, whereas churches are places of ritual behavior favored by Servers and Priests. If Artisans and Sages have a preferred place for ritual behavior, it might be the movie theater.
- According to the original Michaelian group transcriptions, there are conscious good rituals that foster healthy psychological, social, and spiritual endeavors and aspirations, and there are unconscious bad rituals, which could be called “habituals”, that keep one trapped in the instinctive level of cultural and social programming.
- Ritual mainly applies to repetitive and formalized actions and behaviors, but it also involves mental repetitions, such as the saying of a mantra, and emotional repetitions, such as the rhythm of songs.
- Rituals provide a way for all of the people in a family, a club, a business, a society, a culture to know what to do in specific situations, so that no one will be surprised by what other people are doing. To the extent that rituals are a part of the socio-cultural trance, they can safely be recognized as such and discarded by individuals on a spiritual path, which often includes liberation from the norms of the culture.





ROLE





① ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS

This is an entire session transcription from the original Michaelian group. The questioners in this session are ERT and CLS. They met at the hospital where they both worked, and befriended each other. They were founding members of the original Michaelian group. The occasion for this session is that CLS (female) and ERT (male) were now romantically involved (more than half a year since ERT's marriage to ST ended) but are having issues, so they came to Sarah Chambers to get advice from the Michaels. The answers given to them seem to me to be extraordinarily instructive for many typical romantic relationships, especially those between kindred souls or those with Agreements.

This session was in the cache of transcriptions of the original Michaelian group that was shared among the original Michaelian group members. ERT gave me explicit permission to share it with the wider Michaelian teachings community, but CLS was not consulted in the matter. Therefore, I have chosen to not reveal their names.

Parts of this session were quoted in *Messages from Michael*, pages 201-202.

CLS = Old, Third, Artisan, Stagnation, Passion, Idealist, Emotional, Stubbornness.

ERT = Old, Third, Scholar, Dominance, Observation, Idealist, Intellectual, Arrogance.

ERT was born in 1937 and CLS was born in 1949, twelve years later.

15 January 1975 — Wednesday

Oakland, California [Chambers home]

A private session with CLS, ERT, and SJC (Sarah Jo Chambers).

CLS: Do ERT and I have any Sequences together or karmic ties?

Many times in the past, you and ERT have been friends, just as have most [who are] drawn by bonds to this [original Michaelian group] cadre. This is the first time, however, that there has been an opposite-gender attraction. This was partially determined by the Agreed-upon Sequence.

During the original Michaelian group, the word *cadre* was always used to refer to the original Michaelian group itself. Only in the group that Sarah led after the original Michaelian group ended (what I am calling the second Michaelian group) was *Cadre* used to refer to the seven Entities cast as a group "at the same time". Agreements to do Sequences were said elsewhere to be made between souls for things to do together during incarnation. Elsewhere in the original Michaelian group, opposite-gender attraction is said to sometimes facilitate soul growth via Karma, Monads, Agreements, and Sequences — all of which can be called Soul Business. These words are all capitalized because they are part of the Michaelian teachings special terminology. The nature of the Sequence was described in the next Q&A exchange:

CLS: Which was?

Once in the past, you were on opposite sides in a major conflict, but even then managed to cross the [battle] lines long enough to establish the Recognition. In this life, the Agreement was made [with ERT] to facilitate the Student CLS's search for the [original Michaelian group] cadre and thus [spiritual] growth.

"Recognition" is capitalized because here and elsewhere in the Michaelian teachings it refers to recognition of a kindred or friended soul, especially when they have Soul Business. "Student" is also capitalized because it refers to those souls who have an Agreement with the Michaels that the Michaels will facilitate their spiritual growth.

CLS: So this is the only Agreement and it is fulfilled?

An Agreement can be considered fulfilled only if there is agreement and mutual satisfaction.

ERT did introduce CLS to the original Michaelian group, so to that extent the Agreement was fulfilled. The question in my mind is, how much more did the Facilitating Agreement entail. The next answer would seem to indicate the Agreement was for “the long haul”. CLS was found via an internet search in 2011. She no longer has any interest in the Michaelian teachings, so in that sense the Agreement is certainly over, if not fulfilled, and she is happily married to another man since 1978.

CLS: [Is it all for my benefit or do] I have no Agreement to do anything for him?

In a sense, the Agreements made benefit both parties. In the long haul, this will be evident. Remember that the conflicts felt are the result of, first, the individual belief systems, which are part of the Mechanical Man, as well as some rather rigid master Tapes on the part of both Students.

One element that was not mentioned anywhere in the session was their difference in age. ERT was 37 years old and CLS was 25. A twelve-year differential in maturity level at that age is not insignificant. Then there is the matter of the Fourth Internal Monad that usually starts in the early to mid thirties, and is the major part of a transformation that takes years. CLS was years away from starting that, and ERT was in its early stage. Hence the Michaels’ reference to “the long haul”. It was really too early to make a commitment one way or the other. Many romantic relationships between kindred and friended souls (higher selves) do not last the long haul because lower-self factors interfere — as the Michaels addressed below — so they do not receive the full benefits that are part of their soul Agreement. The phrase “Mechanical Man” is straight out of the Gurdjieffian teachings, and refers to the person who is operating mostly out of False Personality and Maya, to people who are not on any path of self-awareness or self-improvement, let alone one of spiritual development. The phrase “master Tapes” was coined by John Lilly and refers to instinctive behavior that comes naturally with a physical body, as distinct from what comes from soul or Essence; refer to the chapter “Bio-computer” for more information. Thus, in this succinct statement, we are told that influences for actions come from three levels: 1) the body, 2) the mind, and 3) the spirit. Each person, not just this couple, has the first two as potential impediments to fulfilling Agreements made by 3).

CLS: Will this [issue I have with him] recur if I allow it to?

If you allow it to, and if he persists hanging onto old patterns, yes.

The description of her issue with his old patterns is revealed further on.

CLS: Where is this [problem] coming from?

First of all, we do not recommend rigid structured male-female relationships where there is no room for blooming or growing, if you will. But we do recommend that if you accept the more open approach, then you select for yourself those partners who understand this approach and seek it themselves. This type of an approach can come from a quite enlightened and Balanced space, but in you, there is still much fear of repeating [your] old patterns and finding yourself again cut off from the [spiritual] path [without ERT’s facilitating].

So, both of them had “old patterns” giving them problems. The recommendation here appears to be, to use the vernacular: Cut each other some slack, and in the long haul it will all work out. Some couples, often younger souls, might actually like being in a rigid structured relationship, so the Michaels’ advice won’t apply to them. There is some doubt about what the Michaels meant by “open approach”, because what they meant was not made explicit. It could refer to being completely honest with each other, holding nothing back in their communication. However, most of the context, revealed in comments further on, indicates that it probably refers to more than one intimate partner. Further on we find that ERT was not willing to commit fully to CLS, whereas CLS wanted a full commitment. This is probably the reason for the comment about choosing partners who are equally open in this way. This kind of openness is called “polyamory”, and it usually includes “polyfidelity”; there is commitment, but it is with more than one intimate partner. If anyone in a polyamorous relationship is by nature jealous and/or possessive, polyamory cannot work. If anyone in a polyfidelity relationship is secretly unfaithful and tries to hide it, then the dishonesty eventually destroys any sense of intimacy and trust from and toward the other. The word “Balanced” came from the Gurdjieffian teachings and was adopted and adapted by the Michaels in the original Michaelian group. The word is capitalized because it has a special meaning in the Michaelian teachings: it refers to a person who is spiritually mature enough that they can operate consciously and intentionally out of the appropriate Center for whatever situation the person finds themselves in. A Balanced person has access to the lower Centers that operate from Personality, and the higher Centers that operate from Essence. Refer to the chapter “Balanced Man”.

Other insights into the relationship of CLS and ERT?

In this culture, unfortunately, once a firm [= “rigid” in previous answer] commitment is made in relationships, the partners often undergo a startling change in their interpersonal relating, to the point that living becomes so strained that they begin looking for the escape route. Of course, this stems from imprinting [False Personality] and the lessons learned insofar as what may be expected in an ideal mate is concerned. You are perhaps more aware of this than most [in this culture] and seek to avoid the “tender trap.” With a committed Student, an interpersonal relationship “should” be free from this danger. Ideally, it would be, but the other Student at this point in your growth would not satisfy your projected needs [that you insist he fulfill because he is not yet mature enough].

One point that the Michaels make is, don’t let the Personality make a “firm commitment” one way or another unless it is fully aware of the extent of the soul’s Agreement that there be a firm commitment. To rephrase a Biblical reference (Mark 10:9) in Michaelian terms, “What God (Essence) has joined together (in Agreement), let not man (Personality) put asunder (Abdicate)”, where “Abdicate” is the Michaelian term for reneging on an Agreement. Another point is that so few couples make commitments based on Essence; they make them based on other things, which the Michaels point out and recommend against. For instance, beware of cultural imprinting if it goes against your own nature, especially your higher nature. In this younger-soul culture, expectation of rigid structured mating is the norm. In another Bible reference, there is an injunction about not plowing with an ox and a donkey yoked together (Deuteronomy 22:10); this was referred to as “unequally yoked”. This causes strain between animals — and human mates also. Hence the Michaels’ injunction to older souls in a previous answer to make room for blooming and growing. The Young-Soul culture also imprints expectations about an “ideal mate” (see below), and to the extent that the mate does not meet the cultural (or personal) ideal, a rigid structure will cause strain and a search for an escape from the yoke, the “tender trap”. Both Wikipedia and IMDb have entries on the 1955 movie, “The Tender Trap”, starring Frank Sinatra and Debbie Reynolds — refer to those internet resources to see the obvious relevance of that fictional story to this channeling. The capitalized word “Student” here refers to those in the Michaels’ cadre of students, the original Michaelian group. A Michaelian student, informed that there might be higher purposes than fulfilling Personality needs, does well to heed the promptings of the Teaching and of Essence. The next paragraph of this answer elaborates on the “projected needs” of personalities in intimate relationships, the things one Personality wants from another Personality.

ERT, you must still verify for yourself the fact that no one person can possibly fulfill the needs of another Personality. You have come to this knowledge intellectually during the past year [because of your divorce]. Now, what you must do is to truly feel it emotionally at many levels. The Personality [not the Essence] searches for the ideal.

In contrast to Personality, Essence does not *search* for the ideal — it is the ideal. To some extent, the Personality senses that there is such a thing as perfection and seeks it, but of course the perfect ideal does not exist on the Physical Plane. More is said about the “ideal” mate further on, the single mate that satisfies all needs. Let it be emphasized that **no Personality can possibly fulfill the needs of another Personality**. Nowhere in this session are the Personality’s “needs” denigrated as something to be ignored or denied; it is not illegitimate to satisfy them. It is not stated explicitly here, but it is implied that it is okay to fulfill Personality needs when the exchange is mutual, a “win-win” situation. So many intimate relationships among younger souls operate within a “zero-sum game”, where for one to win, the other must lose. The question then becomes, what to do about satisfying the Personality needs if one is an older soul, and the Michaels recommend polyamory/polyfidelity — **if one is mature enough on many levels** to do it well. In other words, “unless you are a trained professional, don’t try this at home.” It was in the past year that ERT’s marriage ended due to Personality “needs” not being met by either party. Refer to the session of 13 May 1974, where things were said, among other things, about that failed relationship:

The lack of eroticism in the relationship would not be a consideration if both concerned were at the same place spiritually, but there is a strong feeling still within the lady that one male and one female “should” be able to fulfill all of each other’s needs. We do not think this viable, of course, except within the younger levels [soul ages] bereft of any psycho-spiritual insight. The lady struggles with this in her head and may come to grips with it, but now cannot go past the cultural barrier. [13 May 1974]

Let it be noted that both ERT and CLS were Idealists, hence perhaps having a greater expectation than non-Idealists that a mate should be “ideal” — satisfy all needs. (However, they both probably had more unrealistic,

unworkable “shoulds” and “should-nots” in their Personalities than that particular expectation.) “Psycho-spiritual insight” probably refers to the Personality that is aware of Essence. Further on, we find that if one can get above mere Personality — get out of cultural norms and out of Mechanical Man operating from master Tapes seeking an ideal mate — and into Essence, then Personality needs and Essence needs become the same in a Balanced person. Further on, the issue of inequality of psycho-spiritual development — not “at the same place spiritually” — is addressed.

Resuming the session of 15 January 1975 we find this:

In your culture, the desire to seek out a permanent mate on a one-to-one basis is still largely predicated upon the loneliness and isolation that the technological society breeds. It is a terrible price to pay for civilization, for in the long run, especially where there are far-reaching legal ramifications, it breeds discontent and much needless negativity, and thus much wasted energy, which [energy] could [otherwise] be used for [spiritual] growth.

Strained marriages and subsequent divorces generate much negativity. Outside the younger soul cultural norm, when enlightened and Balanced older souls seek mates, there does not need to be a seeking of a “permanent relationship on a one-to-one basis” with an ideal mate. A lack of negativity and a presence of positive energy can be used for spiritual growth.

ERT, above all, tranquility — or at least a measure of it — is needed for [spiritual] growth. This tranquility must come from within, never from externals, for the latter is a false tranquility, and any third force can destroy it, utterly shatter it, in the twinkling of an eye.

Inner tranquility, by the way, is inherent in an enlightened and Balanced person. One of the primary goals of the Michaelian teachings is to become an enlightened, Balanced, and tranquil person.

Now we do not speak entirely against the custom of marriage. It is that we do disapprove of it being a legislative imperative. We would speak of rather personal contractual commitments. This, of course, is an alternative to the more open approach, which we have often recommended for advanced Students. This latter works only in the presence of a high level of Balance on the part of all concerned.

This paragraph is a summary of previous paragraphs. Three levels of romantic relationships are mentioned: 1) marriage with legal trappings; 2) “personal contractual commitments” without legal trappings; 3) polyamory/polyfidelity. Note that the latter is not promiscuity; nowhere in the Michaelian teachings is promiscuity considered to be Good Work. The more spiritually-advanced a person is, the more they might gravitate to numbers 2) or 3), but of course this is a matter of individual nature and personal choice of all participants in the arrangement.

Regarding “personal contractual commitments”, that does not sound like “true love” to me; it sounds merely “transactional” to me, somewhat like a business contract that is negotiated in detail and formalized by shaking hands and then signing some papers. It may be mutually beneficial, and that is often enough to keep business people working together, and couples in a partnership, but that is not the highest form of relationship, which is the true love experienced by kindred and friended souls.

CLS: My problem is in not accepting ERT's inability to be with me — his care level.

We would say that both of you have enormous expectations of each other, certainly not only the Student CLS but also ERT. There are expectations on the part of CLS that the relationship will be progressive, while there are expectations on the part of ERT that the relationship will remain intermittent.

The way she phrased her question shows that she recognized that she made his problem into her problem. That is, she took responsibility for her response. A less insightful person might only blame the other person for making them unhappy. More will be said further on about how expectations poison romantic relationships, and really, every kind of human relationship. The unenlightened and unBalanced Personality has expectations galore, plus a lack of ability to take responsibility for his or her own well-being.

Unfortunately, in keeping the relationship intermittent, ERT feels forced at those points to undergo a “cooling off”. This results in the rather real rejection that CLS perceives at many levels. There is some real rejection going on at those times. It is not all erroneous perception.

What is not revealed in this session was revealed in a personal interview with ERT by the author of this chapter: after two failed marriages, he simply was not willing to commit to CLS, and at this time was in fact seeing other women, even though hot sex with CLS was the best he had ever had. As for CLS, the Michaels offer a reality check here — CLS has legitimate concerns; they are not illusory.

But what to do about the differences between these two? The Michaels ever so gently instruct them:

It would be possible to establish a warm and close constant relationship, only if the fears of both could be erased. ERT must begin to perceive his own tendency to fluctuate in the intensity with which he gives of himself. In the Balanced Man, there is no fluctuation of this sort.

Because of his own internal unresolved conflicts, ERT was fluctuating between “hot sex” and “cold shoulder” with CRT. Relationship problems are often driven by insecurity, that is, fears within the Personality. If one does not have access to an external source of information such as a channel, then one might be left to introspect what those underlying fears might be. The Balanced person has overcome fears, has come to know the self deeply, and abides in constancy and tranquility.

A technique for mitigating fear is mentioned in the next paragraph.

CLS must begin to look at her short-term goals with this [original Michaelian group] cadre and decide if her commitment is there or if it is on a more personal basis. If it is the latter, then she must discover why and what expectations of hers have led to this. If the former, then the support of the brothers and sisters can become adequate during those periods of [ERT’s] vacillation. For one thing, with ERT, others will feel the fluctuation in the close living afforded in a commune. They will not hesitate to Photograph this.

To “Photograph” is to make oneself or someone else aware of the error of their ways. This was a part of the Gurdjieffian teachings, and the Michaels continued the concept into the original Michaelian group. So, the recommendation here is that it is beneficial to have a stable support group to get through rough patches and help stabilize a romantic relationship. The original Michaelian group never evolved into a commune as they thought they might, so we will never know whether or not close living would have actually helped or hindered their troubled relationship. It is doubtful that community life would have improved things because of their divergent expectations and perhaps other irreconcilable differences. At any rate, CLS was found via an internet search in 2011. She had long since lost interest in the Michaelian teachings, but we do not know when. It appears likely that she did not avail herself of the help of the original Michaelian group cadre for a couple of reasons: The original Michaelian group disbanded within a couple of months of this session, and ERT soon afterward met another woman, and then in 1976 married her. He was able to commit to her, without any help from the original Michaelian group, and sire and raise several children with her. Likewise for CLS. She also entered into a long-term marriage starting in 1978. This indicates that their problems with each other were not absolute; they were only relative. That is to say, when they each found an appropriate and compatible mate, the mating worked well and endured.

One might wonder if an enlightened and Balanced person could make a poor relationship work better. It would seem so:

In the climb toward Balance, ERT, this is one of the very real lessons that must be learned. Balanced Man is, above all, constant in his relationships. This constancy stems primarily from a lack of fear, for Balanced Man knows that he cannot be “trapped” by another less-Balanced Personality.

This connects with the statements above regarding a spiritually-mature person having a tranquil inner life, and the reference to the message of the *Tender Trap* movie that showcased a lot of trauma-drama in a male-female relationship. This inner tranquility naturally translates into a tranquil outer life. A romantic relationship characterized by trauma-drama is obviously not a mature or healthy relationship. Few people actually achieve Balance, so there is some inconstancy in most relationships, but as Michaelian students we know what to aspire to.

Most relationships also have an inequality of spiritual development, and it is generally up to the more mature person to keep the relationship steady by not getting caught up in the trauma-drama of the less mature person. And beyond inequalities of maturity, there is always the challenge of *loving* people on the Essence level that you do not *like* on the Personality level. That is addressed in the next two answers.

In true Agape there is, of course, an intensive, constant flow of love and caring from one to another. The [False] Personality rejects this out of hand, of course. It cannot even admit the possibility. That is why it is so difficult for you [ERT] to Photograph yourself intermittently dispensing affection in your interpersonal relationships. This is not limited certainly to CLS. Most astute brothers and sisters [in the original Michaelian group] feel this cool wind blowing and they are sometimes more able to separate from it, only because their expectations are less, or at least different. At least one other Student has revised his expectations to coincide with the observed fluctuations.

At their young age, and in the early Levels of any Soul Age, including Old, there is typically less self-awareness than there is in older people and in the late Levels. With greater self-awareness, one can typically Photograph and override the False Personality better.

A few more points can be made about true Agape that are not made above. With Agape, one has no expectations of the other person. With Agape, the love is pure and simple and unconditional. It originates in Essence; it is not based on or ruled by the needs of Personality. Agape is not dependent on Intellectual Center rapport or Emotional Center harmony or Moving Center compatibility — it transcends these. Elsewhere in the Michaelian teachings it is said that Agape is experienced from Essence through the higher Centers, not the lower Centers, and a Balanced person has access to higher and lower Centers, and responds from whichever Center is appropriate. Obviously, it is not just in romantic entanglements that Agape is good; it is in all relationships.

CLS: I am uncomfortable in the relationship when ERT puts restrictions on it. I haven't done that.

When Students in this Teaching leave the School, it is usually for this kind of reason [discomfort with other Students]. Few leave because of discomfort with the Teaching. But you see, this culture places such an enormous value on the quality of individual relationships that it is almost impossible for the Student still struggling with Balance to separate from this [cultural imprinting] in a confined relationship such as a resident School or commune. To see this [cultural imprinting] and choose to separate from it as a task is a strong sign of progress.

Unlike the cultural norm in this country, some other cultures put more emphasis on the quality of the group interaction than they do on the quality of the romantic or marital interaction. That emphasis would take the pressure off the individual relationship; things would work somewhat more like polyamory, where one gets one's Personality needs fulfilled with more than one person. The recommendation here of course is the usual advice to act out of Essence rather than out of any cultural norms. It is as Students in a Teaching that one learns about Essence and how to heed its preferences.

To choose to separate yourself geographically [from each other] is not wrong, if coming from a positive place; that is, if the probable resolution of the conflict comes with the separation. This would be in the case of Overleaves in conflict, surfaced anger and violence, *et cetera*. Otherwise, you run the enormous risk of never resolving the conflict and setting up the same pattern again with another set of circumstances and players. If the conflict can be resolved here, it will result in enormous growth on the part of both of these Students. For instance, if CLS were to look at her feelings of self-worth and worth to the others in this [original Michaelian group] cadre, and if ERT were to look within himself for the strength necessary to maintain a constant flow of warmth without the necessity to flee before the threat [of entrapment, then growth would occur].

Heretofore the Michaels have pointed out the components of False Personality that are troubling this couple. Looking at their Overleaves, which are part of True Personality, the major "abrasions" appear to be between his Dominance and her Stagnation, his Observation and her Passion, his Intellectual and her Emotional, his Arrogance and her Stubbornness. Even these differences could be overridden by major Essence Agape if they were both mature and Balanced. However, if they break up pre-maturely, so to speak, the same issues will likely show up with other persons, perhaps even in other lifetimes. Notice the use of the word "look" here. This amounts to Photographing oneself; no need to get Photographs from other Students. In the Gurdjieffian teachings, Photographing was called "self-observation". It was a primary tool for mitigating False Personality, Mechanical behavior, cultural imprinting, and other fear-based issues. Often times, just noticing one's issues, and examining them all the way down to their roots in a particular fear, will mitigate them unto eventual extinction. Photographing does its work by stepping outside the issue; it dis-identifies with the issue; it sees it from the vantage point of the higher self, which is not encumbered by the fear-based issue in the lower self.

CLS: I refuse to continue with this unresolved thing, to be put upon or shit upon.

There is, of course, the risk of involved game-playing developing — of the "No, please allow me to make the sacrifice," if this is carried too far. This is a risk one always takes when one tries to convince another to retract a valid choice. Even if there is a game being played on the part of the one making the choice, the choice must still be considered [treated, honored as] valid.

She wants a commitment, yea or nay to the relationship, one way or the other, but is not sure how to facilitate this. Should she wring it out of him? She might be saying, "Go ahead, you dump me so I do not look like a quitter." Is she unwilling to simply opt out of the relationship on her own volition if she cannot stand his vacillation any more? The Michaels seem to have understood that CLS wanted ERT to make the decision, so

they say that manipulation is never okay, not even when it is thought to be for his/her own good. One wonders if it is ever okay to argue with someone else. Elsewhere the Michaels recommend simply informing the other person of the way it is with the informer. For instance, from *Messages from Michael* (1979), pp. 58-59:

You must communicate your needs to those around you. Unless you are telepathic, you must do it verbally. Then you must leave them with an option. You must make that option known to them. The alternatives, with all the ramifications, must be understood, as well as the motivation of their acceptance or refusal. When there is complete understanding, there will be no disagreement. You have all heard this before, and we must emphasize it because it is the secret to effective communication, which will banish the specter of unfulfilled expectations.

There it is, succinctly stated: in order to resolve issues, one must tell the other person one's personal truth fearlessly. Then you might be surprised that both will come to understand and respect each other better for it. If only it were that easy. Of course you have to know your personal truth before you can tell it to another, and getting to that prerequisite is often a long journey. These two were close to the beginning of that journey, so could not have understood the other person or themselves very deeply or thoroughly. An older, enlightened and Balanced person, will have done just that by eliminating the False Personality previously mentioned: cultural imprinting, programmed behavior, unrealistic expectations, and so on. UnBalanced people do not have a truth to tell; in Gurdjieffian terminology, they have many "I's" with different truths. In this session, CLS pretty much spoke her mind, typical of the Passion Mode, but nothing is heard from ERT. This is not atypical for the Observation Mode, especially from a person who appears to have not yet sorted it all out, as will be seen further on.

Often resolution comes about in a strange way when one makes a choice from a far-from-ideal space and then Photographs Chief Feature keeping him from retracting that choice and admitting that it was from a less-than-ideal place.

The more extreme the bad choice the easier it is to see, even if blinded or misdirected by her Stubbornness and his Arrogance.

We have recommended that you not burn bridges. In this case, we would certainly reiterate: leave the door open, because, you see, on many levels you are far more committed to the Work than you understand. The Work has in fact penetrated deeply into your entire life structure, to the point where total separation [from each other] would be difficult.

People in the Passion Mode like black-and-white decisions, a firm commitment one way or the other; but the Michaels advise them to not "burn their bridge". If you are not evolved enough to resolve your issues now, maybe you can later, when presumably you will at least be more mature, if not Balanced. And the person on the other side of the issue might also become more mature and Balanced. The word "levels" is used several times in this session, referring to degrees of freedom from False Personality or stages on the path to Balance and enlightenment. By Photographing issues, one steps up to the next higher level of consciousness or spiritual perception. It has been said that "problems cannot be solved at the level in which they are created"; the Michaelian teachings seems to agree with that. The channeling was right about ERT being committed to the Work of spiritual growth, because he is even to this day; CLS not so much, according to her own testimony.

CLS: I don't feel I am playing a game. I haven't said I am burning any bridges.

In very advanced Students, there is a degree of detachment from the master Tapes that sometimes works against them in strange ways. For one thing, it sometimes makes them unaware of behaviors that are still continuing on lower levels, mostly by rote, to some degree. There is always, until Balance has been achieved, the risk of slipping back into these behavior patterns.

Both ERT and CLS appear to be in an awkward place, having started on the spiritual path and gone a considerable distance, but still a long way from the ultimate destination, Balance. There was much more Photographing to be done, to increase their detachment from components of False Personality, such as "master Tapes". Even as truly and fully Balanced people cannot be seduced by unBalanced people as stated earlier, so they cannot become unBalanced — "slip back" — by themselves.

In this [original Michaelian group] cadre, there are Students at all levels [of spiritual growth], and you can observe this easily. In [younger-soul] society, most contracts and most interpersonal relationships are based upon [overt] manipulative behavior patterns. In the male-female relationships, this is especially apparent. In this [original Michaelian group] cadre [of older souls], there is an increasingly low [declining] level of this type of

behavior, but in this case we do see some evidence of [covert] manipulative behavior on almost an entirely instinctive level, with detachment from the feeling of wanting to manipulate.

The cultural imprinting for manipulation is very difficult to surmount on the way to Balance. The person might not even notice it in the self or others.

Question: On whose part?

On the part of all concerned. You see, in the structured male-female life relationships [common in this culture of “do-it-my-way” younger souls], there is a conscious desire to manipulate the other [person] toward the desired aim. In this [case with you older souls], we see nothing that overt. There is not a true desire. In fact, we would say the opposite — [there is] a desire not to [manipulate]. But in the behavior being exhibited by these Students [who are yet undeveloped], there is evidence of the same patterns seen in the more overt societal relationships. If this can be looked at by both [of you] and be verified, progress will be made.

The older the soul, the less manipulative they are, and the more spiritually advanced the person, the less manipulative they are. Recall that the motto of the Old Soul was said to be, “You do what you want to do and I do what I want to do.” These were both Old Souls, but they were *young* Old Souls — in two senses: the chronological sense (pre-Fourth Internal Monad) and the early-Level sense (Third Level). Here again, in this passage “looked at” means “Photographed” in the “self-observation” sense.

Facilitating growth can be a difficult Sequence, for it entails far more than simply being a “friend” — in the accepted definition of friendship. The desire to complete the Sequence should not in any way destroy the closeness of an interpersonal relationship based upon a commitment to the Work. But until each of you is able to look at your own fears and conflicts in relation to each other, this is a real danger too that you face.

They could mess up the fulfillment of their facilitating Agreement if they let their issues in their romantic relationship get the better of them. Another option is that they could continue to be friends and help each other as friends on their spiritual path without the stress and strain of a difficult romantic relationship and all the unfulfilled expectations that often go with that among people who are less than spiritually mature. Another viable form of intimate relationship, not mentioned in this session but consistent with its message, is called “friends with benefits”. You probably know what that means.

It is true, ERT, that you have brought many [in addition to CLS] to the door, but at many levels you must still walk through that door yourself, and until you do you will continue to feel the confusion.

Walk your talk. Regarding the reference to his confusion, elsewhere it is called “vacillation” and “inconstancy”: these are symptoms of a Personality that has not yet achieved internal consistency, authenticity, self-knowledge, and such. At minimum, ERT had not made up his mind about which woman he wanted to settle down with, or even *if* he wanted to settle down. There might have been other considerations, the conclusion to which he had not yet arrived. ERT had brought a number of people to the original Michaelian group, not just CLS.

CLS: Is it possible [for the Personalities] to relieve someone of an Agreement made [by their souls]?

Yes. They must also wish to be relieved for it to be a permanent and comfortable Agreement.

An Agreement not terminated or fulfilled amicably by the two Personalities involved is called an Abdication, in which case it might not be “permanent”. The souls involved will then have to negotiate another settlement that is ultimately accomplished satisfactorily.

CLS: Did I Agree to help him or just him [Agree] to help me?

Not so much to help you, but in many ways to free you for this without entrapping you with his own expectations. You see, “facilitating” [which is the nature of Agreements] means making it possible or probable. He did not Agree to be your teacher, only your facilitator.

The Personalities should not try to make more out of an Agreement than the souls have Agreed to, or it will mess up the relationship.

CLS: If I agree to relieve you (ERT) of the Agreement, then that takes care of your Sequence.

In effect she says, “ERT, I hereby release you from this Agreement to facilitate me on the Path. That certainly takes the strain off.”

CLS: Other comments?

Only that we would, whatever your choice may be, hope that our choice to stay in contact [with you two] will not be ignored.

They could choose to go their separate ways, but the Michaels could still be with them both.

ERT: Other comments for me?

We would hope that you will reflect upon those Photographs that we have made of you and use them to facilitate your own progress within the next several months. This could be an extremely exciting transition period for all serious Students. It could also be an emotional disaster for those unwilling to effect the necessary change.

One can tell from the session transcriptions that the Michaels had stepped up their own energy in the previous few months, and it seemed that real progress was being made in the original Michaelian group. Unfortunately, things blew up in their faces, and the original Michaelian group was disbanded before the end of February. Thus, many Students were left to fend for themselves, so to speak, unless they maintained contact with the Michaels by means other than Sarah's Ouija board.

Before the group blew up, the very next day after the session above in fact, another personal relationship came up for discussion, and the response from the Michaels is relevant to this chapter:

Mallory asked about a decision she and Ralph are trying to make about moving. Is now the best time? They are hung up on issues.

Always, we would recommend a change of patterns only if it comes from a positive space. This would, of course, mean that you both were in this space and could see the change as opening, rather than closing doors. As long as one of you holds onto the latter, it will only result in one giving way to the other. This, of course, is a bad place to move from. For you, the change could be quite positive. Resolution of this conflict could be brought about by less intellectualization and more expression from you, Mallory, on these emotions you only have begun to surface. Perhaps, this would lead to some rather surprising insights about what still remains hidden in your relationship. Perhaps, you may choose to no longer hide it. It, or rather, all still hidden in many relationships stands in the way and acts as a permanent barrier to Agape, even on that level, to true cooperation. Most life relationships resemble icebergs in that most truth about the partners remains hidden below the surface. The partners then attempt to modify their behavior around what they perceive as the expectations of the other and what they have set as a goal. We see vestiges of this behavior in all of you — not certainly you alone, but all students here present. True, you have expressed, but you have been received intellectually and to a certain extent, even rationalized your emotions.

Mallory: Michael stated I have not expressed emotions. I think Ralph has some unexpressed emotions also.

Oh, yes, that is entirely valid. He also has much of the ice beneath the surface, and it is also valid that when a wish becomes "an imperative", it must be acted upon in some very concerted fashion or you run the very real risk of erecting another block around that imperative.

Mallory and Ralph eventually married and moved away. He died in 2012 and she died in 2015.





⑦ SCATTERING

This chapter is the product of a search for the word “scattering” in the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group channeling sessions. This word does not represent a significant component of the Michaelian teachings. However, there are good reasons to discuss the subject in this *Study Papers* book: 1) the subject came up numerous times during the original Michaelian group; 2) some interesting things were said about the subject; 3) the subject is related to a number of other components of the Michaelian teachings that are considered to be significant; 4) students can presumably benefit from having the mentions conveniently collected and commented all in one place; 5) Scatterbrain issues are pervasive in human psychology and sociology and spirituality — subjects covered extensively in this book — so it behooves us to have a working knowledge of it.

The word “scattering” is not capitalized in this chapter or other chapters of this *Study Papers* book because it has no special meaning in the Michaelian teachings; it is not a Michaelian jargon word that needs a definition apart from its use in the common vernacular.

This chapter is one of many in this book that focuses on a psychological component of the Michaelian teachings as found in original Michaelian group transcriptions, rather than on a doctrinal or spiritual component. A psychological component is usually either a positive to be cultivated or a negative to be mitigated. As we will see, the Michaels tell us that scattering is a negative to be eschewed. The Michaelian version of psychology is not to be confused with the popular psychology of the self-improvement movement, those that do not have a spiritual core or perspective. Rather, the Michaelian psychotherapeutic path (aimed at improving psychological health) is a beneficial precursor to the spiritual path (aimed at improving soul health). To skip the former but attempt the latter is referred to as “spiritual bypassing”. This is discussed at length on such websites as https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spiritual_bypass. To skip mitigating one’s psychological issues and attempt to go straight to enlightenment usually proves to be problematic.

What prompted me to compile this chapter was that on numerous occasions during the original Michaelian group meetings the Michaels pointed out that the attendees’ minds were “scattered” rather than focused on matters at hand. This phenomenon dilutes all other phenomena, and the social interactions become diluted, shallow, and superficial. This is a potential issue in all group gatherings where, obviously, various personalities with various Overleaves are in attendance. Most people would rather party and/or otherwise be spontaneous. What to do? Well, sometime when you are free of external distractions and ready to focus your internal resources, read on for some Michaelian (and Philipian) suggestions.

Definition of Scattering

So what is meant by scattering? The online Merriam Webster dictionary definition is:

- 1: going in various directions
- 2: found or placed far apart and in no order
- 3: divided among many or several [as in] scattering votes

Synonyms: disbandment, dispersal, dispersion, dissipation

[<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/scattering> — retrieved 15 March 2023]

Scattering happens when everyone adds “their two cents” to a conversation, and those two cents are not all that relevant to the thrust of the conversation, meaning that the two cents do not move the conversation along a forward focused trajectory, but rather make a diversion. This is not what we want in a group where progress and intimacy are goals.

Scattering per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

The following extracts from original Michaelian group transcriptions are Q&A exchanges, where an original Michaelian group member asks a question (or makes a comment), and the Michaels provide an answer. These extracts are presented in the chronological order in which they were given. As is my custom, I often provide some explanatory comments following the question or answer. Underlined words in the Michaels' answers are my emphasis, to draw attention to what it is that I comment on. Sometimes I embed words or phrases [in brackets] that I believe help to clarify the question or the answer.

Scattering was an issue from the beginning of the original Michaelian group. The following is from the second session that has become generally available:

[Tomas:] I believe this [session] should end for now — the energies are scattered.... Good night. [19 June 1973]

That was abrupt! Refer to the chapter "Agenda". There you will read that people came to the original Michaelian group meetings while still processing the events of their day, or they had their own ideas about what should happen in that session, and they asked a lot of personal questions that were irrelevant to the group as a whole. Having an individual personal agenda is not conducive to having a collective impersonal or interpersonal meeting.

One of the most thorough discussions of the scattering problem came after several months of meetings:

Richard informed us that he had "talked" with Soleal, and that Soleal was willing to be with the group this evening.

[Soleal:] I have no real revelations to offer, just that I am struck again by the tremendous scattering of energies even in this group, due in the most part to the myriad personal agendas that take Intellectual Center and sometimes Emotional Center out of play [focus on the task at hand] for long periods of time.

The lady who has prepared the paper has hit upon an important truth when she speaks of diverse goals within a tight partnership ... or really I should say, divergent [goals]. The goals of the teaching, and thus of the students, must be unified in order to be effective. The teacher [Michael] can only suggest to you the methods if you wish to grow. Right now, the response within the group is almost solely intellectual. There is relatively little emotional commitment to the teaching or to each other, which is really more important. This leads to the haphazardness with which the group goes about its business. [18 February 1974]

Refer to the chapter "Commitment — Dedication — Devotion" for a lengthy discussion about the opposite of scattering. Evidently the presence of a supernatural teacher was not enough to corral the thoughts of the attendees. Usually it takes the actual presence of an eloquent charismatic leader-teacher to make the attendees focus. It does not say so here, but the hope during the original Michaelian group was that an enlightened King would show up to lead them, such as was the case with the Gurdjieff group that founding members had been affiliated with, which was lead by a Seventh Level Old King named Robert Burton; refer to the chapter "Gurdjieff, Ouspensky, Collin, Burton" for that whole story. However, for every potential upside there is a potential downside. History teaches us that groups led by a strong charismatic personality often go astray and become a personality cult. Lots of negative lessons about what not to do are learned this way, in addition to the positive lessons about what to do. Burton's Fellowship of Friends devolved into a cult over the decades.

In this same original Michaelian group session, the discussion of scattering continued:

Comment: Everything we do should complement the goal of the group. We tend to take on too many things to do. You don't have to give up everything, but you should pull your life towards the goal.

[Soleal:] I would like to point out to you at this time that many of you are dabblers. You dabble in this and that, tasting all of the fruits, eating of none, and in this light you also dabble in spiritual growth as well. Now, this is all right; there is nothing wrong with this — it incurs little Karma — but on the other hand, it leads nowhere. Also, the concept of Agape requires the actions of a closely-knit group of supportive students in order to come to reality. No one can feel Agape in an ivory tower. It can only be felt when Higher Centers are contacted in the course of close association with others. There is no way to do this alone that I know of. Where the misunderstanding has come about, I think, is where the teacher [Michael] has advised you of the dangers of the cloisters and the stifling atmosphere there that retards growth, and has pointed out to you the relative lack of success among those who choose the solitary path. [18 February 1974]

Refer to the chapters "Agenda", "Growth, Spiritual", "Karma", "Agape", "Centers, Higher", and "Solitude" for more information about subjects related to scattering that are mentioned in that passage. The comment about "stifling cloisters" refers to one type of attempt to mitigate the scattering problem, that of forming a

closed group, isolated from extraneous influences. History tells us that form of group identity often goes awry when a rigid dogma–doctrine takes over, and suffocating rules of conduct proliferate. Yet another type of attempt to mitigate the scattering problem is the solitary path, where the spiritual aspirant tries to ‘go it alone’; during the original Michaelian group, the Michaels recommended against that many times. The point to be emphasized here is that, for any group of people to function effectively and efficiently, it is useful to temporarily set aside personal matters and focus on the agreed-upon function and purpose of the group.

The next mention of scattering occurs in reference to a particular Role:

Dick: She must be Mature and Dominant.

Yes. Second level Mature Artisan in Dominance, Idealist. She is not terribly perceptive. Somewhat scatterbrained. Stubbornness as Chief Feature. [10 March 1974]

That Artisans tend to be scatterbrained was later revealed to be caused by the notion that they have five “inputs” or “channels” for processing information, and these are happening all the time. To work effectively and efficiently, Artisans must eliminate, or at least minimize, distractions and diversions so that they can concentrate on assembling the channels of input and focusing on their creative endeavor or project. The same principle applies to group work. If people are focused on what is happening in their own heads, or talking only to the person next to them, rather than participating in the group as a whole, then the “energy” of the group will diverge and disperse into cacophony and pandemonium — which is usually what’s happening in an Artisan’s brain unless they find a project that is so fascinating that it grabs and holds their full attention.

Phyllis: It seems there has been progress made in that we are not jumping subjects around so much.

There has been some improvement, yes, but we [still] see much scattering in the aims of the various souls involved in this. We would still see [that] some more cohesion and mutual purpose should arise; then that should eliminate the scattering. [20 March 1974]

The original Michaelian group started out small and gradually grew over the months. Older versus newer members were at different levels of understanding of the information. Besides that, different people have different personalities that pull and push in different directions; the more people in the group, the more the potential for scattering. It takes intention on the part of all involved to forget what is on their own minds and instead focus their attention on the goal of the group, or the matter at hand, or the topic chosen for discussion in that meeting.

That applies to individuals as well as groups:

Delia: At this point, what is my task?

Right now, you can use more power in concentration. You are still scattering much of the time. [03 July 1974]

Delia was not an Artisan, but she was in Growth and Passion, and those Overleaves are known to make a person scattered, especially when Growth is in the Negative Pole of –Confusion. May I suggest, in response to that answer, that individuals do well to first learn to concentrate their attention on the task at hand, and then apply that new-found ability to their group participation; refer to the chapter “Meditation and Concentration”.

Dick: All the Centers are operating all the time, but we are not aware of them.

All Centers are not working in Mechanical Man; they are only potentially workable. This is why perceptions of man [= humans] are so inaccurate and so scattered. This is the reason that criminal identification is so fraught with error. No two souls perceive the moment in precisely the same way, unless, of course, you happen to have two Balanced Men. [17 September 1974]

In a previous Q&A exchange in this chapter, Intellectual and Emotional Centers were mentioned, but Moving Center also belongs in the discussion. If various people are reacting from various Centers to something that happens in the group, then that obviously contributes to scattering. One of the major projects of the Michaels was to assist their students in becoming “Balanced”; refer to the chapter “Balanced Man”. There you will read that a Balanced person responds from the appropriate Center, not an inappropriate Center. This means that, in a Balanced person, all of the Centers are working all of the time. Therefore, a group of Balanced people will not be a scattered group.

Elizabeth: Comment on ladies meeting?

Elizabeth, there was much scattering as you know, but this can be controlled with practice. The need to exchange communication at times overrides the quality of that communication. This can be so effective if

carried out in the direction of the Work. It would be an ideal time to exchange those insights that are individually unique in origin and yet universally relevant. [24 September 1974]

It might seem stereotypical, but I will say it anyway in order to make a point: women's meetings have more emotional interactions, and men's meetings have more intellectual interactions. The point being that it is so difficult to balance the Intellectual and Emotional Centers in group settings. It seems to me that, ideally, a group will have both sober verbal exchanges and lighthearted emotional exchanges.

The chapter "Relevance" has more to say about scattering. Also, refer to the chapter "Communication" and "Insight" and "Work, The". There you will read that many people — men as well as women — feel compelled to 'add their two cents' to the conversation, even when that is almost irrelevant to the general thrust of the subject. This often makes the conversation diverge onto tangents that lead nowhere in particular, and the subject at hand gets short shrift. This has something to do with the way brains are wired to work: some are "convergent" (they seek and follow the thread) and some are "divergent" (they branch onto some other thread). This notion has been formalized in Michaelian teachings doctrine as the so-called "male/female" energy ratio, which is also called the "focused/creative" energy ratio so as not to seem stereotypically sexist. Oftentimes, in order to mitigate scattering, groups establish some rules, such as holding up one's hand when one wants to talk (this is not just a thing for elementary school classrooms full of restless students), or passing around a "talking stick", where only the person who has the stick can talk. A potential problem with this formalized and rigid procedure is that it tends to stifle emotional spontaneity and fun and playfulness. Here again, it is hoped that a mature group will approach a balance of both focused convergent order and divergent creative chaos.

We wish to resume this discussion when this group next gathers without fail. If progress is to be made, we must work with you in the way you have now begun to accept. This we would call great progress. There is far less scattering in this group now than ever before. Many have come to a seriousness of purpose that was previously absent. It is possible now that real growth will commence. [08 October 1974]

That statement about sums it up: are you serious about being a Michaelian student or not? Here they were, well over a year after the formation of the original Michaelian group, and they are starting to 'get their act together'.

False Personality will detract [and distract] yes, but if you look hard, you will see the Balance of the group as far as Centers. This group is not as scattered as you see on the surface. [08 November 1984]

Balance of Centers was mentioned above, so I will not comment on it again here. However, the new thought that comes to my mind about that statement is that if the group is full of older soul kindred and friended souls, then they have already made progress in unification at deeper levels of their being, so the group work in this lifetime will be easier and quicker. The trick then becomes to mitigate the False Personality that obscures this deeper level of integration that was previously established in True Personality in previous lifetimes and on higher planes.

As indicated above (and below), one of the Goals is especially prone to scattering:

... the Negative Pole of the Growth Goal [–Confusion] involves tremendous scattering of energies as the soul rushes from school to school searching feverishly for that illusive "way". [09 November 1974]

... the scattering comes from the Negative Pole of Growth [–Confusion] ... Growth with this amount of scattering, will amount to some degree of Retardation. [14 December 1974]

I'm curious about the Negative Pole of Growth [–Confusion].

A scattering of attention, the relentless search for the answer to a not-yet-formulated question, the quest for spiritual experiences without any clear-cut feeling or intuition as to what that might be. Students in the Negative Pole of Growth often go from group to group for many years not knowing for certain what it was that the experience lacked, but knowing that they did not find it. Many in the Negative Pole of Growth become quite prominent philosophers; the man, Emmanuel Kant, for example. Many others go from religion to religion for surcease from their internal torture. In addition, they fight any real growth within themselves with [whatever is] the degree of strength provided [or prevented] by the Mode. [19 January 1975]

As I said previously.

... there will be much focus on this and other similar teachings in the coming years, and it will be up to the students to lend credence to the words. This [teaching] will be far more believable coming from a Balanced student than [if it were coming from] a scattered one. [12 November 1974]

Being a Balanced person is a reward in itself, but it is also beneficial to others because it lifts and unifies the consciousness of everyone in their orbit.

... We would discuss this when the energy level is better; there is much scattering now and transmission is difficult. [19 November 1974]

This was said at the very end of that particular session. Perhaps students could be excused for loosing focus after hours of watching the planchette scitter around Sarah's Ouija board.

The energies here this evening are extremely scattered, and students are not present [in the here-now]. We would prefer that the remainder of the evening be spent in discussion of your fears concerning the new direction of this teaching among yourselves. [28 December 1974]

Reading the original Michaelian group transcriptions from beginning to end, it is readily apparent that in late 1974 the Michaels 'shifted into a higher gear', which they referred to here as a "new direction"; the Michaels did not mince words about the desirability of students elevating their consciousness, and they began to deliver long coherent lectures in addition to Q&A marathons. One wonders how much the scattering was due to people who could not harmonize their own energies with the new energy of the teaching. This sort of thing happens all the time in groups of every kind: either a group member does not change along with the changes made by the group as a whole, or a group member finds himself evolving in a different and new direction from the evolution of the group as a whole. This is a somewhat different thing than the "scattering" discussed in this chapter, but it seems relevant to the topic of this chapter in general.

Jim: Scattering is so much of my Personality. I need more concentration on the teaching ... work on myself at home ...

[Soleal:] ... I had to force myself into my present philosophy of never taking in more than one day at a time, in order to unload my bad spaces. The same can happen to you; you can learn to think only in small increments. It is not easy, but it is rewarding. [01 February 1975]

It so happens that Jim also had a Goal of Growth. Soleal's advice works for everyone who has a problem with scattering of energies: narrow your focus down to the immediate task at hand. You might have heard of the aphorism, "Be Here Now". When your mind is scattered onto the past or the future, you are de-energized. The opposite of the Goal of Growth, which Goal I prefer to name the Goal of Reduction, is good at concentration; its tendency is to make a priority list, focus first on the top item on the list, and then move down the list one item at a time.

[Soleal:] ... there must not be agendas in your way or the flow will be scattered, and you will not be able to transmute the collective energy into the higher expression. [16 February 1975]

Refer to the chapter "Agenda" for more about that particular type of scattering influence. There you will read that individuals should temporarily set aside their personal agendas when they come to a group meeting.

One of the goals of a group is usually to learn to flow in the same direction, toward the same goal. Going with the flow of the metaphor there, I would ask: Are you going to "row, row, row your boat, gently down the stream" of the collective group consciousness? Or are you going to thrash about with your paddles, adding to the turbulence of the waters as if you were white-water rafting down the rapids of a mountain stream?

It is possible for groups to collectively raise their energy — or "vibration" if you prefer — but individual agendas do the opposite:

You have not lost a thing when a non-serious student leaves the teaching — at least, you have lost nothing positive. What you may have lost is much scattering of energies to the winds. Working with one who is truly not a student only wastes the energies of the [original Michaelian group] cadre, and grieving over their loss results in a tremendous drain. [16 February 1975]

Sometimes non-serious students leave the group on their own volition; sometimes non-serious students must be asked to leave the group, if their contribution is negative rather than positive. One of the causes of scattering at that time was that the original Michaelian group had grown in membership faster than new people could be properly assimilated; that is, 'brought up to speed' and harmonized.

Stop for a moment and notice the lack of cohesion. No wonder the information is painfully squeezed out letter by letter [on the Ouija board]. Why the tremendous scatter? Do you know at all? Can you feel it? We certainly can.

Energy, you see, does have a vibratory quality and psychic energy is no exception to this. If the vibratory quality of the universal flow is neutral and the psychic energy flow from the Essence is positive, then the vibratory quality of the Personality must be negative. We would call this [Personality] "artificial rhythm," as we would call

the other [Essence] the “natural rhythm.” There seems to be an inordinate amount of backsliding, and we must point this out. Personality lives with artificial rhythms always. Seldom does it even come into contact with natural [Essence] rhythms. [Spiritual] Schools of the type we have been discussing, many times, will produce an environment wherein natural rhythms begin to flow. As students come to Balance, they find their own rhythmic niche and follow it through natural rhythms, of course, required [requiring?] that the Essence be satisfied with its occupation of the moment, whether it is Moving, Emotional, or Intellectual [Center]. Much work still must be done in dissolving the grip on allurements. This still has you fast in its jaws and we wish that you all could feel the level of vibrations emanating from you this evening: diffuse, peaked, and jerky, with no particular pattern other than discordance and jumbled rhythms going off into the ethers with no direction or focus.

At this point in the work, it is not necessary that you be receiving data. In order to focus, you must merely concentrate and focus your energies. If you are bored with the material being shared, that simply indicates to us that you are coming from an inappropriate Center. The same goes for apprehension over new students or visitors who happen to have strong Overleaves. If you respond with the appropriate Center, the apprehension will fade. [21 February 1975]

This statement came through during the last original Michaelian group session in which the large group was convened. This is an interesting case because Sarah discontinued the large group because a certain member was more serious than the group as a whole, and he was aggressively obnoxious about it. In my opinion, he should have been asked to leave for the same reason that non-serious people should be asked to leave: it scatters the energy of the group as a whole to be distracted by people who do not fit in. Most of the original Michaelian group attendees ‘scattered to the wind’ after that breakup.

Concluding Comments on Scattering

Subsequent to the original Michaelian group, the Yarbrow group was much more selective about who was let into membership; it remained closed to the world except for word-of-mouth recommendations. Consequently, for all we know, it has been fairly stable and focused over the decades.

During the 1980s, the Briggs group and its successor the Michael Educational Foundation group were not very discriminating about membership, and were not so intent on forging group bonds, so during that time the Michaelian teachings grew exponentially ... for a while; the energy has settled down in the last few decades. Another intense local group — in which the Michaels’ statements on scattering can be tested — has not emerged during these decades since the 1980s. The information about group dynamics contained in this and other chapters (such as “Agenda” and “Commitment”) might become important in the future, assuming that the Michaelian student body continues to grow in membership, such that eventually local in-person self-governed group meetings are convened. If people just come to a group meeting to listen to a channel, then little governance is required.

This chapter briefly indicates that students should intentionally mitigate scattering during group interactions, but there are also unintentional factors at play, as, for instance, in the way that personality factors naturally interact with each other. Scattered here and there in the original Michaelian group transcripts are a few mentions of Overleaves that abrade, and Overleaves that are compatible, and Overleaves that attract each other. This phenomenon was never developed into a systematic account during the original Michaelian group or in subsequent groups. However, I figured it out and wrote it up and put it in Part Four of my book *The Tao of Personality*. In my opinion, it would help Michaelian groups to focus on the tasks at hand if they came to understand and apply what is said in that Part of that book.

One of the fundamental questions that members of any group ask is if the forces of attraction are stronger than the forces of repulsion: shall I stay in the group or shall I leave the group. Relevant to this chapter are the chapters “Individuality” and “Alienation”.





SCHOOL METAPHOR

In spiritual groups where reincarnation is believed, the experience of incarnation is often compared to being in a 'school classroom' where the soul learns things. In this metaphor, people are compared to 'students', and people have 'teachers' who are further along than they are. In the "Earth School" classroom, people learn 'lessons' as part of a 'curriculum' whether or not they believe in the purpose and function of reincarnation, but there are groups of believers who propose that the learning process can be accelerated.

The word School is capitalized in this chapter because it is a special case, a *spiritually-oriented School*, functioning for the purpose of aiding students to learn and practice, first of all psychological purification, and then, beyond that, spiritual development.

Spiritual Schools have been around for millennia, notably the Pythagorean and Alexandrian Schools. Sometimes these are called "mystery" or "esoteric" or "occult" schools. There is a Wikipedia entry on this subject. They were mostly secretive because they were so far outside the mainstream of their culture that they risked persecution if they revealed themselves. However we won't start with them; we will start with the Gurdjieff and Ouspensky description of a spiritual School. From there we will see what the original Michaelian group transcriptions have to say about the original Michaelian group being a 'school', with discarnate Michael as The High Teacher.

Ancient Spiritual Schools

What information can Michael give me about previous lives as a philosophy teacher?

You taught in the best [schools]. There were two schools prominent at the time: the Pythagorean, and the Aristotelian. You were associated with the former, which was another occupation in Essence for you, as the Pythagorean school is concerned with the health of the soul. The city was Thebes. [13 December 1973]

I would like to know the answer to the question about group souls when you do ask. What is a Rosicrucian?

It is a society which apparently began in Egypt, at the time of the Pharaohs. It has to do with the occult arts. It is one of the oldest esoteric schools. They study these things, such as astral projection.

It is a split on eternity, like "send your sinuses on vacation."

When the teacher dies, the teaching passes into literature and should be regarded as such. (Regarding the Rosicrucians.) [08 September 1973]

Schools According to Gurdjieff and Ouspensky

Most of the founding members of the original Michaelian group came out of a "Fourth Way" (Gurdjieffian) spiritual school founded in 1970 by Robert Burton, an Old King. Thus they were exposed to Gurdjieff's concept of what a spiritual school should be all about. They departed that group in late 1972 and struck out to do their own spiritual seeking without a physical leader, but as we see below, they continued with the idea of 'school work'. Let us see what Gurdjieff's teaching about school work was like:

A man who wants to awake must look for other people who also want to awake and work together with them. This, however, is easier said than done because to start such work and to organize it requires a knowledge which an ordinary man cannot possess. The work must be organized and it must have a leader. Only then can it produce the results expected of it. Without these conditions no efforts can result in anything whatever... (P.D. Ouspensky, *In Search of the Miraculous*, p. 222)

Schools are imperative, first of all because of the complexity of man's organization. A man is unable to keep watch on the whole of himself, that is, all his different sides. Only school can do this, school methods, school discipline – a man is much too lazy, he will do a great deal without the proper intensity, or he will do nothing at all while thinking that he is doing something; he will work with intensity on something that does not need

intensity and will let those moments pass by when intensity is imperative. Then he spares himself; he is afraid of doing anything unpleasant. He will never attain the necessary intensity by himself... (P.D. Ouspensky, *In Search of the Miraculous*, p. 347)

The above was Ouspensky quoting Gurdjieff. Below is Ouspensky speaking for himself.

Generally speaking, a school is a place where one can learn something. There can be schools of modern languages, schools of music, schools of medicine and so on. But the kind of school I mean is not only for learning but also for becoming different... Nobody can work alone, without a school... A group of people who decide to work by themselves will arrive nowhere, because they would not know where to go and what to do. So we can say that a school is an organization for the transmission to a certain number of prepared people of knowledge coming from higher mind. This is the most essential characteristic of a school. Another very important fact is the selection of students. One cannot pass straight from the absurdity of ordinary life to school... Only people of a certain preparation and a certain level of understanding are admitted to a real school... There are schools where men Number 1, 2, and 3 learn how to become Number 4 and acquire all the knowledge that will help them in this change... (P.D. Ouspensky, *The Fourth Way*, pp. 94–95)

A school, in the full sense of the term, must consist of two degrees, that is, it must have two levels in it: one level where Men 1, 2 and 3 learn to become No.4 and the other level where Men No.4 learn to become No.5. If a school has two levels, it has more possibilities, because a double organization of this kind can give a larger variety of experiences and make the work more quick and more sure. [P.D. Ouspensky, *The Fourth Way*, p. 101]

Notice that Ouspensky regarded it as a part of the definition that a true School receive information from 'higher mind'. This comes up often in the original Michaelian group work. There is much more information in both of these books about the concept of a School and its function in promoting psychological and spiritual development. Below we plunge into the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group and see how that group acted as a School — with Michael as the teacher.

Schools per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

The following extracts from original Michaelian group transcriptions are Q&A exchanges, where an original Michaelian group member asks a question (or makes a comment), and the Michaels provide an answer. This is not a subject that would benefit by division into subcategories, as some subjects do. These extracts are presented in the chronological order in which they appear in the transcriptions, even though this is not a subject where there was a development or evolution of a specific revelation of a facet of the Michaelian teachings, as was often the case with the original Michaelian group. As is my custom, I often provide some explanatory comments following the question or answer. Underlined words in the Michaels' answers are my emphasis, to draw attention to what it is that I comment on. Sometimes I embed words or phrases [in brackets] that I believe help to clarify the question or the answer.

Even before Michael showed up, the subject of School came up in a session with Soleal. One of the founding members of the original Michaelian group felt that he was not ready to be the leader of a School:

I haven't felt ready for the task yet – and I assume that Soleal means to form my own school – I haven't been in touch yet with higher forces in my head and I really didn't feel that it was fair to start a school because at the present, I would only give them what I have read. I've felt like I needed higher forces operating through me in order to go and teach.

There are higher forces working through all of us in this school. Because you are here today puts you in the student category. You have many doubts concerning validity of experience where cosmic force comes into play. [03 July 1973]

As far as Soleal was concerned, even at this stage, just a few months old, the original Michaelian group was in fact already a School. The members were considered to be 'students', and they along with Soleal were all subject to 'higher forces', which was one of the distinguishing features in Gurdjieff's definition of a true School. Soleal was himself a Seventh Level Old King who had achieved Adept hood on another planet, and he was the leader of his people there. This means he was qualified to be the high teacher for the original Michaelian group. However, his statement about 'higher forces' might have been an allusion to Michael, who was Soleal's teacher.

It was several months after the exchange with Soleal that the subject of School again came up for discussion, and by this time Michael was the original Michaelian group's main teacher. So what is a School for? Obviously, to learn about and practice a Teaching:

I was not aware that she would be considered a candidate for a school.

Work on her soul level without a teaching is difficult. It is, again, virtually impossible to raise the level of consciousness without a teaching. With a teaching, however, the span from a Young or Mature level to a late level Older Soul may be accomplished. [20 Nov 1973]

Other statements indicate that such a leap in Soul Age is highly improbable even with a Teaching, but here it was said that it is not impossible. There is another chapter on *Teaching*, but obviously spiritual Schools are involved in spiritual teachings and spiritually-minded students.

Later in this same session there was another mention of Schools. The following quote was extracted from an answer about another subject:

... This School does not need to grow to large proportions in order to teach. It probably will work better with a limited selection of students; people living on a ranch, healing with laying on of hands, and healing of the soul with messages... [20 November 1973]

The questioning about the development of the original Michaelian group School continued:

Will this School be rich or poor? I see it as a highly developed School.

For awhile, it will be touch and go — on the poor side. Several in your group need the growth involved in farming, leaving the city and being aware of themselves. Then the school will grow in spurts and become large. It will never become an extremely rich school; it is not necessary. Part of your evolution will be the loss of your ego, which would like the richness. It is nicer to be rich, greater to be poor. Your growth will come faster. At some time in your growth, you will need only what is around you at the moment, and the materials will no longer be necessary. It is not even so far off as you think, as you are moving in that direction anyway. Most of those in this group are moving away from the material, and this is necessary for their growth and is good. It can lead to great leaps in soul work. [20 November 1973]

I would like to ask Soleal: because of studying Gurdjieff, I've come to believe that the only possibility for anything is through individual personal growth, and not through trying to change things like political systems. I would like to know if this is correct?

Not entirely. Someone must teach the Logos in the first place. As the population grows, the teachers increase. Some people need much more personal direction. Reading will not help them. Are you ready to take on that task?

I haven't felt up to the task of starting my own school, because I haven't been in touch with my higher forces on my own, and I don't feel that it is fair to start a school until higher forces are operating through me.

There are higher forces working through all of us in this school. Because you are here today puts you in the student category. You have many doubts concerning validity of experience where cosmic force comes into play. You must be open to any manifestation or the blocks will be just as strong as they are when you are dreaming, and the dream stops and reality takes over, but the mind refuses to make the reality tape [recording], and includes the experience in the reservoir of dreams. Many times the mind regulates perception to the point where the creature is unable to perceive the experience at all, even to the point of a recorded nightmare.

Are the means for doing this available to us? I'm so stuffed with systems —Gurdjieff, Don Juan, parapsychology. Actually, information like this might interfere with itself.

There should be a synthesis if the information comes through cosmic [sources]. If the synthesis is not felt, then the system is probably not valid. If there is synthesis, there should be no conflict. If there is not the synthesis, then one of us is not telling the truth, and as in all previous situations, it will be up to you in the end to verify. There is a deep-seated fear that you will choose the wrong path and be inadvertently left behind. The synthesis is always there for those who are willing to search beneath the surface. The readings are good; the confusion is not. That takes conscious effort on your part. Just be patient. You cannot achieve enlightenment by any route in one day, or by any method without first making the decision to establish this as the goal for the present lifetime, and then making the decision to devote the rest of the life to that pursuit. The devotion must be there, no matter which path you take ultimately. The path can take you through the mainstream of life on your world, or you may eventually decide that you must have the seclusion. A communal setting would offer this in many ways. You need people around by whom you can measure your progress and this is not bad for you. Self-confidence, and I mean in your own spiritual strength, must be developed. [Soleal, 1973]

Does the "Occult Brotherhood" still exist, and can SC contact it? Are we better off to read the Bible or just listen to Michael concerning the new Messiah coming?

Yes. The brotherhood cannot die out. It is far too widespread and the brothers are too careful. This is the most ancient school. The Bible can be read as literature.

Could we have some information on the Rosicrucians?

Some of the Rosicrucians are bona fide brothers, some are not. In the neophyte program, there is no screening; the winnowing comes later. The heaviest concentration is now in India rather than the mid-east, where it formerly was.

Are the brothers chosen because of their psychological health and strength?

Usually, they are "chosen" through telepathic communication. This should tell you where they are on the path. [25 December 1973]

In the Gurdjieff group, the leader did not call his school a religion; it was a school of "consciousness." Ours is a teaching also, and not a religion, isn't it?

The only difficulty in that word is that it ties into dogma, and that is not religion. We wish to teach a joyous religion without dogma, and so decline to label it. Jesus did not call his teaching "Christianity."

It should also be a pleasant shock when it all comes together.

More and more, you will find yourselves immersed in the planning stages.

We just got through with planning for the Town Meeting.

This is planning of a very different sort, but all the rules are applicable. Since this is a planning stage, this means that decisions will be made, and you will be left to start the implementation octave with a dedicated core.

Is it our task to provide the spiritual base for the Oregon community?

We feel that that would be in many respects the ideal start. We feel that wherever you are, you must have adequate facilities to accommodate transients who seek you. We are interested in centralizing this teaching and eliminating the most distracting duplications that now occur, preventing most of you from serving to the limits of your ability. [03 February 1974]

Should we send the transcripts out to those who do not participate? Should there be a school within a school for those who come each time?

We would prefer that you assemble the material here given, editorializing if you wish, and present it to all potential students in a palatable form. There are Scholars among you who are up to this task as well as Artisans aplenty who can contribute the imaginative approach. We could see this as one of your major tasks, and we have advised you this before. We would see the core "school" remains small, as otherwise the commitment will never be strong. Now it is our aim to see you eventually propagate this teaching at large. We would see you exorcise the personal data prior to disseminating any information beyond this core; other than that, you may publish at will. Ouspensky and Gurdjieff did. The data concerning internal centers of gravity presented by these gentlemen is, of course, valid, as is information pertaining to the separation of the earth-bound personality and the spiritual essence. Beyond that, we have taken you into another realm. [08 February 1974]

I need outside help in order to experience this.

That is the advantage of being in a teaching. Yes, there is virtually no way of achieving this on your own — a school is necessary. [03 March 74]

I think Ouspensky was said not to be subjectively conscious. Was he trapped in the Intellectual Center?

He was not subjectively conscious. He was trapped in Intellectual Center, that is valid. This was a fifth level Old Sage who was a good student. [03 March 1974]

What was meant by him saying, "Abandon the system and start a school [based] on [fulfilling] your 'wants'?"

Many confuse "wants" and "needs." This is what was meant here. "Needs" were implied while "wants" were verbalized. [03 March 1974]

Gurdjieff was said to be Moving Centered and his students Intellectual, while Ouspensky was Intellectual and his students were mostly Emotionally Centered. Is there a good combination for teacher-student relations?

It is common [for this sort of thing to happen]. It is neither good nor bad; it is simply that the students sense something in the teacher that they cannot reach. [03 March 1974]

There is, of course, an enormous resurgence of interest in the occult in this part of the world. Sometimes potential students are led gently to the school; sometimes it is like a bolt out of the blue or a tap on the head. At any rate, this is available all over this country. If you are able to listen to the words, you will find them. You are here because you wish to be. This is not facetiousness. At a deeper level, you wish to know [that] this is not unusual. Given your total picture, it points to curiosity about many things.

Are new students helpful because they bring new questions?

Each new student who approaches this teaching in a serious vein brings new questions that would otherwise go unasked. This is good. The constant ebb and flow of students causes consternation and provides friction for some students, but these are welcome to our private help any time. [27 March 1974]

There is a fuzziness in False Personality and Overleaves. How do you tell the False Personality from the Overleaves?

In the person who is not a student, all Overleaves except for the soul level manifest through false personality.

Do you mean a student in this organization?

Or a similar one. This is not the only Causal school. [03 April 1974]

What to do is not clear. I'm not a teacher.

Others would live by your example.

It is still unclear. Do I keep on being a doctor?

Yes. If that is your choice.

The role can be made into a teaching one. You do not have to have an organized school of your own. It is enough to be in one to effectively affect the opportunity for others around you to look at their Overleaves and begin to understand. Evolution on this world has been slow and now is picking up somewhat — still slow though when compared to, for instance, Soleal's world. [14 April 1974]

Once we realize we can change, how do we know when that is?

Usually the Mature Soul at that point seeks therapy. Whether this is effective depends upon the skill of the therapist. The same goes for the skill of the teacher in the school, such as this. We believe that it is certainly worth exploring; discussing where the others fit in would help; all could make a contribution. Such a move in the right direction could be a tremendous stride toward growth if the space was positive and the manifestation did not involve unrealistic fantasy. [08 May 1974]

The Teacher–Student Monad

Teachings and Students per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

True Teacher — Agreements

May I introduce the concept of “True Teacher” here. This idea is not quite in the same spirit as the “Four Pillars of Vitality”: True Rest, True Play, True Study, and True Work — these were introduced in *Michael's People* in 1998. The idea of “True Home” was introduced in the late 1990s via Sarah Chambers; I also see some references to “true intimacy” and “true livelihood” and “true mate” and “true community” in Sarah's 1990s channeling, but it does not seem as if they were added to the official list of “Pillars of Vitality”.

This “True Teacher” idea is within the realm of the aphorism, “When the student is ready, the teacher will appear” (google it). It is also within the realm of the “Teacher–Student Monad” discussed in some Michaelian teachings books (e.g. *Michael: the Basic Teachings*, p. 189). It appears in the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group; in fact, the Teacher–Student Monad was introduced in the very first Michael session on 12 August 1973. There is also the general understanding that the Michaels have pre-incarnate Agreements with their students that they will be our True Teacher. Many of us here Recognized them as our True Teacher the moment we serendipitously discovered them and their teaching.

Some of the founding members of the original Michaelian group got involved in a Gurdjieff-Ouspensky “Fourth Way” group lead by Robert, among them RH, AH, KH, and ET, during 1971 and 1972; they founded the Michaelian group in early 1973. RH and AH and ET left Robert's group, but RH and AH's daughter KH did not leave. The Michaels said that Robert was KH's “teacher”. They also said that Robert was a candidate for the manifestation of the Transcendental Soul. The guy is still alive at the time of this writing (1974), but the manifestation has not happened. In fact, Robert turned out to be a corrupt cult leader. Consequently or subsequently, KH left that group in the 2000s; she did not seem to be bitter about it when I corresponded with her and met her in person at AH's memorial service in 2012. I do not believe that this particular type of outcome invalidates that Robert was a True Teacher for KH. The reason I say this is that I was involved in a fundamentalist quasi-Christian cult during the 1960s and 1970s, the Worldwide Church of God, lead by

Herbert Armstrong. It taught me so very much over a period of twenty years, but it also proved to be corrupt, and I left it, only to find the Michaels about a year later. I regard that man and that group to have been one of my True Teachers, so I am not the least bit bitter about it.

I want to say a little about the “magnetic-electric catalyst” phenomenon. Once in a while someone comes along and we recognized them as a True Teacher....

Concluding Comments on the School Metaphor

Sarah Chambers was the main channel for Michael, but others in the group also learned to channel. Michael said they would come to any of them if they would but ask and listen, and some did that in a way that was more akin to receiving inspiration than verbatim channeling. One thing that is unique about the Michaelian teachings as distinct from other channeled sources is that there are numerous channels, not just one. This helps prevent one of the main traps common to spiritual Schools, the tendency to devolve into “personality cults” if a charismatic personality starts the School or rises to the top. With the Michaelian teachings coming through various and sometimes divergent channels, and the encouragement to “validate” everything using our own internal guidance system, there is little danger of slipping into cultishness. On the other hand, there is also little prospect for forming a commune, which can be extraordinarily useful for impelling spiritual development. But that is the subject for another chapter. Groups have met and classes have been held in Michael groups subsequent to the original Michaelian group, but they never had a hope of becoming Schools in the sense that Gurdjieff and the original Michaelian group used the word.

[[Find somewhere to put this: the goal of the Michaelian teachings is to teach us to outgrow the Michaelian teachings, via intuition = autodidactic autopoiesis (self-taught self-creation). This is done by developing one’s own intuition to the point that the spiritual aspirant does not need a channel, the student does not need to be in school, the person has sufficiently Validated the basic information to such and extent that life experiences thereafter become the teacher with the help of introspective reflection on the principles.]]





SEARCH — SEEK — QUEST — FIND

The very first Q&A exchange in which the Michaels were the source (rather than Tomas or Soleal) records that members of the original Michaelian group wondered if the “search” for enlightenment was worth it. This first encounter with the Michaels sets the tone for the entirety of the Michaelian teachings, which is about the spiritual path.

The question was asked concerning the decision to go on in the search for spiritual enlightenment — on to becoming an Adept. What do you do when you get so far and are not too sure you want to continue? We wondered if the Masters picked those in whom the desire for “psychic experiences” was quite strong to become Adepts.

The desire is polar, too. Everything in the universe is, of course. Along with the desire is always the dread. The choice does not become clear to you until you have experienced the desire from another dimension. You must stand and observe the desire from the shadows of dread. Wishes, like everything, have positive and negative poles. There must be attraction and repulsion or nothing exists because no energy is being generated. The primordial force was energy, not mass. Think about that when you are hung up on cause and effect. The more primitive one is energy. Does it not seem that all seeking the least complex will return to the energy from whence they came? Complexity is the antithesis of what the spirit seeks. The body represents the epitome of complexity. That is why the spirit is again and again attracted to it, until the partially awakened Essence catches a glimpse beyond the “veil”. [12 August 1973]

This chapter is the product of a search in the original Michaelian group transcriptions for references to the search for enlightenment. There are several words in this first reference to the subject that are synonymous with “search”, and there are others. There are also things besides enlightenment that we search for, such as truth.

It is not likely that you would be reading this — or I to have written it — unless we sought an imagined state that transcended our current state.





③ SELF-OBSERVATION

The topic of this chapter is yet another one of many that discuss one or another of the components of the Gurdjieffian teachings that were adopted and adapted in the Michaelian teachings during the original Michaelian group. Because Michaelian teachings groups subsequent to the original Michaelian group typically do not have the Gurdjieffian teachings in their backgrounds, as the founding members of the original Michaelian group did, I believe that it is expedient to discuss it at length in this *Study Papers* book, for the edification of present and future Michaelian students. This chapter also serves as an introduction to the chapter “Photography”, which is the word that the Michaels typically used when discoursing about “Other-observation”, if I may coin a phrase, which refers to those cases where one student offers an astute and perspicacious and insightful observation about another student. In this chapter, the mentions of Self-observation are extracted and commented upon.

The word “Self-observation” is capitalized in this chapter and other chapters of this *Study Papers* book because it has a special meaning in the Michaelian teachings; it is a Michaelian jargon word that needs a definition apart from its use in the common vernacular.

This chapter is one of many in this book that focuses on a psychological component of the Michaelian teachings as found in original Michaelian group transcriptions, rather than on a doctrinal or spiritual component. A psychological component is usually either a positive to be cultivated or a negative to be mitigated. As we will see, the Michaels tell us that Self-observation is a positive worth cultivating. The Michaelian version of psychology is not to be confused with the pop psychology of the self-improvement movement, those that do not have a spiritual core or perspective. Rather, the Michaelian psychotherapeutic path (aimed at improving psychological health) is a beneficial precursor to the spiritual path (aimed at improving soul health). To skip the former but attempt the latter is referred to as “spiritual bypassing”. This is discussed at length on various websites, including https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spiritual_bypass. To skip mitigating one’s psychological issues and attempt to go straight to enlightenment usually proves to be problematic.

[[Rerun the search, this time for the word “look”.]]

Self-observation per Gurdjieff

Quoting Gurdjieff, Peter Ouspensky, a notable student of Gurdjieff, had this to say about Self-observation:

“The principle ‘know thyself’ embraces a very rich content. It demands, in the first place, that a man who wants to know himself should understand what this means, with what it is connected, what is necessarily depends upon.

“Knowledge of oneself is a very big, but a very vague and distant, aim. Man in his present state is very far from self-knowledge. Therefore, strictly speaking, his aim cannot even be defined as self-knowledge. Self-study must be his big aim. It is quite enough if a man understands that he must study himself. It must be man’s aim to begin to study himself, to know himself, in the right way.

“Self-study is the work or the way which leads to self-knowledge.

“But in order to study oneself one must first learn how to study, where to begin, what methods to use. A man must learn how to study himself, and he must study the methods of self-study.

“The chief method of self-study is self-observation. Without properly applied self-observation a man will never understand the connection and the correlation between the various functions of his machine, will never understand how and why on each separate occasion everything in him ‘happens’.

“But to learn the methods of self-observation and of right self-study requires a certain understanding of the functions and the characteristics of the human machine. Thus in observing the functions of the human machine it is necessary to understand the correct divisions of the functions observed and to be able to define them

exactly and at once; and the definition must not be a verbal but an inner definition; by taste, by sensation, in the same way as we define all inner experiences.

“There are two methods of self-observation: analysis, or attempts at analysis, that is, attempts to find the answers to the questions: upon what does a certain thing depend, and why does it happen; and the second method is registering, simply ‘recording’ in one’s mind what is observed at the moment.

“Self-observation, especially in the beginning, must on no account become analysis or attempts at analysis. Analysis will only become possible much later when a man knows all the functions of his machine and all the laws which govern it. [P.D. Ouspensky, *In Search of the Miraculous*, p. 105]

There is much more to be said about Self-observation as taught by Gurdjieff, but I leave the reader to explore the subject further, in books and on the internet. A lengthy discourse can be downloaded from the internet at this location: ><http://gurdjiefffourthway.org/pdf/SELF-OBSERVATION.pdf><. The Michaelian version of Self-observation does not substantially differ from the Gurdjieffian presentation.

Between the Gurdjieffian and the Michaelian presentation, we take note that modern psychology also has something worth adding to this chapter.

Metacognition per Psychology

What Gurdjieff called Self-observation is called metacognition in psychology. Not unexpectedly, Wikipedia has an article on this subject. It is so relevant to the Michaelian teachings that it merits quoting some of it; the is much more that also merits reading:

Metacognition is an awareness of one’s thought processes and an understanding of the patterns behind them. The term comes from the root word *meta*, meaning “beyond”, or “on top of”. Metacognition can take many forms, such as reflecting on one’s ways of thinking and knowing when and how to use particular strategies for problem-solving. There are generally two components of metacognition: (1) knowledge about cognition and (2) regulation of cognition. In practice these capacities are used to regulate one’s own cognition, to maximize one’s potential to think, learn, and to the evaluation of proper ethical/moral rules.... In the domain of experimental psychology, an influential distinction in metacognition ... is between Monitoring — making judgments about the strength of one’s memories — and Control — using those judgments to guide behavior.

Several researchers have related mindfulness to metacognition. Mindfulness includes at least two mental processes: a stream of mental events and a higher level awareness of the flow of events. Mindfulness can be distinguished from some metacognition processes in that it is a conscious process.

In the context of mental health, metacognition can be loosely defined as the process that “reinforces one’s subjective sense of being a self and allows for becoming aware that some of one’s thoughts and feelings are symptoms of an illness”. The interest in metacognition emerged from a concern for an individual’s ability to understand their own mental status compared to others as well as the ability to cope with the source of their distress. These insights into an individual’s mental health status can have a profound effect on overall prognosis and recovery. Metacognition brings many unique insights into the normal daily functioning of a human being. It also demonstrates that a lack of these insights compromises ‘normal’ functioning. This leads to less healthy functioning. Adrian Wells’ and Gerald Matthews’ theory proposes that when faced with an undesired choice, an individual can operate in two distinct modes: “object” and “metacognitive”. Object mode interprets perceived stimuli as truth, where metacognitive mode understands thoughts as cues that have to be weighted and evaluated.

Writings on metacognition date back at least as far as two works by the Greek philosopher Aristotle (384–322 BC): *On the Soul* and the *Parva Naturalia*. [><https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Metacognition>< — retrieved 08 March 2023]

In the generation before Aristotle, another Greek philosopher, Socrates, said “Know thyself” and “The unexamined life is not worth living”. Of course, one way to accomplish that self-knowledge is to observe or monitor yourself as if you were not yourself, and then evaluate that self and control that self in the light of better or higher knowledge and wisdom. Therefore, Self-observation is not only looking ‘down’ at one’s “lower self” but also looking ‘up’ at one’s “Higher self”; refer to the chapter by that name.

Simply stated, one purpose of Self-observation is to promote metacognition.

Self/Other-observation per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

The following extracts from original Michaelian group transcriptions are Q&A exchanges, where an original Michaelian group member asks a question (or makes a comment), and the Michaels provide an answer. These extracts are presented in the chronological order in which they were given. As is my custom, I often provide some explanatory comments following the question or answer. Underlined words are my emphasis, to draw attention to what it is that I comment on. Sometimes I embed words or phrases [in brackets] that I believe help to clarify the question or the answer.

The first mention of the subject of this chapter appeared in the original Michaelian group transcriptions before the Michaels themselves appeared:

Carolyn: I have felt the need to express my opinions more lately, and I wonder if this is good. Sometimes I have spouted off.

Do you understand the source of the negative emotions? If so, then you should examine them carefully and see if you can turn them into something positive. Hostility is never an act of conscious will. The only positive forces are peaceful, loving ones. Carolyn still has a tendency to slip into the patterns or vibrations of the moment. Many sleeping souls provide the necessary shocks to keep her on the right track — constantly examining herself. This is a common failing among neophytes on the true path. There are always many doubts until the integration takes place, and the commitment is made and is irrevocable. Life on the material plane, with all its Glamour, continues to lure you back. The Glamour is illusion — Maya, if you prefer the more esoteric term. Maya is part of Karma and is present for a very specific purpose. It tests your spiritual growth all the time, and is your sole eternal safety checkpoint. When you reach the point in your spiritual growth when you “know” that all hostile feelings and thoughts and words — and even world wars — come from lower Centers in sleeping souls and they are not in control, then you will lose the desire or need to retaliate or spout off. It’s like spouting off to a stone wall for all the good it does you. You gain nothing and lose a great deal. [24 July 1973]

Refer to chapters “Negativity”, “Hostility”, “Maya”, “Glamour”, “Karma” — those are some of the issues that one should observe and examine in order to advance through the psychotherapeutic path and onto the spiritual path. Self-observation reminds you where you have been, where you are, and where you are going on the path.

Carol: Do children count or are we talking only of adults?

[Tomas:] Children do not provide the necessary interaction. Most people would not permit the child to observe and objectively comment on significant departures [from the path], and most children cannot discern and interpret the acts of the adults around them with clarity. The ability is there, but the child has already learned not to cross the authority figures in its life. [24 July 1973]

The Q&A exchange above was made in the context of communal living, where presumably one of the perks is that spiritual aspirants have other spiritual aspirants around them continually, to help boost their self-awareness. If a person, allegedly on a psychotherapeutic and spiritual path, does not use other people as mirrors to examine and modify their own beliefs, values, and behaviors — as children do — it cannot be said that they are any further along on that path than children are in life.

The following Q&A exchange is from the first session in which the Michaels were the source.

The question was asked concerning the decision to go on in the search for spiritual enlightenment — on to becoming an Adept. What do you do when you get so far and are not too sure you want to continue? We wondered if the Masters picked those in whom the desire for “psychic experiences” was quite strong to become Adepts.

The desire is polar, too. Everything in the universe is, of course. Along with the desire is always the dread. The choice does not become clear to you until you have experienced the desire from another dimension. You must stand and observe the desire from the shadows of dread. [12 August 1973]

Be vigilant about the desire/dread Monad when you observe it in yourself. In other words, when a dilemma appears, when a difficult choice presents itself, when you come to a fork in the road that has an emotional charge to it, you know that something important needs to be resolved. This situation presents the opportunity and the challenge to focus via Self-observation, and make the right choice, which should be from a positive place (“desire”) rather than from a negative place (“dread”). The function of Self-observation is to effectively get you progressively more out of your lower self and into your higher self; this process is the essence of the spiritual path to enlightenment; this is Metaphysics class 101.

Phyllis: ... It was a very interesting experience to observe all of these family dynamics. [02 October 1973]

If one can observe and learn from their family dynamics without getting caught up in them, that is Good Work. Refer to the chapter “False Personality” for more stuff like this to watch out for.

Dick: Some of the internal depression and anger I experience seems to be the result of expectations I have of myself.

Re-examine those expectations for shades of realism. One step at a time is normally effective for useful ambulation; why not for spiritual liberation? [02 October 1973]

Oftentimes we coast through life and only jump into Self-observation when something unpleasant shocks us out of our trance. Each and every unpleasant event should be greeted with reflection, and transmuted into yet another step of progress on the path; refer to the chapter “Shock”.

There is no particular advantage to know this [Soul Age information] unless you plan to put it into practice in helping you to observe yourselves and those around you, toward improving your interactions in a positive fashion. [17 October 1973]

There you go. This is a succinct statement about the purpose of Self/Other-observation; it is a tool for learning to get along with yourself and with other selves better.

Gene: Just hear the words. Just observe yourself as carefully as you can and see if what he [Michael] says is true.

Just don't move the comparison to a verbal level. [23 October 1973]

Self/Other-observation is best not handled by the verbal level, aka the Intellectual Center; it is best handled by the Neutral and Cardinal Centers, where intuition and insight and empathy and energetic rapport are the primary instruments of perception. What is vaguely hinted at here is that one of the functions of Self/Other-observation is to lift one out of the lower Centers and into the higher Centers.

Alice: Can I do anything?

Yes. [Observe] your reluctance to assert yourself.

Alice: Explain, please.

Your willingness to take the blame should be your first clue as to what needs “looking at”.

Alice: What do you mean?

Alice, you are blaming yourself for his problems. This is not on a conscious level always, but the guilt is there. You must stop [self-blaming] before he can look at himself in relation to you. We see the question you ask on multiple levels. There is the sub-vocal one, but this is a tempest in a teapot compared to the underlying structure. It [the challenge] is in [her husband] Dick. This must be solved by him. As long as you help by shouldering the blame, whether consciously or not, it will not be solved. He brings up surface issues that cloud the real issue and you respond when he pushes your buttons. Stop responding in your penitent fashion. This will be the needed Shock [to provoke his insights]. You must know that you are not to blame. [10 November 1973]

So many of our thoughts, feelings, and behaviors emerge from subconscious processes. The function of Self/Other-observation is to help us rise from unconsciousness to full consciousness. Refer to the chapter “Awakening from Sleep” for some discussion of this factor. Also, refer to the chapter “Shock” for discussion of another phenomenon, other than Self/Other-observation, that helps us raise our subconsciousness into awareness.

Speaking of “Shocks”:

Richard: What is it that astronaut Edgar Mitchell saw on his flight to the moon?

He came in contact with his Essence for the first time. During the voyage, he observed his False Personality and was Shocked into action.

Refer to the chapter “Extinguishment” for several components of the Michaelian teachings that Michaelian students should be on the lookout for. One of the functions of Self-observation is to extinguish negativity, including False Personality, Chief Features, Negative Poles of Overleaves, and Negative Emotions. Mitchell response to his experience was that he founded an organization to study enlightenment experiences such as his own, and more: IONS.

This is not a high-energy session. It was good to observe your state last night. There will be more energy during the next few months. [14 December 1973]

If one cannot do the Self/Other-observation in “real time”, in the moment when something is happening, then one can do it in retrospect, at a time of quiet reflection. I would say that this is often the most effective way to do it, because we are so often caught up in the moment that we cannot “snap out of it” at that time.

Cheryl: It seems that I am going from the Young Soul to the Mature Level because of a great change in how I perceive people. I see them so much more differently than a while back. Can you comment?

We would prefer that you continually observe your changes and decide for yourself. [20 January 1974]

One Self-observation of a particular defect or deficiency is not enough to 'wake up' and arrive at enlightenment; it is an ongoing practice and procedure for monitoring progress along the spectrum or hierarchy of improvement.

Alice: I would like to ask for the SR&G of a partner at EST who participated with me in an experiment where we looked into each other's eyes for an hour without deviating. She seemed to be about where I am and in Acceptance. Her face turned into that of a pig and I could not tell her that.

This lady is a Third Level Old Scholar in Acceptance.

The illusions were your own symbolic way of dealing with an extremely frustrating situation in your life where you feel that you should have to either force others to listen or pay them for their service. This is one of the hallmarks of the Submission Goal, and you wish to leave that behind. You made her deliberately grotesque in order to justify taking up her valuable time. We would hope that when you contemplate this sequence, you will realize enough about the mechanics to stop the illusions the next time the setup occurs. [27 January 1974]

The first step in mitigating a negative psycho-dynamic is Self-observation. Basically and briefly, issues can be reconciled by looking at the situation objectively rather than subjectively. This is done by elevating the awareness to the next higher level or later stage in the hierarchical structure of space and time.

Doug: Today, I had an experience that seemed to be a type of meditation. I've never meditated before and would like a comment on my experience today.

You must learn to let go of the images. Just observe them and let go. Any more borders on concentration, and any concrete thoughts on the subject leads to reflection. [13 February 1974]

One of the functions of meditation is Self-observation. Refer to the chapter "Concentration and Meditation" for the full discussion of the different purposes and functions of concentration versus meditation. Self/Other-observation is more like meditation, where the purpose is to neutralize any attachment or negativity about that which is being observed. In the case of meditation, it is thoughts and feelings that are meant to be neutralized and extinguished; in the case of Self/Other-observation, it is negativity about oneself or others that is meant to be extinguished.

Dick: Why do we choose such things as Rejection, Self-destruction, and so forth and so on?

The soul — sans body — tends to forget the intensity of the experience and the pain. This is your objective: detached review, Dick. We would suggest to you all that you begin to think of goals in terms of landings on the infinite staircase and that you fixate, if you must, on an intermediate goal rather than the "ultimate goal." We [Michael] are not in sight of that one yet. [27 February 1974]

The objective of Self-observation is an objective "detached review" so that one discerns where one is on the hierarchical "infinite staircase". Refer to the chapter "Consciousness — Subjective and Objective". Most of the time we live subjectively, automatically. It is easier to be objective on the Astral Plane, but it helps if we aspire to be objective while incarnate on the Physical Plane.

Dick: Maybe there's not "another guy". Maybe there's one observer that is stuck in observing Personality. Is the observer the "I" that watches Essence but is stuck in Personality.

Essence can usually be referred to as the silent observer, yes. Unfortunately, for most on the Physical Plane it remains silent forever, never being given a chance to express itself.

Dick: Essence is usually positive. In Robert [Burton]'s teaching, we were told to act positive even though we may have felt negative, and some day we would become this positive person that we wished to be. Where in this puzzle lies the truth?

We have not asked that you not explore your negative feelings. As a matter of fact, we would agree that this exploration is absolutely imperative before you can go on with the Work. Pretending is in Personality. We, however, do not feel that the hostility should be encouraged to a degree where it would be inappropriate to the situation. In all instances, there should be an orderly process for exploring the hostility. This will consist of acknowledging that the hostility exists, hunting for the source — which will always be found within — reviewing the cause, considering the alternatives, then and only then encountering the object of the hostility. This process often acts as a cooling off time and allows for a more palatable solution in the end with considerable reduction of the negativity. [19 March 1974]

The psychotherapeutic path, which includes Self-observation, is a useful precursor to the spiritual path. Listed there is a multi-step procedure for dealing with an observed problem: acknowledge > search for cause > review > consider > confront. In the Gurdjieffian teachings and the Michaelian teachings, the Essence is said to function at a far higher level of consciousness in the awareness hierarchy than Personality does. One of the purposes of Self-observation is to raise one's level of awareness from Personality to Essence. It does not say so here, but the transition from Personality to Essence is long and arduous and involves many layers and levels on a spectrum. The penultimate observer is Essence; the ultimate observer is Tao. Refer to the chapter "Essence and Personality" for more discussion.

... the opportunity for others around you to look at their Overleaves and begin to understand. [14 April 1974]

The Michaels revealed the Overleaf System so that we would have that key component of human existence to Self/Other-observe on our spiritual paths.

Dick was one of the founding members of the original Michaelian group who was also a member of the local Gurdjieff group. Therefore, he was aware of the Gurdjieffian teachings about Self-observation. That is probably why he asked this question:

Dick: Observing self — can't figure out why it operates as it does (the Machine). What do I do to make the change?

We would say at this point that the insight you have mentioned is an extremely essential one; that is, to view from the inside [via Self-observation] the utter Mechanicality of the Personality and its conditioned responses. Yes, these responses can be altered, and you, above all of those who seek, should now begin to see how they can be changed. All along, we have been urging you to Photograph these [Mechanical] sequences in yourselves. Some of them are, of course, culturally induced; the work ethic is an example. Others result from your combination of Overleaves, and the way in which you interrelate because of them. The Personality is a Machine. All of its responses are Mechanical, and most are unnecessary. The continued [Self-]observation should make you willing to change this behavior; after awhile, it becomes too frustrating to do otherwise. This is one of the side benefits of the Concentration–Meditation Monad. It does make the Essence disgusted by the hold Personality has over it, and usually the necessary impetus occurs to effect the change. Sooner or later, if you are willing to pursue this to the bitter end, the light will shine and the Essence will gain control. Then those things which are truly significant will take precedence over much of the nonsense you now use to occupy your days. And this does not just mean Dick, this is all of you. [19 June 1974]

The answer given above is the most thorough and succinct description in the original Michaelian group transcriptions of the value of doing Self-observation. One of the primary functions of Self/Other-observation is to break the unconscious, un-self-aware habits of so-called "Mechanicality"; refer to the chapter "Mechanical Man" for a thorough discussion of that subject.

Those who defined the ego and ego states thereof were not, after all, conscious beings, and were observing only the Personalities of others with their own Personalities. [14 September 1974]

Refer to the chapters "Ego" and "Consciousness — Subjective and Objective" for more information about "conscious beings". The point to be made here is that Self/Other-observation must be made from a higher level of awareness or it will be distorted and judgmental; it will not serve its proper function as outlined in this chapter, which is to gradually elevate one's viewpoint, one's perspective, one's perceptions, one's consciousness, to ever-higher levels of reality.

Richard expressed the desire to know from Michael if his perceptions were valid or not of Ray and Gene.

The only way we know of to come to Agape, which presumably is the goal, is to acknowledge your feelings, likes and dislikes, and then come past them. We have not ever advocated the toleration of any obnoxious behavior to you and we never will. It is far too much of an energy drain. The fact remains that Mechanical Man has no inkling of his behavior or how it is perceived by others. The only way that he can ever have that inkling is if some higher being, or even one who is far enough along the path to see it, will hold up the psychic mirror in whatever way possible at the time. Only then can Mechanical Man perceive himself as others perceive him. That is the first step toward self-perception — especially, if the consensus that [the] latter factor is one other compelling reason for staying in a teaching rather than striking out alone. When you do not have this constant yardstick, you cannot measure your progress. [21 September 1974]

Even though the word self-observation is not used in this paragraph, it is an excellent description of it.

SRG on Jim: Third Level Mature Sage, Growth, Observation, Impatience, Idealist, Intellectual Part of Moving Center?

Fifth Level Mature; all else is valid. The Impatience in you is not as apparent as in a Personality that expresses total impatience with the life situation. Your Impatience is rather with life in general, and you are very content to sit back and observe this. [08 November 1974]

Apparently, there is a type of false Self/Other-observation that does not produce any results such as insights or growth. This would happen with people who do not have awareness that there are states of consciousness higher than where they are.

You can come eventually to knowledge of just who might benefit from this knowledge and who will not. For instance, some of these “dregs” are in the Cycle where they could be able to look at their own destructive Overleaves and choose to change them. But at the present time, you do not know the reason why they have become dregs and, therefore, you cannot possibly help them to look at it themselves, except on a most haphazard basis. If you wish to do this, we would suggest that you start here. [07 December 1974]

The word “Self-observation” was not used there, but it obviously applies.

If Agape is to develop, it must develop in an environment where students observe each other in all facets of life, not just when the students are on their good meeting behavior. [14 December 1974]

Indeed, Self/Other-observation is most appropriate and effective for people who are not on their best behavior.

... Perhaps you could examine your own anger from the standpoint of your own internal energy drain, and in this light bring yourself to a more calm acceptance.... [19 January 1975]

Here again we see a situation where a negative experience can jolt a person into Self-observation. Negativity of any kind results in an “energy drain”; refer to the chapter “Energy and Energy Leaks” for the whole story. That is never any fun, but ‘lemons can be turned into lemonade’ with the help of Self-observation.

Mallory: During meditation, her cat had settled on her lap; observed that she experienced the top of her head on the left side. Why? What is this sensation?

The animal’s attraction is to the positive energy being expended. These sensations are neurological and directly related to the energy exchanged. In other words, you receive a Shock. [25 January 1975]

One of the major components of the Gurdjieff version of Self-observation is to become aware of body sensations; these are clues to energetic, emotional, and mental states. Start by doing this in meditation and the capacity to observe aberrations will leech into normal consciousness, where they can be dealt with intentionally.

We would have you stop for a moment and observe for yourselves all of the artificial rhythms present in this room. [21 February 1975]

In Gurdjieff meetings, it was common to implement the “stop” exercise, where someone would say “Stop!” at some random and arbitrary moment, and the attendees knew to cease whatever they were doing, and then Self-observe. This, of course, was to teach the students to pay attention, rather than sleep-walk their way through their lives.

There was a great deal of talk at this point about violence, anger, hostility, etc. and ways of dealing with it and moving on to more positive spaces in ourselves.

Ideally, this teaching could provide such an environment where the trust level would give permission to ventilate the anger. But, remember, that anger is an emotion felt by the ego when its expectations go unfulfilled or even worse, ignored. What should develop within a teaching is the “steward” who can stand aside in each of you and observe the ego ventilating its wrath. But we must realize that only a fraction of self is angry. There is never a time when all the Overleaves are angry or sad or happy. If that ever happened, either enlightenment or disintegration would occur. For instance, Intellectual Center cannot experience anger. [21 March 1977]

In the Gurdjieffian teachings, there is a hierarchy of levels in the metaphorical ‘household’ of being a human. The so-called ‘steward’ was the intermediary between the so-called ‘master’ and the so-called ‘servants’. While functioning in mere Personality, one is a ‘servant’ of unconscious forces. With the help of Self-observation, one develops from being a ‘servant’ up the hierarchy through the ‘steward’, an observer of Personality, and then further up the hierarchy to the penultimate observer, Essence, the ‘master’ level.

Discussion: We talked about the critical nature of clarity of perception, being able to see what’s happening — everything starts with what you see.

The Intellectual Center, when it perceives hostility, retreats. The Emotional Center sulks, and only the Moving Center moves toward the source. In other words, each of the Overleaves perceives the situation in quite a

different light. As you move toward more understanding, then the perceptions become more unified, and many times more accurate, as the Overleaves come together on a perception. This accounts for such experiences as you have described. The Moving Centered Warrior in the Younger Cycles will react to hostility with a well-aimed punch in the nose, while the Older Intellectually Centered Scholar will attempt to obscure with a smoke screen of verbal trivia. [21 March 1977]

Personally, I resemble that last remark. Other things being equal, the older the Soul Age, and the higher the Level with the Soul Age, the greater the capacity for metacognition, and the more it comes naturally.

Both Richard and Dick did not like the idea of predicting highs and lows ahead of time, as in the biorhythm thing.

You should be able to do this without charts or graphs.

Through our own observation of ourselves?

As easily as with other internal cyclic manifestations. [10 April 1977]

You might have heard of the pseudoscience of “biorhythms”, where allegedly we have physical, emotional, and intellectual ups and downs on a regular schedule, starting at birth. Even if there is no such regular schedule, there is still a cycling of highs and lows. It is good to become aware of those, and make adjustments and allowances, so as to live your life most effectively and efficiently in spite of them.

Concluding Comments on Self-observation

Personally, I regard Self-observation as the primary technique on a psychotherapeutic path toward mental health, and a spiritual path beyond the psychotherapeutic path to “Enlightenment” (refer to the chapter by that name).

Even though it does not say so in any of the above extracts from the original Michaelian group transcriptions, what Self-observation does is pop you out of habitual thoughts, feelings, and behaviors (the lower Centers), into a higher level or “dimension” of awareness — this is where “Balanced Man” lives (refer to the chapter by that name). If/when this is not the case, one is not progressing on the spiritual path; one is Trapped (refer to the chapters “Traps” and “Liberation”) in the lower Centers.

Self-observation should also be understood in the context of identification and its opposite, disidentification; refer to the chapter “Identification” for the whole story about that psychological technique. Basically and briefly, the act of Self-observation works to help one disidentify with the lower self and identify with the higher self, thereby pushing one’s consciousness to ever higher stages along the spectrum of consciousness.

As a person who is himself in the Observation Mode, I can vouch that Self/Other-observation is apparently more natural for people in this Mode than it is for people in other Modes. That would be from the Positive Pole, +Clarity, which could also be called +Perspicacity and +Perspicuity, which results in appropriate and effective Self/Other-observation. The Negative Pole of this Mode, –Surveillance, is not so good at appropriate and effective Self/Other-observation:

Souls in Observation are the only souls we know of who can speak of their own lives in the third person. They are distinguished by a slightly remote but polite detachment and a sense of noninvolvement, offering logical but not consoling advice. They are very good in crisis situations, even if the crisis is their own, because they can usually stand outside of it and observe. [28 September 1974]

[[quote where review during life is not as objective as review between lives.]]





⑦ SECRECY

This chapter is the product of a search for the word “secret” and its derivatives in the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group channeling sessions, and other words with a similar meaning. This word does not represent a significant component of the Michaelian teachings. However, there are good reasons to discuss the subject in this *Study Papers* book: 1) the subject came up numerous times during the original Michaelian group; 2) some interesting things were said about the subject; 3) the subject is related to a number of other components of the Michaelian teachings that are considered to be significant; 4) students can presumably benefit from having the mentions conveniently collected and commented all in one place; 5) Secrecy issues are pervasive in human psychology and sociology and spirituality — subjects covered extensively in this book — so it behooves us to have a working knowledge of it.

The word “secrecy” is not capitalized in this chapter or other chapters of this *Study Papers* book because it has no special meaning in the Michaelian teachings; it is not a Michaelian jargon word that needs a definition apart from its use in the common vernacular.

This chapter is one of many in this book that focuses on a psychological component of the Michaelian teachings as found in original Michaelian group transcriptions, rather than on a doctrinal or spiritual component. A psychological component is usually either a positive to be cultivated or a negative to be mitigated. As we will see, the Michaels tell us that secrecy is a negative to be eschewed. The Michaelian version of psychology is not to be confused with the popular psychology of the self-improvement movement, those that do not have a spiritual core or perspective. Rather, the Michaelian psychotherapeutic path (aimed at improving psychological health) is a beneficial precursor to the spiritual path (aimed at improving soul health). To skip the former but attempt the latter is referred to as “spiritual bypassing”. This is discussed at length on such websites as https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spiritual_bypass. To skip mitigating one’s psychological issues and attempt to go straight to enlightenment usually proves to be problematic.

Secrecy per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

The following extracts from original Michaelian group transcriptions are Q&A exchanges, where an original Michaelian group member asks a question (or makes a comment), and the Michaels provide an answer. These extracts are presented in the chronological order in which they were given. As is my custom, I provide some explanatory comments following the question or answer. Underlined words in the Q&A exchanges are my emphasis, to draw attention to what it is that I comment on. Sometimes I embed words or phrases [in brackets] that I believe help to clarify the question or the answer.

The first appearance of the word secrecy appeared before the Michaels revealed themselves to the group:

[Soleal:] Secrecy usually indicates fear. [mid-1973]

Refer to the chapter “Fear” for more about that. Basically and briefly, in that chapter you will read that sometimes fear is an appropriate response to a real danger, and sometimes it is an inappropriate reaction to an imaginary danger. Therefore, sometimes secrecy is legitimate and sometimes it is not. Perhaps you have heard it said that, “It’s not paranoia if they really are out to harm you.” One of the manifestations of wisdom is in discerning and assessing reality accurately; refer to the chapter “Wisdom”.

The second appearance of the word came from the Michaels:

Mature Souls are disturbed by secrets. [18 September 1973]

This is obviously referring to the illegitimate type of secrecy. Generally speaking, it seems to me that younger souls are not disturbed by having secrets, it comes naturally to them because they are more alienated from, and wary of, others because they see life in terms of a so-called “zero-sum game”, meaning, “I win, you lose”. Older souls in general (a category that starts at Fourth Level Mature) would prefer not to have secrets, and they are disturbed that they live in a world where secrets are expedient. Part of that stems from their inherent lack

of illegitimate fears and their inherent lack of alienation from self and other; they see life holistically, cooperatively, in terms of a “I win, you win, we win” game.

Speaking of having an open, philanthropic, non-secretive friendly attitude toward others:

Phyllis: [My husband Winthrop] has renewed his interest in the Society of Friends recently, since his father [died last year], but he was not technically ever a Quaker. How can Wynn find changes and secrets less threatening? How can I present changes in myself so they are less threatening to him?

By prefacing the changes with something familiar. Teach the changes after review. [18 September 1973]

The word “threaten” prompts this comment: Some people who are traumatized by past events tend to become more secretive about their internal processing of the trauma; they do not want to reveal their wounds for one “reason” or another. Often, healing of the trauma takes place when the person opens up to someone they trust who is also sympathetic and empathetic.

By the way, Phyllis was an Old Soul and Wynn was probably a Young Soul; their marriage ended in the next decade. Concerns other than attitude about secrecy were probably not their only issue.

Speaking of sympathetic:

Billie: Is there some way I might communicate more with my older son, Jimmy?

The rent [break] in the trust must be repaired first. Let him know that you will not judge. You must also let him know that you will respect confidences [secrets] thus exposed. This is a fragile Mature Soul who perceives you as a fluctuating source of security because of your own inner conflicts. [01 November 1973]

If you are a trusted other, then it is important that you maintain that trust by respecting what other people confide in you; refer to the chapters “Communication”, “Trust”, and “Judgment”. Because some people in this world are judgmental and untrustworthy, it is not unreasonable for some other people to maintain secrecy about certain things. We should let people ‘come out of the closet’ in their own time and in their own way and under their own terms.

Following is an exemplary case where secrecy was appropriate:

Alice: I would like to ask if my lips were sworn to secrecy in past lives or what is the reason I find myself with pursed lips when I wake up in the middle of the night. My lips are sometimes tightened and I have to tell myself to relax them. Is there anything from past lives here?

That is valid. It is an unconscious gesture on your part, sealing your lips against possible disclosure. You dream a great deal about this, Alice, and the pursed lips are tension manifestation of the dreams.

Alice: Was I sworn to secrecy?

In the dreams, yes. Sometimes in waking, there are flashes of memories when you overheard state secrets, not only in that life but while painting a mural in the palace of London. The mural is no longer there; it was early in the ninth century. [16 December 1973]

It is a big deal when intelligence agencies in different nations are friendly and trusting enough to share secrets gleaned from their mutual enemies. Of course, they do not share the secrets with the citizenry because of fear of what the enemies of the nation or the alliance might do. The general principle here is that not just nations, but groups and individuals tend to collect friends and enemies, and we can safely confide secrets in our friends but not in our enemies. As stated above, older souls would dearly love to live in a world where it was not divided into friends and enemies, but such is the reality of the world we live in now.

The members of the original Michaelian group realized that they needed to maintain some secrecy about what they were doing:

Incidentally, we once warned you all that your activities would become suspect, and that you would come to be regarded as eccentric. Once you elected to pursue this, you voluntarily placed yourself outside the mainstream, especially in this culture. You must be prepared for the results of this action, which will include more adverse publicity, and breaks in relationships with those who cannot understand, and are frightened of this type of activity.

Refer to the chapter “Culture” for a discussion of the difficulty of living in a society that has a different belief system, value system, and behavior system than you do, or than your group does. My impression is that American culture is not nearly as closed as it used to be, to what Michaelian students believe and feel and do.

Should we be secretive about it?

Your insistence on secrecy will depend in the long run on your own desires to wear the cloak of dignity, and we do feel that this is advisable.

Nichols: The need for secrecy won't be that great, as we will know how to handle this.

Soft-pedaling the activity will serve to tone down any sensationalism and the danger of luring in false students with glamour.

Comment: If you want to be dignified, keep your mouth shut when you need to. [03 February 1974]

The original Michaelian group members had reasons to keep their activities secret because what they were doing was not as acceptable then as now. They did not advertise to the public for prospective participants, as subsequent Michaelian groups have done. Rather, people came into the original Michaelian group entirely through 'word of mouth': relatives, friends, co-workers, fellow church members, acquaintances, and so on.

Dick: ... It's difficult to have [unapproved] experiences in this culture. It is time-consuming and secretive.

Refer to the chapter "Culture". As I said above, the younger soul culture that dominated the American landscape in the 1970s, with its restrictive and dogmatic belief-value-behavior system, drove non-conformists into hiding, into the metaphorical 'closet'. The context of this particular Q&A exchange was homosexuality, but reasons for secrecy can be generalized to other activities that are disapproved by the prevailing culture.

The following paragraph appeared in a long discourse on "Communal Living"; refer to the chapter by that name. There you will read about the maximization of trust and the minimization of secret-keeping, among many other advantages of that life-style.

The subject of domestic animals [dogs and cats] is interesting, in that domesticating animals was one of the first symptoms of growing alienation in this culture many centuries ago — almost, in fact, at the dawn of Creatures of Reason [ensoulment of hominins] on this world. Once man gives up his need for alienation, he can then, and only then, look at the reasons for his need for substitutes; he uses domesticated animals in lieu of people. They are expendable, relatively cheap and give away no secrets. (If you are not wearing a cape, how can you conceal a dagger?) [12 February 1975]

You have to wonder if even your trusted friends will give away your secrets, but not so your pets. Refer to the chapters "Alienation" and "Creatures of Reason". If Creatures of Reason (humans) were not alienated from each other, there would be no need for secrets. As stated above, it is primarily younger soul Creatures of Reason that find alienation satisfying or useful.

Concluding Comments on Secrecy

Numerous other chapters discuss topics that are related to this one on secrecy, such as "Alienation", "Barriers and Blocks", "Fear", "Trust", and "Veil". So much of the Physical Plane experience is about feeling separate from nature and from other people, and this leads to feeling the need to be secretive. So much of the spiritual path is about transcending the feeling of alienation.





⑧ SELF-REMEMBERING

The subject of this chapter is yet another one of many that discuss one or another of the components of the Gurdjieffian teachings that were adopted and adapted in the Michaelian teachings during the original Michaelian group. Because Michaelian teachings groups subsequent to the original Michaelian group typically do not have knowledge of the Gurdjieffian teachings in their backgrounds, as the founding members of the original Michaelian group did, I believe that it is expedient to discuss it at length in this *Study Papers* book, for the edification of present and future Michaelian students. For an introduction to the general subject of the Gurdjieffian teachings and the involvement of the original Michaelian group with it, refer to the chapter “Gurdjieff, Ouspensky, Collin, Burton”.

This chapter is one of many in this book that focuses on a psychological component of the Michaelian teachings, rather than on a doctrinal or spiritual component. Psychotherapeutic components of the Michaelian teachings are usually either a positive to be cultivated or a negative to be mitigated. As we will see, Self-remembering is a positive to be cultivated. The Michaelian version of psychology is not to be confused with the popular psychology of the self-improvement movement, those that do not have a spiritual core or perspective. Rather, the Michaelian psychotherapeutic path (aimed at improving psychological health) is a beneficial precursor to the spiritual path (aimed at improving soul health). To skip the former but attempt the latter is referred to as “spiritual bypassing”. This is discussed at length on such websites as https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spiritual_bypass. To skip mitigating one’s psychological issues and attempt to go straight to enlightenment usually proves to be problematic.

Self-remembering is connected with numerous other ideas in the Gurdjieffian teachings and in the Michaelian teachings. For instance, this chapter covers a slightly different topic than a previous chapter, “Self-observation”, which one might reasonably infer is related. Basically and briefly, Self-remembering is a Gurdjieffian term meaning that a person is present in reality with what they are doing, and the goal is to be present every moment of every day; it is therefore the opposite of living in “Maya” or “Fantasy” or “Glamour” or “Artificial Space” — refer to the chapters by those names. Self-remembering is also connected to disidentification in that the purpose of Self-remembering is to jump out of what Gurdjieff referred to as “subjective consciousness” into what Gurdjieff referred to as “objective consciousness”, where one observes oneself as if one were not oneself — refer to chapters “Identification” and “Consciousness — Subjective and Objective”. Self-remembering is also the opposite of ‘sleepwalking’ your way through life; refer to the chapter “Awakening from Sleep”.

The hyphenated phrase is capitalized in this chapter and other chapters of this *Study Papers* book because it has a special meaning in the Michaelian teachings; it is a Gurdjieffian and Michaelian jargon word that needs a definition because it is not in use in the common vernacular. The subject came up in the original Michaelian group numerous times, some interesting things were said about it, and it might be helpful for Michaelian students to have the answers conveniently collected and commented all in one place.

Self-remembering in the Gurdjieffian teachings

Someone other than myself has, of course, written an extensive study paper on this subject, and it can be downloaded from this internet address: <http://www.gurdjiefffourthway.org/pdf/SELF-REMEMBERING.pdf>. The first two pages of this fourteen-page document provide an excellent introduction.

SELF-REMEMBERING

“You do not remember yourselves. You do not feel yourselves, you are not conscious of yourselves. You do not feel: I observe, I feel, I see.” — G.I. Gurdjieff

Nature of Self-Remembering

The term self-remembering is sometimes referred to as “self-presence” or “self-consciousness”. The practice of self-remembering has been called the ‘master key’ to Gurdjieff’s teaching. In the words of his student Henri Tracol: “It is the Alpha and Omega, the threshold that must be passed at the outset and crossed and re-crossed time and again.”

Gurdjieff once provided a succinct description of self-remembering: “To know you are angry when you are angry.” Self-remembering is a direct feeling or sensing of one’s aliveness in the present moment — a state of consciousness in which a person is aware of their own presence and being: I, here, now. In the words of Henri Thomasson: “To remember myself is to submit myself to the effort which brings me to the concrete sensation of existing in the present moment: ‘I, wholly here, where I am, present’.” Self-remembering is an experience of coming back to ourselves by opening to the reality of the present moment:

Only when we succeed in gathering our attention and relaxing does our body become capable of opening. If these inner conditions are brought together and maintained for a certain time, a true feeling — without words, without images — can appear for a few moments within ourselves. At the moment of this experience, which is like no other, we sense a new vibration that transmits the taste of a more secret, more subtle life. We realize, then, that the capacity to be there has been given us. Habitually, we are everywhere but there, in ourselves. In our ordinary state, we are sometimes in the past, sometimes in the future, but rarely in the present and at home.

According to Gurdjieff self-remembering is a state of consciousness in which human beings are simultaneously aware of both themselves and their actions:

Self-consciousness is the moment when a man is aware both of himself and of his machine. We have it in flashes, but only in flashes. There are moments when you become aware not only of what you are doing but also of yourself doing it. You see both ‘I’ and the ‘here’ of ‘I am here’ — both the anger and the ‘I’ that is angry. Call this self-remembering, if you like. Now when you are fully and always aware of the ‘I’ and what it is doing, you become conscious of yourself.

The possibility of remembering ourselves, being attentive to ourselves, is always present. Self-remembering seeks to create a correspondence between the inner and outer worlds of each human being: “Self-remembering is the expansion of the field of consciousness so that both the outside and the inside worlds are perceived together in the unity of experience.” P.D. Ouspensky spoke of the division of attention which is the characteristic feature of self-remembering:

When I observe something, my attention is directed towards what I observe — a line with one arrowhead. When at the same time, I try to remember myself, my attention is directed both towards the object observed and towards myself. A second arrowhead appears on the line. Having defined this I saw that the problem consisted in directing attention on oneself without weakening or obliterating the attention directed on something else. Moreover, this “something else” could as well be within one as outside me.

Self-remembering is an inner process of conscious attention which “allows us to take in impressions directly, unfiltered ... we consciously receive and digest impressions, rather than simply react to them.”

Self-remembering is simply a relocation and redistribution of one’s attention. Thus, one becomes embodied. In doing so, the attention is freed and elaborated and a new quality emerges. That quality separates one from their state. From this separateness, the state and its manifestations are observed. If there is identification with the observation, then the separateness is lost. One becomes their state again or a successive state. That is, they are absorbed back into the program. But whatever has been observed has been truly seen without buffers or filters. One’s intelligence has been awakened to itself.

Self-remembering requires the simultaneous attention of all aspects of the human being to be truly effective. Gurdjieff taught that proper self-remembering is a conscious effort involving all our functions — body, mind and feelings. “A moment of self-remembering is a moment of consciousness, that is, of self-consciousness — not in the ordinary sense, but a consciousness of the real Self, which is “I,” together with an awareness of the organism — the body, the feeling and thought.”

A man cannot remember himself because he tries to do so with his mind — at least in the beginning. Self-remembering begins with self-sensing. It must be done through the instinctive-moving center and the emotional center. Mind alone does not constitute a human being. The center of gravity of change is in the moving and emotional centers, but these are concerned only with the present; the mind looks ahead. The wish to change, to be what one ought to be, must be in our emotional center, and the ability to do in our

body. The feelings may be strong, but the body is lazy, sunk in inertia. Mind must learn the language of the body and feelings, and this is done by correct observation of self. One of the benefits of self-remembering is that one has the possibility of making fewer mistakes in life. But for complete self-remembering all the centers must work simultaneously. [<http://www.gurdjiefffourthway.org/pdf/SELF-REMEMBERING.pdf> — retrieved 12 December 2021]

The remainder of the above-quoted document is much to be recommended for a thorough understanding of the topic. In addition to that article, I suggest that <https://gurdjieffclub.com/en/articles-essay-dimitri-peretzi/> is also very useful to readers of my *Study Papers* book if they are to come to a thorough understanding of Self-remembering and its related ideas in the Gurdjieffian teachings and in the Michaelian teachings.

The Psychology of Self-remembering

It is not as if Self-remembering is some big secret that is found only in obscure esoteric teachings. It is in fact well known in popular self-help psychology, where it commonly goes by the name of “being present” in the moment, rather than having one’s attention distracted into matters not immediately at hand. It is also called “mindfulness”, and Wikipedia has an extensive article on it:

Mindfulness is the practice of purposely bringing one’s attention to the present-moment experience without evaluation, a skill one develops through meditation or other training. Mindfulness derives from *sati*, a significant element of Hindu and Buddhist traditions, and is based on Zen, Vipassanā, and Tibetan meditation techniques. Though definitions and techniques of mindfulness are wide-ranging, Buddhist traditions explain what constitutes mindfulness such as how past, present and future moments arise and cease as momentary sense impressions and mental phenomena. Individuals who have contributed to the popularity of mindfulness in the modern Western context include Thích Nhất Hạnh, Herbert Benson, Jon Kabat-Zinn, Richard J. Davidson, and Sam Harris.

Clinical psychology and psychiatry since the 1970s have developed a number of therapeutic applications based on mindfulness for helping people experiencing a variety of psychological conditions. Mindfulness practice has been employed to reduce depression, stress, anxiety, and in the treatment of drug addiction. Programs based on mindfulness models have been adopted within schools, prisons, hospitals, veterans’ centers, and other environments, and mindfulness programs have been applied for additional outcomes such as for healthy aging, weight management, athletic performance, helping children with special needs, and as an intervention during the perinatal period.

Clinical studies have documented both physical- and mental-health benefits of mindfulness in different patient categories as well as in healthy adults and children. Studies have shown a positive relationship between trait mindfulness (which can be cultivated through the practice of mindfulness-based interventions) and psychological health. The practice of mindfulness appears to provide therapeutic benefits to people with psychiatric disorders, including moderate benefits to those with psychosis. Studies also indicate that rumination and worry contribute to a variety of mental disorders, and that mindfulness-based interventions can enhance trait mindfulness and reduce both rumination and worry. Further, the practice of mindfulness may be a preventive strategy to halt the development of mental-health problems. However, according to one opinion article, too much mindfulness may produce negative effects.

Evidence suggests that engaging in mindfulness meditation may influence physical health. For example, the psychological habit of repeatedly dwelling on stressful thoughts appears to intensify the physiological effects of the stressor (as a result of the continual activation of the sympathetic nervous system and the hypothalamus-pituitary-adrenal axis) with the potential to lead to physical health related clinical manifestations. Studies indicate that mindfulness meditation, which brings about reductions in rumination, may alter these biological clinical pathways. Further, research indicates that mindfulness may favorably influence the immune system as well as inflammation, which can consequently impact physical health, especially considering that inflammation has been linked to the development of several chronic health conditions. Other studies support these findings. Additionally, mindfulness appears to bring about lowered activity of the default mode network of the brain, and thereby contribute towards a lowered risk of developing conditions such as dementia and Alzheimer's disease.

However, critics have questioned both the commercialization and the over-marketing of mindfulness for health benefits — as well as emphasizing the need for more randomized controlled studies, for more methodological details in reported studies and for the use of larger sample-sizes. While mindfulness-based interventions may be effective for youth, research still needs to determine the most appropriate methods in which mindfulness could

be introduced and delivered in schools. [<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mindfulness>< — retrieved 01 May 2023]

One rather famous popular treatment of the subject of mindfulness, from a Harvard clinical psychologist turned guru, is found in Ram Dass's book, *Be Here Now*.

Self-remembering in the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

The following extracts from original Michaelian group transcriptions are Q&A exchanges, where an original Michaelian group member asks a question (or makes a comment), and the Michaels provide an answer. These extracts are presented in the chronological order in which they were given. As is my custom, I often provide some explanatory comments following the question or answer. Underlined words in the questions and answers are my emphasis, to draw attention to what it is that I comment on. Sometimes I embed words or phrases [in brackets] that I believe help to clarify the question or the answer.

As stated above, some of the founding members of the original Michaelian group were familiar with the Gurdjieffian teachings. Naturally they asked about it very early after the Michaels appeared. The following is from the third session for which the Michaels were the source:

Dick: Is Self-remembering important?

[Yes, because ...] You cannot even remember your dreams accurately and what you had for dinner last Thursday.

Dick: True.

I am only pointing out to you that you are not always present, and one reason is that you are still in fantasy to a still injurious extent. Now, that only applies to those aspirants who desire help with conscious[ness] raising techniques. Others can and will disregard this information; it serves no purpose to them. Dick, you are an aspirant; take heart; [for you] the ability is there. [21 August 1973]

Self-remembering was a very important component of the Gurdjieffian teachings, and it is an important practice — for anyone who aspires to minimize injurious fantasy and raise consciousness; refer to chapters “Fantasy” and “Consciousness — Subjective and Objective”.

Dick's daughter, Kathryn, was also into the Gurdjieffian teachings, and she had a question about it:

Kathryn: Is Self-remembering a part of meditation?

No, but it is an excellent form of concentration — the highest form to be exact. Meditation requires an empty head.

Self-remembering is the opposite of emptying the head; it is filling the head with awareness of the present moment, the task at hand.

Sarah: Michael told us there is a difference. Both have their place and the goals are different.

What is the difference between meditation and concentration?

Meditation is the emptying of the mind of Maya; concentration is the active acquisition of higher knowledge: the Logos. [08 September 1973]

Refer to the chapter “Maya” for more about that. Refer to the chapter “Meditation and Concentration” for more information about the distinction that the Michaels made between these two consciousness-raising techniques. Basically and briefly, meditation and concentration are a Monad: use them both to advance your consciousness. Refer to the chapter “Logos” for more information about the use of this word that refers to higher knowledge.

The Michaels provide their own succinct definition of Self-remembering:

Kathryn: It seems that I am constantly taking in impressions all the time (under grass) and am not in illusion.

Self-remembering can be defined as follows: You are sitting in a field; you see the sunlight; you see it and feel its effect on you. You also feel and see its effects on the trees. You can see and feel its effects on your entire physical environment at once: the sunlight filtering through the trees, the sunlight calling the bees to action, the sunlight on your back, the sunlight as radiant energy, the sun as a source of light and heat. You can hold all of these impressions separately and yet recognize them as an integrated whole. To do this requires separation from Maya. [08 September 1973]

Refer to the chapter “Integration and Disintegration” for more discussion about that. Refer to the chapter “Psychedelics” for more information about their potential role in psycho-therapeutics and spiritual growth.

One point of Self-remembering is to become aware of the input from all of one's five senses: sight, touch, hearing, smelling, taste. Usually the brain filters out sensory stimulus that is not relevant, such that it can be said that one is only ever partially 'alive'. Some psychedelics heighten one's sensory sensitivities, and occasionally one faces some temporary emergency that heightens one's senses, but Self-remembering is an intentional practice that one can do at appropriate times, such as when functioning on 'auto-pilot' is not a good idea.

Much can be gleaned about Self-remembering from the following long series of Q&A exchanges:

Dick: ... [Gurdjieff said that] The key to [higher] consciousness was Self-remembering. It was Gurdjieff's theory that you needed this to become conscious. He had a bunch of stuff on higher hydrogens, which were produced and refined by Self-remembering. The whole theory of Self-remembering is invalidated by Michael.

The source for the [psychic] energy is the same. The speed that it is burned as fuel is faster when utilized by the higher Centers.

According to the Michaels, Gurdjieff's way of explaining higher and broader states of consciousness via his "theory" about so-called "hydrogens" was backwards, and the Michaels substituted their own way of framing it in terms of spiritual practices (see below) that teach the aspirant to 'burn fuel' to provide 'energy' for experiencing the higher Centers. This means that, according to the Michaels, Self-remembering was the effect ("by-product"; see below), not the cause, of the spiritual practices. Refer to chapters "Acceleration", "Centers, Higher", and "Psychic Energy" for more documentation about that.

[Please] clarify this.

The fuel is the same for all Centers. It is the [nature of the] consumer [Center] that is different.

Refer to the chapter "Level of Being" for a description of "different consumers" of psychic energy in terms of the Center in the spectrum of seven Centers that they are able to achieve. Basically and briefly, Gurdjieff characterized spiritual development in seven stages related to the Centers arranged in a hierarchy from 'lowest' to 'highest', each Center having a different "speed" of use of the 'fuel' of psychic energy.

The production of fuel: does it have anything to do with Self-remembering? In order to Balance the Centers, we have to have a larger supply to reach higher Centers.

An analogy would be an old fashioned stove with insufficient insulation, a leaky chimney and an inefficient flue compared to a brand new radar [microwave] oven. Moments of pure consciousness do produce contact with higher Centers, yes.

Per previous statement, it is the "speed" of utilization of the energy by a Center, not the quantity or amount ("larger supply") of the energy, that makes the difference. Perhaps this "speed" is related to 'frequency of vibration', an analogy that is often used in the realm of "energy". One common analogy is to ascribe to each Center a different 'color' in the rainbow spectrum of colors; refer to the chapter "Aura" for more about that. Another analogy is to say that each Center in the hierarchy has a different 'temperature', so to speak. My suggestion is that the word "inefficiency" be used in contrast to the word "concentration" used in an earlier session: the more a person concentrates on Self-remembering, the more efficient their use of the 'fuel' (psychic energy) will be. The chapter "Energy and Energy Leaks" has much to say about using 'fuel' well.

Is Self-remembering the way to produce psychic energy?

Not the way [to produce], simply the by-product. The Self-remembering must be produced first through those methods we have outlined to you [meditation, concentration, fasting, study]. Then as you go progressively toward Balance, you automatically will have more and more flashes of consciousness, opening the door to higher expression.

Refer to the chapter "Tools" for a list of the "methods" for raising one's consciousness 'up' the spectrum of Centers, from 'lower' to 'higher'. Refer to chapters "Flash" and "Consciousness — Subjective and Objective" and "Balanced Man" and "Higher Expression" for further discussion of those subjects. In the context of this chapter, the more you develop through application of the spiritual tools, the more you will experience Self-remembering (not the other way around).

Comment: That makes it sound like you generate what you need as you go along. There are checkpoints to tell you where you are. [09 February 1974]

In conclusion to that Q&A series, according to the Michaels, Self-remembering is the by-product of raising one's consciousness up the Centers, not one of the tools that raises one's consciousness up the Centers as Gurdjieff understood it.

The next mention of Self-remembering happened more than half a year later. It seems likely that this question was elicited by a person who read a compilation of the 1973 session transcriptions:

Could we have a comment on Self-remembering, embracing three things? (In Self-remembering, one is aware of the flower he sees, himself, and the sun shining impartially on both.) [from the 08 September 1973 session]

Essentially, yes. One of the reasons that no one of your previous teachings has impressed you indelibly is that the mystical “awe inspiring” element was largely pushed to the background. Some respond to this approach, others do not; you do not. We wish so much to bring you together with a teacher who will bring this element to this teaching. We see the difficulty, and, of course, have been cognizant of it all along, but in this particular instance, it has taken much work to provide this synthesis. [21 September 1974]

Refer to the chapter “Synthesis, The” for more information about what the Michaels named their teaching. As an essential component of that teaching, the Michaels revealed means and methods to experience the higher Centers, which is an “awesome” experience. When you experience the higher Centers, you are experiencing Self-remembering, because you will be hyper-aware of self and non-self but yet the interconnectedness (synthesis) of all things. The original Michaelian group never acquired a charismatic enlightened teacher who could example the awesome results of Self-remembering to them.

The way that Self-remembering works is actually the same way that “Monads” work (refer to the chapter by that name): pay attention to inner experience at the same time as you are paying attention to outer experience and it pops you into a higher state of consciousness. In the case of Self-remembering, the Law-of-Three formula (explained in the chapter “Monads”) is this: outer-experience Thesis plus inner-experience Antithesis equals Synthesis at a higher Level of Being. The higher the Level of Being that you achieve by means of spiritual practices, the higher the quality of your Self-remembering will be, and thus the greater your Synthesis.

The final appearance of the word had to do with defining words in a spiritual teaching:

Mallory: Workable vocabulary?

Perhaps a glossary is in order. Tonight, the word vulnerability could have been defined to the satisfaction and agreement reached to substitute another word for the secondary meaning. Also, the group has reached a point now in growth where members can afford to be careful with important words such as love and spirituality.

Shirley: Afford?

You can apprehend the true meaning and substitute another more appropriate word when you are describing another emotion, such as a feeling about [“loving”] ice cream. This is an exercise in Self-remembering, and can be verified as valid. [24 September 1974]

Refer to chapters “Vulnerability” and “Love” and “Spirituality” for more discussion of the proper meaning of those words. It is important in the Gurdjieffian teachings and in the Michaelian teachings that one uses words accurately; refer to the chapters “Communication” for elaboration of that concept. Accuracy of vocabulary is also part of the whole “Validation and Verification” process; refer to the chapter by that name. According to that passage, it is an exercise in Self-remembering to refine one’s understanding and use of the vocabulary of one’s spiritual teaching of choice. Therefore, perhaps this *Study Papers* book can be considered to be an exercise in Self-remembering. (It has served that purpose for me.)

Concluding Comments on Self-remembering

Related chapters in this *Study Papers* book are “Awakening from Sleep”, “Buffers”, “Considering — Internal and External”, “Identification”, “Mechanical Man”, “Photography”, “Self-Observation”, and “Shock”. All of these have their origin in the psychotherapeutic/spiritual path component of the Gurdjieffian teachings that original Michaelian group founding members were familiar with. Many of the psychotherapeutic/spiritual path components of the Michaelian teachings were borrowed from the Gurdjieffian teachings.

There is the animal nature and the spiritual nature. So many of the defects and deficiencies of our lives — which the psychotherapeutic/spiritual path is directed at overcoming — are the result of the fact that a spiritual soul or Essence is encumbered by the physical organism that evolved for survival in the physical world, and the Essence wants to be free from the encumbrance. The way out, the way to enlightenment, is not via escapism; the way out is through — through a thorough experience of the physicality of being human at the same time that one is experiencing the spirituality of being human. Self-remembering is one of the results

of doing the spiritual practices that aid this process of development by being aware that one is living in both the physical and the spiritual worlds at the same time.

One could say that the experience of Self-remembering is that one remembers the “higher-self” (refer to the chapter by that name), and when done correctly, that happens. May I suggest that the reason that the Michaels revealed the Overleaf System to their students is so that they would know what it is that we are to *forget*, namely our ‘lower’ self as Personality, on the way to *remembering* our higher Self as Essence.





⑥ SENSUALITY

This chapter is the product of a search for the words “sensual” and “sensuality” in the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group channeling sessions. This word does not represent a significant component of the Michaelian teachings. However, there are good reasons to discuss the subject in this *Study Papers* book: 1) the subject came up numerous times during the original Michaelian group; 2) some interesting things were said about the subject; 3) the subject is related to a number of other components of the Michaelian teachings that are considered to be significant; 4) students can presumably benefit from having the mentions conveniently collected and commented all in one place; 5) The question, to be sensual or not, is unavoidable; it is pervasive in human psychology and sociology and spirituality — subjects covered extensively in this book — so it behooves us to have a working knowledge of it.

The word sensuality is not capitalized in this chapter or other chapters of this *Study Papers* book because it has no special meaning in the Michaelian teachings; it is not a Michaelian jargon word that needs a definition apart from its use in the common vernacular.

This chapter is one of many in this book that focuses on a psychological component of the Michaelian teachings as found in original Michaelian group transcriptions, rather than on a doctrinal or spiritual component. A psychological component is usually either a positive to be cultivated or a negative to be mitigated. As we will see, the Michaels tell us that sensuality is a positive to be cultivated. The Michaelian version of psychology is not to be confused with the popular psychology of the self-improvement movement, those that do not have a spiritual core or perspective. Rather, the Michaelian psychotherapeutic path (aimed at improving psychological health) is a beneficial precursor to the spiritual path (aimed at improving soul health). To skip the former but attempt the latter is referred to as “spiritual bypassing”. This is discussed at length on such websites as https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spiritual_bypass. To skip mitigating one’s psychological issues and attempt to go straight to enlightenment usually proves to be problematic.

Definition of Sensuality

So what is meant by sensuality? The online Merriam Webster dictionary definition is:

- 1: relating to or consisting in the gratification of the senses or the indulgence of appetite; fleshy
 - 2: sensory, sense 1
 - 3a: devoted to or preoccupied with the senses or appetites
 - 3b: voluptuous
 - 3c: deficient in moral, spiritual, or intellectual interests; worldly, especially irreligious
- [<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/sensory> — retrieved 11 November 2022]

When you read these definitions, do you see in them a negative connotation, as if sensuality was a bad thing and therefore to be eschewed? Do you have a notion that sensuality anchors one in the carnal appetites of the physical body, such that it is a hindrance to spiritual growth? Those notions are not the Michaels’ notions; read on.

Sensuality per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

The following extracts from original Michaelian group transcriptions are Q&A exchanges, where an original Michaelian group member asks a question (or makes a comment), and the Michaels provide an answer. These extracts are presented in the chronological order in which they were given. As is my custom, I often provide some explanatory comments following the question or answer. Underlined words in the Michaels’ answers are my emphasis, to draw attention to what it is that I comment on. Sometimes I embed words or phrases [in brackets] that I believe help to clarify the question or the answer.

The first appearance of the word came in a session with Soleal, a month before the Michaels appeared:

Dick: Love and sex seem like separate things – but when they're pulling together, it seems like a stronger force is generated than either by itself. It seems like the only kind of energy that I have experienced to date that might be the kind of energy that you need for actual evolution.

[Soleal:] Sexual energy, when used to express higher Centers, can be incredibly strong. When the energy is relegated downward, it results in an energy leak. That is sometimes why you want to sleep after physical union. You fed lower Centers — sometimes the Moving Center and the Essence is exhausted, so the body goes to sleep to free the Essence. When you use Emotional Center to express Moving [Center] needs, don't you feel the leak? So, if you feel that, just stretch your mind. Right now, you are all using Emotional Centers to satisfy Moving [Center] needs and this is a result that is culturally induced — that you feel something uplifting each time you have a physical union. That is absurd! It just is not possible. The body is not capable of experiencing ecstasy. Only the Essence can experience ecstasy. The body does not even come close with its sensual pleasures. [03 July 1973]

In the early mentions in the original Michaelian group transcriptions, sensuality is related to sexuality, but further on it is said that the two experiences should be distinct. Refer to the chapter “Sexuality” for more about that subject. It is true that sensual pleasures are not as good for the soul as ecstasy is for the Essence, but this does not mean that sensual pleasures are to be eschewed. In fact, the Michaels had good things to say about sensuality; see further on.

The next appearance of the word was in one of the earliest Michael sessions:

The Baby Soul views its own sexuality with a vague uneasiness, and if the culture fosters such, will think of it as somehow shameful. The Baby Soul will be embarrassed by overt displays of honest sexuality and it will strive to keep the others around it bound down by its own reprehensible moral code. Behind closed doors, the Baby Soul is more often than not quite as prudish as it is in public and seldom sustains any sort of sensual pleasure. Not having experienced such, it naturally does not “believe” in the existence of the experience. [late August 1973]

Experiencing is believing. Among and within repressed Baby Souls, sexuality and sensuality are both considered to be problematic, and thus to be eschewed. When Baby Souls eschew them, their value is disbelieved.

Eschewing sensuality is a temporary phenomenon; it does not last for the entirety of the reincarnation cycle:

The Old Soul is casual about sex in the earlier Levels because erotic love begins to lose its charm. In the final Level, the Old Soul often does not participate for lack of purpose (sex adds nothing to its life). The Old Soul is intensely sensual, however, and does enjoy close physical contact. The Old Soul is usually an experienced and exciting partner for a soul in an earlier Cycle, but can be a very disappointing lover because of its nonchalance. [late August 1973]

It would seem that, generally speaking, and all other things being equal, the older the soul, the less importance is attached to the value of sexuality and the more importance is attached to the value of sensuality. Sensuality is sensuality but sexuality is on a broad spectrum. Note that the kind of sexuality spoken of in this passage is “erotic” sexuality, whereas the kind of sexuality spoken of in the first quotation above (“when used to express higher Centers”) is transcendent, ecstatic sexuality, which the Old Soul would not likely be nonchalant about; that is the subject of the “Sexuality” chapter.

Dick: When love is turned on, this in itself puts you on a high. Maybe that's “Man #4” according to Gurdjieff and it is not permanent.

The love of the Logos or Agape permeated the being of Jesus even prior to the manifestation [of the Infinite Soul]. He lived for the Word. The quest for spiritual liberation took precedence over all things, sometimes to his despair prior to manifestation. This was an Emotionally Centered Mercury-Saturn. He was passionate and sensual. [06 October 1973]

What would Jesus do? Although not recorded so far as I know, my guess is that he would give hearty healing hugs. People who are Emotionally Centered are usually also very sensual; refer to the chapter “Emotional Center” for the whole story. There you will read that the Michaels recommended to the original Michaelian group members that they get out of their Intellectual Centers and into their Emotional Centers, and that includes sensuality. It does not say so explicitly in any of the original Michaelian group passages that have the word sensuality in them, but sensuality is also a component of the Instinctive Center as Gurdjieff understood it, and as it was in the original Michaelian group, namely as the Physiology Center, which is where the five senses feed the Centers of Personality; refer to the chapter “Instinctive Center” for the full story.

Mallory: I'd like to ask about a dream I had last night. I was dancing and became dizzy. I have a feeling I could use dancing in my therapy.

That is valid. You could make significant contributions from Essence.

Mallory: I'd really never given it much thought before.

Because it brings you pleasure of a sensual sort and you cannot translate this into "work." [22 January 1974]

Not only the Emotional Center and the Physiology Center, but the Moving Center has sensuality as a component. Dancing often elicits urges for the satisfaction of sensual urges. Mallory was in college, learning to be a psychotherapist. There is such a thing as "body-centered" therapy, where getting in touch with one's body is a healing modality: ><https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/therapy-types/somatic-therapy><. Mallory was a Warrior, and Warriors are a rather sensual type by nature, so dance and sensuality are types of therapy that would be "in Essence" for her, meaning that she could and should "translate this into [spiritual] work". Sensuality is a pleasure to, and a therapy for, the physical body, and it actually fosters one's spirituality to please the body.

Is sex so important in pair bonds?

Sexuality is usually not a problem in pair bonds, since all other factors are compatible. We feel the sensuality can often be a door to extra perceptive experiences. Sensuality can be enjoyed outside of the mating urge. [24 February 1974]

The underlined sentences make the point that I really want to drive home in this chapter. Humans are mammals, and as such we usually thrive in the body when the Physiology Center and the Moving Center and the Emotional Center are nourished with physical activity and physical touch. The problem is that most people get confused, because they find dancing to be sexy, and sensuality of the tactile sort to be sexy, but really, these activities should be kept separate from sexuality unless the two people are in agreement about what is meant by the sensual activities.

One particularly enjoyable and beneficial form of sensuality is massage:

Alice: If I am tired and would rather have slept, we have sex and you ask me, "How it was" for me when you have enjoyed it and if I tell the truth for me that it was OK instead of great, you go down with that. Why can't you simply enjoy it without having to have it be great for me every time?

By eroticism, we speak of the total abandonment of the body to sensual experience and, yes, this is a solitary experience.

Alice: You do not even like massage and I love it.

This you have not done. We have suggested massage before and for good reason. You are not the only one bound up in this. Most Adepts are extremely sensual in their personal lives. This may come as a surprise to you but it runs pretty true to form. [19 March 1974]

Refer to the chapter "Bodywork Modalities: Breath, Dance, Exercise, Massage" for more discussion about massage. In almost all of these quotations from the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group, sensuality is discussed in the context of sexuality, but the Venn diagrams of the two are not totally congruent. I would say that sensuality and sexuality overlap, but one can experience either one without experiencing the other, and I would say that it is Good Work to make the distinction. Refer to the chapter "Adepts and Masters" for more about those people.

Joan: How can I develop my pink aura?

Reddish pinks are always sensual colors. There is nothing negative there about this aura; it is healthy and vibrant.

Here again the Michaels negated the notion that sensuality was a negative thing. The take-away point of this chapter is this: because sensuality is good for the body — making it "healthy and vibrant" — it is good for the soul.

Joan: Then is my total Personality sexually oriented? I don't act out the sex.

The orange-red auras normally indicate those in whom the orientation is primarily physical or, if you will, sexual. Those going toward the pinks are more tactile or sexually [sic; should be "senually"] oriented. [15 May 1974]

Correct me if I am wrong, but my impression is that even people who cannot see auras, intuitively regard red as the sexual color and pink as the sensual color.

Concluding Comments on Sensuality

Let's suppose that sensuality has polarity, like so many other things. The Negative Pole of –Sensuality would be when one is addicted to sensual pleasures, to the exclusion of pleasures higher up the spectrum of 'pleasures', from emotional to intellectual to intuitive to mystical to spiritual. The Positive Pole of +Sensuality would be when the legitimate needs of the body are satisfied by sensuality, such that one's awareness rises to higher 'pleasures'. When I say this I am thinking of Maslow's so-called "Hierarchy of Needs", where the lowest need is to take care of the physiology; when that need is satisfied, the consciousness naturally moves to the next higher need, safety, and the next higher need, companionship, and so on successively, up the spectrum to spirituality: >https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maslow's_hierarchy_of_needs<.





SEPARATION

This chapter is the product of a search for the word “separation” and its derivatives and synonyms in the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group channeling sessions. This word does not represent a significant component of the Michaelian teachings. However, there are good reasons to discuss the subject in this *Study Papers* book: 1) the subject came up numerous times during the original Michaelian group; 2) students can presumably benefit from having the mentions conveniently collected and commented all in one place; 3) some interesting things were said about the subject; 4) the subject is related to a number of other components of the Michaelian teachings that are considered to be significant; 5) Issues of separateness are unavoidable, they are pervasive in human psychology and sociology and spirituality, so it behooves us to have a working knowledge of them.

The word “separation” is not capitalized in this chapter or other chapters of this *Study Papers* book because it has no special meaning in the Michaelian teachings; it is not a Michaelian jargon word that needs a definition apart from its use in the common vernacular.

This chapter is one of many in this book that focuses on a psychological component of the Michaelian teachings as found in original Michaelian group transcriptions, rather than on a spiritual component, as so many other chapters in this book do. Psychological components of the Michaelian teachings are usually either a ‘virtue’ to be cultivated or a ‘vice’ to be mitigated; both are amenable to psychotherapy. Obviously, template is a vice worth eschewing / virtue worth cultivating. The Michaelian version of psychology is not to be confused with the pop psychology of the self-improvement movement, those that do not have a spiritual core or perspective. Rather, the Michaelian psychotherapeutic path (aimed at improving psychological health) is a beneficial precursor to the spiritual path (aimed at improving soul health). To skip the former but attempt the latter is referred to as “spiritual bypassing”. This is discussed at length on various websites, including >https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spiritual_bypass<. To skip mitigating one’s psychological issues and attempt to go straight to enlightenment usually proves to be problematic.

Definition of Separation

So what is meant by separation? The online Merriam Webster online dictionary definition is: Wikipedia has an article that provides a definition and a description, as follows:

Separation per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

The following extracts from original Michaelian group transcriptions are Q&A exchanges, where an original Michaelian group member asks a question (or makes a comment), and the Michaels provide an answer. These extracts are [not] presented in the chronological order in which they were given, even though this is not a subject where there was a development or evolution of a specific revelation of a facet of the Michaelian teachings. As is my custom, I usually provide some explanatory comments following the question or answer. Underlined words are my emphasis, to draw attention to what it is that I comment on. Sometimes I embed words or phrases [in brackets] that I believe help to clarify the question or the answer. Numerous study papers related to this chapter are to be found among my comments.

Concluding Comments on Separation





SERENITY, PEACE, TRANQUILITY

This chapter is the product of a search for the words “serenity” and “peace” and “quiet” and “tranquility” in the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group channeling sessions. This word does not represent a significant component of the Michaelian teachings. However, there are good reasons to discuss the subject in this *Study Papers* book: 1) the subject came up numerous times during the original Michaelian group; 2) students can presumably benefit from having the mentions conveniently collected and commented all in one place; 3) some interesting things were said about the subject; 4) the subject is related to a number of other components of the Michaelian teachings that are considered to be significant; 5) Issues of serenity and the lack thereof are pervasive in human psychology and sociology and spirituality.

The word “serenity” is not capitalized in this chapter or other chapters of this *Study Papers* book because it has no special meaning in the Michaelian teachings; it is not a Michaelian jargon word that needs a definition apart from its use in the common vernacular.

This chapter is one of many in this book that focuses on a psychological component of the Michaelian teachings as found in original Michaelian group transcriptions, rather than on a spiritual component, as so many other chapters in this book do. Psychological components of the Michaelian teachings are usually either a ‘virtue’ to be cultivated or a ‘vice’ to be mitigated; both are amenable to psychotherapy. Obviously, serenity is a virtue worth cultivating. The Michaelian version of psychology is not to be confused with the pop psychology of the self-improvement movement, those that do not have a spiritual core or perspective. Rather, the Michaelian psychotherapeutic path (aimed at improving psychological health) is a beneficial precursor to the spiritual path (aimed at improving soul health). To skip the former but attempt the latter is referred to as “spiritual bypassing”. This is discussed at length on various websites, including https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spiritual_bypass. To skip mitigating one’s psychological issues and attempt to go straight to enlightenment usually proves to be problematic.

Definition of Serenity

So what is meant by serenity? [The online Merriam Webster online dictionary definition is: Wikipedia has an article that provides a definition and a description, as follows:](#)

Serenity, Tranquility, **Peace, Calm, Quiet** per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

The following extracts from original Michaelian group transcriptions are Q&A exchanges, where an original Michaelian group member asks a question (or makes a comment), and the Michaels provide an answer. These extracts are presented in the chronological order in which they were given, even though this is not a subject where there was a development or evolution of a specific revelation of a facet of the Michaelian teachings. As is my custom, I usually provide some explanatory comments following the question or answer. Underlined words are my emphasis, to draw attention to what it is that I comment on. Sometimes I embed words or phrases [in brackets] that I believe help to clarify the question or the answer. Numerous study papers related to this chapter are to be found among my comments.

This subject came up for discussion near the beginning of their meetings, and appeared repeatedly thereafter:

Alice: So does that mean that I am a catalyst?

[Soleal:] Zealots make the finest catalysts. You are not a zealot, but you can act as a calming force on those around you. There is peace and serenity in your Essence too. This could be the major part of growth for you, to get in touch with those fine elements. It is difficult to do this in a system that rewards competition. That usually

leads to the more aggressive elements of the False, culturally induced, Personality. Love is the only force that you can apply in a positive situation consciously. [03 July 1973]

Refer to chapters "Culture" for more discussion about that factor that works against serenity. Refer to the chapter "Love" for more discussion about that factor that works toward serenity.

Richard: I would like to somehow recapture the tranquility I found at [Lake] Tahoe. I would like to spend tomorrow meditating, and next week meditating and reflecting. How can I best do this?

Cease inner consideration of the effects of your actions on others. You are doing nothing wrong. We find no fault with your plan. [22 September 1973]

Refer to the chapter "Considering — Internal and External" for more discussion about ceasing to care what other people think about you, which will likely get you upset. Refer to the chapter "Reflection" for more discussion of that interval or hiatus when one 'takes a break' or 'vacation' from the 'hustle and bustle' of life to reconsider stuff. On a few occasions, original Michaelian group members spent a weekend at a cabin at Lake Tahoe.

The Mature Souls seek tranquility, and if this means isolation, then so be it. [06 October 1973]

Refer to the chapter "Loneliness versus Aloneness" for more discussion of isolation. The Michaels did not speak well of isolation for those on a spiritual path, except temporarily, when unprocessed catalyst has accumulated and needs to be reflected on.

This was a relatively tranquil life because you were entrusted into the care of household slaves at birth. [15 November 1973]

Some lifetimes have more tranquility built into them than other lifetimes do.

Not only lifetimes, but some relationships are more tranquil than others, partly because of compatible Overleaves:

If both [people] are primarily in Essence, then two with the same Role are most compatible and there is much cooperation. Many do well if the Exalted [Cardinal] Roles are mated with their counterparts in the Ordinal Roles. Scholars do badly as a general rule in the interpersonal relationships, but sometimes are fairly tranquil with Priests and Warriors. [16 December 1973]

A comprehensive theory of the interactions of Overleaves has never been revealed by the Michaels, but I did that in Part Four of my book *The Tao of Personality*. There you will read that ideal relationship is built on a bedrock of compatible traits that provide a measure of tranquility that helps them to 'weather storms', but the relationship also has other combinations of traits that provide some challenge, lest the relationship become stagnant.

There is a certain aura of noble tranquility present in Kings that is notably lacking in Warriors. The King commands respect by his presence alone, the Warrior often by force of personality. Warriors are generally much more loud; Kings normally speak softly. [10 January 1974]

Dick: I, too, have a sense of stress and lack of ease. Is this Wrong Work of Centers?

That is true, Dick. When you learn to truly relax, you will experience more frequent intervals of tranquility and then you will begin to actively seek this.

Dick: What wrong Centers am I using?

Intellectualizing, mostly.

Dick: When one is tranquil, is the Essence in control?

The Essence is tranquil, yes.

Dick: Agape love sputters for only 15 seconds and it does not happen often. Is this moving toward a #4 person?

We agree. It is a difficult place to be, but definitely rewarding.

Dick: In the tranquil period, are Centers Balanced?

Usually the soul experiences a moment of Balance, yes. Also, during meditation.

Richard: Does the soul transfer this to the body?

Essentially. The body is not as threatened by other aspects of spiritual growth, just as the sea urchin is not threatened by a calm sea.

Questions: Does the body fight meditation?

Sometimes, yes. Moving Centered bodies fight it tooth and nail; Intellectually Centered bodies less, but still forceful.

Mallory: Is it easier sitting up straight rather than relaxed?

Comment: You do not wish to fall asleep and there is a danger when prone. [03 March 1974]

Gene: There is no positive or negative in Essence. True?

We would agree with that. But you must remember that in Essence, one experiences; one does not evaluate. We would point out that that which is the soul operating from Essence feels that which we called "Agape" and that is a feeling of tranquility, of peace, and we doubt that the Personality of many earthbound souls would consider these particularly strong emotions. [05 June 1974]

Betty: What is my Life Task?

As with most Priests, it is primarily missionary in nature and will involve your own ability to project the teaching from your own center of serenity to the most unlikely group of students. [12 June 1974]

There is power in having a stable core of serenity; it helps whatever endeavor one wants to accomplish.

Carolyn: [Life] task? Is it to be alone, involvement with child?

To be happy alone, depending upon the "all". Pan-dependency, of course, is predicated upon the Personality becoming independent and functioning self-sufficiently without depending upon the actions of others around you to move first. Of course, this is necessary if you are ever to allow the Essence to rely upon the cosmic forces that it knows are dependable. That is one of your primary tasks; it is not a goal. No, that is not the only one; there are others involving arriving at an inner "truth." That, in turn, involves unscrambling much conflict in doctrines, or rather many conflicting doctrines. Again, this is largely a solitary task. If we clarify this, it will take more hours than you now have, since it involves a lifetime of work, but briefly this lady has within her the ability to arrive at a point of spiritual tranquility that she does not now enjoy, by recognizing further [for] her self what is true and discarding that which is patently false, keeping the good and throwing out the bad from all of those influences that have and will later come into play. [12 June 1974]

Jim asked a question regarding his apprehension at changing jobs (going into business for himself).

It is primarily a fear of failure, which is not at all complex and usually accompanies a move of this type. We would be astonished if you did not manifest some of this. A completely tranquil acceptance of the possibility of failure requires Balance. [16 June 1974]

Delia: Does my meditative sanctuary have to do with any of my previous lives?

No, this is the space created by you for meditative and insightful periods. Of course, many do duplicate from memory spaces that were particularly tranquil. [03 July 1974]

Mallory: I wonder about my recent backpacking trips: how would this relate to my Centers? I stopped picking at my fingers, did not think, did not feel: I just was. I did not feel any more awake or more high. I feel uncomfortable because I feel I'm not accomplishing anything.

It is related to the fact that students often experience an Essence or Balanced state for prolonged periods when removed from the Maya, error, familiar Maya of their environment and are forced to "be" in the moment.

Mallory: It is not a dramatic thing; it just is. A person in the present is not experiencing anything dramatic. Does a Balanced Man feel high? It was said last time that the "surge" comes when one becomes Balanced.

If the moment is a quiet one, Balanced Man will feel the tranquility. If it is a "high" [moment], then Balanced Man will feel the ecstasy of the moment. Ironically, the reverse is often true in Mechanical Man. Young Souls involved with ecology legalization will often feel surges of emotionalism when confronted with a pacific, woodland environment. [17 September 1974]

Some time in late 1974 or early 1975, the Positive Pole of the Stoic Attitude was given as +Tranquility, and the Negative Pole was given as –Resignation. In all the discussion of tranquility in this chapter, know that we do not want our experience the tranquility to ‘fall through the floor’ into resignation.

Abdullah: Will you speak to us some words of wisdom?

The words we speak, the words we would speak, would not be individually directed, but rather directed to the group at large. You see, this individuality that Mechanical Man seeks is but another example of his never-ending quest for complexity. The soul is tranquil now, so you see, it can be achieved. [26 December 1974]

Leslie: What did Soleal say to Beverly on Sunday?

“Peace and serenity, my sister.” [21 February 1975]

This was said on the last day of the large original Michaelian group sessions, when an obnoxious Warrior provoked whatever serenity the original Michaelian group might have developed.

[Soleal:] ... serenity, non-attachment, peace within and without, unity with the cosmic consciousness, the quiet head tuned to the universal truth ... [Dimensions! June 1975]

Gene, above all, tranquility — or at least a measure of it — is needed for growth. This tranquility must come from within, never from externals, for the latter is a false tranquility, and any third force can destroy it, utterly shatter it, in the twinkling of an eye. [15 January 1975]

Jane asked if she needed to acknowledge her own resentment. She then asked why she and her boyfriend fought so much.

The level of enthusiasm and diverse interest, most of the time. Both of you are extremely verbal and independent.

What is needed to calm?

If the desire for tranquility ever overrides the excitement now derived from the scrapping, then the work can be done merely through Photographing your tendencies to spar for dominance.

Jane: I'd settle for equality. I do not want to dominate.

Equality here would be a rather crowded, explosive pedestal.

Jane: Does that mean that someone is supposed to dominate?

Not at all. It is simply that at this point in your lives, it is the battle for dominance that provides the excitement and not that which is achieved. It would be an uneasy truce should one of you decide to capitulate.

Jane: Is it worth it to stay together or is it to be an affair of months? Is there any Karma here?

You are not Essence Twins nor are you Fragments of the same Entity, but basically like each other. Whether or not you decide to devote the energy is another question again. Unless you wish to pursue the spiritual path, the drain is not that great. Should you choose to examine [spiritual] growth at a later time, then you might wish to examine the energy loss. We will say that this relationship will never be dull or prosaic. Nor will it ever be calm. There is no Karma here. The man is a Fragment of the Entity that contains Christopher. [19 January 1975]

An incompatible mate can prompt much learning and growth, but can also be a drain and a distraction for someone who gets on a spiritual path. People in such situations have evaluations to do and decisions to make.

Concluding Comments on Serenity





⑨ SEXUALITY

This subject is covered in “Source Material — The Michaelian teachings” in the Interlude of my book *The Tao of Relationships: The Chemistry and Alchemy of Service and Intimacy*.





⑦ SHAME

This chapter is the product of a search for the word “shame” in the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group channeling sessions. This word does not represent a significant component of the Michaelian teachings. However, there are good reasons to discuss the subject in this *Study Papers* book: 1) the subject came up numerous times during the original Michaelian group; 2) some interesting things were said about the subject; 3) the subject is related to a number of other components of the Michaelian teachings that are considered to be significant; 4) students can presumably benefit from having the mentions conveniently collected and commented all in one place; 5) Shame issues are pervasive in human psychology and sociology and spirituality — subjects covered extensively in this book — so it behooves us to have a working knowledge of it.

The word “shame” is not capitalized in this chapter or other chapters of this *Study Papers* book because it has no special meaning in the Michaelian teachings; it is not a Michaelian jargon word that needs a definition apart from its use in the common vernacular.

This chapter is one of many in this book that focuses on a psychological component of the Michaelian teachings as found in original Michaelian group transcriptions, rather than on a doctrinal or spiritual component. A psychological component is usually either a positive to be cultivated or a negative to be mitigated. As we will see, the Michaels tell us that shame is a negative to be eschewed. The Michaelian version of psychology is not to be confused with the popular psychology of the self-improvement movement, those that do not have a spiritual core or perspective. Rather, the Michaelian psychotherapeutic path (aimed at improving psychological health) is a beneficial precursor to the spiritual path (aimed at improving soul health). To skip the former but attempt the latter is referred to as “spiritual bypassing”. This is discussed at length on such websites as https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spiritual_bypassing. To skip mitigating one’s psychological issues and attempt to go straight to enlightenment usually proves to be problematic.

Definition of Shame

So what is meant by shame? The online Merriam Webster dictionary definition is (underlines are my emphasis):

1a: a painful emotion caused by consciousness of guilt, shortcoming, or impropriety

1b: the susceptibility to such emotion [as in] “Have you no shame?”

2: a condition of humiliating disgrace or disrepute : ignominy [as in] the shame of being arrested

3a: something that brings censure or reproach [or disgrace], also : something to be regretted : pity [as in] it’s a shame you can’t go

3b: a cause of feeling shame

Wikipedia has a much more extensive definition and descriptions, and because it is relevant to this chapter, I quote it here:

Shame is an unpleasant self-conscious emotion often associated with negative self-evaluation; motivation to quit; and feelings of pain, exposure, distrust, powerlessness, and worthlessness. Shame is a discrete, basic emotion, described as a moral or social emotion that drives people to hide or deny their wrongdoings. Moral emotions are emotions that have an influence on a person’s decision-making skills and monitors different social behaviors. The focus of shame is on the self or the individual with respect to a perceived audience. Empirical research demonstrates that it is dysfunctional for the individual and group level. Shame can also be described as an unpleasant self-conscious emotion that involves negative evaluation of the self. Shame can be a painful emotion that is seen as a “...comparison of the self’s action with the self’s standards...” but may equally stem from comparison of the self’s state of being with the ideal social context’s standard. According to Neda

Sedighimornani, shame is relevant in several psychological disorders such as depression, phobia of social interactions, and even some eating disorders. Some scales of shame measure it to assess emotional states, whereas other shame scales are used to assess emotional traits or dispositions — shame proneness. “To shame” generally means to actively assign or communicate a state of shame to another person. Behaviors designed to “uncover” or “expose” others are sometimes used to place shame on the other person. Whereas, having shame means to maintain a sense of restraint against offending others (as with modesty, humility, and deference). In contrast to having shame is to have no shame; behaving without restraint, offending others, similar to other emotions like pride or hubris. [<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shame> — retrieved 19 October 2022]

The main point made in that article that I want to emphasize here is that shame is a tool for “social engineering”, meaning that shame is used by parents and cultures to shape behavior toward a norm acceptable to the elders. The gist of the sentiment is that: “You can do better than that”. It so happens that some entire tribal and national and religious cultures emphasize shame as the preferred method of persuasion to conform; see next section. It is up to the individual to discern if the culturally-approved behavior is virtuous for themselves, and if shame is a legitimate way for themselves to foster the cultural virtue.

Shame Cultures

This chapter is one of a triad of chapters, along with “Guilt” and “Fear”, that discuss three types of human cultures. I will let Wikipedia tell you about them:

In cultural anthropology, the distinction between a guilt society or guilt culture, shame society or shame culture and honor–shame culture, and a fear society or culture of fear, has been used to categorize different cultures. The differences can apply to how behavior is governed with respect to government laws, business rules, or social etiquette. This classification has been applied especially to so called “apollonian” [intellectual, as distinct from “dionysian”, emotional cultures] societies, sorting them according to the emotions they use to control individuals (especially children) and maintaining social order, swaying them into norm obedience and conformity.

In a guilt society, control is maintained by creating and continually reinforcing the feeling of guilt (and the expectation of punishment now or in the afterlife) for certain condemned behaviors. The guilt worldview focuses on law and punishment. A person in this type of culture may ask, “Is my behavior fair or unfair?” This type of culture also emphasizes individual conscience.

In a shame society, the means of control is the inculcation of shame and the complementary threat of ostracism. The shame–honor worldview seeks an “honor balance” and can lead to revenge dynamics. A person in this type of culture may ask, “Shall I look ashamed if I do X?” or “How will people look at me if I do Y?” Shame cultures are typically based on the concepts of pride and honor. Often actions are all what count and matter.

In a fear society, control is kept by the fear of retribution. The fear worldview focuses on physical dominance. A person in this culture may ask, “Will someone hurt me if I do this?”

The terminology was popularized by Ruth Benedict in *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword*, who described American culture as a “guilt culture” and Japanese culture as a “shame culture”.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Guilt—shame—fear_spectrum_of_cultures — retrieved 26 February 2023]

Besides this chapter on “Shame” and the chapters on “Guilt” and “Fear”, another relevant chapter is “Culture”. As we will see below, the Michaels had a dim view of shaming people as a means to persuade them to conform to standards that have only a local and temporary cultural significance.

Shame per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

The following extracts from original Michaelian group transcriptions are Q&A exchanges, where an original Michaelian group member asks a question (or makes a comment), and the Michaels provide an answer. These extracts are presented in the chronological order in which they were given. As is my custom, I often provide some explanatory comments following the question or answer. Underlined words in the Michaels’ answers are my emphasis, to draw attention to what it is that I comment on. Sometimes I embed words or phrases [in brackets] that I believe help to clarify the question or the answer.

The first occurrence of the word shame was in the original description of the Baby Soul age:

The Baby Soul views its own sexuality with a vague uneasiness, and if the culture fosters such, will think of it as somehow shameful. The Baby Soul will be embarrassed by overt displays of honest sexuality and it will strive to keep the others around it bound down by its own reprehensible moral code. Behind closed doors, the Baby Soul is more often than not quite as prudish as it is in public and seldom sustains any sort of sensual pleasure. Not having experienced such, it naturally does not “believe” in the existence of the experience. [late August 1973]

Refer to chapters “Sexuality” and “Sensuality” for a discussion of what the Michaels have to say about those subjects, which is different from what cultures and religions typically have to say. This is the first, but by no means the last, indication that shame, embarrassment, prudishness is culturally induced; it is not a negative emotion that is inherent to the human condition. Anthropologists who have studied various cultures of the present and the past tell us that.

We had discussed the burning of the library at Alexandria by Justinian. Richard voiced the fear that perhaps we would do a repeat of this, but this time out of shame, so that future generations would not know how irresponsible we were. Then he asked Michael if the books were burned at Alexandria out of shame.

Misguided zeal. He (Justinian) regarded science as evil. [08 October 1973]

Both shame and zeal can be connected with the notion that there is such a thing as evil, inside oneself and outside oneself respectively. Personally, I agree with Richard that the present-day generation of humans has a lot to be ashamed about.

Gene: I am treating a cancer patient with hypnosis. Can Michael give me advice to what else I can do?

You can help her to find the source of her resentments. Most cancer victims have a pervasive sense of shame over inconsequential happenings. This is truly one of the most self-destructive processes we know of. More of these unfortunate people have a sense of no accomplishment or a sense of being directed by others. The cancer is often the only escape. Many of these people give an outward appearance of success, some even tranquility. The target organ is often the seat of the conflict. This is especially true with the reproductive organs. [29 November 1973]

Notice the hints about the relationship of shame to the Chief Features of Self-destruction and Martyrdom (failure). People who have the Ordinal Chief Features are more prone to shame than those with Cardinal Chief Features. The psychosomatic component of illness is discussed in the chapter “Health — Physical and Mental”. Basically and briefly, it is generally acknowledged in the health professions that negative emotions of any kind, not just shame, can lead to illness. What are we Michaelian students to think and feel and do? Realize this:

The Essence knows no shame, no guilt. If you can learn to share your fears, however childish they may seem to you, you will have gone a long way along the path. [22 October 1974]

There we see the three types of negative cultural persuasion listed: shame, guilt, and fear. These three types of negative emotions are often inculcated into children, at an age when they have no defense against the programming. Of course, we do not share our negative emotions with just anyone; we do so with our intimate friends as documented in the chapters “Intimacy” and “Trust”.

If you first learn to express your feelings to one another without shame or guilt or any of the other myriad barriers, then you open the door to Silence. [12 November 1974]

Refer to the chapter “Barriers and Blocks” for more about impediments to the extinguishment of negative emotions. Refer also to the chapter “Silence, The”, where you will read that the Michaels recommended that students grow in empathy and sympathy and intuition to such an extent that they can communicate without words. The chapter “Communication” has somewhat to say about that also.

Discussion: We talked about types of cancers.

It is usually an attempt within the tumor (then the tumor has a life of its own), as does much tissue of this type. Yes, it must be given a fertile field in which to grow. Let us give you an example: the tumors of the gastrointestinal system are especially virulent. Most of these come about in souls slightly ashamed of their feces or morbidly concerned with the mechanics of defecation. The curative surgical procedure only enhances this concern, as defecation is even more obvious and imperative to the soul. He becomes more introspective than ever and more dedicated to elimination than ever. Now we are not suggesting that you cease operating upon malignant tumors of the gastrointestinal tract, or other malignant tumors — only that you learn to counsel effectively. [21 February 1977]

So much of, and so many of, our negative emotions are produced by the awareness, subconscious and/or conscious, that as humans we consist of a spiritual soul embedded in an animal body. As the saying goes, “We are spiritual beings having a human experience.” E.g., souls don’t need to shit, but animals do. That fact of the human condition causes all kinds of physical and mental health problems, and coming to terms with it is a huge endeavor and aspiration. One component of the Michaelian teachings is that we yield to this reality, embrace the human experience, mitigate the shame and guilt that so often accompanies the human condition.

Besides the dichotomy between the spiritual and the physical aspects of our being that we want to reconcile on our journey through life, there is the discrepancy between the individual and the collective that we also want to reconcile — if we are to have a healthy psychosomatic experience:

Dick mentioned that Cynthia seemed to be repressing her emotion.

Yes, it is [true], but then this [American] society is a verbal [intellectual] one and she must communicate. It [this society] is not as repressed as many. The increase of gastrointestinal ulcerations among females is related precisely to the same factors as in males: Emotionally Centered males as well as Emotionally Centered females are now being shamed into being accepting of Intellectual and Moving Centered goals. Once again, civilization has succeeded in ‘throwing out the baby with the bath water’. [21 March 1977]

Refer to the chapter “Individuality” for a discussion of the dichotomy between the benefits of individualism and the benefits of collectivism. During the entirety of our incarnate human lifetimes we are concerned with sorting out this discrepancy, looking for the optimal balance of the two. It is good to not let shame, guilt, and fear keep us from becoming more who we truly are in Essence. And it is also good to come to know what is best for humanity as a whole, and do what we can to foster that.

Concluding Comments on Shame

Shame is covered in this chapter, and negative emotions in general are discussed in the chapters “Negativity and Positivity” and “Extinguishment”. One of the goals of the Michaelian teachings is to eliminate negative emotions and express positive emotions, such as described in the chapter “Emotional Center”. The opposites of shame are the positive emotions of respect, honor, and esteem; refer to the chapter Esteem, Honor, Respect”.

The next time your inner dialogue says that you “should” or “should not” do this or that, then you should implement “Self-observation” (refer to the chapter by that name) and ask yourself where that “should” came from. In almost all cases it will have come from what your parents or your school or your culture told you, rather than it being a “prompting from Essence”, or a prompting from the Michaelian teachings. Refer to the chapter “Motivation” for a fuller discussion of proper and improper motivations. The point made there is that motivations — such as shame, guilt, and fear to do better in the future than one has done in the past — are more effective if they are intrinsic (internal promptings) rather than extrinsic (external promptings). Per the Michaelian teachings (and the psychology profession) negative emotions *per se* are not effective motivators to do better next time; more often than not, they are counterproductive to self-improvement, so just keep your eye on the future and not on the past.





① SHOCK

This chapter is the product of a search for the word shock in the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group channeling sessions. This word does not represent a significant component of the Michaelian teachings. However, there are good reasons to discuss the subject in this *Study Papers* book: 1) the subject came up numerous times during the original Michaelian group; 2) some interesting things were said about the subject; 3) the subject is related to a number of other components of the Michaelian teachings that are considered to be significant; 4) students can presumably benefit from having the mentions conveniently collected and commented all in one place; 5) shocking events are unavoidable; they are pervasive in human psychology and sociology and spirituality — subjects covered extensively in this book — so it behooves us to have a working knowledge of it.

About a _____ times in the original Michaelian group transcriptions, the word shock is used. One could guess what it probably means by its usage in the common vernacular and the context in which it is used in the transcriptions, **but it is never actually defined in the transcriptions**. As it turns out, it did not need to be defined because this is a term and concept in the original Michaelian group — one among many — that was adopted and adapted from the Gurdjieffian teaching, one of the spiritual teachings that some of the original Michaelian group founding members were familiar with. For an introduction to the general subject of the Gurdjieffian teachings and the involvement of founding original Michaelian group members with it, refer to the chapter “Gurdjieff, Ouspensky, Collin, Burton”. The term has a particular meaning apart from the common vernacular, and because of this specific meaning in the context of the Gurdjieffian teachings and the Michaelian teachings, it is on the jargon list, and therefore capitalized.

Even though the Michaels used the term shock on numerous occasions during the original Michaelian group, Yarbro did not mention **[verify]** it in her book about the original Michaelian group, *Messages from Michael*, perhaps because, near as I can tell, Yarbro was not familiar with the Gurdjieffian teachings. The Michaels have not used it in subsequent groups so far as I have been able to determine, perhaps because subsequent groups have not been familiar with Gurdjieffian teachings. Therefore, the term, and even the concept referred to by the term, has not become common knowledge in the Michaelian teachings community subsequent to the original Michaelian group. Nevertheless, I believe Gurdjieff’s psychological insights are worth discussing, the subject of shock being one of them. I also believe that it is worthwhile to make the historical record of the original Michaelian group reasonably complete.

So let’s dive right into some cold water at the deep end of the pool; you might be Shocked.

Shock per Gurdjieff

In Gurdjieff terminology, there are two types of Shock. The first type of Shock is any surprise that temporarily jolts one into self-awareness; the second type of Shock is something that permanently transforms a person from the Ordinal Centers to Balanced Man (Impulse Center) and “higher”. I could not find what I wanted in my usual books on the Gurdjieffian teachings, the ones that I own, so I turned to an internet search, and came up with the following.

What is the “First Conscious Shock”?

Self-remembering: The embodied awakening of mindfulness. The first conscious shock is the inner transformation that occurs when we are “momentarily awakened” by comparing our habitual awareness to our potential for conscious presence. It is a surprising energy shift (“shock”) which both amplifies conscious[ness] and requires intentionality. When sapience is voluntarily produced within an individual it provides a perpetually novel contrast in comparison to unconsciousness (ordinary automatic self-awareness of human beings). This process of “self-remembering” is a dynamic spectrum of variants — running from the simplest “idea of being more present” to the most intense forms of whole-being presence.

Check out the study paper chapter named “Self-remembering” for a thorough discussion of that subject as it was understood by Gurdjieff and by the members of the original Michaelian group. Basically, what Gurdjieff referred to as self-remembering is when a person, either via intentional self-aware mindfulness or via an external surprising stimulus (shock), is temporarily “awakened” from their habitual “sleepwalking” through life; there is also a study paper chapter named “Awakening from Sleep”.

Wholeness: The First Conscious Shock is not primarily a mental matter. It should not be limited to an intellectual comprehension of the [unified, consistent] “I” or its locus of selfhood emerging in the mind. Rather this is a whole-being shift grounded in the awakening of a field of subtle sensation in the body, and the emotional urge to grow, deepen, and be more, and embody our highest values.

What I see here is obvious references to the lower Centers (Moving, Emotional, Intellectual), and obscure references to the Neutral (Impulse Center) and higher Centers, where one functions as a unified self, often referred to as the “higher” self. What is being said here is that Shocks propel us along our spiritual path to enlightenment, if you regard enlightenment, as Gurdjieff did, as an ascent from the lower Centers up through the higher Centers. Refer to the chapter on “Levels of Being” for the exposition of that notion.

Contrast: The distinctive feature of this “shock” is that realization that one has been absent, non-present, “as if asleep”. The contrast between normal consciousness and active consciousness stands out sharply. In fact it is primarily the use of training and psychological energy to re-cognize the flavor of our unconsciousness that produces a moment of self-remembering.

Etymology: Used by St. George (G.I. Gurdjieff) in his teaching of The Work & the Fourth Way.
[><http://doowikis.com/m/RerDCZDKRY>< — retrieved 12 June 2021]

So that was a description of the “first” type of Shock, quite suitable for what is found in the original Michaelian group transcriptions. An internet search led me to this thorough discussion of the “second” type of Shock, the best example that I found: [>http://www.gurdjieff-internet.com/article_details.php?ID=263&W=40< — retrieved 12 June 2021] For most people, that lengthy article will be TMI = Too Much Information. I boil it down to its essence, thus:

- Shocks happen because the human condition is full of suffering, and it leaves a lot to be desired.
- Shock is the transmutation of negative emotions (suffering) into positive emotions (joy, bliss).
- Shock is the intentional sublimation of lower Centers into higher Centers.
- A Shock occurs at all of the unstable transitions between stable stages on one’s spiritual path.
- “Conscious Labor” and “Intentional [mindful, purposeful, sacrificial] Suffering” provide Shocks.
- Basically, the Shock procedure is to *not* follow the path of least resistance out of habit or Sleep.

Unlike the first type of Shock, which is passive acceptance of the transforming effectiveness of suffering, the second type of Shock is an active pursuit of transformative “suffering” to a higher state of consciousness. The type of “suffering” recommended here is not self-flagellation — that is a distortion found in some religions. Rather, it is challenging yourself to pursue the anti-habitual path toward liberation and enlightenment.

The so-called “problem of suffering” is a very deep one; it has been pondered by philosophers and theologians for millennia. You may read about it here: ><https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Suffering><.

We will see both of these types of Shocks recorded in the original Michaelian group transcriptions, in this and those other study paper chapters referenced above.

‘Shock’ per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

The following extracts from original Michaelian group transcriptions are Q&A exchanges, where an original Michaelian group member asks a question (or makes a comment), and the Michaels provide an answer. These extracts are presented in the chronological order in which they were given. As is my custom, I usually provide some explanatory comments following the question or answer. Underlined words are my emphasis, to draw attention to what it is that I comment on. Sometimes I embed words or phrases [in brackets] that I believe help to clarify the question or the answer. Numerous study papers related to this chapter are to be found among my comments.

The first mention of Shock in the original Michaelian group transcriptions is not exactly what I mean in this chapter:

Gene: I think we are all kind of shocked to see you [Tomas] sitting there with Lorraine’s eyes open.

[Tomas:] Yeah, it is sort of a shock to me, too. She is a hard soul. [19 June 1973]

This quotation is included here to emphasize that the essence of “Shock” as Gurdjieff taught it is when we encounter something that is way more impacting than mere surprise, as was the case here.

The first recorded mention of the concept of Shock per the subject of this chapter occurs a couple of months before the Michaels appeared:

[Tomas:] ... Many sleeping souls provide the necessary Shocks to keep her on the right track — constantly examining herself.... [24 July 1973]

Refer to the chapter on “Awakening from Sleep” for a discussion of that metaphor for unenlightened people. The Shocking behavior of primitive souls should be a lesson for those of us who fancy that we are not primitive souls: when we see stupidity, ignorance, and foolishness in others, our proper response should be to do a “reality check” on ourselves; we may only be more subtle and less overt in our stupidity, ignorance, and foolishness than they are.

Sarah: There have been all kinds of books written about the cultural shock of being contacted by an alien civilization. Astronomers have spent hours and hours writing these long-winded papers about this cultural shock. [19 June 1973]

Sociologists sometimes refer to people as being absorbed in the “cultural trance” of their place of birth. “Culture shock” is a phenomenon that is familiar to anyone who has visited another country, but it is not what this chapter is about. I include it anyway, because the point is that a Shock of *any kind* will make us more self-aware about how we tend to “sleep walk” our way through life, barely conscious of the extent to which we have been acculturated.

Stop responding in your penitent fashion. This will be the needed Shock. You must know that you are not to blame. [10 November 1973]

Hey! Shock yourself by not acting or feeling or thinking the way that you usually do.

Richard: What is it that astronaut Edgar Mitchell saw on his flight to the moon?

He came in contact with his Essence for the first time. During the voyage, he observed his False Personality and was Shocked into action. [10 November 1973]

The action that he was Shocked into was the formation of the “Institute of Noetic Sciences” (IONS): ><https://noetic.org/><. (Actually, it was on the return journey *from* the moon, not *to* it, but only a pedant like myself quibbles with such details.)

The omens very often are given to you as Shock, just as precognitive experiences [are]. The omens or signs are often [from the] Astral [Plane], and the one to whom they are addressed are the only ones who see them. There are others, such as darkening skies, etc., that are seen by many, and the collective mind flashes on the insight that was communicated. [20 December 2073]

Here again I would say that extraordinarily unusual events sometimes Shock us into awareness that there is something more in heaven and earth than we dream of in our mundane lives. I would add that, even if such abnormal aberrations are accidental — meaning, not intended by the conscious Astral agents to help us wake up — they still serve that function.

This Teaching should eventually free you from the yoke of collective guilt, then the sober affect will be even more inappropriate. Learn joy now and it will not be such a Shock then. [10 January 1974]

Learn the easy way so that the universe will not make you learn the hard way, with a Shock. It is possible to grow incrementally by the application of intentional methods, such as mindfulness; pay attention to people (and the Michaels) who know better than you do; you do not need to wait for adversity to wake you up to reality.

Dick: Has the group reached a new octave?

In giving you some direction to your purpose, you have, during the interval between physical lives, chosen to live a life in service to the Word [Logos]. The manner in which you will do this is now becoming increasingly clear to many of you, and you are no longer sad to see the complexion of the group changing. It should be clear to you all at this juncture that those who have dropped by the wayside were motivated by other factors, many of them Karmic to mingling briefly and then be on their way. Some parted with sadness for they felt inexplicably bound to you, but could not contain the restless spirit. Now you find yourself at the turning point together with others who are driven by the same chosen purpose. You will find it now easier to plan, for this is the *planning* octave, just as the one just completed was the *investigating* octave. Yes, the vibrations are doubled (as in music) and the experience must be therefore richer and more Shocking.

Gene: The more intense, the more difficult and the more rewarding.

Cynthia: It should also be a pleasant Shock when it all comes together.

More and more, you will find yourselves immersed in the planning stages.

Cynthia: We just got through with planning for the Town Meeting.

This is planning of a very different sort, but all the rules are applicable. Since this is a planning stage, this means that decisions will be made and you will be left to start the *implementation* octave with a dedicated core. [03 February 1974]

[[Is anything more said about the investigating, planning, implementing octaves in original Michaelian group or Gurdjieff?]]

The use of the word Shock, as well as the other underlined words, in the context of the word “octave” is not unexpected when you know Gurdjieff and his so-called “Law of Seven” as applied to his so-called “Levels of Being”. (There are chapters with those titles in this book.) Briefly, the musical scale is an octave of seven steps that repeats. Gurdjieff likens this to stable stages of spiritual growth separated by unstable traumatic, tumultuous, turbulent transformative phases, where advancement from stage to stage was said to be passively experienced as Shocks, and/or actively facilitated by intentional Shocks.

Dick: On death, as far as I'm concerned, the only thing that thinks and lives, goes with death, and I cannot imagine anything going beyond death. You either die slowly with age or illness or rapidly in an accident. When you're eaten by a hungry crocodile, you actually become that crocodile.

Of course, the Personality dreads the discontinuity of physical life, for when the organism dies, yes, that [Personality] dies also, but more of that which is essentially “you” survives beyond the grave. This you will understand more fully when you progress. The layers will gradually peel away to give you a glimpse of that which lives eternally and does not depend upon the organism for expression. Many facets of your life now are coming from that, in Essence. The task is to recognize them and capitalize on them rather than the negative aspects of the Personality. The Personality is judgmental and argumentative. The Personality bases its actions on the cultural mores in which it moves. The soul or Essence does none of these and feels the freedom. Perception is purposely blurred by the Personality, for it could not survive if the Essence took command. But the Essence perceives on its own and the lessons learned by the soul are sometimes quite different than what you would suspect by recounting your “conscious” experience. As Dick, the soul sees beyond the brain barriers set up by the organism in order to cushion the Shocks [the suffering inherent in the human condition]. In other words, [without soul/Essence] the [cost/benefit] reward would not seem great enough for the organism to continue with the absurdity [of continued living with Shocking suffering]. You have begun to peel the layers away, and so we would say that you, Dick, are perceiving far more than you give yourself credit for. The pain the body endures while being munched upon by a crocodile is seconds only compared to the Cycle of the soul. [17 March 1974]

Ask any Buddhist and they will tell you that the human condition involves physical suffering as well as psychological suffering. Much suffering can be avoided by shifting awareness away from body and Personality and toward Essence; refer to the chapter “Essence and Personality” for more information.

Is the old “Photographing” of another person a good thing to practice?

That is valid. We intend to suggest more areas in need of psychic Photography.

Is it [Photography] as good as a Shock?

That is also true and this is why the method used [by Gurdjieff and by Robert] was so effective. We would suggest the same to any Student able to receive the voices from the Causal Plane. [27 March 1974]

Refer to the chapter “Photography” for an explanation of that term as used in the Michaelian teachings. Basically, it means “calling out” someone, or oneself, on their psychological issues. Both Photographs and Shocks are ‘wake-up calls’ that propel one on the path toward greater self-awareness in the short run, and enlightenment in the long run. The Michaels, from the Causal Plane, sometimes Photographed and Shocked their Students in the original Michaelian group. If a Student heeds a Photograph, a Shock might not be needed.

Dick: I am used by [my employer]. The people who are running it are in the Perseveration Mode. Will we be able to receive a way of changing?

You may do the work within this Teaching, but in order to do so, you must be able to recall the reasons you chose the offending Overleaf ... and this means following up on your intuitive drives. Those coming out of the

Repression Mode [such as yourself], often do so explosively and with much resentment over all that they have missed. Some of this “Shock” therapy you will see should give you considerable insight into where the work is. [14 April 1974]

As you probably know, “shock therapy” is a psychiatric treatment where a person’s malfunctioning brain is zapped with electricity to ‘reboot’ and ‘reset’ it, to use computer metaphors. That is a drastic last resort therapy. However, it is an apt analogy for the severe Shock that is sometimes required to reset some adverse Personality traits.

The above statement is not the only time that some Overleaves got a drubbing:

Dick: Repression Mode — people do not feel Agape?

They do not ordinarily allow themselves this, you are right.

Gene: Sarah thinks Observation Mode keeps her from feeling Agape. Comment?

All of these Modes can be used to varying degrees to prevent the acceptance of Agape. In particular: Repression, Caution, Perseverance, and Observation. But the powerful [Cardinal] Modes [Power, Passion, Aggression] can be also used to startling effectiveness. Many souls who choose too Neutral a composite [array of Overleaves] for a resting Cycle find themselves in a position of being unable to react appropriately. This sometimes brings them to the negative attention of those around. Then, if they meet with a Teaching, they can sometimes be Shocked out of their stifling neutrality. [25 June 1974]

In the original Michaelian group there was discussion of changing the Overleaves with the help of Shocks, but after the Positive and Negative Poles of the Overleaves were revealed in late 1974 or early 1975 the discussion shifted to getting out of the Negative Poles and into the Positive Poles.

The Essence or soul, as we have said before, does become encrusted with barnacles and has much to go through to act intuitively. Most of the time, its powers are totally suppressed and it spends its time slumbering, as you well know. Those moments of crystal clarity come about when it is prodded into wakefulness by some Shock. [15 May 1974]

That last sentence pretty much sums up the function of Shocks.

Do they [cetaceans] go on [evolve on higher planes] as we do to Entity and Tao?

Yes, except you must remember they are relatively free of ambition and greed, which are the two prime movers of civilization. The necessary ingredients are not there for them to require this type of periodic Shock (having the Infinite Soul manifest).

One of the functions of Transcendental and Infinite Souls is to Shock humanity into the next stage or level of social and/or political development. As mentioned previously, Shocking times make for turbulent transitions.

About witnessing an apparently illegal act in San Francisco on O’Farrell Street — the Shock of seeing something as we interpret it — a warning?

We would call it so, yes. You see, what happened then happens often to Mechanical Man. He is in his customary state of slumber and all of a sudden awakens briefly from his dreams and attempts to interpret a scene in that split second before he sleeps again. Often, his momentary vision is grossly distorted, and then the Emotional Center or Emotional Parts of Centers takes over and directs the action. These [Shocking] experiences are good for Students in that they often call attention to the depths of the trance in which you go through life. It is true, Students do often witness heinous crimes of violence, but then usually the alert Student is prepared to spring into action and do what must be done from the proper perspective. It is not true, however, that the high planes arrange convenient accidents to aid the Students. We just hope that you do notice those experiences that come your way as growth experiences. [08 October 1974]

The above was another succinct statement about the way to use Shocks for permanent change: pay attention, learn from the experience, use it as catalyst for spiritual growth, and don’t let the heightened awareness wane.

This [two evil men] is one alternative [for worldwide Shock]; the others: contact with worlds beyond this one is one — this would provide the Shock of which you have spoken. Spiritual communities and widespread resistance is another [alternative for worldwide Shock]. [19 October 1974]

Considering the many books written and movies made about the Shock that would result from unequivocal contact with extraterrestrials, one wonders if humankind is being prepared for this eventuality. It might be as Shocking as the manifestation of an Infinite Soul.

That was the last of the appearances of Shock in the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group.

Not once did Yarbro use the word in her book *MFM*. Yarbro was not a member of the original Michaelian group, and was probably not familiar with Gurdjieff's notion of Shocks. However, Leslie Briggs was an original Michaelian group member, and the word Shock was used in her channeling sessions, but not with the meaning borrowed from Gurdjieff. This tells me that the Michaels used the word in the original Michaelian group because the members were familiar with the concept, but did not use it in subsequent groups where the members were not familiar with it. Even so, I believe it is useful for all Michaelian students to know and understand the notion of Shocks.

Concluding Comments on Shock

Putting my thoughts in a bulleted list helps me get them in order.

- Because Michaelian students subsequent to the original Michaelian group were not generally familiar with the Gurdjieffian teachings or the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group, and because neither Yarbro nor Briggs had anything to say about Shock in their channeling, this concept has not been adopted and adapted into the Michaelian teachings communities. My feeling about this fact is that it would be beneficial to revive the notion; it has value, 'shock value', ha ha.
- The concept of Shocks as taught by Gurdjieff and the Michaels is not mere sensationalism which is perpetrated for its 'shock value', of course. Rather, we should regard Shocks that happen to us as 'wake-up calls' on our spiritual path.
- Besides the Shocks that happen as a normal part of life, one can intentionally depart from habitual behavior as part of waking up from 'sleepwalking' through life: do new and challenging things that stretch you out of your comfort zone.
- In late 1974 and early 1975, William Pearlman attended some of the original Michaelian group meetings. He was a Gurdjieffian student, and he drove everyone nuts with his inappropriate Shocking behavior. You may read about this, and how it led to the disbanding of the original Michaelian group, in Volume 2 of *Michael Speaks: The Legacy of Sarah Chambers*. This implies that there is appropriate Shocking behavior — if it is applied judiciously by an Adept with students who agree willingly to having this done with them. Gurdjieff was perhaps such an Adept, but Pearlman was not.
- The concept of Shock is connected to and intertwined with many other concepts in the Gurdjieff and Michaelian teachings; I noted those along the way in this chapter, and referred the reader to other chapters in this *Study Papers* book.
- We are usually somewhat unaware of our own psychological issues (mindlessness, ignorance, stupidity, foolishness, and so on), but other people can be pretty good about noticing and pointing out where we are 'asleep at the wheel', so to speak; we should be receptive to their Photographs, or we will learn the hard way. By "the hard way", I refer to the fact that the universe, the government, the culture, and the family can be brutal when it punishes psychological issues.
- Developmental psychologists in general, in their research, have become aware that there are traumatic transformative transitions between stages of childhood and adulthood. These are discussed in my book *The Tao of Cosmogony* in the Part on "Developmental Psychology". It is not inappropriate to refer to these as Shocks, although they are not the same thing as 'wake up calls' provided by the others, and our own selves.





④ SILENCE, THE

This chapter is the product of a search for the word “silence” and “silent” in the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group channeling sessions. As usual, I have added some commentary, which consists of my analysis and synthesis of the quotations. Basically and briefly, the Michaels recommended that their students ‘silence’ their thoughts and emotions and behaviors in order to ‘listen’ more intently to sources beyond their normal state of consciousness. They referred to this state of mind as “*the silence*”. Personally, I found it surprising how many times *the silence* was mentioned in the original Michaelian group transcriptions, so I take it as a significant factor in the Michaelian teachings. And, as we will see in this chapter, *the silence* was a component of an integrated system of components (concepts and practices and experiences) that foster spiritual growth. These other components are noted in this chapter; they have chapters of their own in this *Study Papers* book.

So far as I know, no one else has noticed this, but it looks to me as if the Michaels attached a special meaning to the phrase, The Silence. For this reason, the phrase “The Silence” is capitalized in this chapter and other chapters of this *Study Papers* book; it is a Michaelian jargon phrase that needs a definition apart from its use in the common vernacular. (For the same reason, I also capitalized the phrase, The Synthesis, which is the name that the Michaels gave to their teaching.) The subject came up in the original Michaelian group numerous times, some interesting things were said about it, and it might be helpful for Michaelian students to have the answers conveniently collected all in one place, rather than them researching the term on their own.

Before we get to the Michaelian definition of The Silence, let’s take a look at what the Gurdjieffian teachings had to say about it.

The Silence per Gurdjieff

Some founding members of the original Michaelian group had previously been members of a Gurdjieffian teachings group. It was there that they learned about the value of spending some time in The Silence. Following are a series of quotations that I found on the internet. The first quotation is not from a student of Gurdjieff, but the others are.

“So, what is the knowledge being conveyed by the different oral traditions? It is not spiritual knowledge because, practically speaking, this is useless. Rather, it is spiritual experience — an experience of stillness. We are reaching for something deeper within us. When we come into its presence, our ordinary minds and capacity for language are useless. The transmission of the knowledge we seek occurs only obliquely through the spoken word, and more directly through silence, both of which constitute aspects of an oral tradition.” —Swami Chetanananda, *Parabola*, August 1992

“In October I was with G. in Moscow. His small apartment on the Bolshaia Dmitrovka, all the floors and walls of which were covered in the Eastern style with carpets and the ceilings hung with silk shawls, astonished me by its special atmosphere. First of all, the people who came there — who were all G.’s pupils — were not afraid to keep silent. This alone was something unusual. They came, sat down, smoked, they often did not speak a single word for hours. And there was nothing oppressive or unpleasant in this silence; on the contrary, there was a feeling of assurance and of freedom from the necessity of playing a forced and invented role. But on chance and curious visitors this silence produced an extraordinarily strange impression. They began to talk, and they talked without stopping as if they were afraid of stopping and feeling something.... I realized in this place that people feared silence more than anything else, that our tendency to talk arises from self-defense and is always based upon a reluctance to see something, a reluctance to confess something to oneself.” —P. D. Ouspensky, *In Search of the Miraculous*, pp. 271-272

“Is it possible to accomplish an external task in an intelligent and efficient manner, without at the same time losing this sense of a presence which is infinitely beyond us? This is the game we are playing now. We try here a

little, there a little ... and sometimes silence comes to our aid. This silence is very tumultuous inside us, and many associations get in the way, but there is, nevertheless, a place for an acknowledgment of real silence — not real outer silence but real inner silence. An immense opening. And of that one hardly dares speak. One would wish to speak of it as little as possible. One would wish to allow it to impose itself of its own accord.

Sometimes one finds words — and that seems very seductive — but that's not what really counts. Once again let us return to the experience itself." —Henri Tracol, *Further Talks and Essays*, p. 167

"There is something about the silence of a hundred people who have a certain education, more than the silence of two or three people. There is also something about the agitation of a hundred people [smiles]. Can see the agitation around adults. But it is so striking when people are very quiet, turned toward what calls them "innerly" and not at all taken by whatever is around them. Each face becomes beautiful. And it is lost as soon as that quietness is not in them. And it is good to receive this impression, for we wish to have an aim, a double aim, to be related both to what is inside — which gives meaning, openness — and to the world. To be in relationship with both. When something real is received, by grace, then a wish arises. Like falling in love: there must be a relation; then it is felt, real. Any other "wish" is illusion, abuse of the word. There is no wish without relation. A wish is based on something real. The wish to serve That." —Michel de Salzman, *The Next Attention*, pp. 338–339

"I have a preconceived idea that a state of silence, of peace, is deprived of energy and of life, a state where there is a stop, the suspension of everything that generally moves me. In fact, silence is a moment of the greatest energy, a state so intense that everything else seems quiet... The perception of 'I' that is revealed in the stillness must be as strongly established as the notion of myself rooted in the body... The wish to be conscious is the wish to be. It can only be understood in silence." —Jeanne de Salzman, *The Reality of Being*, pp. 165–167 [<https://www.gurdjieff.org/excerpts6.htm> — retrieved 24 July 1974]

So, in the Gurdjieffian teachings, and in other teachings that preceded him, it was an important component of their spiritual practices to be in The Silence at least part of the time. What makes this experience The Silence is when one turns the attention away from this world to the world beyond. The Michaels adopted and adapted this ancient and modern spiritual practice into their own teaching.

Silence per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

The following extracts from original Michaelian group transcriptions are Q&A exchanges, where an original Michaelian group member asks a question (or makes a comment), and the Michaels provide an answer. These extracts are presented in the chronological order in which they were given. As is my custom, I often provide some explanatory comments following the question or answer. Underlined words in the Michaels' answers are my emphasis, to draw attention to what it is that I comment on. Sometimes I embed words or phrases [in brackets] that I believe help to clarify the question or the answer.

The first mention of silence in the original Michaelian group transcriptions happened even before the Michaels appeared, and it set the tone for all of the following mentions:

[Soleal:] Any time you communicate with me, there must be silence in your psyche.

Do you understand that there are tensions on this world, that silence is not easy?

There can be tensions on any world if it is encouraged and rewarded. Tension is a manifestation of unrest in any society. [undated early session]

In information theory, there is the concept of signal versus noise, and the two are the reciprocal of each other, meaning that the more of one, the less of the other. In order to receive information from Soleal or any other supernatural source, there must be silence, an absence of noise, in the psyche — "noise" in this case referring to distracting thought and emotions that obscure the signal from the channeled source.

The second mention of silence was by another source of channeled information that preceded the appearance of the Michaels:

Alice: How can I raise myself to the higher — through meditation?

[Tomas:] You are right. Meditation is the door by which you can enter the higher plane and communicate with those waiting to help. Fasting and occasional solitude and silence prepare you for a more meaningful experience. There are many excellent places giving instruction. Maybe this would open the door for you, Alice. The need for personal guidance varies with the individual. [24 July 1973]

Some people have an “internal guidance system” and do not seek communication with supernatural entities. For those who do seek such communication, refer to chapters “Meditation and Concentration” and “Fasting” and “Solitude” for more discussion of words and phrases that appear in this passage. The point is to break the routine of mundane life and intentionally minimize the distractions by silencing the physical mind and listening to the spiritual mind.

When the Michaels appeared, a couple of months after the above, they also had something to say about silence in the sense of not talking, either in your head or in your socializing:

Kathryn: For the growth of my own soul, is this a good course of action, to, for instance, study music, which may be in my Essence?

If you do study music, yes. Don't allow yourself to become enmeshed in the rhetoric. You already appreciate this mode of expression. Now it would be Good Work to learn to express yourself in this fashion. Magnificent contributions have been made in this way by essentially non-verbal souls. You have learned the benefits of creative silence; the lecture hall is not for you. If you give the gift of higher expression through music, you will reach many. [26 August 1973]

Refer to the chapters “Music” and “Good Work, Bad Work” and “Higher Expression” for more discussion of words and phrases that appear in this passage. Beings on planes of consciousness higher than the Physical are a source of information that can be accessed by silencing the merely human psyche as stated previously, but those planes are also the source of creative inspiration, such as with music and art. Creative people who do not have a spiritual inclination tell us that they do not know where their creativity comes from, but people who have a spiritual inclination tell us that it comes from the non-physical world. People who are non-verbal by nature gravitate naturally to “higher expression” in a “creative silence”. Those people who have busy, buzzy minds, who are full of words ... not so much. The phrase, “creative silence” appears a few more times in sessions subsequent to this session. It is a hint that The Silence, when done properly and with intention, is not merely passive and negative; it is also active and positive.

The original Michaelian group was looking for land to purchase so that they could start a commune, partly for the purpose of spending more time in silence:

Richard: Why did it seem so silent? I heard no birds.

We felt that you needed to experience the silence. There are birds. [27 October 1973]

An excellent place to experience the creative silence is in nature, preferably away from the city, out in the country or ‘wilderness’ where there is less noise pollution. Personally, I experience silence whenever I visit the family farm. Presumably, a commune in the right environment would provide more and better opportunities for experiencing silence inside as well as silence outside.

The founding members of the original Michaelian group got the idea of a commune from a local teacher of spirituality in the tradition of Gurdjieff, mentioned above:

Dick: In our first teaching, Robert's emphasis was on being more silent. In Gurdjieff's system, it was stated that everything you said was a lie, and so we had to be very careful with words.

We agree that much work needs to be done by all of you here present toward eliminating all non-essential dialogue. This, of course, may eventually result in your being acutely uncomfortable when you are not with others in the teaching. This is only one of the myriad reasons for spiritual communities such as we have suggested. Silence comes much more easily to those who are secure in the love of those around them.

Comment: We have to experience the Truth-Lying Monad as part of everything. We should not be afraid to speak up. In order to learn in this area, we need feedback. If you are silent, you never expose yourself. If we were more silent, would this help us in working on False Personality?

That is valid. [03 February 1974]

Refer to chapters “Gurdjieff” and “Dialogue” and “Communal Living” and “Lying” and “Monads” and “Personality — True and False” and “Self-observation” for more discussion about subjects mentioned in this passage. The point to be made here is that, not only is it valuable for the individual to silence the “roof-brain chatter” of the “monkey mind” (if these phrases are unfamiliar to you, google them), but it is also valuable to silence the culturally-induced “small talk” between individuals. The more you are around people that you know well, such as in a commune, the less need there is for “small talk” to mitigate social discomfort.

Silence, as in not talking, has its benefits, but issues can surface within yourself while refraining from unnecessary dialogue with others:

The silence often brings you face to face with your [social and personal] anxiety.

Betty: I feel there is much unnecessary dialogue.

The silence often brings you face to face with your anxieties. This was a nervous session. [06 February 1974]
Some people mask their anxiety with distractions. One of the functions of silence is to remove the distractions, such that you are thereby impelled to face your anxieties.

Richard: Gandhi said you should express yourself in the least number of words without embellishment.

We see much value in periods of silence. They are unsurpassed door openers. Right now, however, you are not together enough to dispense with the dialogue, so we have not suggested it. If you will work doggedly for a weekend together, we will probably suggest it. An interesting exercise as a preliminary would be to attempt to complete the sex act in silence.

Comment: Is that without moaning and groaning?

Silence is silence. [03 March 1974]

This was the place in the original Michaelian group transcriptions when the discussion turned from silence, as in not talking, to The Silence, as in “periods of silence” as “door openers” or gateways to higher states of consciousness. Silence as a gateway is hinted at in the reference to silent sex. It was understood, correctly, in the original Michaelian group that the Sexual Center is one of the higher Centers, and therefore non-verbal *per se*. There is some value in the exercise of omitting verbal communication after sex when it breaks a thoughtless habit of yammering on about whatever, but the main value of this exercise in *verbal* silence is when you seek *non-verbal* communication and communion during the so-called “afterglow” of good sex. Above and beyond the Intellectual Center there is a realm where there is a much more meaningful exchange; refer to the chapter “Sexuality” for more about that and its relationship to higher states of consciousness in higher Centers.

I feel isolated from people. Is it related to sex or Overleaves or what? How can I approach this problem?

We would also point out to you that you have erected many barriers between yourself and possible emotional trauma. You do not allow yourself the luxury of intimacy.

Incidentally, the silence can be a marvelous experience, but there must be agreement and positive communication within the silence. Nothing is quite so destructive as a hostile, angry silence. [27 March 1974]

Refer to chapters “Barriers” and “Intimacy” for more discussion about subjects mentioned in this passage. Without barriers to intimacy, it is much easier to maximize the effectiveness of silence with other people — if, of course, the other person also understands and approves and applies this method.

A discussion was held about the experience of looking into other people’s eyes without speaking for an extended time. This was an EST process.

This would bring up many taboos and would be a rewarding experience. We would suggest that you start off with only a few minutes and then increase gradually. You see, this is a more powerful experience than you think, for there are now in your group souls who are beginning to trust, and looking at them closely will produce strange emotions. [05 October 1975]

There is a description of a specific intentional exercise of silence. It is yet another way to remove the barrier of incessantly conversation, so that one may learn to communicate and commune with a kindred soul in a non-verbal way.

More is said about “positive” silence further on in the original Michaelian group transcriptions:

Thaddeus: What would Michael suggest in work to further myself?

We have suggested that you meditate. We also suggest that for you, creative silence is something you might find valuable. This must be done with another student; otherwise it is not effective. Although you have been known to talk to yourself, you are much more inclined to do this when in the presence of others. You have a noisy head and must work to quiet it down. This is not unusual with your Overleaves, but as a student, you must choose to override it. Also, you can practice concentration, augmented [with psychedelics] or not. Also, for you, periodic fasting would be of great value. Spiritual food is what you crave, but the Personality demands the substitute. If you can stand not to gratify the body’s demands, the hold of the Personality will weaken. The movement you are now doing is good — don’t stop. In fact, you could increase it. [29 October 1974]

There is that phrase “creative silence” again. Refer to chapters “Meditation and Concentration” and “Psychedelics” and “Fasting” for more discussion about subjects mentioned in this passage. Psychedelics typically provoke non-verbal experiences, meaning that the experiences are generally difficult if not impossible to describe in words.

We had a meeting with Michael after Soleal was here.

Remember this creature [Soleal] was raised in silence. It is difficult still for him to speak, even in his own milieu. They do not speak on his world. His teacher, when he was quite young, forced The Silence as a discipline.

Leslie: Commented they do "speak", but have telepathy?

That is valid for him and a few others. [10 November 1974]

Refer to chapters "Telepathy" and "Intuition" and "Discipline" for more discussion about subjects mentioned in this passage. Some families and cultures are much more verbal than others, and this sets an expectation about what is normal in social situations. People do not feel comfortable with other people who function outside of their own range of verbosity. Non-verbal people look to body-language, facial expressions, and other clues; verbose people are focused on verbal communication and might miss other clues.

More was said about telepathy as a non-verbal communication in the next session:

The reason for the psychic Photograph should be fairly clear at this time. It is primarily a warm-up exercise, leading to non-verbal communication. Many students who are also teachers err in trying to speed up this process, and for that reason the desired communication does not take place. The telepathic silence is anything but silent, but students cannot be shielding if this is to come about. If you first learn to express your feelings to one another without shame or guilt or any of the other myriad barriers, then you open the door to Silence. Only then can you be truly comfortable without the chatter. Chattering is usually just another shield so the Personality does not have to be honest. You see, the Essence cannot lie; therefore, the Personality cannot tell the truth. It can only lie. This is an important point to remember, since the chattering emanates from the Personality. The Essence does communicate. There is no need for mindless silence in the path toward Balance, but it might as well be truthful communication, and until you can knock away the barriers, this cannot come about. The Personality will always be around to conveniently lie in order to satisfy the Goal. If this Goal happens to be Acceptance, for instance, think of how much energy is lost. [12 November 1974]

Telepathy is always honest communication. In Gurdjieff and in the original Michaelian group, verbal communication was considered to be the least honest form of communication. Refer to chapters "Photography" and "Communication" and "Telepathy" and "Lying" for more discussion about subjects mentioned in this passage. In the "Lying" chapter we see that Gurdjieff and the Michaels had a low opinion of communication that was merely verbal because there are much better means and methods of communication: more accurate, more honest, deeper, higher, more meaningful, because that happens in Centers other than the Intellectual Center. The Michaels had to drive this point home on many occasions, because most of the original Michaelian group members were stuck in that Center.

The Michaels suggested that the original Michaelian group members establish Silence as a project:

Discussion about maintaining silence while working on a project, maybe on a weekend thing, with one day of silence.

That, too, would be a valuable experience for all of you, but we would suggest a creative silence rather than a strained one. One day set aside to work on an important project of your choosing in silence, but together, using other than verbiage to communicate your needs. Writing "bullshit" on little pieces of paper does not differ from saying it out loud. This is not silence the way we mean it. [21 December 1974]

It is not enough to limit speaking; that is negative or passive. A positive and active silence is called "creative", because one becomes increasingly sensitized to non-verbal communication in Centers other than the Intellectual. For creative silence, written communication is therefore no better than spoken communication. Wikipedia has an article on "bullshit", which is obviously a very negative form of verbosity.

Liz: I feel Soleal wants to be silent with us. We should terminate and be silent with Soleal.

[Soleal:] I sense the desire for a more intense and personal experience on the part of these students, and that is all right with me. I can tolerate the change in the level of communication. In fact, in some ways it is welcome, but remember that in asking for this at this point, you eliminate all of those students who cannot allow the creative silence. Let me tell you that this "Oh, shit!" state is very close to enlightenment on several levels. Now, with that in mind, try it. [11 January 1975]

There again is that phrase "creative silence", which is The Silence. As I have stated here and there in these *Study Papers*, there are "levels" of communication that can be correlated with the Centers, namely, from lower to higher they are: Moving > Emotional > Intellectual > Instinctive > Higher Intellectual > Higher Emotional > Higher Moving. These are the so-called "Levels of Being" as understood by Gurdjieff and the Michaels; refer to the chapter by that name. The purpose of the creative Silence is to move the consciousness up the levels

toward non-verbal enlightenment; refer to the chapter “Enlightenment” where we find that enlightenment is experienced in the three higher Centers.

The final statement on Silence lets us know that the use of verbal communication is not totally to be denigrated:

Much of this man’s work on himself has been with the creative silence, and he is not yet satisfied with the results of this, and dialogue is unsatisfactory as a result of this work. We would point out to you that the reverse is true of our student Soleal. Since he was steeped in the silence, his work is now with the creative dialogue.

Both are Good Work by excellent students. Both are needed, for that is what Balance is all about. [16 February 1975]

Refer to the chapter “Dialogue” for more about that. There you will see a discussion about a philosopher who was focused on the creative Dialogue, namely Martin Buber. His main point was that true dialogue clarifies who we really are in our deepest selves, as well as the fact that dialogue should build bonds of understanding between people. So, The Dialogue, when used properly, actually serves the same purpose as The Silence, which is to move the consciousness up the Levels of Being.

Concluding Comments on Silence

The notion that silencing the random chatter within and between people is not limited to spiritual aspirants, it is also a part of pop psychology, as one can see from this article in Psychology Today Magazine:

><https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/the-empowerment-diary/201709/calming-the-monkey-mind><.





① SIN

If you have any personal experience with a fundamentalist Christian church (or other fundamentalist religion), then you have almost surely encountered the concept of “sin”. Hell, you might have encountered the concept without any personal contact with a fundamentalist religion. However, does the concept fit into the Michaelian teachings in any way? The subject is indeed addressed in the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group. Let’s take a look.

Definition of Sin

Non-jargon terms used in the original Michaelian group transcriptions are rarely defined therein, because they do not need to be; they are a part of the general cultural knowledge and understanding. Even so, it seems expedient to me to define them as part of the introduction to the subject, then compare and contrast that common understanding with the Michaels’ take on it, which is often uncommon. In Wikipedia, we may read:

In a religious context, sin is a transgression against divine law. Each culture has its own interpretation of what it means to commit a sin. While sins are generally considered actions, any thought, word, or act considered immoral, selfish, shameful, harmful, or alienating might be termed “sinful”. The word derives from “Old English syn(n), for original *sunjō. The stem may be related to that of Latin ‘sons, sont-is’ (guilty). In Old English there are examples of the original general sense, ‘offense, wrong-doing, misdeed.’”

Then Wikipedia describes the conception of sin within various religions, including Bahá’í, Buddhism, Christianity, Islam, Judaism, and Shinto. The entry on the Christian conception is most appropriate, as it is the probable understanding of the original Michaelian group members, who lived in a predominantly Christian culture:

The doctrine of sin is central to Christianity, since its basic message is about redemption in Christ. Christian hamartiology describes sin as an act of offense against God by despising his persons and Christian biblical law, and by injuring others. In Christian views it is an evil human act, which violates the rational nature of man as well as God’s nature and his eternal law. According to the classical definition of St. Augustine of Hippo, sin is “a word, deed, or desire in opposition to the eternal law of God.” Thus, sin requires redemption, a metaphor alluding to atonement, in which the death of Jesus is the price that is paid to release the faithful from the bondage of sin. Among some scholars, sin is understood mostly as legal infraction or contract violation of non-binding philosophical frameworks and perspectives of Christian ethics, and so salvation tends to be viewed in legal terms. Other Christian scholars understand sin to be fundamentally relational — a loss of love for the Christian God and an elevation of self-love (“concupiscence”, in this sense), as was later propounded by Augustine in his debate with the Pelagians. As with the legal definition of sin, this definition also affects the understanding of Christian grace and salvation, which are thus viewed in relational terms.

[><https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sin>< — retrieved 23 August 2021]

Because the Michaelian conception of deity is so different from the fundamentalist conception, one can reasonably expect the understanding of “offense to the deity” to be different, and such is the case. Refer to the chapter “Tao” for a discussion of the nature of God per the Michaelian teachings.

Sin per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

The word was only used in one passage in the original Michaelian group. This is understandable because few of the members had any involvement with fundamentalist religion, so they were not steeped in the doctrines and dogmas of religion.

Suggesting retrogression to us is another example of Mechanical Man’s desire to complexity, but also it suggests to us Mechanical Man’s need to be punished for what he calls sin. We must somehow make it known to you that there is no sin — only Karma — and this you do repay, but not by retrogression, just by hard work.

There is no one “up here” to punish you. You will have to find someone down there to do your flagellation.
[12 November 1974]

Based on this passage, one should refer to the chapter “Karma” if one is to understand the Michaelian correlate to sin. There is also a chapter on the related topic of Guilt, and another one on Forgiveness. And by the way, note that there is a chapter “Mechanical Man”.

Because the word *sin* is covered so sparsely in the original Michaelian group transcriptions, it seemed to me expedient to research it in other early Michaelian channeling, but the word was not to be found, either in *Messages from Michael* (except to quote the one original Michaelian group passage) or in the Briggs sessions published in *The Legacy of Leslie Briggs* by The Center for Michael teachings. Consequently, I have nothing more to say on the subject.





SOLEAL





SOLITUDE, SOLITARY, ISOLATION, SECLUSION, ALONENESS

This chapter is the product of a search for the word “solitude” and its synonyms, such as isolation and seclusion in the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group channeling sessions, and other words with a similar meaning. I have added some commentary, which consists of my analysis and synthesis of the quotations. Obviously, this word does not represent a significant component of the Michaelian teachings, but even so, the word appears often enough that it seems to me that students can benefit from seeing all of those instances documented and commented on in a chapter of this *Study Papers* book. Furthermore, the word is related to a number of other components of the Michaelian teachings that are considered to be more significant; these will be noted in the commentary on the instances of the word and its contexts. Briefly and basically, the Michaels recommended to the original Michaelian group members that they spend some time in solitude, as this is a normal part of a spiritual path from ancient to modern times.

So what is meant by solitude? The online Merriam Webster dictionary definition is:

the quality or state of being alone or remote from society

aloneness, insulation, isolation, privacy, secludedness, seclusion, segregation, separateness, sequestration, solitariness [<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/solitude>< — retrieved 04 November 2022]

The word “solitude” is not capitalized in this chapter or other chapters of this *Study Papers* book because it has no special meaning in the Michaelian teachings; it is not a Michaelian jargon word that needs a definition apart from its use in the common vernacular. One might therefore wonder why it is even included in this book. One answer is that it is just a Scholar–Cast Artisan thing to do: I study the Michaelian teachings documents and I write about them and I want to be thorough. Another answer is that the occasional desire for solitude is pervasive in human psychology and sociology and spirituality, the subject came up in the original Michaelian group numerous times, some interesting things were said about it, and it might be helpful for Michaelian students to have the answers conveniently collected all in one place.

Solitude per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

The following extracts from original Michaelian group transcriptions are Q&A exchanges, where an original Michaelian group member asks a question (or makes a comment), and the Michaels provide an answer. This is **not** a subject that would benefit by division into subcategories, as some subjects do. These extracts are presented in the chronological order in which they were given, even though this is not a subject where there was a development or evolution of a specific revelation of a facet of the Michaelian teachings, as was often the case with the original Michaelian group. As is my custom, I often provide some explanatory comments following the question or answer. Underlined words in the Michaels’ answers are my emphasis, to draw attention to what it is that I comment on. Sometimes I embed words or phrases [in brackets] that I believe help to clarify the question or the answer.

The first occurrence of the word

Alice: How can I raise myself to the higher — through meditation?

[Tomas:] You are right. Meditation is the door by which you can enter the higher plane and communicate with those waiting to help. Fasting and occasional solitude and silence prepare you for a more meaningful experience. There are many excellent places giving instruction. Maybe this would open the door for you, Alice. The need for personal guidance varies with the individual. [24 July 1973]

Refer to the chapters “Meditation and Concentration”, “Planes”, “Communication”, “Fasting”, and “Silence” for further discussion of those related subjects. Solitude can be regarded as metaphorically ‘hitting the reset button’ when the lifestyle gets stuck in a ‘race condition’. If your ‘head is spinning’ in a ‘whirlwind’ of

distractions, then it is time to 'take a break' from the "sound and fury, signifying nothing" (to borrow a phrase from Shakespeare), and thereby let some inner and higher meaning emerge from obscurity into your life.

Dick: It is unclear to me what I am to do and that is why I keep doing what I do.

Sarah: They suggested you go into solitude for a weekend retreat and you nearly flipped. [14 April 1974]

Solitude is a way to break habitual behavior, to 'get out of a rut' that has become unproductive. Often that means getting out of your usual habitation (home), one way or another. For instance, one might find solitude in a cabin in the mountains, or in a shack in the wilderness, or in a tent in the desert, or on a blanket on a deserted beach, or whatever. If you cannot do this on your own, professional services exist for exactly such unadventurous excursions. Don't bring a book or a computer....

(From Ted): Have I had an experience with intellectual meditation?

Ted has been, in his second most recent lifetime, a Benedictine monk who was the scholar for his order. He led his order in the discipline of meditation at a very high plane. Isolation. Solitude. Isolation. That question is for you to flounder in, and you will no doubt find the answer. Any answer we would give would not be acceptable, as you are now doubting your own veracity. Do not doubt. Give credence to your intuition. It is valid always. [13 August 1974]

Refer to the chapters "Religion", "Discipline", "Meditation and Concentration", and "Intuition". It is in solitude, if/when one intentionally listens to one's intuition, that answers to current questions about the course of one's life often emerge into awareness. Some spiritual traditions lean more toward a solitary spiritual path and some lean more toward a collective path. Monasteries make it easy to do both paths, concurrently or intermittently. It is Good Work for every person to find the solitude/companionship ratio that works best for them.

Dick: I would like a comment on Robert's [Burton] statement that some people are moving toward brilliance in this life and some toward seclusion. I feel I'm moving toward the latter.

At the present, yes, you are. But this does not necessarily have to be. The need is great in you to be a teacher, but now you do need the solitude that your present situation does not allow for. We would say that this demarcation is not as marked or as final as you may have interpreted from the man Robert. In other words, these are not two separate paths here. [They are] one path with two side paths that do not need to last a lifetime. Now you are seeking what you need. [03 September 1974]

Refer to the chapter "Moderation" for more discussion of the virtue and value of leading a balanced life, of not going to extremes. As with so many things in life, both isolation and companionship are Good Work, and should be sought, depending on the benefits to the soul and/or the mind and/or the body at the moment. Usually there is an alternation between the two.

Solitary per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

This section is a product of a search of the original Michaelian group transcriptions for the word "solitary". This adds, of course, somewhat to the Michaelian thoughts on solitude.

The group has one thing the individual cannot tap alone and that is the collective memory. The ability to see the lesson that is being learned is difficult enough in a group, let alone in solitary. [17 August 1973]

There are advantages and disadvantage to practically every lifestyle. That is why it is useful to swing back and forth between solitude and companionship.

Dick: It seems to me that Ellis's past lives were out of role for a Scholar.

Those were only a few of this man's physical intervals and they were not so far out of Essence as you might believe. Scholars do not usually like to work and will prostitute themselves in various ways for the quick kill in order to leave time for their own solitary pursuits. In her very few female lives, Sarah made an excellent prostitute, completely detached emotionally and all business. Ellis was a very scholarly extortionist. [27 December 1973]

Elsewhere it is said that Scholars are "aloof" and Artisans are "remote". It is almost as if those Roles can be in solitude even when they are with other people. In any case, it is easier for those Roles to be in solitude.

Edgar: We are not likely to become Adepts when we are working for the hospital. The satisfaction for the yearning for knowledge is interfered with by having to work.

The thirst for pure data accumulation is almost insatiable in the older Scholar. Yes, your lifestyle is interfering with the Goal of Growth. This [Michael] teaching is not well understood in solitary. (Edgar has done much studying alone.) [31 December 1973]

Most of the components of the Michaelian teachings are aimed at fostering healthy social interactions. Besides Role, other Overleaves influence one's comfort level with a solitary lifestyle. In Edgar's case, his Goal of Growth was contradicted by the penchant of the Scholar Role for solitary study. Generally speaking, Cardinal Overleaves lean toward extroversion, and Ordinal Overleaves lean toward introversion.

Comment: Everything we do should complement the goal of the group. We tend to take on too many things to do. You don't have to give up everything, but you should pull your life towards the goal.

[Soleal:] ... the concept of Agape requires the actions of a closely-knit group of supportive students in order to come to reality. No one can feel Agape in an ivory tower. It can only be felt when Higher Centers are contacted in the course of close association with others. There is no way to do this alone that I know of. Where the misunderstanding has come about, I think, is where the teacher [Michael] has advised you of the dangers of the cloisters and the stifling atmosphere there that retards growth, and has pointed out to you the relative lack of success among those who choose the solitary path.

Comment: The solitary way of the mountain-top yogis, nunneries, monkeries, etc. [18 February 1974]

Refer to chapters "Agape" and "Centers, Higher". One of the dangers of a solitary lifestyle is that one's negatives will be exaggerated, and also one will become increasingly weird. It is far better to mitigate any unhealthy tendency to isolate oneself, and intentionally cultivate some close companions on one's journey.

The man Jim enjoys being his own boss. Being a carpenter is not so much a problem as being under the constant direction of others. Also, this man works far better as a solitary entity. [08 May 1974]

Jim was a Scholar (likely Artisan-Cast considering his profession, but that was not known in the original Michaelian group), so it is understandable that he would prefer to work alone, and/or self-employed, without someone looking over his shoulder.

Barbara: I felt I was not going to bother with groups any more, but I was curious about this one. What am I doing?

Much more like desiring [than curious]; that would be more correct. Perhaps you would review our feelings on the solitary path. (It's a poor way to go ... you need others to Photograph ... you cannot do it alone.) [30 May 1974]

Sharing your spiritual journey with other like-minded spiritual aspirants works better than going it alone.

Mallory then expressed how she did not feel connected with the group. She felt good about coming back after an absence of five weeks, but she felt there were no persons in the group to share her life with. She wished to make the teaching and her life one, and couldn't figure it out.

This lady chooses to separate herself out of shyness. She is reluctant to break into the inner circle, and one of the reasons is that she is still wondering if this is "the teaching". It can be, of course, but evolution is a solitary matter. [30 May 1974]

My perception is that, considering what is said elsewhere, a better word for "solitary" here would have been "individual", meaning that every person has a *unique* evolutionary path. Every person does well to find a spiritual teaching that fits them well, and a teaching typically comes with a community of students with which one can fellowship, develop friendships, and find companionship on the shared journey. If one finds the appropriate teaching, then one is less likely to feel shy among that group of students.

Carolyn: [Life] task? Is it to be alone, involvement with child?

To be happy alone, depending upon the "all". Pan-dependency, of course, is predicated upon the Personality becoming independent and functioning self-sufficiently without depending upon the actions of others around you to move first. Of course, this is necessary if you are ever to allow the Essence to rely upon the cosmic forces that it knows are dependable. That is one of your primary tasks; it is not a goal. No, that is not the only one; there are others involving arriving at an inner "truth." That, in turn, involves unscrambling much conflict in doctrines, or rather many conflicting doctrines. Again, this is largely a solitary task. If we clarify this, it will take more hours than you now have, since it involves a lifetime of work, but briefly this lady has within her the ability to arrive at a point of spiritual tranquility that she does not now enjoy, by recognizing further [for] her self what is true and discarding that which is patently false, keeping the good and throwing out the bad from all of those influences that have and will later come into play. [12 June 1974]

Carolyn was an Artisan, as am I, so I understand the need to seek and approach one's own unique truth. To do so is Good Work, but there are cautions documented throughout this chapter about being too solitary, too independent, too self-sufficient in the pursuit of truth; balance and moderation is to be sought. I understand the term "pan-dependency" in the context of "independence" and "self-sufficiency" to refer to reliance on the universe as a whole, skipping the intermediary practice of reliance on people, who are often very unreliable. In the context of this chapter, one should choose one's teachers and other influences and groups as carefully as one chooses when to go one's own solitary way.

In the same session, Carolyn's friend Gene, An Artisan-Cast Scholar, had similar concerns:

Gene: Task involving teaching and aloneness — separation?

Also, an important part of this task involves the discrimination in knowing who can hear the words without wasting the energy on those who cannot. Yes, the separation is almost accomplished and yes, it is a solitary task and cannot be interfered with. If there is interference, there is nothing accomplished. The true occult Adept is usually lonely. [12 June 1974]

Refer to the chapters "Life Task" and "Loneliness" and "Adept and Master". If one's life task in a particular lifetime is to become an Adept, then one will likely pull so far ahead of one's companions that one will no longer have companions that can foster and facilitate their path as typically happens in spiritual groups; Adepts-to-be will be drawn by higher sources.

Joan: But the work isn't in his [my husband] Essence. Comment, please.

The way that this man approaches these tasks is very much in Essence for him. Also, the need to pursue whatever he chooses in a solitary fashion is very strong in this man. He bristles when others interfere.

Joan: How would this mean restructuring my life?

There may be in the beginning more hours alone than now and this would be time to pursue the paths in your own way. Also, time to structure the relationships with others on the same path. [16 June 1974]

Here again we see that one must find one's own balance between finding one's own way on a path and making alliances with others on the same path.

... The group high that is experienced by the student is, oddly enough, an excellent stepping-stone. This is why this Entity emphasizes group Work rather than solitary struggle.... [30 September 1977]

Groups should help to prevent individuals from going astray, 'off the deep end' as it were, but the shared energy should also enhance consciousness.

Most painters and sculptors are, however, Artisans. This solitary form of creative expression just does not appeal to the more verbal Roles. [01 October 1977]

Isolation per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

This section is a product of a search of the original Michaelian group transcriptions for the word "isolation". This adds, of course, somewhat to the Michaelian thoughts on solitude.

Angie: I have been considering moving into a commune and I would like to know if it is better to live in a commune or to live alone.

[Tomas:] I think that the communal life offers a great deal so long as the goals of the commune are those of continued spiritual growth and they do not conflict with what you know to be true. Living alone offers little and I would not recommend it to anyone. Isolation breeds alienation and alienation breeds suspicion that leads to jealousy, possessiveness, and greed, the three cardinal stumbling blocks on the path to awareness. [24 July 1973]

Refer to chapters "Communal Living", and "Alienation".

Aloneness per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

This section is a product of a search of the original Michaelian group transcriptions for the word "aloneness". This adds, of course, somewhat to the Michaelian thoughts on solitude.

Concluding Comments on Solitude

The function of this chapter is, of course, to remind readers to evaluate their solitude/companionship balance, and seek to optimize it for best results on one's psychotherapeutic and spiritual path. Basically and briefly, occasional solitude is Good Work, whereas the solitary lifestyle is Bad Work. Perhaps we could apply Positive and Negative Poles to the word, as in +Solitude vs -Solitary.

Concept invented by Carl Jung: Introverts vs extroverts, determines preference for and comfort with





SOUL

If we ask the typical Michaelian student for a definition of the word “soul,” a passage from the first published book about the Michaelian teachings, *Messages from Michael*, might come to mind:

... your soul, that part of you which is immortal and eternal. [MFM, p. 97]

Beyond that, *Messages from Michael*, and the original Michaelian group transcriptions have a great deal to say about the soul. The function and purpose of this chapter is to gather the mentions of the word in the original Michaelian group transcriptions, and then to analyze and synthesize the information into a comprehensive description and a thorough understanding.

Self, self

Definition of Soul

In many religious, philosophical, and mythological traditions, the soul is the incorporeal essence of a living being. Soul or psyche (Ancient Greek: ψυχή *psychḗ*, of ψύχειν *psýkhein*, “to breathe”, cf. Latin ‘*anima*’) comprises the mental abilities of a living being: reason, character, feeling, consciousness, qualia, memory, perception, thinking, etc. Depending on the philosophical system, a soul can either be mortal or immortal.

Greek philosophers, such as Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle, understood that the soul (ψυχή *psychḗ*) must have a logical faculty, the exercise of which was the most divine of human actions. At his defense trial, Socrates even summarized his teachings as nothing other than an exhortation for his fellow Athenians to excel in matters of the psyche since all bodily goods are dependent on such excellence (Apology 30a–b). Aristotle reasoned that a man’s body and soul were his matter and form respectively: the body is a collection of elements and the soul is the essence. Thomas Aquinas took this view into Christianity.

In Judaism and in some Christian denominations, (except for angels) only human beings have immortal souls (although immortality is disputed within Judaism and the concept of immortality may have been influenced by Plato). For example, Thomas Aquinas, borrowing directly from Aristotle’s *On the Soul*, attributed “soul” (*anima*) to all organisms but argued that only human souls are immortal. Other religions (most notably Hinduism and Jainism) believe that all living things from the smallest bacterium to the largest of mammals are the souls themselves (Atman, *jiva*) and have their physical representative (the body) in the world. The actual self is the soul, while the body is only a mechanism to experience the karma of that life. Thus if one sees a tiger then there is a self-conscious identity residing in it (the soul), and a physical representative (the whole body of the tiger, which is observable) in the world. Some teach that even non-biological entities (such as rivers and mountains) possess souls. This belief is called animism. [<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Soul> — retrieved 06 February 2022]

The remainder of the lengthy Wikipedia article on the soul tells us that the concept of the soul has been subject to many different understandings during the history of human religions...

In this *Study Papers* book, we are not so much interested in how miscellaneous people defined the soul; we are interested in how the Michaels defined the soul.

Soul per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

Dick: On death: As far as I'm concerned, the only thing that thinks and lives, goes with death, and I cannot imagine anything going beyond death. You either die slowly with age or illness or rapidly in an accident. When you're eaten by a hungry crocodile, you actually become that crocodile.

Of course, the Personality dreads the discontinuity of physical life, for when the organism dies, yes, that [Personality] dies also, but more of that which is essentially "you" survives beyond the grave. This you will understand more fully when you progress. The layers will gradually peel away to give you a glimpse of that which lives eternally and does not depend upon the organism for expression. Many facets of your life now are coming from that, in Essence. The task is to recognize them and capitalize on them rather than the negative aspects of the Personality. The Personality is judgmental and argumentative. The Personality bases its actions on the cultural mores in which it moves. The soul or Essence does none of these and feels the freedom. Perception is purposely blurred by the Personality, for it could not survive if the Essence took command. But the Essence perceives on its own and the lessons learned by the soul are sometimes quite different than what you would suspect by recounting your "conscious" experience. As Dick, the soul sees beyond the brain barriers set up by the organism in order to cushion the Shocks. In other words, the reward would not seem great enough for the organism to continue with the absurdity. You have begun to peel the layers away, and so we would say that you, Dick, are perceiving far more than you give yourself credit for. The pain the body endures while being munched upon by a crocodile is seconds only compared to the Cycle of the soul.

Dick: The soul is another guy who calls himself "Dick." If I am asleep and Michael talks to me, I do not hear him.

The Personality has an extremely limited capacity for experiencing positivity. Whenever you experience unsolicited pleasure, you are experiencing it from Essence. This is why the extinguishment of negativity is so vital to spiritual growth. If you have not guessed this yet, the Personality is the Negative Pole of a Monad [and Essence is the Positive Pole].

Dick: Going through life without love is ridiculous, yet this is what most people do. Love only interferes with survival.

Also, it interferes with the Personality's task, which is survival.

The thought process is good, but the semantics bother us. For when we speak of an Entity, which has been many more than just Dick. The "machine," if you will, is Dick this time, at least. The soul of that Fragment is not the true Dick, but [is] the true Essence of the Fragment that is now Dick.

Edgar: The soul is more than Dick alone. Is it more an angel or what?

Not with any creative process, but yes, with a greater spiritual existence than is trapped in the body.

Could you clarify this?

It is just a matter of pure semantics. The true Dick is "merely that which you see before you." In other words, the Personality living in that body. This true Dick is separate and apart now, but does not have to be. But to say that is the true Dick does not do this Essence justice, for it [the soul] has also been the true Pierre, the true Jackie, the true Martin, the true Amelia and many others.

Edgar: Is the soul within the body? If the soul is a mirror, then it's outside.

"Outside" is a relative term and is only applicable on the Physical Plane. The soul experiences in more than three dimensions, therefore, is outside partially of the three-dimensional physical space. We would prefer that you think of this [soul] in terms of enveloping [the physical body] rather than outside of [it].

Dick: I have this "other guy" theory of the soul ...

That is valid. You brought to this interval a wealth of experience and knowledge that is yours to tap at will. The tapping is up to you, but it is yours if you wish it.

Jim: Is this intuitive knowledge or scientific knowledge or both?

Both.

Dick: I discovered in the OOB [out-of-the-body] weekend [with Robert Monroe] that I was asleep. If Michael talked to me, I do not remember.

Edgar: I had a twilight dream when I was half awake and half asleep. I actually heard someone taking a bath in a pail of water in my living room saying, "This disease — I just can't get rid of it." Then he shuffled down the hall dragging his feet, muttering, "I can't get rid of it." I actually asked him, "What's the matter with you?" and I woke up and realized I recognized him as me.

That which you call "twilight" is, of course, the threshold to Astral projection. Of course, it was you, the Essence of you. The Personality still wishes to compare affliction to evil and thus the washing away that you perceive is splendidly symbolic. Given your religious training, ironically, this could work.

Does the Essence see?

The Personality, often when perceiving the Essence, sees it as evil. This should come as no surprise to you. The Essence is not bound down by any cultural moral code and its perception of the good is quite different. Often, the Personality reels in repugnance from the soul.

Edgar: Religious training ... this could work ... what does he [Michael] mean?

Dick: If you had a choice, Edgar, between physical and religious healing, what would you choose?

Yes, you are quite right, Dick. Some structural defects are unrepairable, but the spiritual healing is far more lasting than the temporary physical one. The affliction that this man has can be made far more livable than in the past and the destruction halted at this point in the man Edgar. The feelings of self-pity are gradually fading into the background, allowing the maximum healing to proceed.

Edgar: I suppose it is ego that wants to be healed physically. If we could learn how Michael operates, we could make a big jump. What good was it for Lazarus to be raised from the dead unless he learned what was behind all this? Why bother? [17 March 1974]

Concluding Comments on Soul

It would have been convenient if the Michaels had used the word “soul” more definitively, but such was not the case. One definition was “that which survives the death of the physical body”. That might seem to include everything between the physical body and the Tao. I prefer to narrow “soul” down to the Etheric body: the piece of the Fragment that has its consciousness on the upper levels of the Physical Plane.





⑦ SOUL AGE

Refer to the section on Soul Age in Part Two, Chapter 2A, “Revelation of the Overleaves”, of my book *A History of the Overleaf Chart* for the record of the revelation of this Overleaf category. **[[Either keep this reference or quote that chapter (with modifications), which is lengthy.]]**





SPIRITUALITY

This chapter is the product of a search for the word “spirituality” and its derivatives in the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group channeling sessions. This word does not represent a significant component of the Michaelian teachings. However, there are good reasons to discuss the subject in this *Study Papers* book: 1) the subject came up numerous times during the original Michaelian group; 2) students can presumably benefit from having the mentions conveniently collected and commented all in one place; 3) some interesting things were said about the subject; 4) the subject is related to a number of other components of the Michaelian teachings that are considered to be significant; 5) Spirituality issues are pervasive in human psychology and sociology and experience in general.

The word “**template**” is not capitalized in this chapter or other chapters of this *Study Papers* book because it has no special meaning in the Michaelian teachings; it is not a Michaelian jargon word that needs a definition apart from its use in the common vernacular.

This chapter is one of many in this book that focuses on a psychological component of the Michaelian teachings as found in original Michaelian group transcriptions, rather than on a spiritual component, as so many other chapters in this book do. Psychological components of the Michaelian teachings are usually either a ‘virtue’ to be cultivated or a ‘vice’ to be mitigated; both are amenable to psychotherapy. Obviously, **template is a vice / virtue**. The Michaelian version of psychology is not to be confused with the pop psychology of the self-improvement movement, those that do not have a spiritual core or perspective. Rather, the Michaelian psychotherapeutic path (aimed at improving psychological health) is a beneficial precursor to the spiritual path (aimed at improving soul health). To skip the former but attempt the latter is referred to as “spiritual bypassing”. This is discussed at length on various websites, including https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spiritual_bypass. To skip mitigating one’s psychological issues and attempt to go straight to enlightenment usually proves to be problematic.

Definition of Spirituality

So what is meant by spirituality? **The online Merriam Webster online dictionary definition is: Wikipedia has an article that provides a definition and a description, as follows:**

Spirituality per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

The following extracts from original Michaelian group transcriptions are Q&A exchanges, where an original Michaelian group member asks a question (or makes a comment), and the Michaels provide an answer. This **is [not] a subject that would benefit by division into subcategories, as some subjects do. These extracts are [not] presented in the chronological order in which they were given, even though this is not a subject where there was a development or evolution of a specific revelation of a facet of the Michaelian teachings, as was often the case with the original Michaelian group.** As is my custom, I usually provide some explanatory comments following the question or answer. Underlined words are my emphasis, to draw attention to what it is that I comment on. Sometimes I embed words or phrases [in brackets] that I believe help to clarify the question or the answer. Numerous study papers related to this chapter are to be found among my comments.

Concluding Comments on Spirituality





√ THE STEM ENTITY

The following Q&A exchange at the beginning of the 14 April 1974 session caught my attention for reasons that will be made clear after the quotation.

We had a discussion as to where we were going next and if people were satisfied with the large meetings. We were started out on a planning octave, headed for an implementation octave and it is seemingly petering out. There are no tasks in our group, and people pop in and pop out. There is a loose commitment of people and we cannot plan on anything. When one tries to present the material to new people, they have their own thing and want to teach their thing and think this is Satan's work because it has to do with reincarnation.

Dick: Is Michael ready to turn us over to the technology and science [STEM] Entity, as Susan is working?

If you wish this, it is available.

To assign tasks on an individual basis requires wholehearted commitment on the part of the one assigned. These tasks are not easy and often appear distasteful at first glance. The lady Susan is now emotionally strong enough to share her tremendous wealth of psychic emotional power with those who desire this special help. The methods have been outlined for you now within the confines of this [Michaelian] teaching [given to the group], but this teaching is of the sort where the implementation must be self-initiated [by individuals, not by assigned tasks]. In the other teaching [Susan's], individual guidance can be obtained through very lengthy sessions with the [STEM] source — with the focus upon one individual, where[as] in this type of teaching [Michael's], the focus is on the group as a whole and abounds in generalities. It is possible, nevertheless, [for the individual] to grow within this [Michaelian] teaching, as it is within the [Gurdjieffian] teaching of the man Robert [Burton], but it means much culling of the material, and concentration on all the work outlined so far. We do have considerable insight into individual needs, but then, so do you all. You discuss it needlessly and reach the same conclusions using terminology we would not choose, but the meaning is the same. The choice is your strongest barrier to success right now — or to be more explicit, your denial of the fact that the choice rests always with you. We have suggested to you all various methods by which others have achieved spiritual growth. This is all that we are employed to do. If and when you make the choice to follow this path, the protection is there.

That exchange prompted me to make the following numbered comments:

1. This session was held less than a year after the original Michaelian group was formed. Only six founding members attended from beginning to end, and they consisted of four Artisans (Dick, Alice, Richard, and Carolyn) and two Scholars (Sarah and Gene). One might reasonably wonder why an Entity (the Michaels), that consisted of Warriors and Kings, would come to the “technology” (Artisan) and “science” (Scholar) Role types rather than appear to a group consisting mostly of the Action Axis Roles, Warrior and King. One possible reason is that the Michaels reside on the Scholar-ish (fourth) level of the Artisan-ish (third) plane, so there was that resonance between senders and receivers.
2. The original Michaelian group started out small and grew to a couple dozen semi-regular attendees by the time of this session. These added transient interlopers were relatives and friends and co-workers and acquaintances of the six founding members who had some general and diverse interests in spirituality. In other words, they did not start out and grow as a group that convened because of a common professional or amateur interest in technology and science. If they had, then perhaps a “technology and science Entity” would have appeared to them.
3. Let's name that technology and science Entity the STEM Entity. If you are unfamiliar with that acronym, that is the Science-Technology-Engineering-Math Entity. Presumably the STEM Entity would consist of mostly Scholars and Artisans, whereas the Michaelian Entity was said to consist of Warriors and Kings (originally, but in Sarah Chambers's channeling in January 1996, a few of the remaining Roles were said to also be present in the Michaelian Entity.)

4. In addition to what I said about the predominance of Scholars and Artisans among the founding members, it would have made sense for a STEM entity to be their source of information for the following reasons. Sarah had a university degree in Astronomy. Alice was a biochemist. Gene and Dick were medical doctors. Dick knew some physicists at the time from the University of California at Berkeley to the west of Walnut Creek, and Lawrence Livermore Laboratories to the east.
5. There was some discussion in the Q&A exchange about how the attendance of miscellaneous non-founding original Michaelian group members diluted the “focus” and “concentration” of the founding members. This is always a problem in any group that grows beyond the founders, to include members who do not share the founders’ vision and commitment.
6. Scholar and Artisan Fragments typically are not as sociable as other combinations of Casting and Role, so they are likely to prefer individual, perhaps even solitary, learning versus the type of group learning that is the subject of the Michael’s answer. (Elsewhere it was said that Scholars are “aloof” and Artisans are “remote”.)
7. As noted above, the Michaels taught from the Scholar-ish (Fourth) level of the Artisan-ish (Third) Plane, so their teaching would naturally have some appeal to geeks and nerds of the STEM persuasion, but, as the Michaels indicated, students who prefer individual study such as Scholar/Artisan Michaelian students need to do “much culling” of the Michaelian teachings if they want to tailor it to their narrow preferences. It seems to me that I, a Scholar-Cast Artisan, have done that with my Meta-Michaelian project.
8. It was said that Susan was working with a STEM entity. A relative of one of the founding members, she only attended a few times. Susan was said to be a Priest, so it is a bit surprising to me that she was said to be working with a STEM Entity. Later that year (1974) she left the original Michaelian group. In 1980 she founded and incorporated another professional organization that is still active at the time of this writing (2024). Looking at her website and the books that she has written, it appears that the message is Priest-ish and Server-ish — the Inspiration Axis — rather than the Action Axis where the Michaels primarily exist and function, or the technology and science axis where presumably a STEM Entity would exist and function.
9. One wonders if the original Michaelian group had trimmed the attendee list and gone over to the STEM Entity, would they have lasted longer than they did, which was to collapse down almost to the original members less than a year after this session. Sarah has said that one of the reasons for the collapse was that she was wearied by the scattered energies from the non-serious attendees.
10. Personally, from the beginning of my acquaintance with the Michaelian teachings beginning in 1981, I have wondered why I, a Scholar-Cast Artisan, was drawn to a Warrior-King teacher. The Michaelian teachings is nerdy in that it does have a structured cosmology or conceptual edifice: it is not a rambling discourse full of inspirational platitudes, as many “spiritual” teachings are, particularly those that originate from the Astral (second) Plane, which is an Inspirational Plane.
11. When I had dinner with Sarah and a member of the Yarbro contingent at a restaurant in Santa Fe in 1998, they suggested that I was a member of the science ‘kingdom’ of a particular Sixth Level Old Magnetic King, a physicist named Freeman Dyson. I did not find this implausible. All the more reason for me to prefer a STEM Entity, or at least a STEM teaching.
12. In the session quoted above, the founding original Michaelian group members were given the choice to trim the attendee list down to a group that was “focused” and “concentrated” and lead by a STEM Entity, but they did not do that. What would the original Michaelian group have evolved into had the Michaels turned the group over to the STEM Entity? May I suggest that it would have become a teaching more like what I have reformulated it into, with the help of the Ra Entity (><https://www.lawofone.info/><) which I encountered in 1983, three years after I encountered the Michaelian teachings. The Ra Entity was questioned by a physicist, and he asked many nerdy questions about how the universe works, and a structured cosmology was given to him, and it also happened to answer many questions that I had from the beginning of my encounter with the Michaelian teachings but which I have yet to find answered in the Michaelian teachings after all these decades.
13. The Michael Entity has been a significant catalyst for me in this lifetime, but they are not the final word for me. It may be that my most catalytic muse is a STEM Entity. I have had a fascination with

science, technology, engineering, and math since childhood. So far as I am concerned, the subjects never get old, and they have no boundaries.

14. Different kinds of students, with different Roles, need different kinds of teachers; the “spiritual” path is different for different Role types; “enlightenment” is different for different kinds of people. Refer to the chapter “School Metaphor” for more discussion about the notion of spiritual aspirants searching for and finding their “True Teacher”.





⑧ STEWARD, THE

This is yet another chapter on a word and a concept that was borrowed from the Gurdjieffian teachings. Recall or know that the founding members of the original Michaelian group had previously been members of another group that called itself The Fellowship of Friends, led by an Old King named Robert Burton; refer to the chapter “Gurdjieff, Ouspensky, Collin, Burton” for the whole story. One of the many key concepts in the Gurdjieffian teachings was covered by the word “steward”. This chapter consists of quotations from Gurdjieffian documents on the subject, then a discussion of the appearances of the word “steward” in the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group channeling sessions.

This word does not represent a significant component of the Michaelian teachings. However, there are good reasons to discuss the subject in this *Study Papers* book: 1) the subject came up twice during the original Michaelian group; 2) some interesting things were said about the subject; 3) the subject is related to a number of other components of the Michaelian teachings that are considered to be significant; 4) students can presumably benefit from having the mentions conveniently collected and commented all in one place; 5) stewardship issues are pervasive in human psychology and sociology and spirituality.

The word Steward is capitalized in this chapter and other chapters of this *Study Papers* book because it has a special meaning in the Michaelian teachings; it is a Michaelian jargon word that needs a definition apart from its use in the common vernacular; see next section.

This chapter is one of many in this book that focuses on a psychological component of the Michaelian teachings as found in original Michaelian group transcriptions, rather than on a doctrinal or spiritual component. A psychological component is usually either a positive to be cultivated or a negative to be mitigated. As we will see, the Michaels tell us that stewardship is a positive. The Michaelian version of psychology is not to be confused with the pop psychology of the self-improvement movement, those that do not have a spiritual core or perspective. Rather, the Michaelian psychotherapeutic path (aimed at improving psychological health) is a beneficial precursor to the spiritual path (aimed at improving soul health). To skip the former but attempt the latter is referred to as “spiritual bypassing”. This is discussed at length on various websites, including a Wikipedia web page, >https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spiritual_bypass<. To skip mitigating one’s psychological issues and attempt to go straight to enlightenment usually proves to be problematic.

Steward per Gurdjieff

As indicated above, Steward is a Gurdjieffian term. In *Psychological Commentaries on the Teaching of Gurdjieff and Ouspensky* by Maurice Nicoll, “Master” is the Real “I” — the Real Will; Steward is below Master; Deputy-Steward is below Steward, and the “Many I’s” of personality is listed below Deputy-Steward. Following is a quote from *The Fourth Way: A Record of Talks and Answers to Questions Based on the Teaching of G. I. Gurdjieff*:

Man [the mind of an unenlightened person] is compared to a house full of servants, without master or steward to look after them. So, the servants do what they like; none of them does his own work. The house is in a state of complete chaos, because all the servants try to do someone else’s work which they are not competent to do. The cook works in the stables, the coachman in the kitchen, and so on. The only possibility for things to improve is if a certain number of servants decide to elect one of themselves as a deputy steward and in this way, make him control the other servants.

In Gurdjieff’s teachings, Deputy Steward was a name for “impartial observer.”

From *Discovering Gurdjieff* by Dorothy Philpotts: “Conscience has been called by Mr. Gurdjieff the voice of the Steward. The Steward speaks to us in a quiet voice, which we cannot hear amid the vociferous clamor of the many I’s, each proclaiming some petty interest or desire, or even some idle fancy.”

Steward per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

The following extracts from original Michaelian group transcriptions are Q&A exchanges, where an original Michaelian group member asks a question (or makes a comment), and the Michaels provide an answer. These extracts are presented in the chronological order in which they were given. As is my custom, I often provide some explanatory comments following the question or answer. Underlined words in the Michaels' answers are my emphasis, to draw attention to what it is that I comment on. Sometimes I embed words or phrases [in brackets] that I believe help to clarify the question or the answer.

Dick, who had been a member of Robert Burton's Gurdjieff study group during 1970-1972 before quitting that and starting the original Michaelian group in 1973, was well aware of the notion of Stewardship:

Dick: I've been working on this for years and there seems just no way to get rid of Personality. I think when I'm stoned, I'll be able to do it, but as soon as I become unstoned, I can't. What Gurdjieff says is, it's a step-by-step process in which a Work "I" becomes dominant over the other "I's" in Personality and is always working on this problem. Later, you develop deputy steward and finally the steward that keeps Personality in line — on the straight and narrow. My Work has been such that I cannot verify this. Even if I'm organized, my Personality is still the same dusty way. [06 October 1973]

Refer to the chapter "Work" for a discussion of the notion, also derived from the Gurdjieffian teachings, that it takes intentional disciplined effort to transcend the mere Personality self, the so-called "many I's". Refer to the chapter "Psychedelics" for a discussion of plant medicine as a tool in the Work toolbox. Refer to the chapter "Validation and Verification" for more about another tool that helps one move up the levels in the process of mitigating the Personality.

The Michaels provided their description of the Stewardship state of mind:

Try an exercise if you wish. The next time you are involved in a hostile exchange with someone with incompatible Overleaves, create within [yourself] the quiet space: face this challenge squarely and attempt to acknowledge to that other person, "Thou art God". This does not have to be said aloud, but said [within] enough to become reality. It does not even have to put an end to the hostilities. It is merely acknowledgment that is important. If you are able to achieve this, it will be the Essence that does the achieving. The Overleaves may very well go right on spitting. This is the same principle as the "steward". ... and we are asking that you create a corridor through which your Essence can pass. [12 December 1976]

Therefore it would seem that the Gurdjieffian Steward = the Michaelian Essence; refer to the chapter "Essence and Personality". Refer to the chapter "Serenity, Peace, Tranquility" for more discussion about cultivating that virtue found in the Steward-Essence state of mind.

The following answer ties together a number of concepts related to the notion of the Steward:

There was a great deal of talk at this point about violence, anger, hostility, etc. and ways of dealing with it and moving on to more positive spaces in ourselves.

Ideally, this teaching could provide such an environment where the trust level would give permission to ventilate the anger. But remember that anger is an emotion felt by the ego when its expectations go unfulfilled or even worse, ignored. What should develop within a [spiritual] teaching is the "steward" who can stand aside in each of you and observe the ego ventilating its wrath. But we must realize that only a fraction of self is angry. There is never a time when all the Overleaves are angry or sad or happy. If that ever happened, either enlightenment or disintegration would occur. For instance, Intellectual Center cannot experience anger. [21 March 1977]

Refer to chapters "Anger", "Ego", "Enlightenment", "Expectations", "Higher Self", "Hostility", "Integration and Disintegration", "Self-observation", and "Trust". Some of those chapters advocate for what is called "meta-cognition" in psychological jargon. The basic notion is that, among the many Gurdjieffian "I's" that clamor for attention in the typical human psyche, some are closer to Essence than others are, and one should identify with progressively higher "fractions of self" and disidentify with lower "fractions of self". The Steward-Essence is a higher self that is not caught up in the triumphs and tragedies and ups and downs and ins and outs of the Personality self.

Concluding Comments on Steward

In the Gurdjieffian teachings, there is a hierarchy of levels in the metaphorical 'household' of a human psyche. The so-called 'Steward' was the intermediary between the so-called 'Master' above and the so-called 'Servants' below in the hierarchy. While functioning in mere Personality, one is a 'Servant', perhaps even a slave of its whims. With the help of "Self-observation" and "Self-remembering" (refer to the chapters by those

names), one evolves up the hierarchy from being a 'Servant' through the 'Deputy Steward' to the 'Steward', as an observer of Personality at ever higher levels, and then even further up the hierarchy to the ultimate observer, Essence, the 'Master' level; refer to the chapter "Adept and Master" for more about that.





① STRANGERS

In the chapter “Kindred Souls” there is an extensive discussion of the Michaels’ revelation that Fragments or souls come in groups, somewhat like the fact that human families come in kindred groups. There were said to be so-called “Entities” of about a thousand souls, aka Fragments, and there were said to be so-called “Cadres” that consist of ‘related’ Entities, said to be related because they are “Cast (formed) at the same time”. This chapter “Strangers” gathers information about the Michaels’ advice regarding the advantages of doing one’s spiritual Work with soul family members, those within the Cadre, rather than with so-called Strangers, those who are not soul family members. Because the Michaels’ use of the word Strangers has this special meaning, it is capitalized, as so many other jargon words used within the Michaelian teachings are capitalized so as not to be confused with the usage of the words with the common meaning.

Strangers per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

During the original Michaelian group, the Michaels only revealed the rudiments of the Casting of souls in groups, in Entities and Cadres. Various members of the original Michaelian group were identified as being in the same Entity or in the same Cadre, and relationships between these kindred souls were said to be advantageous. The word “Stranger” was almost never applied to non-kindred souls in the original Michaelian group. The only time this word “stranger” is used in this way in the original Michaelian group is this:

Eugene asked about a woman he had met and felt a strong attraction to: early [Level] Old Artisan in Stagnation?

The Overleaves were pleasantly complementary and there was physical attraction, but you are not Strangers. You have met the lady before [in other lifetimes]. You are correct, though, in that this is not an Essence Twin, nor are there [Karmic] Ribbons. No, [she is not an early Old Artisan,] this lady is a Sixth-Level Mature Scholar. [09 November 1974]

The meager information on kindred souls was greatly expanded in *More Messages from Michael*, particularly in the “Michael Math” chapter. In addition to Entities and Cadres, *MMFM* revealed that there were Cadences consisting of seven Fragments, and seven Cadences formed a so-called “Greater Cadence”.

The meager information about the advantages of intimate relationships with Strangers really only began to appear in the second Michaelian group.

Strangers per the Second Michael Group

As stated in the previous section, during the original Michaelian group, things were said about Entity and Cadre mates getting along better with each other than with non-Entity, non-Cadre mates. However, nothing explicit was said about the advantages of sharing one’s spiritual path with kindred souls. However, in the second Michaelian group, this is stated quite explicitly and with elaboration. During the second Michaelian group, the Michael’s began to emphasize that:

The Work should avoid Strangers ... [29 March 1983]

The meaning of “Work” is discussed in the chapter by that name. Briefly, it refers to the spiritual work of minimizing the influence of Personality and maximizing the influence of Essence in one’s life. There is, of course, a chapter “Essence and Personality”.

Some explanation of this injunction can be found in the book based on channeled information from the second Michaelian group, namely *More Messages from Michael*, where it was said that:

Relationships between members of the same cadre — that is, the group of seven entities cast from the Tao at the same time — are not uncommon, but not necessarily very compelling, for the relationship might be regarded as in-laws or step-relatives, meaning that there is a tie, but it is somewhat removed from the stronger ones of entity, essence [Role], cadence and the two immutable “links” of essence twins and task companions, or the flexible association of configuration members. It is not uncommon for members of the same cadre to

gravitate to one another on a fairly regular basis, and to sense a familiarity from the cadre that makes up for many other obvious differences, such as difference of national origin, sex, age, occupation, social position, and all the other examples of the rule of maya that is the nemesis of life on the physical plane. Cadre ties may occur in all manner of ways, and last however long they last, and to whatever purpose. The negative side of this is that roughly seventy percent of all karmic ribbons occur between members of the same cadre.

It should be apparent that those within the same cadre with the same role in essence and/or the same overleaves would have a stronger sense of fellowship than those who simply share the same cadre casting. Certainly those fragments have the opportunity to achieve recognition on many levels, and to validate their impressions. The more fragments share, the more they are capable of freeing themselves from the rule of maya and the negative poles of their overleaves. That is not to say such actions are required, for even such matters as recognition are chosen, and can be denied if the fragment does not wish to have such contacts impinge upon it. Certainly there are overleaves which tend to make this more likely than others, although we must point out that no overleaves, no matter how negative they may appear, are designed to stop recognition altogether. Recognition is the function of essence, and essence works through the positive poles of the Overleaves. We emphasize this, for it is basic to what we would wish to convey to you.

Members of the same entity have a stronger relationship, not unlike cousins. Just as in families, entity members do not always and automatically “like” each other, and in some cases where past experience or abrading overleaves are present, there can be an active dislike present, even though the entity bond is present. Often entity members will spend much time “in the same class,” in bringing their lessons to bear. There can be much worthwhile growth when members of the same entity set out to accomplish their life tasks together, for that brings the weight of their tie to increase the impetus. As we have said before, task companions are six times out of seven part of the same entity, and that in large part reflects the nature of the entity, which is a similarity of underlying purpose that transcends the demands of the physical plane. [MMFM, pp. 83–84]

With that general overview in mind, we can not turn to the transcriptions of the second Michaelian group which were published by the Center for Michael teachings, Inc., namely *Michael Speaks: The Legacy of Sarah Chambers, Volume 3* There we see, among other things, that there are a couple of types of non-Strangers. With one type, the weaker connection, there have been amicable past lifetimes together:

Yes, [she is] an old friend from the past [lifetimes]. The way you are all connected will become clearer as you work with these interfaces. The Vectors converged and the Work was good for many of you. The Fragment Stephanie is not a Stranger and can hear and understand the Work. This Fragment is in the same Entity that contains Joel. [29 March 1983]

We see that amicable lifetimes often result in subsequent amicable lifetimes, where even more soul-directed Work can be done. We also see that it helps if said “friended” souls are also “kindred” souls — members of the same Entity (or Cadre — see below). Refer to the chapter on Vectors for more information.

We don’t see this as avoidance. We see it rather as a decision to seek the Work in a more serious way. We see in you much turmoil now because of the options and all that we would caution is that you tread carefully and do not waste the Work with Strangers. If progress is to be made, it will be made only with those in the cadre [or Cadre?]. [29 March 1983]

The “Cadre” here spoken of is perhaps the group of seven Entities cast at the same time. Souls in the same Cadre are kindred souls and progress is made most easily when working with kindred souls as stated above. The word “cadre” is also used numerous times in the original Michaelian group and the second Michaelian group to refer to a group of students who are under the leadership of one teacher. During the original Michaelian group and the second Michaelian group, that teacher was the Michaels.

Elizabeth is not a Stranger, but her Work is diverging now and it is best for her if she is allowed to express it. This is not to say that there must be a split, but there must not be coercion on your part to have this Fragment follow your star. This Fragment is a good Student on her own cognizance and is willing to Work. If your paths diverge and you are serious about the Work, then be willing to go where it leads you. [29 March 1983]

Good advice here about following wherever the Work leads you, and your own “star”, not someone else’s.

Another bit of advice from the Michaels is not to disdain or mistrust Strangers. It is not necessarily a waste of time to interact with them in a friendly way just because you do not Recognize them as kindred or friended souls and they are on a different path:

... this Fragment places much trust in Strangers. You, on the other hand, must discover this quality in yourself. But you are wary now of wasting time with those who do not seek the Path, and in this way you complement each other. [10 April 1983]

However, there are *reasons* for avoiding *Work* with Strangers and some of them can be garnered from the following paragraph. For instance: Strangers do not share the same belief system (the Teaching); they are more likely to be working from Personality than from Essence; they are likely to be distracted from spiritual Work by mundane concerns:

The Fragment who is now Hugh could help, yes, but this Fragment does not have the knowledge to do this from the Teaching. This Fragment is not a Stranger to this [musical] cadre, but the negative emotions, which are of the Physical Plane, get in the way of constructive contact. This Fragment is not unaware of the teaching, but is cautious in his approach. He also has many Physical Plane considerations in the way now also, and this is a problem. The Fragment Mstislav places great faith in this Fragment, however, and feels that he is ready to learn and for that reason, spends time working with him on things other than strictly musical. Others can pave the way for you. Allow them to and the contact will be a fruitful one. [10 April 1983]

Add “negative emotions” to Bad Work with Strangers as stuff to avoid in relationships — and in one’s self, of course. Negative emotions and being encumbered with other common Physical Plane affairs, will drag one down. In the *Bible*, there was a commandment: “Do not plow with an ox and an ass together.” To do so was to be “unequally yoked”. It is an ancient principle, endorsed by the Michaels. Don’t let toxic relationships drag you down.

It is not, of course, true that because there are too many [Personality] links here, and those relationships are normally between Strangers, and lead to no [spiritual] growth. Physical relationships between close Fragments are almost never strictly physical. Physical relationships between Essence Twins, next Cast Fragments, Task Companions, [Entity,] and Cadre members are usually accompanied by insights that are unobtainable otherwise. [10 April 1983]

“Physical” relationships might or might not just refer to romantic or marital relationships; it might also refer to any physically close relationship, such as friendships including the “platonic” kind, business partnerships, and club or church memberships involved in Good Work as a team. In Joel’s case, the close physical relationship with others was membership in a musical orchestra. Before getting intimately entangled with someone, one should also consider the level of comfort and discomfort with compatible and incompatible Body Types; this is discussed elsewhere in the Michaelian teachings. One might also extrapolate from this word “physical” to include the ‘aura’ or ‘energy’ of other people, which a sensitive person can sense when in physical proximity.

Simply stated, one can learn from both Stranger and non-Stranger relationships, but the Path is more productive with non-Strangers than with Strangers:

No time spent in a relationship with another Fragment who is not a Stranger is time wasted. Time spent with Strangers is counterproductive, but sometimes necessary. But other interpersonal relationships, whether or not they end in disaster, teach valuable lessons in that they carry over into the future. [30 May 1983]

Elsewhere in the Michaelian teachings, it is said that nothing is wasted. Of course, some things are more productive than others and some things are more productive in a positive way than others. One can learn and make progress from negative experiences, but there are better ways to grow. If one has a choice, avoid entanglements with Strangers, and where time spent with strangers is necessary, make the best of it, or at least minimize the unproductiveness of it.

Beware of beguiling Strangers though; they interfere with the Work. Elizabeth should also beware of too much from Strangers. They are not involved in the Work and will only serve to distract. You are good Students. You should have no trouble distinguishing them. Sharon also should be wary of Strangers from now on. The Work will become more clear. Elizabeth should be at home in the old city also, for there are memories there for her also, and she will perhaps see the direction here the Teaching could take there. [30 May 1983]

As stated above and below, the geographical location one places oneself in affects contact with Strangers and non-Strangers:

You have no Sequence here. If you pursue it, you will be with Strangers. [30 May 1983]

It is in organizations or groups that gather for a common goal and that spend a lot of time together, that it is most important to deal with non-Strangers:

This could be, of course, a suitable vehicle for the expression of this [musical] cadre's purpose, yes, but the selection must be undertaken with much care that Strangers are not accepted in the way, as they would only create underlying tension and get in the way of the expression. You have only to look at the present configuration of the symphony group to understand what we mean. This is typical of what we mean. It is a personality cult, what the Fragment Kurt Vonnegut once called a "granfalloon". For the want of a better word, we will keep that one: a grouping that has no spiritual purpose, such as the Oakland Symphony, the Rotary Club, or the Republican Party. These groupings contain too many Strangers to ever come together in the Work. If you are to form a group to do the Work, then you must take care that there are no Strangers to you. In that group then, it is possible for the grouping to become a vehicle for the Work. The Fragment Eugene [sic] is of course a member of this cadre and is not the Stranger of whom we speak. [10 January 1984]

Besides the bonds of Casting as kindred souls — within the same Cadre — there are also bonds of friended souls, who might or might not be kindred souls. These are Fragments who are not Strangers on account of past life associations of a positive nature:

This Fragment is no Stranger to you, and there was Recognition on many levels. There are no Agreements here at the moment, but it would not be difficult to make one, for you and this Fragment have been close relatives in the past: Uncle and nephew — last life; not the immediate past, but in the Nineteenth Century. [03 January 1984]

A lot of this information about not Working with Strangers boils down to what can be called "the efficiency of the transactions." That is, all of one's endeavors flow much more gracefully and effectively — not just in the Work — if one gravitates toward kindred and friended souls and away from Strangers:

This Fragment, although not a complete Stranger, is not of particularly close ties, and even then, on many levels, you realized this. We do not recommend that Students abruptly dismiss Strangers, just that they do not waste their time in entanglements. [03 January 1983]

The key word and new concept in this chapter about Strangers is "entanglements". These are not explicitly defined in these passages; some obvious examples are marriage and business and church — anything where legal, economic, and belief/value binding factors come into play. Such entanglements are potentially distracting and/or dangerous. It requires the expenditure of psychological energy to relate effectively with Strangers and this gets tiresome after a while. Better to find non-Strangers and benefit from their company. In fact, "entanglement" — in the positive sense with kindred souls — is the trend of older souls, both on the Physical Plane and higher Planes.

There are Strangers involved here and Students must avoid using Strangers in Bad Work. The Strangers here involved are Younger Souls and do not understand. [Undated session]

"Bad Work" is of course the opposite of "Good Work"; refer to the chapter "Good Work — Bad Work". One must understand that in the Michaelian teachings, all choices are considered to be "valid". Some choices are preferable to others for a variety of reasons that we will not go into here. For older Souls, it is unlikely that younger souls would not be Strangers. For older souls to remain "disentangled" from younger souls is, of course, not the same as shunning them or disparaging them or disrespecting them or dismissing them.

The most extreme form of entanglement with a Stranger (or non-Stranger for that matter), is Karma:

The Fragment who is now Bernard wishes to hide from this, and the Fragment who is now Sarah should guard against incurring karma with a Stranger. The Fragment who is now Maxim understands that he experienced something in the presence of the Fragments who are now Sarah and Gary. Again, the student must guard against Karmic Ribbons with a Stranger. [Undated session]

Elsewhere, it is said that earning and burning Karma is not a waste of time. However, it is the most unpleasant way to learn a lesson. Elsewhere, it is said that younger souls are much more likely to be involved in Bad Work, including Karma, so it is understandable that for older souls to become entangled with them could lead to Bad Work. It is all about how one learns what needs to be learned during incarnation:

The Fragment who is now Joel can profit from all of this, but he too must tread carefully. The Fragment who is now Mstislav would be willing, and what he would learn would not be all musical. But here, too, there are Strangers. [Undated session]

It is always good advice to tread carefully through life when dealing with other people — Strangers or not. Kindred and friended souls who share ones values and beliefs are the easiest to get along with, and the most likely to be forgiving of missteps if one does not tread carefully enough.

The Priest has been Sarah's son also [in a past life], and these two will not forget. There was a Stranger here too in this life and there are ties [entanglements?] that are of the Physical Plane. But this is an Old Soul and the Recognition was there; will be there again. Again, the Student must guard against the use of a pawn against Strangers. [Undated session]

The principle here regarding Strangers is that if there are not soul connections in the supernatural realm to facilitate the interactions, then it is distracting to form body connections in the natural realm.

There is work here to be done that is not of the Physical Plane. Two of these Fragments have Agreements for Monads. This life could be pivotal for them. The seeds have been planted; now they must be nurtured. The Fragment who is now Bernard should not be involved in this by other Students.... The Fragment who is now Gennadi is not involved. Here again, there are Strangers. Do not look for connections where none exist. The Fragment who is now Joel has never met him [in some other life], and neither has the Fragment who is now Sarah. The Fragment who is now Elena is not involved. Again, do not search for false connections. [Undated session]

One type of kindred or friended souls is called "Configurations" in the Michaelian teachings. This word did not appear in the original Michaelian group transcriptions, but it was described in *More Messages from Michael*. For instance, there are Configurations of four (Quadrante) and six (Sextant) in number, that Agree to work together over several lifetimes to accomplish specific tasks. Whatever Work is accomplished in a Configuration is Good Work:

It fragments the Work of course [to not be able to locate all members of a Configuration]. This happens frequently in lives where Fragments pursue divergent lifestyles. In the case of very large Configurations or multiple Configurations, it is even more difficult for all of the Fragments to pull together. In the case of multiple Configurations, it rarely happens before the Old Soul Cycle, and then it is still difficult. In the case of Quadrates, since the psychic goals are often similar or the same even though the Fragments pursue very different life courses, the psychic [soul] bonds pull them together. In case of multiple or very large Configurations, there are quite often divergent psychic [soul] goals to deal with in addition to the divergent life goals, and it is hard to find common ground. In many cases, it only looks as though the life goals and psychic goals are different because the Personalities are different or the cultural backgrounds are vastly different. But where Fragments meet on deeper levels, both [psychic and life goals] are found to be the same. When we speak of Essence Twins who manage to bridge the enormous gulf between cultures, this is why they are able to do it without emotional devastation. Even in case of Task Companions and close Entity Fragments, vast cultural difference and social barriers can be bridged if the psychic and life goals are similar or the same. No matter how well intentioned Fragments are, these [are] barriers that cannot be bridged if the [goal] factors are negative. [18 September 1982]

Beyond the above extracts from the transcriptions of the second Michaelian group, the closest I could come to this concept in the Yarbro books is this passage:

Where the past associations or bonds, ties and the like are present, the "door" for essence contact can more easily be opened than with a "comparative stranger," but that is not to say that therefore essence contact "ought" to be limited to "safer" fragments. Putting limitations on the possibilities of essence contact serves to lessen the chance of achieving it and defeats its "purpose" as well, which is to free the fragment from the shackles of fear. [*Michael's People* (1988), page 119]





STRUGGLE

This chapter is the product of a search for the word struggle and its derivatives and synonyms in the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group channeling sessions. This word does not represent a significant component of the Michaelian teachings. However, there are good reasons to discuss the subject in this *Study Papers* book: 1) the subject came up numerous times during the original Michaelian group; 2) some interesting things were said about the subject; 3) the subject is related to a number of other components of the Michaelian teachings that are considered to be significant; 4) students can presumably benefit from having the mentions conveniently collected and commented all in one place; 5) struggle seems unavoidable; it is pervasive in human psychology and sociology and spirituality — subjects covered extensively in this book — so it behooves us to have a working knowledge of it.

The word struggle is not capitalized in this chapter or other chapters of this *Study Papers* book because it has no special meaning in the Michaelian teachings; it is not a Michaelian jargon word that needs a definition apart from its use in the common vernacular.

This chapter is one of many in this book that focuses on a psychological component of the Michaelian teachings, rather than on a spiritual component. Psychological components of the Michaelian teachings are usually either a positive to be cultivated or a negative to be mitigated. // Obviously, _____ is a negative to be eschewed / positive to be cultivated. // The Michaelian version of psychology is not to be confused with the popular psychology of the self-improvement movement, those that do not have a spiritual core or perspective. Rather, the Michaelian psychotherapeutic path (aimed at improving psychological health) is a beneficial precursor to the spiritual path (aimed at improving soul health). To skip the former but attempt the latter is referred to as “spiritual bypassing”. This is discussed at length on such websites as https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spiritual_bypass. To skip mitigating one’s psychological issues and attempt to go straight to enlightenment usually proves to be problematic. ?

Search for synonyms “effort”, “force”

In the next section, you will see that the Michaels use the word with both a negative and positive connotation. ?

All of the following mentions of struggle can be explained and expounded in terms of the Monadic Principle, where opposite are engaged in an interaction that seeks to get resolved. Outside the Michaelian teachings, this is known as dialecticism. It might surprise the reader that this is a richer and deeper subject than they expect.

Definition of Struggle

So what is meant by [template](#)? The online Merriam Webster online dictionary definition is:

My usual go-to source for definitions and descriptions and explanations, Wikipedia, says this (underlined words are my emphasis):

Struggle per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

The following extracts from original Michaelian group transcriptions are Q&A exchanges, where an original Michaelian group member asks a question (or makes a comment), and the Michaels provide an answer. **This is a subject that benefits by division into subsections. These extracts are presented in the chronological order in which they were given.** As is my custom, I usually provide some explanatory comments following the question or answer. Underlined words are my emphasis, to draw attention to what it is that I comment on. Sometimes I embed words or phrases [in brackets] that I believe help to clarify the question or the answer. Numerous study papers related to this chapter are to be found among my comments.

Kathryn: I would like to be more in touch with that part of me that "knows the score."

Meditation would help. That part of you realizes the intense internal struggle. It is almost like war right now. The False Personality senses that it is losing and will continue to fight. [08 September 1973]

Kathryn graduated from high school in 1970, so she was in her early twenties at the time of her question. As usual for that age, she was trying to find out who she really was while trying to find her way in the world. Struggle is not just about other people or life in general; it is also about the warring factions within oneself. All of that struggle is between True Personality or Essence and False Personality. Much of modern psychotherapy is about resolving inner struggles; much of A psychological component of the Michaelian teachings is about resolving inner struggles. Resolving them is a necessary step on the spiritual path from the human condition to the soul condition.

Depression is the external manifestation of the internal struggle. [02 October 1973]

There is more than one cause of depression: situational depression often happens when life takes a serious turn for the worse and one cannot see a way through the problems; biochemical depression often accompanies an organic mental or physical disease; psychological depressions often accompanies an internal struggle.

The previous two mentions of struggle were about 'internal' struggle; this one is about 'upward' struggle:

Ray: I appreciate and am aware of an upward struggle of the past year or so. I'd like to ask about the path that I'm on.

It is positive. [23 October 1973]

Presumably there is also such a thing as a 'downward' struggle, as might be the case where an otherworldly person lives too much in their imagination, or flight of fancy, or abstract realm, or 'ivory tower', and it would benefit them to be more 'grounded' and therefore balanced. I do not get the feeling that such was ever the case with original Michaelian group members.

There is also an 'external' struggle:

Many poverty-stricken Young Souls have achieved wondrous things through shear struggle. [22 November 1973]

It is a well-known psychological phenomenon that adversity often provides the impetus for significant later success. In other words, some people are geared to 'turn lemons into lemonade'. Young souls are typically focused on outer success, so that is a case of external struggle rather than internal struggle.

Or perhaps that could be characterized as a 'forward' struggle; presumably there is such a thing as a 'backward' struggle, where a person went too far 'out on a limb', or was too aggressive in some way and now it behooves them to backtrack if they are to regain balance and moderation.

In terms of dimensionality, the struggle for a Priest is metaphorically 'upward' and the struggle of a King is metaphorically 'forward', but the two can clash, as religion and politics often do:

Cheryl: Where does the conflict between [my sister] Kathryn and me originate?

This conflict is only in part Karmic. It mostly stems from the race for power between two strong, exalted Roled [Young Priest and Old King] souls who live under the same roof. Someone must emerge victorious, and in this case both are determined very strong souls. The struggle for supremacy has been the hallmark of the relationship. So far, both understand that the power can be theirs. Kathryn, at a deeper level, knows that she is to lead. Cheryl, also.

Alice [their mother]: Does that mean that "Cheryl knows that Kathryn will lead?"

Cheryl [the Priest] will lead in the spiritual sense. [Their father] Dick is correct in saying that this is an ancient struggle. Compare the struggle between the chief [King] and the medicine man [Priest].

Cheryl: Can it be resolved in this life?

There have been historical instances of resolution. The way is not easy and in many others resulted in even more strained relations initially, but it can be resolved by recognizing the source of the conflict and capitalizing on some of the positive factors as a bridge across the deep water. The struggle between [Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin] Disraeli and [Queen] Victoria [of England] was resolved in this manner.

Dick: Was there a prior conflict?

Yes, there was. This time it was in Essence [life role matched Role]. Kathryn was a general and Cheryl a priest. Cheryl was bishop of Cologne. This was during the French Revolution. [16 December 1973]

Refer to the chapter "Overleaves — Interactions" for more war stories.

There are other battle lines between Overleaves, and there are other battle grounds between lifetimes:

Marina: What have been her Goals in the past [lives]?

This lady has made a magnificent struggle, bringing herself from Rejection to Acceptance. [17 January 1974]

Previously I made allusion to polarities in metaphorical 'dimensions' of struggle: inner versus outer, upward versus downward, forward versus downward; those are Monadic struggles. Another type of "Monad" (refer to the chapter by that name) is found in the structure of the Overleaf System. Rejection and Acceptance are the Ordinal and Cardinal Goals on the Expression Axis. Over the course of the story arc of reincarnational lifetimes, one of the processes is to experience both Axes of all of the Overleaves, so that one ends up a well-balanced soul. Perhaps that is why the Michaels referred to this as a "magnificent" struggle.

Let's shift gears to a different type of struggle

We wish for you the opportunity to propagate the Logos. How you do it should be as comfortable as possible, so that you can devote yourself best to growth and not to struggle. [22 January 1974]

If you find yourself in a mindset of struggle in terms of your spiritual path, then you are likely doing it wrong; refer to the chapters "Reward, Gratification, Satisfaction" and "Fun, Humor, Laughter, Levity, Play"

The following Q&A exchange was about the difficulties the original Michaelian group was having with respect to starting to live communally:

Dick: It seems as though we may become involved in politics in a new town like that.

If you were much larger and stronger, we would recommend and push private church as the purchase.

However, we do not now feel that the struggle would be beneficial for this group. We felt in the beginning that perhaps you could carry this. We do not feel from the majority of you the willingness to scrape this together from scratch. This is why we have brought you in touch with this alternative. [06 February 1974]

A certain amount of struggle can be beneficial, but if you find yourself in a mindset of intense struggle in terms of your physical path, then you are likely doing it wrong. Connecting this to the previous statement about spiritual struggle, there is another Monad: the physical versus spiritual monad; the balanced approach to life in general is to not go overboard either way; refer to the chapter "Moderation". Also, ask yourself what is the cost/benefit and risk/reward ratio of whatever you do. After calculating that evaluation, if there is too much struggle involved, then that means it is not worth it. Presumably, the universe will go along with your plans if they are in alignment with you true self and/or your higher self and/or for the greater good, but if not, then forcing the situation will have negative consequences, because the universe will 'kick back' on you in its goal of equilibrium.

In Search of the Miraculous [Ouspensky's book] is valuable mostly in that it points to the diligence with which some souls search, and one man's struggle to unite with a teaching. [08 February 1974]

Refer to the chapter "Search, Seek, Quest, Find". There is a certain class of people who are not satisfied with whatever explanation for life, the universe, and everything was told to them during their youth, so they become "seekers". In that case, the future self is in a struggle with the past self — this is yet another type of Monad that wants to be reconciled.

Can Michael name the town?

We would prefer the lady struggle with this herself. [13 February 1974]

This is one of many instances where the Michaels encouraged a student to search within themselves for an answer instead of running to the Michaels for an answer; refer to the chapter "Intuition" for many other examples. There is a constant feedback between inner and outer resources that can provide answers to questions' the general trend of the spiritual path is to go from dependence on outer resources to independence with inner resources.

More is said about this inner versus outer struggle in the next mention of the word, this time also in the context of planning to live in a commune:

Cynthia: The Town Planning requires a constant dialogue. You have to earn a place in the Town. One without a sense of community cannot just walk into it. So, there's a need for planning.

Many of those who are in the founding group for this land venture are in search of the Golden Fleece. This does not hang in Oregon [any] more than [it does] in Troy. Of course, they will carry their mixed bag of problems with them. The advantage in a closed community of that sort is the opportunity to live the teaching in a supportive atmosphere and, by example, spill over on to those around you. This is not to say that you will be heard by any of them. Probably not many of them will respond, but those who do, will contribute, and will in

turn aid in your own personal growth process by providing the Photographs. We see only one advantage in this proposed community and that is the environmental one. We suggested it as a means to an end, where you could, through group effort, free hours of time for individual growth. Perhaps you need not involve yourselves at all with those who are in the awareness movement. We would point out to you that this is a valid starting point for those with ambiguous feelings and the need for an elusive "something better". Many accidentally find this "something better" by going through the awareness processes, and others go on to a spiritual growth process such as the one we would see you involve yourselves [in]. Many of you came to this because of the Friction in your lives, seeking a method of handling this and still staying above ground emotionally, and toward this end, some of you have made much progress. The man Gene continues to struggle with this and is now able to see his progress beginning to speed up. The man Jim wishes to do this also, but sees the necessity to change the environment. Similar insights have come to others, but they have chosen to discount these as irrational, mainly because the changes would be immediately painful, and immediate pain is more scary than projected pleasures are worth. [24 February 1974]

Refer to chapter "Friction"; there you will read that Friction is when your inner world gets 'rubbed the wrong way' by something in your outer world. That chapter provides some information on what to do about Friction. Basically and briefly, one should use it as a catalyst for change, either to fix something in yourself or fix something in your world. This process can also be framed as a Monadic reconciliation of opposites.

Concluding Comments on Struggle

"Struggle" is just another name for the Monadic process....





③ STUDY

In a book titled *Study Papers*, it could hardly be more appropriate than to have a chapter that covered the subject of study itself. Furthermore, it should be no surprise to any Michaelian student that the Michaels would recommend that, if their students are serious about their studenthood, they would study what the Michaels teach. This book is one of the ways that I personally fulfill my Michaelian studenthood, and I hope that, if you are at all studious by nature or by nurture, it help you in that endeavor in your own case.

This chapter is the collection of, and commentary on, the word “study” found in the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group. Other related words, such as “student” and “teacher”, are collected and commented on in their own chapter, namely “School”, in this *Study Papers* book. There you will see that the original Michaelian group members regarded themselves as metaphorical ‘students’ in a ‘school’ with a ‘curriculum’ of ‘subjects’ to ‘study’ as part of a ‘teaching’. Near as I can tell, they got this idea from another local metaphysically-oriented ‘school’, namely that of the Gurdjieff teaching, which founding original Michaelian group members had been involved in immediately before breaking off from that ‘school’ and founding their own ‘school’. For an introduction to the general subject of the Gurdjieffian teachings and the involvement of founding original Michaelian group members with it, refer to the chapter “Gurdjieff, Ouspensky, Collin, Burton”.

So, let’s first take a look at the subject of study per the Gurdjieffian teachings, and then we will move on to review what the Michaels had to say on the subject.

Study per Gurdjieff/Ouspensky

Although probably all spiritual movements enjoin the members thereof to study their spiritual teaching as part of leaning to live that teaching, the founding original Michaelian group members probably got the idea of the importance of study from the local Gurdjieff/Ouspensky school where they had been students for a brief time:

The system can be divided into study of the world, [study] on certain new principles, and study of man. The study of the world and study of man include in themselves a kind of special language. We try to use ordinary words, the same words as we use in ordinary conversation, but we attach a slightly different and more precise meaning to them.

Study of the world, study of the universe, is based on the study of some fundamental laws which are not generally known or recognized in science. The two chief laws are the Law of Three and the Law of Seven, which will be explained later. Included in this, and necessary from this point of view, is the principle of scale — a principle which does not enter into ordinary scientific study, or enters very little.

The study of man is closely connected with the idea of the evolution of man, but the evolution of man must be understood in a slightly different way from the ordinary....

Serious study begins in this system with the study of psychology, that is to say with the study of oneself, because psychology cannot be studied as astronomy can, outside oneself. A man has to study himself. When I was told that, I saw at once that we do not have any methods of studying ourselves and already have many wrong ideas about ourselves. So I realized that we must get rid of wrong ideas about ourselves and at the same time find methods for studying ourselves.

Perhaps you realize how difficult it is to define what is meant by psychology? There are so many meanings attached to the same words in different systems that it is difficult to have a general definition. So we begin by defining psychology as *study of oneself*. You have to learn certain methods and principles and, according to these principles and using these methods, you will try to see yourselves from a new point of view. [P.D. Ouspensky, *The Fourth Way*, pp. 2-3]

It will be obvious to any Michaelian student that the Michaelian teachings is like the Gurdjieff/Ouspensky teaching in that it includes the study of the world, the study of principles, and the study of the psychology of humans. In order to make that even more obvious, I offer the following analysis and synthesis of the original Michaelian group session transcriptions on the subject of study.

Study per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

The following extracts from original Michaelian group transcriptions are Q&A exchanges, where an original Michaelian group member asks a question (or makes a comment), and the Michaels provide an answer. As is my custom, I often provide some explanatory comments following the question or answer. Underlined words in the Michaels' answers are my emphasis, to draw attention to what it is that I comment on. Sometimes I embed words or phrases [in brackets] that I believe help to clarify the question or the answer.

Rather than present the mentions of the word “study” in the order in which they are found in the original Michaelian group transcriptions, as I usually do, in this chapter I find it expedient to divide this section into subsections of *why*, *what*, *who*, *how*, *where*, and *when* to study.

Why Study

The first question we need answered is, why study? Appropriately, we get an answer in one of the earliest original Michaelian group session transcriptions that we have in our possession:

[Tomas:] I would like to continue on this subject, perhaps next week if you like. I would like to study and meditate now, in order to bring the beautiful words that are associated with love [to fruition], and learn the correct way, in order to help you understand. [10 July 1973]

(Even astral Fragments, which Tomas was, need to study.) That pretty much sums up the reasons for study: fruition, course correction, understanding, and helping and teaching others. One of the functions of study is to confirm and affirm and inculcate knowledge claims. There are beliefs about what is, and then there is knowledge about what is, and then there is that which “turns knowledge into being” as it says in the chapter “Knowledge”.

The point of study is to really ‘dig into’ a subject, to focus on it, to advance it in your own life at minimum, and to advance the frontier of the subject for others — and the world in general if you are up for that. So many people and so many cultures are frankly intellectually and experientially lazy; their minds and their lives are superficial and shallow. Study serves to mitigate the prevailing muddle-headed, mush-for-brains way of being.

Now that we know *why* it benefits us to study, we might reasonably ask, *what* should we study?

What to Study

As we saw above, the Gurdjieff/Ouspensky teaching had a list of three broad areas of study, and the situation is about the same in the Michaelian teachings. The following is from the second original Michaelian group session that we have in our collection.

Dick: Soleal has come through with so much scientific material. I wonder if this type of scientific material is valuable for one's spiritual growth?

Valuable only in that it [scientific understanding] frees the mind for [spiritual] study.

Dick: Oh, instead of always wondering about things ...

Richard: You get beyond those [scientific] things and then you feel good about continuing [into spiritual matters]. [03 July 1973]

Gaining knowledge and competence in science lays a particular type of foundation for gaining competence in spirituality. My suggestion is that for one to pursue scientific material mitigates the all-too-common human tendency to embrace ignorance, stupidity, and foolishness about the physical world and how it works. The scientific method and the philosophical toolkit have evolved over the last few hundred years to become the best devices in the history of humankind for ‘separating the wheat from the chaff’ of claims about knowledge and understanding in all realms of life. In my opinion, there is even more ignorance, stupidity, and foolishness in the world of metaphysical claims than there is in the world of physical claims, because many people who are attracted to metaphysics are inclined to lack competence in the scientific, philosophical, and academic approach to ‘separating the wheat from the chaff’. The people that I trust the most to pontificate on metaphysical matters have mastered some scientific discipline, and yet they are open to spiritual matters.

Kathryn: For the growth of my own soul, is this a good course of action, to, for instance, study music, which may be in my Essence?

If you do study music, yes. Don't allow yourself to become enmeshed in the rhetoric. You already appreciate this mode of expression. Now it would be Good Work to learn to express yourself in this fashion. Magnificent contributions have been made in this way by essentially non-verbal souls. You have learned the benefits of creative silence. The lecture hall is not for you. If you give the gift of higher expression through music, you will reach many.

Dick: I have a question about which course of action [my daughter] MaryAlice should pursue.

MaryAlice can pursue a course of study in the physical sciences. MaryAlice has a logical mind. MaryAlice could also have a career in music, but from a different place than Kathryn. MaryAlice could direct others. Music is an exacting science, and Artisans who pursue this must learn the rules. She would do this well. [26 August 1973]

From these two Q&A exchange we surmise that, in order to be most efficient and effective, whatever you study should be appropriate for what fulfills and satisfies your Role, your soul, and your Essence. This is deeper than just studying whatever your family or your culture thinks you should study for a profession. In subsequent Michaelian teachings groups, the concept of "True Study" was revealed (along with True Play, True Rest, and True Work). The idea of True Study is to study something that is aligned with your True Personality rather than aligned with your False Personality.

Would studying history be better than relating more to present-day problems?

Recorded history holds the greatest lesson that can be learned, except [for that learned] at the feet of the realized Master. [Mid September 1973] ...many of you have felt the drive to take up the study of history at this late date. [27 February 1974]

Perhaps you have heard the aphorism, apparently formulated by George Santayana: "Those who do not remember the past are condemned to repeat it." This principle applies to individual learning as well as to collective (socio-cultural-political) learning. It is a lot less stressful or traumatic to learn by studying the bad examples set by others down through history; it helps you to not screw up your life by not making the same mistakes they did.

SusanT: Comment on the value of her present work done at the A.R.E. clinic, especially their views of dream interpretation.

Some of the work being done there is extremely valuable.... The dream work is perhaps now their most valuable study. [29 November 1973]

Refer to the chapter "Dreams and Dreaming" for a discussion of that recommended realm of study.

Tina: What is the purpose of learning all these [Overleaf] labels? I dislike labels.

It is only important if you wish to make The Synthesis. We agree, verbal communication is a poor excuse for the sum of communication. However, until one of you break through with telepathy, this will have to do. This study [of the Overleaf System] enables you to have insights to the motivation of certain activities that could conceivably be perceived by you as hostile or undesirable, and prohibit the understanding necessary for Agape to take place. It will also enable you to aid those who seek your counsel. [31 December 1973]

A study of the Overleaf System is foundational to the understanding of the Michaelian teachings, to resolving one's own issues, and to developing Agape toward one's fellow humans. The Michaels referred to their teaching as The Synthesis because it does all that, among other things; refer to the chapter "Synthesis" for a discussion of that.

Studying your total [personality] picture should enable you to see where the persistence is coming from. [17 April 1974]

For you, David, we would suggest first that you study the Overleaves, and look at where you are in them and why you have chosen this task.... There is a tremendous internal battle being waged here, which is why we suggested that he study the Overleaves carefully. [07 December 1974]

Study again the words we gave you in defining the action of the Positive Poles of the Overleaves. [12 December 1976]

So, study yourself — in the light of the Overleaf System, of course.

There is a particular component of yourself that prefers specific kinds of study, namely the Role:

What is Essence challenge?

Spiritual growth, for example. All forms of studious endeavor when undertaken for the sheer joy of the undertaking; some forms of religious pursuit; work that is in Essence [Role]. That is to say, for instance, painting was in Essence for the Old Artisan Raphael and his Essence was not bored. [05 June 1974]

It can be said that each Role is “studying” a particular component of human life, and this is satisfying to the transcendent component of the human experience.

Liz: How can I get in touch with Intellectual Center?

This will be the most difficult for you and for all others in the Centering you are in, as it involves single-minded concentration and application of non-judgmental logic. Reading very studious works has done it for other students. Continuous study will also do it. The determining factor is the boredom factor. As soon as boredom creeps in, the Emotional Center has crept in too. Boredom is simply not intellectually possible. It is a lower emotional function. Most of the time, in fact, it is a function of the Emotional Part of Moving Center. [28 September 1974]

Another discipline for the Intellectual Center is writing books; that has helped my studies tremendously.

Who to Study

In addition to the Michaelian teachings, there are a lot of other spiritual teachings out there in the world that purport to provide good guidance, and that are worthy of study by Michaelian students. The Michaels had some recommendations about which of these performed as advertised.

Dick: Is the Don Juan teaching wrong? How was the wrong thinking done?

The Don Juan teaching is not wrong. The wrong thinking was in the improper use of the teaching, and your body told you it was wrong in protest of that. You must meditate on this, Dick. I cannot help you by giving you all of the answers. The teaching you are studying is not wrong — it was used in the wrong way at that time. [17 July 1973]

Members of the original Michaelian group studied numerous other metaphysical teachings, not just Gurdjieff/Ouspensky, both before and during the original Michaelian group. Several chapters in this book discuss those other teachings, such as Castaneda, Theosophy, Rosicrucianism, Erhard Seminars Training, Monroe, Cayce, Kabbalah, and so on. It is Good Work to study other teachings for comparison and contrast, as a part of fulfilling the Michaels’ injunction to validate what they say.

Ilene: What is a Rosicrucian?

Sarah: It is a society that apparently began in Egypt, at the time of the Pharaohs. It has to do with the occult arts. It is one of the oldest esoteric schools. They study these things, such as Astral projection. [08 September 1973]

Rosicrucianism is discussed in my book *The Synthesis*. It has somewhat in common with the Michaelian teachings, therefore appropriate to compare and contrast with each other if one is interested in studying that sort of thing.

Dick: If I am evolving at all, it is invisible to me, and I’ve been studying Gurdjieff and then Ouspensky, and now this [Michaelian teachings], and the longer I go at this, the less I seem to know. I seem to be evolving backwards.

This is more apparent than real. You are now in touch with *The Synthesis*, and this is not an easy concept. Could you appreciate the beauty of the differential equation if you did not first have understanding of algebra and the linear equation? The more dimensions you explore, the more difficult the exploration becomes. [18 September 1973]

There is a lot of information about the Gurdjieff/Ouspensky teaching as it relates to the Michaelian teachings in this book and my other books, so you may study it there or in the books and websites dedicated to that teaching.

It is true that the more you know the more you know that you don’t know, and this was frustrating to Dick, but we should not let that stop us from pursuing a state of expertise via study. Malcolm Gladwell in *Outliers* said that it takes ten thousand hours to achieve expertise in a skill. This has been somewhat debunked, but the point is that the path to expertise starts with ‘baby steps’ and leads to mastery only after a long period of time and much effort. In terms of the Michaelian teachings, the Michaels named their teaching “The Synthesis”; refer to the chapter “Synthesis” for the complete discussion of that. There you will see that the Michaelian teachings is not shallow or easy; it presents a lot of information for its students to learn. Mere dabbling in the Michaelian teachings — just reading the books and/or the websites — is not real study, and would not arrive at *The Synthesis*.

Dick: I would like to know how to burn Karma.

If you are to purposefully burn Ribbons, you must first know with certainty what has been incurred. This takes study and recall. Otherwise, you will pay your Karmic debts in their natural order. This is why the knowledge of

reincarnation comes in some way to all Old Souls. Prior to that, it is only a matter of chance, such as birth in a country such as India where this is the accepted theology. [22 September 1973]

Recalling past lives is not part of my study, so I have no comment on this passage, other than to say that reincarnation provides an explanation for a lot of things that happen in one's life, and the Michaelian teachings has a lot to say about reincarnation and the ramifications of reincarnation. Therefore, studying the Michaelian teachings and other metaphysical teachings can give one a 'heads up' about dealing with one's karma effectively and efficiently as it shows up in one's life.

Dick: Michael told us to study [ancient Greek philosopher] Epicurus, for a reason that Christ was much influenced by him. The problem I have here is that from what I read about Epicurus, he believed the soul and the body were one and inseparable, and there is no reincarnation.

Not only Epicurus, but also the Michaels recommended the study of some other philosophers; refer to the chapter "Philosophy and Philosophers" for more about that. The situation is that many religions and philosophies said the same thing about a lot of subjects, and the Michaels say some of the same things that the religions and philosophies do. My book *The Synthesis* is all about that. Richard Chambers, in a flier for the Fellowship of Friends, said: "By studying the teachings of many who have traveled the path before us, we learn to validate the Universal Truths and apply them in our lives."

Dick asked for a comment concerning the Course in Miracles.

The only direct comment that we could make is that this study is as effective in its own [way], as are those other courses of study that we have discussed. [03 September 1977]

The *Course in Miracles* was being produced at about the same time as the Michaelian teachings. Some original Michaelian group members found it valuable, second only to the Michaelian teachings. It is Good Work for a spiritual seeker to find a spiritual teaching or teachings that suit them, and study it for all it is worth to them.

When to Study

There is no time like the present:

Dick: Why not wait until you are on the Astral level to study it objectively? Why study while on the subjective, [Physical] life level? If you are dispassionate, you are in no position to do anything.

Alice: We have to experience living while on the Physical Plane, don't we?

That is valid. During the Astral [Plane] interval [between incarnations], the study is retrospective and unchangeable. Here [on the Physical Plane] you have the opportunity to change right up until the last breath is drawn [at the time of death]. [27 February 1974]

Refer to the chapter "School" for more about the function of reincarnation as a metaphorical 'classroom' in which to study and thus to learn. It is true that when you learn the lesson during the astral interval, it makes the next incarnation easier, but when you learn the lesson in the current incarnation via study, it makes that incarnation easier.

Until [a person] realizes that he can break these barriers, he is trapped. We say trapped by Maya, and this is precisely what it amounts to, because he becomes so immersed in life crises that he fails to contemplate even the purpose of his sojourn here until quite late in the [reincarnation] Cycle. Then he must race to make up for lost time. By that time, however, he has usually experienced the greater part of life, and can relax and get down to the real business of study and contemplation that allows him access to the pan-dimensional universe. [22 October 1974]

Evidently there are many souls that do not apply themselves to spiritual studies until near the end of the line. This reminds me of those who 'cram for the finals' rather than pacing their studies during the entire term. For inculcation of the lessons, and to minimize stress and maximize effectiveness, it is better to pace than to race.

How to Study

Unless you apply yourself and focus yourself, study will not do its intended job:

Dick: I would like to ask if [my daughter] Cheryl should be a physician.

Cheryl would make a good healer, if she could be persuaded to acquire the required study habits, and by this I mean really learning and making the synthesis, not just by memorizing the lesson to pass the tests. [26 August 1973]

Cheryl was a Young Soul, an Age less inclined than older souls to acquire and value knowledge and understanding for its own sake. The above is a good description of what one's metaphysical studies should do: they should provide a deep and broad learning of the material, and they should provide a synthesis of various material into a coherent whole. This will not happen unless you value the study and love the study.

All of them [Essenes] took their turn in the fields and in the house, freeing them for serious study. [03 March 1974]

Here I put the emphasis on *serious*; effective and efficient study is not casual. If one is to have time to do study well, it is useful to be unencumbered by chores. Study has consistently been an important component of spiritual groups, especially of the monastic and convent and commune variety, for at least a couple thousand years. Although study can be done verbally, groups typically create sacred texts for students to study; the Essenes left behind the Dead Sea Scrolls. Typically, the study is done in a group setting, not in solitary.

Where to Study

To be most effective, 'study' is best done in a 'school', which often takes place in a communal setting:

Joan: Could Carrie teach in a spiritual school and be in Essence?

She should be more rewarded by the actual setting up of that environment and by seeing the work for those who chose it. Older Souls in this role are adept at the planning out of foolproof environments in which students can study with unimpeded barriers. [21 October 1978]

Refer to the chapter "Communal Living" for more information about that idealized environment for study. The purpose of study in a 'school', whether spiritual or academic, is to accelerate and deepen and broaden the entire learning endeavor.

Adjuncts to Study

Numerous times, study is mentioned as one of a series of practices that facilitate one's psychotherapy and one's spiritual development. The following series of Q&A exchanges comprises the list of those mentions.

This can be accelerated, of course, by those methods we have outlined for the others; that is: meditation, concentration, fasting and study. [15 November 1973]

You will achieve this state — whether you do it this time is up to you. You know how to do it: meditation, concentration, right-thinking, study. [22 November 1973]

Should we go through it all over again, Sue? Meditation, concentration, fasting, study, right-thinking — this is the magic enlightenment formula, like $E = MC^2$. [22 November 1973]

We have given those to you. They are again: meditation, concentration, fasting, and study. [03 March 1974]

... we don't yet have the necessary steps to overcome our Overleaves. We have some keys, such as "experiencing it out", and meditation, fasting, studying, which seem non-directive. [10 May 1974]

We have given them the tools for attainment of this state, which are yes, meditation, concentration, fasting, and study. [20 November 1974]

There is no Leakage of energy in Balanced Man, and all of this energy can be diverted into the [spiritual] Work — whether this be meditation, concentration, or study. [26 November 1974]

It is true that none of you has diligently applied all of the tools we have suggested. For instance, Dick meditates and concentrates, but is disinclined to study; Beverly studies and meditates; Sarah studies. All of you must plunge in and at least try. [15 April 1975]

Refer to the chapters, "Meditation and Concentration" and "Fasting", for more information about those tools. Obviously, for maximum benefits on the spiritual path, all tools should be used; they reinforce each other; they are all tools in a toolbox that one can use to get the job done.

Impediments to Study

There are numerous distractions that often keep one from having the time or energy to study.

Edgar: What is my purpose?

We have told you that a major part of Karma for you this time revolves around searching for truth, in spite of great physical handicap. This is the major part of Karma. There is more. You had to be relatively free of emotional entanglements also, to be free to study. The study is now beginning to reap the necessary reward. This can be a lonely choice, but all souls make it occasionally. [20 December 1973]

Edgar was a Scholar, confined to a wheelchair. Apparently, some souls choose a challenge that makes their pursuit of a goal more difficult, and that makes their achievement of the goal more sweet. A major fulfillment of the Scholar Role is to have a favorite subject to study in any given lifetime. His handicap had its advantages and disadvantages. On the one hand, he did not have to work for a living and support a family, giving him time to study. On the other hand, it is no fun to be handicapped.

Arthur: We sold our house and are moving, having new friends. What direction to move in now?

For you, Arthur, this has been an enormous step. The next one will be when you are able to move with the other students [into a commune], and experience this growing group. Only then, can you fully appreciate its influence on your present trend. Perhaps now that you have given up much Glamour, you can continue to study and apply, and then further steps will be self evident, as they have been with other students. Your progress is so good right now. [08 October 1974]

Refer to the chapter “Glamour” for more information about that impediment to study. This passage is yet another endorsement for mitigating distractions in order to free oneself for study. One of the functions of ‘schools’ that are part of a commune is to mitigate distractions and encumbrances that would interfere with study. Refer to the chapter “Communal Living” for more discussion about that.

This is quite in line with the [spiritual] school that demands that you experience out all of your desires of the Personality, in order to free yourself for study. [09 January 1975]

Effective and efficient study requires focus, a lack of distractions and encumbrances.

Concluding Comments on Study

Several themes run through the quotations above:

- What to study? Yourself; the Overleaf System; science and history; past lives; dreams; whatever satisfies your Overleaves, your Role, and your Essence.
- Who to study? The Michaelian teachings of course, and other spiritual and philosophical teachings.
- How to study? Seriously, focused, in connection with other spiritual practices, free of distractions and encumbrances such as excessive work and unnecessary entanglements.
- When to study? The sooner the better; there is no time like the present.
- Where to study? Preferably with other people who can provide feedback and encouragement, in an intentional school setting, such as a commune.

The topic of this chapter, study, is often found in a list of spiritual practices that the Michaels recommend to their students if they are serious about their spiritual path; those relevant topics have their own chapters, such as “Meditation and Concentration” and “Fasting”. The most relevant other chapter in this *Study Papers* book to this chapter is “School”. There you will see that the Physical Plane reincarnation experience is metaphorically like a school; this is where souls study certain required and elective subjects, in order to ‘graduate’ to other planes of experience. The function of study is also very connected to the process of Validation; refer to the chapter “Validation and Verification” for more on that.

Study as a spiritual practice has not been emphasized in subsequent Michaelian teachings resources. And it may be that most of the so-called Michael “students” have not gravitated toward study.

The following quotation is from Richard Chambers, not the Michaels, taken from a magazine that advertised the Fellowship of Friends, the formal organization incorporated by the original Michaelian group:

The First Line of Work is on oneself, study of self, study of the teaching, and trying to change the most Mechanical behavior. This line of work must begin first. It concerns only yourself (egocentric). You Receive knowledge, ideas, help. [Dimensions! April 1975]

Personally, as a Scholar-Cast Fragment, study comes naturally to me. As an Artisan Role Fragment, the process of writing books facilitates my study enormously: it forces me to think about what I am learning, and writing impels me to craft my wordsmithing carefully and clearly, which inculcates the lessons learned.





SUFFERING AND PAIN

Philosophers and theologians have deeply pondered the so-called “problem of suffering” for millennia. And not just philosophers and theologians, most thoughtful and sensitive people, when they experience or witness suffering, also wonder why it exists in the world: “What good can come from this?”, or, “Is this really worth it on this or any other level?”, or, “Is there a silver lining in this cloud?” The subject came up in the original Michaelian group, of course, and the Michaels had their answer, as we will see.

The following study paper is the result of a word search for suffering, **but also pain, and similar terminology**. There is also a related chapter, on the subject of Evil and Good, which the reader might want to peruse in tandem with this chapter in order to get a broader and clearer picture of what the Michael’s had to say about something that affects us all in one way or another.

Before we look at what the Michaels had to say, let’s take a brief look at what the philosophers and theologians had to say.

The Problem of Suffering

INTRODUCTION

Suffering, or pain in a broad sense, may be an experience of unpleasantness and aversion associated with the perception of harm or threat of harm in an individual. Suffering is the basic element that makes up the negative valence of affective phenomena. The opposite of suffering is pleasure or happiness.

Suffering is often categorized as physical^[3] or mental. It may come in all degrees of intensity, from mild to intolerable. Factors of duration and frequency of occurrence usually compound that of intensity. Attitudes toward suffering may vary widely, in the sufferer or other people, according to how much it is regarded as avoidable or unavoidable, useful or useless, deserved or undeserved.

Suffering occurs in the lives of sentient beings in numerous manners, often dramatically. As a result, many fields of human activity are concerned with some aspects of suffering. These aspects may include the nature of suffering, its processes, its origin and causes, its meaning and significance, its related personal, social, and cultural behaviors,^[5] its remedies, management, and uses.

TERMINOLOGY

The word suffering is sometimes used in the narrow sense of physical pain, but more often it refers to psychological pain, or more often yet it refers to pain in the broad sense, i.e. to any unpleasant feeling, emotion or sensation. The word pain usually refers to physical pain, but it is also a common synonym of suffering. The words pain and suffering are often used both together in different ways. For instance, they may be used as interchangeable synonyms. Or they may be used in 'contradistinction' to one another, as in "pain is physical, suffering is mental", or "pain is inevitable, suffering is optional". Or they may be used to define each other, as in "pain is physical suffering", or "suffering is severe physical or mental pain".

Qualifiers, such as physical, mental, emotional, and psychological, are often used to refer to certain types of pain or suffering. In particular, mental pain (or suffering) may be used in relationship with physical pain (or suffering) for distinguishing between two wide categories of pain or suffering. A first caveat concerning such a distinction is that it uses physical pain in a sense that normally includes not only the 'typical sensory experience of physical pain' but also other unpleasant bodily experiences including air hunger, hunger, vestibular suffering, nausea, sleep deprivation, and itching. A second caveat is that the terms physical or mental should not be taken too literally: physical pain or suffering, as a matter of fact, happens through conscious minds and involves emotional aspects, while mental pain or suffering happens through physical brains and, being an emotion, involves important physiological aspects.

The word unpleasantness, which some people use as a synonym of suffering or pain in the broad sense, may refer to the basic affective dimension of pain (its suffering aspect), usually in contrast with the sensory dimension, as for instance in this sentence: "Pain-unpleasantness is often, though not always, closely linked to both the intensity and unique qualities of the painful sensation." [6] Other current words that have a definition with some similarity to suffering include distress, unhappiness, misery, affliction, woe, ill, discomfort, displeasure, disagreeableness.

PHILOSOPHY

Ancient Greek philosophy

Many of the Hellenistic philosophies addressed suffering.

In Cynicism (philosophy) suffering is alleviated by achieving mental clarity or lucidity (ἀτυφία) (literally "freedom from smoke (τύφος)" which signified false belief, mindlessness, folly, and conceit), developing self-sufficiency (αὐτάρκεια), equanimity, arete, love of humanity, parrhesia, and indifference to the vicissitudes of life (adiaphora ἀδιαφορία).

For Pyrrhonism, suffering comes from dogmas (i.e. beliefs regarding non-evident matters), most particularly beliefs that certain things are either good or bad by nature. Suffering can be removed by developing epoche (suspension of judgment) regarding beliefs, which leads to ataraxia (mental tranquility).

Epicurus (contrary to common misperceptions of his doctrine) advocated that we should first seek to avoid suffering (aponia) and that the greatest pleasure lies in ataraxia, free from the worrisome pursuit or the unwelcome consequences of ephemeral pleasures. Epicureanism's version of Hedonism, as an ethical theory, claims that good and bad consist ultimately in pleasure and pain.

For Stoicism, the greatest good lies in reason and virtue, but the soul best reaches it through a kind of indifference (apatheia) to pleasure and pain: as a consequence, this doctrine has become identified with stern self-control in regard to suffering.

Modern Philosophy

Jeremy Bentham developed hedonistic utilitarianism, a popular doctrine in ethics, politics, and economics. Bentham argued that the right act or policy was that which would cause "the greatest happiness of the greatest number". He suggested a procedure called hedonic or felicific calculus, for determining how much pleasure and pain would result from any action. John Stuart Mill improved and promoted the doctrine of hedonistic utilitarianism. Karl Popper, in *The Open Society and Its Enemies*, proposed a negative utilitarianism, which prioritizes the reduction of suffering over the enhancement of happiness when speaking of utility: "I believe that there is, from the ethical point of view, no symmetry between suffering and happiness, or between pain and pleasure. (...) human suffering makes a direct moral appeal for help, while there is no similar call to increase the happiness of a man who is doing well anyway." David Pearce, for his part, advocates a utilitarianism that aims straightforwardly at the abolition of suffering through the use of biotechnology (see more details below in section Biology, neurology, psychology). Another aspect worthy of mention here is that many utilitarians since Bentham hold that the moral status of a being comes from its ability to feel pleasure and pain: therefore, moral agents should consider not only the interests of human beings but also those of (other) animals. Richard Ryder came to the same conclusion in his concepts of 'speciesism' and 'painism'. Peter Singer's writings, especially the book *Animal Liberation*, represent the leading edge of this kind of utilitarianism for animals as well as for people.

Another doctrine related to the relief of suffering is humanitarianism (see also humanitarian principles, humanitarian aid, and humane society). "Where humanitarian efforts seek a positive addition to the happiness of sentient beings, it is to make the unhappy happy rather than the happy happier. (...) [Humanitarianism] is an ingredient in many social attitudes; in the modern world it has so penetrated into diverse movements (...) that it can hardly be said to exist in itself."

Pessimists hold this world to be mainly bad, or even the worst possible, plagued with, among other things, unbearable and unstoppable suffering. Some identify suffering as the nature of the world and conclude that it would be better if life did not exist at all. Arthur Schopenhauer recommends us to take refuge in things like art, philosophy, loss of the will to live, and tolerance toward 'fellow-sufferers'.

Friedrich Nietzsche, first influenced by Schopenhauer, developed afterward quite another attitude, arguing that the suffering of life is productive, exalting the will to power, despising weak compassion or pity, and recommending us to embrace willfully the 'eternal return' of the greatest sufferings.[citation needed][8]

Philosophy of pain is a philosophical speciality that focuses on physical pain and is, through that, relevant to suffering in general.

RELIGION

Suffering plays an important role in a number of religions, regarding matters such as the following: consolation or relief; moral conduct (do no harm, help the afflicted, show compassion); spiritual advancement through life hardships or through self-imposed trials (mortification of the flesh, penance, asceticism); ultimate destiny (salvation, damnation, hell). Theodicy deals with the problem of evil, which is the difficulty of reconciling the existence of an omnipotent and benevolent god with the existence of evil: a quintessential form of evil, for many people, is extreme suffering, especially in innocent children, or in creatures destined to an eternity of torments.

The 'Four Noble Truths' of Buddhism are about *dukkha*, a term often translated as suffering. They state the nature of suffering, its cause, its cessation, and the way leading to its cessation, the Noble Eightfold Path. Buddhism considers liberation from *dukkha* and the practice of compassion (*karuna*) as basic for leading a holy life and attaining nirvana.

Hinduism holds that suffering follows naturally from personal negative behaviors in one's current life or in a past life (see karma in Hinduism). One must accept suffering as a just consequence and as an opportunity for spiritual progress. Thus the soul or true self, which is eternally free of any suffering, may come to manifest itself in the person, who then achieves liberation (*moksha*). Abstinence from causing pain or harm to other beings, called *ahimsa*, is a central tenet of Hinduism, and even more so of another Indian religion, Jainism....

In Judaism, suffering is often seen as a punishment for sins and a test of a person's faith, like the *Book of Job* illustrates.

For Christianity, redemptive suffering is the belief that human suffering, when accepted and offered up in union with the Passion of Jesus, can remit the just punishment for sins and allow to grow in the love of God, others and oneself.

In Islam, the faithful must endure suffering with hope and faith, not resist or ask why, accept it as Allah's will and submit to it as a test of faith. Allah never asks more than can be endured. One must also work to alleviate the suffering of others, as well as one's own. Suffering is also seen as a blessing. Through that gift, the sufferer remembers God and connects with him. Suffering expunges the sins of human beings and cleanses their soul for the immense reward of the afterlife, and the avoidance of hell.

According to the Bahá'í Faith, all suffering is a brief and temporary manifestation of physical life, whose source is the material aspects of physical existence, and often attachment to them, whereas only joy exists in the spiritual worlds. [<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Suffering> — retrieved 30 October 2021]

There is something positive to be said about all of the above religions, but the Bahá'í Faith perhaps comes closest to the Michaels Teaching perspective.

Is the statement that "Suffering is good for the soul" really true? For people who might not otherwise be very reflective about their lives, suffering might indeed induce them to ask, "Why me? What am I doing that might have caused this suffering that I should not be doing?" If they do not see that they are the cause of their suffering, then some of them might blame "God".

The original Michaelian group members were not philosophers or theologians, so they were not sophisticated about the subtleties of arguments about the reason for suffering, but the subject did come up a few times, and the Michaels did have somewhat to say about it.

Suffering per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

Eugene: I see a purpose evolving in SusanT's group. It has a therapeutic format and takes an upset and the accumulated information. It takes into account Karmic Ribbons from past lives and how this has affected us and others. I would like to hear some feedback on how we are doing.

These specific conflicts are best hashed out in the small groups or preferably alone, using either the techniques presented to the lady SusanT or the alternatives suggested to Richard and Dick.

Comment: An attempt was made to explain primary, secondary and tertiary upsets and how one must go back to the original upset. Those who have been through EST understand this, but were having difficulty explaining it to the rest.

The body does not like pain, obviously, and will erect as swift a barrier as possible between its receptors and the pain. It is sometimes by fainting, sometimes by more subtle denial.

Mallory: Is our interest to deal with pain?

That is valid, as this is the only way that the Essence can experience pain — that is, vicariously. We [Michael] have nothing analogous to physical pain.

Eugene: If you experience out the pain, then you do not have all sorts of (psychological) crap to go through. Instead, you are ready for new experiences if you have experienced the pain at the time it happened.

Mallory: It sounds like the only way would be to cultivate a way to leave the body.

Eugene: You would be running away.

Arthur: I see a parallel to Rolfing. The theory behind that is that Rolfing unlocks the structures of muscles and the tightness caused by emotions and feelings when physical pain has been inflicted.

Mallory: Would you treat the trapped part [of Centering] first? Could treatments be recommended for specific Centers? For example, could I be Rolfed and then go to hypnosis?

This combination could be extremely affective as it would “kill two birds with one stone.” [20 March 1974]

[search for “pain’]





SUICIDE

This chapter is the product of a search for the word “suicide” in the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group channeling sessions, and other words with a similar meaning. This word does not represent a significant component of the Michaelian teachings. However, there are good reasons to discuss the subject in this *Study Papers* book: 1) the subject came up numerous times during the original Michaelian group; 2) students can presumably benefit from having the mentions conveniently collected all in one place; 3) some interesting things were said about the subject; 4) the subject is related to a number of other components of the Michaelian teachings that are considered to be significant; 5) Suicide issues are pervasive in human psychology and sociology and spirituality.

The word “suicide” is not capitalized in this chapter or other chapters of this *Study Papers* book because it has no special meaning in the Michaelian teachings; it is not a Michaelian jargon word that needs a definition apart from its use in the common vernacular.

This chapter is one of many in this book that focuses on a psychological component of the Michaelian teachings as found in original Michaelian group transcriptions, rather than on a spiritual component, as so many other chapters in this book do. The psychological component is usually either a ‘virtue’ to be cultivated or a ‘vice’ to be mitigated; both are amenable to psychotherapy. Obviously, suicide is a vice. The Michaelian version of psychology is not to be confused with the pop psychology of the self-improvement movement, those that do not have a spiritual core or perspective. Rather, the Michaelian psychotherapeutic path (aimed at improving psychological health) is a beneficial precursor to the spiritual path (aimed at improving soul health). To skip the former but attempt the latter is referred to as “spiritual bypassing”. This is discussed at length on various websites, including https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spiritual_bypass. To skip mitigating one’s psychological issues and attempt to go straight to enlightenment usually proves to be problematic.

Definition of Suicide

So what is meant by suicide? Wikipedia has an entry on this subject:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Philosophy_of_suicide

Suicide per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

The following extracts from original Michaelian group transcriptions are Q&A exchanges, where an original Michaelian group member asks a question (or makes a comment), and the Michaels provide an answer. This is not a subject that would benefit by division into subcategories, as some subjects do. These extracts are presented in the chronological order in which they were given, even though this is not a subject where there was a development or evolution of a specific revelation of a facet of the Michaelian teachings, as was often the case with the original Michaelian group. As is my custom, I often provide some explanatory comments following the question or answer. Underlined words in the Michaels’ answers are my emphasis, to draw attention to what it is that I comment on. Sometimes I embed words or phrases [in brackets] that I believe help to clarify the question or the answer.

The first mention of suicide appeared in the first session in which the Michaels were the source:

When I’ve been depressed, I don’t want to die. Oh, it is horrible — the thought is ghastly! When I feel good, absolutely overflowing with life, it doesn’t matter. It is a weird contradiction. You ought to want to hang onto it the most, but just speaking of it now, it felt like if it ends right now, that’s great.

Death is a ghastly experience if you are depressed. You bring all your depression with you. That is why so many suicides must go back and finish that which they abdicated, or no progress can be made. [12 August 1973]

So, the first thing to know about suicide is that it does not actually solve anything. In fact, it just complicates the situation.

A few sessions after that first Michael session, the subject came up again:

Dick: Well, I really didn't know. Tomas has said that "wrong thinking" is the cause of all disease and trouble, so I put my hand on her head, when maybe I should have been trying to treat her Emotional Center. I didn't feel anything in my hand at the time, and also it was strange. In spite of all the troubles — and her eyes were all red — I was still sexually attracted to her. It was a strange mishmash of thought.

Only Emotionally Centered beings suicide. You can only reach them emotionally, of course. Suicide is quite romantic to them; also retaliation. The young lady was sexually aroused by the act [of attempted suicide] itself; you reacted to this. [26 August 1973]

In addition to real-life stories, some fictional stories are predicated on romantic suicide, where a sexual relationship has gone awry. Romanticism from the Emotional Center and sexually from the Moving Center or Higher Moving Center are actually three different phenomenon, but many people mingle them unwittingly and indiscriminately; Refer to the chapters "Emotional Center" and "Sexuality" for the complete discussion, which is not exactly relevant in the context of suicide, except to say that for good mental health one should not get confused about these different functions of the Personality.

Sarah: Apparently, it has to do with altering Karma. We can give you information on altering Karma. We had an incident where, at Asilomar, there was a situation where a girl came knocking at our door, looking for a minister. We didn't think anything about it and when we went back to the [Ouija] board, it told us she was contemplating taking her own life, and we asked if there wasn't anything we could do to help her. The answer was, "No", and that we should not interfere with her Karma, and that if the person had asked us for help, then we should help. Otherwise, do not tamper with suicides. The first part was about altering Karma. There's another comment —

The course you wish to follow would not hold your interest long. Karma must be burned. [08 September 1973]

In addition to that, my suggestions are these: If someone you know well comes to you saying they are contemplating suicide, as if they are asking for help, then you might be able to talk them out of it. It has happened to me, and I said "don't do anything you can't undo when you are in a negative frame of mind", and, "this too shall pass". It worked then, and the person is still alive a decade later. I would not call that illegitimate "tampering" into someone else's inevitable Karma. If the person is a stranger who comes 'knocking at your door', then perhaps you should call the suicide hotline then and there, and leave the situation to a trained professional. If you are in public and a person is about to jump from a high place, for instance, then let the trained professionals handle it' if there is Karma, it will be on them, not on you, according to this channeling

Often times, suicidal thoughts are an indication that something false in the personality must die; it is not an indication that the physical body must die. Unless there is some physical health issue that makes death seem preferable to life, then psychological suicide (killing the mental health issue) is the way to go rather than physical suicide.

Richard: That [Mature Soul Age] is where the suicide rate is the highest. [18 September 1973]

Refer to the chapter "Troubled Souls" for more about that. It may be that Richard (and Sarah) got that information from the Michaels, because they sometime worked the Ouija board together without transcribing it, unfortunately for us.

Billie: I would like to know where my [deceased] twins are living [reincarnated] now.

We would prefer not to [say], for some fairly obvious reasons. There was a necessity for you to experience this grief. The souls that obliged also had the need to finish out a role [Agreement] they cheated on [Abdicated]; both of them suicided previously. They needed only to experience the death [not a full life]. [01 November 1973]

Besides Karma, suicide can be part of an Agreement to play a part in some necessary learning experience. Some suicides are not Karmic or by Agreement; they are the result of mental and/or physical illness, and in those cases it is legitimate to intervene:

Evelyn: What is the Level and Role of my brother?

This was a troubled Fifth Level Mature Priest. (Committed suicide at age 36.)

Dick: Troubled where? Personality or soul?

That is valid [it is both]. This is a conflict between Essence and Personality. It is when the individual Fragment cannot cope with the conflict that the integrative defense mechanism falls apart and allows the ego to disintegrate before there is any strength in Essence, leaving the soul goalless and adrift.

Ray: Is this conflict unresolvable?

It is not unresolvable. With carefully chosen therapy or an understanding guru, the conflict will be resolved. The difficulty lies in the choice of therapies. [15 November 1973]

Here again I note that the “suicide” should be directed at the faulty belief, value, or behavior, not at the body that contains the defective and/or deficient belief, value, or behavior. Sometimes a person can work through this on their own, and sometimes it takes trained professional help.

Edgar: Are these suicidal tendencies repetitive life after life?

No. Sooner or later, the soul learns that suicide is unprofitable. For instance, if a person with terminal cancer suicides and there remained five or six months of life with its attendant lessons, then that soul will experience infant death at a later time. [15 November 1973]

See also:

Alice: Did I ever commit suicide in past lives?

You never suicided. [22 November 1973]

Evidently suicide is not one of those experiences that are required in the curriculum of earth-school.

I see Clarence as a Warrior, Baby Soul. He is full of anger and disappointments of expectations of others. He isn't getting Social Security and seems to be destroying himself. He may die soon. I can't think of anything to do to help him. I also am afraid of him. He is so big and violent. So far, the violence is directed inward.

This man is indeed angry enough to destroy himself, not with suicide, but with bodily dysfunction. He has chosen this for himself and there is nothing to do. There is little chance he will turn the violence outward. He will eat away at himself. He perceives only himself and me, and cannot perceive others at this stage. He will not be helped. Do not overly concern yourself. Help him as you would anyone, but do not become identified because there is nothing you can do. He has chosen. He will pay. He will grow. You cannot assist in that. [20 November 1973]

There are overt suicides, and then there are self-destructive behaviors that lead to a premature death. The latter case is like the former case as far as the recommendation is concerned: don't interfere with other people's choices; wait for them to ask for help, or ask them if they want help, and if they don't want it, don't intervene forcefully.

... lung cancer is not caused by a specific vitamin deficiency — it is merely another form of superior suicide. [30 December 1973]

Refer to the chapter “Health — Physical and Mental” for more discussion of the notion that many illnesses are psychosomatic, meaning, cause by negative thought, emotions, and behaviors. It does not say so here **or other places in this chapter**, but some deaths that are caused by disease other than old age are part of a soul's choice to terminate a life.

Perhaps there is a good reason to exit early...

You were a suicide in Rome, and reincarnated earlier than otherwise. [10 January 1974]

...such as so that you can reincarnate early.

[[Continue search to end.]]

Dick: On death: As far as I'm concerned, the only thing that thinks and lives, goes with death, and I cannot imagine anything going beyond death. You either die slowly with age or illness or rapidly in an accident. When you're eaten by a hungry crocodile, you actually become that crocodile.

Of course, the Personality dreads the discontinuity of physical life, for when the organism dies, yes, that [Personality] dies also, but more of that which is essentially “you” survives beyond the grave. This you will understand more fully when you progress. The layers will gradually peel away to give you a glimpse of that which lives eternally and does not depend upon the organism for expression. Many facets of your life now are

coming from that, in Essence. The task is to recognize them and capitalize on them rather than the negative aspects of the Personality. The Personality is judgmental and argumentative. The Personality bases its actions on the cultural mores in which it moves. The soul or Essence does none of these and feels the freedom. Perception is purposely blurred by the Personality, for it could not survive if the Essence took command. But the Essence perceives on its own and the lessons learned by the soul are sometimes quite different than what you would suspect by recounting your "conscious" experience. As Dick, the soul sees beyond the brain barriers set up by the organism in order to cushion the Shocks. In other words, the reward would not seem great enough for the organism to continue with the absurdity. You have begun to peel the layers away, and so we would say that you, Dick, are perceiving far more than you give yourself credit for. The pain the body endures while being munched upon by a crocodile is seconds only compared to the Cycle of the soul. [17 March 1974]

Concluding Comments on Suicide





⑦ SUPERSTITION

This chapter is the product of a search for the word “superstition” in the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group channeling sessions. This word does not represent a significant component of the Michaelian teachings. However, there are good reasons to discuss the subject in this *Study Papers* book: 1) the subject came up a few times during the original Michaelian group; 2) some interesting things were said about the subject; 3) the subject is related to a number of other components of the Michaelian teachings that are considered to be significant; 4) students can presumably benefit from having the mentions conveniently collected and commented all in one place; 5) Superstition is pervasive in human psychology and sociology and spirituality — subjects covered extensively in this book — so it behooves us to have a working knowledge of it.

The word “superstition” is not capitalized in this chapter or other chapters of this book because it has no special meaning in the Michaelian teachings; it is not a Michaelian jargon word that needs a definition apart from its use in the common vernacular.

This chapter is one of many in this book that focuses on a psychological component of the Michaelian teachings as found in original Michaelian group transcriptions, rather than on a doctrinal or spiritual component. A psychological component is usually either a positive to be cultivated or a negative to be mitigated. As we will see, the Michaels tell us that superstition is a negative to be eschewed. The Michaelian version of psychology is not to be confused with the popular psychology of the self-improvement movement, those that do not have a spiritual core or perspective. Rather, the Michaelian psychotherapeutic path (aimed at improving psychological health) is a beneficial precursor to the spiritual path (aimed at improving soul health). To skip the former but attempt the latter is referred to as “spiritual bypassing”. This is discussed at length on such websites as https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spiritual_bypass. To skip mitigating one’s psychological issues and attempt to go straight to enlightenment usually proves to be problematic.

This chapter overlaps somewhat with the chapters “Religion” and “Belief System” and “Paranormal, The”.

Definition of Superstition

So what is meant by superstition? As usual, I refer to Wikipedia for *an* answer, not *the* answer:

A superstition is any belief or practice considered by non-practitioners to be irrational or supernatural, attributed to fate or magic, perceived supernatural influence, or fear of that which is unknown. It is commonly applied to beliefs and practices surrounding luck, amulets, astrology, fortune telling, spirits, and certain paranormal entities, particularly the belief that future events can be foretold by specific (apparently) unrelated prior events. Also, the word superstition is often used to refer to a religion not practiced by the majority of a given society regardless of whether the prevailing religion contains alleged superstitions or to all religions by the antireligious. Definitions of the term vary, but commonly describe superstitions as irrational beliefs at odds with scientific knowledge of the world. Stuart Vyse proposes that a superstition’s “presumed mechanism of action is inconsistent with our understanding of the physical world”, with Jane Risen adding these beliefs are not merely scientifically wrong, but impossible. Similarly, Lysann Damisch defines superstition as “irrational beliefs that an object, action, or circumstance that is not logically related to a course of events influences its outcome”. Dale Martin, says they “presuppose an erroneous understanding about cause and effect, that have been rejected by modern science.” The Oxford English Dictionary describes them as “irrational, unfounded”, Merriam Webster, as “a false conception about causation or belief or practice”, the Cambridge Dictionary “[without] grounding in human reason or scientific knowledge”. This notion of superstitious practices are not causally related to the outcomes.

Both Vyse and Martin argue what is considered superstitious varies across cultures and time. For Vyse, “if a culture has not yet adopted science as its standard, then what we consider magic or superstition is more accurately the local science or religion.” Dale points out that superstitions are often considered as out of place

in modern times influenced by modern science and its notions of what is rational or irrational, surviving as remnants of older popular beliefs and practices.

Vyse proposes that in addition to being irrational and culturally-dependant, superstitions have to be instrumental: an actual effect is expected by the person holding a belief, such as increased odds of winning a prize. This distinction excludes practices where participants merely expect to be entertained.

[><https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Superstition>< — retrieved 07 February 2023]

The article continues with a discussion of superstition in psychology and religion and philosophy. Obviously “superstition” is a pejorative term when used by both those who are scientific or spiritualistic in their worldview. The Michaels did not regard their teaching as superstition, but those of various other belief systems would, both the scientific and the religious.

Superstition per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

The following extracts from original Michaelian group transcriptions are Q&A exchanges, where an original Michaelian group member asks a question (or makes a comment), and the Michaels provide an answer. These extracts are presented in the chronological order in which they were given. As is my custom, I often provide some explanatory comments following the question or answer. Underlined words in the Michaels’ answers are my emphasis, to draw attention to what it is that I comment on. Sometimes I embed words or phrases [in brackets] that I believe help to clarify the question or the answer.

In the first original Michaelian group session in which the Michaels were the source of information, the subject came up:

Sex is part of the computer [human body] — we’ve got to accept that. It may be one of the most highly important parts and maybe I’ve neglected it. Maybe in Jesus’ time, they weren’t neglecting it. Maybe if he were here today, he would tell people to have more. Maybe in Jesus’ day, people thought about it all the time and we hardly ever think about it.

Quality is the answer. It is what you think, not how often. In Jesus’ time on Earth, most of the thoughts were bound up in fertility rites and superstition; they were negative energy vortices. [12 August 1973]

There is a factor in the human psyche that is prone to make up a supernatural explanation for stuff when there is not enough data to formulate a naturalistic theory. This is called “God of the gaps”.

Dick: In treating allergy, is there distinctions of Young and Old Souls? Is there some way to get to repressed emotions? Robert [Burton] used to say the Bible had keys to understanding the words. With Christ, it may have not actually been “healing.” When he made the blind man see, the Bible may have been using esoteric terms. Is this interpretation correct?

Those parables are true as you expressed them. Jesus was also able to calm the hysterical by his presence alone.

There is a clear-cut case of *globus hystericus* in the Bible. This is not an organic disease. You could learn to differentiate in this way. The people then were superstitious. It was easier to talk them out of their demons.

There was also a case of hysterical paralysis. [04 September 1973]

Not just ancient people, but also many people in the modern world are superstitious.

Dick: It makes me wonder [that] if evolution occurs through Cycles regardless of what one does, what is the point of the Infinite Soul manifesting? A lot of people quit their jobs to follow him and then lead useless lives. The implications are not to quit these things unless you are on the path instead of quitting your job and sitting around waiting for the “king” and “judgment day.”

This was promulgated by a man named John, who had a series of nightmares. It was not pleasant to watch someone you loved [Jesus] die in a particularly horrible manner. There was an earthquake and an eclipse that day; completely natural phenomena, believe it or not. This gave rise to many bad dreams in already susceptible superstitious people. [22 November 1974]

The time of Jesus was long before the scientific method had become the empirical and philosophical basis for deciding ontological and epistemic questions in the minds of the general populace, which pushed superstition aside.

Susan: I wrote a letter to my parents recently, thanking them for their support and help while I was working on a goal, and my mother wrote back and said she knew all the time that I would do this, because when I was born I had a “veil” over my face, and the midwife predicted great things for me. I would like to know how valid these superstitions are...

The superstition concerning the psychic power of those born with a “caul” is a very ancient one, having its roots in Babylonia. The place of superstition in the scheme of things is sometimes valid, in that it allows powerfully psychically energetic souls to exercise their powers without disrupting their already formed dogmatic belief systems. The lady in question was one of those. She used a convenient superstition to explain the tremendous amount of psychic energy she felt. [20 December 1973]

Refer to the chapter "Paranormal, The" for a discussion of psychic phenomena. The Michaels regarded some of these phenomena as legitimate, as not superstitious.

This enabled him to override the heredity of superstitions and open himself to positive experience. [21 August 1973]

Superstitions are passed down from generation to generation, in family and in culture. These are impediments to valid spiritual growth. The Michaels prefer that we have "positive [spiritual] experiences". That's it for this chapter.





⑤ SURRENDER

This chapter is the product of a search for the word surrender in the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group channeling sessions. This word does not represent a significant component of the Michaelian teachings. However, there are good reasons to discuss the subject in this *Study Papers* book: 1) the subject came up numerous times during the original Michaelian group; 2) some interesting things were said about the subject; 3) the subject is related to a number of other components of the Michaelian teachings that are considered to be significant; 4) students can presumably benefit from having the mentions conveniently collected and commented all in one place.

The word surrender is not capitalized in this chapter or other chapters of this *Study Papers* book because it has no special meaning in the Michaelian teachings; it is not a Michaelian jargon word that needs a definition apart from its use in the common vernacular.

This chapter is one of many in this book that focuses on a psychological component of the Michaelian teachings as found in original Michaelian group transcriptions, rather than on a doctrinal or spiritual component. A psychological component is usually either a positive to be cultivated or a negative to be mitigated. As we will see, the Michaels tell us that surrender is positive to be cultivated. The Michaelian version of psychology is not to be confused with the popular psychology of the self-improvement movement, those that do not have a spiritual core or perspective. Rather, the Michaelian psychotherapeutic path (aimed at improving psychological health) is a beneficial precursor to the spiritual path (aimed at improving soul health). To skip the former but attempt the latter is referred to as “spiritual bypassing”. This is discussed at length on such websites as https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spiritual_bypassing. To skip mitigating one’s psychological issues and attempt to go straight to enlightenment usually proves to be problematic.

Probably everyone had heard about Twelve-Step Programs for overcoming alcoholism and other addictions, but have you ever read them? The first seven steps are about “surrender”:

Step 1: We admit that we were powerless over [our addiction] — that our lives had become unmanageable.

Step 2: We have come to believe that a Power greater than ourselves can restore us to sanity.

Step 3: We have made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood him.

Step 4: We have made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.

Step 5: We admit to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.

Step 6: We are entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.

Step 7: We humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.

If we substitute the word “Essence” or “Reality” for “God” in the above statements, we have a procedure that is not incompatible with the recommendations of the Michaels in their version of the spiritual path, components of which are discussed in numerous chapters in this *Study Papers* book. Personally, I prefer to substitute the word “Universe” for “God” in instances where I find myself needing to surrender to the will of All That Is rather than asserting egotistical desires.

The Michaels had somewhat to say about the subject of surrender, as we will see below.

Surrender per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

The following extracts from original Michaelian group transcriptions are Q&A exchanges, where an original Michaelian group member asks a question (or makes a comment), and the Michaels provide an answer. These extracts are presented in the chronological order in which they were given. As is my custom, I often provide some explanatory comments following the question or answer. Underlined words in the Michaels’ answers are my emphasis, to draw attention to what it is that I comment on. Sometimes I embed words or phrases [in brackets] that I believe help to clarify the question or the answer.

The first appearance of the word was in an early session that discussed some of the characteristics of Soul Age:

Only the Old Soul has the experience to surrender to the desire. [13 October 1973]

What does that mean? The answer is found in a careful reading of other instances of the word in the original Michaelian group transcriptions.

Question: "Life reading" by a friend. [Is it] valid?

Mostly valid.

What isn't?

We find no great fault with this man. He is a trance medium and he does surrender well in trances. [12 June 1974]

One form of surrender is where the ego-centric consciousness yields control of the psycho-somatic apparatus enough to allow some other entity to control the psycho-somatic apparatus.

Another occasion where the surrender of the ego is appropriate is at the approach to death:

Narra said that she felt that [her husband] Robert did much work at the end.

We would agree with that. The Fragment that was Robert was one of the few in this [original Michaelian group] cadre able at the end to acknowledge that death was not the end, and that was an enormous step that led to much introspection and much contact with the Essence at the end. This Fragment was able to surrender the body without regret. The Essence is never "in Rejection", you see. Therefore, the man Robert even rejected his own knowledge, his own good advice. From that, you can measure the strides that were made. Those unfortunate souls who continue to hope for a miracle that will make them whole again never do come to grips with the possibilities that rest with death, and they never can relax the [ego's] vigil and see the light up ahead. Only those who realize that the physical life is about to end and go from there have a chance. Those who counsel err when they do not counsel in this direction. [21 February 1977]

This passage is a fairly clear indication that surrender involves letting go of the ego-centric Personality and yielding to the Tao-centric Essence.

The word surrender was not much used in the original Michaelian group, but other synonymous words were used to convey the general idea. In the previous passage, "relax" and "acknowledge" were used; in the following passage, the words "de-conditioning" and "vulnerability" and "allow" are used:

We talked about the different spiritual teachings and how, while they said much the same thing, the approach was different, and each of us had different feelings about them. For instance, the [Course in] Miracles material is very scholarly. The Seth Material appeals to Cynthia more. And this led to discussion about programming from the past, which led to a question about the value of de-conditioning processes.

De-conditioning processes: If there is a great deal of doubt and perseverance [perseverance] and the inability to move forward without them, then these [de-conditioning] processes are essential if the life goal is to be achieved. However, we must say that if the "break-away" occurs normally, then the manifestation of the soul level will also occur unimpeded, and then the fragmentary learning can be brought together in a more cohesive whole. It is possible to learn this material and allow it to effect a change of sorts without peeling back the layers, but the gains will be superficial and there will be backsliding. As to which is better, the answer would be that all that takes one back to "go" are better. In other words, the man [Arthur] Janov and the Fischer-Hoffman process, etc., are valid as long as the recipient is truly able to surrender and allow the self to have the experience. There is a great deal of "faking it" in these processes.

Surrender is perhaps the most difficult task before you, and the stakes are high if you wish to achieve what you set out to do. Therefore, many are likely to act out an experience that is not real. All of you here present have more difficulty with the concept of vulnerability and surrender than any other aspect of spiritual training. All of you are escaping the fear of poverty and degradation that the early decades of your lives instilled in you. Young ones, just ten years your junior, do not have this fear. It is not necessary to be poor in order to be spiritually enriched. It is only necessary to give up the effort of the unrealistic goals set for you by the culture and go on from there. More true spiritual thought and action comes from relatively secure environments than from impoverished backgrounds. Squalor does not ordinarily breed enlightenment; rather, it breeds defeat, frustration and, ultimately, a giving up of goals. It's okay to be comfortable as long as the goals are realistic and do not compromise the values of the teaching — then the amount of luxury accrued is relatively trivial. In other words, if the wealth comes easily and at no expense to the spiritual life, then the wealth is immaterial. It is when

the desire for the wealth overrides all spiritual considerations that trouble occurs, and then irreconcilable conflicts [between ego and Essence] arise, and there is an inability to proceed any further with any teaching. There is a point where a choice must be made and a true assessment of your material needs versus wants must occur if you are to go on. If you decide at that point that continued acquisition beyond that which is necessary is vital to your survival, then you must pursue this or dissatisfaction will follow you and plague you the rest of this life. You will give up spiritual teachings at this point — and that is not necessarily a bad choice — just a choice. [10 April 1977]

Refer to chapters “False Personality” and “Culture” for more discussion about what to give up.

Dick said we were all just spiritual dilettantes — the utilitarian value comes later — the value of the Overleaves. In order to “surrender” there has to be a feeling that there is something to achieve through this surrender.

There are two types of experience going on within this movement — and by ‘movement’ we mean the whole guru game that is now on-going. These are the true experiences and the cultural experiences. Most of those who go to EST do not experience anything but group highs, and this could have happened merely by smoking marijuana in the living room with a group of friends. Others have elected to change their lives, and this has occurred only through surrender to the processes. Faith is what determines success. [10 April 1977]

The process of surrendering *of* the lower, and the surrendering *to* the higher, has to be genuine. This involves a ‘leap of faith’ in that one is dealing with ‘out with the old and in with the new’, which can be scary.





① SYNTHESIS, THE

This chapter is the product of a search for the word synthesis in the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group channeling sessions. This word does not represent a significant component of the Michaelian teachings. However, there are good reasons to discuss the subject in this *Study Papers* book: 1) the subject came up numerous times during the original Michaelian group; 2) students can presumably benefit from having the mentions conveniently collected and commented all in one place; 3) some interesting things were said about the subject; 4) the subject is related to a number of other components of the Michaelian teachings that are considered to be significant, so it behooves us to have a working knowledge of it.

The dictionary definition of the term “synthesis” is, “the combination of ideas into a complex whole”. The Michaels often used the phrase, *The Synthesis*, to refer to their own comprehensive and integrated teaching about the structure and function of the cosmos. It is capitalized in this chapter because it becomes clear as one reads the instances of its appearance that the phrase has a special meaning. We will see below that they used the term to refer to much more than “ideas”. Founding members of the original Michaelian group were familiar with the Gurdjieff/Ouspensky teaching, but “The Synthesis” is not a concept seen in that teaching, so far as I have been able to determine. When one has studied the Michaelian teachings for a while, one sees the dictionary definition of the term is eminently applicable to the Michaelian teachings. There is an elaborate and elegant interconnection of the parts to form a coherent system. Such is not the case with every teaching, but such is the case with every true and complete Teaching, as we see from the following Q&A exchange even before the Michaels appeared on the original Michaelian group scene:

Gene: Is this our Tomas, the one Tomas?

Tomas is my name. I do not know why it matters to you. The information given is the same. There is only one true Teaching. [24 July 1973]

And the one true Teaching is a synthesis — meaning, IT EXPLAINS A LOT!

Gene: How do we know? How can we find out about the one [true] Teaching?

If it is true it can be verified, and will teach nonviolence, peace within, and moderation in all things. There will be a clear synthesis in all the information given. The answers will “feel” right. [24 July 1973]

This use of the word “synthesis” is not “THE Synthesis” which is the subject of this chapter, but the context indicates that the word means a comprehensive and coherent overview of a subject. This particular chapter is a collection of the passages on the subject of The Synthesis. The entire collection of chapters in this book is an attempt to provide a synthesis of the Michaels’ version of the one true Teaching as it was presented in the original Michaelian group.

“The Synthesis: The Michaelian Teachings as Perennialism”

That is the name of another book manuscript in my septenary of books. The basic notion espoused in that book is that the Michaelian teachings are yet another thread in a fabric of teachings that go back thousands of years.

So what is “Perennialism”. As usual, Wikipedia has a definition and a description and a history of the notion:

The perennial philosophy (Latin: *philosophia perennis*), also referred to as perennialism and perennial wisdom, is a perspective in philosophy and spirituality that views religious traditions as sharing a single, metaphysical truth or origin from which all esoteric and exoteric knowledge and doctrine has grown.

Perennialism has its roots in the Renaissance interest in neo-Platonism and its idea of the One, from which all existence emerges. Marsilio Ficino (1433–1499) sought to integrate Hermeticism with Greek and Jewish-Christian thought, discerning a *prisca theologia* which could be found in all ages. Giovanni Pico della Mirandola

(1463–94) suggested that truth could be found in many, rather than just two, traditions. He proposed a harmony between the thought of Plato and Aristotle, and saw aspects of the *prisca theologia* in Averroes (Ibn Rushd), the Quran, the Kabbalah, and other sources. Agostino Steuco (1497–1548) coined the term *philosophia perennis*.

A more popular interpretation argues for universalism, the idea that all religions, underneath seeming differences, point to the same Truth. In the early 19th century the Transcendentalists propagated the idea of a metaphysical Truth and universalism, which inspired the Unitarians, who proselytized among Indian elites. Towards the end of the 19th century, the Theosophical Society further popularized universalism, not only in the western world, but also in western colonies. In the 20th century, universalism was further popularized through the Advaita Vedanta and Sufism inspired Traditionalist School, which argued for a metaphysical, single origin of the orthodox religions, and by Aldous Huxley and his book *The Perennial Philosophy*, which was inspired by neo-Vedanta. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Perennial_philosophy — retrieved 08 April 2023]

The Wikipedia article continues with sections on Definition, Origins, Popularization, and Academic Discussions. This Wiki refers to other Wikis on related subjects, namely Universalism, Syncretism, Pluralism, Transcendentalism, and Mysticism. Older souls and older-soul teachings such as the Michaelian teaching are inclined to adopt philosophical spirituality as their worldview.

Note that the Michaelian teachings is not the only teaching that claimed to be a grand synthesis of other teachings; Theosophy and Gurdjieffianism said the same thing. A search for the word synthesis in the collected works of Neo-theosophist Alice Bailey yields 951 hits.

Now let us move on to what the Michaels themselves had to say on the subject. Pertinent synonyms and descriptions are underlined in order to make a quick review easier.

The Synthesis per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

The following extracts from original Michaelian group transcriptions are Q&A exchanges, where an original Michaelian group member asks a question (or makes a comment), and the Michaels provide an answer. These extracts are presented in the chronological order in which they were given. As is my custom, I usually provide some explanatory comments following the question or answer. Underlined words are my emphasis, to draw attention to what it is that I comment on. Sometimes I embed words or phrases [in brackets] that I believe help to clarify the question or the answer. Numerous study papers related to this chapter are to be found among my comments.

In the next quote, taken from an undated session in which the Roles were first revealed within a couple of weeks of the Michaels' appearance to the original Michaelian group, we do in fact find the phrase, The Synthesis:

The religion of the Old Soul is expansive and includes unorthodox rituals. Groves of trees become cathedrals, and the presence of the realized Masters is often felt by older souls. The Synthesis is perceived in the final Cycle, and Old Souls seldom cling to dogma. The Transcendental Soul perceives The Synthesis and teaches it as such — [it] will not espouse popular dogma and does not affiliate with organized religion [because it does not have The Synthesis]. [late August 1973]

Elsewhere in the channeling it is said that Old Souls see themselves as part of something larger. Putting that statement together with this description of The Synthesis, we surmise that it has something to do with the big picture of life, the universe, and everything. In the above quotes, there is no definition of “Synthesis” yet, but we can surmise from the context what it meant: souls who have experienced practically all of what the Physical Plane has to offer, who have “done it all”, therefore have a very broad overview with deep understanding. This then is obviously one type of synthesis.

There is a similar use of the word in the next quote, but once again it is not *The Synthesis*.

Dick: I would like to ask if [my daughter] Cheryl should be a physician.

Cheryl would make a good healer, if she could be persuaded to acquire the required study habits, and by this, I mean really learning and making the synthesis, not just by memorizing the lesson to pass the tests. [26 August 1973]

Here “the synthesis” means inculcation of an academic subject, the product of true study and experience. Obviously this is not The Synthesis of the one true spiritual teaching, but the principle is the same, namely

that one should acquire a fundamental, deep and broad, understanding of a subject category on the way to mastering it.

Regarding Old Souls, the Michaels repeated themselves in the following passage, again without defining the term:

All Old Souls see The Synthesis. [08 September 1973]

So far in these quotations, synthesis is spoken of in terms of learning a subject broadly and deeply, whether it be in a classroom or in THE metaphorical 'classroom' — the Physical Plane. So I think we are getting to the gist of it.

The next quote follows this pattern:

Gene: All of a sudden we're having this huge body of information about souls, and it must be important, and I would like an overview. Is this information going to be practical to me? Can I use it? Why this topic?

This [Soul Age] is another Overleaf [in addition to Centers], and integration [of this information] must take place before you are able to perceive The Synthesis, which, of course, must precede perception of the Tao. Yes, it can be of great value to you. Body Typing answers some questions. This [information about Soul Age] answers still another set of questions. This is a broader Overleaf, and there are more. [18 September 1973]

So there we have a couple of synonyms for synthesis, namely "overview" and "integration". When the parts of the Michaelian teachings are integrated into a complete system, we have the integrated overview. The Michaels let the original Michaelian group know that when the revelation of their teaching was complete, it would lead the original Michaelian group members to the perception of Tao, which is the ultimate synthesis indeed.

The Synthesis of the "one true Teaching" has predecessors, steps that lead up to it:

Dick: If I am evolving at all, it is invisible to me, and I've been studying Gurdjieff, and then Ouspensky, and now this, and the longer I go at this, the less I seem to know. I seem to be evolving backwards.

This is more apparent than real. You are now [via the Michaels] in touch with The Synthesis, and this is not an easy concept. Could you appreciate the beauty of the differential equation [in calculus] if you did not first have understanding of algebra and the linear equation? The more dimensions you explore, the more difficult the exploration becomes. [18 September 1973]

Gurdjieff and Ouspensky were not The Synthesis, but they were a precursor to The Synthesis for many members of the original Michaelian group. In subsequent Michaelian teachings groups, many who came to the Michaelian teachings were also previously into some other spiritual teaching and/or practice, and this is often a good preparation for the Michaelian teachings, which seems to be more advanced. The elaborate structure of the Michaelian teachings can seem daunting to students, even those who are building upon previous metaphysics, but it helps to know that getting into the Michaelian teachings is not like completely starting over.

The Michaelian teachings is definitely not the easiest spiritual teaching that one might encounter. It does seem elaborate and complicated during the learning phase, but ultimately we should find our way through the complexity to a simplicity in the end, which is The Synthesis:

Alice: Does the path become harder as your soul evolves and becomes older?

Difficulty is relative to the perceiver. Not strictly speaking; it should become easier. It is simply that more of the pieces fit into the puzzle, and you are faced with an increasingly alarming volume of data until you allow yourself to perceive The Synthesis. [08 October 1973]

The Michaels liken learning about The Synthesis to assembling all of the pieces of the picture puzzle into the final image. Maybe we do not know what it is until near the completion of the project. But, when we have it all together, we SEE it, we KNOW it, as in "Eureka! I found it":

Dick: Are the means for doing this [validation] available to us? I'm so stuffed with systems — Gurdjieff, [Castaneda's] Don Juan, parapsychology. Actually, information like this might interfere with itself.

[Soleal:] There should be a [consistent] synthesis if the information comes through cosmic [sources, which are by nature unified]. If The Synthesis is not felt [intuitively], then the system is probably not valid.

Dick: I just wonder if there is any jealousy, rivalry. If I listen to what Soleal says, will Tomas be put out — you know?

If there is synthesis, there should be no conflict. If there is not The Synthesis, then one of us is not telling the truth, and as in all previous situations, it will be up to you in the end to verify.

The fact is that there are conflicts or discrepancies within the various versions of the Michaelian teachings. That such is the case has been an incentive for me to examine them with a view to resolving them, moving toward “Validation and Verification” of the “Truth”; refer to chapters by those names. What I learn I write in my books.

Dick: Would you please elaborate on that one?

There is a deep-seated fear that you will choose the wrong path and be inadvertently left behind. The Synthesis is always, is always, there for those who are willing to search beneath the surface. The readings [from various teachings] are good; the confusion is not. That takes conscious effort on your part.... Just be patient. You cannot achieve enlightenment by any route in one day, or by any method without first making the decision to establish this as the goal for the present lifetime, and then making the decision to devote the rest of the life to that pursuit. The devotion must be there, no matter which path you take ultimately. The path can take you through the mainstream of life on your world, or you may eventually decide that you must have the seclusion. A communal setting would offer this in many ways. You need people around by whom you can measure your progress and this is not bad for you. Self-confidence, and I mean in your own spiritual strength, must be developed. [03 July 1973]

If/when one looks beneath the surface of a teaching, if it is a true Teaching, then, among other indicators of validity, one should find that it is systematic, organized, coherent — and consistent with other true Teachings. The world is full of lies, but they are often diverse and contradictory, whereas you will see much agreement from true sources. It requires discretion and validation to sort through and look for the common theme in various teachings — the similarities are clues to what is probably valid.

Once again we see that the journey through the morass of confusing and conflicting teachings can be difficult, but hang in there; it will all make sense eventually. Just keep plodding along relentlessly until you figure it out:

Tina: What can I do?

Make substantial strides toward effecting The Synthesis. (Learn what it all means.) [31 December 1973]

That parenthetic statement is what the original Michaelian group editor thought of The Synthesis. “Learning” what it all means is a good thing, but the Michaels used the word “effecting,” which is a stronger or deeper *experience* — *inculcating and putting into practice* — The Synthesis. One could say that “effecting” The Synthesis is *becoming or embodying* The Synthesis with a view toward propagating and imparting it to others.

Then, one might ask what “strides” they recommend? A large and important part of the Michaelian teachings is the Overleaf System that we all know and love. It is one of the crown jewels of the Michaelian teachings. The Michaels launched into it very early on. It is not all that there is to the Michaelian teachings, and it is not *per se* The Synthesis, but if you master it, you should be well on your way to The Synthesis:

Edgar: They tell me I'm impatient after ten thousand years [of reincarnating repeatedly]??? (Said later.)

The actual visualization of The Synthesis will only come about when you have all of the physical Overleaves, and [beyond the Overleaves] only after the Teaching has progressed to the point where we are able to communicate with you directly on the high planes [higher than the Physical Plane, that is]. [31 December 1973]

The word “visualize” is used here, as if The Synthesis is a coherent “picture” of what life, the universe, and everything is all about. Even though the Michaels do not say so, it would seem that since the Overleaf System is based on the number seven, and the cosmos itself consists of seven planes, there is a correlation between the two. That is to say, human personality and cosmic “personality” correspond, so that understanding the former leads to an understanding of the latter. Thus, the Overleaf System is the template for the big picture puzzle, and you don't understand it all until you understand the entire system of seven. That is why when the Overleaf System is understood thoroughly at a deep level, it becomes a gateway that enables communication with an even higher source of understanding. It is best, then, that you do not object to the Overleaf System:

Tina: What is the purpose of learning all these [Overleaf] labels? I dislike labels.

It is only important if you wish to make The Synthesis. We agree, verbal communication is a poor excuse for the sum of communication. However, until one of you break through with telepathy [to us], this will have to do. This study [of the labels of the Overleaves] enables you to have insights to the motivation of certain activities which could conceivably be perceived by you as hostile or undesirable, and prohibit the understanding

necessary for Agape to take place. It will also enable you to aid those who seek your counsel. [31 December 1973]

Ah, so Agape toward your fellow humans, learned through mastery of the Overleaf System, leads to non-verbal connections with higher sources of understanding. Now that we have the goal of the Overleaf System defined, let's go back down to one nitty-gritty specific:

Dick: I would like to ask for a comment on my hatred for Dominant Warriors, and anything on The Synthesis for acceptance and fears.

This [hatred] would represent a major part of Friction for you, as you see in them all those traits you endeavor to eradicate from your own life. Only by understanding that Warriors in the earlier Cycles [Soul Ages] are pretty much a victim of their Karmic Ribbons — and will be until they meet with a Teaching — then you can apply the same principle of unconditional acceptance that you must with all others. In perceiving The Synthesis, this acceptance is imperative. [03 January 1974]

Here again we see that proper use and understanding of the Overleaf System leads to Agape — unconditional acceptance of people exactly as they are. Removing faulty perceptions about people leads to perceiving The Synthesis. (In passing, note that one level of synthesis occurs when one thoroughly understands each Overleaf, and a higher level occurs when one understands people as gestalts of their Overleaves, wherein each Overleaf affects every other.)

Another part of the process seems to be the ability to receive information from higher planes and higher beings, as in connection with the Michaels in the quote above, and with even higher beings in the following case:

Gene: I would like to ask more questions on the books about the Masters of the Far East, by Thomas Spaulding, whom I've asked about before. I've read four of the five volumes now. There is good teaching information there. He said he was talking in person to Jesus and Mohammad and other Old Souls. He went to Asia, Tibet, in the early 1900's or late 1800's, where he was taught to teleport. I would like a comment and also to ask if he really was talking to Jesus and Mohammad as he implied.

The high Mental Body [Infinite Soul] spends time with all Adepts. Some see the Infinite Soul in several transcendental forms. This is usually because the perceptions of physically-tied Adepts is not keen enough to perceive that much of The Synthesis. They, like some of you, see the reintegration as loss of self and bemoan this. He [Spaulding] saw his own perception of the fragmentation of the Infinite Soul [parts of which he saw in the Masters]. [03 January 1974]

So, even Adepts have some trouble perceiving The Synthesis, and need a little help from beings on the high planes just like the rest of us seekers. After all, those discarnate beings have literally and actually achieved The Synthesis — in the sense of the reintegration of their Fragment souls. And of course to really get to that ultimate Synthesis, they had to come to a complete understanding of the *teaching* about The Synthesis.

Anyway, after all that the Michaels said above, someone was ready to propose a definition of The Synthesis:

Ellis: I would like to ask about the meaning of "synthesis." I have the theory that it means putting the knowledge into effect for [spiritual] growth.

There you have that word "effect" again, same as used on 31 December 1974.

That is valid. You cannot begin to put this into practice until you fully understand it. The Synthesis will allow you to see the entire systems of ideas as one unified idea — the continuous creative force. Understanding why those around you are like they are will open you up to Agape, and true acceptance. This will allow you to put personal agendas aside and pursue the path toward communion with the high teachers [not just us, the Michaels]. [17 January 1974]

Well, there you have it, succinctly put. This is the closest we have to a definition of what they meant by The Synthesis. One of the aspects of The Synthesis is that it helps you find and know your place in the largest scheme, the whole. Having a unified mental understanding of the overall picture of an elaborate and complicated system of human behavior will lead one to higher levels of reality, and beings on those higher levels. Instead of fragmentary and incomplete understanding, The Synthesis is an integrated and overall understanding of how the system works and fits together. (As part of coming to understand how the *system* works, and *we* and *others* work within that system, ourselves also become more unified in our total being, as we shall see further on.)

Note that the Michaels are just one true Teacher of that Synthesis:

Dick: Michael is giving us the how, The Synthesis!

Dick accepts us as his Teacher. This is not necessarily the truth for Lee and Martin. [20 January 1974]

Of course one has to allow the influence of whatever Teacher or Teaching one accepts and pursues. A true path leads to wholeness.

Healing of the body is yet another kind of synthesis, of making whole or complete:

How did the healing in Edgar take place?

We have said many times that we offer guidance and support. The work is yours. We can show you the path. You must walk it. We can show you the healing and the healer, but you must be healed. For the first time your Essence was free to rise above the body and the pain, and experience freedom. This is synthesis on a higher level. [20 February 1974]

The key idea here is that higher levels of reality are less fragmented, increasingly integrated, therefore more healthy in the original sense of the word “healthy”, namely whole and complete. When this person experienced the healthy wholeness that exists at higher levels of reality, the illusion of illness at this lower level, where fragmentation prevails, was dissolved, and physical healing resulted. (More is said about “synthesis on a higher level” in the chapter “Monads”.) The spiritual path of applying a Synthesis Teaching leads to merging with those higher levels of reality and the beings who reside there. Ultimately, there is realization or actualization of unity, of oneness, with all creation. This is the essence of The Synthesis.

The above statement where Essence rose above the physical realm, and the statement below, imply that we can get a glimpse of those higher levels via altered states of consciousness:

Regarding hypnotherapy — having a therapy place where some of us would treat troubled people by hypnosis — synthesis while under hypnosis. [08 May 1974]

That was just a comment made by one of the members of the original Michaelian group. It did not get answered by the Michaels, but it is fair to say that the potential for seeing The Synthesis exists in that altered state if various reports are to be believed.

Ted: In CIF and EST, [we are] exposed to much knowledge. What is the purpose of these for us?

This answer would be much the same for all in this room. That is, to synthesize and verify this knowledge so that you can be in a better space to promulgate the Logos. [19 June 1974]

During the original Michaelian group, the members of the original Michaelian group sought information from many other metaphysical systems. The Michaels endorsed and recommended, as instances of the Logos, many metaphysical teachings and practices other than their own. There is a notion, referred to as Perennialism, that claims that there is a common core of beauty, truth, love, and energy in the various religious and philosophical traditions. We should make use of these sources.

One might also get some enlightenment by learning The Synthesis from a mere mortal who knew it:

Dick: I've been reading about [Johann Wolfgang von] Goethe. It is the most impassioned life I've ever read about. His output was stupendous.

This was a Sixth Level Old Scholar in the Intellectual Center, an Idealist in the Passion mode, in Growth. Yes, he did dabble in the occult enough so that he made contact [with higher-level beings], and this man knew what you are now learning.

He knew The Synthesis?

Yes. [03 July 1974]

Well then it might increase one's own understanding of The Synthesis to study the works of a man such as Goethe who had achieved that understanding.

Such teachers are rare:

Dick: Gurdjieff says that Mechanical Man has no will (a #1, #2 or #3 man, that is). He may start out to pursue a course, but will succumb to societal pressures, fears, habits, etc. Gurdjieff says in order to become conscious, one must have “C” influence, and allow him to function as his will. Michael cannot function in this capacity, as they need a medium [channel, which is indirect contact].

Type “C” influence in the Gurdjieffian teachings meant direct contact with an enlightened person, a “Master”.

Essentially, yes. One of the reasons that no one of your previous teachings has impressed you indelibly is that the mystical “awe inspiring” element was largely pushed to the background. Some respond to this approach, others do not. You do not. We wish so much to bring you together with a [human] Teacher who will bring this element to this Teaching. We see the difficulty, and, of course, have been cognizant of it all along, but in this

particular instance [without the help of a human Adept or Master], it has taken much work to provide this synthesis. [21 September 1974]

There were numerous previous teachings that many of these people were involved in, such as Fourth Way, Theosophy, and Rosicrucianism. The charismatic founders of those teachings were deceased at the time. This statement about an exalted human teacher is very reminiscent of one of the elements of many spiritual teachings in the Orient: one should find one's guru and follow him or her. Historically, the problem with this approach has been that some charismatic leaders and their followers devolve into a "personality cult". But when done properly, a guru/follower Monad is a relatively rapid route to enlightenment. Even a "personality cult" can lead to enlightenment when you quit it and transmute the negative into the positive. (More is said about that in the chapter "Communal Living".) According to the Michaels, contact with a channeled being is just not as effective and efficient as personal contact with a genuine living Adept or Master. However, as indicated in some previous quotes, following a high (not a low) channeled entity can eventually lead to a more direct contact with a discarnate Teacher via altered states of consciousness.

And perhaps there is not so much danger of the "cult" problem manifesting. At least one of the members of the original Michaelian group wanted to make the most of that kind of contact with the Michaels:

Ralph: Are there lines and areas of questioning that we are presently capable of, but very seldom voice, which would make your Teachings more available to us? If so, what can you tell us about them?

We would say yes, there are definitely many lines to be explored, mostly pertaining to synthesis of the information on interrelations. The reason for failure is in the interrelationships of those on the Physical Plane, particularly in the area of spiritual growth. In particular, a question was recently asked but not pursued as to the reason for these failures. Also, so far, no one has voiced a concern over the relationships between man and the universe and the harmony therein. The level of curiosity concerning the yin/yang combinations is relatively low, connoting a lack of understanding. Also, there has been no curiosity concerning those who come to The Synthesis from seemingly [but not actually, because the Synthesis is not diverse] diverse [esoteric] backgrounds, and yet bring much [broader and deeper] understanding to the Teaching. Also, a more workable vocabulary would be in order. The interpretations, at times, suffer from broken semantics, and this is an area of work. The origins of man on this world, and its eventual evolution, along with its place in the ultimate evolution of the physical universe, is also a part of this Teaching, aimed at providing you with a more concise understanding of your own position in the total schema. [24 September 1974]

So here we see listed many of the components of the big picture. They are all worthy of study and practice. Coming to understand them all clearly and completely will lead to The Synthesis, here also called the "total schema." (This *Study Papers* book and my other books address some of these very realms of knowledge that were not completely explored during the original Michaelian group, and have not even been explored subsequent to the original Michaelian group.)

One member of the original Michaelian group did later ask specifically about one of the components mentioned above, "the relationships between man and the universe and the harmony therein":

What is man's proper function in the universe?

We have presented this material in such a fashion that we hope you are now having some feelings for the orderliness of the cosmos, and that there is nothing chancy about this. The Physical Plane, of course, has its place in this natural order of things. Truly, the evolutionary process is continuous throughout the planes, until this [evolution] reaches the point of origin [Tao]. The planes can also be likened perhaps most easily to the Goals. For instance, on the Physical Plane there is much resistance and Rejection, particularly of those things beyond the physical. On the Astral Plane, there is much Submission, particularly on the lower levels, where the painful lessons are being learned. This can be extrapolated on up to the Tao, which represents Growth in the highest order. Souls experience this "overall goal" in very subtle ways, almost imperceptible, except to the highest student. The learning process therefore is very different on each plane, with physical inhabitants learning primarily through Rejection. You prefer to call it "experience", or more often, "bitter experience". More often than not, it is merely a Rejection of intuition. Therefore, the errors made on the Physical Plane often are the result of cognitaling [sic] and eventually Rejecting the intuitive selection for the more profitable or culturally-acceptable one. These errors are not usually resolved until the physical student meets with a teacher, this usually occurring in the later cycles [older Soul Ages]. These lessons, of course, provide the groundwork for the lessons yet to come, as the Entities work progressively toward the Tao. You see, there is an overall [cosmic] synthesis of which your [personal] synthesis is a component. We wish to resume this discussion when this group

next gathers without fail. If progress is to be made, we must work with you in the way you have now begun to accept. This we would call great progress. There is far less scattering in this group now than ever before. Many have come to a seriousness of purpose that was previously absent. It is possible now that real growth will commence. [08 October 1974]

(At this time in the original Michaelian group, there was not actually an understanding of the correlation of the Planes with the Goals. Subsequent to the original Michaelian group, the proper synthesis eventually became known as follows: the Physical Plane = Ordinal Action = Submission Goal, Astral Plane = Ordinal Inspiration = Retardation Goal, Causal Plane = Ordinal Expression = Rejection Goal, and Tao Plane = Cardinal Action = Dominance Goal.) In this quote, "synthesis" refers to spiritual growth on the Physical Plane leading ultimately to "synthesis" on the higher planes; that is, reintegration of Entities. The value of a teacher in this process is again mentioned. Reintegration with "Tao" is said to be the end result, the ultimate synthesis, of this process.

The subject of Tao came up in a later session, and The Synthesis was a part of that discussion also:

Dick asked why Michael uses the word "Tao" and not "God."

Primarily, because the word "God" in your society has become masculinized and requires the use of the masculine pronoun, thus perpetuating the personification of the Universal Creative Force, which is ethereal and not physical. This cannot be personified even for teaching purposes with this cadre [group of students]. It would be treading on thin ice for this Entity. For us, this teaching is a form of evolution. We have chosen our tools carefully, with those of you here present in mind, as well as all members of the cadre who are now geographically physically separated. It is as important that they understand, as it is for you here present to understand. Each teaching now ongoing has different tools, and yet The Synthesis can be easily made by one caring to make the comparison. In choosing the specific tools that we have, each of your Overleaves was taken into consideration, as well as all your imprinting, your core beliefs, and your master Tapes. [30 January 1975]

Here again various and diverse teachers and teachings about spiritual paths are mentioned, but ultimately they all lead souls to The Synthesis.

However, it is probably most effective and efficient if a person follows a teacher and/or teaching that is most suited to their particular personality and needs. Otherwise, confusion can result:

Dick commented that he was reading The Teachings of Don Juan, the last [actually first] book [of Carlos Castaneda], and he could not incorporate it in our truth, but had to file it as a separate truth.

This is precisely why so many Astral [Plane] and Physical [Plane] Masters insist in absolute faithfulness from their students, in asking that they abstain from studying any other teachings. Some go to the extreme of saying that there are no other teachings. Teachings are chosen carefully for the students. In many ways, you are fortunate in having a Causal [Plane] teacher who can impose no such restrictions, but also in many ways it is confusing to you when it is difficult for you to make a synthesis where the cultural differences are so vast. We would not quarrel with the teaching of this Yaqui teacher. Within his cultural milieu, he expressed the Logos. The Oriental concept that, "When the student is ready, the teacher will appear", is true. The teacher is like everything else, no accident. At the moment, many of you would not accept the direction that you so vehemently demand. There will come a time when you will and that direction will appear. It is now all that you can do to assimilate the necessary data, develop some trust in each other and consider the possibilities we have thrown out without having a top sergeant barking orders. If you are coerced into a change from a negative space, you will fail. Your culture is at fault here in that all of you have core beliefs that are strongly anti-growth. Being spiritual is, of course, being nonproductive and everyone "knows" that this is "bad". Just to enable you to come past this barrier requires much ingenuity and could be disaster in the hands of a physical Adept, no matter how positive the Adept might be. Strange as it may seem, many of you are among our most earnest students, and yet among our most stubborn. [30 January 1975]

Similar points about matching teachers and types of teachings with types of students on the path to The Synthesis were made in the next session with regard to yet another group of spiritual seekers:

... Both [students in that other spiritual group] are able to look at their Overleaves and choose to alter them into workable ones, but the vocabulary and the groundwork is simply not there for the expression and grasping of the teaching in the same intellectual fashion that is being given to these students here. In this case [here], the preliminary concepts must be expressed, and this in a sense will make the eventual reading more valuable to beginners on the path. One does not have to see the Logos in terms of the synthesis that you have received [from us], in order to see it. [31 January 1975]

(The subject of the Logos is explored in another chapter.) The word 'synthesis' is not capitalized in this case because it is a partial synthesis, not the final synthesis. The Michaelian teachings does seem complicated, but as it says above, it is useful to certain kinds of students to start out with an elaborate intellectual system tailored to lead them beyond the complications. Other personality types can get to The Synthesis with different teachers and teachings. For Michaelian students, the path is often more intellectual, as it said above. Other paths might emphasize more the emotional or the behavioral. The point is that these paths do not ultimately contradict each other, and the ultimate end of the path, the Logos, is the same.

One of the major characteristics of Synthesis is that each higher level is simpler and more integrated, no matter how complicated and alienated it starts out to be:

Ralph: Is The Synthesis simpler than the systems that man erects?

In its most evolved form, yes. In words suitable for communication with the members of this enclave it becomes complex. Again, Creatures of Reason take the simplest activity and render it complex through symbols. The Synthesis is not complex. The Synthesis seeks integration, simplicity. Creatures of Reason seek to justify their existence through expressions of individuality, isolation, alienation. Creatures of Reason seek to justify their existence by assigning themselves a role, even a negative one, if that be the case, of subrogation, taking the responsibility from themselves, assigning that responsibility to a higher power, conveniently beyond the five physical senses, and therefore, unarguable, unprovable, unassailable, safe, comfortable, complex." [26 December 1974]

As we find elsewhere in the Michaelian teachings, the alienation/fragmentation process finally comes to an end, and the turn is made toward reintegration.

In the final quote on this subject, we see that the path to The Final Synthesis is incremental, with stages and levels of synthesis, not one giant leap of enlightenment:

Eugene: What we do here in [our physical] lives we ingest and synthesize between [physical] lives so we know what we have in the way of appointments and agreements.

Growth of another kind occurs on other planes, devoid of the stimuli of the Physical Plane. Eugene is mostly right in saying that a synthesis comes about in that period between lives on the Physical Plane. This is the time of review and the opportunity to see where growth is needed. [21 February 1977]

And then during the next physical life, more fodder for later synthesis is gathered, until no more fodder for synthesis can be gained from the Physical Plane. Each level of synthesis is just the springboard for the next higher level of synthesis. And so on up the steps of reintegration to The Final Synthesis.

General Comments on The Synthesis

There is a definition of The Synthesis that does not appear in the transcriptions that have become available to us, but nevertheless came out of the original Michaelian group. That is the statement in *MFM* on page 68 where the perceptions of various Soul Ages are given. Then it says, "There is, of course, an ultimate perception that is The Synthesis. This, of course, is Truth." Little syntheses along the way add up to The Final Synthesis.

Another clue about the meaning of synthesis is found in *MFM* on page 127, also from the original Michaelian group but not in the transcriptions that we have. This time the reference was to the seven Levels within the seven Ages: "All Monads and perceptions of the cycles must be completed in the sixth level before the understanding and synthesis of the seventh level can occur." Besides Levels, there are seven Soul Ages and seven planes to ascent toward The Final Synthesis, so obviously the seventh stage is the synthesis of the previous/lower six.

Yet another example of the Michaels' use of the word synthesis in the original Michaelian group is found in *MFM* on page 43, this time in yet a third setting, namely the uniting of polarities: "Seven is the closest thing we know of to a universal number. It expresses not only the three aspects of duality, but the resolution of the dualities. It is thesis, antithesis, and synthesis.... Remember the interrelations of the polarities as well as their synthesis." (More is said about this type of synthesis in the chapter "Monads".)

One of the compelling features about the Michaelian teachings as distinct from some other teachings is that it provides an overview of the grand cosmic scheme of things, from largest to smallest and back again. Conveniently, the Michaels themselves realize this, and use the term "synthesis" occasionally when referring to the scope and quality of their teaching. In the above quotes we can discern several other ways to understand the term as used by the Michaels. There are ascending types and levels of synthesis, as follows:

- “Synthesis” was used in reference to health and healing of the physical body, and of course this could be said of the emotional and mental bodies as well.
- “Synthesis” was used in reference to coming to a deep and broad understanding of a high and true spiritual teaching.
- “Synthesis” was used in reference to Agape, which is the culmination of understanding and accepting other people via the Overleaf System.
- “Synthesis” was used in reference to communing with an incarnate guru or a discarnate teacher.
- “Synthesis” was used in reference to knowing the cosmic scheme of things and one’s place in it.
- “Synthesis” was used in reference to the understanding of the Physical Plane that the Old Soul achieves toward the end of its sojourn here.
- “Synthesis” was used in reference to the seventh stage in the ascending staircase of levels up toward The Final Synthesis.
- “Synthesis” was used in reference to the reuniting of souls with their kindred soul Fragments, progressively until the individual Fragment is united with Tao, the Source, the undifferentiated One.

So, all in all, “Synthesis” is a result as well as a process. That is, ultimately, the process of synthesis results in a return to the One that began the Fragmentation process. It could be said that in the process of synthesis, the cosmos turns itself inside out: what was objective becomes subjective. That is facilitated by some forms of concentration and meditation. Even though the word “synthesis” is not used in the following comment, one of its synonyms is, “integrated whole.”

Meditation is the emptying of the mind of Maya. Concentration is the active acquisition of higher knowledge; The Logos. Self-Remembering [a form of concentration] can be defined as follows: You are sitting in a field. You see the sunlight. You see it and feel its effect on you. You also feel and see its effects on the trees. You can see and feel its effects on your entire physical environment at once; the sunlight filtering through the trees, the sunlight calling the bees to action, the sunlight on your back, the sunlight as radiant energy, the sun as a source of light and heat. You can hold all of these impressions separately and yet recognize them as an integrated whole. To do this requires separation from Maya. [08 September 1973]

So, the concentration exercise called “Self-remembering” is a method for approaching and experiencing The Synthesis. More is said about meditation and concentration in another chapter.





SYSTEM — ORDER — COSMOS

The reason that I created this chapter is to make clear a distinction between two types of metaphysical teachings: there is the type that is systematic and there is the type that is unsystematic. The former tends to characterize spiritual teachings that emanate from the so-called “Causal” Plane (which is intellectual in nature), and the latter tends to characterize teachings that emanate from the so-called “Astral” Plane (which is emotional in nature). The Michaelian teachings is the former kind: it is one of the most systematic that I have seen it is built around a vocabulary of specific concepts with well defined meanings. This systematic mental nature of the Michaelian teachings is obvious when one collects quotations from the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group on various subjects, analyzes and synthesizes the information, and thereby comes to understand the pattern of the system as a whole. That is, of course, exactly what one finds in the *Study Papers* book.

One could argue that a teaching of any kind, in order to be most effective and efficient, should be systematic. Every pedagogical school curriculum is set up to present the information in a systematic way, with the broadest and/or most fundamental concepts presented first, then with subsequent information built upon that foundation in ever more advanced and/or complex circles of understanding. An example of this method is to notice the way that mathematics is taught: we first explain the concept of numbers, then explain the relationships of numbers (add, subtract, multiply, divide, fractions), then explain geometry and trigonometry, then explain algebra, then explain calculus, then explain topology. Or something like that; the point is that it is necessary to understand more primitive concepts before one can understand more advanced concepts; there is a hierarchy of understanding.

Books on the Michaelian teachings, and Michaelian teachings websites, typically describe the Michaelian teachings in these pedagogical ways: from simple to complex, from basic to advanced, from general to specific. That is not the way I chose to do it in this book, because the assumption is that readers of this book will have a thorough understanding of the Michaelian teachings before reading this book. Readers of this book will **struggle** if this is not their situation. Indeed, readers of the original Michaelian group transcriptions will **struggle** if this is not their situation, because the information on various subjects is so scattered within the transcriptions. [\[move to intro?\]](#)

Self-similarity?

Definitions of System — Order — Cosmos

This chapter of this book is the product of a word search on three words: system, cosmos, and logos. All three words apply to the notion that the universe has a systematic structure, and therefore any teaching about the structure and function of the universe should be systematic. All three words refer to the orderly arrangement of the reality system in which we find our consciousness embedded.

SYSTEM:

ORDER:

COSMOS:

System in the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

[[Perhaps some of the following can be deleted – if I cannot think of a way to make them relevant.]]

I've been told that I have some obstacles toward spiritual growth — some “bad Tapes” so to speak — that are keeping me from progressing. Can you tell me about them?

Anxiety over others' impressions of your actions, obsessions with systems and procedures, worry about what is right, the fear that you will not be somehow the good little boy. Your halo can be tarnished, and many will still love you.

By systems and procedures, I assume you mean in my personal life and not in my job? Is that correct?

Yes. [mid 1973]

I take this to be an obscure allusion to one of the big features of the Gurdjieffian teachings, which is about the struggle against subconscious habits that keep a person from “waking up”. A feature of the human biocomputer is habituation: it puts people to “sleep”; it makes them “mindless”; it mitigates mindfulness. Refer to the chapter on “Mechanical Man” and the chapter on “Awakening from Sleep” for an elaboration. Beyond that explanation for this exchange, I would add that there is a very creative balance between cosmos (order) and chaos (disorder) in the universe as a whole, so it is mentally healthy to balance the two in one’s little personal life: do not get hung up on one or the other.

Communal living has been tried here on a limited scale. The problem has been with some people not being as productive as others. The [communal] system breaks down. Can you comment?

[Soleal:] We force the issue. You object to being told what you like to do; you are bristling about this right now [discussing communal living]. The people on my world do not object; they would rather be free [than lazy]. [mid 1973]

For the purposes of this chapter on systems in general, I read this as an endorsement for balancing the desires of the individual and the desires of the group in terms of “systems and procedures”. Neither should get too rigid or it breaks the “system”, but, as a general principle, the preference should go to cooperation over competition. In other words, “when push comes to shove”, the bias should be in favor of the larger, more inclusive system; that is the winningest strategy overall. I learned this from Laslo Mero’s book about game theory: *Moral Calculations*.

Sarah: I think he means “cultural” in the wider sense, because we’ve been asking him questions about the political and economic systems.

I think you might profit by a few lessons in how to avoid aggressive actions.

Dick: I would like to ask Soleal: because of studying Gurdjieff, I’ve come to believe that the only possibility for anything is through individual personal growth and not through trying to change things like political systems. I would like to know if this is correct.

Not entirely. Someone must teach the Logos in the first [place]. As the population grows, the teachers [need to] increase. Some people need much more personal direction. Reading will not help them. Are you ready to take on that task?

Are the means for doing this available to us? I’m so stuffed with systems —Gurdjieff, Don Juan, parapsychology. Actually, information like this might interfere with itself.

There should be a synthesis if the information comes through cosmic [sources]. If the synthesis is not felt, then the system is probably not valid.

By definition, in a “system”, typically there are nodes of information connected into a meaningful network. It is possible for data to be wrong, or semantics to be wrong, or both; a valid system has both nodes and semantics correct. A teaching is suspect if it is not comprehensive in its interlocking nodes and webs.

Dick: In the Don Juan books, in the works of faith healers and in the Indian chakras, there seems to be an agreement that there is a place in the lower abdomen, where there is a chakra in the Indian system and a place where the healing can be applied (Mr. A’s faith healing system), and in the Don Juan system, the ‘will’ comes out through a gap in the abdomen – and these are things that I haven’t been able to experience, except to read about them and I’d like to know if those particular points are valid.

The average Creature of Reason does have his gravity center somewhere near the middle of the torso and to get in touch with that energy source, you must first know how you are Centered and what you still have to go through, because you will want to direct that energy into something positive.

Dick: You know, in Robert’s System, he never felt that there was any reason whatsoever for a person to get in touch with his sexual feelings. You know, that they would automatically be operating during your spiritual growth.

Alice: So does that mean that I am a catalyst?

Zealots make the finest catalysts. You are not a zealot. But you can act as a calming force on those around you. There is peace and serenity in your Essence too. This could be the major part of growth for you to get in touch with those fine elements. It is difficult to do this in a system that rewards competition. That usually leads to the

more aggressive elements of the false, culturally induced, personality. Love is the only force that you can apply in a positive situation consciously. [03 July 1973]

The other night, I was complaining about sitting in the midst of the (human) computer and having all this whirling going on and saying, "I can't understand this, it is too much!"

The human nervous system and the large brain make it an ideal conductor. Just add an isotonic solution and that is all that is necessary. It is a simple case of attraction-repulsion — magnetism, if you prefer. [12 August 1973]

At this point, there was a discussion about eye problems pointing to other physical disorders and denoting a brain deviation.

Verify this with actual patients. Those who have visual defects have a very set constellation of abnormalities systemically. There are other physical defects that follow patterns like this.

This Q&A exchange contains a couple of synonyms for system, namely "constellation" and "pattern". A cluster of related health symptoms is referred to as a "syndrome".

Dick: I would like to have a medical session some night, but right now, I'd like to move on to something else. I'd like to bring up the subject of "heaviness" that I find reading all these esoteric books and Hindu books. So far, in these systems, I've found so little of the ordinary type of joy. I'd like to buy a toy boat, just lie in the bath tub and putt around.

You would probably benefit much more from that activity than from reading fifty philosophical texts. These are nothing more than another Old Soul expounding on half-acquired enlightenment. Enlightenment is not ponderous. As I said before, as growth progresses, the soul seeks simplicity. This is one good way to discern whether a particular piece of literature will be of any help to you. If it is merely an exercise in vocabulary and rhetoric, then abandon it. Some very wordy material comes from Young Souls. Be wary of this in selecting reading material.

Most of those involved in the teaching profession — academic, that is — are either Young or Mature Souls, and their system of ethics is erroneously based upon their own fears of physical death and the nothingness — annihilation of the soul. [26 August 1973]

He [Werner Erhard] is not a manifestation of the Causal body [Transcendental Soul] if that is what you mean. However, he does have a workable system for Older Souls. Older Souls are capable of helping each other. In this [Old Soul] Cycle, the psychological becomes philosophical and this is the approach needed. This is why you all discovered Gurdjieff. [04 September 1973]

Some other Q&A exchanges mentioned the "Gurdjieff system", but they did not provide anything beyond this statement. Among all metaphysical teachings, the Fourth Way is rather toward the systematic end of the spectrum. Systematization is one of the things that makes it suitable for Old Souls, that Age being the Neutral Assimilation Aspect of the Cardinal Expression Process, which is the epitome of "philosophy": a propensity and proclivity for pondering profound patterns (and alliterations, haha).

Dick asked if Michael was present during his examination of a difficult male patient, who appeared to be a latent homosexual and a florid hypochondriac.

Most Baby Souls somatize. Any patient who fixates on a particular organ system can usually be categorized immediately. For instance, all elderly ladies with bowel fixations are Baby Souls. [02 October 1973]

The only reason that I included this particular Q&A exchange here is to make the point that the human body is a system that consists of sub-systems and sub-sub-systems and so on, and then make the point that fractal nesting of systems is a feature of the nature of systematization *per se*, and then make the point that the cosmos is thus systematized from beginning to end, from top to bottom, and from outside to inside. The Septenary, as embodied in the Overleaf System, maps the structure of the cosmos. Systematization is also a feature of my books.

Order in the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

Cosmos in the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

General Comments on System — Order — Cosmos





TAO

As we Michaelian students all know, the Michaels preferred to not use the word “God” when referring to an Ultimate Being because the common conception of that Being is not accurate. This is stated in *Messages from Michael*:

There is no exalted purpose behind human life. The life itself is the purpose, and is only one stage of evolution, which proceeds in an awesomely ordered, unalterable line until the created in effect evolves to become the creator. We prefer not to use the word “God” in speaking of the ultimate creative force of the universe.

“You don’t call it God,” Craig said. “I’m an agnostic but I don’t object to the word. Why don’t you use it?”

Primarily because the word “God” in your society has become masculinized and requires the use of the masculine pronoun, thus perpetuating the personification of the universal creative force, which is ethereal and not physical. This cannot be personified, even for teaching purposes with this cadre [the groups of students in contact with the entity Michael]. It would be treading on thin ice for this entity. For us, this teaching is a form of evolution. Unfortunately the word “God” gives rise to anthropomorphic fantasies that have no place in this teaching. For our purposes we shall call this constant creative force the “Tao”, for it is impossible for the western mind to construct any visual image around this word. [MFM, p. 22–23]

As we will see in this chapter, the above statement about the Tao appears to be a continuous Q&A exchange given by the Michaels, but it was actually cobbled together from various statements in various sessions. (When we compare MFM with the original Michaelian group transcriptions, we find that Yarbro often did this.)

There are some subtleties in the discussion of this subject that are not appreciated by very many people other than academic theologians. None of the members of the original Michaelian group were theologians, and no theologians that I know of have been members of subsequent Michael groups, or been Michaelian students at large. I suspect that for this reason the Michaels have not explicitly made some distinctions in their presentation of the Tao that theologians have made in their conceptualizations. In this chapter, I pretend to be a theologian; I make these distinctions; I point them out in my comments on original Michaelian group passages where appropriate. Because of these ambiguities and subtleties, my interpretation of some of the Michaels’ statements about Tao are iffy.

First, let’s see what theologians and esotericists have to say about the Ultimate, the Absolute, the Tao. Then we will interpret what the Michaels have to say about the Tao in the original Michaelian group transcriptions.

Tao per Theology

This section is a very brief summary of information found in its longest form in my book *The Tao of Cosmology*. There are other summaries found in two of my other books, tweaked as appropriate for those books, namely *The Tao of Cosmogony* and *The Tao of Personality*. As one can see from those titles, those books provide my understanding of how the Tao seemingly ‘fragments’ itself into ‘space’ and ‘time’ and ‘personality’ respectively. My conception of the Tao, as presented in those books, is derived from millennia of ponderations and experiences of theologians and mystics and philosophers. Theologians in particular have developed a special vocabulary to apply to their various concepts of the Tao as the “ultimate ontological primitive”. What do I mean by that? The next three subsections are a brief introduction to those terms and their meaning, before we apply the concepts in an effort to understand the Michaels’ conception of the Tao in the next section.

My template for understanding Tao is derived from Chapter 42 of the *Tao Teh Ching*, allegedly written by a semi-legendary mystic name Lao Tzu, who apparently lived approximately 500 BCE, and who was identified by the Michaels as an Infinite Soul:

Tao produced the **One**; the One produced the **Two**; the Two produced the **Three**; the Three produced **All** things. All things carry the **Yin** and embrace the **Yang**, and through the blending of the **Chi** they achieve harmony.

It helps to understand this statement when it is placed in a table, and then the table can be referred to and commented upon:

TRANSCENDENT TAO

TAO'S TEMPLATE in BASIC FORM						
IMMANENT TAO						
Yin (Ordinal)			Chi (Neutral)	Yang (Cardinal)		
First	Second	Third	All	Threeness	Twoness	Oneness

Comments on this table are as follows:

- Tao has a yin/yang about it: it is both 'outside' the boundary of the table (= "transcendent", see below) and 'inside' the boundary of the table (= "immanent", see below). The transcendent side of Tao is undifferentiated and insubstantial; the immanent side of Tao is differentiated and substantial. One and Two and Three are differentiated ("produced") from the substantial side of Tao.
- The three aspects of the nature of Yin (= Ordinality in the Michaelian teachings) are embodied in the words "First — Second — Third" on the left side of "All" in the Table. Notice that Ordinality is *quantitative* and has its numerical components characterized as a *sequence*.
- The three aspects of the nature of Yang (= Cardinality in the Michaelian teachings) are embodied in the words "Threeness — Twoness — Oneness" on the right side of 'All' in the table. Notice that Cardinality is *qualitative* and has its numerical components characterized as *principles*.
- The formula from Tao's Template is "Yin + Yang = Chi". All things are made up of Chi, the immanent, substantial side of Tao. All things — all reality systems — are built out of this numerical structure and this interplay of Yin and Yang. "All things" includes the Overleaf System.

With that brief explanation behind us, we can start to look at how theological concepts fit into Tao's Template. All of the sections below have titles posed as contraries separated by the word *versus*. The reason for this is because we understand a concept by comparison and by contrast with what it is and by what it is not.

Relationalism versus Substantialism

Before we can even begin to discuss the nature of Tao, we have to understand a couple of philosophical concepts, namely the title of this subsection. These are explained in a Wikipedia article:

Relationalism in a broader sense applies to any system of thought that gives importance to the relational nature of reality... On the relationalist view, things are neither self-standing entities nor vague events but relational particulars. Particulars are inherently relational, as they are ontologically open to other particulars in their constitution and action. Particulars, as relational particulars, are the ultimate constituents of reality. Particulars interact and make the very fabric of reality.

That abstract philosophical language might not work for many people, so the Wiki continued with a discussion in terms of the physics to time and space:

In discussions about space and time, the name relationalism ... refers to Leibniz's relationist notion of space and time as against Newton's substantialist views. According to Newton's substantialism, space and time are entities in their own right, existing independently of things [and events]. Leibniz's relationism, on the other hand, describes space and time as systems of relations that exist between objects [and events]. More generally, in physics and philosophy, a relational theory is a framework to understand reality or a physical system in such a way that the positions and other properties of objects [such as motions] are only meaningful relative to other objects [and motions]. In a relational spacetime theory, space does not exist unless there are objects in it; nor does time exist without events. The relational view proposes that space [and time] is contained in objects [and events] and that an object [and event] represents within itself relationships to other objects [and events]. Space can be defined through the relations among the objects that it contains considering their variations through time. This is an alternative to an absolute [substantialist] theory, in which the space [and events] exists

independently of any objects [and events] that can be immersed in it.
[><https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Relationalism>< — retrieved 14 May 2023]

The reason that I included the second paragraph, the one on time and space, is that the Overleaf System consists of a grid of Processes and Aspects, which are just different names applied to personality that correspond to the physics concepts of time and space respectively. In substantivalism, space and time are ontological primitives that have an existence regardless of whether or not anything exists or happens therein. Whereas in relationalism, the ontological primitive is that what exists is the relation between distinct being/doing. In my view, both are correct in that being/doing exists in space and functions in time all the way down to the undifferentiated Immanent Tao; see next section

Transcendent versus Immanent Tao

In the comments on the table, I referred to the area covered by the table as the immanent Tao, and the area outside the table as the transcendent Tao. Wikipedia explains the difference between the two:

In religion, transcendence is the aspect of a deity's nature and power that is completely independent of the material universe, beyond all known physical laws. This is contrasted with immanence, where a god is said to be fully present in the physical world and thus accessible to creatures in various ways.... Although transcendence is defined as the opposite of immanence, the two are not necessarily mutually exclusive. Some theologians and metaphysicians of various religious traditions affirm that a god is both within and beyond the universe (pantheism); in it, but not of it; simultaneously pervading it and surpassing it.
[>[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Transcendence_\(religion\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Transcendence_(religion))< — retrieved 14 May 2023]

As we will see, the Michaels during the original Michaelian group seem to refer to the Tao sometimes as transcendent and sometimes as immanent. This is not a contradiction if you understand the concept of Tao as living (doing/being) on the border between those two conceptualizations, and thereby

The way I resolve the Michaelian ambiguities is to say that the Michaels ignore the Absolute Absolute as irrelevant to anything they wanted to say, and that they just referred to the transcendent Tao here and the immanent Tao there without explicitly making that distinction between these two aspects of Tao. With that understanding, I can tease out which aspect of Tao they are referring to in the various mentions of the Tao.

Absolute Absolute

Absolute versus Relative

A definition of the Absolute is provide by Wikipedia, thus:

In metaphysics, the absolute refers most of the time to a perfect, self-sufficient reality that depends upon nothing external to itself. In theology, the term is also used to designate the supreme being. Hegel considers the absolute as an "unconditioned reality which is either the spiritual ground of all being or the whole of things considered as a spiritual unity". This definition of the absolute is also found in the works of F. W. J. Schelling, the perceived insufficiencies of which inspired Hegel to develop his own distinctive account. Hegel's view was anticipated by Johann Gottlieb Fichte. The concept of "the absolute" as "the sum of all being, actual and potential" was introduced in modern philosophy by Hegel.

For Hegel, as understood by Martin Heidegger, the absolute is "spirit, that which is present to itself in the certainty of unconditional self-knowing". As Hegel is understood by Frederick Copleston, "[l]ogic studies the absolute 'in itself'; the philosophy of nature studies the absolute 'for itself'; and the philosophy of spirit studies the absolute 'in and for itself'."

In British philosophy, self-identified neo-Hegelian F. H. Bradley distinguishes the concept of absolute from God, whereas Josiah Royce, another neo-Hegelian and founder of the American idealism school of philosophy, has equated them.

Apophatic versus Cataphatic Tao

There are two ways to regard the Tao as 'creator': 1) as the ultimate *emptiness* 'out' of which creation exists—functions or 2) as the ultimate *fullness* 'within' which creation exists—functions. I place 'out' and 'within' in quotes because they are metaphors for the 'direction' of 'creation' from the Tao which is conceived as transcendent to space–time and time–space. What is not so mysterious is what exists—functions in space–time

and time-space between these two 'extremes', namely 'creation'. The theological terms for these are "apophatic" and "cataphatic" conceptions of the Tao:

Apophatic theology, also known as negative theology, is a form of theological thinking and religious practice which attempts to approach God, the Divine, by negation, to speak only in terms of what may not be said about the perfect goodness that is God. It forms a pair together with cataphatic theology, which approaches God or the Divine by affirmations or positive statements about what God is. The apophatic tradition is often, though not always, allied with the approach of mysticism, which aims at the vision of God, the perception of the divine reality beyond the realm of ordinary perception.

[>https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Apophatic_theology< — retrieved 11 July 2022]

That is a lengthy Wikipedia article, and one well worth your time to read if you have any interest in such abstract theological considerations. I have three brief comments about this distinction between apophatic and cataphatic conceptions of the Tao that might make it seem more relevant to concrete considerations:

1. Conceptually, in correspondence with number theory in mathematics, apophatic = zero and cataphatic = infinity. All of the numbers exist-function between these two extremes. Zero and infinity can also be conceptually correlated with the transcendent Tao, and the numbers can be conceptually correlated with the immanent Tao.
2. In terms of information theory, apophatic = 'silence' and cataphatic = 'noise'. I put 'silence' and 'noise' in single quotes because they are metaphors for information that is transmitted by sound, whereas there are many other ways to communicate information than auditory. There is a very brief introduction to information theory in the chapter "Communication".
3. In terms of physics phenomena, apophatic = at rest and cataphatic = in chaos.

One can regard both of these conceptions of Tao as equally true if one combines them into the concept of the Absolute: [see below....](#)

Potential versus Telic Tao

Objective versus Subjective

Some people prefer to think of the Tao as the ultimate outside of oneself and other people prefer to think of the Tao as the ultimate inside of oneself. Here again, I

Both are the imaginary sides of the sandwich of the actuality of experiential Tao

Absolute versus Relative Tao

In our search for a deep understanding of what the Michaels meant by the "Tao", we consider what philosophers and theologians refer to as the "ultimate ontological primitive". The first notion that one must understand is that there is an idea even more ontologically primitive than the conceptualization of the Tao as the Michaels used the term. This is sometimes referred to as the Absolute Absolute. It cannot be compared or contrasted to anything or to nothing; it cannot be said to even exist or to not exist; it is "beyond" the realm of experience; it is "beyond" conceivability. This means that, technically speaking, we should not even have given a name to the Absolute Absolute or to have pointed to it as if it were something. As the first sentence of the Tao Teh Ching says, "The Tao that can be named is not the Tao".

So what is the Tao? The Tao is sometimes referred to the "Absolute", which is distinct from the "Relative". conceivable and exp that out of which all is born and borne. At this point

In summary, there is the Absolute Absolute, the Absolute, and the Relative. The Absolute Absolute is ineffable in that it precedes even the distinction between the Absolute and the Relative.

In the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group session extracted below, we see hints of these various concepts of Tao. Unless the reader is aware of theological concepts, one would not notice the hints, but I did...

Tao per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

The following extracts from original Michaelian group transcriptions are Q&A exchanges, where an original Michaelian group member asks a question (or makes a comment), and the Michaels provide an answer. **This is not a subject that would benefit by division into subcategories, as some subjects do.** These extracts are presented in the chronological order in which they appear in the transcriptions, even though this is not a subject where there was a development or evolution of a specific revelation of a facet of the Michaelian teachings, as was often the case with the original Michaelian group. As is my custom, I often provide some explanatory comments following the question or answer. Underlined words in the Michaels' answers are my emphasis, to draw attention to what it is that I comment on. Sometimes I embed words or phrases [in brackets] that I believe help to clarify the question or the answer.

The Michaels used the word, introduced the subject of, the Tao in their second appearance to the original Michaelian group:

The law of cause and effect is as old as the Tao and that has existed for a long time. [17 August 1973]

The law of cause and effect has existed since the so-called "Big Bang", according to modern physics. Without getting deep into the weeds of physics here (I do that in my book *The Tao of Cosmology*), let me just say that the law of cause and effect is coexistent with time and space in the Physical Plane.

No definition or descriptions of the Tao was given in the first mention of the word, or in the second:

The Infinite Soul perceives the Tao. [late August 1973]

Refer to the chapter "Transcendental and Infinite Souls" for more information about those beings.

The Causal Plane was discussed at this point, and Sarah said that she gathered that there was a high Causal body and a low Causal body, and that Michael says that he is a Causal being.

That is essentially correct. There is growth and evolution necessary on the Causal Plane as well as the Astral.

There is a difference, though. This Entity [Michael, on the Causal Plane] still perceives self and something apart from self, although still a part of self, so this Entity cannot be said to be all of everything there is. The high Causal body [Transcendental Soul] does not perceive even this minute separation evidently. This is where the difference lies. Beyond the Physical Plane, the evolution concerns perception of the Tao. [26 August 1973]

Evolution on the planes concerns both quantitative and qualitative perceptions of the Tao. There is both a hierarchy and a gradation in these perceptions that escalates and increases as the soul evolves. Refer to the chapter "Planes" for a thorough discussion of that.

Were we a part of the "passion play" [Jesus's crucifixion]?

Israel, of course, refers to the Tao. Israel was not a physical thing when those words were written. Souls cast from the Tao at the beginning, at least not in any way that you would understand [sic]. Israel was not Syria-Palestine, at least not until fairly recent times. Israel was an allegory used to express the inexpressible. When the being you speak of as Moses spoke of his people being cast from their homeland, he spoke of souls becoming Earth-bound for the Cycle. The genealogies are reincarnational Cycles: count them. [mid September 1973]

According to this answer, and according to the description by esotericists quoted above, the Tao is "inexpressible", aka ineffable, incomprehensible. In theology, this is due to it being undifferentiated from — to use mathematical terms — zero/infinity. However, expressibility starts with the differentiation of the Tao into the processes of time and aspects of space. In the Michaelian teachings, this is referred to as the so-called "Casting" of souls into incarnation; refer to the chapter "Casting", for more information.

How did life get started?

Physical evolution proceeded on an orderly basis on all worlds. This concept should be self-evident when one examines the remnants. Spiritual evolution occurs simultaneously. There is evolution on all planes except the Tao. That is the only perfection of which we are cognizant. [mid September 1973]

In my perception, there is an ambiguity in the Michaelian teachings about what the word Tao refers to. In Theology, there is the notion of the Ultimate as "transcendent", and then there as the notion of the Ultimate as "immanent". This is discussed in some detail in my book *A History of the Overleaf Chart*, in Chapter 4N, "Casting Concerns", and, of course, the internet provides resources galore on the subject, such as this one: ><https://www.encyclopedia.com/environment/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/transcendence-and-immanence><. Near as I have been able to discern, the Michaels understand Tao as both transcendent and immanent (as I do), but they do not always make the explicit distinction when they discuss the Tao; the transcendent or immanent aspect of Tao is implicit in the description. In this particular passage, one might

think that the Tao is the seventh plane, and the first Overleaf chart created by the original Michaelian group shows it that way (see further on). Therefore, this passage appears to be consistent with the notion of Tao as immanent, that all planes are Cast as fragments of the substance of Tao. As we will see further on, there are passages that are more consistent with the notion of Tao as transcendent. The passage above where Tao is “inexpressible” is one of those.

Gene: All of a sudden, we're having this huge body of information about souls and it must be important, and I would like an overview. Is this information going to be practical to me? Can I use it? Why this topic?

This is another Overleaf, and integration [of this information] must take place before you are able to perceive the synthesis, which, of course, must precede perception of the Tao. Yes, it can be of great value to you. Body Typing answers some questions. This [Soul Age] answers still another set of questions. This is a broader Overleaf, and there are more. [18 September 1973]

In a passage quoted previously, Tao was characterized as immanent in terms of “perfection”. In the passage immediately above, the Tao is regarded as immanent in terms of “synthesis”. Refer to the chapter “Synthesis” for a discussion of that notion.

Sarah: I wanted to pursue that thing we started the other day about Israel being an allegory, meaning “cast out souls.” He told us that Israel, as referred to in the Old Testament, was an allegory and it referred to souls being cast from the Tao.

Dick: Israel is used to try to explain the inexplicable.

Sarah: He said that the firstborn experienced the feeling of being cast from the homeland. The homeland was not a place in Palestine. It was the place from which the souls come. [18 September 1973]

In my view, the word “inexplicable” is appropriate for the transcendent aspect of Tao, as the word “inexpressible” was transcendent in the passage Dick referred to, quoted previously.

The word Tao was not used in the following Q&A exchange, but that is what it is referring to.

Loving the creative force [Tao] itself requires separation from any personification.

“Personification” is an aspect of the immanent Tao whereas “creative force” is a reference to the transcendent Tao.

Richard: Could we have a clarification of Fragments and Entities?

The higher planes each have seven levels of evolution, not just the physical. The continuous creative force that is universal Casts out Entities into physical lifetimes. These Entities Fragment and become many different Personalities. Their integration is the evolutionary pattern for all souls. ... This concept does not have to be expressed in theological terminology in order to be valid. Many who seek and find are atheists. That is all right. The Tao does not require belief in order to continue. [06 October 1973] Entire Entities are Cast from the Tao. [08 October 1973] There are seven major Roles in Essence. These are chosen at the time the Entity is first born or Cast from the Tao and followed throughout. [late October 1973] The Entities were Cast from the Tao at the same moment in time. [08 November 1973] This man was Cast from the Tao almost twenty thousand years prior to yours [therefore in a different Cadre], but you know him. [06 February 1974] The animal kingdom picks up on the vibrations around it. The domesticated animals have a tendency to imitate the one who renders the major part of nurturing. The hive soul is truly ancient and was here [on Earth] long before individual souls were Cast from the Tao. [03 April 1974] The Entity as Cast from the Tao contained 100 Priests, 400 Slaves and 350 Sages. (You have met) no one in this life (time who is part of your Entity). [23 June 1974] Twinning occurs often at the moment the Entity is Cast from the Tao and can occur between Entities Cast at the same time. ... Essence Twinning occurs at the moment the Entities are Cast from the Tao. [23 June 1974]

Here again I perceive an ambiguity because of the use of the word “from”. It can be said that Entities are Cast out like ‘sparks’ from the transcendent Tao, and it can be said that Entities are Cast in a mold from the substance of the immanent Tao. **Technically, the transcendent Tao is not that which Casts out Entities, it is the immanent Tao that**

Ellis: I have been reading of the concept that one has to be true to himself — be himself, an individual — to perceive the infinite. Is this true?

That is why Socrates said, “Know thyself.” If you perceive that which is “really you”, you will concomitantly perceive the Tao. [08 November 1973]

Elsewhere, this sentiment is stated as **“The Created evolves to become the creator.”** [

There was quite a discussion here about sexuality, False Personality, and Essence. Some at the meeting were uneasy because they thought Michael was running down sex. Then came:

Plan is fantasy, or if you will, imagination. If the sexual act is surrounded by fantasy, it is both competitive and unreal. It is neither good nor bad. It is that which insures the continuity of the Tao. This universe has an awesome order. [08 November 1973]

Evidently, reproductive sexuality is an essential and necessary component of the entire cosmic scheme of involution and evolution **Seems like there should be more to it** than providing bodies for souls to reincarnate into as part of enriching the Tao in the short run and ensuring the continuity of Tao in the long run. Perhaps this is the more to it:

How blurred is your sexual activity?

The only sexual activity would be found in the low Astral Plane and there it is not truly analogous to physical sexual activity. Reproduction is a function of the Physical Plane and the Tao. Since sexual activity does have a generative motive, however blurred that may be, the reason for its existence disappears with the dissolution of the reproductive function. [08 October 1974]

Eugene: I am confused about which souls inhabit what planes after the Physical level. I would like more information about this

There are, of course, seven planes in all, each with seven levels. Beyond the Astral Plane is the Causal plane with seven levels ... three low, one mid Causal plane level upon which we reside, and three higher levels upon which reside the high Causal bodies — the Transcendental Souls contiguous with this plane, and the Mental Plane is the Akashic plane, which is a photographic record of all history. Some very high Adepts have access to this plane. On the Mental Plane resides the Infinite Soul [on the high levels], and the low and mid-Mental bodies. Beyond this is the Buddhic Plane and upon this level are all of those souls who have achieved physical communion with the Tao. Beyond this, of course, [is] the Tao. [29 November 1973]

This passage has some ambiguities. It is impossible to tell from it if Tao is the seventh plane as with the immanent aspect of Tao or “beyond” the seven planes, as in the transcendent aspect of Tao. In my book *A History of the Overleaf Chart*, in Chapter 1B, “The Seven Planes”, I make a case that the most sensible explanation of this and other passages is that the Michaels conflated all three Cardinal Planes under the name “Buddhic” Plane. **Th**

Edgar: There was an impression that the soul is entrapped in this physical body. I disagree with that answer and my opinion was expressed regarding this. There is one Infinite Soul and we are each manifestations of the same soul and I fail to see how the Infinite Soul can be trapped in a finite body.

All souls or Fragments, as we choose to call them for now, are of course, a part of the universal creative force, which we call the Tao. However, when this Fragmentation occurs and the physical Cycle begins, this Fragment is remote from the Tao and remote from what we call the Infinite Soul. We think that we have a problem with semantics here. Let us use an analogy and perhaps this will become crystal clear. Imagine the Atlantic Ocean as the whole. Imagine filling ten test tubes, then sealing them so that they are both watertight and air tight; then imagine dropping them back into the ocean. They are a part of the whole, yes, but unless some outside force liberates them, they are remote from the source and trapped in an effective prison. This same way the soul is trapped in the body. The body is very limited in what it can do. You [Edgar, in a wheelchair] should understand this really better than the others. The soul in its true spiritual state has no limitations or handicaps. [20 December 1973]

Edgar: In reading our new workbook on page 82, I have a question about integrating Fragments and them having a pull on you and it being “curtains” for those who integrate. Also, I have a question about Karma: they said the strength comes from those already integrated. Is good and evil the fulfillment of Karma with a promise to return to “paradise” after this fulfillment?

That question was raised in a spirit of wishful poignancy and concerned missing certain aspects of life on the Physical Plane such as sunlight filtering through the trees, etc. However, you are right, Edgar, the good and evil mentioned in that paradise refers to negative [Ordinal, yin] and positive [Cardinal, yang] poles of the Monads. Even after evolution to the Astral Plane, there are many steps yet to take. Return to the Tao is the goal or purpose. Perhaps this is an area [that] we still must grow [into], for we do not see this as an insufficient goal. [27 January 1974]

Eugene: Question regarding the intelligence of plants and maybe consciousness of other matter.

We would repeat an earlier truth: the Tao is all there is. [22 May 1974]

Dick: The big picture: Tao — creation — Tao — creation — Seems so unglamorous. Seems there is no end point.

All of you are losing sight of the eons that lie between the Physical Plane and eventual return to the Tao. Or to the “recycling”. This should be paradise enough for any soul. All that is creatable flows from the Tao, utilizing the material that has existed for all time.

Shirley: What is the definition of Tao?

The Tao is the all, the creative force. It is everything there is.

Marty: Have any Entities reunited with the Tao?

The Tao has existed always. Yes, there have been many, countless in fact, Cycles. [25 June 1974]

Comment: The King seeks the kingdom.

That is valid, or [the King seeks] the Tao. [17 September 1974]

At this point in time, it is useless to bring up any discussion of an ultimate purpose in existence. This is not a concept that can be dealt with in the language of the Physical Plane. It must be intuited at a higher level and it is up to the student to work toward this intuition. It is not easy. The Tao cannot be understood intellectually, it can only be intuited. [24 September 1974]

The Priest seeks — as the King and the Sage — the Tao. [01 October 1974]

King, Priest, and Sage are the Cardinal Roles, and thus they are more attuned to the nature of Tao ...

These lessons, of course, provide the groundwork for the lessons yet to come, as the Entities work progressively toward the Tao. [08 October 1974]

As we have intimated before, the Tao is the epitome of simplicity and, therefore, the simplicity toward which we all strive in our return to the primeval. Therefore, the Physical Plane, with its enormous complexity, offers by far the most challenge and also the most barriers to spiritual liberation.

Dick: Would like some clarification of the word “Agape.”

We use this word to express the unqualified acceptance of another person’s being as the greater part of self. We know of no other word that would be appropriate. This is the love of the Tao. [22 October 1974]

About the Tao as mother — the Infant Soul is symbiotic.

No and yes. The casting is not casting out, but rather casting into. The Tao is not just the mother, but you know this. The Infant Soul is close, but furthest from the goal. The ladder must be climbed and the Infant [Soul] is aware of this. Its closeness comes from this knowledge. Beyond this, the knowledge is not expanded. The Infant Soul is in this way unique and it is as close to its ‘mother’ as the infant man who wanders to the Astral Plane continually and loses contact immediately. In the Casting, the total awareness is lost, but not the feeling of loss. The Infant Soul then experiences the loss and the closeness simultaneously. The Infant Soul is again unique in this sense of loss and must start the sorting that later becomes the seeking of the Tao. The confusing life of the Mature Soul will, and indeed does, Balance this great sense of loss in the Infant [Soul]. The sense of loss is not present in the Mature Soul and this “heavy” involvement into the life stream will help the Infant [Soul] to learn to seek what it has lost. This is what is meant by Balance. [08 November 1974]

Ralph: Going toward simplicity, is there anything more simple than the Tao?

More simple, no. The Tao you see is the absence of complexity. [26 December 1974]

[Soleal:] And soon, with an ultimate glimpse of the Tao and my own part in this magnificent scheme, there was no longer the sense of apartness — only the feeling of oneness that characterizes the acceptance of the teaching, and it was with joy and not disappointment that I received this insight. I can only tell you that I have glimpsed this oneness and I have experienced the joy. Long after we have passed from this time, the leaves of the Tao will continue to fall in ever-changing patterns. What more awesome poetry could you possibly desire?

What more majestic goal could you possibly seek? To be a part of this, an infinitesimal part of this magnificence fills me with joy. [11 January 1975]

Dick asked why Michael uses the word "Tao" and not "God."

Primarily, because the word "God" in your society has become masculinized and requires the use of the masculine pronoun, thus perpetuating the personification of the Universal Creative Force, which is ethereal and not physical. This cannot be personified even for teaching purposes with this cadre. It would be treading on thin ice for this Entity. [30 January 1975]

We talked of perceptions — unity with the Tao, etc.

This Entity [Michael] perceives itself as a part of the greater whole that is the oneness. This Entity also perceives all of its Fragments making up the whole, much as you perceive the individual parts of the anatomic structure. We would have to, at this point in our own evolution, agree that there is a pervasive cosmic awareness that is certainly present at the Tao. It is extremely doubtful, however, that those lofty entities on the Buddhaic Plane really feel for the personalities they left behind eons ago. What is lost is not the perception of self — what is lost is the Personality's perception of the apartness — the separateness that is an illusion of the Physical Plane. This Entity does not perceive the apartness that you feel when you are communicating with, for instance, Soleal. You perceive it because both you and he are caught in the artificial limitations, the solid, rigid, space-time-continuation [continuum?] of the Physical Plane. [08 February 1975]

To feel the resistance is to feel the polarity, to feel the yin and yang of the Tao. [16 February 1975]

In the beginning, it would suffice to say that we didn't believe in anyone or anywhere. We must start at a time and a point in infinite space and eternal "time" to acquire something you would call shouldering responsibility or acknowledging rules and proceed forward from that point through your little piece of the greater Tao, which you call your life role. All do not grow to appreciate that which is in Essence, but most do experience a nagging pull in that direction. Religion has nothing to do with formal belief in any one particular system. We would have you look upon religion as an ecstatic celebration of the pan-dimensional life of the constant creative force of the universe, of the Tao. We would see you look upon religion as the joy of the liberated Essence. [Dimensions! Magazine, June 1975]

The evening began with talk about the [A Course in] Miracles material, and we shared thoughts about the difference between false goals and true goals. Must we give up life goals?

All must realize that the term Holy Spirit does in fact refer to the Essence — that within the self that is in contact with the Tao. To contact this Holy Spirit, then, requires only the quieting of the Overleaves to the extent that the Essence can be perceived. The perception is often brilliantly elucidated during a so-called "spiritual" experience, when the Personality is temporarily inactivated by the powerful input. [12 December 1976]

The Intellectual Center cannot perceive God. The Intellectual Center is not interested in this perception; it does not count it as a loss [to not perceive God]. Only the Higher Centers long [yearn] for the Tao, through the Emotional Center. [12 December 1976]

Louise: While I am emotionalizing, am I using that as a way of repressing what I am feeling?

Intellectualizing denies emotionalism. The expression emotionally releases the Personality from the intellectual trap. The machine has a tape that warns it when this is happening and the Passion Mode employs itself to re-engage the intellectual trap. The problem at this point is that the Personality does no longer connect with the imprinting habit. Freedom of expression is the gift of the Tao upon the Personality. The trap is triggered in the refusal to express the Passion Mode, specifically, in the Positive Pole. [07 November 1977]

Do not forget: the one owing [a Karmic debt] hangs on. The intellectual justification for survival in Acceptance is over. The acknowledgment completes the Ribbon and within [the] Tao's eyes, erases it. This also provides the

Personality with the luxury of freedom. The Personality involved in the Karma does not have to be present on the Physical Plane to acknowledge the completion of Karma. Just because Essence is trapped in the body does not mean that it is denied the experience of other dimensions. [07 November 1977]

God per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

Even though the Michaels preferred to use the word Tao instead of the word God, the latter word did appear a few times in the original Michaelian group transcriptions. **Mostly before the run-up to the use of Tao?**

Personification of the godhead is the strongest in this Cycle. [late August 1973]

Dick: Why are there so many diseases? God made a perfect organism and caused so many diseases. [04 September 1973]

Dick: "In the beginning was the word. The word was God." [John 1:1.] [08 September 1973]

Gene: Recently on my trip, I read a book by Meher Baba and it really tore me up, because he said, "I am the Christ, I am God, I've gone all the way up and I've been united with the all." Then he says, "Yes, I catch colds, and I do this and that." I also know that Baba Ullah says, "I was Christ, who was Muhammed and now I am here!"

Sarah: And Saiya Baba says that, also.

Gene: Yeah, OK, and then there were the five perfect masters that Meher Baba talks about. Maharaj Gee, the 14-year old Guru calls himself the "Perfect Master." There are so many masters and there are so many Christ principles and God principles, and I sure would like some clarifying help in this. [18 September 1973]

Sarah (to Gene): Ahura Mazda is the God of Zoroaster. I brought a book to show you. So, your friend is evidently into Zarathrustra, Zoroastrinism. [02 October 1973]

Dick: That still doesn't answer my question. Simply in the past, love always was directed toward someone. Now what do we do, direct it towards God or Jesus? [06 October 1973]

The Priest is the Slave exalted. These Roles express themselves in service to mankind: humanitarian ideals. In the Priest, there is a sense of God-consciousness, otherworldliness. Physician can be in Essence for either Slaves or Priests, as can social work, nursing and the clergy. [late October 1973]

The Priest is the Slave exalted. The Priest is born with a sense of God-consciousness or 'other worldliness.' The Priest in Essence chooses a life role where it is possible to bring comfort to many in a spiritual sense. [15 November 1973]

Edgar: What is meant by his saying he was the Son of God?

You are all sons of "God." This man, before the Infinite Soul manifested, referred to himself as the servant of man. The Infinite Soul said, "I am the Word." The Infinite Soul manifested during a period of intense meditation and fasting, and "the sermon on the mount" was the first uttering of the Infinite Soul. [22 November 1973]

Edgar: The way I have understood the teachings of Christ through meditation or praying, one can elevate himself to receive the word by communion with God. That is what he meant by "receiving the word of God." That is what is meant by being "under grace" — all troubles melt away. Can I achieve this state? [22 November 1973]

[[keep going – this section is worth doing]]

It does not say so here whether or not the entire cosmos is subject to developmental processes, but I would say that the immanent aspect of Tao (within Physical Plane spacetime and its higher-plane cognates) is in development and that the transcendent aspect of Tao is not. Immanent Tao has two reciprocal components, space-like and time-like; Transcendent Tao also has two reciprocal components, which in math are Zero and Infinity, against which all else is measured.





TAO SEX ORGY

I suspected that that chapter title would get your attention. My use of the words “sex” and “orgy” in the context of “Tao” could be construed as just a bit misleading, but hear me out. It is true that my definitions, for the purpose of this chapter, are not the same as in the common vernacular, but I think you will forgive my bait-and-switch tactic and the false advertising. Prurient, salacious,

So what is a creator to do...

This chapter connects several chapters together... Sections referring to other relevant study papers, such as:

“Fragmentation and Reintegration” of the Tao

“Monads”, “Karma”, “Agreements” where interaction between two makes three at the next higher level.

“Sexuality” is about far more than the reproduction of the species: it is about “intercourse”, “conjugation” in all of the Centers

“Intimacy” is just another word for collapsing the quantum wave function that sits between two sides of an equation, so that potentiality become actuality.

“Ecstasy”



TAPESTRY AND THREADS

If you put together the notion of reincarnation with the notion of kindred souls and the notion of Karma you might be insightful enough to surmise that kindred souls spend many of their lifetimes in each other's company working on their issues and projects. According to the Michaels you would be correct, and the name that they have given to this notion is "tapestry".

The metaphor of reality as a 'fabric' is not only used in the Michaelian teachings.... NDE

Practically all of the quotations in this chapter are found in other chapters on other subjects, but I believe this way of organizing the information is useful. There is an idea or concept here that ties together **three types of threads**: threads of Karma, threads of experience, and threads of Composites....

The words Tapestry and Threads are capitalized in this chapter and other chapters of this *Study Papers* book because it has a special meaning in the Michaelian teachings; they are a Michaelian jargon words that needs a definition apart from its use in the common vernacular. The subject came up during the original Michaelian group on numerous occasions, some interesting things were said about it, and it might be helpful for Michaelian students to have the answers conveniently collected and commented all in one place.

Tapestry per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

The following extracts from original Michaelian group transcriptions are Q&A exchanges, where an original Michaelian group member asks a question (or makes a comment), and the Michaels provide an answer. This is a subject that benefits by division into subcategories, as some other subjects do also. **These extracts are presented in the chronological order in which they were given, even though this is not a subject where there was a development or evolution of a specific revelation of a facet of the Michaelian teachings, as was often the case with the original Michaelian group.** As is my custom, I often provide some explanatory comments following the question or answer. Underlined words in the Michaels' answers are my emphasis, to draw attention to what it is that I comment on. Sometimes I embed words or phrases [in brackets] that I believe help to clarify the question or the answer.

The notion first appeared in the second session in which the Michaels were the source:

Karma is not fate. Fate is a lie. Karma is a law. There is a great danger in becoming fatalistic about Karma. You are all at the level now where that [fatalism] is a possibility. You must learn this about Karma, and that is, that lessons learned in this way are eternally yours. Fate is illusion. It exists no more than faith, which is simply silly. It [Karma] is a weaving together of life Cycles. It is what keeps you together [from lifetime to lifetime]. Sarah would have found Alice again if she had to search the world. [17 August 1973]

Thereafter in the original Michaelian group transcriptions, the word "weave" was always combined with the word "tapestry":

This universe has an awesome order.

Ellis: I don't see ... just what is important about past lives? What is their importance now? I was a king in Greece!

Knowing the names only serves as a good springboard. This enables you to peruse your possible alternatives in a leisurely fashion. If Sarah can outgrow her fear of names, this could be quite instructive, as it could weave a most interesting tapestry. Greece was not the country, Ellis.

Phyllis: Would you tell me about past lives?

Phyllis has chosen almost consistently good Essence roles, but was not ready at the time to evolve. She was an architect in Rome. She was a painter in Spain. She has also been a seamstress, a teacher of music and a wandering minstrel; also, a very good violinist. [08 November 1973]

The subject did not come up again for nearly a year:

It was suggested that each of us attempt to meditate or concentrate on the tapestry, with whom and why we have been together. [15 October 1974]

Apparently, the subject did not come up during that year, late 1973 to late 1974, because the original Michaelian group members were not ready for it:

Dick: There was an offer by Michael to weave a tapestry of past lives. Are they ready for that now? Should we ask specific questions?

There is no need to ask specific questions. We would think you would examine your various reasons for evading this particular question; it is an interesting phenomenon. [19 October 1974]

Allyn would like to know how far back we should weave the tapestry: before Christ?

This is our ultimate intention, yes. [22 October 1974]

The following quotation does not mention the weaving of a tapestry, but it seems relevant to the subject:

There is an awesome order to the cosmos. Yes, we agree with that, but there is no evidence of preordination [predestination, determinism] in all of that order. [15 April 1975]

So, what is a tapestry made of? It is made of different-colored threads that are woven in such a way as to display an orderly pattern chosen by the weaver. Likewise, our lives are woven by our souls and by Essence in harmony with the structure of the universe.

Threads per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

The 'Tapestry' is a metaphor for the weaving together of the lives of kindred souls in their journey of reincarnation. Tapestries are built from threads. 'Threads' are a metaphor for the journey that the soul takes from lifetime to lifetime. The Michaels used this term 'thread' more often than the metaphor of 'Tapestry' during the original Michaelian group.

Three types of threads are found in the original Michaelian group transcriptions: threads of Karma, threads of experience, and threads of Composites. For convenience, there are gathered into three subsections of this section.

Karmic Threads

Let's revisit the quotation at the beginning of this chapter:

Karma is not fate. Fate is a lie. Karma is a law. There is a great danger in becoming fatalistic about Karma. You are all at the level now where that [fatalism] is a possibility. You must learn this about Karma, and that is, that lessons learned in this way are eternally yours. Fate is illusion. It exists no more than faith, which is simply silly. It [Karma] is a weaving together of life Cycles. It is what keeps you together [from lifetime to lifetime]. Sarah would have found Alice again if she had to search the world. [17 August 1973]

What are Karmic Ribbons?

Those interwoven threads between you and the others you are associated with. Things they've done to you and you to them ... things that have to be evened. [04 September 1973]

Refer to the chapter "Karma" for an extensive discussion about the metaphor of the Karmic 'Ribbon' as being like a 'thread' that connects two souls. The Michaels use the two terms somewhat synonymously, as that which connect souls and events that might otherwise appear to be disconnected because of the deaths of physical bodies. Astral bodies do not die while the Fragment is repeatedly reincarnating; Fragments are aware of the threads and ribbons that connect events from physical lifetime to physical lifetime.

Question lost: [Something like: Is there a way to know our Karmic Ribbons?]

Yes, through conscious recall. Sarah almost has it. She has found four threads already. This is important. Work on it, then you will know what it is that you must do this time.

Is burning a Karmic Ribbon always a negative thing?

Sometimes you are the debtor. Sometimes it is to you that the debt is owed. The Ribbon is the thread that links you to the other Fragments of a Karmic play. You wish to complete the Monad. As soon as this is accomplished, the Fragment has evolved. As soon as the major Monads are completed, the Fragments are integrated.

Sarah wanted to know if there was one dominant thread [for Karma]. If you do it to her in this life, is she going to turn around and do it to you in the next life? Is it that Karmic Ribbons makes you find them [the other person connected by the Karmic Ribbon]? [17 October 1973]

Question: I would like to ask Michael if there are any threads [Karmic Ribbons?] between myself and Rachel(?). [01 November 1973]

Jack: What happened to my former wife who died?

... the soul about whom you inquire is a Young Soul, not yet engaged in the review of the Karmic threads yet. [29 November 1973]

Cheryl made a comment about learning lessons.

Cheryl, you have learned a few lessons before. This is why the Teaching comes easily now.

There were men alive at that time who knew the teachings of Socrates were much alive and you were able to pick up the threads quite easily for the relatively unbroken ribbon linking this life to your previous life.

We repeat, we will not make this easy for you, but each of you will now be open to the memories of this, for you, the most important physical interval when all of you were touched by greatness. [13 February 1974]

Comment: We wondered if he would burn the [Karmic] Ribbons he had left, and went on considering that everyone on earth has a goal — a set of things to experience and learn on the Physical Plane. We wondered about the betrayal of Astral agreements we may have made, and someone asked if Michael would let us know what missions we had decided to accomplish.

We will, yes, but we had hoped that by giving you the Overleaves and Photographing the patterns, the insights would come. Many of you already have some inkling of what you have agreed to do merely by discussing your Karmic Ribbons and interwoven Sequences. These tasks are not always difficult; many are not even very interesting, but in some way, they enrich the Fragment and lead to the experiencing of all of life. [15 May 1974]

[[search for “weave”]]

Experiential Threads

The first appearance of the word “threads” was in the same session as the appearance of the word “weaving” with respect to Karma:

What sense in life? [Probably meaning: Is there any way to figure out your Karmic Ribbons or is there any way to remember your past lives?]

Yes, there is a way. You must first be able to recall the threads [of past lives]. This is what takes the practice. This is why concentration and meditation have been stressed [recommended by the Michaels]. You have indicated that you wish this and we are showing you how. [17 August 1973]

Ray: Where do people stay after death? In what space are they?

This depends a great deal on the level of the soul and the belief system going at the time of transition [physical death]. For instance, those souls who make [the] transition believing in a literal “heaven” and “hell” will have to experience this before they can experience anything else, as unfortunately, they create this out of Astral matter with the thoughts of transition. Then those souls like [atheist] Jean Paul Sartre must experience a long period of ‘nothing’ before they go on. Then the soul becomes a habitué of the low [levels of the] Astral Plane. The alternative threads can be pursued, the alternate courses outlined and the choices made. [15 November 1973]

The soul between lifetimes decides which Karmic threads and which experiential threads are selected for exploration in the next lifetime. In the ‘school’ of reincarnation, just as in schools on the Physical Plane, there are required ‘subjects’ (Karma, Monads), and there are ‘elective’ subjects: choices of the soul to satisfy its curiosity.

Bonding Threads

Delia: If reincarnated with a loved one, will we communicate with them again?

There are so many strands that bond you together, that it is truly unlikely that one who is genuinely loved will not be with you again in the future as well as in the past. [03 July 1974] [[search "strand" \]\]](#)

Dick: I would like to ask about my sense of loss from [his daughter] Kathryn, the sadness and regret. My machine cannot "love" either and the children interpret it as, "My father doesn't love me." My Personality is weeping over the Personality not being able to let Kathryn know, "I love her." Are there previous Sequences I had with her?

She must learn now to differentiate between that which cannot love and that which does love and deeply. She cannot now do this. She is only now learning that there are feelings at a deeper level that compel her into certain relationships. Also, she is the student of one not yet manifested [Robert] and he still must learn this, also. The communications of the love beyond the Mechanical Personality would not fall on deaf ears. This King [Kathryn] has been beloved to all of you for so many centuries that it is more difficult to lose the contact now, even though it is so temporary. All of you have looked to her so many times for what she was able to give and now do not wish to break the thread. Even Personality gained by this contact and even Personality is reluctant to give it up. There is support and energy emanating from this soul and it would be unusual if those closely associated did not feel the loss. [07 July 1974]

Mallory: Were we associated?

Very definitely. The threads established then persist now and are the source of some of the present conflict. [19 October 1974]

Sarah made a comment on threads bringing us together.

Getting in touch with the threads is a very strong feeling, not only from the standpoint of merging Entities, but also getting in touch with the emotions connecting the threads that are so strong. You, Sarah, are struggling with the dichotomy of the strength of feelings and the strength of Entities. You must realize the effect of this on the False Personality and its ramifications. You must deny the feelings to get in touch with the flow of the thread. The feelings are stronger than the thread, although appearing the opposite. You, Sarah, must deny these feelings as part of the Overleaves. Get in touch with your emotions. Let feelings flow. This process will free much more and you, Sarah, will experience the depth of the gift. You were attempting to get in touch with support in the great times of trial that you were going through. The denial will not be much longer. The support of Agape. The tension will cease with the adjustment. The feelings are not as buried as you think. The trust has been there longer than you would admit. [08 November 1974]

[Louise: What about my son] Larry?

This family has been together several times involving the Sequential aspect of the reincarnational 'string' or threads.

Allyn asked if it was our extended [family]?

Both have had much to do with each other several times. This immediate family has been together as it is now seven times; the extended family five times. [14 December 1974]

Composite Threads

Besides Karmic threads, another type of connection between souls has to do

Gene: From the first time a Fragment is made, this [Role] carries on. If I'm 150 Fragments at this point (in time), that means there are 150 Roles. Could they comment on this? Do we assimilate these? Is there a dominant role?

The Fragments as they integrate assume the dominant Personality. The strong experiential thread persists. [23 October 1973]

Refer to the chapter "Composites" for more information about how, in the later Soul Ages, an incarnation of one Fragment 'thread' can be augmented by the cohabitation of Fragment 'threads' of kindred souls. The phrase, "experiential threads", might have been stated that way in order to distinguish this phenomenon from "karmic threads" — aka Ribbons.

Edgar: How many Fragments are united in me?

There are now five hundred united Fragments. The dominant thread that is Edgar has been male most of the time, the same as Sarah.

Edgar: What are a few outstanding Scholars in my Fragment [Entity]?

The dominant thread that is Edgar was an astronomer named Tycho Brayhe. Is this accomplishment enough?

Dick: Am I correct in assuming in my Role, I have lived 5,000 previous lives? (One hundred fifty Fragments, each Fifth Level Old Soul = 4,800 lives.)

This is not completely valid. The dominant Fragment, in other words, the thread that is still drawn to the Physical Plane, remembers only those lives that pertained to it exclusively. It only has indirect access to the integrated Fragments [of its Entity].

Dick: Is my incarnate soul a single Fragment?

In your physical body, there is a single dominant thread, but you must understand that you are no longer separated from your integrated Fragments; they are very much a part of you. When the Entity first fragments and all of it is on the Physical Plane, there is wide separation, then there is progressive integration. All of the Fragments still incarnate have the pull exerted on them by their Astral Fragments. There is no "real" separation, merely a physical barrier that is easily scaled. [22 November 1973]

[\[\[Continue search \]\]](#)

Tapestry Post-Original Michaelian Group

Even though the notion of the Tapestry only appeared a few times in the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group, this notion survived into subsequent subsequent Michaelian teachings groups, thanks to Yarbrow

Concluding Comments on Tapestry and Threads

The basic idea is that we are all connected in a sort of web work or network.

Perhaps this subject can be compared to quantum entanglement, where the properties of particles are correlated outside of the usual causal relations of space and time...





TASK

This chapter is the product of a search for the word “task” in the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group channeling sessions. This word does not represent a significant component of the Michaelian teachings. However, there are good reasons to discuss the subject in this *Study Papers* book: 1) the subject came up numerous times during the original Michaelian group; 2) students can presumably benefit from having the mentions conveniently collected all in one place; 3) some interesting things were said about the subject; 4) the subject is related to a number of other components of the Michaelian teachings that are considered to be significant; 5) “task” issues are pervasive in human psychology and sociology and spirituality.

The word “task” is not capitalized in this chapter or other chapters of this *Study Papers* book because it has no special meaning in the Michaelian teachings; it is not a Michaelian jargon word that needs a definition apart from its use in the common vernacular.

Basically and briefly, the Michaels recommended to the original Michaelian group members that they

Definition of Task

So what is meant by task? The online Merriam Webster dictionary definition is:

Task per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

The following extracts from original Michaelian group transcriptions are Q&A exchanges, where an original Michaelian group member asks a question (or makes a comment), and the Michaels provide an answer. This is [not] a subject that would benefit by division into subcategories, as some subjects do. These extracts are presented in the chronological order in which they were given, even though this is not a subject where there was a development or evolution of a specific revelation of a facet of the Michaelian teachings, as was often the case with the original Michaelian group. As is my custom, I often provide some explanatory comments following the question or answer. Underlined words in the Michaels’ answers are my emphasis, to draw attention to what it is that I comment on. Sometimes I embed words or phrases [in brackets] that I believe help to clarify the question or the answer.

Concluding Comments on Task





TELEPATHY

This chapter is the product of a search for the word “telepathy” in the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group channeling sessions. This word does not represent a significant component of the Michaelian teachings. However, there are good reasons to discuss the subject in this *Study Papers* book: 1) the subject came up numerous times during the original Michaelian group; 2) students can presumably benefit from having the mentions conveniently collected all in one place; 3) some interesting things were said about the subject; 4) the subject is related to a number of other components of the Michaelian teachings that are considered to be significant; 5) **“Template” issues are pervasive in human psychology and sociology and spirituality — subjects covered extensively in this book — so it behooves us to have a working knowledge of it/them.**

The word “template” is not capitalized in this chapter or other chapters of this *Study Papers* book because it has no special meaning in the Michaelian teachings; it is not a Michaelian jargon word that needs a definition apart from its use in the common vernacular.

To my way of thinking, there was a surprising number of references to telepathy in the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group (1973-1978). This might have just been a ‘thing’ with Sarah Chambers, because she also channeled a lot about it in what I refer to as the second Michaelian group (1978-1983) and in what I refer to as the third Michael group (1996-1998). In order to provide the complete account of this subject, I include quotations from all three groups.

Telepathy per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

The following extracts from original Michaelian group transcriptions are Q&A exchanges, where an original Michaelian group member asks a question (or makes a comment), and the Michaels provide an answer. This is [not] a subject that would benefit by division into subcategories, as some subjects do. **These extracts are [not] presented in the chronological order in which they were given, even though this is not a subject where there was a development or evolution of a specific revelation of a facet of the Michaelian teachings, as was often the case with the original Michaelian group.** As is my custom, I often provide some explanatory comments following the question or answer. Underlined words are my emphasis, to draw attention to what it is that I comment on. Sometimes I embed words or phrases [in brackets] that I believe help to clarify the question or the answer.

In my reading, a Master (Rama Krishna) touched his pupils on the forehead and told them they would be more aware.

Ritual is sometimes extremely valuable. It only works for those who believe in its power. Actual transference of energy between Adepts only occurs when both are telepaths.

Will there be anyone in our group with that power?

There are Adepts who can do this. Soleal is one. There are Adepts on your planet who can do this with practice.

Who are they?

In this group there are many who can, one who will. [date]

What is the purpose of learning all these labels? I dislike labels.

It is only important if you wish to make the Synthesis. We agree, verbal communication is a poor excuse for the sum of communication. However, until one of you break through with telepathy, this will have to do. This study enables you to have insights to the motivation of certain activities which could conceivably be perceived by you as hostile or undesirable, and prohibit the understanding necessary for Agape to take place. It will also enable you to aid those who seek your counsel. [date]

Someone talked of a headache he sometimes gets — this came tonight immediately after receiving the information he asked for. What is it? Why?

As for the band of tension, there is an underlying disappointment that needs not be. You are a good student and as capable as those others. As the goal of Agape or spiritual Liberation entails ultimately becoming an Adept, the concept of telepathy should not be taken lightly. It is within the grasp of you, and would require an enormous amount of predictability. When you meet with an Adept who is strongly telepathic, and also totally vulnerable, you will understand this more fully, but it is not an unrealistic goal.

Do you refer to "predictability" on my part?

At first yes, then with those you allow access to. If the emotions are chaotic, the work cannot proceed in this direction. That is where the Balance [of Centers] comes in. When the student first comes into contact with an unfamiliar Center, there is an initial surge, and then until the adjustment is made, the insights are unrelenting and chaotic.

You have been told [by Gurdjieff] that Mechanical Man cannot love, and that is true. Love is the highest truth of all, and isn't it said that ultimate truth is sealed off from man? Man also cannot "help" — in fact, man cannot do anything at all. At least from the standpoint of will or volition, because of the two imperative senses he chooses not to use: we speak of the intuitive sense and the telepathic sense. One would think that these had suffered the atrophy of disuse. This is not the case at all. They are simply held in abeyance until such a time that Mechanical Man can willingly look behind the barriers he has constructed about these very frightening senses, and put them to use. This is usually the last lesson learned on the Physical Plane, and the hardest one. Because it, or rather they, are the one that the Personality fights the most. Of course, it fights these, and it is a fight for survival, for once the door is open in this direction, only the Essence can go through it, and behind the barriers is knowledge. Man must meet with a cosmic teaching in order to look behind the barriers. Psychology will not do it for you: for, if the psychologist is a Mechanical Man himself, he also has adaptive behavior taking place, and he cannot look behind your barriers, or very well allow you to, either. It would be too scary for him — he would then also have to look behind his own barriers. The broad purpose of the Physical Plane, of course, is then to cut through the first layer of complexity.

How can we prepare ourselves? What can we do to help ourselves see through the veil?

You are right, "veil" is a word we would prefer; for these barriers, from our vantage point, are as insubstantial as the morning mists. But man chooses to solidify them to the point where he cannot destroy them. This brings them into line with the solidness of the Physical Plane. "Solid" is very much like "ponderous" to us. The weighty philosophical battles, battles waged by Mechanical Man, are his attempts to solidify even thought, and make it more complex. He must first come to the point that he can verify for himself the tenuousness of that which stands between him and the pan-dimensional universe, and the path toward simplicity and therefore perfection. All in this universe is truly perfect. It is only faulty perception that renders it imperfect. Once the perception is full, the imperfection is gone, and the Liberated Essence can perceive all there is on the higher planes, and can move about without the solid limits of the Physical Plane. Many of you have had a taste of this, and know of what we speak.

The heavy weightiness of the Physical Plane is a burden you have chosen to bear in order to come to this point. Now you wish to throw off the yoke, and this is why we have chosen to assist you. If you were not ready, you would simply not hear the words. We have stated, essentially, the purpose — succinct to be sure, but still essential. There are steps, of course, man's purpose then being to learn that there is love, and that it is accessible, and that it is accessible only through those "extrasensory" perceptions that he chooses to deny. The foundation we have given; the application you have agreed to try. Until you manage to open these doors — or at the very least, verify that they are there — you will notice no significant change in yourself, although that change may be readily perceptible to other students, but not to the one stuck with it.

The application of this Teaching in a loving, trusting environment could enable you to verify the presence of these blocks. If you choose to take advantage of this, of course, we will be there to assist. Essentially what Mechanical Man is saying when he says, "I do not trust you", is, "I do not trust you not to show me what is behind those blocks." Perhaps this, then: "If I allow you to come too close, you will violate my barriers, and I will be naked in the void." Once the stripping happens, the work, of course, becomes far easier, and Personality begins to lose ground. It can do nothing else at this point. The Essence knows no shame, no guilt. If you can learn to share your fears, however childish they may seem to you, you will have gone a long way along the path. The realm of unfulfilled desires is fraught with Maya, and one which must be conquered. What you are saying, in saying that you do not trust, is also, "I am so terrible that if you knew it, you could not love me," and

on a personality-to-personality basis, this is of course probably true; but the level of comprehension in this group is such that very little has not been met and dealt with already. It is doubtful that you could feel away the acceptance with your escapades. In fact, this would invariably bring you all much closer, and at this moment, that is the goal. You have all been told about the utter foolishness in setting up impossible goals for yourselves: fixating on a goal years in the future is another of the Personality's defenses against the Essence's experiencing of the moment.

Comment: the personality has wants, shoulds, and have-tos, but if you'd let Essence do what it wants, you'd survive.

The time for doing this exercise is whenever there is intuitive consensus.

You must first remember that this telepathic sense is a two-way street, at least until you are quite strong and confident, so practice with one with whom the trust level is very high will produce the best results. Those who are not willing, or are hiding, will give superficial permission, but at the last moment will deny access to all but the most superficial strata. For the development of this sense, meditation of some form is imperative. Until you go into this deep space you cannot quiet the head enough to hear. This is of course why we still stress this with you all, but as we have said before, we are patient. You can begin working with those around you, with whom you have established the trust level. Meditating together would be effective. You need not be in the same room.

What are the differences between the "intuitive" and "telepathic" senses?

Actually there is as much difference in them, and of a similar nature, as between sight and hearing. The telepath hears and the intuitive person sees, but in a far more developed sense.

This is an old group. There are no desires to mold you. You can interact casually with one another, and we think that within a very few months (could) manage to give up many of your remaining expectations of how that interaction should feel. When this happens, and you are able to express genuine feelings to one another, you will be ready for an alternative life, such as the one we have suggested.

The reason for the psychic Photograph should be fairly clear at this time. It is primarily a warm-up exercise, leading to nonverbal communication. Many students who are also teachers err in trying to speed up this process, and for that reason the desired communication does not take place. The telepathic silence is anything but silent, but students cannot be shielding if this is to come about. If you first learn to express your feelings to one another without shame or guilt, or any of the other myriad barriers, then you open the door to silence. Only then can you be truly comfortable without the chatter. Chattering is usually just another shield so the Personality does not have to be honest.

You see, the Essence cannot lie; therefore the Personality cannot tell the truth — it can only lie. This is an important point to remember, since the chattering emanates from the Personality. The Essence does communicate. There is no need for mindless silence in the path toward Balance, but it might as well be truthful communication, and until you can knock away the barriers, this cannot come about. The Personality will always be around to conveniently lie in order to satisfy the goal. If this goal happens to be acceptance, for instance, think of how much energy is lost.

The process of becoming a trance medium or a suitable transmitter cannot be accomplished in one session, or even in what you consider many sessions. This process, like all other processes in this Teaching, requires work, practice, and a high level of trust between the teacher and the student. Also, one must remember that in the beginning there is a tremendous emotional response to the awakening communication. Often this is intensified by the student's Overleaves.

Discipline must occur on all three levels [lower Centers] if it is to be effective. It cannot merely be the discipline imposed by Intellectual Center. It must also involve shutting down the artifact and experiencing Emotional Center as a barometer. It must involve Moving Center as the acting-out Center and not as the thinking Center. Joy can be experienced. It cannot be adequately expressed through other than telepathy. When you feel joy, why express it in an instinctive way. Why not instead try to convey this without words.

For clarity's sake we would have given the Parts of other Centers as "thinking, reacting, and acting" Parts.

Telepathy per Second Michaelian Group Transcriptions

Telepathy per 3MG Transcriptions





TEMPLATE

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The word _____ is not capitalized in this chapter or other chapters of this *Study Papers* book because it has no special meaning in the Michaelian teachings; it is not a Michaelian jargon word that needs a definition apart from its use in the common vernacular. However, as we will see in this chapter, the word _____ is applied to both positive and negative phenomena, hence + _____ and – _____.

It might be a little surprising how often _____ shows up in the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group, considering that it has not appeared in subsequent channeling sessions that we have record of. For instance, it never appears in Yarbro's books, not even *Messages from Michael*, which was about the original Michaelian group. Because it covers a subject that might otherwise have been ignored and forgotten, I regard it as useful and valuable to include the research in this chapter; it makes our understanding of the Michaelian teachings richer and more complete. I have done the same with numerous other chapters on obscure topics in this *Study Papers* book.

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In the next section, you will see that the Michaels use the word with both a negative and positive connotation.

About a _____ times in the original Michaelian group transcriptions, the word _____ is used. One could guess what it probably means by its usage in the common vernacular and the context in which it is used in the transcriptions, but it is never actually defined in the transcriptions. As it turns out, it did not need to be defined because this is a term and concept in the original Michaelian group — one among many — that was adopted and adapted from the Gurdjieffian teaching, one of the spiritual teachings that some of the original Michaelian group founding members were familiar with. For an introduction to the general subject of the Gurdjieffian teachings and the involvement of founding original Michaelian group members with it, refer to the chapter "Gurdjieff, Ouspensky, Collin, Burton". The term has a particular meaning apart from the

common vernacular, and because of this specific meaning in the context of the Gurdjieffian teachings and the Michaelian teachings, it is on the jargon list, and therefore capitalized.

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Concluding Comments on _____





⑥ TEMPTATION

This chapter is the product of a search for the word temptation in the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group channeling sessions. This word does not represent a significant component of the Michaelian teachings. However, there are good reasons to discuss the subject in this *Study Papers* book: 1) the subject came up numerous times during the original Michaelian group; 2) some interesting things were said about the subject; 3) the subject is related to a number of other components of the Michaelian teachings that are considered to be significant; 4) students can presumably benefit from having the mentions conveniently collected and commented all in one place; 5) Temptation issues are unavoidable, they are pervasive in human psychology and sociology and spirituality — subjects covered extensively in this book — so it behooves us to have a working knowledge of it.

The word temptation is not capitalized in this chapter or other chapters of this *Study Papers* book because it has no special meaning in the Michaelian teachings; it is not a Michaelian jargon word that needs a definition apart from its use in the common vernacular.

This chapter is one of many in this book that focuses on a psychological component of the Michaelian teachings as found in original Michaelian group transcriptions, rather than on a doctrinal or spiritual component. A psychological component is usually either a positive to be cultivated or a negative to be mitigated. As we will see, the Michaels tell us that temptation is a vice worth eschewing. The Michaelian version of psychology is not to be confused with the popular psychology of the self-improvement movement, those that do not have a spiritual core or perspective. Rather, the Michaelian psychotherapeutic path (aimed at improving psychological health) is a beneficial precursor to the spiritual path (aimed at improving soul health). To skip the former but attempt the latter is referred to as “spiritual bypassing”. This is discussed at length on such websites as https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spiritual_bypass. To skip mitigating one’s psychological issues and attempt to go straight to enlightenment usually proves to be problematic.

Definition of Temptation

So what is meant by temptation? The Wikipedia article on the subject starts out with a definition:

Temptation is a desire to engage in short-term urges for enjoyment that threatens long-term goals. In the context of some religions, temptation is the inclination to sin. Temptation also describes the coaxing or inducing a person into committing such an act, by manipulation or otherwise of curiosity, desire, or fear of loss [of] something important to a person. In the context of self-control and ego depletion, temptation is described as an immediate, pleasurable urge and/or impulse that disrupts an individual’s ability to wait for the long-term goals, in which that individual hopes to attain. More informally, temptation may be used to mean “the state of being attracted and enticed” without anything to do with moral, ethical, or ideological valuation; for example, one may say that a piece of food looks “tempting” even though eating it would result in no negative consequences. Research suggests that there are paradoxical effects associated with temptation. Implicit in all the forms in which temptation can present itself there is a set of options that may facilitate high moral standards in decision-making.

- Weak or subtle temptations, in comparison to strong or obvious temptations, can lead to a greater loss of self-control.
- Supported research states that “available temptations are less valuable and less tempting”.

Temptations can have effects on long-term goal attainment, it has been found that individuals who experienced temptation and the effects of it found there were benefits to their experiences.

[<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Temptation> — retrieved 24 October 2022]

The article continues with sections on the subject as it appears in religious and non-religious usages, the measurement of the phenomenon by psychologists, and its various expressions and effects. The goal of this chapter is to make you more self-aware, to help you understand yourself and your motivations. The entire Wikipedia article is well worth reading as an introduction to this chapter.

The Michaels do not have much to say about temptation, and their view differs somewhat from the Wikipedia view. Let's take a look.

Temptation per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

The following extracts from original Michaelian group transcriptions are Q&A exchanges, where an original Michaelian group member asks a question (or makes a comment), and the Michaels provide an answer. These extracts are presented in the chronological order in which they were given. As is my custom, I often provide some explanatory comments following the question or answer. Underlined words in the Michaels' answers are my emphasis, to draw attention to what it is that I comment on. Sometimes I embed words or phrases [in brackets] that I believe help to clarify the question or the answer.

... you should be able to see this in yourself and resist the temptation.... [27 January 1974]

The gist of the temptation experience is that a 'higher' part of oneself in the hierarchy of consciousness observes a desire in a 'lower' part of oneself, and the 'higher' understanding is that it is expedient to override the 'lower' desire. Refer to the chapter "Self-observation" for more discussion of that phenomenon. Other relevant chapters are "Motivation", "Levels of Being", "Higher Self", and "Photography".

That is one type of temptation, involving the difference between 'higher' versus 'lower'. There is another type of temptation, that involving the difference between 'whole' versus 'part':

The temptation is very great for this Old Priest to retreat to the monastic veilings. Yes, this is a valid alternative.

The Personality has found the secular life painful and not to its liking, and longs for the quiet of the cloister. [16 June 1974]

This is another passage where it is obvious that the Michaels use the word "temptation" to refer to the situation where a component of a personality wants something that another component finds troublesome. However, in this case, the use of the word "temptation" is ironical: for the Old Priest to yield to the temptation to abandon the painful secular life for the monastic cloister is a valid alternative for that Soul Age and that soul type. In this sense, a temptation experience is about that phase of a transitional process where a person as a whole has not yet sorted themselves out enough to make a settled decision on some desire that has emerged into awareness. This passage hints at the notion that there are negative and positive temptations; that notion is revisited below.

There is yet another type of temptation, that involving the difference between 'inner' versus 'outer' realms:

Children born into a [spiritual] teaching have a far easier time accepting it as a way of being, and they seldom fall prey to the temptations of peer approval. [05 October 1974]

There is almost always going to be a struggle between a person's belief/value/behavior system and the cultural belief/value/behavior system in which they live, and the "temptation" is to conform to the culture rather than conform to personal integrity, and that is an example of a negative temptation. Refer to the chapters "Imprinting", "Culture", and "Personality — True and False" for more discussion about the socialization or acculturation or imprinting process.

At this moment, it is a temptation for some students to discredit the experiences of those students, without taking the difference in Overleaves into consideration. [26 November 1974]

It is so easy to fall prey to the temptation to be judgmental about, or dismissive of, other people. The ultimate principle here is that temptation to dismiss or judge is an inevitable consequence of the fact that there are differences among people. The Overleaf System categorizes some of those differences, and it is Good Work for us as students thereof to be aware of the implications of these differences so that we have wise discernment, not a judgmental or dismissive attitude. Here again I would like to apply the notion that the word temptation can apply to a positive as well as a negative experience. When an immature person notes differences between people, the temptation is to have a negative regard for selected persons, but in a mature person, the temptation should be to have a positive regard for the differences.

"Lead us not into temptation," the prayer says. You are the ones who lead. Take heed the words: it is not some god or devil who leads; it is only you. [28 December 1974]

That is quoting the King James translation of the so-called “Lord’s Prayer” delivered by Jesus in the so-called “Sermon on the Mount”, as recorded in Matthew 6:12 and Luke 11:4. Here again, note the positive and negative versions of the temptation phenomenon: positive in the case of “god” who allegedly entices us to be and do good, versus the negative in the case of the “devil” who allegedly entices us to do and be evil. The Michaels allege that “god” and “the devil” are not external to us, they are components within ourselves, and the spiritual journey involves sorting them out, resolving the transitional temporary temptations into settled beliefs/values/behaviors.

In the Wikipedia quotation, temptation was said to be related to self-control. As it so happens, self-control appears in the original Michaelian group transcriptions only once:

Jim: Regarding benefits from the other job [that] he would have to continue on his own. Comments?

If you are planning to continue to seek the help of such individuals, then, yes, you will have to make provisions for paying them. You could do this on your own, but it would, of course, require enormous self-control to set aside sufficient funds. But if you chose this as an alternative, then the funds would be there for an emergency.

After all, health is not the only urgent situation. [16 June 1974]

Several types of temptation involving conflicts were mentioned above: higher desires versus lower desires, urges of the whole versus urges of the parts, inner integrity versus outer integrity. This passage on self-control concerns yet a different type of temptation, a temporal type, where the conflict is between evaluation of the well-being of the present self versus an evaluation of the well-being of the future self.

Personally, I do not like the idea that one part of the self exercises “control” over another part of the self. I understand that this is a temporary expedient, but the ideal of the maturation process is to have all of the “parts” united in a singularity of form and function and purpose. This is also a notion that is espoused by the Michaels; refer to the chapter “Energy and Energy Leaks”. A divided self is a dis-empowered self; an undivided self is an empowered self.

Concluding Comments on Temptation

When one experiences a temptation, this is an easily-recognized clue that one has an issue of some kind with reality. It might be an external reality or an internal reality that one is not yet fully compatible with. The wise and spiritually mature thing to do is to examine the temptation with introspection, until one has one’s conflicts sorted out at a higher level of integration. For each temptation that comes into awareness, repeat the process of self-appraisal with enough depth and breadth of review to eventually extinguish the temptation. Then, of course, another temptation will arrive and prompt you to deal with it.

The word “temptation” in the common semantic might have only a pejorative connotation, but, as the Michaels use it, temptations are not bad *per se*. I suggest that the task for us their students is to discern whether any particular temptation that emerges has a negative charge, which tells us to think, feel, or do something that we *shouldn’t* but that is currently desired by some part of our entire self, or a positive charge, which tells us to think, feel, or do something that we *should* but that is currently resisted by some part of our entire self; refer to the chapter “Intuition” for more discussion of that. The trick is, of course, to discern on what basis one “should” or “should not” think, feel, or do. To help us with that process, the Michaels offer their perspective on “Good Work, Bad Work”; refer to the chapter by that name.

My observation is that people are beset with temptations that resurface often, and plague them repeatedly in one or another realm of life, until they extinguish it. In terms of the Overleaf System, the Negative Poles and the Chief Features provide a handy catalog of negative temptations. Beyond that, Michaelian students do well to consider if they encounter some other recurring temptation, such as the common and ordinary temptations involving the abuse of money and power and sex and food, for instance; the list is almost endless.

My view is that if/when one were to attain unity of consciousness — meaning complete integrity — then one would experience no temptations, because one would no longer be composed of parts that vie for attention, that seek to have their needs fulfilled, that tempt one to be other than what one truly and wholly is. This is not the situation for any being this side of the Tao. Until we are all that Tao is, we will experience the pushes and pulls of temptations. Deal with it.





TEST

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This chapter is one of many that discusses a particular tool that the Michaels recommend if they are serious about advancing on their spiritual path; refer to the chapter "Tools" for a complete accounting.

This chapter is one of many in this book that focuses on a psychotherapeutic // psychological component of the Michaelian teachings, rather than on a doctrinal // spiritual component. Psychotherapeutic components of the Michaelian teachings are usually either a positive to be cultivated or a negative to be mitigated. // Obviously, _____ is a negative to be eschewed / positive to be cultivated. // Psychological issues are addressed with psychotherapy. The Michaelian version of psychology is not to be confused with the popular psychology of the self-improvement movement, those that do not have a spiritual core or perspective. Rather, the Michaelian psychotherapeutic path (aimed at improving psychological health) is a beneficial precursor to the spiritual path (aimed at improving soul health). To skip the former but attempt the latter is referred to as "spiritual bypassing". This is discussed at length on such websites as >https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spiritual_bypass<. To skip mitigating one's psychological issues and attempt to go straight to enlightenment usually proves to be problematic.

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Concluding Comments on _____





TOOLS AND METHODS

This chapter is the product of a search for the concept embodied in such words as “tool”, “technique”, “method”, “practices” in the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group channeling sessions. This concept does not represent a significant component of the Michaelian teachings. However, there are good reasons to discuss the subject in this *Study Papers* book: 1) the concept came up numerous times during the original Michaelian group; 2) students can presumably benefit from having the mentions conveniently collected all in one place; 3) some interesting things were said about the concept; 4) the subject is related to a number of other components of the Michaelian teachings that are considered to be significant; 5) “Template” issues are pervasive in human psychology and sociology and spirituality.

The words used for the concept are not capitalized in this chapter or other chapters of this *Study Papers* book because they have no special meaning in the Michaelian teachings; they are not Michaelian jargon words that needs a definition apart from their use in the common vernacular.

Basically and briefly, the Michaels recommended to the original Michaelian group members that they

Definition of Tools

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Tools per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

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Answer: To translate what you have learned intellectually as knowledge into what you do — (Being). It’s turning water into wine [as Jesus allegedly did].

This is, of course, our teaching also. The discipline, of course, includes going toward Balance through concentration, meditation, and other conscious[ness]-raising techniques. Also, the understanding and ultimate complete acceptance of all others, leading to the spiritual Agape, which is the doorway to true consciousness. [03 February 1974]

Being” is a Gurdjieff term describing where someone is on their spiritual journey, as in their “level of being.”

Dick: Michael has a job to do, too, as I see it and that is to produce #4 and #5 people in his teaching. (See In Search of the Miraculous, by P.D. Ouspensky, for enlightenment on men with numbers ... index will guide you.) If Michael is sensitive, he will help us solve our internal problems. The discovery track of what we are has to be complete before becoming a #4 or #5 man. Comment, please.

We have given you the tools by which you can discover these [solutions to internal problems] within yourself. Telling you where the problem areas are would produce the same initial hostility and resentment as hearing it from a psychologist would. When you discover them within yourself, you also at that time verify them for

yourself and then they are truth for you. Until then, they are merely the opinions of another. Pointing to the tools is sometimes not enough and the path is agonizingly slow. We would say that the conscious beings you have mentioned (Jesus, Fulton Sheen, Gandhi, etc.) were not given more than the tools in the beginning. As you begin to use the tools, then you are given more material to work on. Only then can the path be trodden in a straight line. Until you begin to use the tools, all you have is information and more information can hinder your growth rather than help it, if all previous data has not been assimilated. One of the things you have not verified to your satisfaction is your own ability to change some of your uncomfortable Overleaves, and until you do, all lessons concerning the how to of more difficult tasks would be in vain. All is changeable. Nothing is stationary. [03 September 1974]

Concluding Comments on Tools





TRANSCENDENTAL AND INFINITE SOULS

Transcendental and Infinite Souls

The Transcendental Soul experiences others as itself. Telepathic rapport and psychic union occur. These exalted souls seldom seek reincarnation in the physical body. If they do, it is usually because of the spiritual and/or philosophical ennui existing on the planet, and then they normally precede the descent of the realized masters [Infinite Soul] by less than one hundred years. The Transcendental Soul can enter the physical body and displace an Old Soul at any time during the life Cycle. It has happened that the presence of the Transcendental Soul alone was enough to provoke the needed spiritual, philosophical or cultural revolution [so that an Infinite Soul is not necessary]. [late August 1973]

The Infinite Soul perceives the Tao.

Neither the Transcendental Soul nor the Infinite Soul pursues physical union. Quite often, however, the high Causal [plane] body or the high Mental [plane] body displaces an older soul and at that time of the manifestation, the sexual activity ceases. These souls are not challenged by Maya.

The Transcendental Soul seldom "seeks" any sort of formal education, although it will go along with what is forced upon it cheerfully unless it interferes too greatly with its purpose. Then the transcendental soul will gently but firmly balk.

The Infinite Soul has direct access to all knowledge and has no need for education of any type.

The Transcendental Soul perceives the synthesis and teaches it as such — will not espouse popular dogma and does not affiliate with organized religion.

The religion of the Infinite Soul is the Logos. [late August 1973]

Sarah: The Transcendental and Infinite Souls do not manifest in a physical body.

That is essentially correct. The High Causal body [Transcendental Soul] manifests only in times of social or religious unrest. Then if the revolution does not come about, the High Mental body [Infinite Soul] manifests and brings the Logos to bear.

Gene: Yeah, OK, and then there were the five perfect masters that Meher Baba talks about. Maharaj Gee, the 14-year old Guru calls himself the "Perfect Master." There are so many masters and there are so many Christ principles and God principles, and I sure would like some clarifying help in this.

The Infinite Soul manifested through the physical forms of Lao Tsu, Sri Krishna, Siddhartha Gautama and Jesus — no others. The Transcendental Soul has manifested through Socrates, Zarathustra, through Muhammed, and through Mohandas Gandhi. [18 September 1973]

Gene: I want to finish my theme now. It helps me to put this in the perspective of who to read, who not to read and who to listen to. Apparently, we are going to have a return again of the Infinite Soul around the year 2000?

Sarah: Within 100 years of the appearance of the Transcendental Soul. It has happened every time.

We have told you that.

Dick: There will be an anti-Christ preceding him, who was born in 1964. He will lead many astray.

The anti-Christ is not "evil", just misguided, but it is in the Karma of many to follow this man. Many have this Ribbon to deal with. There must also be an antithesis to complete the Monad. Paul [Saul of Tarsus] will also return.

A question was lost in the changing of the tapes. However, Michael's answer leads one to assume that the question concerned John the Baptist, as described by Seth.

John was a Fragment, not a manifestation [of the Transcendental Soul or Infinite Soul]. Paul was a Young Soul who was a zealot.

The next question was also lost, but it concerned the fact that John [the Baptist] was presumably a reincarnation of Elijah.

You are correct. Elijah was a part of the Infinite Soul at the time of the manifestation. The Causal body evolved. The high planes each have seven levels. The Fragments integrate at different times. When the integration takes place, evolution supervenes. [18 September 1973]

Richard: Did Christ know about atomic theory when he was in the physical body?

Not as an Old Soul, but when the high Mental body manifested, it brought the sum of the Logos to bear.

There was discussion about the Transcendental and Infinite Souls, and their place on the reincarnational Cycle; about the possibility of the Transcendental Soul manifesting through Robert, etc.

That is oversimplification. The Transcendental Soul is only such when it is manifest on the Physical Plane, as is the Infinite Soul. The high Causal body [Transcendental Soul] is capable of displacing many souls at once. This will occur within the next decade. Many must sit at the feet of living masters. You are now living in a large, complex society. A Jewish carpenter [Jesus] would hardly be apropos.

Richard: Will he be a Russian?

The high Mental body [Infinite Soul] will manifest. Look around you; do you not think that this is necessary? There is social and political unrest, internecine [mutually destructive] and interracial wars, religious schism — all existing simultaneously in a powder keg of nuclear power. The manifestation will be a very different type. The problems are not so different as they are more dangerous. [08 October 1973]

Richard: Well, Christ certainly didn't require that you fork over the earnings of the day to see him. When Robert manifests [the Transcendental Soul], will this still be necessary or will I be able to relate to him then? Or shouldn't I be uptight about this?

There is more money in the hands of all people today than in the time Jesus was manifesting the Infinite Soul. If he had charged admission of that sort, the people he was trying to reach would not have gotten into the hall. This is not true today. Money is the one thing almost everyone has. [20 October 1973]

Eugene: I am confused about which souls inhabit what planes after the Physical level. I would like more information about this

There are, of course, seven planes in all, each with seven levels. Beyond the Astral Plane is the Causal plane with seven levels ... three low, one mid Causal plane level upon which we reside, and three higher levels upon which reside the high Causal bodies — the Transcendental Souls contiguous with this plane, and the Mental Plane is the Akashic plane, which is a photographic record of all history. Some very high Adepts have access to this plane. On the Mental Plane resides the Infinite Soul [on the high levels], and the low and mid-Mental bodies. Beyond this is the Buddhic Plane and upon this level are all of those souls who have achieved physical communion with the Tao. Beyond this, of course, [is] the Tao. [29 November 1973]

Eugene: What about the Book of Truth — Osiris? Were the writings given to the author by a literal "god"?

That part, of course, is absurd, but information is mostly good. The god "Osiris" is just another name for that which is unnamable and unutterable. The ancient Egyptian civilization was psychically far advanced. The Egyptians knew exactly how to appeal to the masses. They did this successfully for longer than any other civilization. Amenhotep was a manifestation of the Transcendental Soul. [20 December 1973]

The Book of Truth or The Voice of Osiris is another channeled teaching, written in 1925 but not published until 1956.

From Wikipedia: Probably referencing Akhenaten, known before the fifth year of his reign as Amenhotep IV, who was a Pharaoh of the Eighteenth dynasty of Egypt. He ruled for 17 years and died about 1336 BC–1334 BC. Akhenaten is especially noted for abandoning traditional Egyptian polytheism and introducing worship centered on the Aten, which is sometimes described as monotheistic or henotheistic. An early inscription likens him to the sun as compared to stars, and later official language avoids calling the Aten a god, giving the solar deity a status above mere gods. Akhenaten's wife was Nefertiti and his son was Tutankhamun ("King Tut"). Their tombs were discovered in 1907 at the Valley of the Kings, Egypt.

Transcendental Soul per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

The high Causal body [Transcendental Soul] last manifested through Mohandas Gandhi. [26 August 1973]

Dick: I have a question. It has to do with the fact that I have only known one living master and when it comes to patterning my behavior, I have only this one model and my tendency is, as the "level of being" goes up, to follow this model that I already know. Is this correct?

The pattern is a good one. The man Robert will be a vehicle for the manifestation of the high Causal body [Transcendental Soul]. This will occur simultaneously with other manifestations in other parts of the world. Mohandas Gandhi was the first; many [will] follow. The world is much larger now than it was at the time of the last manifestation of the Infinite Soul [Christ]. There must be many [Transcendental Souls] to prepare the way. [26 August 1973]

The Causal Plane was discussed at this point, and Sarah said that she gathered that there was a high Causal body and a low Causal body, and that Michael says that he is a Causal being.

That is essentially correct. There is growth and evolution necessary on the Causal Plane as well as the Astral. There is a difference, though. This Entity [Michael, on the Causal Plane] still perceives self and something apart from self, although still a part of self, so this Entity cannot be said to be all of everything there is. The high Causal body [Transcendental Soul] does not perceive even this minute separation evidently. This is where the difference lies. Beyond the Physical Plane, the evolution concerns perception of the Tao. [26 August 1973]

He [Werner Erhard] is not a manifestation of the Causal body [Transcendental Soul] if that is what you mean. [04 September 1973]

Is Robert a "realized Master"?

Not yet. He will be when the High Causal body [Transcendental Soul] manifests. He still has questions. He wishes to become that [manifestation]. He will be given that wish. [mid September 1973]

Robert was the leader of the group to which Alice and Dick had belonged from its early formation. We have been told that Sarah and Richard belonged to the group for only a few months. They all (Sarah and Richard, Alice and Dick) left near the end of 1972. Also, about that same time, Richard and Sarah were married. Shortly thereafter they started their own group, which became the original Michaelian group.

Richard: I will finish the book on Gandhi tomorrow. Then what should I do?

First, make sure that absorption has taken place. Then continue with the meditation. [Reading about] Any of the Adepts and Masters we have discussed this evening would be valuable.

Richard: To me, Gandhi seemed weak and sick most of his life.

His diet was terrible.

Richard: But was that Good Work?

It was Good Work for him. It also accomplished his purpose. The High Causal body [Transcendental Soul] has no attachment for the Physical Plane.

Richard: But wouldn't he have been more effective if he had been healthier? Wouldn't he have reached more people?

No, he would have reached far fewer. When he fasted, those who loved him attempted to bring about the changes he desired in order to persuade him to break his fast.

What happens to the Old Soul when it is displaced by the manifestation of the Transcendental Soul?

He remains as a part of the low Astral body.

Then he doesn't automatically become a Transcendental Soul?

Not until he burns the remaining Ribbons or chooses to be reborn. [22 September 1973]

Dick: I would like to know if Robert is a Transcendental Soul?

At this point, Sarah again took the board from Carolyn. The recorder was not on and a large segment of the following is unrecorded.

The Transcendental Soul displaces an Older Soul when it manifests. This has not happened to this man yet.

Dick: What is he [Robert] now?

He is a final Level Older Soul. [02 October 1973]

Dick: I would like to know if the Gurdjieff idea of Man #1, Man #2, Man #3 is correct and if so, at what level am I?

It is valid when the man number six is thought of as the Transcendental Soul. You are going toward Balance [Man #4]. Fear of emotional abandon holds you back — the fear of losing emotional control. [20 October 1973]

Dick: It seems to me that the Causal Plane is divided up into sections, with each section having a specialty, like teaching. Is that correct?

Yes, there are choices that can be made here too. Teaching is one; guidance is another. The guidance groups are, of course, carefully selected, as you well know. Some forms of “therapy” do more harm than good....

Would you give us more on the Teacher-Guide?

The guidance groups require much time and can become intensive, and for that reason, must remain small or they lose their effectiveness. This, of course, is because of the trust level, which is proportional to the level of intimacy in any group.

You must also remember that yours is not the only world upon which high Causal [Transcendental Soul] manifestations are occurring. These then are for many reasons: to effect social and cultural change, to avoid absolute destruction of civilizations, also to give impetus to those societies in which there is philosophical ennui. [27 March 1974]

Infinite Soul per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

Gene: I would like to ask more questions on the books about the Masters of the Far East, by Thomas Spaulding, whom I've asked about before. I've read 4 of the 5 volumes now. There is good teaching information there. He said he was talking in person to Jesus and Mohammed and other Old Souls. He went to Asia, Tibet, in the early 1900s or late 1800s, where he was taught to teleport. I would like a comment and also to ask if he really was talking to Jesus and Mohammed as he implied.

The High Mental body [Infinite Soul] spends time with all Adepts. Some see the Infinite Soul in several transcendental forms. This is usually because the perceptions of physically tied Adepts are not keen enough to perceive that much of the Synthesis. They, like some of you, see the reintegration as loss of self and bemoan this. He saw his own perception of the fragmentation of the Infinite Soul. [03 January 1974]





TRAPS

This chapter is the product of a search for the word “trap” in the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group channeling sessions. This word does not represent a significant component of the Michaelian teachings. However, there are good reasons to discuss the subject in this *Study Papers* book: 1) the subject came up numerous times during the original Michaelian group; 2) students can presumably benefit from having the mentions conveniently collected all in one place; 3) some interesting things were said about the subject; 4) the subject is related to a number of other components of the Michaelian teachings that are considered to be significant; 5) Entrapment issues are pervasive in human psychology and sociology and spirituality.

The word “Trap” is capitalized in this chapter and other chapters of this *Study Papers* book because it has a special meaning in the Michaelian teachings; it is a Michaelian jargon word that needs a definition apart from its use in the common vernacular.

Definition of Trap

So what is meant by trap? The online Merriam Webster dictionary definition is:

Traps per Gurdjieff

Traps per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

The following extracts from original Michaelian group transcriptions are Q&A exchanges, where an original Michaelian group member asks a question (or makes a comment), and the Michaels provide an answer. This is a subject that benefits by division into subcategories, **These extracts are [not] presented in the chronological order in which they were given, even though this is not a subject where there was a development or evolution of a specific revelation of a facet of the Michaelian teachings, as was often the case with the original Michaelian group.** As is my custom, I often provide some explanatory comments following the question or answer. Underlined words are my emphasis, to draw attention to what it is that I comment on. Sometimes I embed words or phrases [in brackets] that I believe help to clarify the question or the answer.

Centering Traps

It seems that originally Centering Traps had something to do with Essence:

Alice: Am I Moving Centered?

No, you, too (are Intellectually Centered). You use the Moving Center, but that is not where the trapped Essence is. [08 September 1973]

Alice: I would like to know how to untrap my intellect.

Concentration is an excellent exercise for you. [08 September 1973]

Sarah: There is no advantage of being on one level over another one. No one trapped in one Center is better off than another somewhere else. Since it was said that I was Moving Centered, that means I can get to my Moving Center more readily than someone trapped in Emotional or Intellectual Center.

That is merely a suggestion, not a command. [17 October 1973]

Is introspection a way to spiritual growth? I find if I pursue it, I get depressed and it just repeats and repeats.

Some degree of introspection is, of course, necessary in order to dredge up blocked truths, but you are right, it is a trap — a very clever one — that false personality throws out every so often just to keep the alienation going. This is a primary defense mechanism for Intellectually Centered souls: it is a sure way of keeping them in Intellectual Center. [06 February 1974]

Dick: Can people be trapped in sub groups of Centers, as symbolized in the deck of cards, illustrated by HW?

This is valid. Alice is trapped in the Emotional part of Intellectual Center. Cheryl was in touch with the Moving part of Emotional Center; is now moving toward Balance; needs to contact the Emotional Part of Emotional Center, the Emotional and Intellectual parts of Intellectual Center, also the Moving part of Moving Center. The tennis helps in this; also the reading. We have other books for CH when she finishes the one she has now. [27 February 1974]

Richard: Where am I trapped?

You are trapped in the Emotional part of Moving Center. Both JH and Sarah are trapped in the Intellectual part of Moving Center.

Dick: Is Phyllis in the Intellectual part of Intellectual Center?

Moving part of Intellectual Center.

JH: Where am I trapped?

Emotional part of Intellectual Center. N is with PJ: Emotional part of Intellectual [Center].

Dick: Where am I trapped?

Emotional part of Intellectual Center.

Dick: Is Dorothy in the Emotional part of Intellectual Center?

Dick is correct.

What good is knowing this information?

It should give you some idea of where the work is. Gene is now in contact with the Moving Center and Emotional Parts of Intellectual Center, the Moving and Intellectual parts of Emotional Center, and the Intellectual Part of Moving Center.

Narra: Is my son, M, in Dominance and a Young soul?

This is a fifth level Young Warrior, not in Rejection: in Growth. This child is still being bombarded by the adolescent hormonal storm. This makes it difficult for you to read him. He is trapped in the Intellectual part of Moving Center. [27 February 1974]

Mallory: I would like to ask about my Chief Feature and in which Center I am entrapped. I feel I fluctuate between Moving part of Emotional Center to the Emotional part of Moving.

We are here with you. The lady, Mallory, is right about the entrapment. Yes, this can fluctuate. Most adolescents go through a stage of being entrapped in the Emotional part of their Center. We see more Impatience in this lady than Self-Deprecation, as we see more in the Intellectual Arrogance in Barbara — also a generalized haughtiness. In Edgar, we see an almost dogged persistence which is definitely a part of Stubbornness. [03 March 1974]

Mallory: What is the work necessary for me to becoming untrapped in essence?

The work for you, MJ, includes moving. Your dance is an excellent place to start, preceded by your period of meditation, with the thought of preparation for the dance. We see emotional involvement. The way through to Intellectual Center is, of course, the rendering of this type of input neutral. The inability to accept input in a detached fashion separates you from the Intellectual part of this Center, and thus there is a barrier to Intellectual Center. The love of the movement, or more accurately, the exhilaration you feel when moving, creates a barrier to Moving part of Moving Center. All students must discover their area of entrapment and work from there, emulating the energy center toward which they are moving. Students trapped in the Emotional part of Intellectual Center rationalize all technical material well, but romanticize all other input, trying

to find that completely personal slant. There is “love” of literature and words in these souls. They are normally exceedingly verbose in tutorial positions; not so much in others. These souls find the romance of the Logos so alluring that this entrapment is among the most difficult to scale. Most souls trapped in the Moving part of Intellectual Center are veritable whirlwinds of intellectual activity. They spend the entire [Physical plane] interval collecting facts, sometimes in a random fashion, and sometimes to negligible results. On the other hand, many inventors, such as the man Thomas Edison, were trapped here.

Dick: Are some intellectual scholars trapped in the Intellectual part of Intellectual Center?

It is possible to be trapped here, Dick, and yes, you are right. Many of the theoretical scientists are indeed immired [immured? = trapped/confined in] in the Intellectual part of Intellectual Center. This is a route to higher Centers when there is balance.

Sarah: Is John Lilly one who is trapped in Intellectual part of Intellectual Center?

Everyone (?) agreed — at least all those who said, “Uh huh.”

NC: I missed the discussion Wednesday. Could someone explain that?

Comment: One in the Intellectual part of Intellectual Center looks on things dispassionately, without emotional attachment. The name, Edward Teller, came up, and so we wondered if he were entrapped there. Sarah thought he was in Emotional Part of Intellectual Center.

The man, Edward, is almost hopelessly trapped in the Emotional part of Moving Center.

Where am I?

_____ Is one who fluctuates wildly between Moving and Intellectual parts of Intellectual Center. In some respects, this gives him an easier task; in other [respect]s, [it gives him] a harder one, since emotions are often difficult to contact.

In other words, take a look at the activities one uses just to fill the hours.

For instance, many who are trapped in the Intellectual part of Intellectual Center must involve themselves only in intellectually stimulating and rewarding experiences. Many trapped in Moving Center are constantly “doing things,” and consider all else rather frivolous. Souls trapped in Emotional Center find it difficult to sit through an evening of “head stuff,” or they also dislike the modern dancing, and [other dancing] where there is little body contact and much wild gyrations.

Could we have something on the Moving part of Emotional Center?

The “love of action.” These souls make ideal spectators, and will yell themselves hoarse at all spectator events. They rarely participate, but [they] will drive hundreds of miles to spend a weekend at a ski lodge. The romance of movement prevails here with little active participation. [03 March 1974]

I think Ouspensky was said not to be subjectively conscious. Was he trapped in the Intellectual Center?

He was not subjectively conscious. He was trapped in Intellectual Center, that is valid. This was a Fifth Level Old Sage who was a good student. [03 March 1974]

“Subjectively Conscious” refers to Gurdjieff’s Man #5. Evidently Ouspensky was trapped as Man #3, Intellectually Centered, and could not even make it to Man #4, Balanced Man.

Are children more balanced than adults, and does the entrapment take place in adolescence?

The specific center is chosen prior to the interval, but the entrapment takes place during childhood, usually during adolescence, when the child is the most vulnerable [to] cultural imprinting.

Can this happen earlier than adolescence?

Yes, and later.

Why are some children imprinted less than others?

Children in exalted Roles and dominant Goals are not easily imprinted.

I can verify that by the Sage who lives at our home.

Does the “waking sleep” [the Gurdjieff term for those not on the spiritual path] result from being entrapped [in a Center, unable to grow spiritually, to raise the kundalini]?

Yes. “The cave” (by Plato) was analogous to this entrapment. (You see shadows of what is going on and imagine things from what you think is real.) [03 March 1974]

What do I need to get in touch with? Which Center am I trapped in? (Some said Intellectual, but ____ thought Emotional.)

We agree with that [Emotional Center]. ____ needs to get in touch with the detached plateau of the Intellectual part and the action-laden Moving part.

What I meant was that I think the thing tying me down is mental laziness. I can't stick to it (meditation). What technique can I do that is not a chore for me?

The mental inertia is not uncommon to souls stuck in this spot — they usually suffer from this. The technique does not matter nearly so much as the diligence with which you apply it and the value you assign it on your priorities.

In other words: try, try, and try again.

That is valid.

What part of Emotional Center am I trapped in? Can you fluctuate? I have spurts of energy, and other times I am reticent.

There is, of course, disharmony (of Centers), but the soul who is not a seeker ordinarily does not recognize this and blames the discomfort on externals.

What Center am I trapped in?

The Emotional part of Emotional Center. If she wishes balance, she must reach Intellectual and Moving Centers.

How much does the Attitude determine where one is trapped?

Very much. Most of the imprinting of early childhood is very effectively converted into tape loops. [03 March 1974]

Dick: Could Michael comment on the negative sides of Centers? Is there a negative side to each Center?

This is, of course, valid. Think of the hysterical entrapment in Emotional Center. The man Adolph [Hitler] was trapped in the Moving part of Emotional Center. All of the psychoneuroses are directly related to the negative half of the Centering. That which leads souls to live above and outside the law of the land, all of the violence directed against other creatures — these combined with the other Overleaves produce this. You can take two souls with the same Overleaves except for Centering and quite drastic differences will occur in the lifestyle. This is why we feel that some comparison of historical souls will prove to be a valuable experience, even though they are no longer extant. The man, Adolph, and the younger, Scipio Africanus, had virtually the same Overleaves save for Centering. It is interesting that they differed only in the man, Adolph's, penchant for genocide.

Dick: Certain Overleaves like Rejection are not compatible with some Centers, say the king of hearts (Emotional part of Emotional). I do not see how a person could be there and be in Rejection.

No, but there are some extremely hostile souls entrapped there — emotional and hostile, too. The soul here is often the man who kills because "God told me to."

Dick: Is this a major source of conflict in people?

Many times it is.

Dick: They are in Centers not compatible with the [other] Overleaves. Could we have some examples of this?

One example is: females who use their sexuality as a weapon are usually in Rejection and trapped in the Emotional part of Emotional Center. [06 March 74]

Ray: What was the conflict in her Centers?

The Goal of Dominance and the entrapment in the Emotional part of Emotional Center. [06 March 1974]

Ray: Please comment on J's SRGA.

This second level Young Scholar in Dominance is a Realist. His Chief Feature is Arrogance, and he is trapped in the Moving part of Intellectual Center; mostly Jovial, some Saturn. [06 March 1974]

Dick: Fear and guilt prevent one from experiencing new things. Is this due to the negative side of Centers working?

Most of them, yes. Notice the differences in souls who are trapped in the Intellectual parts of Centers. They are relatively guiltless, as those trapped in the Moving parts are relatively fearless. [06 March 1974]

I see a parallel to Rolwing. The theory behind that is, Rolwing unlocks the structures of muscles and the tightness caused by emotions and feelings when physical pain has been inflicted.

Mallory: Would you treat the trapped part [of one's Centering] first? Could treatments be recommended for specific Centers? For example, could I be Rolfed and then go to hypnosis?

This combination could be extremely affective as it would "kill two birds with one stone."

Mallory: Is the order important?

We would treat the trap in your case. We say this specifically in your case because of the difficulty one would have with trance inductions with the need to release so much stored up anxieties. This would not always run true. Most of the time, we would treat the Center first. [20 March 1974]

think it is Phyllis's Martyrdom role that keeps me needing her.

The keynote with Intellectual Center is, of course, rationalization. The Intellectual part, of course, is capable of objective rationalization, the Emotional part of subjective rationalization, and the Moving part of practical, materialistic rationalization. The person trapped in the Moving part of Intellectual Center is usually practical to a fault, and whatever fruits are harvested are usually in this vein. Whatever they pursue — whether it be medicine, the law or housewifery — these souls are prepared through meticulous research for any and all eventuality. They spend much energy in their researches, and not even the simplest task is performed without the ritual of researching them carefully. All of their intellectual endeavors must be immediately or at least clear-cut utilitarian value [sic]. On the other hand, the soul trapped in the Intellectual part of Moving Center "attacks" knowledge with a vigor that is virtually unexcelled. Knowledge is a mountain to be scaled and conquered.

Sarah: That's how I approach my interests. I attacked astronomy and was absorbed in it.

What are the characteristics of the Moving part of Emotional Center?

It is movement romanticized. The movement becomes the love object. Most dancers, such as the man, Rudolph [Nureyev], are trapped here.

Are those who sit around and watch trapped here?

Many times this is true — depending on the energy level present. The spectators do draw though from the action on the field. By the same token, some Movers [those with the Moving Center], such as again professional dancers, are trapped in the Emotional part of Moving Center, where emotion must be expressed through movement. [27 March 1974]

Cynthia: I would like to have more on the Moving Center and a description of the Moving part of Moving Center and the Emotional part of Moving Center.

We do recall that we covered this, but will reiterate briefly. The soul that is Moving Centered acts out in life in an action mode. This, of course, means that one trapped in the Emotional part of Moving Center will react to a moving situation with some type of physical response, such as dancing with joy, etc. The soul trapped in the Intellectual part of Moving Center will often ramble far afield in the search for knowledge. The soul in the Moving part of Moving Center appears often as a driven soul. [17 April 1974]

Do we get stuck in the negative or positive half, or does it fluctuate?

Most are stuck. This is not a growth-producing sequence. Again, for instance, souls trapped in the Moving part of Intellectual Center can be rather cold and ruthless, given neutral Overleaves.

Is this chosen ahead of time?

Much of this is unfortunately culturally induced. Scholars in Stagnation can be induced to respond to positive reinforcement.

Does a soul before birth choose the culture in which it will be raised?

Not so. The child is born with predominant Centering and the chance to go either way. With negative reinforcement, the child will usually become stuck in the negative pole of the Center by late adolescence.

If there is no negative reinforcement do you get stuck in the positive half of the Centering?

These same Overleaves become positive. [01 May 1974]

Is it that the trapped part increases in energy while the weakened part decreases in energy?

[That is] valid, except for the Instinctive Center, which malfunctions only during organic illness. [16 June 74]

JH: Do we choose Centers before birth? Are my children Moving Centered?

They are Moving Centered, but they are not trapped yet. They now use all of the Moving Center. You do choose your center but the entrapment in a specific part happens later. No, but we think if you look at the answer again you will understand. [16 June 1974]

Is music a useful route?

Music is a route for some, especially for Emotionally Centered souls, or those trapped in Emotional parts of the other centers. Only if you can allow yourself to feel the music can it be a tool. As soon as you start analyzing, it loses its force and becomes another head trip. [17 June 1974]

RH: I would like to ask how to bring the perceptions of the Emotional Center and those of the Intellectual Center together to be balanced. Perceptions seems so limited: there is so much input and only one thing seems to get through.

Of course, the perceptions of one trapped in the Intellectual Center are going to be based upon what is thought, and will be largely analysis of the perception rather than a perception at all. The perception itself will be lost in the analysis. The perceptions of one lost in the Emotional Center will be swamped by the feelings surrounding the moment, and again the perception itself will be lost to sight. This is what is meant, of course, by not experiencing one's experiences. Those trapped in the Moving Center will be already planning or carrying out some action surrounding the perception before it has time to register. No Mechanical man is able to appreciate any experience fully because of this. All perceptions are, of course, stored, and can be recalled by the balanced man if need be. In order to perceive and experience a moment in time, all Centers must be working (correctly). [17 September 1974]

How can I tell when I'm in the Intellectual Center?

There is a vast difference in the sheer expenditure of energy. Those who are trapped in the Moving Center expend more physical energy than those in the Moving part of Intellectual Center. The energy spent is of a different quality. Often the body is not tired even though tremendous amounts of intellectual energy is spent, causing the person to expend far beyond its intellectual capacity for achievement. However, in Moving Centered souls the reverse is often true. They seldom are able to work to full intellectual capacity because the body tires so rapidly. Once the body goes to sleep, then Mechanical Man has lost his hold on the intellectual functioning.

How could _____ tell if she is in her Intellectual Center?

By her ability to work steadily on an intellectually based project, not in fits and starts such as she does now. [17 September 1974]

Am I in the Rejection part of Growth right now? I feel like no one likes me, or wants to be with me, etc. I am almost paranoid about it.

E's fears that no one out there likes you, mirrors the cyclic loss of self-esteem that accompanies your violent mood swings. Yes, this in part due to the Mode, and in part due to the Center, in which you are trapped. Souls in Growth do experience the fear of Rejection where souls in some of the other Goals do not, but souls in Growth do not often experience the need to Reject — only the fear, and this fear is certainly cyclic. This is one area in you that could be looked at. The high point in the cycle is the one to hold up as a growth aim. Believe it or not, you will not be hyper-manic, just joyful, if you are able to attain this and remain there. Those souls with bland Overleaves can stand to look at their experiences of joy, and perhaps tune in more than they are now doing. Moving centered souls often turn off or tune out these experiences that are potentially emotionally loaded. [28 September 1974]

What does Michael think of the teachings of Krishnamurti?

This method of teaching is most valuable in those souls trapped in the Emotional part of Moving Center, or in the Emotional Center proper. Yes, A, he makes one think, and this leads in some ways to contact with intellect.

In other words, the barrage leaves little room for emotional reactions until its over, and by that time some has been absorbed. The teachings themselves are in part inspired by higher sources, and in part by Krishna[murti]'s vivid personality. [01 October 1974]

_____ asked about his work recently in trying to get into the moving center by using hobbies. He is trapped in the Intellectual Center, and by using the hobbies is trying to balance this.

Yes, this is a good attempt on your part and could be successful if pursued. [26 November 1974]

How can one tell whether one is in a negative pole of an appropriate Center, or if one is in the wrong Center entirely?

Whatever portion of a Center provides an entrapment for the soul who is still a victim of his Overleaves becomes the negative pole of that Center. All creatures of reason have this in common — you are not alone. This is for many a no-exit situation, and becomes wrong work, but still not wholly inappropriate, as in the example given. It is still an emotional reaction to an emotional situation or a sexual reaction to a sexual situation. We would call it unschooled rather than inappropriate. It is not inappropriate, for instance, for your children in this culture to giggle at salacious pictures, and this is an appropriate reaction from an unschooled Center.

In order to become successful in life in this culture, it is usually absolutely necessary to act out of the negative poles of Centers. In order to survive, some of the negative poles of the Overleaves produce behavior that is laudable by the culture. For instance, mothers in the negative pole of Dominance are often admired for their unflagging devotion to their children. However, what produces success in life produces failure in a teaching, for the very visible reason that the goals are diametrically opposed. [25 January 1975]

As you are aware, this adept [Soleal] was Emotionally Centered as a youngster. His teacher sensed this and sensed the depth of the trap. He therefore sent Soleal to work in a quarry under higher gravity than he was accustomed to on his own world, and that year the work was so strenuous that this youngster actually traded traps [and went into Moving Center]. It was necessary for survival. Then he went back to his Intellectually Centered environment, charged with Moving Centered energy and found himself with no alternative but to open the Intellectual Center. This experience and others like it were responsible for his present level. Please believe us, that quarry is no picnic. [It provided plenty of friction.] It snows there sixteen months out of their year of twenty, and the snow is often four to five feet deep over the entire landscape. Remember also that Soleal lives near the equator of his home world.

Discipline must occur on all three levels if it is to be effective. It cannot merely be the discipline imposed by Intellectual Center. It must also involve shutting down the artifact and experiencing Emotional Center as a barometer. It must involve Moving Center as the acting out center and not as the Thinking Center. Joy can be experienced. It cannot be adequately expressed through other than telepathy. When you feel joy, why express it in an instinctive way. Why not instead try to convey this without words. [15 April 1975]

Am I in Emotional Center when I am meditating? It seems like I am simply perceiving.

Sometimes it is higher Emotional Center and this can be referred back to the triangles. Emotional center, when it is not the trap, acts merely as a barometer, sensing the variances around. This includes the dangers and the anger, the joy and the pain being beamed about. This center makes no judgment on this information and cannot react to any situation when it is being used in tandem with the other centers. When it is the trap, it is utilized much as the other centers, having then a thinking, reacting and acting part.

Please, students, think! This does not differ from the other Centers. Balanced Man thinks with the Intellectual Center, perceives with Emotional Center and acts with the Moving Center. The divisions no longer hold [when you are in] in balance. [01 April 1975]

Are there any other surprises in Centers?

Negative reactions of any type are artifacts and need not be experienced nor acted upon by advanced students. There are no surprises other than what we have given. Stoics who are trapped in the Emotional Center react very differently than do, say, Idealists. Look to the Overleaves when reactions occur first. Chances are that the

personality is to blame and not the center. Many reactions to the past and the glories of it are from the [Negative Poles of the] Overleaves, not the Centers — all tapes [recordings in false personality], in other words. In fact, any ruminations about the past or the future must come from the personality. [15 April 1975]

While I am emotionalizing, am I using that as a way of repressing what I am feeling?

Intellectualizing denies emotionalism. The expression emotionally releases the personality from the intellectual trap. The machine has a tape that warns it when this is happening, and the Passion mode employs itself to re-engage the intellectual trap. The problem at this point is that the personality does no longer connect with the imprinting habit. Freedom of expression is the gift of the Tao upon the personality. The trap is triggered in the refusal to express the Passion mode, specifically, in the positive pole. This essence does communicate at the emotional level easier than at any other level. The student AB is trapped in this Center to learn this. The Emotional Center does provide false personality with the excuse to accept this. The student AB has perceived this and the personality rebels at this knowledge. The trap is emotionalism, the personality uses this excuse to perpetuate the belief that the Emotional Center is not perceiving. The Emotional Center perceives only, and the personality finds this very difficult to deal with. The intellectual [center] blocks the knowledge of the trap, through the trap of the Emotional Center. If the emotions rule, how can you be in the Intellectual Center? (We had believed AB was in the Emotional part of Intellectual Center.) Discovery of this cover-up is important to the student AB. [07 November 1977]

Concluding Comments on Centering Traps

There are several chapters on Centers in this *Study Papers* book because it was a central component of the psychotherapeutic and spiritual paths in both the Gurdjieffian teachings and in the Michaelian teachings. Recall that your Centering predisposes how you tend to react or respond to events; the Centers are an internal property that disposes how you process external events as interpreted through the Attitude. One of the central components of the teaching on Centers was that people, before reaching adulthood, tend to settle into an habitual reaction pattern rather than evolve into a mature and appropriate response to life events and situations. These habitual reaction patterns are referred to as “traps”. Because the word has a special meaning in the Gurdjieffian teachings and in the Michaelian teachings, I capitalize it in my books.

Centering Traps are also mentioned in the chapter “Balanced Man”. Even though it does not say so in most of the following quotes, the purpose of getting out of Centering Traps is to achieve Balance, so read that chapter to find out about that goal on one’s spiritual path. There are references in the original Michaelian group to the Essence being trapped, but that is not the subject of this chapter; it is mentioned in a subsection of another chapter, “Essence and Personality”. To be trapped is also the opposite of being free, and this is the subject of yet another chapter, “Liberation”.

Once again I would like to emphasize that the purpose of all the following explanation is that when you notice that you are perturbed (unBalanced), you will recognize where the problem lies (in terms of a system of understanding what is and how it works), and consequently you will know how to release the perturbation most efficiently and effectively. The Michael system of psychotherapy and spirituality is very complex, but that is only because the perturbations are very numerous, and it helps to have all those perturbations pointed out. There is one primary method of extrication, and that is self-observation. Other secondary methods are mentioned in this and other expositions. There are also perturbations that don’t feel bad, so are hard to notice unless someone else points them out. That is also the subject of yet another chapter, namely “Schools”.

Traps

First we will look at the traps, then we will look at the liberation from the traps. The following quotations do not discuss the liberation from traps.... [[subsections on trapped Essence ...](#)]

The analysis and synthesis of Centering Traps has its own chapter: “Centering Traps”.

Dick: My patients have headaches and I have no inkling of why they have chronic ones. Some I just don’t understand at all. I can’t figure out why they have headaches all the time.

Headaches are repressed emotions. Many things can be said through the painful head. Most frequently, a weariness of the body coupled with a bored, trapped Essence will produce the worst headache. Young Souls frequently have migraine headaches. They do not attempt to understand the treadmill they are on. Mature

Souls frequently have tension headaches from being surrounded by uncomfortable souls all day. Mature Souls [who are] in close contact with Baby Souls and many Young Souls tend to have the most frequent and severe headaches. You can treat their [Mature soul] headaches by helping them see the source. With Young Souls, you can only treat the pain. [04 September 1974]

Alice: Am I Moving Centered?

No, you, too (are Intellectually Centered). You use the Moving Center, but that is not where the trapped Essence is. [08 September 1973]

Alice: I would like to know how to unTrap my intellect.

Concentration is an excellent exercise for you. [08 September 1973]

Gene: I imagine that they are talking about the non-fragmented Entity — the unified Entity — “were first born at the same time” and that seems to me contradictory, because those of us who were born are only part and not the Entity.

Entire Entities are Cast from the Tao. They fragment into physically trapped souls for as long as is necessary for them to experience all of life through the Cycles. [08 October 1973]





⑦ TROUBLED SOULS

This chapter is the product of a search for the phrase “troubled soul” in the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group channeling sessions. This word does not represent a significant component of the Michaelian teachings. However, there are good reasons to discuss the subject in this *Study Papers* book: 1) the subject came up numerous times during the original Michaelian group; 2) some interesting things were said about the subject; 3) the subject is related to a number of other components of the Michaelian teachings that are considered to be significant; 4) students can presumably benefit from having the mentions conveniently collected and commented all in one place; 5) The concept of a troubled soul is pervasive in human psychology and sociology and spirituality — subjects covered extensively in this book — so it behooves us to have a working knowledge of it.

The words “troubled soul” are not capitalized in this chapter or other chapters of this *Study Papers* book because it has no special meaning in the Michaelian teachings; it is not a Michaelian jargon word that needs a definition apart from its use in the common vernacular.

This chapter is one of many in this book that focuses on a psychological component of the Michaelian teachings as found in original Michaelian group transcriptions, rather than on a doctrinal or spiritual component. A psychological component is usually either a positive to be cultivated or a negative to be mitigated. As we will see, the Michaels tell us that having a troubled soul is a negative to be eschewed. The Michaelian version of psychology is not to be confused with the popular psychology of the self-improvement movement, those that do not have a spiritual core or perspective. Rather, the Michaelian psychotherapeutic path (aimed at improving psychological health) is a beneficial precursor to the spiritual path (aimed at improving soul health). To skip the former but attempt the latter is referred to as “spiritual bypassing”. This is discussed on such websites as https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spiritual_bypass. To skip mitigating one’s psychological issues and attempt to go straight to enlightenment usually proves to be problematic.

Definition of Troubled Souls

So what is meant by troubled soul? Near as I have been able to discover with an internet search is that this is a phrase that was derived from some Biblical references, such as the following:

O LORD, the God of my salvation, I have cried out both day and night before You.

Let my prayer come before You; Incline Your ear to my cry!

For my soul has had enough troubles, And my life has drawn nigh unto the grave.

I am counted with those who go down into the pit; I am as a man with no strength....

You have put me in the lowest pit, in dark places, in the depths.

Your wrath has rested upon me, and You have afflicted me with all Your waves.

You have removed my acquaintances far from me; and made me an abomination to them....

My eye mourns because of my affliction; I have called upon You every day, O LORD. [Psalm 88:1-9]

That was in the so-called “Old Testament”; the following is from the so-called “New Testament”:

And He [Jesus] descended with them, ... and there was a great multitude of His disciples, and a great throng of people from all Judea and Jerusalem and the coastal region of Tyre and Sidon, who had come to hear Him, and to be healed of their diseases; and those who were troubled with unclean spirits were being cured. And all the multitude were trying to touch Him, for power was coming from Him and healing them all. [Luke 6:17-19]

Many other internet resources indicate that this phrase is well known in the zeitgeist, that the concept originated in ancient times, and that it refers to a person who has what we in modern times regard as a chronic mental health issue.

Troubled Souls per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

The following extracts from original Michaelian group transcriptions are Q&A exchanges, where an original Michaelian group member asks a question (or makes a comment), and the Michaels provide an answer. These extracts are presented in the chronological order in which they were given. As is my custom, I often provide some explanatory comments following the question or answer. Underlined words are my emphasis, to draw attention to what it is that I comment on. Sometimes I embed words or phrases [in brackets] that I believe help to clarify the question or the answer.

The first mention of a troubled soul appeared about two months after the Michaels appeared to the original Michaelian group:

Dick: Then Owen Chamberlain was a Young Soul, a Lunar, and a troubled soul?

First Cycle Mature Soul; troubled. [02 October 1973]

Dick was a medical doctor who encountered people with mental as well as physical health issues. Chamberlain worked at UC Berkeley and was known to Dick. Chamberlain was a Nobel Prize-winning physicist who worked on the Manhattan Project to develop the atomic bomb. Perhaps his conscience smote him for this participation, because in the later decades of his life he became a political and social-justice activist who campaigned against the Viet Nam War, nuclear proliferation, and the Soviet oppression of dissident physicists.

The above is the first, but it is not the only, mention of Mature Souls as being “troubled”. In fact, that attribute is given to Mature Souls more than to any other Overleaf category. For instance:

Dick: I have a question about this problem of “troubled souls” [that] Michael has mentioned several times, and it seems to me that all souls are troubled. This sounds like an area we ought to ask about. Are there untroubled souls?

Few Baby Souls are ever truly troubled. They rarely question their motivation, and everything that happens to them is either because they were bad and are being punished, or because they were good and are being rewarded. Think of the two and three year old child when you think of Baby Souls. Think of the bright, lovable, overly energetic, quick, inquisitive eight-to-twelve year olds when you think of Young Souls. Think of the emotionally disturbed teenager when thinking of Mature Souls. [Think of] the wiser young adult in [thinking about] the Old Souls. [20 October 1973]

Teenagers typically go through what later became known in the Michaelian teachings as the Third Milestone (aka Internal Monad). All Milestones are turbulent, but that Milestone is about the person establishing an identity independent of the family of origin. Therefore, the teenage transition is appropriately compared to a troubled soul who goes through what, in the next mention of a troubled soul in the same original Michaelian group session as above, called “ego disintegration”. It was a lengthy Q&A exchange:

Dick: Are the ‘Ages of Man’, as put forth by William Shakespeare, another Overleaf?

Not completely. Shakespeare, like Carl Jung, did not become aware of this teaching [on Soul Age] until very late in life.

Refer to https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/All_the_world%27s_a_stage if you want to read about the “seven ages of man”. Shakespeare preceded the Michaels by several hundred years in his division of a full human lifetime into seven stages. These stages were not revealed during the original Michaelian group, but they were in *Messages from Michael*, pp. 216-218, where they were referred to as Milestones or Internal Monads. The Milestones are separated by transition zones that is often referred to as an “identity crisis”, when the sense of personal identity goes into limbo or confusion, where it could be said that one becomes a troubled soul. This confused condition can be temporary or permanent, as we see further on.

The Q&A exchange continued:

Dick: I’m glad that is not another Overleaf, because it is something that we already knew. I would like more information on troubled souls.

When we speak of troubled souls, we speak of a clouding of reason leading to disintegration of the functioning psyche.

There probably isn’t a specific entry for “troubled soul” in the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, but it can be safely stated here that troubled souls are at least a little bit crazy, and often times for the remainder of their lives, not just the transition zone between stable Life-Stages:

Alice: Well what happens? Do they ever get it back together again?

Not in that lifetime.

According to later channeling (reviewed in the Chapter 4Q, “Life-Stages”, in Part Four of my book *A History of the Overleaf Chart*), the trauma of transiting a Milestone does not make a person a troubled soul unless they never pull out of the Negative Pole of that Milestone.

The Q&A exchange continued, and more is said about troubled Mature Souls again:

Dick: Well, it must be the Karma that is troubling it, isn't it? Wouldn't you assume that?

There is a general bombardment of unfamiliar stimuli during the Mature Cycle. This is difficult to cope with at best. If a soul has chosen a passive Role [Server, Artisan] and Body [Type], the pressure can become intolerable, especially if poor environmental choices are made.

Sarah: Richard asked me one time why you [Dick] and Gene had such different things going for you at the hospital and I told him that it was your bosses: Dick has this troubled Mature Soul for a boss. [20 October 1973]

It does not say so here, but elsewhere it is said that the Artisan Role has the most fragmented and disintegratable ego, and therefore the most likely to become a troubled soul — especially if that Artisan is a Mature Soul.

About a month later, the subject of troubled Mature Souls came up again:

Evelyn: What is the Level and Role of my brother?

This was a troubled Fifth Level Mature Priest. (Committed suicide at age 36.)

Dick: Troubled where? Personality or soul?

That is valid [in both cases]. This is a conflict between Essence and Personality. It is when the individual Fragment cannot cope with the conflict, that the integrative defense mechanism falls apart and allows the ego to disintegrate before there is any strength in Essence, leaving the soul goalless and adrift. [15 November 1973]

Refer to chapters “Essence and Personality” and “Ego” and “Soul” to get the background understanding of what is said in that answer. Basically and briefly, the self as a whole consists of space-like levels and time-like stages. When there is a conflict between the levels and/or stages, then the self, or soul, can be said to be troubled. The ego is defined as that which holds the sense of selfhood together (“integrative defense mechanism”) against forces that would disintegrate it. If the ego is not successful, then the ego disintegrates, leaving behind a “troubled soul” that is “goalless and adrift”. The goal of a spiritual path is actually to gradually weaken the selfhood that is of Personality while concomitantly strengthening the selfhood that is of Essence.

In a session a week later, the subject of troubled souls came up yet again:

Dr. L: Even though Carolyn doesn't like to admit it, Simon is a Sage. He is a very troubled older [Level] Mature [Soul] and that is why her reaction. Cool it.

Dr. H: He is a troubled Young Soul, Intellectually Centered, Priest, Venusian. [20 November 1973]

So far we have seen the mention of a Mature Priest and a Mature Sage and a Young Priest as troubled souls, so it is not just Artisans and other passive Roles that can ‘go off the rails’, so to speak. Warriors are not immune either:

Alice: I would like to ask about a friend, Caroline. She might be Mercurial, but she also seems Lunar, but she is not shy. I cannot figure her out. She is probably a Mature level as she is somewhat troubled.

This Caroline is a Solar-Lunar, a Mid-Cycle [Fourth Level] Mature Warrior. [16 December 1973]

One of the things about troubled souls, aka people with mental illness, is that it is difficult to discern their Overleaves because the Overleaves are obscured thereby.

Phyllis: Could we check the Soul [Age] and Role of [my son] Elliott? Mature is good for Mott, but Elliott seems like the oldest soul I ever knew.

This child [Elliott] is quite secure within his present framework. Not all Mature Souls are troubled. Some are quite creative within a nurturing environment, with avoidance of stress and hostility in the family members. This child picks up quite well on all negative vibrations, but does not act upon them. [27 December 1973]

Psychologists have noted that an unusual amount of creativity is sometimes correlated with being a troubled soul, but this is not always the case. The reason for this correlation may be because Artisans, who of all the Roles are the most likely to be troubled, are also the most creative of the Roles.

It is not just on the Physical Plane that souls can be troubled:

Richard: Have you ever meditated on Astral material?

There are many troubled souls on the low Astral Plane, and contact with them is often disturbing, even to the Adepts who travel there. For instance, most Baby Souls continue to think of themselves as “dead” until they take another body, and the Astral form they adopt is often gruesome. Some Old Souls play out a particularly remembered life over and over, complete with costumes, and often startle travelers not prepared for medieval splendor. [03 January 1974]

Haunting by ghosts might be one of the manifestations of troubled souls.

Ray: I would like to know the Role and Goal of his nephew, William. I would say he was a Mature Priest, Intellectually Centered, in Rejection.

This is a troubled soul, but not a Priest. He, too, is a Slave; Mid-Cycle Mature in Submission. [20 February 1974]

There we see that the other passive Role, Server, can be troubled.

Cynthia: I would like to ask about a neighbor.

This lady is a deeply troubled Mid-Cycle [Fourth Level] Mature Artisan in Rejection; but what do you hope to achieve with her?

Cynthia: The neighbors feel threatened, and it is frightening to see a person crumble in front of you. It sounds heartless to say that she will have to work it out herself. Is she with the proper therapist for her?

No, she is not.

Cynthia: Would it help to know her Center?

She is an Emotionally Centered Mars-Jovial.

Cynthia: Is she psychotic?

Mildly, yes. Mostly neurotic; much ambivalence concerning her motherhood role. [24 February 1974]

Neurosis and psychosis have specific definitions in the psychiatric profession, but the phrase “troubled soul” covers those and others well enough for amateur purposes. Evidently these disorders are treatable by professional therapists. It does not say so here (but it does below), but my guess is that Emotional Centering factors into neurosis and psychosis; there is such a thing as emotional dysregulation as well as thought dysregulation.

Shirley: I would like to ask about my husband's sister. She is giving him trouble. She is working on her seventh husband. She is probably a troubled soul — trouble follows her everywhere she goes. She is difficult and hard to get along with. She deserted her second family. She used to be quite beautiful.

First of all, this is a Cynic in Greed, a Baby Soul King in Rejection (Third Level Baby Soul). [17 March 1974]

It does not say so there, but I will say that there are two kinds of “troublemakers”: 1) those who are themselves troubled and just make life difficult for themselves and for those in their orbit, and 2) those provocateurs who see that the status quo can be improved, who want to ‘rock the boat’ in a good way. If you encounter a troublemaker, then it is Good Work to discern which kind it is, and act accordingly.

Dick asked about a patient with a FUO (Fever of Unknown Origin).

The reason Dick has so many of these troubled souls should be obvious. He is more qualified to offer something to them in another vein when medicine fails. This man is deeply troubled and is asking for help. The fever is the outward manifestation of the emotional conflict. [27 March 1974]

Conflicts between levels and/or stages of self, as mentioned above, can manifest with physical, emotional, or intellectual symptoms. The phenomenon of psychosomatic illnesses is well known in the medical profession, and in the amateur zeitgeist. Of course, the medical profession should do the gamut of clinical tests and thereby eliminate potential physical causes before implementing a psychological treatment protocol.

I would like to ask about Lincoln. His friend dropped him off here as if he were a child being dropped by a baby sitter.

This man [Lincoln] is, of course, troubled. [He is] also seeking refuge or sanctuary among those he senses will not press him. [27 March 1974]

Perhaps it can be said that troubled souls come in two types, the extroverted or active type and the introverted or passive type. The former are prone to make trouble for everyone around them; the latter are prone to withdraw from everyone around them, or at least prefer the company of those they find comforting, that do not exacerbate their troubles.

Sarah wished to change the subject and inquired about people in the neighborhood being told there was a malevolent spirit around.

The only malevolence is in the negative energy produced by the many troubled souls on that street. [03 April 1974]

Troubled souls are troubled within themselves, yes, but perhaps it can also be said that they are more sensitive than non-troubled souls are to the “negative energy” in their vicinity, which only exaggerates their own internal troubles. Putting this passage together with the previous passage, we can say with confidence that troubled souls would do well to put themselves in an environment that feels like a refuge or a sanctuary to them, lest the authorities catch them and put them in a padded cell or medicated zombification regimen where they cannot hurt themselves or others.

Regarding hypnotherapy — having a therapy place where some of us would treat troubled people by hypnosis — synthesis while under hypnosis.

Once we realize we can change — how do we know when that is?

Usually, the Mature Soul at that point seeks therapy. Whether this is effective depends upon the skill of the therapist. The same goes for the skill of the teacher in the school such as this. [08 May 1974]

As documented in the chapter “Health”, troubled Mature souls are inclined to seek professional psychological counseling whereas troubled Old Souls are inclined to seek spiritual counseling.

Mallory: I saw a woman on the bus — different, another country, looked attractive and I liked her, but then when [I] looked her in the eyes, had difficulty.

Primarily, the difficulty here lies in the fact that this was a deeply troubled soul with an opinion of herself that caused you to feel the “evil”.

What was her soul level?

A Mid-Cycle Mature Priest. [05 June 1974]

Mallory was a psychologist in training at the time. Perhaps you have heard the phrase, “The eyes are the window to the soul”. One can tell if a soul is troubled or untroubled by looking in their eyes. It has been noticed by Michaelian students that Priests typically have what seems like light shining from their eyes, but the opposite was the case here. This phenomenon has not gone unnoticed in the dramatic arts regarding the supernatural realm, where good people are sometimes portrayed as shining light from their eyes, and evil people are sometimes portrayed as having dark or “dead” eyes.

Beth: I would like to ask of my brother, Bob, who had a \$900 debt, had put himself in an institution, and has disappeared. I'd like to know if he is OK?

This troubled Mid-Cycle Mature Soul is not at rest with himself, nor will he be in this lifetime. The Personality disintegrates without Essence contact. He spends increasingly more time out of the body on a more pleasant plane for him, and will perhaps choose to stay [out] soon. [14 July 1974]

In the chapter “Essence and Personality” we find that if the Essence level of the self is unable to express through the Personality level of the self, then the Essence metaphorically ‘goes to sleep’, leaving the person “goalless and adrift”, as stated above. A healthy self requires the healthy functioning of both Essence and Personality during the lifetime.

Abdullah asked if the pressures asserted by the full moon (astrological moon) were influencing behavior of certain ones at the place he works.

It is common that troubled souls react to the full moon with far more intensity than more Balanced out souls.

The thing that these young men had in common was that they were all troubled Mid-Cycle Mature Souls.

Troubled souls can sometimes be guided through this difficult period by someone who is able to recognize the ego disintegration, who is in tune with the lunar cycle and also close enough to the involved souls to recognize the restlessness and disorientation that precedes the break. [01 October 1974]

Wikipedia has an article on the alleged phenomenon where the full moon affects the mental health of people near the edge of sanity/insanity: >https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lunar_effect<. That article is not as favorable to the notion as the Michaels were.

Concluding Comments on Troubled Souls

What can we learn from observing troubled souls? For one thing, they serve as bad examples: what are they doing that we should not be doing. For another thing, they can also teach us compassion: “But for the grace of God there go I”. But if oneself is a troubled soul, then one might need to seek professional help; refer to the chapter “Health — Physical and Mental” for more about that.





⑤ TRUST

This chapter is the product of a search for the word trust in the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group channeling sessions. This word does not represent a significant component of the Michaelian teachings. However, there are good reasons to discuss the subject in this *Study Papers* book: 1) the subject came up numerous times during the original Michaelian group; 2) some interesting things were said about the subject; 3) the subject is related to a number of other components of the Michaelian teachings that are considered to be significant; 4) students can presumably benefit from having the mentions conveniently collected and commented all in one place; 5) trust issues are unavoidable; they are pervasive in human psychology and sociology and spirituality — subjects covered extensively in this book — so it behooves us to have a working knowledge of them.

The word trust is not capitalized in this chapter or other chapters of this *Study Papers* book because it has no special meaning in the Michaelian teachings; it is not a Michaelian jargon word that needs a definition apart from its use in the common vernacular.

This chapter is one of many in this book that focuses on a psychological component of the Michaelian teachings as found in original Michaelian group transcriptions, rather than on a doctrinal or spiritual component. A psychological component is usually either a positive to be cultivated or a negative to be mitigated. As we will see, the Michaels tell us that trust is a positive to be cultivated. The Michaelian version of psychology is not to be confused with the popular psychology of the self-improvement movement, those that do not have a spiritual core or perspective. Rather, the Michaelian psychotherapeutic path (aimed at improving psychological health) is a beneficial precursor to the spiritual path (aimed at improving soul health). To skip the former but attempt the latter is referred to as “spiritual bypassing”. This is discussed at length on such websites as https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spiritual_bypassing. To skip mitigating one’s psychological issues and attempt to go straight to enlightenment usually proves to be problematic.

Trust per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

The following extracts from original Michaelian group transcriptions are Q&A exchanges, where an original Michaelian group member asks a question (or makes a comment), and the Michaels provide an answer. These extracts are presented in the chronological order in which they were given. As is my custom, I often provide some explanatory comments following the question or answer. Underlined words in the Michaels’ answers are my emphasis, to draw attention to what it is that I comment on. Sometimes I embed words or phrases [in brackets] that I believe help to clarify the question or the answer.

Nearly a month after the first appearance of the Michaels to the original Michaelian group, the subject of trust was first broached:

Kathryn: Back to being modest: is there any other act I could put on?

Openness would be the best approach. You are quite open, but there are still some closed corridors. You are conscious of the futility of anger, but are not quite sure of how to handle what you interpret as anger, so you tend to avoid situations that might give rise to this. Also, you have a tendency not to trust your own verifications. You have verified your own status and are still unwilling to admit this. This is Wrong Work. Don’t accept the words or evaluations of the others until you have verified their status. This ability is within your grasp. You know instinctively who to seek, and have so far sought with discrimination on an instinctual level. Now, you can move into doing it on a higher level. The knowledge is there [within you]. [08 September 1973]

This is the bedrock foundation of trust: if you are being open and honest with yourself, then you can trust yourself to discriminate what is and is not trustworthy when it comes to evaluating others. Another point is that, because ourselves are not experts at everything, sometimes we find ourselves in situations where we must

trust the expertise of other people: are their credentials (whether as a plumber or a guru) solid? Another thought regarding discrimination comes to my mind: per Ronald Reagan regarding the Russian nuclear treaty: "Trust but verify". So, do not be naive or gullible or credulous in matters involving situations of trust. Refer to the chapter "Validation and Verification".

Dick: Guess I'm saying there has to be large internal changes in order to make a change in jobs, before I can trust cosmic influences. [06 October 73]

The notion of "cosmic influences" came from the Gurdjieffian teachings; refer to the chapter "Influences: A, B, C". The questioner was right to be wary, because not all such supernatural sources are trustworthy.

I see as long as I'm in False Personality, I'm blocking and wasting much energy and I suppose the best thing to do would be to separate from False Personality as much as possible.

Soleal has a tendency not to trust his decisions until he has fantasized over the alternatives, none of which are relevant and come from vestigial False Personality. [06 October 1973]

Recall that Soleal was allegedly a spiritual Adept who lived on another planet; he came to the original Michaelian group via channeling before the Michaels showed up; he was also a student of the Michaels. Even though he was an Adept, he still had the vestiges of some human traits such as False Personality. I can relate to his tendency to fantasize about irrelevant alternatives before settling on a decision.

Dennis: I would like to know my Soul level and Role.

[You are a] Fourth Level Mature Scholar. This young man has difficulty trusting intuition, which stems from childhood misadventures, and [this difficulty trusting intuition] is also inherent in the [Mature] Cycle. [15 November 1973]

Mature souls begin to open to intuition, but souls younger than Mature have even less belief in or trust in intuition; it is in the Old Soul Cycle that intuition is most firmly established in the psyche.

Evelyn: About three years ago, my sister-in-law's personality changed. It troubles her and she would like some help to understand this.

We have discussed this lady at length. Her primary difficulty should be resolved if she would trust the intuition. The change that occurred is nothing more serious than a late manifestation [of the Fourth Internal Monad]. She feels now very insecure. She was very secure in her old role, where everything was clearly defined. Now the edges are blurred. She does not like this, but it is, of course, preferable and is the initial opening of the door. Warriors find the [spiritual] "path" especially steep and rocky. All her old relationships were taken for granted. For the first time in her life, she was faced with the challenge of creating new relationships out of totally new material and with a new game with different rules. [29 November 1973]

The Fourth so-called "Internal Monad" (manifestation of Essence) was alluded to in the original Michaelian group a few times, but it was not specifically revealed to be part of six other Internal Monads or Milestones. It is at the manifestation of Essence at that Milestone that one should learn to trust the promptings of Essence, otherwise known as intuition.

Betty: Is there someone else who could do a better job?

The trust level between therapist and patient must be extremely high. In other words, she must have a belief in his ability to do this. [29 November 1973]

Psychotherapists do well to realize that their effectiveness is largely dependent on the empathetic rapport they are able to establish with their clients.

Ray: Question lost.

In order for this group to achieve the cohesion necessary to provide [spiritual] growth, a level of intimacy and trust far exceeding what you now have must be reached. This cannot be achieved through dialogue. Dialogue is False Personality's defense against Emotional Center. [31 January 1974]

The type of dialogue spoken of here comes mostly from Intellectual Center, which can be (but should not be) hostile to Emotional Center. But there is another type of "dialogue" that is non-verbal and that comes from Emotional Center; it typically has more capacity to form cohesive social and spiritual bonds than the Intellectual Center does.

In the quotations above, the focus was mostly on learning to trust one's intuitions. In many subsequent quotations, the issue of trust as it applied to cohesion within the original Michaelian group came to the fore, because they were moving toward commitment to form a commune.

Richard: I got some automatic writing when I was doing reports for the Assessment District. My hands were frozen as a child and when the temperature became 40 degrees today, a message came through that there would be an important message tonight.

There are many fears in this group that must be met and dealt with before going on. One [fear] concerns the decision you will be making within the next six months, some to go and some to stay. Many will be sad. Many will chose to go on with the security they now believe they have, while others will trust their intuition. Whatever the move, it will be painful, and at one level many fear the newness of the concept and recognize that [it] is [a] total break with all familiar. This you have learned to dread. Others realize that this will mean drastic changes in the nuclear family and also dread this. Relationships will change as growth occurs. You are now at the crossroads. One way leads to spiritual growth, the other to Maya. All of you are now at the point where you realize that you must make some decision as to whether you intend to pursue this. You are no longer investigating. You know precisely what is being offered. This levity comes in part from anxiety. The silence often brings you face to face with your anxiety. [06 February 1974]

This is the third time that trusting intuition appears in the original Michaelian group transcriptions.

I have a special affinity for a town in Northern Italy. Is this a valid past memory?

Why do you distrust the feeling? Even though we are having difficulty coming through now, we will try again and your feelings are most valid. We will let you know which are not. [13 February 1974]

Here I would say that “feeling” is synonymous with intuition. However, I would also say that one should learn to discern whether intuitions and feelings are trustworthy or not, and that is by noticing their valence, whether it comes from a higher place or a lower place in one’s consciousness. This takes practice, and it is only realized after clearing one’s Personality of psychological issues: Chief Feature, False Personality, Maya, Negative Poles, and so on.

When the need manifests, the group will come together. In TFR group (“Time for Reality”), there is much trust in each other. We can be honest and open up.

There are perfidious people out there, so trust is not something that one should extend credulously; it is reasonable to expect other people to earn your trust by their honesty and openness. It is a two-way street: you should be open and honest with others, and if they reciprocate, then intimacy will result.

Gurdjieff was organized and was not haphazard, and Michael says the only thing valid was the Centers and a life beyond the physical.

[Soleal:] At great risk of developing some real friction, I offer this, in part my own, in part the teaching, not yet inseparable. In most of you, I see great fears of invasion of very private worlds. This [is], of course, in great measure due to a lower level of trust, and also to guilt. Many of you still are not convinced that your very private life style will be acceptable to the others, and you are singularly unwilling to risk finding out. Also, there is a tenacious desire to run from any possible molding of your lives by others. Many of you need to work on this, for this is personality digging in for a last ditch stand against Essence, which would not permit the molding in the first place. All of you have a set of rigid specifications set by personality concerning your needs. None of those are valid. Only that which comes from Essence is valid. If you are being completely honest with yourselves and others, the need for privacy and aloneness disappears, and is replaced by the feeling of Agape. This is not easy. The teacher has not said that it is easy, only that it can be obtained. On this world, we are faced daily with the need for continued growth, and spend much time solving those kinds of problems that beset you all. The difference being that we know that it is a workable system and feel the necessity to keep it alive. It is sometimes difficult and sometimes disheartening, but in the long run, rewarding beyond words... Your level of trust is so low that you must be very selective in those in whom you may confide. That is not the case here [on my planet]. This makes a very great difference. Your history records that your greatest leaders were in constant danger of assassination, and their access to the people was consequently severely limited. Mine would be, too, I’m afraid... There is, on this world, a basic contract of trust, which places all major responsibility and decision-making into the hands of a select few. This, of course, points to a very high level of trust on this world, for we have no weapons. These so-called leaders can be called to task by any one at any time that their decision-making apparatus appears to fail. [18 February 1974]

Refer to the chapter “Communal Living” if you want to get a full picture of the context of this statement. A general ambiance of trust is absolutely essential for the healthy functioning of a commune, or any group of any size that has psychological intimacy as a goal.

There is not enough to work on here.

You are fearful of the projected ramification of an intimate relationship. These fears, of course, are culturally induced, but that is slightly irrelevant when you are struggling with them. Almost all of these fears concern some material considerations, and again are bound up in your ferocious work ethic. Intimate relationships can be expensive, for instance. Intimacy requires time and nurturing. To be intimate, you must trust. [27 March 1974]

Refer to the chapters “Intimacy” and “Alienation”.

Would you give us more on the teacher-guide?

The guidance groups require much time and can become intensive, and for that reason must remain small or they lose their effectiveness. This, of course, is because of the trust level, which is proportional to the level of intimacy in any group. [27 March 1974]

A sociologist named Robin Dunbar claimed that humans cannot maintain a social circle larger than about 150 people, and this has become the “Dunbar Number”. (Do an internet search.) A tribal village that exceeds that number will tend to divide into groups. Realistically, that number is way too high for effective relationships, so large businesses do well to divide the workforce into teams of a dozen people or fewer. In the case of the original Michaelian group, they had a core group of mostly founders and then they had an open large group.

Question regarding small groups.

Trust is more easily built in the small groups. You should make an effort to vary the construction of these smaller sessions so that the trust can go around the circle. Also, this will be valuable in eliminating some of the impatience and negativity over neophytes who ask what seem to be nonessential questions. At some point, we would agree that many of these questions serve merely as ice-breakers. Other souls simply are not profound, but can grow.

Trust, as you have said, implies communication and awareness, and they are inseparable. Trust is solely based upon intuition and cannot be logical. Logic will fail you every time in matters of trust. Also, the person who trusts must be less vulnerable. Yes, otherwise, he would be torn apart most of the time. Trust contains elements of toughness that comes only with practice and concerns a lack of Internal Consideration — a “let the chips fall [where they may]” attitude. Trust is most difficult for souls in Acceptance, Submission, and Rejection. [27 March 1974]

More than once in these Q&A exchanges, the Michaels contrast intuition with intellect. My view of this is that the so-called “Instinctive” Center (which I prefer to call the “Impulse” Center) has a Positive Pole of +Intuition, according to myself. This is one Center that is “higher” in the hierarchy of spiritual maturity than either Pole of the Intellectual Center, +Thought and –Reason (Logic). A “Balanced” person functions in the Positive Pole of the Instinctive Center, +Intuition; refer to the chapter “Balanced Man”.

There is not enough to work on here.

You are fearful of the projected ramification of an intimate relationship. These fears, of course, are culturally induced, but that is slightly irrelevant when you are struggling with them. Almost all of these fears concern some material considerations, and again are bound up in your ferocious work ethic. Intimate relationships can be expensive, for instance. Intimacy requires time and nurturing. To be intimate, you must trust. [27 March 1974]

Besides the connection of trust with intuition, intimacy is also mentioned numerous times in the context of trust.

I would like verification of the validity of my use of the Ouija board. Was I in touch with my higher self or was it my imagination or what?

We would say that the information is certainly valid. We would also add that one’s higher self is perfectly good counsel and should not be feared, even if it does happen to peek through once in a while. “Higher” means just that, and we would advise all to listen to that higher self as carefully as you listen to us. After all, the Essence has a vast store of knowledge accumulated over the centuries, and can be trusted implicitly. Only the Personality is transient and fraudulent, and you will soon recognize the difference. [17 July 1974]

Refer to the chapter “Higher Self”, where we find other evidence that it is synonymous with Essence, and that one should learn to discern its promptings and guidance.

Jody: SRG for Virginia, a teacher [that I know]?

This lady (Virginia) is a Fifth Level Baby Priest in Growth, in the Caution Mode, with a Chief Feature of Martyrdom, in the Emotional Part of Intellectual Center, a Realist. You may tell the lady Juanita to trust her first impressions. They are more valid than her second thoughts. [10 September 1974]

It takes a while to learn to trust one's first impressions and intuitions, but once that connection to intuition has been firmly made, it is often a more reliable source of information than secondary reasoning and rationalization.

Alice: Sock it to me, Michael, so I may be a better person for it.

Since your own Chief Feature is Self-deprecation, Alice, your own timidity is stronger and therefore needs the work. The start now has been good, but you must not dwell on the possible effects of your Photographs. This is a horrendous drain in energy. Just say it. Most of the time you have been right when you have felt strongly. Practicing with those you trust is all right for the present. It is valid that if it is the truth you speak, most have no rejoinder. Only those in Rejection will sometimes reject even the truth. [21 September 1974]

Here is yet another conjunction of trust with "felt" intuition. To not follow your intuition results in an "energy drain" — refer to the chapter "Energy and Energy Leaks". Practice being open and honest with people you know you can develop a deep trust with, and this will help you to develop openness and honesty with others in general.

At this point Gene brought up the subject of trust. He asked for the group response as to how we felt about trusting him, etc. Considerable discussion followed.

Gene was an Idealist. Whether they realize it or not, people on both sides of the Idealist-Skeptic Axis are focused on resolving issues of trust and distrust: Idealists tend to be too trusting, especially in the Negative Pole of -Naivety, and Skeptics tend to be too distrusting, especially in the Negative Pole of -Suspicion. A Balanced person is neither too naive nor too suspicious:

If one is truly striving toward Balance, there will be a desire for harmony in the environment. They are one and the same. There is only chaos in the environments of those struggling with conflicts on the glamorous Physical Plane. The struggle to meet the expectations of others that is, sadly enough, most often without knowledge of those expectations. There is so much guesswork going on, how could you possibly trust? We agree with you, Eugene, more than you think, that ultimately trust has to do with constancy — predictability, if you will. This endows the persona with a certain amount of reliability with which to operate. It is like arming the cannon. The flagrant misuse of someone else's definition of a word usually denotes a lack of understanding and a semantic barrier rather than any particular breach of trust. [24 September 1974]

Refer to chapters "Balanced Man" and "Glamour". Trust is fostered when two people "speak the same language" in terms of their semantics, which means that they are "on the same page". It is difficult to trust people who do not share your belief system, value system, and behavior system — your entire worldview. And of course, as it says here, it is difficult to trust someone who is not settled into a consistent identity pattern.

After the second hypnosis session was through, Dick asked a question about a very private internal space. He acknowledged that he allows no one in his space. He wondered if others allow beings into their mental space. This occurred to him on two occasions.

Many can allow access to this easily. This is again dependent on an enormous trust level. Only those who are trusted absolutely are granted access. You find it easier at this point to only allow those who are disembodied (to enter). The next step, of course, is to allow access to one who is still entrapped [in a physical body]. [05 October 1974]

Artisans, such as Dick, tend to be alienated from themselves and others — they find it difficult to reveal themselves openly and honestly to others, and this fosters distrust in both directions. Elsewhere, it is said that Artisans (and Sages) wear 'masks' that conceal who they are in the case of Artisans, and exhibit who they are not in the case of Sages. "What you see is what you get" does not generally apply to them, so they have trust issues, more so than other Roles. Artisans and Sages are on the same Axis (Expression) as Skeptic and Idealist, mentioned above as Overleaves that also deal with trust issues.

Comment: We need a teacher to pass on to us the Agape — like passing the torch in the Olympics. A discussion was held about the experience of looking into other people's eyes without speaking for an extended time.

This would bring up many taboos and would be a rewarding experience. We would suggest that you start off with only a few minutes, and then increase gradually. You see, this is a more powerful experience than you think, for there are now in your group souls who are beginning to trust, and looking at them closely will produce strange emotions. [05 October 1974]

Trust is the breaking down of artificial barriers between people. Evidently trust can be developed and transferred via eye-gazing. This is short of the transmission of enlightenment from a guru to an acolyte, which is referred to as *shaktipat*. The question was probably asked by Dick, because on several occasions he mentioned that *shaktipat* of some kind was the way he wanted to be liberated from his psychological issues.

[Question not recorded.]

This is valid. The first session in an evening should be a "practice". The more sessions in an evening the more trusting the personality and the deeper each successive trance. [09 October 1974]

This answer was given in a session that was aimed at helping Sarah learn to trust the process of channeling in trance rather than on the Ouija board. Beyond that, the general point to be made here is that learning to trust can be fostered by intentional practice in a systematic and escalating process. This is a well-known fact in the psychotherapeutic profession. Trust/distrust is not binary, there is a spectrum between the two extremes, so the goal is to learn where something is on the continuum between what is trustworthy and what is not.

There are steps, of course, man's purpose then being to learn that there is love, and that it is accessible, and that it is accessible only through those "extrasensory" perceptions that he chooses to deny. The foundation we have given; the application you have agreed to try. Until you manage to open these doors — or at the very least, verify that they are there — you will notice no significant change in yourself, although that change may be readily perceptible to other students, but not to the one stuck with it. The application of this teaching in a loving, trusting environment could enable you to verify the presence of these blocks. If you choose to take advantage of this, of course, we will be there to assist. Essentially, what Mechanical Man is saying when he says, "I do not trust you," is, "I do not trust you not to show me what is behind those blocks." Perhaps this, then: "If I allow you to come too close, you will violate my barriers, and I will be naked in the void." Once the stripping happens, the Work, of course, becomes far easier and Personality begins to lose ground. It can do nothing else at this point. The Essence knows no shame, no guilt. If you can learn to share your fears, however childish they may seem to you, you will have gone a long way along the path. The realm of unfulfilled desires is fraught with Maya and one which must be conquered. What you are saying, in saying that you do not trust, is also, "I am so terrible that if you knew it, you could not love me," and on a Personality-to-Personality basis, this is, of course, probably true; but the level of comprehension in this group is such that very little has not been met and dealt with already. It is doubtful that you could peel away the acceptance with your escapades. In fact, this would invariably bring you all much closer, and at this moment that is the goal. You have all been told about the utter foolishness in setting up impossible goals for yourselves: fixating on a goal years in the future is another of the Personality's defenses against the Essence's experiencing of the moment. [22 October 1974]

Refer to chapters "Love", "Guilt", "Barriers", "Mechanical Man", "Essence and Personality", "Work, The", "Maya".

Thaddeus wanted advice on furthering his telepathic powers, moving toward trance mediumship.

Thaddeus, you must first remember that this telepathic sense is a two-way street, at least until you are quite strong and confident, so practice with one with whom the trust level is very high will produce the best results. Those who are not willing, or are hiding, will give superficial permission, but at the last moment will deny access to all but the most superficial strata. For the development of this sense, meditation of some form is imperative. Until you go into this deep space, you cannot quiet the head enough to hear. This is, of course, why we still stress this with you all, but as we have said before, we are patient. You can begin working with those around you, with whom you have established the trust level. Meditating together would be effective. You need not be in the same room. [29 October 1974]

Refer to the chapters "Telepathy" and "Meditation and Concentration". The recommendation here and there is not to do telepathy as an intrusion, but as letting down the artificial barriers, as opening to trust other people.

Gene asked why there have been errors in Soul Levels and Roles — are they purposeful? He had been told by Michael much earlier that he was an Artisan, and during a session the night before, someone in the group had asked about his Role and was told it was Scholar, which seems to fit him better.

I have spent many hours with Gene in private, and I can therefore say with some confidence that he is likely an Artisan-Cast, Scholar Role Fragment. During the original Michaelian group, they did not know about Casting into Role-like natures as this was not (yet) a part of the revelation of Cadres and Entities.

The errors occasionally happen with growth in mind, yes. Often, they are errors. The man is right in one respect. The test is not testing, but rather a lesson to be learned in trust and getting in touch with intuition. The

soul level discrepancies are not reflective of too much more change. The coincidence of the changes just happened to come in order of the questions. [09 November 1974]

Channeling is not something that can be trusted implicitly, hence the injunction to verify with intuition.

Thaddeus had been in hypnosis and the teacher [Michael] had seemed to talk through him. We asked about this.

This is an easy body to come into, not much struggle at all; much desire. It could be facilitated much by fatigue. The man is not tired. One way you will be able to measure the trust level in this group will occur when the diehards begin to drop their guard. With the man Thaddeus there is not much guarding, and he finds it easier to let go because of this. [09 November 1974]

Like the ability to experience telepathy when it comes to person-to-person communication, the ability to channel is a measure of trust when it comes to person-to-entity contact.

We held a group discussion of experiences and impressions during the weekend we spent together. Many of us experienced verification of Soleal, Emotional Center experiences, and a cohesiveness of the group. We then asked Michael for a comment about the weekend the group had spent together, specifically about trust.

We would hope that those of you who were exposed to the verification of the presence of our other student [Soleal] and who were exposed simultaneously to the joy of communication without the need for subterfuge and verbiage, would attempt within the next few months to perfect, or at least awaken, these skills within yourselves. This is perhaps the most exciting breakthrough that this cadre has yet experienced.

Those students who did not experience this at least now know where the work is and yes, we would agree there will be much focus on this and other similar teachings in the coming years, and it will be up to the students to lend credence to the words. This will be far more believable coming from a Balanced student than a scattered one.

It was excellent work to have the group pressed into a crowded situation and yet come away with far more positive emotions than negative ones, even though many privately held belief systems concerning the need for alienation were violated. Those of you who made the experience count will not lose the ground gained. Those students who refused to penetrate the experience are in precisely the same spot as they were before the experience.

It does not worry us that you wish to go into this gradually. We have much time. It is, however, gratifying that at least the ball is now rolling, and many students are now looking at alternatives that in the beginning were untenable. This is some progress. The rest must come about at a comfortable rhythm. The more time that you can spend in close proximity, the easier the Work will become. It was graphically clear to many students, for instance, that they were not restricted by the fact that the other students were present and that they were able to function in many spheres and with a far keener appreciation of the action undertaken. This is a valuable lesson and a valid group Photograph.

This is an old group. There are no desires to mold you. You can interact casually with one another, and we think that within a very few months (could) manage to give up many of your remaining expectations of how that interaction should feel. When this happens and you are able to express genuine feelings to one another, you will be ready for an alternative life, such as the one we have suggested.

The reason for the psychic Photograph should be fairly clear at this time. It is primarily a warm-up exercise, leading to nonverbal communication. Many students who are also teachers err in trying to speed up this process and, for that reason, the desired communication does not take place. The telepathic silence is anything but silent, but students cannot be shielding if this is to come about. If you first learn to express your feelings to one another without shame or guilt or any of the other myriad barriers, then you open the door to silence. Only then can you be truly comfortable without the chatter. Chattering is usually just another shield so the Personality does not have to be honest.

You see, the Essence cannot lie; therefore, the Personality cannot tell the truth. It can only lie. This is an important point to remember, since the chattering emanates from the Personality.

The Essence does communicate. There is no need for mindless silence in the path toward Balance, but it might as well be truthful communication, and until you can knock away the barriers, this cannot come about. The Personality will always be around to conveniently lie in order to satisfy the Goal. If this Goal happens to be Acceptance, for instance, think of how much energy is lost. [12 November 1974]

The word "trust" is not found in the lengthy answer, but I include the quotation here because the description of the increasing openness in various realms of experience fits the general definition of trust.

Considering what has been said previously in this chapter, the following quotations from the original Michaelian group transcriptions do not benefit from some added explanatory commentary by me; the information in the quotations is mostly a repetition of what we have seen above.

There was much discussion on Sarah's reluctance to answer (Michael through the Ouija board) the apparent contradictions.

The process of becoming a trance medium or a suitable transmitter cannot be accomplished in one session or even in what you consider many sessions. This process, like all other processes in this teaching, requires work, practice, and a high level of trust between the teacher and the student. Also, one must remember that in the beginning, there is a tremendous emotional response to the awakening communication. Often, this is intensified by the student's Overleaves. [12 November 1974]

We have spoken to you many, no countless, times about what you and we choose to call a "trust level". This trust level is, of course, essential to Agape or a spiritual love. The Personality can never experience this. The Personality cannot trust, therefore cannot love. If this trust level is to develop, it must develop in an environment of almost constant exposure. If Agape is to develop, it must develop in an environment where students observe each other in all facets of life, not just when the students are on their good meeting behavior. It is easy to love most of you during the weekly comings together of this cadre. We doubt that this would hold true twenty-four hours a day without much work. Most of you trust each other only superficially. Not one of you feels the bonds that we would foster in this cadre, but the ability is there, and a start has been made several times. However, when it becomes frightening, it is quickly aborted, and the subject is changed rapidly over to something less scary. [14 December 1974]

Trusting your intuition is valid and the insights are your own. You know when they 'fit'. [14 December 1974] The Essence "survives" already in eternity. Impatience, lack of trust, and a Stubborn clinging to the "I am not psychic" belief hold you all from experiencing truth, as it is available to all. [28 December 1974]

Sandy: Seth seems to give more personal help with private situations. Why not Michael also?

We are most willing to act as a guide or help you in all of those areas involving spiritual growth, such as meditation, concentration, fasting, and the like. We have in the past, recommended aids in this regard. We are, on the other hand, most unwilling to interfere in the so-called life crises, as that would take choice out of your hands, and we would suffer in the long run as that would represent a loss of ground for us. The responsibility for your interpersonal relationships lies always with you. We can, of course, help you to understand why you approach a given set of circumstances in a certain fashion. In fact, this is why we have given this [original Michaelian group] cadre the tool of the Overleaves. The teaching here is somewhat different than in groups where no preliminary groundwork has been done. In this cadre, many have learned to accept full responsibility long before meeting with us and, for that reason, we started at that point. We would hesitate at any time to force a decision in any of you in any life crisis situation. This would be detrimental to you in the long run. However, in any teaching involving spiritual growth and the application of this teaching, we are grateful for the opportunity to spend as much time as necessary in facilitating with life crisis situations. The growing closeness of the cadre should help, and if the trust level grows to the point where you can share your fears and conflicts, you will find that the crises become less urgent and are eventually eliminated. [02 January 1975]

It is, again, merely a sad commentary on the Physical Plane that communication is so poor. It is hoped that with this cadre, for instance, a trust level will be developed where these conflicts will fade away. When the trust level is such that one student could say to another, "I wish you would die and leave me alone," that statement will be totally unnecessary, as the other student will already know to give the necessary space. This can only be gained by the highest of trust levels, and comes through hard work. [09 January 1975]

During the Crusades, Liz feels that she was with Saladin, who was RickH [in this life]. She saw him transform into Saladin.

[Soleal:] Then, why do you doubt your insights — if you see the transformation? Or, is it that you do not trust the space you are in when the transformation comes? There is no reason why you should doubt this particular insight. Verification from me is quite a crutch and it is still necessary for most of you. The teacher [Michael] hounds you over and over again to learn to trust your insights. It is more than simple belief that all of your neat "head stuff" is springing from the foundation of knowledge. It is the ability to separate the wheat from the chaff — to determine at that instant how much of your own Personality and its attendant longings come into play, and how much is genuine insight. I must tell you that the need to follow my own particular goal, or my "task" if you will, becomes imperative, and I know that the time is at hand. I, too, must make a choice the same as you, and there comes a time when I can no longer stall for time.

You as a group do have a very low profile and are almost invisible, one of the reasons being that you do not trust your Level of Being at all, and there is ample reason for this mistrust. Yogis are extremely visible and have a high profile. The energy wasted in concealment could just as easily be consumed in more meaningful ways. Many of you are even apologetic in your acceptance of this teaching. You apologize all the time for embracing such irrational beliefs such as reincarnation and the like — the mere fact that you are now sitting here reflecting on the fact that you might well be crazy sets you apart from the Creatures of Non-reason or from the unensouled universe. On what laurels rests your doubts? What audacity gives you the right to question the awe and the majesty? [11 January 1975]

Comment?

Only that we would be gratified if indeed what has transpired this evening is converted into dynamism and becomes reality. It will, of course, require a high level of commitment and also trust level of which we speak. But we do not say it cannot be done. Some have chosen already. Perhaps more will choose when they can verify the risk involved is minimal in terms of return. [16 January 1975]

Merely revealing yourself in this fashion will boost the trust level tremendously, as this is a side of you that not many of the group has been privileged to see. [19 January 1975]

At the moment, many of you would not accept the direction that you so vehemently demand. There will come a time when you will and that direction will appear. It is now all that you can do to assimilate the necessary data, develop some trust in each other, and consider the possibilities we have thrown out without having a top sergeant barking orders. [30 January 1975]

No relationship that is not between Balanced Man can be one hundred percent intimate. Some of the expectations placed upon you in the past have been unreasonable and you have reacted to them in the only way you could. Now, you are coming to the space where you can verbalize that without difficulty. Your concern needs to be with your own growth, as those around you need to be concerned with theirs. The degree of intimacy that you allow will grow with your trust level: as it goes up, you will allow more intimacy. [01 February 1975]

There is, in the last analysis, no confrontation except that which occurs when the Essence is free enough to confront the Personality. The confrontation is an inner thing. That is the only one that will produce growth. There is also a lack of trust among many of you in that if one opens the door just a crack, perhaps the light will be so blinding that that one will not be able any longer to move in darkness. In other words, there will be no more excuses possible. [09 February 1975]

[In a commune,] If the trust level is high enough, the need for [pets as] substitutes [for humans] will diminish. [12 February 1975]

Bill felt that much of the discussion that had been going on was "bullshit" and that an inner voice kept telling him that he didn't have to put up with it. He wondered what Overleaf was telling him that it was crap — was it his Exalted {Cardinal} Role [Priest]?

We would agree that most of this is "bullshit", but before anything can be constructively done to eliminate this from the [original Michaelian group] cadre, the trust level must rise to the point where the true issue can be brought to the front. Then, even those in Exalted Roles and strong Chief Features can be involved in the solutions. [12 February 1975]

The critical point is trusting the Essence. [undated]

Ideally, this teaching could provide such an environment where the trust level would give permission to ventilate the anger. [21 March 1977]

Dick said we were beginning to sound like we are talking to the Ann Landers in the sky — or something like that.

Most of what concerns you from day to day could be solved without Ann if you could trust your own judgment. Of course, this is elementary. We can go on to something far more ponderous at any time you are all ready. [10 April 1977]

Dick: The problem is trusting the process. It used to be that "the truth shall set you free." ... Now it's baloney that sets you free. (Dick said that!) [10 April 1977]

Closeness physically with another compatible Fragment can sometimes produce an environment suitable for spiritual evolution, primarily because if there is considerable honesty and, therefore, trust between those involved, the vigil can be relaxed. Positive Poling [operating in the Positive Poles of Overleaves] is required for this relaxation to occur, and in most physical relationships there is too much Negative Poling [operating in the Negative Poles of Overleaves]. For instance, spiritual evolution cannot occur in the presence of jealousy, envy,

or greed. As long as the Chief Feature rules you, there will be no change. Perhaps you may wish to look at the way the Chief Feature rules each of you in this room. [30 September 1977]

Carrie: What job could I do out of Essence? (Fifth Level Old Slave)

[Jim's Source:] Decisions reflect ability to come from trusting your own self. Your own destiny can be determined by your ability to create goals and causes in your life. We cannot decide for you but can give you the guidance that you desire. How difficult you make it is up to you. [21 October 1977]

Narra: Is Paul J my Essence Twin?

Your Essence has already recognized its twin: why cannot the rest? This is not quite fair, we realize, but there is a tendency, even on this [mid-Causal] level, [for us] to want you to answer your own questions, in particular, those concerning Fragments of your Entities, Essence Twins and the *déjà vu* one feels when one encounters an old friend from the past. With you, the barrier is more of a tendency not to trust your own intuitive knowledge. The joy one experiences when the twin Essences come in contact is not wanted by the Repression Mode. We are not evading your question — we have answered it. We would say then that you must trust that intuition. [21 October 1977]

Trust your perception of the situation and the answer is yours. [07 November 1977]

Summary Comments on Trust

A numbered list is always helpful to get my ideas in order.

1. Most often, the subject of trust was discussed in the context of the original Michaelian group members wanting to share their spiritual journey with others in a close and intimate group, perhaps eventually including communal living, where a high level of trust would be essential. This factor has become less important in subsequent Michael groups, which have not been moving in the direction of communal living. And, in the modern Michaelian communities, those are more online than in person, and the level of trust online is not nearly as high as it would be if they were meeting in person, and not nearly as high as it would be if they were living together.
2. Developmental psychologists tell us that human infants (and other sentient animals for that matter) learn very early whether or not to trust themselves or the world. If the parents of an infant are reliable and consistent in taking care of the infant, then the infant learns to trust themselves and the world. If the parents of an infant are unreliable and inconsistent in taking care of the infant, then the infant learns to not trust themselves and the world. I refer the reader to the work of psychologist Erik Erikson in particular: >https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Erik_Erikson<. Intimacy does not come naturally to everyone, and even for those who do trust easily, that trust can be broken early in life
3. Even in adulthood, in a person who does not grow up with trust issues, issues of trust can develop if the world is unreliable and inconsistent toward the adult, as, for instance, if a senseless trauma is delivered to the person (or a loved-one) seemingly capriciously by the universe. When that happens, people typically ask “Why me? Why this?”, and a search for answers begins. For millennia, philosophers and theologians have been struggling with providing explanations or advice. Channeled entities, such as the Michaels, also offer some suggestions.
4. In the Trump era if not before, the reader might have heard of “gaslighting”, where one person messes deceptively with the perceptions of another person, in an effort to get the second person to not trust their own perceptions. This is sometimes referred to as “mind fuckery”; in my opinion and that of others, it creates a thick Karmic Ribbon, because the fucker intends to reduce or eliminate the free choice of the fucked. One may read about that here: ><https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gaslighting><.
5. A person's Attitude colors how they regard the world specifically and life in general. If a soul chooses to have the Attitude of Idealist or Skeptic, then it is likely that the soul is focusing on trust issues in that lifetime. This is most obvious when one considers the Negative Poles: Idealists who are in the Negative Pole of –Naivety tend to trust the world implicitly unless the world proves itself untrustworthy; Skeptics who are in the Negative Pole of –Suspicion tend to distrust the world implicitly unless the world proves itself trustworthy. In the phenomenon that Michaelian students refer to as “sliding” (and which I prefer to call “circulation”), people who are in either Pole tend to swing or circulate between the Negative Pole of their Attitude and the Negative Pole of the complementary Attitude. As experience matures a person in this process, the person gradually narrows the gap

between the extreme manifestations of both –Naivety and –Suspicion, until the person comes to balance in the Positive Pole of their Attitude. In other words, it is possible to be too friendly, and it is possible to be too hostile; the goal of sliding or circulation is to have accurate and appropriate perceptions of the world in all situations.





TRUTH

This chapter is strictly a search in the original Michaelian group transcriptions on the word “Truth”. I ponder each instance and see what it teaches me. I write it down and you see what it teaches you.

There is almost no philosophical discussion on the nature of truth itself in the abstract. Rather, almost all of the references are to specific concrete truths.

There is a branch of philosophy called ‘epistemology’ which is all about how do we know what we know.

At one time it was thought that mathematics was the ultimate truth, then Kurt Godel published his incompleteness theorem, proving that formal mathematics was either complete or consistent, but not both, and that there were innumerable assumptions that could form the foundations of various consistent mathematical systems. So, there is provable truth within the system, but no way to prove the assumptions from within the system. This might mean that if the universe itself is an expression of a mathematical system, it is based on unprovable assumptions.

Truth is a bid deal.

Refer to related chapters, such as “Secrecy and Secrets”...

[\[\[search for honesty, lying, fiction, etc related subjects \]\]](#)

Truth per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

Before the Michaels appeared, the original Michaelian group members were in contact with Tomas and Soleal. The first mention of truth came through Soleal more than a month before the Michael appeared:

Dick: I just wonder if there is any jealousy, rivalry. If I listen to what Soleal says, will Tomas be put out – you know.

[Soleal:] If there is synthesis, there should be no conflict [between myself and Tomas]. If there is not the synthesis, then one of us is not telling the truth, and as in all previous situations, it will be up to you in the end to verify. [03 July 1973]

The Michaels referred to their teaching as The Synthesis, and Soleal was a student of the Michaels, so he was probably familiar with the concept; refer to the chapter “Synthesis, The” for the whole story. This chapter is closely related to the chapters “Honesty and Dishonesty” and “Verification and Validation”. When there is a contradiction in the information provided by different sources, or even the same source, then that is a signal that students should examine the contradiction. This was an important revelation then, near the beginning of the original Michaelian group, and it is important to all students of any alleged spiritual teaching.

Gene: How can I differentiate between truth and fiction in the psychic field?

[Tomas:] We made a boo-boo; there was a short circuit somewhere. I am not sure what happened there. I do know I like where we were at the time of the finding of B’s [sic] brother. It helps. The only way to qualify the truth from fiction is to experiment and learn to distinguish the voices. Let us break for a while. There is interference here now. [05 July 1973]

The scientific method of experimentation (changing the variables to see how they affect the outcome) is one of the ways to empirically validate and verify certain kinds of phenomena. Channeling is one of those phenomena that is not to be trusted implicitly, because transmission can have “interference”; refer to the chapter “Bias”.

Dick: Since I am in middle age I have not been having the “living experiences” that you have mentioned. How do I live them?

[Tomas:] At the time of middle age, one assumes as you have, Richard, that there are no more living experiences to come. Every experience is living, and an experience to learn from. The daily process of working and dealing with the inner relationships you have are there for a purpose: to teach you. When you clear the assumption that there will be no more living experiences, the higher living experiences will occur. Each

moment has a truth. That is not to say each is a tingling breathless happening. Some are subtle, and they are just as important to your growth. Look for these and search for the lesson in all. [17 July 1973]

It is a common theme in spiritual teachings to say that one should live in the present moment, not in memory of the past or in imagination about the future.

Carolyn: Well, it's not all spouting off — sometimes it is just a strong urge to say what I feel.

[Tomas:] Necessary talk is not wrong work. Whoever told you that it was bad to express a true opinion? When you express a valid point, it is not wrong — just make sure that you have verified it and it is not illusion. [24 July 1973]

Perhaps you have heard it said that everyone is entitled to their own opinions, but not to their own facts. (Look it up on the internet.) If there is an objective truth about a particular matter, then it is incumbent on us to learn about that rather than spout an uninformed opinion.

Dick: I perceive vaguely a better way to heal, but it is too vague.

I have given you a start. You must begin to approach your patients as souls who are Centered in different places. You have verified for yourself the truth of the Centers. Now, you must verify the truth of the [Soul Age] Cycles. This is practical knowledge for the Older Soul, not just idle chatter. It supersedes all previous information. This is the lesson you must learn. The approach must be governed by what you sense intuitively, given this special skill. [04 September 1973]

Dick was a medical doctor. He learned about Centers from the Gurdjieffian teachings; Soul Age was the first of the Overleaf categories revealed by the Michaels. It is incumbent on Michaelian students to validate (verify the truth of) their Overleaves, and it helps to validate the truth of other people's Overleaves.

Christopher: What is a Mature soul?

A Mature Soul perceives others as they perceive themselves. Sometimes this makes living difficult. The Mature Souls is not as open to the occult as the Older Soul. The Mature Soul perceives beauty with a clarity not found in earlier cycle. At the end of the cycle, the Mature Soul begins to perceive truth. This prepares the soul for the search. [08 September 1973]

This indicates that incarnate souls on the Physical Plane do not begin to search for the “truth” — spiritual truth, that is — until late in the Mature Soul Cycle. I personally believe that there is a “truth” of the Physical Plane, so I understand this statement to mean that after younger souls have come to thoroughly understand what “truth” there may be on the Physical Plane, and then begin to look beyond it, to a “higher” truth. The Michaelian teachings concerns itself with both actually. Mathematicians and physicists will tell you that they often use beauty as a guide for finding truth in their field of inquiry.

Dick: I have a complaint and comment and a question. I don't seem to be able to change knowledge into being and I don't feel any different.

You do approach being under the influence of marijuana. This is an incontrovertible message about the pace of your life. Marijuana slows the responses to physical phenomena and heightens emotional response to all experiences. You feel the music instead of hearing it. The five primitive senses belong to False Personality. They can be compared to margarine — they will never be butter, no matter how you color them or package them.

Your life is not geared for understanding, just toiling.... However, Jesus was trying to tell this same truth two thousand years ago. We keep telling you: you must choose your path. If that [chosen path] is spiritual liberation, then you must eliminate the distractions of Maya. If the goal is different, then the path will be different and you are correct in assuming that we don't care [which path you choose]. We impart the Logos dispassionately. It is yours to accept or reject. [06 October 1973]

Refer also to the chapters “Psychedelics” and “Liberation” and “Logos”. Refer to the chapter “Knowledge” for instructions on how to transmute that into a higher “Level of Being”. Notice here the contrast of truth with Maya; “Maya” is the title of yet another chapter. Here just note that it refers to the concept that so much in this world is illusory, false.

Edgar: What was the essence of the teachings of Christ?

Truth is the greatest good and love is the highest truth. Good is its own reward, as is truth.

Edgar: What is the meaning of, “I am the Word”?

The Logos, the truth, the absolute, the order of things. [22 November 1973]

Refer to chapters “Reward, Gratification, Satisfaction” and “Logos” and “Love”.

Edgar: What is my purpose?

We have told you that a major part of Karma for you this time revolves around searching for truth, in spite of great physical handicap.

Edgar: In regards to my last my purpose for being and Karma, and searching for truth — but I feel I have failed.

The discouragement is a good sign. Those who are complacent about their status are no longer searching. There is no place for complacency in this search. The rewards are the doors that are opening to you now, Edgar. We recognize the frustration. This always accompanies a plateau stage. This will dissipate as you go on to the next flight. It is like a landing on an infinite staircase. [20 December 1973]

LeeC: If Jesus' prejudiced ideas of divorce were attributed to his early childhood, how does Michael form their ideas to set down values and judgments of divorce?

The Fragments of this Entity (Michael) at the time they were on the Physical Plane, ran the gamut of opinion culminating in the opinion that acceptance of all other souls in the form of Agape was the greatest truth. This did not occur until the Cycle [of physical lives] was completed. [20 January 1974]

SusanT: When two or three individuals view one thing, is how each views the thing correct? Or, is one more correct than the other?

Within the Cycles [Soul Ages], there is a vast difference in perception. Each perceives to the limit imposed by the Age of the soul. The Mature Soul often views others in error, from one point of view: that being, that others around him will perceive another soul in quite a different way. There is, of course, an ultimate perception that is the synthesis. This, of course, is "Truth." Older Souls have a tendency to be less harsh in their perceptions and as growth occurs, this gentleness grows, also.

SusanT: If the Soul Levels are the same and both are aiming for the truth, (and I believe we all have the truth within us), do the Soul Levels see the truth differently?

Yes. Also, the Roles dictate some difference in approach to the truth.

SusanT: My perceptions as a Priest seem true and right, and Eugene thinks his are. Yet, they are totally different to what the truth is. I don't understand.

The approach is very different [between the two of you.] Neither of you is yet ready to express the truth in an absolute sense. SusanT intuitively perceives more at this level, but she is not able to apply this, yet. Eugene applies more than he intuitively knows at his level. [20 January 1974]

Are there reasons for not dreaming?

Fatigue is one, but everyone dreams part of the night. Voltaire, we believe, said not. Truths are for all men. This is valid and many effectively block out all unacceptable information acquired during dreaming. [24 January 1974]

Voltaire: "There are *truths*, which are not for all men, nor for all times."

Comment: We have to experience the Truth-Lying Monad as part of everything. We should not be afraid to speak up. In order to learn in this area, we need feedback. If you are silent, you never expose yourself. If we were more silent, would this help us in working on False Personality?

That is valid.

Dick: Could you comment on the statement that everything is true, no matter who says it and when they say it?

That is a valid exercise (to say "that is true" for everything that is said, no matter how untrue it feels to you at the time) for exorcising negativity. Yes, that goes without saying to those of you who were initiated by the man Robert. That is valid, of course, for the new students. The same teaching should prevail. [03 February 1974]

Mollie: I read the group's book and would suggest a glossary would be most helpful, with definitions of such words as Maya, Monad, Logos, and Karma.

We propose an exercise in psychic Photography for all of you as follows: begin to Photograph yourselves reacting to suggestions of change with the statement, "I cannot", then realize that this is not true. Sometimes, the truth will be that you do not at the present moment possess the required skills or knowledge, but more often than not, the truth will be, "I do not want to." This is vital, and a positive step on the path. You can help by Photographing each other in this. Also, all of you are guilty of using this as an excuse many times a day to

shift the blame, and this accomplishes that nicely. You present then the picture of a student at the mercy of the cosmos, which is, of course, absurd. Personality sets up many barriers along the [spiritual] path. This is merely one of them, and chipping away at this will only result in the uncovering of many more similar guises. [20 March 1974]

Comment: I'm not relating to people when I'm out there working.

We would see you all give some thought to which of the activities you endlessly perform are, in truth, necessary. We have asked you to do this before, but you did not. This is a valuable exercise and not as futile as some of the others, such as the endless internal agonizing that you now do when you find that you do not have enough hours to stuff in all of your tasks. It is not merely what can you leave undone until tomorrow or until the middle of next week, but what can you honestly leave undone forever? [27 March 1974]

Dick: Robert never argued with anyone. He would say, "That is correct ..." and then say what he had to say. We are attracting people by what the Ouija board tells them. We must demonstrate our own evolution before we can pass it on. I become impatient when people argue with me and want to teach me "the truth." It is the nonverbal quality that attracts people. [14 April 1974]

Alice: I wonder if there is any truth to what Robert used to say, that if too many people woke up, there would be another catastrophe such as Atlantis. Robert said the reason for Atlantis being destroyed was that too many people were conscious.

We do not agree with that. It would merely speed up the evolution on this world, but would not affect the stellar evolution. [14 April 1974]

Richard: We seem to be getting voluntary information on violence. Is there a statement about this?

Only that violence is culturally induced, yes. It is wholly a part of False Personality. The Essence is pacific. Violence is truly the dark side of the soul. No one comes onto the Physical Plane violently. How violently one completes the Monad is a choice made at the moment of truth. [01 May 1974]

The so-called "moment of truth" is distinct from what you believe you would do hypothetically. There is no faking it at the moment of truth. The Free Dictionary has an extensive list of moments of truth:

The moment or point at which some critical and decisive event, action, or test will occur.

FIG. the point at which someone has to face the reality of a situation.

A critical or decisive time, at which one is put to the ultimate test, as in "Now that all the bills are in, we've come to the moment of truth — can we afford to live here or not?" This expression, a translation of the Spanish *el momento de la verdad*, signifies the point in a bullfight when the matador makes the kill. It was first used in English in Ernest Hemingway's story *Death in the Afternoon* (1932).

COMMON: The moment of truth is the time when you learn the true facts of a situation or make an important decision.

A crisis; a turning point when a decision has to be made or a crisis faced.

[><https://idioms.thefreedictionary.com/moment+of+truth>< — retrieved 03 November 2022]

We would repeat an earlier truth: the Tao is all there is. [22 May 1974]

Carolyn: [Life] task? Is it to be alone, involvement with child?

To be happy alone, depending upon the "all". Pan-dependency, of course, is predicated upon the Personality becoming independent and functioning self-sufficiently without depending upon the actions of others around you to move first. Of course, this is necessary if you are ever to allow the Essence to rely upon the cosmic forces that it knows are dependable. That is one of your primary tasks; it is not a goal. No, that is not the only one; there are others involving arriving at an inner "truth." That, in turn, involves unscrambling much conflict in doctrines, or rather many conflicting doctrines. Again, this is largely a solitary task. If we clarify this, it will take more hours than you now have, since it involves a lifetime of work, but briefly this lady has within her the ability to arrive at a point of spiritual tranquility that she does not now enjoy, by recognizing further [for] her self what is true and discarding that which is patently false, keeping the good and throwing out the bad from all of those influences that have and will later come into play. [12 June 1974]

Carolyn was an Artisan, and as an Artisan myself, I can tell you that it is especially difficult for that Role to sort out the truth of any given matter, whether it is an internal truth or an external truth. I suggest that this is because they look for all the possibilities of how something can be, they look at all sides of an issue from all angles. Consider the other Overleaves on the Ordinal side of the Expression Axis: Rejection, Caution, Skeptic, Intellectual, and you can see how scattershot their approach to truth is. However, when they finally arrive at a consensus on truth, you can have more confidence in it than you can in whatever truth the other Roles arrive at. This is why Artisans make good engineers: if you do not want a structure to fall down or a widget to malfunction, then you get a bunch of Artisans to design it and build it and test it. That is 'truth' of a sort.

Richard: Are insights about [Isaac] Asimov correct (human brain) etc.?

Essentially, your insights are valid yes, and yes, Isaac is a liar. Of course, he does not know the truth, but Richard is receiving some help with his insights. [16 June 1974]

Sometimes liars know what the truth is but they prevaricate anyway; some liars do not even know what the truth is. One source of truth is insight; refer to the chapter "Insight". One can receive insights from various places, such as one's own higher self or from some source of inspiration such as the Michaels.

Liz: What do you mean, "I do not see myself correctly"?

We have told you before that the significance of your choice of the Power Mode in this life was not to have power over people, as you seem to want to have. It is not working. Look instead to the power that you have to control and subvert your False Personality and remove it from influence. You have the power to receive truths. This is the ONLY power you will experience. You need only to allow yourself to experience it. Do not block it with the illusion that you will be a great leader. You want to validate this message, and you do not believe that we have been in contact with you. Validate. [13 August 1974]

A few months later it was revealed that the Positive Pole of the Power Mode is +Authority and the Negative Poles is -Oppression. That answer to Liz hints at both of those Poles. Refer to the chapter "Validation and Verification". Basically and briefly, one can validate-verify the truth either academically (outer) or experientially (inner). Obviously, when one has validated the truth, then one can believe, feel, and act with authority because one will be functioning in True Personality rather than functioning in False Personality; refer to the chapter "Personality — True and False".

Hypnosis is a valid way for those in Moving Center to reach truth. [13 August 1974]

Refer to the chapter "Hypnosis" for the whole story about that. Basically and briefly, repetitive movement of some kind (e.g. focus and concentrate your attention on the swinging watch), even if it is the verbal or mental repetition of a mantra, can induce a trance state of consciousness where one is susceptible to influences from somewhere. Here again we see it said that it is more likely that one will find truth in the subconscious mind or superconscious mind than one may find in the conscious mind.

Dick: Michael has a job to do, too, as I see it and that is to produce #4 and #5 people in his teaching. (See In Search of the Miraculous, by P.D. Ouspensky, for enlightenment on men with numbers ... index will guide you.) If Michael is sensitive, he will help us solve our internal problems. The discovery track of what we are has to be complete before becoming a #4 or #5 man. Comment, please.

We have given you the tools by which you can discover these [solutions to internal problems] within yourself. Telling you where the problem areas are would produce the same initial hostility and resentment as hearing it from a psychologist would. When you discover them within yourself, you also at that time verify them for yourself and then they are truth for you. Until then, they are merely the opinions of another.... Until you begin to use the tools, all you have is information and more information can hinder your growth rather than help it, if all previous data has not been assimilated.... [03 September 1974]

Refer to the chapter "Levels of Being" for the explanation of #4 and #5 people (on a seven-level scale of enlightenment). The truth about one's internal problems is first noticed emotionally and intellectually and then presumably verified (assimilated) experientially with the help of the Michaelian toolkit. Refer to the chapter "Tools" for an inventory of the toolbox.

Dick: It seems to me that the Emotional Center knows the truth better than the Intellectual Center.

Essence knows truth and Essence most often manifests through Emotional Center in good students. This is primarily because “truth” is not often readily believed by Intellectual Center; it [truth] is just not [always] rational. [17 September 1974]

My opinion, for whatever it is worth, is that different types of truth can be correlated with the various Centers. Thus there is a kind of truth, namely logical deductive truth, that are associated with the Intellectual Center. I suggest that “truth” in this passage refers to trans-rational truths. For instance, intuition is often said to be associated with the Emotional Center, but, technically speaking, to my way of thinking it fits better with the Instinctive Center, aka Impulse Center. In Michaelian lore, Truth with a capital “T” is often affiliated with the Higher Intellectual Center, and I personally like that notion, but, as I said, I suggest that all of the higher Centers have their own variety of transcendent Truth.

Alice: Sock it to me, Michael, so I may be a better person for it.

Since your own Chief Feature is Self-deprecation, Alice, your own timidity is stronger and, therefore, needs the work. The start now has been good, but you must not dwell on the possible effects of your Photographs. This is a horrendous drain in energy. Just say it. Most of the time you have been right when you have felt strongly. Practicing with those you trust is all right for the present. It is valid that if it is the truth you speak, most have no rejoinder. Only those in Rejection will sometimes reject even the truth. [21 September 1974]

(Often, people say, “I love ice cream.”)

At this point in time, it is useless to bring up any discussion of an ultimate purpose in existence. This is not a concept that can be dealt with in the language of the Physical Plane. It must be intuited at a higher level, and it is up to the student to work toward this intuition; it is not easy. The Tao cannot be understood intellectually, it can only be intuited. As we have stated before and will again, Leslie, growth [truth] is the greatest good and love is the highest truth. Music is Mechanical Man’s only method of expressing the higher [level], and this is also true on the high planes at another level. [24 September 1974]

It seems to me that the channel glitched in this case, because what they said before (and after) is “truth”, not “growth” is the greatest good: 22 November 1973 and 28 December 1974.

(Yarmulke, or head covering?)

Yes. This practice in religion has a basis in truth, or “reality” if you prefer that word. It is a ritual of conserving energy and providing protection for the medium. [09 October 1974]

Elizabeth: I have a great aunt who died, and I feel responsible for carrying out her wishes to be cremated and spreading ashes. I do not know whether this is silly to carry out the ritual or what. I’d like a comment please.

Positive thought emanations, of course, are more valuable in these situations than Mechanical Man’s [ritual] action. Of course, you can combine the energy with the [ritual] action for your wish. Remember that these younger souls usually experience the transition between planes as shocking and are not in a coping state. Contact at that point is usually fruitless. However, the positive energy flow can always help, even if it only acts as a reassuring cocoon for a time. The body is, of course, beyond caring. The Essence no longer cares about the body, at least, not for the time being. So many must spend prolonged periods sorting out the acquired beliefs from the truth of the experience before they can possibly respond to the experience. In the case of souls in Sequence, there is often a desire to monitor the [other] soul left on the Physical Plane once the sorting is over — curiosity, nothing more. Sometimes this is accomplished by Older Souls. [15 October 1974]

Man’s place in the universe should, of course, have become a little more apparent to you since we opened the discussion on complexity. As we have intimated before, the Tao is the epitome of simplicity, and therefore the simplicity toward which we all strive in our return to the primeval. Therefore, the Physical Plane, with its enormous complexity, offers by far the most challenge and also the most barriers to spiritual liberation. Man, or rather, Mechanical Man, must then cut through the glamour and allurements of the Physical Plane in order to see the light of truth. Nowhere else is this as difficult, for on the Physical Plane, all is glamour and all is complex, even compared to the Astral Plane, which to the high planes can seem quite complex. [22 October 1974]

Love is the highest truth of all, and isn't it said that ultimate truth is sealed off from man? [22 October 1974]

Will Soleal's visit be a precursor for the Infinite Soul manifestation?

This student will not be a vehicle for the Transcendental Soul on this planet, no, but it will be a part of the initial surge, yes. He has taken as his task the "proof" of the universality of the Logos, that truth there [on his planet] is truth here [on Earth]. [10 November 1974]

Personality does not have to be honest. You see, the Essence cannot lie; therefore, the Personality cannot tell the truth. It can only lie. This is an important point to remember, since the chattering emanates from the Personality. The Essence does communicate. There is no need for mindless silence in the path toward Balance, but it might as well be truthful communication, and until you can knock away the barriers, this cannot come about. The Personality will always be around to conveniently lie in order to satisfy the Goal. [12 November 1974]

We have told them of the highest truth, which is Agape, which is the unqualified acceptance of other creatures as the greater part of self. [20 November 1974]

Much discussion ensued about "boss," "partner," "servant." Our perception of it and how David sees it. Other similar triads were brought to mind — parent, sibling, child, etc.

All of these "triads" are, of course, valid in describing the various combinations of interactions of the Personality, but you must not overlook the fact that there is an "over-truth" that supersedes all of these. That is the truth of the Essence, or truth as the liberated Essence perceives it, which is far less complex than any truth that is perceived by the enTrapped Essence, and the key is in the simplicity with which the truth is perceived. The more verbiage needed to explain a truth, the more deeply entrapped that truth has to be. Many fine-sounding psychological words having five or more syllables have been coined to describe obnoxious behavior stemming from harsh Overleaves. These are all true, of course, and they all say the same thing to one from this vantage point: they are the enTrapped Essence working overtime to produce a truth.

Richard commented and asked about the relationship between Trapped Essence and Personality.

The Personality does not even perceive that much of the truth. The Personality does not look at truth, only at the needs of its systems for perpetuation and even these are quite often false. Just look at the obese person's "need" for food. [07 December 1974]

Of course, there is a method by which you can override the instinctive behavior patterns that separate you from the truth. [21 December 1974]

Ralph: Is there some dimension we might call "feeling" or "love" or "value"?

Or truth or light. Of course. Value, truth, love, feeling, intuition, understanding, knowledge. Synonyms. No substantial difference. Knowledge is understanding, is Agape, is the goal. Once there is understanding, there is knowledge, there is love.

Abdullah: Can we on this planet participate in this knowledge?

Only if you desire to do so; only if you seek; only if you allow it to uncritically flow into your consciousness; only if you open yourselves to the experience fully; only if you allow the experience to become the life. You now experience the dichotomy between what you perceive as your spiritual side and what you perceive as your physical side. In truth, there is no dichotomy and there cannot be. If you are to experience this pan-dimensional universe — this truth, this knowledge — there is no dichotomy. There is no spiritual side to your Essence. [26 December 1974]

Again, we say, until you finally understand, that love is the highest truth and truth is the greatest good. [28 December 1974]

[[Continue the search to the end of the transcriptions.]]





TWINS — PHYSICAL AND SPIRITUAL

In the following Q&A exchanges, it is often difficult to discern whether physical or soul twins are the subject.

We hear so much about Twin souls, and I would like to know about that.

Dyadic union occasionally occurs while the principals are still on the Physical Plane. This is exceedingly rare and happens only among Fragments of the same Entity. These unions are always [gender] polar, and it is a devastating experience. Souls so united are truly one flesh.

(Part of the following was not recorded.)

Why is this devastating? What do you mean by "polar"?

There is complete psychic union. There are no longer any individual perceptions. There is a total loss of identity. All of you will escape this fate in this lifetime, for your strongest attractions within the group are for those of the same sex. [08 October 1973]

I would like to know where my Twins are living now.

We would prefer not to [say], for some fairly obvious reasons. There was a necessity for you to experience this grief. The souls that obliged also had the need to finish out a role they cheated on. Both of them suicided previously. They needed only to experience the death. One now lives in the Eastern United States, one in Sydney.

What are the ages of the Twins?

Both are infants.

Were both born again the same time?

No. [01 November 1973]

I would like to know the soul Level and Role of my brother. Also, I would like to know the reason for our conflicts during teen and adult years.

The conflict has little to do with Roles. This man is bound to you both by karma and by the fact that you are Fragments of the same Entity. This has given the so-called "Twin Soul" phenomenon. You would feel this lack. This man is now unable to give. He has in the past. The problem has always been one of nonreciprocal emotion between these two Fragments. This has caused them to be born again and again within the same family, which is exceedingly rare. This relationship can only change with insight on his part, and we doubt it [will happen]. This play may have to be repeated another time, for the desire will remain unfulfilled again. [13 December 1973]

Michael said before that they had something to say about "Twinning". Could they comment now?

Twinning is, of course, the closest possible of Physical [Plane] relationships. This goes for the other planes also, and this is where the confusion regarding the so-called Twin Souls arises. For instance, the question was asked of us some time ago concerning the possibility that souls could not change sex, or rather gender, between lives because of some Twin soul feature. It is true that most souls do search for their soul mate, but they err in assuming that that Twin is of the opposite gender, and consequently lose out on an exceptionally close and rewarding relationship [when both are of the same gender]. Twinning occurs often at the moment the Entity is cast from the Tao and can occur between Entities cast at the same time. In other words, there is sometimes a crossover [between Entities], and these Twin souls do go through many, usually all lives together.

The lady _____ is an excellent example in her regression therapy sessions. She did remember the need to reincarnate, because her Twin had been reborn, although she did not understand the reasons, and always saw the Twin as male and herself as female. She did recognize the need. Twins normally make better than average partners. They also make exceptionally good marriages. The gender does not matter in this at all, although this culture makes it difficult for some Twins to come together.

Twinning is rare between some Roles, frequent in others. Scholars rarely Twin and usually with Warriors. Priests and Sages Twin most of the time, Artisans and Slaves frequently, Kings rarely. Physical twinning can also strike an unerasable bond that continues throughout the remainder of the physical cycle, driving these souls together again and again. The closeness of twinning is a very special relationship. You choose to play out sequences with the former twin. The lady _____, the lady _____, are good examples. There was an interruption in this because of an extremely long life span in the lady _____ that made it not possible for them to come together again until now. In that life 2000 years ago, the twinning relationship came into being.

What is the purpose of twinning?

The natural impulse of Fragments to reunite.

What's the difference?

Gradations only. Some physical twins are not drawn as strongly to their twins as are the Essence Twins. There are other examples: we would be interested in any feelings of the group. We sense insights.

Are _____ and I Essence Twins?

That is valid. Essence Twinning occurs at the moment the Entities are cast from the Tao. Physical twinning can occur at any time on the [reincarnational] Cycle. You may have both an Essence and a physical twin.

Are _____ and _____ Essence Twins?

These Entities were cast at the same time. There was a crossover [between Entities in the same Cadre] and these are Essence Twins. Old Souls who are seekers, and, yes, also Mature [Soul] and Young [Soul] seekers, too, frequently recognize each other. _____ and _____ are both seekers; however, they have known each other before.

Regarding _____:

[You have] many Sequences in the past [lifetimes]. _____ does have an Essence Twin. They should be able to see this; the Twin also.

Are _____ and _____ Twins?

That is valid. These Entities were cast at the same time. Yes, this Entity containing _____ and the Entity containing R. The Entity containing _____ and the Entity containing _____ were cast at the same time.

Regarding _____'s Entity?

That Entity was cast at the same time as the Entity containing the man who is now the husband of _____.

Do the Roles continue after the Physical Plane experience.

Although the Roles are necessary on the Physical Plane, they must be discarded before transcendence can fully occur.

[Question lost from original transcript.]

A different flavor to the experiential mode in life caused the Entities to differ. The Roles are certainly blunted on the Astral Plane.

Could you comment on identical and fraternal twins?

This is genetic. It does not make a substantial difference whether identical or fraternal.

Do I have an Essence Twin?

Yes. You do have a Twin in Essence. It is not your sister. It is _____.

Does human's seeming need to bond have anything to do with cultural imprinting? Is this Twinning only for physical lives?

The desire to bond is certainly not limited to, or stronger, in the physical cycle. It increases rather than decreases as the soul progresses.

Could you comment on the Mormon belief that people are married for time and eternity?

Only if Twinning has occurred.

Does _____ have another Essence Twin?

No, but you have another physical twin, _____. She has also been a physical twin of _____.

M: is my Essence Twin _____?

Yes.

Is there Essence Twinning with _____?

Not Twinning, just many Sequences; no Ribbons, no real tension.

Have I met the Twin in this lifetime?

Yes, but you refused to acknowledge the Fragment.

Will I get another chance in this lifetime to acknowledge it?

Yes, the opportunity will again present itself. You are not in touch with the Essence Twin.

Is _____ a physical twin?

Yes.

Have I met with my Essence Twin?

Not yet.

Is _____ an Essence Twin of mine?

Just very old friends.

Regarding _____ and _____ being twins.

Physical twins, yes. One of the unique features of this group is that you all have an Essence Twin. _____ does have an Essence Twin not yet in this group. [23 June 1974]

Is _____'s (her husband) Essence Twin named _____?

No.

Why does [physical] twinning occur? What is it?

Twinning is an almost natural impulse of the human species and one of the least understood. The desire to join with another of like mind supersedes all other impulses, even sometimes those necessary for survival in a hostile environment. Those with reclusive Overleaves do not exhibit this impulse as strongly as others, but it still happens to them also. This process has become extremely blurred by the cultural taboos and the isolation that permeates the way of life. There is so much suspicion on the Physical Plane that the truly intimate relationship of twins is all but precluded, especially if the twin happens to be of the same gender.

Do whales twin?

Yes, all creatures of reason twin [physically].

Is it a random process?

No, it is elective [by choice] and based upon initially compatible Overleaves. This of course means that the Overleaves of the twins will not always be compatible, which makes some strained but still very special relationships. In some instances the twins are drawn together in a love-hate relationship that defies reason.

Then it isn't necessary for Essence Twins to live together?

The Essence likes it but the Personality does not always.

What about triplets on the Physical Plane, and do triplets have a spiritual counterpart?

Physical triplets and other multiple births do stroke [sic] close bonds the same as physical twins. There are no Essence Triplets.

Do bonds break when Entities reunite? Is there a process which helps Fragments through?

There are also close bonds between reunited Entities on this [Causal] Plane, and we presume that this continues as the reuniting progresses.

Is _____ (her husband) my Twin?

This man is not your Twin, but what you feel is that you have been physical twins before and this bond drives you together again.

Is my Essence Twin in this room?

Your Essence Twin is not in this room, but you do have one.

Do I know my Essence Twin?

No.

Have I met mine?

No.

Do I have an Essence Twin and have I met my Essence Twin?

Yes you do, and you have met this twin.

Is it _____?

No.

I feel I have met my Essence Twin. True?

That is valid.

Is _____ my Essence Twin?

No.

Will we meet them in this life?

That is the plan.

Have I met mine?

Yes, you have met the Twin.

Is it _____?

That is valid.

My Essence Twin is moving. Is there anything left for us to do?

No. Your paths will cross again.

Does this serve a helpful purpose in going through lives?

It is helpful when both are seekers. The human species seeks confirmation and affirmation. The human species has this in common with a great number of other species.

Do twins have something in common?

Age.

Twinning involves responsibilities. Should I do anything about my twin?

There are no responsibilities, but usually there is a strong enough pull so that the twins, once reunited, will go along together and pursue a similar path if at all possible.

How can you differentiate between Twin soul attraction and infatuation?

This [infatuation] is a danger, of course, but relationships between Twins persevere through trials not usually weathered by those attracted to each other's personalities. Also, the bond withstands long separations and [does] not [have] many setbacks. It is certainly not romantic, and even though the Twins are of opposite gender, they often choose another as a mate because of all the usual Maya, but not quite leaving the Twin stranded. [25 June 1974]

Is the Fisher-Hoffman school valid?

This school is as valid as the other Astral-Physical [Plane] schools. It must cut through the bias of Arrogance, but is essentially valid. The man will do no harm if he continues to photograph his vanity. He has been [photographing], yes, but when a Physical [Plane] teacher begins to regard himself and his Astral [Plane] counterpart as omnipotent, trouble begins, in a snowballing fashion. This does not need to happen.

Does this Anderson have a school taught by the Astral Plane teachers?

The same type of relationship exists here [as with the Fisher-Hoffman school].

Does this mean they are in contact with their Essence Twin [on the Astral Plane, not incarnate]?

Usually, yes. [03 July 1974]

It has been that I have already met my Essence Twin. Will I meet this person again in this lifetime?

Oh, yes, we think so, and again, soon.

Does this person live in the Chicago area, or what direction shall I look?

You will not need to look. With your added knowledge, recognition will come.

I would like the SRG of my Essence Twin. I'd say he was a Mature Scholar in Rejection, dark blue aura, Power for the Mode, Saturnine Body Type, Stoic Attitude.

[This is a] Sixth Level Mature soul, not in Rejection but Dominance. Watch, this trap is as hard as the Realist/Pragmatist to differentiate; all else [is] correct. The aura is blue-green. [17 July 1974]

There is a strong physical resemblance between _____ and my Essence Twin soul. Were they brothers? What is the reason for my involvement with them? Is there some reason I choose to be with tall people?

The resemblance is, of course, a chance thing, but the attraction is not. All of you know in advance the approximate physical size of those in your cadre. Now we did not say exact, but you do know approximately. This leads you to be physically attracted to certain physiological persons [more] than others. Another factor

being with these two men, however, is that their paths have had similar forks because of similar karma. In other words, they have similar Ribbons to burn, and thus there will be a similar tack to their lives. [17 September 1974]

Since coming back from Italy, I keep feeling contact with my Essence Twin. Is this person studying Gurdjieff?

Your feelings in this are valid. Your "Twin" is near to your personality; will be meeting soon. You are in similar circumstances. When this happens, you will bring him to a meeting [of this group], and all will know. No, he will not think you are crazy; he will believe. For the first time, he is sane. He will have found home. He is searching. It will be by "accident" that he finds you. This should help _____ in the knowledge [that] there are no accidents in finding Twins. [01 October 1974]

I had an experience with a man — both of us felt we had known each other before — and I told him that maybe he was my Essence Twin. What is his SRG: late Mature Scholar in Growth, Realist, Intellectual Part of Emotional Center, Impatience, Caution Mode?

This man is not your Essence Twin, but it is not from this life that the memories spring. He senses the knowing or the acquaintance at a deeper level from a previous life. [He is a] Sixth Level Mature Scholar in Growth. Yes, the rest is valid. [05 October 1974]

Do Warriors Twin with Roles other than Scholars? Please elaborate.

Yes they do; it is just that Scholars seldom twin [Twin?] with other than Warriors. Warriors often twin with other Warriors, with Kings, and with many others also. Scholars do not often Twin with other than Warriors.

(There was a discussion of _____'s question regarding sexuality of Essences. Since it has been said that Essence is neither masculine nor feminine, why does Michael speak of the masculine or feminine Essence in Roles? It was compared to the yin and yang polarity, often times the way a role is played out, an identity word, a cultural thing.)

Did _____ Twin?

We have said that all of you have Twins, yes. [22 October 1974]

_____ asked if _____ was a part of his Entity.

No. He is a (Twin soul).

_____ is planning on bringing a new student on Tuesday. She has a feeling of affinity for him, almost like talking to herself.

This man is not a Twin, but you have known him several times. You were quite close the last time you knew him. They were husband and wife. [08 November 1974]

Who is my Essence Twin? Have I met the twin? Is it someone in the group?

Yes you have [met the Twin]. No (not in the group), but again, peripheral to it.

How do we recognize a Fragment of our Entity?

The recognition of a Fragment of one's Entity is usually a casual one. Sometimes the one who recognizes is startled at first, but this normally is not a relationship fraught with much tension. In fact, it is usually marked with ease, as these are old friends [from other lifetimes], and you would not expect fireworks. With [Essence?] Twins there is normally a desire for closeness of an immediate nature, and barring social constraints, this proceeds rapidly, and is usually fixed from that point on. This bond is by far the strongest on the Physical Plane, and not much can come between Twins. Karma of an adverse nature can pull Twins apart, and sometimes the Goal of Rejection will repel a Twin even though it does not wish to be repelled.

Do Twin souls have sequences?

Oh, yes, and karmic Ribbons too.

_____ asked about a woman he had met and felt a strong attraction to: *early Old Artisan in Stagnation?*

The Overleaves were pleasantly complementary and there was physical attraction, but you are not Strangers. You have met the lady before [in other lifetimes]. You are correct, though, in that this is not an Essence Twin, nor are there Ribbons. No, this lady is a Sixth Level Mature Scholar. [09 November 1974]

_____ and _____ were born on the same day, and asked Michael of their connection.

There is a bonding between you because you have been physical twins more than once in the past. This is a close strong bond, and it now strengthens again. The desire to return together was strong. Actually the identical date was coincidental, but you did experience the desire to be born again together.

_____ asked if his Essence Twin was in the group [of students].

First of all, perhaps we should reiterate a bit. There is of course a very special relationship between Essence Twins, and of course, this is desirable and many want it. But the knowledge of this should come in on an intuitive level in order to be verifiable. For us to simply tell you that so and so is your Essence Twin would only

lure you into perceiving a false set of specifications. If you verify this on an intuitive level, it would be easily verifiable. This group is as we have said, a bit unusual in that you all twinned. Some of you know your twins. Others have simply taken rather wild guesses, based upon strong physical attractions. Please be assured that Twinning does produce an almost unbreakable bond — a strong bond you are usually aware of on an intuitive level, long before you can express it verbally. The man _____'s Twin is not in the cadre [of students]. [10 November 1974]

The Physical Plane and its pervasive atmosphere demands that you “do” something physical about ethereal matters. Consequently, when the Essence awakens [from “sleep”] for an instant and feels love for its Essence Twin or an old [physical] twin, the False Personality immediately goes to work on this emotion, converting it into something it can understand. It is unusual for Essence Twins not to appear on the Physical Plane together, although many Scholars do sabotage attempts to move toward their twins.

_____ asked if Essence Twins are usually born in the same locale.

Not always. Some must travel many miles and spend many years searching. [19 November 1974]

MW and JW and JW feel a part of a cadre, not ours, but she wants to know if she may be the link between them. Is JW the W's teacher?

Both of these final Level Old Kings do have a Mid-Causal teacher; both are ready to teach. They are Essence Twins, and are bound together in many more ways, such as the Teacher-Pupil Monad. The student MW is correct that she belongs with the man JW. He is her [True] Teacher. She is a member of the cadre [of students] that is forming around him, but like the man RB, he will belong to the [Transcendental Soul] age, and is not a Fragment of her Entity. Yes, an exchange between these two groups would be valuable, just as with the man YS.

Elizabeth asked if the girl TI was an Essence Twin of M.

These two have the affinity of many lives and many bonds. They are Fragments of the same Entity, yes, but not Twins, although they have been physical twins before. They have been lovers, yes. [16 February 1975]

Narra: Is J my Essence Twin?

Your Essence has already recognized its Twin: why cannot the rest? This is not quite fair, we realize, but there is a tendency, even on this [Mid-Causal] level, to want you to answer your own questions, in particular, those concerning Fragments of your Entities, Essence Twins, and the *deja vu* one feels when one encounters an old friend from the past [lifetimes]. With you, the barrier is more of a tendency not to trust your own intuitive knowledge. The joy one experiences when the Twin Essences come in contact is not wanted by the Repression Mode. We are not evading your question — we have answered it. We would say then that you must trust that intuition. [21 October 1977]





UNDERSTANDING

This chapter is the product of a search for the word “understanding” in the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group channeling sessions. This word **does not** represent a significant component of the Michaelian teachings. However, there are good reasons to discuss the subject in this *Study Papers* book: 1) the subject came up numerous times during the original Michaelian group; 2) students can presumably benefit from having the mentions conveniently collected and commented all in one place; 3) some interesting things were said about the subject; 4) the subject is related to a number of other components of the Michaelian teachings that are considered to be significant; 5) Issues of understanding and not understanding are pervasive in human psychology and sociology and spirituality.

The word “understanding” is not capitalized in this chapter or other chapters of this *Study Papers* book because it has no special meaning in the Michaelian teachings; it is not a Michaelian jargon word that needs a definition apart from its use in the common vernacular.

Definition of Understanding

So what is meant by understanding? The online Merriam Webster dictionary definition is:

Of course there are many instances of the word that do not refer to the subject of this chapter, understanding as a grasp of information that is

Understanding per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

The following extracts from original Michaelian group transcriptions are Q&A exchanges, where an original Michaelian group member asks a question (or makes a comment), and the Michaels provide an answer. This is not a subject that would benefit by division into subcategories, as some subjects do. **These extracts are [not] presented in the chronological order in which they were given, even though this is not a subject where there was a development or evolution of a specific revelation of a facet of the Michaelian teachings, as was often the case with the original Michaelian group.** As is my custom, I often provide some explanatory comments following the question or answer. Underlined words in the Michaels’ answers are my emphasis, to draw attention to what it is that I comment on. Sometimes I embed words or phrases [in brackets] that I believe help to clarify the question or the answer.

[Tomas:]... do not dwell on things you do not understand for now. Later you will know. [19 June 1973]
To understand something is to know it at a deeper level, in terms of other relevant knowledge.

Dick: Is this [kundalini] the essence of consciousness?

[Tomas:] Not entirely. By itself, it can be called insanity. There also must be understanding. [05 July 1973]

This is one of the first hints found in the original Michaelian group transcriptions that understanding sometimes comes from integrating an experience into a gestalt of understanding.

[Tomas:] Later, after understanding comes, she will not require their aid or support. [05 July 1973]

We often need others to help us understand something, so we ask them to explain it. On the other hand, we have also all had the experience when some understanding ‘dawns’ on us spontaneously, as the light of day arises in the morning and we see what is really going on. This is often symbolized in the graphic image of a metaphorical light bulb turned on over our heads.

Richard: Yes. Have you heard of the Board of Karma?

I have not heard of that one until just now. Stop acquiring all of that data. Understanding is unlikely. [05 July 1973]

This is not to say that understanding of a subject will not dawn on us after a sufficient accumulation of data or raw information; that can happen. Understanding happens when you put the data into a pattern or system that all makes sense together.

Toni: I'm having an internal conflict right now based on certain information I have received, and I want to know if the conflict is justified.

No conflict is ever justified. There is much you do not understand. When you "flash" on the understanding, the conflict will disappear. Don't brood about this. [23 October 1973]

That answer is fundamental to understanding the difference between -Justification and +Justification. Refer to the chapter "Understanding". There you will read that, basically and briefly, understanding is another word for +Justification in the sense that, with a flash of understanding one has come see that two apparently conflicting bits of information can be reconciled at the next higher level in the hierarchy. Refer also to the chapter "Insight", which provides yet another synonym for the same process, progress on the learning path.

Concluding Comments on Understanding





⑦ VALIDATION AND VERIFICATION

This chapter is the result of a search for the words “validation” and “verification” (and their variations) in the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group as they apply to one of the central tenets of the Michaelian teachings, namely that students should validate and verify what the Michaels tell them — both of these words are used to cover that one concept. If Michaelian students do not validate and verify what the Michaels teach, then their belief, value, and behavior systems are no better than those of people who are credulous, gullible, naive, and thoughtless. Validation and verification issues are pervasive in human psychology and sociology, the subject came up in the original Michaelian group numerous times, some interesting things were said about it, and it might be helpful for Michaelian students to have the answers conveniently collected and commented all in one place.

Yes, this subject is important to the Michaels, and this subject is so important to me that I have a chapter or section on validation and verification in all of my books. This is that chapter in this *Study Papers* book.

Chapters closely related to this chapter are “Knowledge as Gnosis” and “Truth”. In the chapter “Knowledge as Gnosis”, there is discussion of the branch of philosophy called “epistemology”, which has a lot to say about means and methods for validation and verification of claims about knowledge. We also see that knowledge can be raised to a higher level, into the realm of integrated understanding, which is covered by the Greek word *gnosis*. One function of the Michaelian teachings is to raise our consciousness from data to knowledge to truth to *gnosis* via the process of validation/verification.

These words are not capitalized in this chapter or other chapters of this *Study Papers* book because they have no special meaning in the Michaelian teachings; they are not Michaelian jargon words that needs a definition apart from their use in the common vernacular.

[[Run search for term “examine”.]]

Verification and Validation per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

The following extracts from original Michaelian group transcriptions are Q&A exchanges, where an original Michaelian group member asks a question (or makes a comment), and the Michaels provide an answer. These extracts are presented in the chronological order in which they were given. As is my custom, I often provide some explanatory comments following the question or answer. Underlined words in the Michaels’ answers are my emphasis, to draw attention to what it is that I comment on. Sometimes I embed words or phrases [in brackets] that I believe help to clarify the question or the answer.

The first appearance in the original Michaelian group transcriptions of the concept of validation and verification of channeling sets the stage for all other mentions of the concept, namely the fact that the channeling process is not perfect and the alleged information that comes through is not always accurate and trustworthy ... and something should be done about that fact, namely validation and verification. This first mention happens about a month before the Michaels appeared to the group, and concerns the fact that they were getting information from two different entities, Soleal and Tomas:

Dick: Would you ask him [Soleal] if there is any conflict between him and Tomas?

Sarah: Well, he said one time that there were third plane [Causal] Entities working with him too, so I don't know.

Dick: I just wonder if there is any jealousy, rivalry. If I listen to what Soleal says, will Tomas be put out — you know?

[Soleal:] If there is synthesis, there should be no conflict. If there is not the synthesis, then one of us is not telling the truth, and as in all previous situations, it will be up to you in the end to verify. [03 July 1973]

Channels can be defective and deficient, and the sources that they contact can be defective and deficient, and the connection between the channel and the source can be defective and deficient; refer to the chapter

“Bias” for more about that. Whatever the source of the error, as this chapter develops, we will note means and methods for verification.

(There was a discussion here. Gene told of asking Tomas for help on picking up something psychically about a patient as they were trying an experiment together — both Gene and the patient trying to pick up something about the other. Gene told what he had picked up during meditation, which Tomas verified, and then said Tomas had given a fact — the patient had a baby brother die and the baby was not named at the time of death or afterward. Gene then said that the only fact of the information that was true was the incident Tomas mentioned and he had been wrong in his vibrations.)

[Tomas:] We made a boo-boo; there was a short circuit somewhere. I am not sure what happened there. I do know I like where we were at the time of the finding of B’s brother. It helps. The only way to qualify the truth from fiction is to experiment, and [thereby] learn to distinguish the voices. Let us break for a while; there is interference here now. [05 July 1973]

The metaphors of “short circuit” and “interference” are appropriate for the glitches that often occur with channeling. This statement foreshadows the principle of validation and verification, one of the major themes of the Michaelian teachings, by empirical and experiential means. The original Michaelian group members were not credulous spiritual neophytes, and their sources — Tomas, Soleal, Michael — all told them that it was Good Work to be skeptical of what came through channeling, and about that I would say that the Positive Pole of the Skeptic Attitude, +Investigation, is much to be preferred to the Negative Pole, –Suspicion.

Before Sarah became the primary channel for the Michaels, there was experimentation with three other channels:

General discussion with three replies [from Tomas] read — one from Lorraine, one from Sue, and one from Carolyn.

[Tomas:] Hello. You have all posed many questions. There are many of us here. This has been planned in order to stimulate the questions that we are provided to answer. There are many sources of information. We are here to teach you. When manifesting through one person, there will be differences because of personalities of the receiver, and each of us manifest differently. The persons to whom we are communicating with, each requires different information. Of course, there are many generalized pieces of information. There are sometimes problems with the expression of our information and [we] try to allow for this when answering personal items. It can be opinionated information as what we see here about the questioner. Be sure at the time of verification, the same one here is speaking. With Saturday, the entity was wishing to comfort Gene and spoke of what he saw. It was true information in [that] this is true for Sue. It was not what I gave Sue through Lorraine. If I had spoken, I would have gently and firmly refused the information as it was unnecessary testing. This is the one true Tomas. [17 July 1973]

Sometimes the accuracy of the channeled information depends on the giver (none of them are omniscient senders), sometimes the accuracy of the channeled information depends on the medium (none of them are perfect receivers), and sometimes the nature of the channeled information is specific to the recipient (and does not apply to anyone else). We do well to factor all of these considerations into our evaluation of what is said.

Gene: How can we be sure who we’re talking to?

[Tomas:] We are also limited in trying to communicate at times. Another misspells Tomas [as Thomas, on the Ouija board] and the only way to verify it is Tomas is to be in touch with the inner self. It does not matter if it is I. The information from others is reliable. I am emphasizing this. When asking a question through a medium and then asking the same question through another, verify the presence of another entity both times in order to avoid confusion. Make sure it is the same entity each time for true verification. The fact of Tomas or another does not matter. It does not have to be I as long as it is the same at the time of both questions. [17 July 1973]

Refer to the chapter “Intuition” for more about being in touch with the “inner self”. It is not Wrong Work to check the information given (see below). Several times the original Michaelian group transcriptions record that original Michaelian group members asked the Michaels to conform some bit of information that did not seem right; sometimes the information was affirmed and sometimes it was corrected. *[[Consider compiling these in a chapter.]]*

Gene: Is this our Tomas, the one Tomas?

Tomas is my name. I do not know why it matters to you. The information given is the same. There is only one true teaching.

Gene: How do we know? How can we find out about the one Teaching?

If it is true, it can be verified and will teach nonviolence, peace within, and moderation in all things. There will be a clear synthesis in all the information given. The answers will “feel” right. [24 July 1973]

That the information is a synthesis (internally and externally consistent and coherent) is one measure of its truthfulness, and a good measure, epistemological speaking. However, I say that there are serious limitations on the “feel right” method of validation, because that depends partly on the accuracy of the information of the database in one’s memory, and it partly depends on how accurate one’s intuition is; again I say, refer to the chapter “Intuition”. It is partly because of inadequacy and inaccuracy in the “feels right” method of validation-verification that the so-called “scientific method” was developed over the millennia of human inquiry, especially the last few centuries:

All of you have a need to check and verify, and that is not Wrong Work. Much of this has to do with your predominantly scientific backgrounds. You will all reach the point, if you pursue this, where you will know. [24 July 1973]

Refer to the chapter “Knowledge as Gnosis” for more about what it means to “know”. Refer to the chapter “Synthesis, The” for the story about the name that the Michaels gave to their teaching. A true teaching is at minimum consistent and coherent (non-contradictory) within itself; therefore, one should examine any self-contradictions found therein. Besides internal consistency and coherence, the one true teaching should be consistent and coherent with sources of information outside the Michaelian teachings, whether objective science or subjective psychology and philosophy.

Regarding the scientific backgrounds among the founding members of the original Michaelian group, Alice was a biochemist; Dick was a medical doctor, Gene was a surgeon; Sarah had a degree in Astronomy, Richard was a civil engineer. More will be said about the scientific method in the concluding comments at the end of this chapter.

Heretofore we have seen that the subject of verification/validation come up repeatedly in pre-Michael sessions, but after the Michaels appeared on 12 August 1973 the subject came up again; the message about the need for validation did not change; it is one of the major themes of the Michaelian teachings.

Dick: I perceive vaguely a better way to heal, but it is too vague.

I have given you a start. You must begin to approach your patients as souls who are Centered in different places. You have verified for yourself the truth of the Centers. Now, you must verify the truth of the [Soul Age] Cycles. This is practical knowledge for the Older Soul, not just idle chatter. It supersedes all previous information. This is the lesson you must learn. The approach must be governed by what you sense intuitively, given this special skill. [04 September 1973]

This is the first but by no means the last injunction from the Michaels to validate one’s Overleaves. That passage also provides two of the methods espoused in the branch of philosophy called epistemology: there is the “practical” method of *objective* reductionistic scientific examination and experimentation, and there is the holistic “intuitive” or *subjective* evaluation of the situation, which is the same as the “feel right” epistemology mentioned above.

Richard: I have a problem with automatic writing. I feel I’m controlling [it]. I argue with myself. In general, the information is valid. I get [my wife] Sarah and we verify through the [Ouija] board. [08 September 1973]

From personal experience I can say that, like Richard, I do not trust automatic writing or a pendulum because myself alone is the instrument, but when working the Ouija board with a trained partner it seems like neither I nor the other person is controlling the message, so the information feels more trustworthy. Another thing is that I rarely seek information from a channel, preferring to trust my own intuition, which I call my “internal guidance system”. And by the way, just because two Michael channels say the same thing is not verification-validation. Many other resources are available. In addition to the scientific method and expert consensus as mentioned above, there is the consistent core of many ancient and modern teachings, philosophies, religions, and mysticisms that goes by the name Perennialism. Presumably, the matters on which they agree provides a time-tested guide to truth; this is called consilience. The process of validation-verification by all means is ever ongoing; one is always approaching the truth and aspiring to truthfulness, but one never fully and completely and finally arrives at the Truth.

(Question lost in tape ending ... something to do with being able to tell the difference in soul levels.)

There is a difference. Finer. It must be verified; but perception is the concept that separates the [Soul Age] Cycles. [08 September 1973]

Regarding “verification” of “finer” “differences”, I take this as an injunction from the Michaels to practice critical thinking and apply acute discernment. In other words, please do not be a muddle-headed, mush-for-brains moron about important matters of knowledge and truth.

Richard: Is “False Personality” and “Maya” the same?

He [Tomas] is challenged by the Glamour of the diversified belief systems, and is only able to differentiate because of higher teachers [than him] who are available. We do not prevent the dissemination of valid information from the Astral Plane [where Tomas was], but this is monitored carefully, and attempts are made to invalidate false data. Sometimes this is not possible, primarily because of the rigid belief systems of the medium involved. This is why we always attempt to work with Older [Soul] mediums. Their convictions tend to float more easily, and it is possible to sneak past their bias. [20 December 1973]

Refer to the chapter “Belief System” for more discussion of that potential impediment to the validation and verification process. Refer to the chapter “Bias” for the discussion about the fact that no channel is completely unbiased. As you may recall, Tomas was an Astral Plane Fragment who was channeled before the Michaels appeared to the original Michaelian group. There were times when a Young Soul Fragment (as was later revealed), Lorraine, channeled Tomas, but Sarah, an Old Soul also channeled Tomas.

Evidently the Michaels have — or had during the original Michaelian group — some quality control measures in place. However, if we compare and contrast the information received from various channels in decades subsequent to the original Michaelian group, we see that there are apparent contradictions between them, because channels have biases, blind spots, and other limitations on perfect accuracy and fidelity. Part Four of my book *A History of the Overleaf Chart* is a product of my own quality control validation–verification measures; therein I document and discuss some of the channeling discrepancies found in the Michaelian teachings, and I propose solutions, and I propose that it would be Good Work for channels to implement some quality control measures.

We are concerned only that you share the knowledge once it has been assimilated and verified. Individual verification of the given material is perhaps the most vital precept upon which this teaching is based, for this process alone opens the door to expanded perception, which is, of course, necessary in order to experience Agape and thus grow spiritually. [24 February 1974]

Those are strong words. This is perhaps the key passage in this study paper: it is not only *desirable* to verify the Michaelian teachings, it is *necessary* to validate the Michaelian teachings if one is to foster and facilitate spiritual growth. Refer to the chapter “Growth, Spiritual” and you will see that this is not only about filling the head of students with more *objective* (accurate and validated) data, aka Intellectual Center stuff. Although more and better information is not to be eschewed, spirituality has more to do with expanded *subjective* perceptions in the higher Centers. The subjective sources of insight-intuition and the objective sources of information should, of course, validate and verify each other. The technical philosophical word for this confirmation, concordance, convergence strategy of objective and subjective realms of experience is “consilience”; refer to Conclusion below for more about that.

Ted: In CIF and EST, [we are] exposed to much knowledge. What is the purpose of these for us?

This answer would be much the same for all in this room. That is, to synthesize and verify this [Michaelian teachings] knowledge so that you can be in a better space to promulgate the Logos. [19 June 1974]

In addition to the Gurdjieffian teachings, some of the original Michaelian group members participated in the Creative Initiative Foundation and Erhard Seminars Training. Enough was said about “EST” that there is a chapter on it in this book. The point to be emphasized here is that, one of the ways to do validation–verification is to apply academic scholarship tools to the task of comparing and contrasting the Michaelian teachings to other spiritual and philosophical and psychological teachings. Neither you nor I would want to promulgate misinformation about the Logos, now would we? Refer to the chapter “Logos”. Propagating the Logos should go along with experiencing Agape and spiritual growth, which are mentioned in the Q&A exchange above.

There is another factor that mitigates the human tendency toward cultishness, toward unearned belief in an authority figure. Would you believe it if I told you that the Michaels acknowledge that they sometimes provide misinformation, that they do not always make an attempt to correct unintentional errors in channeling, and that this is intentional and purposeful, and that this is for our own good?

Gene asked why there have been errors in Soul Levels and Roles — are they purposeful? He had been told by Michael much earlier that he was an Artisan, and during a session the night before someone in the group had asked about his Role and was told it was Scholar, which seems to fit him better.

The errors occasionally happen [purposefully] with growth in mind, yes. Often, they are [unintentional] errors [due to channel bias or ignorance or stupidity]. The man is right in one respect. The test is not testing [the channel], but rather a lesson to be learned [by you] in trust and getting in touch with intuition. The soul level discrepancies are not reflective of too much more change [actual advancement]. The coincidence of the changes just happened to come in order of the questions. [09 November 1974]

Even though neither the words validation nor verification occurs in this passage, it is relevant to the subject. In addition to what has been said elsewhere, this is another indication that it is important to learn to get in touch with your intuition and learn to trust it — instead of credulously trusting channeling. You might not like this answer, but this answer indicates that the Michaels sometimes intentionally introduce discrepancies, and sometimes let errors slip through the channel without later correcting them, so that students learn to trust their intuition more than they learn to trust channeling; it is actually a matter of your spiritual growth that you learn to not rely too much on the channeled source. Again I refer you to the chapter “Intuition” for more information about that subject.

A search for the words test and testing in the original Michaelian group transcriptions reveals that several times students tested the channel, hoping to discern the level of trust that the students could place in the channel. This is not the right way to do Validation; rather, students should learn to Validate their own internal intuitive faculty, and otherwise upgrade their epistemic sophistication via such external measures as academic, historical, scientific, and philosophical exploration. One of my own intention here in these study papers is exactly this: to note errors in channeling so that students learn to apply and trust their Validation process, whether by their own intuitive faculty or by their own academic research, with the purpose of weeding out the inconsistencies, the incoherence, and the inconsilience in the channeling.

Speaking of consilience — the virtue of checking any source against other sources — we have this:

All of you come to this teaching from a myriad of disciplines, beliefs, philosophies, and *et cetera*. Validation within each other is the only criteria. “Judge not, lest ye be judged.” Judgment is Bad Work. Acceptance of all and verification through experiencing is the only Good Work. [11 January 1975]

The phrase “within each other” is ambiguous enough that I can claim that it applies to both *within* oneself as an individual, and *among* individuals in a group. Numerous times during the original Michaelian group, the Michaels mentioned the value of group spiritual work; refer to the chapters “Communal Living” and “Solitude, Solitary, Isolation, Seclusion” and “Individuality” for discussions of that notion. Whether individually or in a group setting, the more personal experience you have (intuition is a type of experience), both in terms of chronological age and Soul Age, the better discernment you will have when it comes to validating and verifying the Michaelian information.

Validation and verification via consilience with other esoteric teachings (“disciplines, beliefs, philosophies”) is also Good Work, because these are “experiences”, although external rather than internal.

The Fellowship of Souls is a group of people who have willingly embarked upon the journey. We utilize many methods and disciplines, taking from each the essence that is relevant, and that produces growth. By studying the teachings of many who have traveled the path before us, we learn to validate the Universal Truths and apply them in our lives. By using various disciplines of meditation and concentration, we learn to reach deep within to the source of all knowledge — and we learn that All lies within, awaiting our moment of awakening. [promotional flyer, mid-1975]

Late in the original Michaelian group story arc, they incorporated themselves as The Fellowship of Souls. Besides experiential learning mentioned above, one can also learn much from the experiences of others on their spiritual journeys, whether they are contemporaries or historical antecedents. So-called “Perennialism” is the notion that other spiritual teachings from ancient to modern times provide different facets of the same truth. Therefore, they can be used to provide guidelines and means and methods on our individual and group quests for truth. Refer to my book *The Synthesis: The Michaelian Teachings as Perennialism* where, obviously, I explore that notion at great length.

Concluding Comments on Validation and Verification

The contents of this chapter proclaim and affirm one of the reasons that the motto of all of my books is “The unexamined teaching is not worth believing.”

Reviewing the contents of this chapter, I see three specific kinds of information that we are enjoined to validate, namely the accuracy of channeling, then the characteristics of the teaching that comes via the channeling, and our own Overleaves.

A distinction can be made between these two similar ideas, validation and verification: to me, validation seems more subjective and experiential and intuitive, whereas verification seems more mental or academic, as in comparing and contrasting the teaching within itself, and with other sources.

Philosophers and scientists have actually studied the subject of validation–verification for millennia, and it even has a fancy name, namely “epistemology” — it examines the question, How do we know what we know? Refer to the chapter “Knowledge as Gnosis” for an introduction to that subject.

One principle of the so-called “scientific method” is that experiments should be conducted under controlled conditions in order to eliminate extraneous influences. The Michaelian teachings has been revealed via various channels with various biases. On the one hand, this is not a good thing because it provides an extraneous variable, likely resulting in some contradictory information. On the other hand, this is a good thing because it provides ‘checks and balances’ on the information. My particular bias — as a student who takes seriously the injunction to validate and verify — is to not shy away from discrepancies, but rather to focus on them; discrepancies between channels provide ‘grist for the mill’ of validation and verification. My Scholar Casting does not like discrepancies, and neither does my Acceptance Goal; my Artisan Role likes solving intellectual puzzles, and my Higher Intellectual Center likes to have a comprehensive, coherent, consistent theoretical understanding of the systematic components of the Michaelian teachings. The Priest component of my psyche says, “Go thou and do likewise.”

Another epistemic principle that fosters validation and verification is called consilience, and Wikipedia has this to say about it:

In science and history, consilience (also convergence of evidence or concordance of evidence) is the principle that evidence from independent, unrelated sources can “converge” on strong conclusions. That is, when multiple sources of evidence are in agreement, the conclusion can be very strong even when none of the individual sources of evidence is significantly so on its own. Most established scientific knowledge is supported by a convergence of evidence: if not, the evidence is comparatively weak, and there will probably not be a strong scientific consensus.

The principle is based on unity of knowledge; measuring the same result by several different methods should lead to the same answer. For example, it should not matter whether one measures distances within the Giza pyramid complex by laser rangefinding, by satellite imaging, or with a meter stick — in all three cases, the answer should be approximately the same. For the same reason, different dating methods in geochronology should concur, a result in chemistry should not contradict a result in geology, etc.

The word consilience was originally coined as the phrase “consilience of inductions” by William Whewell (consilience refers to a “jumping together” of knowledge). The word comes from Latin com- “together” and -siliens “jumping” (as in resilience). [<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Consilience> — retrieved 16 April 2023]

The article continues with a discussion of the meaning and application of the principle of consilience in various branches of inquiry, such as history, philosophy, hard and soft sciences. My assertion is that the principle of consilience should be used to validate and invalidate components of the Michaelian teachings, to ‘separate the wheat from the chaff’.





VALUE AND WORTH

Often times in my commentary, in this *Study Papers* book and in my other books, I mention “value system hierarchy” in triad with “belief system hierarchy” and “behavior system hierarchy”. Belief System hierarchy is connected to the Intellect Center, behavior system hierarchy is connected to the Motion Center, and value system hierarchy is connected to the Emotion Center. Obviously, this is the chapter that elaborates on what I mean by value system hierarchy. A value system hierarchy is usually presented as a list of items arranged in a vertical stack, with the top item having the most value and the bottom item having the least value. During the original Michaelian group, the Michaels often mentioned that spiritual aspirants might want and choose to adjust their value system hierarchy, as, for instance, by pushing materialism ‘down’ their hierarchy list and pushing spirituality ‘up’ their hierarchy list, in terms of time and attention and energy spent of those items. Adjusting one’s value system hierarchy is a significant component of the Michaelian teachings because the Michaels, following Gurdjieff, recommended the so-called “Balancing” of the Ordinal Centers (Motion, Emotion, Intellect), and this is somewhat equivalent to adjusting one’s belief, value, and behavior systems.

This chapter is simply the product of a search for such words as “value” and “valuable” in the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group channeling sessions. This concept does not represent a unique or special component of the Michaelian teachings. However, there are good reasons to discuss the subject in this *Study Papers* book: 1) the subject came up numerous times during the original Michaelian group; 2) students can presumably benefit from having the mentions conveniently collected all in one place; 3) some interesting things were said about the subject; 4) the subject is related to a number of other components of the Michaelian teachings that are considered to be significant; 5) Value system hierarchy issues are pervasive in human psychology and sociology and spirituality.

The words related to value are not capitalized in this chapter or other chapters of this *Study Papers* book because they have no special meaning in the Michaelian teachings; they are not Michaelian jargon words that need a definition apart from its use in the common vernacular.

Axiology — the Philosophy of Value

Axiology (from Greek ἀξία, *axia*: “value, worth”; and -λογία, *-logia*: “study of”) is the philosophical study of value. It includes questions about the nature and classification of values and about what kinds of things have value. It is intimately connected with various other philosophical fields that crucially depend on the notion of value, like ethics, aesthetics, or philosophy of religion. It is also closely related to value theory and meta-ethics. The term was first used by Paul Lapie, in 1902, and Eduard von Hartmann, in 1908.

The distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic value is central to axiology. One conceptualization holds that something is intrinsically valuable if it is good in itself or good for its own sake. It is usually held that intrinsic value depends on certain features of the valuable entity. For example, an experience may be said to be intrinsically valuable by virtue of being (because it is) pleasurable or beautiful or “true” (e.g., the ascertainment of a fact can be said to be valuable in itself). Extrinsic value, by contrast, is ascribed to things that are valuable only as a means to something else. Substantive theories of value try to determine which entities have intrinsic value. Monist theories hold that there is only one type of intrinsic value. The paradigm example of monist theories is hedonism, the thesis that only pleasure has intrinsic value. Pluralist theories, on the other hand, contend that there are various different types of intrinsic value, for example, virtue, knowledge, friendship, etc. Value pluralists face the problem of explaining whether or how the different types of value can be compared when making rational decisions. Some philosophers state that values do not exist on the most fundamental

level of reality. One such view holds that a value statement about something just expresses the speaker's approval or disapproval of this thing. This position is opposed by realists about value.
[><https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Axiology>< — retrieved 05 May 2023]

Description of Value System Hierarchy

An internet search yielded the following article at the top of the results. The original was written in Spanish, so the English translation leaves somewhat to be desired.

WHAT IS A HIERARCHY OF VALUES?

The Hierarchy of values is a range of higher and lower values in which the moral and ideological order of life is established. The order of these values is highly debated and difficult to determine, because to reach a conclusion the process is subjective because it will depend on personal, group, educational, cultural, and social perspectives.

Social values community

A large number of values can be ordered in a hierarchy to demonstrate their importance with respect to others, where spiritual, intellectual, artistic, moral values, among others, are involved. The values are divided into infrahuman, inframoral, economic, moral, and religious values. To be clearer about the concept of hierarchy of values it is prudent to define what a hierarchy is and what is value, by its nature, characteristics, importance, and influence in human life. Hierarchy is an organized structure in which important scales or systems of greater or lesser relevance are established within the same environment. Value is something that has in itself a degree of category, which influences the human being that gives meaning and that can be used to decide or justify. The value is closely related to the principles and feelings attitudes that an individual has when it comes to acting. The hierarchy of values requires that the human being has a very clear and filtered system of their values, since to them [it] is the personal and social direction. But it does not mean that values are immutable and can not change. Values can change, for example in the early stages of life the value that could be more important in a person could change later; Can also change according to social, labor, cultural, and religious. The values have a personal character, each one gives the degree of importance that wishes to this or that value according to their social point of view in the value system.

Characteristics of values

The hierarchy of values will depend on three very important elements:

- The person, who is who determines the most important values according to their needs, interests, aspirations, training, their personal and social conditions.
- A second element are the qualities of value, which has to do with personal preference.
- The third element that influences is the situation in which the person lives, since it is determinant in the position and preference of its hierarchy of values.

The following characteristics can be highlighted through these three elements mentioned above:

- The values have two poles, the positive and the negative as good and evil
- They have a rank within the world of values ranging from the lousy to the excellent.
- There is a social, moral and ethical hierarchy.
- Values are in themselves a quality and do not determine a quantity, i.e., they are not quantifiable.
- They are also flexible because they can change over time according to the experiences and needs of individuals

Its durability varies, being some more permanent than others.

Types of values

There are a great variety of values, including 12 main ones that are classified in: personal, familiar, universal, material, economic, human, ethical, pragmatic, aesthetic, socio-cultural, moral and spiritual. Here are some of the most important ones:

- Universal values: They include the rules of relationship and society established and imposed by the community in specific times and according to particular needs.
- Religious values: They are those that are established by each slope, doctrine or religious denomination; Can be pagan or integrated beliefs and recognized worldwide.
- Moral values: They are what derive from their relationship with society and are useful in making decisions because they are subject to the ethical.
- Biological Values: They are known as those that emerge from man's basic needs, such as food, health, housing, personal care, among others.
- Economic values: It refers to the value of the physical and the riches; Are those that satisfy the material, commercial needs of goods, objects, among others.
- Psychological values: They are those that are observed through human behavior.
- Aesthetic values: They are those that focus on beauty as the main object, looking for balance, functionality and visual impact.

Some examples of values

Taking into account that values comprise qualities and are necessary for development in the life of an individual, some examples of general values that do not follow any order, classification or hierarchy but which help to understand their presence in the daily life are presented.

- Sincerity — Honesty — Justice
- Love — Gratitude — Patience
- Humility — Respect — Tolerance
- Generality — Leadness [sic] — Responsibility
- Forgiveness — Legacy — Wisdom
- Friendship — Sensibility — Family
- Service — Simplicity — Compassion
- Improvement — Health — Satisfaction
- Beauty— Prosperity — Success
- Autonomy — Cars — Faith
- Fortitude — Honorableness

Importance of the hierarchy of values

The importance of the hierarchy of values are convictions that determine, guide and guide a person's behavior, aspirations, and interests. Values are the foundations of social life, which allow the coexistence of people. Its hierarchy helps to set priorities. The most important values are those that are part of the identity, they indicate the way we express ourselves and live. The clearer the values and their hierarchy, the orientation and the very meaning of life are determined according to purpose and perspectives. Teaching the importance of the hierarchy of values at school, home, and in social groups from an early age can contribute to a better view of the composition and functionality of values in humanity. Commercial distractions, products, new communication standards, and interpersonal relationships have relegated the inculcation of values at all levels, both family and social, academic and work. The order of degree of values has been displaced in many cases in line with the changes that modernity is undergoing. Globalization can be one of the main reasons that the cultural values of society are disappearing and creating new 'values'. [<https://www.lifepersona.com/what-is-a-hierarchy-of-values> — retrieved 30 January 2023]

One obvious thing is that the three system hierarchies (belief, value, behavior) are interrelated; they all affect each other.

Value per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

The following extracts from original Michaelian group transcriptions are Q&A exchanges, where an original Michaelian group member asks a question (or makes a comment), and the Michaels provide an answer. This is [not] a subject that would benefit by division into subcategories, as some subjects do. These extracts are [not] presented in the chronological order in which they were given, even though this is not a subject where there

was a development or evolution of a specific revelation of a facet of the Michaelian teachings, as was often the case with the original Michaelian group. As is my custom, I often provide some explanatory comments following the question or answer. Underlined words in the Michaels' answers are my emphasis, to draw attention to what it is that I comment on. Sometimes I embed words or phrases [in brackets] that I believe help to clarify the question or the answer.

Concluding Comments on Value System Hierarchy





⑦ VIOLENCE

This chapter is the product of a search for the word “violence” in the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group channeling sessions. This word does not represent a significant component of the Michaelian teachings. However, there are good reasons to discuss the subject in this *Study Papers* book: 1) the subject came up numerous times during the original Michaelian group; 2) some interesting things were said about the subject; 3) the subject is related to a number of other components of the Michaelian teachings that are considered to be significant; 4) students can presumably benefit from having the mentions conveniently collected and commented all in one place; 5) Violence issues are pervasive in human psychology and sociology and spirituality — subjects covered extensively in this book — so it behooves us to have a working knowledge of it.

The word “violence” is not capitalized in this chapter or other chapters of this *Study Papers* book because it has no special meaning in the Michaelian teachings; it is not a Michaelian jargon word that needs a definition apart from its use in the common vernacular.

This chapter is one of many in this book that focuses on a psychological component of the Michaelian teachings as found in original Michaelian group transcriptions, rather than on a doctrinal or spiritual component. A psychological component is usually either a positive to be cultivated or a negative to be mitigated. As we will see, the Michaels tell us that violence is a negative to be eschewed. The Michaelian version of psychology is not to be confused with the popular psychology of the self-improvement movement, those that do not have a spiritual core or perspective. Rather, the Michaelian psychotherapeutic path (aimed at improving psychological health) is a beneficial precursor to the spiritual path (aimed at improving soul health). To skip the former but attempt the latter is referred to as “spiritual bypassing”. This is discussed at length on such websites as https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spiritual_bypass. To skip mitigating one’s psychological issues and attempt to go straight to enlightenment usually proves to be problematic.

Definition of Violence

So what is meant by violence? Wikipedia has an article that provides a definition and a description, as follows:

Violence is “the use of physical force so as to injure, abuse, damage, or destroy”. Other definitions are also used, such as the World Health Organization’s definition of violence as “the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, which either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment, or deprivation.”

The World Health Organization divides violence into three broad categories:

- self-directed violence
- interpersonal violence
- collective violence

This initial categorization differentiates between violence that a person inflicts upon themselves, violence inflicted by another individual or by a small group of individuals, and violence inflicted by larger groups such as states, organized political groups, militia groups and terrorist organizations. [<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Violence> — retrieved 11 March 2023]

The Michaelian use of the word conforms to that definition and description.

Violence per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

The following extracts from original Michaelian group transcriptions are Q&A exchanges, where an original Michaelian group member asks a question (or makes a comment), and the Michaels provide an answer. These

extracts are presented in the chronological order in which they were given. As is my custom, I often provide some explanatory comments following the question or answer. Underlined words are my emphasis, to draw attention to what it is that I comment on. Sometimes I embed words or phrases [in brackets] that I believe help to clarify the question or the answer.

The first appearance of the word violence in an original Michaelian group transcription was when Tomas was the source:

Gene: How do we know? How can we find out about the one teaching?

[Tomas:] If it is true, it can be verified and will teach nonviolence, peace within, and moderation in all things. There will be a clear synthesis in all the information given. The answers will “feel” right. [24 July 1973]

Refer to chapters “Truth”, “Validation and Verification”, “Moderation”, “Synthesis, The”. Nonviolence is obviously, then, a component of the Michaelian teachings. But then, it is aimed at older souls. Humans have a long history of violence against other humans, especially when humanity was predominantly younger souls:

The Infant or “first born” Soul perceives itself and the world around it simply as “me” and “not me.” In this Cycle, there are no racial memories. If “not me” is perceived as hostile and unkind early in life, withdrawal occurs, and a condition known as autism often results. If this perception occurs later, the Infant Soul may react with unchecked violence: sadism, murder without visible provocation, acts of unbelievable cruelty. The Infant Soul truly does not know the difference between right and wrong action, but it can be taught the laws of common sense and decency. [late August 1973]

Refer to the chapter “Hostility” for more about that subject, obviously related to violence. See also the chapter “Health — Physical and Mental”.

I see Clarence as a Warrior, Baby Soul. He is full of anger and disappointments of expectations of others. He isn't getting Social Security, and seems to be destroying himself. He may die soon. I can't think of anything to do to help him. I also am afraid of him. He is so big and violent. So far, the violence is directed inward.

This man is indeed angry enough to destroy himself, not with suicide, but with bodily dysfunction. He has chosen this for himself and there is nothing [for you] to do. There is little chance he will turn the violence outward. He will eat away at himself. He perceives only himself and me, and cannot perceive others at this stage. He will not be helped. Do not overly concern yourself. Help him as you would anyone, but do not become identified because there is nothing you can do. He has chosen. He will pay. He will grow. You cannot assist in that. [20 November 1973]

Note that violence can be toward oneself, not just others. Refer to the chapter “Anger” for more about that subject, obviously related to violence.

Dick: Why does Christ threaten hellfire and brimstone and casting into outer darkness? Why does he say there will be much gnashing of teeth?

Wikipedia actually has an article on that:

In Christianity, the “exterior darkness” or outer darkness is a place referred to three times in the Gospel of Matthew (8:12, 22:13, and 25:30) into which a person may be “cast out”, and where there is “weeping and gnashing of teeth”. Generally, the outer darkness is thought to be hell; however, many Christians associate the outer darkness more generally as a place of separation from God or from the metaphorical “wedding banquet” that Jesus is expected to have upon his Second Coming. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Outer_darkness — retrieved 06 March 2023]

Returning to what the Michaels had to say on the subject:

Jesus did not threaten anyone with violence of his own making; he merely pointed out to them what was in store for them if they continued to pursue the course they were on. One of the groups hit the hardest was the Pharisees, who had extremely literal and unshakable beliefs in a personal, living god. This was not the easiest group to challenge, but they did understand threats. [20 January 1974]

Perhaps you have heard the aphorism, “Live by the sword, die by the sword”. This also comes from the Bible, and Wikipedia has an article on it also:

“Live by the sword, die by the sword” is a proverb in the form of a parallel phrase, derived from the Gospel of Matthew (Matthew 26:52): Then said Jesus unto him, “Put up again thy sword into his place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword.” Early Christian theologians were almost universally pacifists, with Justin Martyr, Hippolytus of Rome, Tertullian, and Origen all making strong statements against soldiering and

bearing weapons. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Live_by_the_sword,_die_by_the_sword — retrieved 06 March 2023]

Mallory: I would like to ask "how" to apply the knowledge to the work I am doing at the [psychiatric] hospital, and if people's style of dreaming has in it a clue to their soul.

No, but their ability to recall and describe is. Much of the time spent in "dreaming" is, in reality, time spent on the Astral Plane. The amount of dreaming actually increases as the soul ages, and the ability to recall becomes acute in the Mature and Old Cycles. Most souls who have definitely recurring dreams are Mature and Old Souls. Baby Souls dream mundane dreams, as this is the style of their lives. Young Souls dream exciting and often romantic dreams, [in] which they are often the "dragon slayer." The Mature Souls often dream dreams of violence and death, and many times their dreams are replete with religious symbolism. Old Souls often dream of incidents from their remote past [past lives]. [24 January 1974]

It might seem counter-intuitive that Mature Souls would dream of violence. Further on in this same session, an explanation was offered as to why Mature Souls often dream of violence:

Ellis: Are you about to make an important decision in your life? I feel dreams are a commentary of your life, of the stresses and strains at the moment. A dream can tell you where you are. We all want to categorize dreams. I'm saying that this can't be done, as each dream has to be individually analyzed.

Thomas has a strong sub-conscious fear of death by violence, also many sexual conflicts. This was an honest attempt to resolve both.

Thomas: Is there anything from past lives that harbor this fear?

The man [Thomas] served with the forces of Napoleon and was exposed to death by violence in many other lives. He retains much fear from this. [24 January 1974]

The reason appears to be that Mature Souls have died by violence many times when they were younger souls, and that experience has totally lost all of the charm it might have had in those immature lives, so they fear that it could happen again, unwillingly.

It seems that spiritual upheaval is balanced out by violence. The worse it gets, the better it gets.

There is no more violence today than there has been in the past; just more people, and faster and better and more accurate news coverage. Some of the earlier Cycles [Soul Ages] are normally violent. [06 February 1974]

Per the Monadic Principle (refer to the chapter "Monads"), there is a quantity of negatives in the world that balances the quantity of positives. In other words, things are not actually becoming more positive overall, but the balance point between positives and negatives is moving from greater violence to lesser violence; older souls learn hard lessons in ways more subtle than the way younger souls learned the same or similar lessons.

Violence in relation to Soul Age was mentioned previously, and it came up for questioning again:

Is the prison population mostly Baby Souls? The Mature cycles [Levels] commit the crimes of passion (murder, etc.)

Old Souls rarely commit violent crime; they simply do not care that much. Infant Souls almost never commit premeditated crimes; most of their transgressions concern striking back at the hostile environment. Baby Souls often commit group crimes such as the Ku Klux Klan was famous for, and most of their crimes are directed by prejudice. The smart criminals are really Young Souls in the first cycle [Level]. The crimes of passion fall in the later part of this [Young] cycle and in the Mature cycle. Old Souls are noted for bad checks. [06 February 1974]

Barbara: I know a man who is into black magic and he has to kill something living everyday. He seemed so sweet until I heard that. Could Michael comment on this?

This is a First Level Young Artisan, misdirected, of course. Souls go to this type of endeavor mostly from Glamour, and it appeals to many who strive to stand apart from society, even in an extremely negative way. [06 February 1974]

It is easy for Artisans to be jerks because, without mitigating factors, they tend to be alienated from themselves and from others. In extreme cases, this can lead to violence against self (somewhat like the shadow of the Artisan Role, namely the Chief Feature of Self-destruction), and violence against other people and/or the world in general. The Young Soul Age correlates with the Artisan Role (they are both Ordinal Expression Overleaves), so the positives and the negatives of Young plus Artisan get reinforced. Refer to the chapter "Glamour" for more about that distraction.

Besides the Overleaves of Role and Soul Age, the negative Part of Centers sometimes play a part in violence:

Could Michael comment on the negative sides of Centers? Is there a negative side to each Center?

This is, of course, valid. Think of the hysterical enTrapment in Emotional Center. The man, Adolph Hitler, was Trapped in the Moving Part of Emotional Center. All of the psycho-neuroses are directly related to the negative half of the Centering. That which leads souls to live above and outside the law of the land, all of the violence directed against other creatures — these combined with the other Overleaves produce this. You can take two souls [people] with the same Overleaves except for Centering and quite drastic differences will occur in the lifestyle. This is why we feel that some comparison of historical souls will prove to be a valuable experience, even though they are no longer extant. The man, Adolph Hitler and the younger Scipio Africanus, had virtually the same Overleaves save for Centering. It is interesting that they differed only in the man, Adolph's, penchant for genocide. [06 March 1974]

Refer to various chapters on Centers in this *Study Papers* book. One can surmise that having a strong Moving Center, more so than any other Center, would foster violence in a person disposed to it via other factors.

It is interesting to note that the dreams all concern some primary fantasy fears, such as Alice's dreams of pursuit with intent to [do] violence to her, and Sarah's dreams of food being destroyed before her eyes. [13 March 1974]

According to some interpreters of dreams, if you dream of violence, then you should perhaps look to see if you are repressing resentment or anger or fear.

I read in previous notes that karmic ribbons must be burned. How are ribbons burned?

Burning karmic ribbons consists essentially of collecting or repaying debts incurred in the past. As your Sequential partners do not necessarily reincarnate at the same time always, this process may take centuries. The problem being that you as the debtor will still have subliminal knowledge of the debt whether or not the person to whom it is owed is on the Physical Plane. This will usually result in some barrier to spiritual growth. Sometimes, souls search for entire lifetimes, are restless and insecure and cannot gain any insight to why they are compelled to search. The payment or collection can consist of a physical remittance such as money, or an emotional one such as nurturing, or even a spiritual bond such as master and pupil. Karmic ribbons concerning violence are usually settled with violence in the earlier cycles. Those occurring in the later cycles are usually settled more pacifically. We would encourage acknowledgment of any of these. The Older Souls are generally not given to commit violent acts. [17 April 1974]

The type of violence there spoken of is probably physical violence, but there is such a thing as emotional abuse and mental abuse, and these can also incur "Karma"; refer to the chapter by that name.

Overleaves and Karma in relation to violence were discussed in a series of Q&A exchanges:

Do Overleaves affect negative and positive Centering? Is it what goes out rather than what goes in?

Some souls are incapable of violence on the basis of the Soul Levels and other Overleaves, but those who are capable [of violence], generally will [do violence] if given negative reinforcement. Old Sages, Slaves, and Artisans are generally incapable of violence.

Those three are the Roles that are said to be more toward the 'feminine' end of the spectrum, whereas Kings, Warriors, and Scholars are said to be more toward the 'masculine' end of the spectrum. Physical violence is more common with "toxic" masculinity than it is with "toxic" femininity.

We seem to be getting voluntary information on violence. Is there a statement about this?

Only that violence is culturally induced, yes. It is wholly a part of False Personality. The Essence is pacific.

Violence is truly the dark side of the soul. No one comes onto the Physical Plane violently. How violently one completes the Monad is a choice made at the moment of truth.

Refer to chapters "Culture", "Personality — True and False", "Essence and Personality", and "Monads" for more discussion about how these factors relate to violence. The "moment of truth" is when 'push comes to shove' and a decision must be made about a course of action, whether to do violence or to be peaceful.

Are violent deaths karmic?

Violent death, when it occurs as a single isolated incident, is karmic, yes.

Plane crashes?

For some on the plane, yes.

Can it be an accident?

Unfortunately, in large violences, those with Karmic Ribbons do take others with them. In many instances where the killing appears at random, the Ribbon goes back many centuries to a time when the present victim was

responsible for mass killings. One of the recent victims in San Francisco was a slave trader in the early nineteenth century. [01 May 1974]

The last sentence was a reference to the “Zebra” murders in the Bay Area, where blacks killed whites, which lasted from October of 1973 to April of 1974. Refer to https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zebra_murders for the story.

There was a great deal of talk at this point about violence, anger, hostility, et cetera, and ways of dealing with it and moving on to more positive spaces in ourselves.

Ideally, this teaching could provide such an environment where the trust level would give permission to ventilate the anger. But, remember, that anger is an emotion felt by the ego when its expectations go unfulfilled or even worse, ignored. What should develop within a teaching is the “steward” who can stand aside in each of you and observe the ego ventilating its wrath. But we must realize that only a fraction of self is angry. There is never a time when all the Overleaves are angry or sad or happy. If that ever happened, either enlightenment or disintegration would occur. For instance, Intellectual Center cannot experience anger. [21 March 1977]

Refer to chapters “Anger”, “Hostility”, “Trust”, “Ego”, “Expectations”, “Steward”, “Enlightenment”. Paragraphs such as this remind us that the Michaelian teachings should be regarded as a coherent belief system with many interconnected parts.

We talked about the critical nature of clarity of perception, being able to see what’s happening — everything starts with what you see.

The Intellectual Center, when it perceives hostility, retreats. The Emotional Center sulks, and only the Moving Center moves toward the source. In other words, each of the Overleaves perceives the situation in quite a different light. As you move toward more understanding, then the perceptions become more unified and many times more accurate, as the Overleaves come together on a perception. This accounts for such experiences as you have described. The Moving-Centered Warrior in the younger Cycles [Infant, Baby, Young] will react to hostility with a well-aimed punch in the nose, while the older [Mature, Old] Intellectually-Centered Scholar will attempt to obscure with a smoke screen of verbal trivia. [21 March 1977]

Just as people tend to “mellow in their old age”, older souls do likewise.

Concluding Comments on Violence

The subject of violence appeared most often in the context of Overleaves that do or do not foster violence, and in the context of the Karmic consequences of violence. This is useful information, and so is the following.

Little if anything was said in the original Michaelian group transcriptions about violence begetting violence. For instance, the word “vengeance” never occurs and “revenge” only occurs twice:

Richard: My “work ethic” gets in my way. My boss was supposed to be there in the afternoon to receive a call, but had gone sailing. I got “revenge” by calling him that evening at 9:00.

Cynthia: That’s hard on the Agape. [17 April 1974]

A comment was made by Dick that the distractions of the Physical Plane were what he enjoyed most!

If they are pleasant for you, they are probably not distractions. By distractions, we mean those considerations that you daily make that keep you from tackling those tasks you would perform from Essence. Reading great literature, writing poetry and prose, listening to seriously conceived music are not distractions. Dwelling on injustices, plotting revenge, and designing your life are. [03 September 1977]

One of the antonyms of violence, kindness, is not to be found in the original Michaelian group transcriptions, but the subject of being kind does come up a few times; refer to the chapter “Kindness”.

At the beginning of this chapter, I quoted the Wikipedia article on violence, and now I would like to quote the Wikipedia article on nonviolence, even though the word only appears once in the original Michaelian group transcriptions, where it was said that nonviolence is a part of all true spiritual teachings, as quoted at the beginning of this chapter. The Wikipedia article discusses nonviolence almost entirely as an activist’s strategy for impelling social change, but it also discusses nonviolence as a personal way of life:

Nonviolence is the personal practice of not causing harm to others under any condition. It may come from the belief that hurting people, animals and/or the environment is unnecessary to achieve an outcome and it may refer to a general philosophy of abstention from violence. It may be based on moral, religious or spiritual principles, or the reasons for it may be strategic or pragmatic. Failure to distinguish between the two types of nonviolent approaches can lead to distortion in the concept’s meaning and effectiveness, which can subsequently result in confusion among the audience. Although both principled and pragmatic nonviolent

approaches preach for nonviolence, they may have distinct motives, goals, philosophies, and techniques. However, rather than debating the best practice between the two approaches, both can indicate alternative paths for those who do not want to use violence.

Mahatma Gandhi was of the view:

No religion in the World has explained the principle of *Ahimsa* [non-violence] so deeply and systematically as is discussed with its applicability in every human life in Jainism. As and when the benevolent principle of *Ahimsa* or non-violence will be ascribed for practice by the people of the world to achieve their end of life in this world and beyond, Jainism is sure to have the uppermost status and Lord Mahavira is sure to be respected as the greatest authority on *Ahimsa*.

Ahimsa as an ethical concept evolved in Vedic [ancient Hindu] texts. The oldest scripts, along with discussing ritual animal sacrifices, indirectly mention *Ahimsa*, but do not emphasize it. Over time, the Hindu scripts revise ritual practices and the concept of *Ahimsa* is increasingly refined and emphasized, ultimately *Ahimsa* becomes the highest virtue by the late Vedic era (about 500 BC). For example, hymn 10.22.25 in the Rig Veda uses the words *Satya* (truthfulness) and *Ahimsa* in a prayer to deity Indra; later, the Yajur Veda dated to be between 1000 BC and 600 BC, states, “may all beings look at me with a friendly eye, may I do likewise, and may we look at each other with the eyes of a friend”.

Chāndogya Upaniṣhad also names *Ahimsa*, along with *Satyavacanam* (truthfulness), *Arjavam* (sincerity), *Danam* (charity), *Tapo* (penance/meditation), as one of five essential virtues (CU 3.17.4).

The Sandilya Upanishad lists ten forbearances: *Ahimsa*, *Satya*, *Asteya*, *Brahmacharya*, *Daya*, *Arjava*, *Kshama*, *Dhriti*, *Mitahara* and *Saucha*. According to Kaneda, the term *Ahimsa* is an important spiritual doctrine shared by Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism. It literally means ‘non-injury’ and ‘non-killing’. It implies the total avoidance of harming of any kind of living creatures not only by deeds, but also by words and in thoughts.

[><https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nonviolence>< — retrieved 11 March 2023]

Refer to chapters “Virtue” and “Truth”.





⑦ VIRTUE AND VICE

This chapter is the product of a search for the word “virtue” in the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group channeling sessions. This word does not represent a significant component of the Michaelian teachings. However, there are good reasons to discuss the subject in this *Study Papers* book: 1) the word itself appeared only two times during the original Michaelian group, but many virtues were endorsed by the Michaels; 2) some interesting things were said about the subject; 3) the subject is related to a number of other components of the Michaelian teachings that are considered to be significant; 4) students can presumably benefit from having the mentions conveniently collected and commented all in one place; 5) Issues of virtue or lack thereof are pervasive in human psychology and sociology and spirituality — subjects covered extensively in this book — so it behooves us to have a working knowledge of them.

The word “virtue” is not capitalized in this chapter or other chapters of this *Study Papers* book because it has no special meaning in the Michaelian teachings; it is not a Michaelian jargon word that needs a definition apart from its use in the common vernacular. The word “vice” does not appear in the original Michaelian group transcriptions, but many vices are discussed.

This chapter is one of many in this book that focuses on a psychological component of the Michaelian teachings as found in original Michaelian group transcriptions, rather than on a doctrinal or spiritual component. A psychological component is usually either a positive to be cultivated or a negative to be mitigated. As we will see, the Michaels tell us that vices are a negative to be eschewed and virtues are a positive to be cultivated. The Michaelian version of psychology is not to be confused with the popular psychology of the self-improvement movement, those that do not have a spiritual core or perspective. Rather, the Michaelian psychotherapeutic path (aimed at improving psychological health) is a beneficial precursor to the spiritual path (aimed at improving soul health). To skip the former but attempt the latter is referred to as “spiritual bypassing”. This is discussed at length on such websites as https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spiritual_bypass. To skip mitigating one’s psychological issues and attempt to go straight to enlightenment usually proves to be problematic.

Definition of Virtue

So what is meant by virtue? Wikipedia, my usual go-to resource for definitions and descriptions, has this:

Introduction

Virtue (Latin: *virtus*) is moral excellence. A virtue is a trait or quality that is deemed to be morally good and thus is valued as a foundation of principle and good moral being. In other words, it is a behavior that shows high moral standards: doing what is right and avoiding what is wrong. The opposite of virtue is vice.

Other examples of this notion include the concept of merit in Asian traditions Buddhism’s four *brahmavihara* (“Divine States”) can be regarded as virtues in the European sense.

Etymology

The ancient Romans used the Latin word *virtus* (derived from *vir*, their word for man) to refer to all of the “excellent qualities of men, including physical strength, valorous conduct, and moral rectitude”. The French words *vertu* and *virtu* came from this Latin root. The word virtue “was borrowed into English in the 13th century”. [<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Virtue> — retrieved 25 February 2023]

Different religions and cultures have compiled lists and descriptions of specific virtues; see further on.

Definition of Vice

So what is meant by vice? Wikipedia, my usual go-to resource for definitions and descriptions, has this introduction to the topic:

A vice is a practice, behavior, or habit generally considered immoral, sinful, criminal, rude, taboo, depraved, degrading, deviant, or perverted in the associated society. In more minor usage, vice can refer to a fault, a negative character trait, a defect, an infirmity, or a bad or unhealthy habit. Vices are usually associated with a transgression in a person's character or temperament rather than their morality. Synonyms for vice include fault, sin, depravity, iniquity, wickedness, and corruption. The antonym of vice is virtue.

[><https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vice>< — retrieved 07 March 2023]

Different religions and cultures have compiled lists and descriptions of specific vices; see further on.

Lists of Virtues

In my humble opinion, there are many insights in this Wikipedia article that are worthy of inclusion in this chapter.

PLATONIC VIRTUES

1. Prudence: (also Wisdom), the ability to discern the appropriate course of action to be taken in a given situation at the appropriate time.
2. Fortitude: also termed courage, forbearance, strength, endurance, and the ability to confront fear, uncertainty, and intimidation.
3. Temperance: also known as restraint, the practice of self-control, abstinence, discretion, and moderation tempering the appetite. Plato considered *Sōphrosynē*, which may also be translated as sound-mindedness, to be the most important virtue.
4. Justice: also considered as fairness; the Greek word also having the meaning righteousness.

ROMAN VIRTUES

Humor, Perseverance or Courage, Mercy, Dignity, Discipline, Good Faith, Tenacity, Frugality, Gravity, Respectability, Humanity, Selflessness, Joy or Gladness, Nobility, Justice, Dutifulness, Prudence, Wholesomeness, Sternness, Truthfulness, Manliness.

CHIVALRIC VIRTUES

Love God, Love your neighbor, Give alms to the poor, Entertain strangers, Visit the sick, Be merciful to prisoners, Do ill to no man, nor consent unto such, Forgive as ye hope to be forgiven, Redeem the captive, Help the oppressed, Defend the cause of the widow and orphan, Render righteous judgment, Do not consent to any wrong, Persevere not in wrath, Shun excess in eating and drinking, Be humble and kind, Serve your liege lord faithfully, Do not steal, Do not perjure yourself, nor let others do so, Envy, hatred, and violence separate men from the Kingdom of God, Defend the Church and promote her cause.

CHRISTIAN VIRTUES

Faith, Hope, Love, Charity, Joy, Peace, Long-suffering, Kindness, Benevolence, Faithfulness, Gentleness, Self-control, Chastity, Temperance, Diligence, Patience, Humility

BUDDHIST VIRTUES

Buddhist practice as outlined in the Noble Eightfold Path can be regarded as a progressive list of virtues.

1. Right View — Realizing the Four Noble Truths.
2. Right Mindfulness — Mental ability to see things for what they are with clear consciousness.
3. Right Concentration — Wholesome one-pointedness of mind.

Buddhism's four *brahmavihara* ("Divine States") can be more properly regarded as virtues in the European sense. They are:

1. *Metta/Maitri*: loving-kindness towards all; the hope that a person will be well; loving kindness is the wish that all sentient beings, without any exception, be happy.
2. *Karuṇā*: compassion; the hope that a person's sufferings will diminish; compassion is the wish for all sentient beings to be free from suffering.
3. *Mudita*: altruistic joy in the accomplishments of a person, oneself or other; sympathetic joy is the wholesome attitude of rejoicing in the happiness and virtues of all sentient beings.
4. *Upekkha/Upeksha*: equanimity, or learning to accept both loss and gain, praise and blame, success and failure with detachment, equally, for oneself and for others. Equanimity means not to distinguish between

friend, enemy or stranger, but to regard every sentient being as equal. It is a clear-minded tranquil state of mind — not being overpowered by delusions, mental dullness or agitation.

HINDU VIRTUES

The virtues that constitute a dharmic life — that is a moral, ethical, virtuous life — evolve in vedas and upanishads. Over time, new virtues were conceptualized and added by ancient Hindu scholars, some replaced, others merged. For example, Manusamhita initially listed ten virtues necessary for a human being to live a dharmic life: *Dhriti* (courage), *Kshama* (patience and forgiveness), *Dama* (temperance), *Asteya* (Non-covetousness/Non-stealing), *Saucha* (inner purity), *Indriyani-graha* (control of senses), *dhi* (reflective prudence), *vidya* (wisdom), *satyam* (truthfulness), *akrodha* (freedom from anger). In later verses, this list was reduced to five virtues by the same scholar, by merging and creating a broader concept. The shorter list of virtues became: *Ahimsa* (Non-violence), *Dama* (self restraint), *Asteya* (Non-covetousness/Non-stealing), *Saucha* (inner purity), *Satyam* (truthfulness).

JAIN VIRTUES

In Jainism, attainment of enlightenment is possible only if the seeker possesses certain virtues. All Jains are supposed to take up the five vows of *ahimsa* (non violence), *satya* (truthfulness), *asteya* (non stealing), *aparigraha* (non attachment) and *brahmacharya* (celibacy) before becoming a monk.

SIKH VIRTUES

The Five Virtues of Sikhism are *Sat* (truth), *Daya* (compassion), *Santokh* (contentment), *Nimrata* (humility), and *Pyaar* (love).

BEN FRANKLIN [Autobiography]

1. Temperance: Eat not to Dullness. Drink not to Elevation.
2. Silence: Speak not but what may benefit others or yourself. Avoid trifling Conversation.
3. Order: Let all your Things have their Places. Let each Part of your Business have its Time.
4. Resolution: Resolve to perform what you ought. Perform without fail what you resolve.
5. Frugality: Make no Expense but to do good to others or yourself; i.e. Waste nothing.
6. Industry: Lose no Time. Be always employed in something useful. Cut off all unnecessary Actions.
7. Sincerity: Use no hurtful Deceit. Think innocently and justly; and, if you speak, speak accordingly.
8. Justice: Wrong none, by doing Injuries or omitting the Benefits that are your Duty.
9. Moderation: Avoid Extremes. Forbear resenting Injuries so much as you think they deserve.
10. Cleanliness: Tolerate no Uncleaness in Body, Clothes or Habitation.
11. Tranquility: Be not disturbed at Trifles, or at Accidents common or unavoidable.
12. Chastity: Rarely use Venery but for Health or Offspring; Never to Dullness, Weakness, or the Injury of your own or another's Peace or Reputation.
13. Humility: Imitate Jesus and Socrates. [<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Virtue> — retrieved 07 March 2023]

And so on; you get the idea. The Wikipedia article has many other introductions to the virtue traditions, from religion, philosophy, and psychology. The reason that these virtues are promoted is because they needed to be promoted because human nature is subject to the opposite valence of virtue, namely vice.

List of Vices

In my arrogant opinion, there are many insights in this Wikipedia article that are worthy of inclusion in this chapter.

In the Sarvastivadin tradition of Buddhism, there are 108 defilements, or vices, which are prohibited. These are subdivided into 10 bonds and 98 proclivities. The 10 bonds are the following:

Absence of shame, Absence of embarrassment, Jealousy, Parsimony (in the sense of stinginess), Remorse, Drowsiness, Distraction, Torpor, Anger, Concealment of wrongdoing.

The poet Dante Alighieri listed the following seven deadly vices, associating them structurally as flaws in the soul's inherent capacity for goodness as made in the Divine Image yet perverted by the Fall:

Pride or vanity: an excessive love of the self (holding the self outside of its proper position regarding God or fellows; Dante's definition was "love of self perverted to hatred and contempt for one's neighbour"). In the Latin lists of the Seven Deadly Sins, pride is referred to as *superbia*.

Envy or jealousy: resentment of others for their possessions (Dante: "love of one's own good perverted to a desire to deprive other men of theirs"). In the Latin lists of the Seven Deadly Sins, envy is referred to as *invidia*.

Wrath or anger: feelings of hatred, revenge or denial, as well as punitive desires outside of justice (Dante's description was "love of justice perverted to revenge and spite"). In the Latin lists of the Seven Deadly Sins, wrath is referred to as *ira*, which primitive vices tempt astray by increasingly perverting the proper purpose of charity, directing it inwards, leading to a disordered navel-gazing preoccupation with personal goods in isolation absent proper harmonious relations leading to violent disruption of balance with others.

Sloth or laziness: idleness and wastefulness of time or other allotted resources. Laziness is condemned because it results in others having to work harder; also, useful work will not be done. Sloth is referred to in Latin as *accidie* or *acedia*, which vice tempts a self-aware soul to be too easily satisfied, thwarting charity's purpose as insufficiently perceptible within the soul itself or abjectly indifferent in relationship with the needs of others and their satisfaction, an escalation in evil, more odious than the passion of hate.

Avarice (covetousness, greed): a desire to possess more than one has need or use for (or according to Dante, "excessive love of money and power"). In the Latin lists of the Seven Deadly Sins, avarice is referred to as *avaritia*.

Gluttony: overindulgence in food, drink or intoxicants, or misplaced desire of food as a pleasure for its sensuality ("excessive love of pleasure" was Dante's rendering). In the Latin lists of the Seven Deadly Sins, gluttony is referred to as *gula*.

Lust: excessive sexual desire. Dante's criterion was that "lust detracts from true love". In the Latin lists of the Seven Deadly Sins, lust is referred to as *luxuria*, which vices tempt cultivated souls in their ability to direct charity's proper purpose to good things or actions, by indulging excess. Thus in Dante's estimation the soul's detachment from sensual appetites become the vices most difficult to tame, urges not as easily curbed by mere good manners since inflamed via appropriate use rather than inappropriate misuse. Hence conventional respect for the ninth and tenth commandments against coveting and social customs that encourage custody of the eyes and ears become prudent adjuncts to training against vice.

The Qur'an and many other Islamic religious writings provide prohibitions against acts that are seen as immoral. Ibn abi Dunya, a 9th-century scholar and tutor to the caliphs, described seven censures (prohibitions against vices) in his writings:

Ire, Envy, Slander, Obscenity, Intoxicants, Instruments of pleasure [<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vice> — retrieved 07 March 2023]

And so on; you get the idea. The Wikipedia article has many other introductions to the vice traditions, from religion, philosophy, and psychology. Michaelian students will recognize many of these vices in the Chief Features (the "Seven Deadly Sins" and the "seven censures" are a clue to this comparison) and in the Negative Poles of the Overleaves. Coincidence? I think not.

Virtue per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

The following extracts from original Michaelian group transcriptions are Q&A exchanges, where an original Michaelian group member asks a question (or makes a comment), and the Michaels provide an answer. These extracts are presented in the chronological order in which they were given. As is my custom, I often provide some explanatory comments following the question or answer. Underlined words in the Michaels' answers are my emphasis, to draw attention to what it is that I comment on. Sometimes I embed words or phrases [in brackets] that I believe help to clarify the question or the answer.

The word "virtue" only appears in the original Michaelian group transcriptions twice. The first one is this:

We see no virtue in crippling asceticism. The danger lies in immoderation. [20 October 1973]

Some people see virtue in poverty and others see virtue in prosperity, but the Michaels saw virtue in moderation (among other things); refer to chapters "Moderation" and "Asceticism and Austerity". As we see in the previous section, moderation is considered to be a virtue in many religions and philosophies.

The second mention of virtue was this one:

[Soleal:] In our [communal living] system, the good of many is valued over the good of the individual, and I will admit that you have good, sound cultural mores and a right virtue of your training to regard this as scary. But however frightening it may sound at the outset, the good of the many eventually serves the needs of the individual. The system, in order to work at all, of course, requires, above all, patience and the belief that your individual needs — and notice I did not say “wants” — will be served. The expectation of instant gratification of all wants is consummately absurd and belongs in childhood. [18 February 1974]

Some cultures regard individualism as a virtue and other cultures regard collectivism as a virtue. This is a socio-cultural-political issue that has been argued by philosophers at least since the time of the Greek philosophers; refer to ><https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/in-one-lifespan/201906/collectivism-and-individualism>< and other internet resources for a review of the topic. As with the poverty/prosperity issue, I regard the median zone of the individualism/collectivism spectrum as the optimal place to run a society, with a slight edge toward the collectivism pole; refer to the chapters “Individuality” and “Communal Living” for further discussion.

Concluding Comments on Virtue and Vice

The Michaels only mentioned virtue twice in the original Michaelian group transcriptions, and one does not hear much about the concept as a generic category in subsequent Michaelian channeling and in groups. However, one does find various virtues discussed at length in the original Michaelian group transcriptions. For instance, refer to the chapters “Agape”, “Discipline”, “Good Work, Bad Work”, “Grace”, “Honesty”, “Integrity”, “Judgment”, “Love”, “Moderation”, “Purity”, “Responsibility”, “Wisdom”.... *[[Review this list when this book is finished.]]*

In the original Michaelian group transcriptions, the word for the opposite of virtue, namely “vice”, never appears. However, there are many chapters in this *Study Papers* book that discuss specific vices, or malfeasances: “Anger”, “Bias”, “Buffers”, “Excuse”, “Facade”, “False Personality”, “Fantasy”, “Glamour”, “Guilt”, “Hostility”, “Machinations”, “Manipulation”, “Mask”, “Maya”, “Mechanical Man”, “Secrecy”, “Sin”, “Superstition”, “Temptation”, “Violence”.... *[[Review this list when this book is finished.]]*

The Spiritualist Attitude looks for, and aspires to, virtue in self and in other and in the world in general. Perhaps because am a Spiritualist, I find this chapter especially meaningful.





① VECTORS

This chapter is the product of a search for the word vector in the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group channeling sessions, and the second Michaelian group. This word does not represent a significant component of the Michaelian teachings. However, there are good reasons to discuss the subject in this *Study Papers* book: 1) the subject came up numerous times during the original Michaelian group and the second Michaelian group; 2) some interesting things were said about the subject; 3) the subject is related to a number of other components of the Michaelian teachings that are considered to be significant; 4) students can presumably benefit from having the mentions conveniently collected and commented all in one place.

The word Vector is capitalized in this chapter or other chapters of this *Study Papers* book because it has a special meaning in the Michaelian teachings; it is a Michaelian jargon word that needs a definition apart from its use in the common vernacular.

Definition of Vector

So what is meant by vector? The online Merriam Webster online dictionary definition is (underlined words are my emphasis):

1a: a quantity that has magnitude and direction and that is commonly represented by a directed line segment whose length represents the magnitude and whose orientation in space represents the direction.

1b: a course or compass direction especially of an airplane

[><https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/vector>< — retrieved 20 April 2023]

The Michaels adopted the term for the phenomenon where events and people converge and diverge in the course of their lives.

Vectors per the Original Michaelian Group and the Second Michaelian Group Transcriptions

The following extracts from original Michaelian group transcriptions are Q&A exchanges, where an original Michaelian group or second Michaelian group member asks a question (or makes a comment), and the Michaels provide an answer. These extracts are presented in the chronological order in which they were given. As is my custom, I usually provide some explanatory comments following the question or answer. Underlined words are my emphasis, to draw attention to what it is that I comment on. Sometimes I embed words or phrases [in brackets] that I believe help to clarify the question or the answer. Numerous study papers related to this chapter are to be found among my comments.

So far as we know from available channeling session transcriptions, the concept of so-called “Vectors” in the Michaelian teachings first appeared in the original Michaelian group in an undeveloped form:

... you need each other, this being one of the reasons each of you moves in or on a different Vector and each can offer the other valuable insights through close association. [07 July 1974]

Elizabeth: I'd like a comment on the inner space, or other plane experience I had: I saw a person in the metaphysical bookstore that fit the person I met while in my inner space. I feel we have had past lives together.

When the student is in the meditative state or is otherwise attentive to the teaching, it is possible to experience what we choose to call the “pan-dimensional” universe and that, of course, includes the Akashic plane. In order to answer your question, Elizabeth, we would explain to you what the term “precognition” really means. In those possessed of tremendous psychic energy, it is possible in the meditative or inner conscious state to “flash” on all of the alternative frames for a future that is close at hand. The problem is in the retaining of these flashes. Most souls do retain only the most dramatic fragments, discarding the mundane. Then, if they recognize this as precognition, they also regard it as fact and accept the most awesome consequences. This is, of course, not

true, for in the time you flash, it is merely an alternative, but sometimes you do set the wheels in motion on a subliminal level and the incident does take place. Elizabeth, this is essentially what takes place when you flash on a meeting that may take place in the near future. You can, in some instances, bring this about, but also, there is the very real attraction there that we have told you before happens when Older Souls come together after an Astral interval for the first time in this life. This attraction can be negative or positive, and can result in a coming together or a going away, but it does provoke an emotional response that is difficult to suppress. [15 October 1974]

There are, of course, parallel Vectors leading to nowhere. Many lead to stagnation on the Physical Plane, many to intense Karmic Ribbons. Only those Vectors leading into the flow are paths that are worth following. Those [Vectors] we have suggested lead to joy and most teachings that we are aware of do lead to this.

Parallel Vectors are the illusion and the misery of the Physical Plane. The “vale [valley] of tears” that was pointed out in the Bible [Psalm 84:6] defines the road obscured by Maya ... the many-fold Vectors of the choices made by the Overleaves. The trouble is, the choices never do satisfy the Essence and there is always internal war. [21 November 1976]

People who are aware of the spiritual dimension of their lives, sometimes speak of the flow of the universe that brings people and events together synchronistically, as if it was “meant to happen”, as if it was part of some “grand cosmic plan”, or an “appointment with destiny”. In the Michaelian teachings, this is called *Vectors*. Generally speaking, the future is not determined and, therefore, cannot be accurately predicted. Souls can make plans and Agreements between lifetimes and during lifetimes to find each other and do specific things together. In mathematics, *vectors* are lines with arrows on them that point in various directions in two-dimensional or three-dimensional space. They can converge or diverge at various angles. In the Michaelian teachings, Vectors involve time as well as space. That is to say, Vectors can bring people and events together or separate them at specific times and specific locations.

The first mention of Vectors in the second Michaelian group involves the converging type:

Their Vectoring has been progressively closer ... [18 September 1982]

Vectors are not fate; they can change on the fly:

The die has not been cast. Vectoring is changing. Wait until this season is farther along. [16 October 1982]

Not only with people meeting each other to conduct their soul business, but world events can approach along certain tracks as well:

This world will be brought to the brink of destruction, as we see it now, if the Vectors continue as they are now forming. [16 January 1983]

Vectors can bring people together and they can also take people apart:

That relationship ... was not Wrong Work. It was a shifting of goals, both spiritual and physical, that ended it then. This was a natural Vectoring of events and because it caused a realization crisis in you, it was rather Good Work. [16 January 1983]

Vectors can be “felt” or intuited if one is sensitive to them:

The feeling that the Vectoring is now moving toward a point of convergence is not without foundation. [27 February 1983]

When a Vector is approaching fulfillment and during fulfillment, participants should be very sensitive to the psycho-dynamics, and not get sidetracked with unrealistic expectations:

The Fragment Joseph also should listen to the inner voices when these two Fragments arrive. The Fragment Lynn will also meet with a Fragment whose paths have crossed before and this will be of great value to her, worth the dance, although it will seem indirect at first. The Fragments Joel and Elizabeth already are aware of converging Vectors. For most of you in this cadre, this Vectoring is the same. For some, there will be a third contact to converge toward the end of this cycle. All of the Fragments of the Entity that contains Joel will experience two converging Vector lines that are theirs to use if they wish.

We cannot make you use this opportunity; only point out to you that it arises and perhaps arises only once in this cycle. All of you should be aware of the feelings of apprehension that build up around strong Vectoring, such as is what is now occurring. If the convergence occurs in an area of this positive energy, such as at Shasta or Taos or any of the other spots we have mentioned, then, of course, the contact will be intensified, but Berkeley is an area of medium energy and will serve as a good conductor for facilitating this awareness. [27 February 1983]

Vectoring often involves kindred or friended souls who have plans and Agreements to meet and conduct soul business in a specific geographical location, and participants can feel drawn to that location:

We have told you before that the Fragment who is Maxim was fleeing toward something and not away from something when he chose to leave the Soviet Union. Most of the Fragments of this Fragment's Entity are concentrated either in England or here in the Berkeley [California] area. Therefore, he is drawn irresistibly towards this Vectoring. The Fragment Gary is a member of the Entity that contains Joel, and has already had an inkling of what is here for him. [27 February 1983]

After the Vector has converged, and during its fulfillment, the kindred or friended relationship should feel comfortable and the work should go smoothly:

Yes, [she is] an old friend from the past. The way you are all connected will become clearer as you work with these interfaces. The Vectors converged and the Work was good for many of you. The Fragment Stephanie is not a Stranger and can hear and understand the Work. This Fragment is in the same Entity that contains Joel. [29 March 1983]

However, there are sometimes obstacles on the way to or from the fulfillment of Vectors:

You, Joel [age 29], must now decide whether you wish to Work on your [Fourth] Monad or not, for the doors are wide open. We will not say that the road will be easy. On the contrary, the way will be steep and difficult, but the Vectors are now converging, and this is a favorable sign. The same Vectors will shift again, and it will be harder. For now, there is an opportunity to make this contact, and in a favorable atmosphere. [07 May 1983]

There can be multiple reasons for Vectors, and multiple reasons strengthen the Vectors:

You are drawn to this place that you are going, not just because of the music but also because of the converging Vectors that will bring you within reach of many contacts. This is a very strong pull. ...at the moment, converging Vectors point to the smaller city [Graz]. [30 May 1983]

Once one becomes aware of the phenomenon of Vectors and has experienced some of them, one can sense them and fulfill them more gracefully:

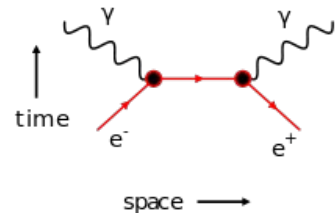
Vectors are again converging. We see all of you learning to listen to this signal more willingly than before. It was Good Work for you to validate for yourselves. The Vectors only shift, and now that you are aware, there will be more opportunities. [Undated session]

Concluding Comments on Vectors

The phenomenon of Vectors is part of a larger phenomenon, what the Michaels call the weaving of the Tapestry of life. The entire Tapestry includes all factors of the soul's plans, not just the converging and diverging of people and events in objective space/time and subjective time/space. The Tapestry includes other phenomena, such as Agreements, Monads, Karma, the Life Task, kindred and friended souls, and so on; refer to the chapter "Tapestry and Threads".

A visual image of Vectors is that the future is full of 'loose threads' or *potential* events, and the present is when the Fragment chooses to *actualize* a specific event from among the available options. You may think of the result as a finished tapestry that then stretches into the past.

Furthermore, when I think of the Michaelian concept of Vectors, I also think of so-called "Feynman diagrams". You might or might not know that Richard Feynman was a physicist who lived during the middle years of the 20th Century. Among his list of achievements was his invention of a graphic way to represent the interactions of fundamental particles. For the story about that, refer to https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Feynman_diagram, and consider an example. >





⑦ VEIL

This chapter is the product of a search for the word “veil” and its derivatives in the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group channeling sessions. This word does not represent a significant component of the Michaelian teachings. However, there are good reasons to discuss the subject in this *Study Papers* book: 1) the subject came up numerous times during the original Michaelian group; 2) some interesting things were said about the subject; 3) the subject is related to a number of other components of the Michaelian teachings that are considered to be significant; 4) students can presumably benefit from having the mentions conveniently collected and commented all in one place; 5) This chapter is not as trivial as the title might suggest to you, considering that the concept has implications that go far beyond the physical, into the realms of the psychological, the philosophical, the spiritual, and the theological. Therefore it behooves us to have a working knowledge of it.

The word “veil” is not capitalized in this chapter or other chapters of this *Study Papers* book because it has no special meaning in the Michaelian teachings; it is not a Michaelian jargon word that needs a definition apart from its use in the common vernacular.

Definition of Veil

So what is meant by the word veil? The online Merriam-Webster dictionary has this to say:

- 1a: a length of cloth worn by women as a covering for the head and shoulders and often especially in Eastern countries for the face, specifically the outer covering of a nun’s headdress
- 1b: a length of veiling or netting worn over the head or face or attached for protection or ornament to a hat or headdress; a bridal veil
- 1c: any of various liturgical cloths, especially a cloth used to cover the chalice
- 2: the life of a nun — often used in the phrase *take the veil*
- 3: a concealing curtain or cover of cloth
- 4: something that resembles a veil; la veil of stars; especially something that hides or obscures like a veil [as in] lift the veil of secrecy
- 5a: a covering body part or membrane: such as a: velum
- 5b: caul [<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/veil>] — retrieved 17 June 2021]

Obviously then, a veil is a membrane that conceals some part of objective reality from another part of reality. The word is also used as a metaphor for something that conceals some part of subjective reality from another part of reality. Wikipedia has a lengthy article on the history, function, and meaning of the practice of veiling: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Veil>. We will see below that the Michaels applied the metaphor to a number of phenomena.

Veil per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

The following extracts from original Michaelian group transcriptions are Q&A exchanges, where an original Michaelian group member asks a question (or makes a comment), and the Michaels provide an answer. These extracts are presented in the chronological order in which they were given. As is my custom, I often provide some explanatory comments following the question or answer. Underlined words are my emphasis, to draw attention to what it is that I comment on. Sometimes I embed words or phrases [in brackets] that I believe help to clarify the question or the answer.

The first occurrence of the word veil is in the first full original Michaelian group session transcription that has become available to us, a couple of months before the Michaels appeared. The Astral being on tap for that

session was Tomas. This is a series of Q&A exchanges that have somewhat to say about seeing beyond the veil that separates the spiritual realm from the physical realm.

Sarah: I have a question that interests me and I don't know why. There are a couple of astrophysicists on the East coast, whose writings would lead me to believe that they see beyond the veil. They are in a position where their books are automatically published and people listen to them, and they are even connected to NASA. I wonder why somebody like you doesn't come through one of them, to get this out.

[Tomas:] How do you know we don't?

Sarah: Because it isn't coming out.

In this [Physical] plane, that we are all present on at this time, there are no persons, of any intelligence, as you are quoting the physicists ... they are all helped. There is a small, small voice within each and every one that tells you — and these people have merely learned to uncover and listen. You haven't learned to uncover and listen, or you too could do it.

Sarah: I don't understand. I'm confused. I could do what?

You could become well-versed in almost any subject, if it interests you, if you choose. All people can do this if they listen, because the help is always there. Always there. Now, throughout your past lives, you haven't been idle. You have been learning. There is a record. You have been learning every step of the way, and all of this is recorded. All you have to do is listen and it all unravels. Through every life, some life will start over here as one thing, another life will start over here as another thing. This life will pursue one goal. Take music — this life starts and progresses throughout its different entities, throughout the musical field until a genius blossoms forth. This person over here dabbles in a little art. In the next life, it dabbles in a little, oh, medicine, and then next life it dabbles in something else. They are confused so that they never hit the right plane — because they don't listen. All you have to do is listen.

Sue: Tomas, if you don't know what to listen to, when you have so many things going through your head at one time, you don't know what to listen to.

That is true, Sue. That is a very good thing to say. Now I know that there were times when I was on this [Physical] plane when I would hear this still voice and I would argue. It was as though I were arguing with myself. I was up there in my conscious mind [saying], "Now you listen and let me tell you how this is" and the little voice was saying, "You listen and let me tell you how it is." I didn't listen — I was too smart, so, I have to, and everybody has to, keep going. But that little voice is still there. If you will quiet your own mind, get on a subject that is of profound interest to you, and listen, you will hear. You aren't arguing with your self — they are telling you. [19 June 1973]

In this case, the meaning of "veil" in this context is not explicit, but it is implicit: there is a "veil" between the Physical Plane and the other planes. Not only at that time in the 1970s, but even more so now, physicists and cosmologists have come to realize that there are realms outside of the space/time reality system in which our consciousness is normally embedded. It is as if the universe is sandwiched between a 'higher' reality system and a 'lower' reality system. Another way to say this is to use the mathematics of set theory and say that the universe is a superset of an infra-reality system, and a subset of a supra-reality system. Physicists and cosmologists are attempting to figure out what the nature and the structure of the infra- and supra-reality systems are. Tomas says that those scientists should listen to their inner voice if they want to penetrate the veil that separates reality systems. This implies that physical devices are okay for exploring this physical reality system within space/time, but not appropriate to the task of penetrating the veils between the space/time reality system of the Physical Plane and the infra- and supra-reality systems.

We should do likewise, listen and learn, in whatever subject we have an interest. Refer to the chapter on "Concentration and Meditation" for means and methods to do so. Basically and briefly, a person alternates between quieting the mind and focusing the mind in order to penetrate the veils between levels of reality.

The next mention of "veil" is from the first session in which the Michaels appeared.

The question was asked concerning the decision to go on in the search for spiritual enlightenment — on to becoming an Adept. What do you do when you get so far and are not too sure you want to continue? We wondered if the Masters picked those in whom the desire for "psychic experiences" was quite strong to become Adepts.

The desire is polar, too. Everything in the universe is, of course. Along with the desire is always the dread. The choice does not become clear to you until you have experienced the desire from another dimension. You must stand and observe the desire from the shadows of dread. Wishes, like everything, have positive and negative poles. There must be attraction and repulsion or nothing exists because no energy is being generated. The

primordial force was energy, not mass. Think about that when you are hung up on cause and effect. The more primitive one is energy. Does it not seem that all seeking the least complex will return to the energy from whence they came? Complexity is the antithesis of what the spirit seeks. The body represents the epitome of complexity. That is why the spirit is again and again attracted to it, until the partially awakened Essence catches a glimpse beyond the "veil". [12 August 1973]

Refer to the chapter "Complexity versus Simplicity". There you will read about how the complexity of life on the Physical Plane veils or obscures the fundamental simplicity of spiritual life. In the process of incarnation, there is a metaphorical 'veil' of forgetfulness between the Astral and Physical Planes, looking both ways: the soul on the Astral Plane forgets how bad its experience on the Physical Plane was, and the soul on the Physical Plane forgets its prior existence on the Astral Plane. From ancient times, this doctrine of forgetfulness has been a component of reincarnation: ><https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lethe><. Refer to the chapter "Forgetting and Remembering".

Not all of the veiling takes place at birth:

Ellis: I had a blissful childhood, with love and enjoyment. Was I aware of my Role then?

Children, before they are thoroughly programmed for their societal role, usually operate from Essence and know their Roles. The Role the child first voices as a desire usually comes from Essence. After that, from False Personality, based on expectations of those around the child. To return to this state is, of course, a major part of the [psychotherapeutic] goal. Until you do, you cannot shake the enthrallment of the physical, material plane. The child, especially the young child, often sees beyond the veil. This is quickly squashed. The happy childhood is mostly a myth. In your case, it was a *bona fide* experience, and your desire to return there is Good Work. [23 October 1973]

There are many documented cases that some preschool children remember their pre-incarnate existences and/or past lives. But then the veil descends. The veil can be lifted again if/when a person has a Near Death Experience, of which there are also many documented cases.

Gene: Please comment on Serge's impressions of Susan's picture.

The temptation is very great for this Old Priest to retreat to the monastic veilings. Yes, this is a valid alternative. The Personality has found the secular life painful and not to its liking and longs for the quiet of the cloister. [16 June 1974]

Here the metaphorical 'veil' is between the monastic life and the secular life; people on either side of the veil do not see much of what is on the other side. In the monastic life, the veil is oftentimes also literal, the purpose being to facilitate focus on the inner world rather than on the outer world.

A chapter related to this chapter on veiling is "Barriers and Blocks":

Man must meet with a cosmic teaching in order to look behind the barriers. Psychology will not do it for you: for, if the psychologist is a Mechanical Man himself, he also has adaptive behavior taking place, and he cannot look behind your barriers or very well allow you to, either. It would be too scary for him — he would then also have to look behind his own barriers. The broad purpose of the Physical Plane, of course, is then to cut through the first layer of complexity.

Richard asked how can we prepare ourselves? What can we do to help ourselves see through the veil?

You are right, Richard. "Veil" is a word we would prefer, for these barriers — from our vantage point — are as insubstantial as the morning mists. But man chooses to solidify them to the point where he cannot destroy them. This brings them into line with the solidness of the Physical Plane. "Solid" is very much like ponderous to us. The weighty philosophical battles, battles waged by Mechanical Man, are his attempts to solidify even thought and make it more complex. He must first come to the point that he can verify for himself the tenuousness of that which stands between him and the pan-dimensional universe, and the path toward simplicity and therefore perfection. [22 October 1974]

So much of our Physical Plane experience is about separation, which the Michaels regard as a major impediment on the spiritual path; refer to the chapters "Alienation" and "Hiding" and "Hostility" and "Individuality".

[Soleal:] All of want or desire is played through the [subconscious] Tapes that the Personality has accumulated. What has happened was a touching in Essence and a perception occurred by the man David, which can now be assimilated into being. The teacher [Michael] and the student [Soleal] are not in conflict except as those roles are seen through the veil of ego. [11 January 1975]

We can attribute the veil to the primary function of “ego”, that which provides a sense of separation of self from not-self and other self; refer to the chapter “Ego”. Refer also to the chapter “Bio-computer: Its Programs and Tapes” for a discussion of that phenomenon, yet another thing that veils the truth from our perceptions.

In the Mature Cycle, there is acute perception of the veil that lies between the real and artificial space, and as never before, the longing to penetrate this veil and go beyond the senses to glimpse the pan-dimensional. To know that you are not alone in the void, you must walk out on the thin ice, and that way test the physical universe and its response to your plea. Most Mature Souls feel this, and in some way translate it into dreams of incredible strength and strange beauty. Not many, unfortunately, retain the memory of these dreams or question its meaning. [08 February 1975]

Up until the Mature Soul Age, the veil is firmly in place. During that Age the veil begins to lift. Refer to the chapter “Real Space Versus Artificial Space” for more discussion of that. One point made in that chapter is that the spiritual reality is more real than the physical reality, in the sense that it is more permanent. Another point made there is that psychological ‘space’ has a veil that separates false perceptions from valid perceptions. Furthermore, just as physical senses are required to navigate physical space, so there are spiritual senses that are required to navigate spiritual space.

We have told you all that there is a way that you can use to penetrate the veil — or, truly, there are several ways that we have outlined. Anything that you can do that will bring you to the brink of an experience with the entire spectrum of existence will bring you to the realization of the path that you must follow. This is a fancy way of saying that you must have some sort of a “psychic” experience that will allow you to see that there is something out there — or out here, if you wish. Nothing else will convince you that you have cut deeply enough into the meat of this teaching or any other teaching. Many still resist with bulldog tenacity. No teaching answers questions that you do not wish to have answered. You can always obscure answers at will, and take from the teaching only what you need to get through your present misery. Only by experiencing the truth directly will you believe and change. This means that you must see it yourself. We cannot tell you that it exists and expect you to feel gratified. You must experience this. You must want to be changed. Some of the methods we have suggested in the past are valid for you even now, but they must be undertaken with possible victory in mind. There is an element of defeat that makes many otherwise good students fail at this juncture. They say, in effect, it has always failed in the past and it will fail again. The Personality does not wish to be enlightened. [21 November 1976]

Refer to the chapter “Experience” for the documentation about the role of personal exploration of the world outside our self-imposed confinement. Refer to the chapter “Paranormal, The” for a review of various psychic phenomena that hint that there are reality systems ‘below’ and ‘above’ the reality perceived by the five physical senses. Refer to the chapter “Enlightenment” for a discussion of what happens when one penetrates the veil that separates “artificial space” from “real space”.

Another metaphor that is commonly used in the Michaelian teachings and elsewhere about the ‘veil’ that separates ‘higher’ reality systems from ‘lower’ reality systems is “Awakening from Sleep”; refer to the chapter by that name. There you will read that, as the dream is to waking reality, so is the waking reality to the spiritual reality. We see that there are various metaphors that point to the same phenomenon.

Concluding Comments about Veil

The types of metaphorical veiling mentioned in this chapter are listed as follows:

- The veil between planes, which prevents people on the Physical Plane from perceiving souls on the Astral Plane.
- The veil between this incarnation and other incarnations, past lives and such.
- The veil between our conscious minds and our sub-conscious and super-conscious minds.
- The veil we wear between our private inner lives and our public outer personas.
- The veil that prevents us from seeing above and/or beyond our present habitual worldview.
- The veil behind which we hid our true selves from other selves and the world in general.
- The veil that separates the illusory from the real, that separates our speculation about reality and our actual experience of reality.

Although the word veil is not used in the original Michaelian group transcriptions to refer to Fragmentation in the Casting process, it could have been, because the analogy is a good one: Tao fragments itself and the

Fragments play hide and seek with each other for a Grand Cycle. The opposite of this is, of course, unveiling, and that is the process of the reintegration of the Fragments; refer to the chapter "Fragmentation and Reintegration". Together, the two are the Cardinal and the Ordinal Poles of a "Monad"; refer to the chapter by that name.





④ VULNERABILITY

This chapter is the product of a search for the word vulnerable and its derivatives in the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group channeling sessions. This word does not represent a significant component of the Michaelian teachings. However, there are good reasons to discuss the subject in this *Study Papers* book: 1) the subject came up numerous times during the original Michaelian group; 2) some interesting things were said about the subject; 3) the subject is related to a number of other components of the Michaelian teachings that are considered to be significant; 4) students can presumably benefit from having the mentions conveniently collected and commented all in one place; 5) vulnerability issues are unavoidable in the human condition; they are pervasive in human psychology and sociology and spirituality — subjects covered extensively in this book — so it behooves us to have a working knowledge of them.

The word vulnerable is not capitalized in this chapter or other chapters of this *Study Papers* book because it has no special meaning in the Michaelian teachings; it is not a Michaelian jargon word that needs a definition apart from its use in the common vernacular.

This chapter is one of many in this book that focuses on a psychological component of the Michaelian teachings as found in original Michaelian group transcriptions, rather than on a doctrinal or spiritual component. A psychological component is usually either a positive to be cultivated or a negative to be mitigated. In the following sections, you will see that the Michaels use the word with both a negative and positive connotation. The Michaelian version of psychology is not to be confused with the popular psychology of the self-improvement movement, those that do not have a spiritual core or perspective. Rather, the Michaelian psychotherapeutic path (aimed at improving psychological health) is a beneficial precursor to the spiritual path (aimed at improving soul health). To skip the former but attempt the latter is referred to as “spiritual bypassing”. This is discussed at length on such websites as https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spiritual_bypass. To skip mitigating one’s psychological issues and attempt to go straight to enlightenment usually proves to be problematic.

Definition of Vulnerability

So what do we mean by vulnerability?

Vulnerable is ultimately derived from the Latin noun *vulnus* (“wound”). *Vulnus* led to the Latin verb *vulnerare*, meaning “to wound”, and then to the Late Latin adjective *vulnerabilis*, which became vulnerable in English in the early 1600s. Vulnerable originally meant “capable of being physically wounded” or “having the power to wound” (the latter is now obsolete), but since the late 1600s, it has also been used figuratively to suggest a defenselessness against non-physical attacks. In other words, someone (or something) can be vulnerable to criticism or failure as well as to literal wounding. When it is used figuratively, vulnerable is often followed by the preposition *to*. [<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/vulnerable> — retrieved 22 January 2022]

The Michaels use the word as meaning vulnerable to harm and wounding, yes, but they also mean it, and define it explicitly, as the Personality should learn to be vulnerable — that is, yielding or submitting — to the promptings of Essence, even though the Personality perceives this as harmful. And this is true: Essence wounds Personality; refer to the chapter “Essence and Personality” for more information about that; Personality has all kinds of built-in defenses against Essence, and one goal of the spiritual path for the Personality to surrender to Essence; refer to the chapter “Surrender” for more about that.

The next section documents this change in the way the Michaels used the word, evolving from the common meaning to the uncommon meaning. Because of this change in meaning, my suggestion is that there is +Vulnerability and then there is –Vulnerability.

Vulnerability in the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

The following extracts from original Michaelian group transcriptions are Q&A exchanges, where an original Michaelian group member asks a question (or makes a comment), and the Michaels provide an answer. These extracts are presented in the chronological order in which they were given. As is my custom, I often provide some explanatory comments following the question or answer. Underlined words in the Michaels' answers are my emphasis, to draw attention to what it is that I comment on. Sometimes I embed words or phrases [in brackets] that I believe help to clarify the question or the answer.

The Michaels introduced the subject of vulnerability several months after their first appearance:

If you are concerned about others taking advantage of you, this simply means that much more work is needed in this area by you. Then you must get to a [psychological] space where no one else can take advantage of you. You can become invulnerable, particularly if you stop taking a lack of enthusiasm on others' part as a personal slight. [30 December 1973]

The subject in this chapter can be connected with the subject of another chapter, namely "Considering — Internal and External". Briefly, if you have perfect personal integrity, and you know who you really are, then you do not need to concern yourself about what other people think of you, or what they feel about you, or how they act toward you. In the context of this chapter, this means that no one can take advantage of you — unless you let them. The difficult task, of course, is the long process of learning to get to that ideal state of psychological invulnerability.

Mallory: Are children more Balanced than adults, and does the entrapment take place in adolescence?

The specific Center is chosen prior to the interval [incarnation], but the entrapment takes place during childhood, usually during adolescence, when the child is the most vulnerable, (due to) cultural imprinting. [03 March 1974]

Refer to the various chapters on Centers. Refer to the chapter "Liberation" for more information about traps. Refer to the chapter "Imprinting" for more information about acculturation and socialization. Refer to the chapter "Culture" for more discussion of imprinting.

Infants and children and adolescents are generally susceptible to, and mostly defenseless against, acculturation in the society in which they grow up. Cultural imprinting is only an adverse phenomenon if it is contrary to a person's innate or inborn True Personality, in which case it is called False Personality; refer to the chapter "Personality — True and False". The early stages of spiritual growth often involve the shedding of cultural imprinting.

Trust, as you have said, implies communication and awareness, and they are inseparable. Trust is solely based upon intuition and cannot be logical. Logic will fail you every time in matters of trust. Also, the person who trusts must be less vulnerable. Yes, otherwise, he would be torn apart most of the time. Trust contains elements of toughness that comes only with practice, and concerns a lack of Internal Consideration — a "let the chips fall [where they may]" attitude. Trust is most difficult for souls in Acceptance, Submission, and Rejection. [27 March 1974]

Refer to the chapters, "Trust", "Considering — Internal and External", for more information about those subjects as they relate to vulnerability.

One goal of the spiritual path is to developing psychological "toughness", which means to become invulnerable to the "slings and arrows of outrageous fortune", to take a phrase from Shakespeare. This happens via learning to trust Essence, as we will see further on, which is here hinted at with the words "awareness" and "intuition".

Is it helpful to use this [hypnosis-induction device] as a rule? [Or] a crutch?

Yes, but sooner or later, you may discard this crutch.

Are you more vulnerable under this?

Judging by your definition of vulnerability, we would say no. [08 May 1974]

Apparently the questioner was concerned about becoming more "vulnerable" to stuff in a bad way while using a hypnosis-induction device. The way the Michaels phrased their answer is one hint that they sometimes use "vulnerable" in a good way, as "vulnerable to guidance" from Essence, which is something that hypnosis can foster. In fact, the next Q&A exchange uses "vulnerability" as a good thing:

Abdullah described an experience at Mecca in 1960 where he entered a field of Arafat. (?) (One million enter after sunrise and leave before sunset.) In July, in the heat of the bright one, each one wearing a white robe, their heads shaven (some), rope around the waist and shoulders bare. He was reduced to total non-functioning. He could not move, then clearly he heard a voice say, "This day we have sown the seed in you."

Of course, this man Abdullah could speak with those of us who are no longer on the Physical Plane directly and not through any medium, but the need to stand back and observe is very great, and usually gains the upper hand. At that time in his life, he was emotionally vulnerable for perhaps the first time in his life and it was far easier for him to hear communications, especially in that very great power spot. [10 September 1974]

This is an instance where the Michaels used the word "vulnerable" in a good sense, as emotionally susceptible to communication from the Astral Plane, which is said to have a pervasive emotional quality to it. There are people such as Abdullah who are sensitive to emotional emanations from the Astral Plane, and if they learn to discern what the communication means, this becomes a psychic power. Abdullah used his gift to interpret drawings that people made of trees.

In the next quotation, the Michaels were explicit in their use of the word as a positive thing:

Dick: It seems to me that a person on the [spiritual] path should not be lashing back at "sick people". Is Michael inferring that we confront these obnoxious people?

By the therapeutic approach, we speak of that method by which the person becomes stripped of the tough outer fibers of the False Personality, and becomes vulnerable to other demands of Essence. It is true, Dick, this Personality cannot love; only the Essence is capable of loving, and only when its demands are met will you love. We have suggested to you that the way to achieve this is through giving up the Personality's expectations of the experience, and you are yet scornful of this truth. Yet, it goes far deeper than this. When you strip down to the Old Soul's perceptions of others, that is, as a part of something — and make note of that "a part" — only a minute part of something greater that includes self. Only when you become willing to part with your ultra-precious Identification [with Personality] will you glimpse the truth in this. [14 September 1974]

Refer to the chapter "Essence and Personality" for the complete essay on the difference between the two.

All of the following Q&A exchanges in this chapter are also explicit in the Michaels' use of "vulnerability" as equivalent to living in Essence rather than in Personality. They say it in different ways and in different contexts, but that is what "vulnerability" meant to the Michaels.

Jean: I feel open and vulnerable.

One of the most positive changes in you, Jean, has been your willingness to throw down barriers. Yes, knowing your Role and your philosophical Attitude has helped you in this.

Mallory: Workable vocabulary?

Perhaps a glossary is in order. Tonight, the word vulnerability could have been defined to the satisfaction and agreement reached to substitute another word for the secondary meaning.

As the goal of Agape or spiritual liberation entails ultimately becoming an Adept, the concept of telepathy should not be taken lightly. It is within the grasp of you and would require an enormous amount of predictability. When you meet with an Adept who is strongly telepathic and also totally vulnerable, you will understand this more fully, but it is not an unrealistic goal for the man Gene. [24 September 1974]

Refer to the chapters "Barriers", "Agape", "Liberation", "Adept and Master", and "Telepathy". An Adept has dropped the barriers, has liberated his consciousness, has surrendered to the open universe, lives in Agape, and thus has become telepathic.

We have spoken before about vulnerability. You all operate from the basis of insecurity in your Personalities, which all too often stops you from speaking what you perceive. This must come to an end. If there is any purpose to our being with you, you must cease this game of "If I tell him what I see, I might be wrong and he won't like me." This is not confrontation tactics, but merely accepting responsibility for your perceptions and having the strength of vulnerability to express the perceptions. [09 February 1975]

Refer to the chapters "Photography" and "Responsibility".

All moments of inexpressible joy are Essence experiences, and, of course, the Essence *is* the flow. It does not *glimpse* the flow — the Personality does that. What you can do is to put yourself into the [psychological] space where your Personality can glimpse this "beyond" realm and then, perhaps, end the conflict [between Personality and Essence]. We do not see any of you here present operating from Essence in this lifetime unless radical change occurs. What we do see is rather steady seeking for what you have already momentarily

glimpsed. For the want of a better term, let us call what we are discussing the spiritual experience — in other words, you must see God. Then you must see the God that dwells within and realize that they are one in the same. Vulnerability is the necessary catalyst. [21 November 1976]

“Go with the flow” is another aphorism for what the Michaels called being “vulnerable”, that is, yielding or surrendering to Essence. There is the inner Essence, and there is also the outer “universe”; the spiritual path is more about going with the flow of Essence.

In spite of the myth of childhood happiness, the child on the Physical Plane is in the least enviable spot in the universe. He is at the mercy of everything and everybody, and he knows it. He chooses to block this knowledge and does this well. So well, in fact, that any thought of going back or regressing to that state appalls the average adult. Abandoning oneself to play, then, is quite a scary fate, and not one easily accomplished once the cherished adult status is achieved. We have never known of an adult who has achieved spiritual enlightenment. Who is more vulnerable than a child? The man Eric Berne knew this when he called the Intellectual Center “the adult,” the Moving Center “the parent” and the Emotional Center “the child”. The Moving Center is concerned with right action, the Intellectual Center with right thought — where, then, is there room for love? [12 December 1976]

If you are not familiar with transactional analysis, refer to >https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eric_Berne< and read his book *Games People Play*. I found the book rather enlightening when I read it in my twenties. Now I recognize it as a thorough exposition on appropriate use of Centers, not unlike what we find in the Michaelian teachings.

In an earlier passage, the child was said to be vulnerable to cultural imprinting, and this was not a good thing. Here the child is said to be “vulnerable” to play and to happiness in the Emotional Center, and this is a good thing that adults would do well to emulate. This reminds me of another passage reviewed above, where there was said to be “vulnerability”, through the Emotional Center, to the Astral Plane. Similar positive comments are found in the chapter “Emotional Center”, because the Michaels recommended that the original Michaelian group members were trapped in their Intellectual Centers, and it would be Good Work for them to cultivate their Emotional Centers.

Surrender is perhaps the most difficult task before you, and the stakes are high if you wish to achieve what you set out to do. Therefore, many are likely to act out an experience that is not real. All of you here present have more difficulty with the concept of vulnerability and surrender than any other aspect of spiritual training. All of you are escaping the fear of poverty and degradation that the early decades of your lives instilled in you.

Many in the group were born in the 1920s, 1930s, and 1940s, so they were negatively affected by the Great Depression and World War II. This instilled in their Personality a need to be in control, rather than to “Let go and let God”, as they like to say in some metaphysical circles.

Refer to the chapter “Surrender” for the essay that discusses that synonym for vulnerability. Refer again to the chapter “Culture” for more information about what one should not surrender to if it is contrary to Essence. Refer to the chapter “Asceticism and Austerity” for more information about the middle path of not having too much poverty and not having too much prosperity. Refer to the chapter “Path — Spiritual” to get a fuller accounting of what vulnerability to Essence entails.

Concluding Comments on Vulnerability

As with so many components of the Michaelian teachings, there is a Positive Pole of Vulnerability, and there is a Negative Pole, and the difference depends on what one is vulnerable to. In the Negative Pole, the Personality yields/surrenders to negativity; in the Positive Pole, the Personality yields/surrenders to positivity, otherwise known as Essence.





WILL

This chapter is the product of a search for the word “will” in the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group channeling sessions, **and other words with a similar meaning**. I have added some commentary, which consists of my analysis and synthesis of the quotations. Obviously, this word does not represent a significant component of the Michaelian teachings, but even so, the word appears often enough that it seems to me that students can benefit from seeing all of those instances documented and commented on in a chapter of this *Study Papers* book. Furthermore, the word is related to a number of other components of the Michaelian teachings that are considered to be more significant; these will be noted in the commentary on the instances of the word and its contexts. Basically and briefly, the Michaels recommended to the original Michaelian group members that they

The word “**template**” is [not] capitalized in this chapter [and/or] other chapters of this *Study Papers* book because it has [no/a] special meaning in the Michaelian teachings; it is [not] a Michaelian jargon word that needs a definition [apart from its] / [because it has no] use in the common vernacular. **One might therefore wonder why a discussion of it is even included in this book. One answer is that it is just a Scholar–Cast Artisan thing to do: I study the Michaelian teachings documents and I write about them and I want to be thorough. Another answer is that will issues are pervasive in human psychology and sociology,** the subject came up in the original Michaelian group numerous times, some interesting things were said about it, and it might be helpful for Michaelian students to have the answers conveniently collected all in one place.

Definition of Will

So what is meant by will? The online Merriam Webster dictionary definition is:

Will per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

The following extracts from original Michaelian group transcriptions are Q&A exchanges, where an original Michaelian group member asks a question (or makes a comment), and the Michaels provide an answer. This is [not] a subject that would benefit by division into subcategories, as some subjects do. These extracts are presented in the chronological order in which they were given, even though this is not a subject where there was a development or evolution of a specific revelation of a facet of the Michaelian teachings, as was often the case with the original Michaelian group. As is my custom, I often provide some explanatory comments following the question or answer. Underlined words in the Michaels’ answers are my emphasis, to draw attention to what it is that I comment on. Sometimes I embed words or phrases [in brackets] that I believe help to clarify the question or the answer.

Concluding Comments on Will

In Theosophy, “Will” is a name given to the first emanation, and in terms of Personality it is associated with what we in the Michaelian teachings refer to as King...





⑦ WISDOM

This chapter is the product of a search for the word “wisdom” and its variants in the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group channeling sessions. This word does not represent a significant component of the Michaelian teachings. However, there are good reasons to discuss the subject in this *Study Papers* book: 1) the subject came up numerous times during the original Michaelian group; 2) some interesting things were said about the subject; 3) the subject is related to a number of other components of the Michaelian teachings that are considered to be significant; 4) students can presumably benefit from having the mentions conveniently collected and commented all in one place; 5) wisdom issues are pervasive in human psychology and sociology and spirituality — subjects covered extensively in this book — so it behooves us to have a working knowledge of it.

The word “wisdom” and its derivatives are not capitalized in this chapter or other chapters of this *Study Papers* book because they have no special meaning in the Michaelian teachings; they are not Michaelian jargon words that needs a definition apart from their use in the common vernacular.

Chapters somewhat related to this chapter are “Knowledge as Gnosis”, “Experience”, “Understanding”, “Insight”, “Judgment”, and “Intuition”.

This chapter is one of many in this book that focuses on a psychological component of the Michaelian teachings as found in original Michaelian group transcriptions, rather than on a doctrinal or spiritual component. A psychological component is usually either a positive to be cultivated or a negative to be mitigated. As we will see, the Michaels tell us that wisdom is a positive to be cultivated. The Michaelian version of psychology is not to be confused with the popular psychology of the self-improvement movement, those that do not have a spiritual core or perspective. Rather, the Michaelian psychotherapeutic path (aimed at improving psychological health) is a beneficial precursor to the spiritual path (aimed at improving soul health). To skip the former but attempt the latter is referred to as “spiritual bypassing”. This is discussed at length on such websites as https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spiritual_bypass. To skip mitigating one’s psychological issues and attempt to go straight to enlightenment usually proves to be problematic.

Basically and briefly, the Michaels were not strongly focused on increasing the virtue of wisdom in their students. They were not focused on foolishness either because there was no discussion of that vice during the original Michaelian group. Perhaps this was because original Michaelian group members were almost entirely older souls, well-educated professionals to boot, and they did not need to be instructed on mitigating foolishness and maximizing wisdom.

Definitions of Wisdom

So what is meant by wisdom? Wikipedia provides an introduction and a definition, quoted as follows:

Wisdom, sapience, or sagacity is the ability to contemplate and act productively using knowledge, experience, understanding, common sense, and insight. Wisdom is associated with attributes such as unbiased judgment, compassion, experiential self-knowledge, self-transcendence and non-attachment, and virtues such as ethics and benevolence.

Wisdom has been defined in many different ways, including several distinct approaches to assess the characteristics attributed to wisdom.

The Oxford English Dictionary defines wisdom as “Capacity of judging rightly in matters relating to life and conduct; soundness of judgment in the choice of means and ends; sometimes, less strictly, sound sense, esp. in practical affairs: opp. to folly;” also “Knowledge (especially of a high or abstruse kind); enlightenment, learning, erudition.” Charles Haddon Spurgeon defined wisdom as “the right use of knowledge”. Robert I. Sutton and Andrew Hargadon defined the “attitude of wisdom” as “acting with knowledge while doubting what one

knows". In social and psychological sciences, several distinct approaches to wisdom exist, with major advances made in the last two decades with respect to operationalization and measurement of wisdom as a psychological construct. Wisdom is the capacity to have foreknowledge of something, to know the consequences (both positive and negative) of all the available course of actions, and to yield or take the options with the most advantage either for present or future implication. [<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wisdom> — retrieved 08 February 2023]

Thereafter follow discussions of wisdom in terms of mythology, history, education, psychology, and religion. The gist of that discussion is that wisdom is a virtue well worth cultivating, because it can be fostered; many families and tribes and cultures attempt to pass their accumulated knowledge, understanding, and wisdom down from one generation to the next. Why learn not to be foolish the hard way when you can learn to be wise the easy way?

I see no reason to suggest that the Michaels' understanding of wisdom is any different from the Wikipedia definitions and descriptions.

Wisdom per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

The following extracts from original Michaelian group transcriptions are Q&A exchanges, where an original Michaelian group member asks a question (or makes a comment), and the Michaels provide an answer. These extracts are presented in the chronological order in which they were given. As is my custom, I often provide some explanatory comments following the question or answer. Underlined words in the Michaels' answers are my emphasis, to draw attention to what it is that I comment on. Sometimes I embed words or phrases [in brackets] that I believe help to clarify the question or the answer.

As part of the revelation about Soul Ages early in the story arc of the original Michaelian group, the Michaels made a connection of wisdom to Old Souls:

Old Souls have a direct, penetrating stare absent in earlier Cycles. Wisdom is reflected there. [18 September 1973]

As the saying goes, "The eyes are the window to the soul." Wisdom is one of the virtues that naturally accumulates during the story arc of reincarnation, culminating in the Old Soul. Indeed the nature of the Old Soul Age is to be philosophical, and philosophy literally means "love of wisdom".

Alice: One more question, which my daughter Cheryl requested me to ask: Will EST, which she is in the process of experiencing, help her to burn Karmic Ribbons?

Something like Erhard Sensitivity Training [EST] does not burn Ribbons, but the experience could conceivably put her in touch with untapped inner resources that would enable her to make wise choices in the future and thus burn the Ribbons.

Sarah: Wanted to know if children could be helped by EST?

The children would benefit enormously.

Sarah: That's the first he's ever said that any of us would benefit. When I offered to send [my daughter] Dorothy to the special children's EST, she began to cry.

The children do not always make wise choices. [17 October 1973]

Refer to the chapter "EST" to learn about that self-help psychology seminar. Cheryl was a Young Soul, and Dorothy was a tween-age child. As such, both of them would benefit by learning wisdom from their elders — elders both in terms of Soul Age and chronological age. Older souls and older people have more wisdom inherent, so less instruction about wisdom is needed.

[Think of] the wiser young adult in [thinking about] the Old Souls. [20 October 1973]

Older souls are often said to be "wise beyond their years"; it is as if they have been adults all their lives. I have noticed that recognition of wise Old Soul children is not uncommon in the zeitgeist, even among people who have no belief in reincarnation.

A month after the connection of wisdom with Soul Ages was revealed, the Roles were revealed. Then, the Michaels associated wisdom with Sages:

The true Sage brings wisdom. [23 October 1973]

Both the Old Soul Age and the Sage Role are what I call “Aspects” of what I call the “Synthesis Process” (as are Acceptance, Power, Greed, Idealist, and Higher Intellectual), aka Cardinal Expression. It is as if these two types have accumulated knowledge and understanding and are able to apply it effortlessly and consistently.

Sages [bring] innate wisdom and sagacity. [~25 October 1973]

That was stated in an undated session dedicated to describing the Roles.

Even very foolish people can learn hard lessons and turn things around in a subsequent lifetime:

[After his death,] The Fragment that was Adolph Hitler saw the unique possibility to burn the Ribbons incurred in Germany. We feel that this was a wise choice.

Shirley: What about soldiers killed in war who were against the war? Do they come back right away?

No, that is usually a definite [Karmic] Ribbon and a life role they chose. The only exception would be the nuclear devastation in Japan. Most of these were reborn. Also, those who died in the concentration camps were not all by choice — or rather, unwise choices were made. [01 November 1973]

Souls between lifetimes are wiser than their incarnate personality, but they are not infinitely wise. It does not say so here, and the Michaels do not dwell upon the subject, but other sources that discuss life between lives often mention that younger souls need plenty of guidance to make wise choices for an impending incarnation, whereas older souls do not need as much guidance.

Some Adepts do this [unnatural longevity]. Bodies die; the organic constituents break down eventually, regardless of the skill of the Adept. It is wiser to change the body. [20 December 1973]

Adepts are said to have special powers, but they still have things to learn in the realm of wisdom; refer to the chapter “Adepts and Masters”. Just because you *can* do something does not mean that you *should*, and wisdom tells you the difference. Those who are less advanced along the spectrum of wisdom often do things just because they can — because they simply do not know any better. People learn to be wise by first being foolish and doing stupid stuff; e.g. Adolph Hitler (see above).

We would speak to you of the wisdom that comes to us from the plane beyond and yet interpenetrating this one. [03 February 1974]

I repeat: people and beings who are further along the spectrum of maturity have much to offer those who are not as far along the foolish-wise spectrum, incarnate and in between incarnations and beyond incarnation.

Foolishness is likely to be revealed in two important and pervasive realms of our lives, namely money and relationships:

We discussed the possibility of having a minimum fee to cover the cost of duplicating transcripts of the meetings. We also need a name in order to incorporate. There are many advantages to incorporating. When there is \$300 in the treasury, we can incorporate.

We definitely agree that the commitment is necessary, but would see you consider some other than financial for some students. We would see a goods-for-service economy emerging within this group and its extensions. We would have you consider services rendered as an alternative for those who are unable to pay. We agree that this teaching is far from free, but we do not see money necessarily as the price. We would warn you to be extremely cautious in implementing the service angle. For instance, you must make those in Acceptance [in the Negative Pole of –Ingratiation] Photograph themselves in accepting more than they wish from False Personality, or those in Submission [in the Negative Pole of –Subservience] submitting to those in Dominance. This would be one way of starting the process of Photographing. We would prefer that you not drop this, as the man Robert [Burton] was wise in this. [08 February 1974]

Robert was an Old Soul King, a wise leader by nature. Refer to the chapter “Photography” for a discussion of a recommended procedure whereby one person can impart their wise insights to another person. Some people with weaker Overleaves have a tendency to defer to people who have stronger Overleaves, whereas it is wise to defer to people who are even wiser, not just stronger. A truly wise person will intuitively know how to navigate and negotiate with a foolish but stronger person.

Mallory: I would be interested if Michael could comment on a child my sister described seeing. She said to the mother that the child was wise — a year old baby.

This little one is a final [Seventh] Level Old Sage.

Both Artisan and Sage approach life artistically and with much innovation and originality, sometimes whimsically, the Artisan manually and the Sage verbally, the Artisan through instinct and the Sage through innate wisdom. [20 February 1974]

It does not say so there, but Roles other than Sage typically accrue wisdom over many lifetimes, but it is not their focus and forte as it is with Sages.

The foolishness–wisdom spectrum applies to not just Roles and Ages, but to entire cultures ... and planets:

Comment: We had then to do it — using up resources, create pollution, etc.?

We did not say that. This same process has been effected more wisely on other worlds. [22 May 1974]

One wonders why humans are more foolish regarding planetary resources than “Creatures of Reason” (refer to the chapter by that name) on other planets. One human cognitive bias (among many) is to discount the future negative impact of present negative behavior. By that I mean, the further in the future the harmful results manifest, the less concern people have about doing the wrong thing now. Exploitation and pollution and other abuses of the natural environment are subject to that bias. It might not be so obvious in the short run, but such abuses are unwise because they are obviously harmful to humans as well as to other life forms in the long run. Shortsightedness is inherently foolish; farsightedness is inherently wise.

Doing foolish stuff in the short run develops wisdom in the long run, but that is not the only path to wisdom:

... This [native American] chief was unique in that he had a white woman for a wife, a child stolen in a raid. He was wise in the ways of the white man, and he sensed your very real danger.... [19 June 1974]

Unusual experiences of any kind provide a depth and breadth of wisdom that might not otherwise develop.

Some seminars intentionally offer unusual, perhaps even extreme, experiences:

Louise asked Michael to comment about the upcoming EST trip for her.

Yes, we would consider this a wise move and a growth experience. [24 September 1974]

Refer to the chapter “EST — Erhard Seminars Training”. The Michaels were not averse to their students seeking wisdom outside of their own teaching. Breakthroughs to greater wisdom can be had when one pursues experiences outside of one’s comfort zone.

There are reasonable cautions that one should have regarding the type of person to look to for wisdom:

James told us about a man who came to California from Illinois, who is a psychic. He has a benefactor, who wants to expose him to the people. He gave James a reading and felt the information was embellished by his Personality.

We would have to say that this man’s Chief Feature stands in the way of any communication with other than his own subconscious storehouse of knowledge. However, this being a Mature Soul, [he] has quite a storehouse [of knowledge], and does have much tapable psychic energy of an intuitive nature. He will, for the most, tell you what you wish to know, and many times this can accelerate a wise, spontaneous move; but as for actually seeing the open alternatives, we would have to say that he does not.

An abundance of knowledge is often necessary, but not always sufficient, to manifest wisdom. Besides having knowledge, it also helps to be intuitive, and also to be psychic, as it says there; refer to chapters “Knowledge as Gnosis”, “Intuition”, “Paranormal, The”, and “Psychic Energy” for more about those adjuncts to wisdom.

The source [Michael] is one with both wisdom and humor at its disposal. [31 January 1975]

These two virtues are not very far apart, especially in Sages, although it does not say that there; refer to the chapter “Fun — Humor — Laughter — Levity— Play”.

Maybe we set up Overleaf Sequences for the first half of our lives and Essence Sequences for the last part of it — when we are older and wiser. [04 November 1977]

To some extent, Wisdom comes with age, but more so wisdom comes from doing foolish things.

Speaking of doing foolish things, consider the role of Karma in learning the hard way:

(We feel the teacher [Michael] slipped the following information in for Leslie. Earlier, we had been talking about a Karma she is currently dealing with).

The Karma is almost burnt. Do not deny that [something] negative can be the most impeccable thing to do. The Karma does not have to be positive to burn. Aside from the present, the Personalities involved in this teaching have not receded from the frontal attack of life. The choices have been wise in each case as the Law [of Karma] decrees. [07 November 1977]

It can perhaps be said that the entire function of Karma is to learn wisdom in the long run, by doing foolish things in the short run; refer to the chapter “Karma”.

Concluding Comments on Wisdom

It seems a bit strange to me that the Michaels did not pay more attention to wisdom in their teaching. My surmise is that this might be so because wisdom is a natural byproduct of the other virtues that are cultivated and focused on in their teaching. On the other hand, if a Michaelian student wants to learn more about wisdom, then there are resources outside the Michaelian teachings, such as the Wikipedia article quoted at the beginning of this chapter.





WORK, THE

Some spiritual groups have an intense and focused program for spiritual development, and they often refer to their project as The Work. This was the case with the Gurdjieffian teachings, which the founding members of the original Michaelian group had participated in. The Michaels adopted and adapted this term for the component of their teaching that provided tools for spiritual growth. The Michaels continued to use the word in what I refer to as the second Michaelian group, which followed after the original Michaelian group, but with different people. Because it has a special meaning and application, different from the use of the word in the common vernacular, I capitalize it as a Michaelian teachings jargon word throughout this *Study Papers* book.

As with many other jargon terms, this is another one of those concepts that has not survived in the Michaelian teachings communities that have existed subsequent to the original Michaelian group, except for the second Michaelian group. It is not much found in *Messages from Michael*, or in the Briggs channeling sessions in the early 1980s, or in the Van Hulle channeling sessions from the mid-1980s onward. Most likely, this omission happened because subsequent Michaelian teachings groups were not familiar with the Gurdjieffian teachings. Nor were they familiar with the complete original Michaelian group session transcriptions, because those only became available in the mid-1990s. The other likely reason for this omission is that subsequent Michaelian teachings communities rarely ventured beyond psychotherapy into the kind of spiritual Work that the original Michaelian group was focused on. Nevertheless, now that we have the near-complete set of original Michaelian group transcriptions, unexpurgated by Yarbrow, I feel and believe that a complete accounting of the original Michaelian group requires a thorough discussion of the concept of Work.

The chapter “Strangers” covers a notion that had some prominence in the second Michaelian group, namely that people should not attempt to do their focused spiritual Work with “Strangers”, other people who are not kindred or friended souls on the Michaelian path.

The first section provides some historical background on the use of the term in the Gurdjieffian teachings, and the second section discusses the instances of the occurrence of the word during the original Michaelian group.

The Work per Gurdjieff

The Work per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

Work per the Second Michaelian Group

This section supplements the two previous sections, which are about the usage of that term in the Gurdjieffian teachings, and its use during the original Michaelian group.

The word *Work* occurs repeatedly in the second Michaelian group sessions, referring to focus on components of Essence’s plans for the lifetime, things such as the Life Task, Agreements, Sequences, and burning Karmic Ribbons. These concepts were introduced in the original Michaelian group, though not emphasized as much as here in the second Michaelian group.

Many spiritual teachings refer to their spiritual path as Work, including the Gurdjieffian teachings, with which the founding members of the original Michaelian group were familiar. The original Michaelian group had many kindred souls in it, and they were focused on doing their spiritual Work. Then the group disbanded after a mere two years of existence, although a few core group members continued to meet occasionally for another three years.

The second Michaelian group met less often than the original group. However, it lasted for about seven years and also consisted of some kindred souls intent on doing their spiritual Work together. One of its members, Joel, was involved in his music career with some kindred souls outside of the second Michaelian group. His music buddies were not necessarily conscious participants in spiritual Work on a spiritual Path; of course, it happened anyway. This is the way it goes in life: it makes the spiritual Path easier to do one's spiritual Work with awareness of what is going on. The entirety of the Michaelian teachings serves this purpose.

One of the first instances of the use of *Work* in the second Michaelian group transcriptions introduces the concept of Wrong Work as well as Good Work:

The Essence, or the 'Self', is perfect in an imperfect universe. The desires of the Self are the desires that you as a Student on the [spiritual] path should hearken to and be going to.

Nothing that you wish to do now is Wrong Work for you. The only Wrong Work that you are doing now is inserting artificial barriers. The thoughts are not Wrong Work. It is the endless consideration or analysis that makes the Work wrong. The only obligation that you have to others on the Physical Plane is that you do no harm.

Know that the Self will not steer you onto the crooked path. The flashes of insight that you are now experiencing are potentially Good Work, depending upon how you interpret them. If you use them to allow for growth and expansion, then they are Good Work. If you are called to another location [to live and work], it would be a strong call and it should come from Essence and not from the Personality, which is bored with its lot. Essence will call you to those places where the Work is, and if you allow it to happen, the call will be strong. [16 January 1983]

Essence — or the "higher self" — prompts the Student to Good Work, whereas Personality — or the "lower self" — often prompts the Student to Wrong Work. The excerpt above lists some examples of both.

Generally speaking, the people one chooses to work closely with should be guided by Essence rather than Personality for people doing their Work on a conscious spiritual path. Romantic relationships are another arena in which Bad and Good Work are very much in evidence:

That relationship, Elizabeth, was not Wrong Work. It was a shifting of goals, both spiritual and physical, that ended it then. This was a natural Vectoring of events, and because it caused a realization crisis in you it was rather Good Work. [16 January 1983]

Generally speaking, a romantic relationship should be driven by Essence rather than Personality for people doing their Work on a conscious spiritual path.

And another major arena with the potential for both Bad and Good Work is in one's geographical location:

As long as you keep in mind that all of your contacts will not come to you [in that location] and keep your ear to the ground, then their being here would not be Bad Work. The only Bad Work for you, Joel, is the frustration that you allow yourself to wallow in periodically. We see you battling this, and we are constrained to show you that options exist. The questions here are linear ones, yes. The relief would be tension relief [for the Personality] rather than spiritual progress [for Essence]. Movement in a linear field is not Wrong Work if it is done in a positive mode. On the other hand, remaining in place will give you Good Work in learning to control impulsive behavior, for this [impulsive behavior] will lose the battle. [16 January 1983]

It helps to do Good work if you live where your kindred souls live, and as stated above, "Essence will call you to those places where the Work is." Mere Personality will not necessarily lead one to the best location for Essence Work.

As stated above, one of the Work practices is to mitigate the influence of the Personality and yield to the influence of Essence, and as stated below, it helps to mitigate that factor of the Personality known as the Chief Feature:

Insofar as the Fragments here present, we will say that the Fragment Joel continue to mirror his inner frustrations, with Impatience. This Feature comes up almost as strong as prior to beginning the Work. With patience, the answers will appear not by any miraculous powers, but through a quieting of the negative features, which we call Chief Features. All of you have a Chief Feature that rules you, but in addition to this, all of you have the other negative propensities in varying degree. As you begin to Work on vanquishing the Chief Feature, a negative feature that has been dormant will arise to take its place. You must be on guard for the appearance of a new Chief Feature or you will find yourself in its thrall, and you will have a new set of Work for you. [27 February 1983]

Of course, there is much more to the Work than mitigating the Chief Feature. There is tapping into the parts of the psyche beyond the conscious Personality, which is governed by ALL of the Overleaves:

You see, all of you here present brought to this present life an enormous pool of experience [because you are older souls], and this pool is yours to use. Through the Work, you will learn to pull it out of what you call the "subconscious." This, of course, is a misnomer, for it is far more conscious than any of you Fragments. It was taught by the man Georges Gurdjieff that man is asleep, and we also teach that man is only dimly conscious until he or she becomes a part of the Work and begins to understand the Overleaves and how they govern the actions of Fragments on the Physical Plane. [27 February 1983]

The major Work regarding the Overleaves is to recognize and avoid the Negative Poles, and consciously choose to work from the Positive Poles:

Of course, the growth that Elizabeth terms "spiritual" is the goal of which this Teaching speaks. But in order to pursue this goal to any degree of success, the Fragment must first divest itself of the Negative Poles of the Overleaves, and begin Work from the Positive Poles. [27 February 1983]

Besides Work on oneself on a spiritual path, mitigating Chief Features and Negative Poles, there is Work with others, usually by Agreements made by Fragments between lifetimes:

Usually, all of the Agreements that Fragments make are compatible or there would be no chance for the Work. The task that you speak of with the Fragment Mstislav is not incompatible with working with the Fragment Elizabeth. Here it is important to understand that with the Student Elizabeth, there are many Physical Plane considerations that stand in her way, and it is she who must resolve these, and decide what to pursue: her own growth or supervise the lives of others. When she reaches this decision, then she can either abdicate her Agreements or go on with the Work. Work toward growth is never easy on the Physical Plane. [10 April 1983]

One must Recognize one's kindred souls and Agreements to Work with them, then acknowledge them, and then do the Work of the Agreement:

There have been past [life] associations here, but not close such as brothers in the flesh or lovers, but associates, yes. Besides which, here the Body Types attract. But there was a Recognition here for both Fragments, and this is Good Work when the Recognition is acknowledged. Of course, this Recognition can be acknowledged other than verbally, but it is more concise if there is an understanding made on the Physical Plane level. Too many acknowledgments are made at deeper levels [only] and Students are perplexed as to whether the other Fragment feels the bond. [07 May 1983]

Besides Body Types, Recognition of soul connections, mitigation of Chief Features and Negative Poles, other specifics of the Michaelian teachings are geared for promoting the Work. Among them is an understanding of the Internal Monads:

You, Joel, must now decide whether you wish to Work on your [Fourth] Monad or not, for the doors are wide open. [10 May 1983]

A few other clues about fostering one's Work are mentioned further on in this same session, such as setting aside the Overleaves in order to work from deeper levels, in an orderly fashion, even if it means changing the environment:

Ordinarily, Fragments on the Physical Plane allow their Overleaves to direct their lives. Now we are asking Students to set aside their Overleaves or, at least, the Negative Poles, and work from deeper levels. This process is not for you alone, but for all Students.... Elizabeth can decide to pursue the Work and Paths can only be achieved through an orderly process. Now she is scattered and there is much Negative Pole activity here. This Fragment will not rise above her woes unless she makes a change of environment. Even if this is only temporary, she must make it change in order to make the larger change. [07 May 1983]

Finally and fittingly, here is a summary of the concept of Work in the Michaelian teachings:

We would wish to point out a hazard that is often faced on the Physical Plane. That is, that once an Agreement or Monad or Karmic association is completed, it is often difficult for the Fragments involved to accept that the Work is done and now the paths diverge. [Undated #2]

Concluding Comments on the Work





⑥ YOGA

Certainly one of the most pervasive quasi-religious body-heart-mind-spirit practices in the world today is that of yoga. Its origin appears to have occurred in south Asia in ancient times (during the so-called “Axial” period, at the same time as numerous other religious and philosophical traditions), and it spread from there over the last two-and-a-half millennia. It did not go unnoticed in the original Michaelian group. This chapter is simply the product of a search for the word “yoga” in the transcriptions of the original Michaelian group channeling sessions. I have added some commentary, which consists of my analysis and synthesis of the quotations.

Obviously, this word does not represent a significant component of the Michaelian teachings, but even so, the word appears often enough that it seems to me that students can benefit from seeing all of those instances documented and commented on in a chapter of this *Study Papers* book. Furthermore, the word is related to a number of other components of the Michaelian teachings that are considered to be more significant; these will be noted in the commentary on the instances of the word and its contexts. Basically and briefly, the Michaels specifically recommended various yogic practices to certain original Michaelian group members. We will also see that various components of the Michaelian teachings correlate with various components of various kinds of yoga. Thus, when the Michaels say that their teaching is “The Synthesis” (refer to the chapter by that name) of other teachings, yoga appears to be one of them.

The word “yoga” is not capitalized in this chapter or other chapters of this *Study Papers* book because it has no special meaning in the Michaelian teachings; it is not a Michaelian jargon word that needs a definition apart from its use in the common vernacular. One might therefore wonder why it is even included in this book. One answer is that it is just a Scholar–Cast Artisan thing to do: I study the Michaelian teachings documents and I write about them and I want to be thorough. Another answer is that the subject came up in the original Michaelian group numerous times, some interesting things were said about it, and it might be helpful for Michaelian students to have the answers conveniently collected all in one place.

Definition and History of Yoga

The yoga of the Occidental world that you might be familiar with was adopted and adapted from the Oriental world, from forms that you might not be familiar with. Per Wikipedia:

Yoga (Sanskrit: lit. ‘yoke’ or ‘union’) is a group of physical, [emotional,] mental, and spiritual practices or disciplines which originated in ancient India and aim to control (yoke) and still the mind [and the emotions and the body], recognizing a detached witness-consciousness untouched by the mind (*Chitta*) and mundane suffering (*Duḥkha*). There is a wide variety of schools of yoga, practices, and goals in Hinduism, Buddhism, and Jainism, and traditional and modern yoga is practiced worldwide....

Yoga is first mentioned in the Rigveda, and is referred to in a number of the Upanishads. The first known appearance of the word “yoga” with the same meaning as the modern term is in the Katha Upanishad, which was probably composed between the fifth and third centuries BCE. Yoga continued to develop as a systematic study and practice during the fifth and sixth centuries BCE in ancient India’s ascetic and *Śramaṇa* movements. The most comprehensive text on Yoga, the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali, date to the early centuries of the Common Era; Yoga philosophy became known as one of the six orthodox philosophical schools (*Darśanas*) of Hinduism in the second half of the first millennium CE. Hatha yoga texts began to emerge between the ninth and 11th centuries, originating in tantra.

The term “yoga” in the Western world often denotes a modern form of Hatha yoga and a posture-based physical fitness, stress-relief, and relaxation technique, consisting largely of the asanas; this differs from traditional yoga, which focuses on meditation and release from worldly attachments. It was introduced by gurus from India after the success of Swami Vivekananda’s adaptation of yoga without asanas in the late 19th

and early 20th centuries. Vivekananda introduced the Yoga Sutras to the West, and they became prominent after the 20th-century success of hatha yoga. [<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yoga> — retrieved 08 November 2022]

This definition and description of yoga as ‘control’ and ‘practice’ reminds me of what is said in the chapter “Discipline”. Besides being a bodywork modality, note that yoga is also a “study” and a “philosophy”, so keep in mind that there is more to it than just bodily contortions and movements.

Gurdjieff’s “Fourth Way” — a Synthesis of Yoga

It is relevant to note here that Gurdjieff referred to his teaching as the “Fourth Way” because he regarded his teaching as the combination of three kinds of yoga that he learned about in his travels in the Orient. The three kinds referred to work on the so-called ‘lower’ Centers: 1) the Instinctive–Moving Center, 2) the Emotional Center, and 3) the Intellectual Center. The application of the disciplines that resulted in the proper functioning of these three Centers made one into a “Balanced Man” — refer to the chapter by that name. Even Wikipedia has an article on the Fourth Way, which says:

The Fourth Way is an approach to self-development developed by George Gurdjieff over years of travel in the East (c. 1890 – 1912). It combines and harmonizes what he saw as three established traditional “ways” or “schools” [or “lifestyles”]: those of the body, the emotions, and the mind, or of fakirs, monks, and yogis, respectively.

Gurdjieff taught that traditional paths to spiritual enlightenment followed one of three ways:

[1] The Way of the Fakir [Physiology Center and Moving Center]

The Fakir works to obtain mastery of the attention (self-mastery) through struggles with [controlling] the physical body involving difficult physical exercises and postures.

As it says above, Work on the three Ordinal Centers correlate with the Work of “fakirs, monks, and yogis”, but it seems to me that some specific types of yoga are also aimed at Work on specific Centers. This description of “the way of the Fakir” appears to me to be most similar to what is referred to as Hatha Yoga and Karma Yoga:

Haṭha yoga is a branch of yoga which uses physical techniques to try to preserve and channel the vital force or energy. The Sanskrit word ... literally means “force”, alluding to a system of physical techniques.... Some of the early haṭha yoga texts (11th-13th c.) describe methods to raise and conserve bindu (vital force, that is, semen, and in women rajas – menstrual fluid). This was seen as the physical essence of life that was constantly dripping down from the head and being lost. Two early Haṭha yoga techniques sought to either physically reverse this process of dripping using gravity to trap the bindhu by inverted postures like viparītakaraṇī, or force bindu upwards through the central channel by directing the breath flow into the centre channel using mudras (yogic seals, not to be confused with hand mudras, which are gestures).... Haṭha yoga’s components include Shatkarmas (purifications), Asanas (postures), Mudras (manipulations of vital energy), Pranayama (breath control). [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hatha_yoga — retrieved 18 December 2022]

From the description above, I would say that hatha yoga involves Work on the physiology of the body, hence what I refer to as the “Physiology Center”, which provides a foundation for the seven psychological Centers. From the description below, I would say that karma yoga involves Work on what the Moving Center does with the physical body in the world, namely that it does good works:

Karma yoga (Sanskrit: also called Karma marga, is one of the four classical spiritual paths in Hinduism, one based on the “yoga of action”.... To a karma yogi, right action is a form of prayer.... Of the classical paths to spiritual liberation in Hinduism, karma yoga is the path of unselfish action. It teaches that a spiritual seeker should act according to dharma, without being attached to the fruits or personal consequences. Karma Yoga, states the Bhagavad Gita, purifies the mind. It leads one to consider dharmā of work, and the work according to one’s dharma, doing god’s work and in that sense becoming and being “like unto god Krishna” in every moment of one’s life. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Karma_yoga — retrieved 08 November 2022]

Gurdjieff called the lowest Center the “Instinctive–Moving” Center, but I prefer to separate them as hatha and karma yoga seem to do, into Physiology and Moving. The distinctions between the Physiology Center and the Moving Center and the Instinctive (aka Impulse) Center are discussed at length in Chapter 4F, “Instinctive Center”, in Part Four of my book *A History of the Overleaf Chart*.

Let us return to the Wikipedia article on Gurdjieff’s Fourth Way:

[2] The Way of the Monk [Emotional Center]

The Monk works to obtain the same mastery of the attention (self-mastery) through struggle with [controlling] the affections, in the domain, as we say, of the heart, which has been emphasized in the west, and come to be known as the way of faith due to its practice particularly in Catholicism.

This description of the “way of the Monk” appears to me to have some similarity to another type of yoga, specifically what is referred to as Bhakti Yoga:

Bhakti yoga is often called the yoga of love or the path of devotion. Nubia Teixeira is a well-known Bhakti yoga teacher and the author of *Yoga and the Art of Mudras*. Teixeira describes the Bhakti yoga path as “different practices that support one’s heart to express love in any and many different devotional ways.” The word “bhakti” comes from the root “bhaj”, which means “to pray” or “to share”. While there can be a heavy focus toward specific deities or the Divine, depending on your lineage, many modern scholars and teachers now explain Bhakti yoga much more globally. They consider it the practice of seeking unconditional loving for everyone and everything. [<https://www.healthline.com/health/fitness/bhakti-yoga> — retrieved 08 November 2022]

Let us return to the Wikipedia article on Gurdjieff’s Fourth Way:

[3] The Way of the Yogi [Intellectual Center]

The Yogi works to obtain the same mastery of the attention (as before: ‘self mastery’) through struggle with [controlling] mental habits and capabilities.

It seems to me that the various types of yoga emphasize one or another of the Centers, but they ultimately involve improvement of the Intellectual Center, because the Intellectual Center is higher than, and is fed by, improvement in the other Ordinal Centers: Emotional, Moving, and Physiology. This Gurdjieffian description of “the way of the Yogi” appears to me to have significant similarity to what is referred to as Raja Yoga:

Raja yoga is one of the four classical schools of yoga In Sanskrit, raja means “king” or “royal”, referring to the status of Raja yoga as a “royal path” or principal form of yoga. Traditionally, Raja yoga refers to both the goal of yoga and the method of attaining it. As such, it is also considered to be the state of peace and contentment that arises from sustained yoga and meditation practice. In essence, Raja yoga is the yoga of mind and body control, with a focus on meditation and energetics.... According to Raja yoga, the biggest obstacle to self-realization is a busy mind, in which excessive thinking, ego, craving, attachment, and a separate sense of self all contribute towards suffering. [<https://www.yogapedia.com/definition/5338/raja-yoga> — retrieved 08 November 2022]

Notice that this description of raja yoga, the alleged ‘king’ of yogas, emphasizes disciplines of the mind, or Intellectual Center, and this results in improvements in the other Ordinal Centers. This description reminds me of so-called “Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy”, a type of psychotherapy that recognizes the same sequence of the Ordinal Centers.

Let us return to the Wikipedia article on Gurdjieff’s Fourth Way:

Gurdjieff insisted that these paths, although they may intend to seek to produce a fully developed human being, tend to cultivate certain faculties at the expense of others. The goal of religion or spirituality was, in fact, to produce a well-balanced, responsive and sane human being capable of dealing with all eventualities that life may present. Gurdjieff therefore made it clear that it was necessary to cultivate a way that integrated and combined the traditional three ways.

Fourth Way

Gurdjieff said that his Fourth Way was a quicker means than the first three ways because it simultaneously combined work on all three centers rather than focusing on one. It could be followed by ordinary people in everyday life, requiring no retirement into the desert [to pursue the lifestyle of the fakir, the monk, or the yogi]. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fourth_Way — retrieved 08 November 2022]

This description of Gurdjieff’s “fourth way” reminds me of another one of the “classical” types of yoga, namely what is referred to as “jnana yoga”:

Jñāna yoga, also known as jñāna mārga, is one of the three classical paths (*margas*) for *moksha* (liberation) in Hinduism, which emphasizes the “path [lifestyle and/or discipline] of knowledge”, also known as the “path of self-realization”.... The jñāna yoga is a spiritual practice that pursues knowledge with questions such as “who am I, what am I” among others. The practitioner studies usually with the aid of a guru, meditates, reflects, and

reaches liberating insights on the nature of one's own Self (Atman, soul) and its relationship to the metaphysical concept called Brahman in Hinduism. The jñāna-mārga ideas are discussed in ancient and medieval era Hindu scriptures and texts such as the Upanishads and the Bhagavad Gita.

[>https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jnana_yoga< — retrieved 08 November 2022]

The reason that I correlate jnana yoga with the Fourth Way is that the fourth Center, the Neutral Assimilation Center — which in the Michaelian teachings is the Instinctive Center but which I prefer to call the “Impulse” Center — is the ‘gateway’ or ‘bridge’ between the (physical) Ordinal Centers and the (metaphysical) Cardinal Centers. The quotation mentions “insights” gained via jnana yoga; my names for the Poles of the Impulse Center indicate metaphysical insight, namely +Intuition and –Instinct. Another reason for my correlation is that the fourth Role, the Scholar, is also known for its pursuit of knowledge as a way of life.

The point to be emphasized here is that improvement of any one of the Ordinal Centers improves the function of the other Centers, whether this is done as a “way” or “path” aka lifestyle (fakir, monk, yogi), or done as a discipline aka yoga (hatha, karma, bhakti, raja, jnana).

Not only does one's Centering predispose a person to prefer one or another of the types of lifestyle or yoga, so also does one's Role. As a Scholar-Cast Artisan, I seem to prefer jnana yoga and raja yoga.

Yoga per the Original Michaelian Group Transcriptions

The following extracts from original Michaelian group transcriptions are Q&A exchanges, where an original Michaelian group member asks a question (or makes a comment), and the Michaels provide an answer. These extracts are presented in the chronological order in which they were given. As is my custom, I often provide some explanatory comments following the question or answer. Underlined words in the Michaels' answers are my emphasis, to draw attention to what it is that I comment on. Sometimes I embed words or phrases [in brackets] that I believe help to clarify the question or the answer.

Almost a month after the Michaels first appeared, the subject of yoga first appeared in the original Michaelian group transcriptions:

Christopher: What can I do to clear up the troubles with my body and get in tune with it more. (Christopher has suffered with asthma most of his life.) It's really hanging me up lately.

Structural Integration [Rolfing] would help; also yoga — not the easy asanas, the hard ones. [08 September 1973]

In yoga, “asanas” are positions and movements of the body. Hatha Yoga is mostly aimed at improving the health of the body, but, of course, mental health is improved also, because of the feedback loop between them. It should go without saying, but I will say it anyway, that without a healthy body and a healthy mind, it is all the more difficult to pursue a healthy spirituality.

Dick: I think that I'm paying my Karmic debt by being cross-eyed. I've developed a right eye dominance and yet, being left-eyed is being in Essence and I would like to know if I could fuse my vision yet or if this is just the way it is?

Eye exercises, the ones in yoga, would help. [20 October 1973]

An internet search revealed to me that yoga eye exercises are a real thing. Who knew?

Dick: I spent hours with Norma and it is like she cannot see the difference between “C” and “B” groups. She thinks she will be God-conscious soon. She thinks she's near, through the Agni Yoga. Is it because I do not have the guidance when I'm talking with her or what? [30 December 1973]

From Wikipedia: “Agni Yoga is a spiritual teaching transmitted by the artist Nicholas Roerich and his wife Helena Roerich from 1920. The followers of Agni Yoga believe that the teaching was given to the Roerich family and their associates by Master Morya, the guru of H. P. Blavatsky, a founder of the Theosophical Society.” Yoga is often advertised as an accelerated path to enlightenment, but one wonders if this is more hype than reality. The Michaels recommended yoga to some of their students, specifically to those who asked about it during the original Michaelian group, but it was not a significant component of the Michaels' path to enlightenment, recommended for all students.

Mallory: Is yoga good for my Moving Center?

No. This can only be used as a prelude or postlude to meditation if it is to be of value. We mean movement, not isometrics. [03 March 1974]

Mallory was a Warrior who was studying to be a psychotherapist. As such, it was only natural that she would be interested in body-centered therapies (she was also interested in dance). My understanding of this

passage is based on my observation that there are basically two types of physical yoga, the type involving movement (therefore Moving Center) and the type not involving movement, therefore “isometric” (therefore Instinctive, aka Physiology, Center). My impression is that Warriors like the “isometric” types of yoga, because the challenge there is to put the body into a series of difficult positions and hold it there; obviously this is not “good for the Moving Center”. As an Artisan, I dislike the isometric/static types of yoga; I prefer the movement types of physical yoga, where the body is always in motion, and the body flows gracefully from one type of repetitive movement to the next. Obviously, this type is “good for the Moving Center”.

Gene: Was Milarepa an Old Soul? Did he shortcut many lifetimes?

The “Way of the Fakir” is not a recommended path for your culture. It is only rarely successful and requires more of its proponent than is necessary. This is successful in accelerating. [25 June 1974]

Obviously, some types of yoga are more appropriate for any particular individual and for any particular culture than other types.

Dick had some angles on the group toward a more cohesive, active one:

- *We have a medium and a treasurer, and we need a secretary for communication of activities such as exercise meetings, dance, yoga, games, plays, concerts, etc. [07 July 1974]*

Dick was suggesting that they formalize one of the things that the Michaels recommended to them, namely that they needed to “balance” their three lower Centers. Because most of them were stuck in their Intellectual Centers, the list of recommended group activities here were intended to get them into their Moving Centers and their Emotional Centers.

Concluding Comments on Yoga

The goals of yoga are the same as the goals of the Gurdjieffian teachings and the goals of the Michaelian teachings: to make humans into better humans, specifically by increasing the health of the lower Centers, thus facilitating access to the higher Centers.





CONCLUSION TO THE BOOK

The more you know, the more you know that you do not know. Visualize your knowledge as a circle; your accumulation of knowledge is inside the circle, and what you do not know is outside the circle. As your amount of knowledge increases, the size of the circle increases. As the size of the circle increases, the perimeter of the circle makes contact with what you do not know, and you realize that there is so much more that you do not yet know. If by your nature you have curiosity about the great unknown, you will become increasingly humbled by the vastness of your ignorance. This book just scratches the surface of the seams in the gold mine of the Michaelian teachings. I have dug out a few nuggets, but these could be polished and molded in much more beautiful ornaments than I have been able to do.

One of the things that happened during the original Michaelian group is that the members compared and contrasted the Michaelian teachings with other spiritual traditions that they were familiar with, most notably Gurdjieff, but also Theosophy, Rosicrucianism, **and so on**. This has not happened very often with Michaelian students subsequent to the original Michaelian group, who find the Michaelian teachings broad enough in its scope to be sufficient within itself. However, the Michaels said that their teaching was a Synthesis of other spiritual teachings, religions, theologies, and philosophies from ancient and modern times. In this Study Papers book, and in my other books, I document these similarities because I believe it enriches our understanding considerably. It would be possible to gather all of this documentation, then research and document them deeper and wider, and compile the result into a book of its own. **[SPOMG is the sixth Legacy book; this is an idea for a potential seventh Legacy book.]**

(We had also been wondering if there was anything else that had not been communicated yet by the teacher.)

As for new information, we endeavor to present some new information whenever we have your attention — new in the sense that perhaps you have never thought of it in quite that light before. However, dear students, you have heard all that there is to hear. Our task, as we see it, is to continue to present the body of this Logos until a student grasps at its meaning and begins to apply it and teach it to others. We will continue to present it, and since we are not limited by physical time, we can serve it up to you in an infinite variety of frames. Perhaps we have just not hit upon the winning combination. After all, yours is, as you have said many times, a verbal culture, and the words are eventually what you will hear and then they can be translated into the action. Richard has hit upon the meaning of this Teaching, but his understanding is still basically intellectual and philosophical rather than emotional and transcendental. [04 November 1977]

