

The Use of Ancient Texts to Test Hypotheses on the Seven Rays

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Summary

Three key hypotheses are tested: seven archetypal paths exist that are aspatial and atemporal and that are associated with the seven rays; the esoteric teachings found in the ancient world are contained in modern Theosophy; and any ancient esoteric teaching is similar to one of the archetypal paths associated with the seven rays. These hypotheses are tested by comparing Alice Bailey's modern characterizations of the seven ray methods to the esoteric teachings embedded within the following seven ancient texts: *Purusha Sukta*, *Myth of Isis and Osiris*, *Tao Te Ching*, *Revelation of St. John*, *Gospel of Truth*, *Hymn of the Bride*, and *Hymn of the Pearl*. The testing of these hypotheses provides empirical support for them and illustrates Bailey's material on the seven rays.

The Seven Rays

Teachings on the seven rays are contained in both the ancient Hindu *Rig Veda* and modern Theosophy.¹ Either source presents these teachings as though they were revealed from a transcendental realm, such as through inspiration or direct dictation from superhuman beings. The worldwide intellectual community, however, generally does not believe in a transcendental realm. Can the teachings on the seven rays be transformed into a science? In other words, can these teachings be tested in a scientific way so that they can be accepted on the basis of empirical evidence rather than a belief in the authority of an external source of information? Any scientific test entails formulating a hypothesis, collecting evidence, and analyzing results, although procedures vary from one field of inquiry to another. The purpose of this article is to test several hypotheses

related to the seven rays. As background for these hypotheses, let us review what prominent Theosophical writers have said about that ancient septenate.

Alice Bailey (1880-1949), founder of the Arcane School, states:

A ray is but a name for a particular force or type of energy, with the emphasis upon the quality which that force exhibits and not upon the form aspect which it creates. This is a true definition of a ray.²

Every human being is swept into manifestation on the impulse of some ray, and is coloured by that particular ray quality, which determines the form aspect, indicates the way he should go, and enables him (by the time the third initiation is reached) to have sensed and then to have cooperated with his ray purpose.³

In Theosophy, an "initiation" is said to be a milestone on the evolutionary journey. Thus, according to Bailey's account, every human being is connected to a specific ray and can receive guidance from that ray.

How does a ray provide guidance? Bailey associates rays with ideas: "It must be remembered that each ray embodies an idea

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which can be sensed as an ideal.”⁴

An idea is revealed through intuitive perception. An ideal is a mental formulation of an idea, and so can be appreciated and applied by the mind and brain of a human being. Bailey speaks of the “seven groups of ideas and their resultant ideals,”⁵ indicating that each of the seven rays embodies multiple ideas that are transformed into multiple ideals. Bailey also says, “Through the medium of these ever-living and ever-appearing ideas, humanity passes on to something better and greater and more appropriate to the life of the slowly manifesting divinity.”⁶ Thus Bailey’s account indicates that each ray embodies a *sequence* of ideas, in which every idea is more evolved—or greater or more perfected—than the preceding one.

An *archetype* is an original pattern or type after which other similar things are modeled. Early in the twentieth century, the Swiss psychiatrist Carl Jung used the concept of an archetype to illuminate human behavior and literature. Subsequent writers developed the concept of an *archetypal path*, which is a sequential pattern that can guide the mind. For example, Richard Tarnas states, “the human mind is following the numinous archetypal path that is unfolding from within it,”⁷ Emil Mihelich mentions “the ancient, archetypal path revealed in the great pagan mythologies,”⁸ and Donald Sandner speaks of “the archetypal path of initiation.”⁹

In Bailey’s account, the sequence of intuitive ideas embodied in any ray fits the foregoing definition of an archetypal path, implying that there are seven distinct archetypal paths, one for each ray. Aspirants may, however, construct mental ideals and practice disciplines that are distorted reflections of the archetypal ideas. Bailey lists seven ways that such distortions could occur.¹⁰ Thus an aspirant’s evolutionary journey would be similar to the guiding archetypal path, if such a path actually does exist, but with some distortions occurring along the way.

This distinction between an evolutionary journey and an archetypal path is related to

the distinction made in Platonic philosophy between particulars and universals. Particulars are individual things or instances; universals are abstract qualities, characteristics, or categories. The problem of universals is their status: whether universals exist independently of their associated particulars, or if they are merely convenient ways of talking about and finding similarity among particular things that are otherwise different.

The Greek philosopher Plato had the view that universals are real entities that exist independently of particulars: the particulars exist in space and time, but the universals are aspatial (outside the world) and atemporal (outside time); the particulars are imperfect copies of the universals.¹¹

For the remainder of this section, let us suppose that Bailey’s account of the seven rays is valid. The seven archetypal paths, which are the sequences of ideas embodied in the seven rays, are like the universals in Platonic philosophy, because they are real entities that exist independently of the particular religious forms that occur in the world. Even though religions are practiced at specific physical locations and evolve over time, the archetypal paths are aspatial and atemporal.

For the reasons already considered, the evolutionary journey of every aspirant is an imperfect copy of one of these archetypal paths. Even if an esoteric teaching of a religion was guided by an archetypal path, such a teaching would also be an imperfect copy, because words are intrinsically ambiguous with meanings that shift over time. Even if an organized religion was founded as a manifestation of an archetypal path, it would also be an imperfect copy, because its rituals and scriptures would not be completely understood by all its participants. Thus evolutionary journeys, esoteric teachings, and organized religions are like the particulars in Platonic philosophy, because they exist in space and time, and because they can be no more than imperfect copies of the archetypal paths.

The Wisdom Religion

Helena Blavatsky (1831-1891), co-founder of the Theosophical Society, popularizes the concept of the “Wisdom Religion,” which she defines as “the substratum and basis of all the world religions and philosophies.”¹² Other writers promote the same idea but use these synonyms: Ageless Wisdom, Eternal Truths, Perennial Philosophy, Science of the Initiates, and Universal Religion.

Blavatsky makes a key distinction: “Every ancient religious, or rather philosophical, cult consisted of an esoteric or secret teaching, and an exoteric (outward public) worship.”¹³ She speaks of “the esoteric doctrine or WISDOM RELIGION,”¹⁴ indicating that she regards those terms to be synonymous. Blavatsky also states, “Theosophy is, then, the archaic *Wisdom-Religion*, the esoteric doctrine once known in every ancient country having claims to civilization.”¹⁵ Thus she makes a remarkable claim: different ancient religions, even though they existed at different places and times, had the same esoteric doctrine—the Wisdom Religion—and that doctrine can be found in modern theosophical teachings.

Blavatsky says that the Wisdom Religion consists of “scattered rays”:

We know of one Esoteric doctrine—“the universal secret Wisdom-Religion” of old. The latter embraces every one of the great creeds of the antiquity, while none of these can boast of having it in its entirety. Our mission is to gather all these scattered rays, bring them back to one focus, and thus help those who will come after us to unveil some day the glorious sun of Truth.¹⁶

In particular, she says that the Wisdom Religion consists of “seven main branches”:

In order to make my meaning clear I may point out here that the Logos has seven forms. In other words, there are seven kinds of Logoi in the Cosmos. Each of these has become the central figure of one of the seven main branches of the ancient Wisdom-Religion.¹⁷

Blavatsky also speaks of “the primordial seven rays, or Logoi,”¹⁸ showing that she uses rays and Logoi as synonyms. “Central figure” appears equivalent to archetypal path, in which case Blavatsky’s quotation has this meaning: each ray has become the archetypal path for the corresponding main branch of the Wisdom-Religion. In other words, each main branch of the Wisdom-Religion consists of the esoteric teachings that are similar to the archetypal path associated with the corresponding ray. There are seven main branches of the Wisdom-Religion because there are seven rays.

Seven Ancient Texts

A *hypothesis* is a tentative statement that proposes a possible explanation for some phenomenon or event. We are concerned with three testable hypotheses: (1) seven archetypal paths exist that are aspatial and atemporal and that are associated with the seven rays; (2) the esoteric teachings found in the ancient world are contained in modern Theosophy; and (3) any ancient esoteric teaching is similar to one of the archetypal paths associated with the seven rays. As shown by the preceding sections, the first hypothesis is suggested by Bailey’s account of the seven rays, and the second and third hypotheses are suggested by Blavatsky’s account of the Wisdom Religion.

This article tests these three hypotheses by considering examples of esoteric teachings from ancient times. Such teachings are difficult to grasp, however, because they have been veiled by symbols or allegories. Blavatsky also makes that observation:

The religious and esoteric history of every nation was embedded in symbols; it was never expressed in so many words. All the thoughts and emotions, all the learning and knowledge, revealed and acquired, of the early races, found their pictorial expression in allegory and parable.¹⁹

All esoteric truths were given out to the public by the Initiates of the temples *under the guise of allegories*.²⁰

Not all ancient symbols and allegories signify esoteric truths. For example, Blavatsky says that the ancient Greek myths have been distorted:

The Greek myths are no longer the primitive symbolical language of the Initiates, the disciples of the gods-Hierophants, the divine ancient “sacrificers,” and that disfigured by the distance, and encumbered by the exuberant growth of human *profane* fancy, they now stand like distorted images of stars in running waves.²¹

To test our three hypotheses, we need to examine ancient texts that incorporate, without significant distortion, the esoteric teachings from their respective religions. How can appropriate ancient texts be selected for examination? This article examines seven ancient religious texts that are endorsed, either directly or indirectly, by Blavatsky herself. Let us briefly consider these texts—in their approximate chronological order—and Blavatsky’s views concerning them.

1. *Purusha Sukta*. The *Rig Veda* is often dated between 1700 BCE and 1100 BCE, and Blavatsky states, “*this Scripture has been compiled by INITIATES.*”²² The *Purusha Sukta* is one of the many hymns in the *Rig Veda*, and it is specifically cited by Blavatsky as embodying the Wisdom-Religion: “It is those scholars only who will master the secret meaning of the *Purushasukta*, who may hope to understand how harmonious are its teachings and how corroborative of the Esoteric Doctrines.”²³ As mentioned earlier, “Esoteric Doctrines” is a synonym for the Wisdom Religion.
2. *Myth of Isis and Osiris*. This myth became one of the most important and powerful myths in Egypt during the New Kingdom, which often is dated between 1570 BCE and 1070 BCE. Regarding the Ancient Egyptian religion, Blavatsky states: “The Egyptian priests *have forgotten much, they altered nothing* ... Yet they have preserved in their rituals and dogmas the principal teachings of the secret doctrine.”²⁴ Here, “secret doctrine”

is another synonym for the Wisdom-Religion.²⁵ Blavatsky refers to the *Myth of Isis and Osiris* simply as “the Egyptian myth” and says that it is “comprehensible as an allegory.”²⁶

3. *Tao Te Ching*. According to tradition, this famous Chinese book was written around the sixth century BCE by the sage Lao Tzu (or Lao-tse). Blavatsky says that Lao Tzu was “a great sage, saint and philosopher,”²⁷ and speaks of the *Tao Te Ching* as “his great work” and “the *heart* of his doctrine.”²⁸ Blavatsky considers the *Tao Te Ching* to be a veiled teaching, because the earliest known commentary for it goes no further back than the year 163 BCE, but “during the four centuries and a half that preceded this *earliest* of the commentators there was ample time to veil the true Lao-tse doctrine from all but his initiated priests,” and “the true commentaries, as well as almost all the texts, have long since *disappeared* from the eyes of the profane.”²⁹
4. *Revelation of St. John*, the last book of the Bible, sometimes called the *Book of Revelation* or the *Apocalypse*. Modern scholars generally believe that it was composed between 68 and 96 CE. This book has been a mystery ever since it first appeared because of its many puzzling symbols. Blavatsky says, “The fact is ... the whole *Revelation*, is simply an allegorical narrative of the Mysteries and initiation therein of a candidate, who is John himself.”³⁰ Accordingly, in the manner of an esoteric teaching, the *Revelation* was written by an initiate and uses allegorical and symbolic writing to disclose the mysteries of initiation.
5. *Gospel of Truth*. This gospel was discovered as part of the Gnostic treatises found in 1947 at Nag Hammadi, a city in Upper Egypt. Modern scholars generally believe that it was composed between 140 CE and 180 CE. Blavatsky was unable to comment on this gospel because it was not available to her during her lifetime. Nevertheless, she was familiar with other Gnostic material and refers to “the *Gnos-*

tics—the legitimate offspring of the Archaic Wisdom-religion.”³¹ Although the author’s name does not appear in the two extant manuscripts, several modern scholars assert that the author of this gospel is “extremely likely” to be Valentinus,³² whom Blavatsky calls the “profoundest doctor of the Gnosis.”³³

6. *Hymn of the Bride*. Saint Judas Thomas was one of the twelve Apostles of Jesus. The *Acts of Thomas*, thought to be written during the second or third century CE, recounts the adventures of Thomas during his ministry, and it was published during Blavatsky’s lifetime. The *Hymn of the Bride*, which is part of the *Acts of Thomas*, is a symbolic allegory that suggests the ceremony of initiation. Blavatsky does not mention the “Hymn of the Bride” in her writings, but she does mention another allegory in the *Acts of Thomas*, as discussed next.
7. *Hymn of the Pearl*. This hymn is sometimes called the *Hymn of the Soul* and is another symbolic allegory in the *Acts of Thomas*. Blavatsky explicitly mentions this hymn and incorporates the following quotation from Smith and Wace’s *Dictionary of Christian Biography* into one of her commentaries: “In the Syriac text of the *Acts* . . . we find the beautiful *Hymn of the Soul*, which has been sent down from her heavenly home to fetch the pearl *guarded by the serpent*, but has forgotten here below her heavenly mission till she is reminded of it by a letter from ‘*the father, the mother, and the brother*,’ performs her task, receives back again *her glorious dress*, and returns to her old home.”³⁴

These seven ancient texts are from a variety of religious traditions: *Purusha Sukta* from Hinduism, *Myth of Isis and Osiris* from the Ancient Egyptian religion, *Tao Te Ching* from Taoism, *Revelation of St. John* from Christianity, and *Gospel of Truth* from Gnosticism. The last two texts, *Hymn of the Bride* and *Hymn of the Pearl*, are part of the *Acts of Thomas*, which is early Christian literature. Although the mainstream Christian tradition

rejected the *Acts of Thomas* as apocryphal, the Manichaean Church adopted it as a canonical scripture during the third or fourth century CE. Thus our last two texts could be regarded as coming from the Manichaean religion.

The esoteric teachings embedded within these ancient texts are veiled by symbols and allegories, but are deciphered by a series of earlier articles. When deciphered, these teachings provide guidance to aspirants on their evolutionary journey. Next we test our three hypotheses by comparing these ancient esoteric teachings to Bailey’s modern characterizations of the seven ray methods of work. The seven ancient texts are considered in the order of their associated ray number.

Ray One

The names that have been given to the rays are anthropocentric, because they indicate associated human characteristics. The First Ray is called the “ray of will or power,” so its associated human characteristics are will, power, courage, leadership, and self-reliance. As shown next, Bailey’s “Technique of Fusion for the First Ray” is similar in meaning to a stanza in the *Purusha Sukta*.

Bailey says that the “keynote” of the “Technique of Fusion for the First Ray” is “isolated unity,” and gives this explanation:

Isolated Unity is that stage of consciousness which sees the whole as one and regards itself, not theoretically but as a realised fact, as identified with that whole. It is a whole which is “isolated” in the consciousness of the man, and not the man himself who regards himself as isolated. The word “isolated” refers to that complete organised organism of which the man can feel and know himself to be a part. The word “unity” expresses his relationship to the whole. It will be apparent therefore that this whole is something progressively realised.³⁵

Hence the “Technique of Fusion for the First Ray” tells us to identify ourselves with a conceived larger whole, which entails elimi-

nating our limited ideals and forms of pride that would prevent us from working in the best interests of that whole. Moreover our conceived whole becomes more inclusive over time. For example, we might identify ourselves initially with our immediate family, then with our community and nation, and eventually with all humanity.

The *Purusha Sukta* gives an early account of our planet's history and of how the universe operates. This Vedic hymn is analyzed in two earlier articles, a portion of which is repeated here.³⁶ Its sixteenth and final stanza states:

The gods sacrificed with the sacrifice to the sacrifice. These were the first rites. These powers reached the firmament, where the ancient demi-gods and the gods are.³⁷

In the first sentence, the "gods" are taken as the Planetary Logoi, because the Planetary Logos for a planet could be regarded as the personal god of that planet.³⁸

Blavatsky makes the following observation: "Life is built up by the sacrifice of the individual to the whole. Each cell in the living body must sacrifice itself to the perfection of the whole; when it is otherwise, disease and death enforce the lesson."³⁹

The Planetary Logoi are part of the greater body of the Solar Logos, so the Planetary Logoi must sacrifice Themselves to the perfection of the Solar Logos, who in turn must sacrifice Himself to the perfection of a still greater composite Life. Bailey makes similar points: "The Solar Logos expands His consciousness to include the desire of the Cosmic Logos. The Planetary Logos expands His consciousness to measure up to the will and purpose of the Solar Logos."⁴⁰

The second sentence, "These were the first rites," indicates that these sacrifices by the various Logoi are prototypes for human activity. Accordingly, human beings must

sacrifice themselves to the perfection of what they conceive of as their surrounding composite whole. The third sentence indicates that each of these sacrifices leads to advancement. Bailey makes a similar point: "Each step up is ever through the sacrifice of all that the heart holds dear on one plane or another, and always must this sacrifice be voluntary."⁴¹

With these interpretations, the final stanza in the *Purusha Sukta* has the following meaning:

The Planetary Logos for our planet participates in a group sacrifice with the other Planetary Logoi to carry out the will of the Solar Logos, who in turn sacrifices Himself to carry out the will of a still greater composite Life. These sacrifices are prototypes for human activity. In this way, the Logoi and human beings can reach higher levels of achievement, which have already been attained by their ancient forerunners.

Consequently, the *Purusha Sukta* culminates in what is essentially Bailey's "Technique of Fusion for the First Ray," but applied on both the macrocosmic, or universal, and microcosmic, or human, scales.

Ray Two

The Second Ray is called the "ray of love-wisdom," and is associated with love, wisdom, and intuition. As shown next, Bailey's "key" to the Second Ray method is similar in meaning to the *Hymn of the Pearl*. The entire "key" is the following:

Let all the life be drawn to the Centre, and enter thus into the Heart of Love Divine. Then from that point of sentient Life, let the Soul realise the consciousness of God. Let the word go forth, reverberating through the silence: "Naught is but Me!"⁴²

Bailey uses the lower-case “soul” to represent the source of individual divine guidance, and the capitalized “Soul” to represent its aggregation. For example, she speaks of “all souls who constitute—in their entirety—the One Soul.”⁴³ In this key, “Centre” is taken as the individual soul, because Bailey speaks of this soul as “a psychic centre” or “a force centre.”⁴⁴ The “Heart of Love Divine” is taken as the causal body, because she speaks of this body as the “heart centre of the monadic life”⁴⁵ and uses “monadic” as a synonym for divine.⁴⁶

With these identifications, the Second Ray key tells us to practice the following steps. First, we perceive the individual soul within someone else, and thus enter into causal consciousness. Second, while maintaining causal consciousness, we share in our soul’s realization of the Presence of God. Third, we share in our soul’s realization of omnipresence, which is the realization of the one Soul.

The *Hymn of the Pearl*, which is part of the *Acts of Thomas*, is a story about a Prince who is sent to retrieve a precious pearl, forgets his mission, but eventually returns with the pearl. An earlier article explains this allegory in detail, portions of which are repeated here.⁴⁷

The *Hymn* consists of the Prince’s first-person account of his experiences, and it contains two crucial symbols that represent the causal body and the individual soul: the Mantle and the Robe. The first passage that mentions these symbols is:

My Glorious Robe they took off me
Which in their love they had wrought me,
And my Purple Mantle [also]

Which was woven to match with my stature.⁴⁸

The causal body is symbolized by the

We know of one Esoteric doctrine—“the universal secret Wisdom-Religion” of old. The latter embraces every one of the great creeds of the antiquity, while none of these can boast of having it in its entirety. Our mission is to gather all these scattered rays, bring them back to one focus, and thus help those who will come after us to unveil some day the glorious sun of Truth.

Mantle, “Which was woven to match with my stature,” because the size of the causal body reflects the Prince’s spiritual stature, as Bailey explains, “The content of the causal body is the accumulation by slow and gradual process of the good in each life.”⁴⁹ The individual soul is symbolized by the “Glorious Robe,” because the glory of this soul can cover the lower nature like a robe, as Bailey also

explains, “The glory of the soul ... blots out the darkness and irradiates the lower nature.”⁵⁰ Accordingly, the Prince wearing the Mantle symbolizes that his consciousness is polarized within his causal body, which is the definition of causal consciousness. The Prince wearing the Robe symbolizes that he is contacting his soul’s attitude and awareness, which is the definition of sharing in soul consciousness.

The foregoing passage depicts events that occur during the interlude between incarnations. The Prince had been wearing both garments, showing that he had gained causal consciousness and shared in soul consciousness during that interlude. He loses both garments, however, signifying that he loses both types of consciousness before returning to physical life. Bailey indicates that everyone, during the interlude, goes through the same experiences:

Physical plane existence comes to an end and all returns within the causal consciousness ... On the inner side, men *know* that ... they consequently face two great experiences: 1. A moment (long or short, according to the attained point in

evolution) wherein contact will be made with the soul or with the solar angel. 2. After that contact, a relatively violent re-orientation to earth life takes place, leading to what is called “the process of descent and calling.”⁵¹

The *Hymn* has another passage that mentions these two symbols and that illustrates the Second Ray key:

And [now] with its Kingly motions
Was it pouring itself out towards me,
And made haste in the hands of its Givers,
That I might [take and] receive it.
And me, too, my love urged forward
To run for to meet it, to take it.
And I stretched myself forth to receive it;
With its beauty of colour I decked me,
And my Mantle of sparkling colours
I wrapped entirely all o’er me.

The above passage depicts the discipline that the Prince practices during physical incarnation. In the first sentence, “Givers” symbolize the perceptions of the higher and lower selves; “it,” referring to the Robe being brought by the Givers, symbolizes the perception of the individual soul within the higher self; and “Kingly motions” symbolize the perception of the Presence of Deity within the soul. The higher self consists of the soul operating through the causal body, and the lower self is the personality. Thus the first sentence describes the Prince as perceiving the following: the higher self within someone else, the soul within the higher self, and the Presence of Deity within the soul.

The second sentence describes the Prince as running towards the Robe so that he can take it. In other words, he is moving in consciousness toward his soul, because each successive perception entails a more refined use of abstract thought, and so he eventually enters causal consciousness, as Bailey explains:

It is by meditation, or the reaching from the concrete to the abstract, that the causal

consciousness is entered, and man—during this final period—becomes the Higher self and not the Personality.⁵²

Next the Prince says, “And I stretched myself forth to receive it.” The Prince’s continued effort to perceive the Presence of Deity evokes soul consciousness, as Bailey also explains:

The flickering soul light in the personal self has enabled the disciple to see the vision of the soul and in that light to reach union with the soul, even if only temporarily. Now the greater light of the soul becomes focussed like a radiant sun and it reveals in its turn a still more stupendous vision—that of the Presence.⁵³

The Prince concludes, “With its beauty of colour I decked me, And my Mantle of sparkling colours I wrapped entirely all o’er me.” The Prince shares in soul consciousness, symbolized by wearing the Robe, and has causal consciousness, symbolized by wearing the Mantle, so he regains both types of consciousness that he had during the interlude prior to his present incarnation.

In summary, both Bailey’s Second Ray key and the *Hymn of the Pearl* are written in symbols. Deciphering those symbols shows that these two texts depict similar methods for attaining causal consciousness and sharing in soul consciousness.

Ray Three

The Third Ray is called the “ray of active intelligence” and is associated with mental power, adaptability, and creative thinking. As shown next, Bailey’s “Technique of Integration for the Third Ray” is similar to chapter 11 of the *Revelation of St. John*.

The Third Ray technique needs to be deciphered because, as Bailey herself acknowledges, it is “couched in language quite symbolic.”⁵⁴ This technique includes the following excerpt:

The word goes forth from soul to form: “Be still. Learn to stand silent, quiet and unafraid. I, at the centre, Am. Look up along the line and not along the many

lines which, in the space of aeons, you have woven. These hold thee prisoner. Be still. Rush not from point to point, nor be deluded by the outer forms and that which disappears. Behind the forms, the Weaver stands and silently he weaves.”⁵⁵

In other words, the following intuitive instructions are given by the individual soul to its aspirant (“*The word goes forth from soul to form*”). First, calm your emotions (“Be still”) and then learn to align yourself (“Learn to stand”) so that your mind is silent, your feelings are quiet, and your motives are no longer based on fear (“silent, quiet and unafraid”). Second, center your consciousness in your mind (“I, at the centre, *Am*”), have a clear and single-minded awareness of what is actually happening both inside and outside during the current moment (“Look up along the line”), and then respond to those opportunities that are already present. This process is quite different from trying to make new opportunities for yourself by looking “along the many lines” of thought leading into the future. Although you might imagine that those lines of thought lead to personal glory, they actually form a veil of glamour (“which, in the space of aeons, you have woven”) that hold you prisoner (“These hold thee prisoner”).

Third, center your consciousness at the apex of your mind, which is the quiet space above your mental battleground (“Be still”); examine carefully the movement of your thoughts (“Rush not from point to point”), and overcome your false judgments about your personality (“nor be deluded by the outer forms”) and the phenomenal world (“and that which disappears”). Fourth, by focusing yourself behind your personality, which consists of your mental, emotional, and physical bodies (“Behind the forms”), become aligned with the one Soul (“The Weaver stands”) and allow the intrinsic nature of the Soul to act through you (“and silently he weaves”).

The traditional approaches for interpreting the *Revelation of St. John* could be called “external-temporal,” because they all interpret the various characters and episodes as representing people and events that occur in

the external world at definite past or future times. When using the traditional approaches, chapter 11 in the *Revelation* is considered by many scholars to be the most difficult section to understand in that obscure book. For example, Robert Mounce, a Biblical scholar, says, “In turning to the matters in 11:1-14, we come to a passage that is universally recognized as difficult to interpret.”⁵⁶

A psychological interpretation, however, can be given to the entire *Revelation*, so that each symbol within an episode represents some aspect of the consciousness belonging to an aspirant who is at the corresponding stage on the evolutionary journey.⁵⁷ Such an analysis of chapter 11 is provided by a previous article and shows the following.⁵⁸ In verses 1 through 3, “the angel” tells the aspirant to observe himself while judging other people. In verses 4 through 10, the aspirant has a series of insights as to how his judgment of others is harmful to himself. In verses 11 through 13, after having those insights, he transforms himself by giving up all judgment of other people and becomes illumined by “the God of heaven.”⁵⁹

Bailey, however, considers solar angel and soul to be synonymous terms.⁶⁰ Moreover, she considers God and Oversoul to be synonymous,⁶¹ and Oversoul and Soul to be synonymous,⁶² so that God and Soul are also synonymous. Thus, “the angel” in chapter 11 can be taken as the individual soul, and “the God of heaven” as the one Soul. Accordingly, chapter 11 of the *Revelation* can be interpreted as giving instructions similar to those provided by the foregoing excerpt from Bailey’s “Technique of Integration for the Third Ray.”

Ray Four

The Fourth Ray, called the “ray of harmony through conflict,” is associated with harmony, synthesis, and beauty. Bailey’s “Technique of Integration for the Fourth Ray,” which is a modern symbolic formula, is closely related to *The Tao Te Ching*, which is an ancient enigmatic Chinese book.

For example, the Fourth Ray technique includes these three sentences: “Peace I demand. My mind is bent upon it. Oneness with all I seek, yet form divides.”⁶³ The *Tao Te Ching* states, “Peace is his highest value,” with the possessive pronoun “his” referring to “a decent man.”⁶⁴ This statement is close to the technique’s sentence, “Peace I demand.” The *Tao Te Ching* asks the question: “Can you step back from your own mind and thus understand all things?”⁶⁵ This question indicates that self-understanding comes through observing one’s own mind. In the technique, “my mind is bent” is taken as depicting the mind’s observation of itself.

The *Tao Te Ching* also states, “She detaches herself from all things; Therefore she is united with all things.”⁶⁶ This statement incorporates a conditional implication: if there is detachment from all things, then there is a feeling of unity. A conditional implication that is logically equivalent to the preceding one is the following: if there is a feeling of separateness, then there is identification with something.

In the Fourth Ray technique, the phrase “yet form divides” has a similar meaning, as Bailey explains: “As long as a man is identified with the appearance, these aspects of the mental principle produce in him the ‘great heresy of separateness.’”⁶⁷ Here “these aspects of the mental principle” refers to the powers to analyze, discriminate, and separate. Appearance and body are synonyms, so being “identified with the appearance” could be with the physical body and its possessions, or with the emotional body and its appetites, moods, and feelings, or with the mental body and its attributes. Consequently, when we identify ourselves with a mental, emotional, or physical trait, we become involved with a pair of opposites in which we contrast our trait with that of someone else, thereby producing a feeling of separateness, such as pride or jealousy.

An earlier article expands the foregoing analysis and demonstrates that the *Tao Te Ching* has a passage that is similar in meaning to every sentence in the Fourth Ray technique.⁶⁸ This demonstration clarifies both

obscure texts. The *Tao Te Ching* is clarified, because we can see how its diverse poems fit together to form a coherent technique. The Fourth Ray technique is also clarified, because we can see how its symbolic statements can be expressed in a more comprehensible way and be applied.

Ray Five

The Fifth Ray is called the “ray of concrete knowledge or science” and is associated with such characteristics as discrimination, accuracy, and patience. As shown next, Bailey’s “Technique of Integration for the Fifth Ray” is similar in meaning to the *Myth of Isis and Osiris*.

The first passage in the Fifth Ray technique is:

Towards me I draw the garment of my God. I see and know His form. I take that garment, piece by piece. I know its shape and colour, its form and type, its parts component and its purposes and use. I stand amazed, I see naught else. I penetrate the mysteries of form, but not the *Mystery*.⁶⁹

In other words, aspirants have been investigating material forms (“Towards me I draw the garment of my God”) based on two key assumptions: empiricism, which is the belief that sensory experience is the only valid source of knowledge (“I see and know His form”); and reductionism, which is the belief that understanding is acquired by reducing phenomena to more elementary ones (“I take that garment, piece by piece”). With these assumptions, aspirants have accumulated knowledge about material shapes and colors, structures and classifications, components, interrelations, and applications (“I know its shape and colour, its form and type, its parts component and its purposes and use”). Through this research, they have increased their alignment (“I stand”) and are “amazed” that they can now infer the existence of non-material life, even though they cannot see it (“I see naught else”). They recognize that they have penetrated the mysteries of the material world but not the mystery of life (“I

penetrate the mysteries of form, but not the *Mystery*").

The ancient Egyptian *Myth of Isis and Osiris* has four main characters: Osiris, who is king of Egypt; Isis, who is the wife of Osiris; Typhon, who is the brother of Osiris; and Horus, who is the son of Isis and Osiris. The myth appears to be a dramatic tale of betrayal and revenge, and it has three main segments: first, after Typhon seals Osiris in a chest and throws it in a river, Isis searches for and eventually recovers the chest; second, after Typhon cuts up Osiris's body into multiple parts, Isis searches for those parts and eventually finds them; and third, Horus struggles with Typhon for the right to rule the kingdom and eventually defeats him. The esoteric meaning of the myth is given in an earlier article, portions of which are repeated here.⁷⁰

The second segment of the myth begins in the following way:

Typhon, who was hunting by night in the light of the moon, happened upon it [Osiris's chest]. Recognizing the body he divided it into fourteen parts and scattered them, each in a different place.⁷¹

Blavatsky speaks of the "Identity of Satan with the Egyptian Typhon."⁷² The original Hebrew word for Satan means "adversary," which is the translation used in Numbers 22:22. Throughout the myth, Typhon symbolizes the adversary that aspirants must overcome on their evolutionary journey. Bailey says that their achievement is "liberation from maya or illusion,"⁷³ so Typhon symbolizes illusion, or false belief.

The physical body consists of the etheric, or vital, body and the dense physical body. Bailey uses "lunar orb," or moon, as a symbol for the solar plexus chakra,⁷⁴ which is a major force center in the etheric body. Thus "the light of the moon" symbolizes the lower emotions—such as fear, hate, disgust, and desire—that are associated with the solar plexus chakra.⁷⁵

Blavatsky states that, in the myth, "Osiris ... is the indwelling spirit."⁷⁶ Using Bailey's terminology, Osiris is taken as the one Soul,

so the division of Osiris's body symbolizes the differentiation and separation of a unified whole. Bailey gives this explanation: "Yet all forms are differentiations of the soul, but that soul is one Soul, when viewed and considered spiritually. When studied from the form side, naught but differentiation and separation can be seen."⁷⁷

With the foregoing interpretations of its symbols, the myth has this meaning: illusion controls the lower emotions, which in turn cause aspirants to perceive the one Soul as differentiated and separated into many material forms. Thus the beginning of the second segment of the myth corresponds to the beginning of the Fifth Ray technique, because both texts depict the perception of many material forms without understanding the life that lies behind those forms. The subsequent portions of both texts provide instructions on how to understand the underlying life.

The Fifth Ray technique continues:

The Word goes forth from soul to form:
"Behind that form, I am. Know Me.
Cherish and know and understand the nature of the veils of life, but know as well the One Who lives. Know Me."

In other words, the following intuitive instructions are provided by the individual soul to its aspirant ("*The Word* goes forth from soul to form"). Behind the personality there exists the spiritual self ("Behind that form, I am"), and the time has come to gain knowledge about that inner self ("Know Me"). Continue to study, know, and understand the mental, emotional, and physical worlds ("Cherish and know and understand the nature of the veils of life"), but know as well the one Soul ("but know as well the One Who lives"). Continue your exploration until you gain direct knowledge of the Soul ("Know Me").

These instructions correspond to the rest of the second segment of the myth, during which Isis searches for the pieces of Osiris and eventually brings them together, as in the following account:

Once it [Osiris's body] was all together, except of course the part eaten by the fish, the body was wrapped in white linen and placed in state at the Temple of Abydos.⁷⁸

Bailey writes, "*Eve, Isis, and Mary* ... are of peculiar and significant importance where our civilisation is concerned for they embody in themselves the symbology of the entire form nature, which, when integrated and functioning as a whole person, we call the personality."⁷⁹ Thus, Isis symbolizes the personality.

The reassembled body of Osiris represents the realization of omnipresence, which is the realization of the one Soul that lies behind all differentiations of form. Bailey gives this explanation: "The first great realization which the aspirant has to achieve is that of *omnipresence*; he has to realize his unity with all, and the oneness of his soul with all other souls."⁸⁰

Abydos is the Greek name for an ancient city in Egypt. Abydos symbolizes the causal body, because the original Egyptian name for Abydos signifies a container for holy relics, and the theosophist Arthur Powell says, "The causal body, as said, is the receptacle of all that is enduring."⁸¹ Placing Osiris's reassembled body within the temple in Abydos indicates that the realization of omnipresence occurs within consciousness polarized in the causal body, which is the definition of causal consciousness. Thus, the myth has this meaning: aspirants have to search for the presence of the Soul, in themselves and other people, until they attain causal consciousness and the realization of omnipresence.

The last paragraph in the Fifth Ray technique begins with this passage:

Detach thy thought from form and find Me waiting underneath the veils, the many-sided shapes, the glammers and the

thoughtforms which hide my real Self. Be not deceived. Find Me. Know Me. Then use the forms which then will neither veil nor hide the Self, but will permit the nature of that Self to penetrate the veils of life.

...each main branch of the Wisdom-Religion consists of the esoteric teachings that are similar to the archetypal path associated with the corresponding ray. There are seven main branches of the Wisdom-Religion because there are seven rays.

In other words, detach yourself from any prideful form ("Detach thy thought from form"), and evoke the perspective of the onlooking Soul ("and find Me waiting underneath"). In this way, examine the attractiveness of personality consciousness: identifications with the lower self, desires for physical things, glammers that distort perceptions, and thoughtforms based on

ignorance ("the veils, the many-sided shapes, the glammers and the thoughtforms which hide my real Self"). When tempted by any of these forms of illusion, search for the underlying Soul until you achieve the realization of omnipresence ("Be not deceived. Find Me. Know Me."). Then, after regaining causal consciousness, use your personality, which no longer veils the Soul ("Then use the forms which then will neither veil nor hide the Self"), to express the nature of the Soul in the mental, emotional, and physical worlds ("but will permit the nature of that Self to penetrate the veils of life").

These instructions correspond to the third segment of the myth, in which the Great Ennead judges between Horus and Seth, starting with this passage:

Horus, the Avenger of Osiris, came before the Great Ennead. With His Mother beside Him, He spoke of the cruel murder of His Father at the hands of Seth. He spoke of the usurpation of the Throne of Egypt. The Gods were impressed by the eloquence of the Falcon-Headed One.⁸²

Horus, "the Falcon-Headed One," represents causal consciousness for two reasons. First, each wing of a falcon is shaped like a scythe,

symbolizing that, in Powell's words, "causal consciousness thus deals with the *essence* of a thing, whilst the lower mind studies its details." Second, a falcon can fly at high speed and change direction rapidly, symbolizing that, again in Powell's words, "with the causal consciousness, we take up the essence of the idea of the subject, and move it as a whole, as one moves a piece when playing chess."⁸³

Seth is another name for Typhon and so symbolizes illusion. Bailey associates personality consciousness with illusion, because she says, "you will learn that things which are potent and apparent in your personality consciousness are *in fact* non-existent."⁸⁴ Thus Seth also symbolizes personality consciousness.

The Great Ennead is a panel of nine gods. In the above passage, this panel conducts a trial during which they judge between the competing claims of Horus and Seth. In our inner struggle, however, we are our own judge. For example, Joshua 24:15 tells us to "choose you this day whom ye will serve." Thus, in this segment of the myth, the panel of gods represents an aspirant, referring to a center of consciousness that has the responsibility of choosing between causal and personality consciousness.

A later passage states:

Re proclaimed, "We shall cross the river to the Island in the Midst, and try the case thereon. I shalt further order the ferryman not to ferry Isis across."

Re is a member of the panel of gods and so represents an aspirant. Re plans to move the trial to a place where Isis cannot reach. Likewise, the next step for an aspirant is to examine the attractiveness of personality consciousness while being detached from the personality. Subsequent passages depict the insights that are gained through this inquiry.

Near the end of the myth, a passage states:

Geb's words to the Nine Gods: "I have appointed Horus, the Firstborn, Him alone, Horus, the inheritance."

In other words, the gods appoint Horus to be ruler of all Egypt. An aspirant's corresponding step is to make the decision of relying on causal consciousness for all areas of his or her life.

A concluding passage states:

Then Horus stood over the land. He is the uniter of this land.

The corresponding step is for an aspirant's causal consciousness to take control of all areas of his or her life and to unite those areas.

In summary, both Bailey's "Technique of Integration for the Fifth Ray" and the *Myth of Isis and Osiris* are written with symbols. Deciphering their symbols shows that the Fifth Ray technique has a meaning similar to that of the myth's second and third segments.

Ray Six

The Sixth Ray is called the "ray of devotion" and is associated with devotion, idealism, and loyalty. As shown next, Bailey's "key" to the Sixth Ray method is similar to the *Gospel of Truth*. The entire "key" is the following:

Let all desire cease. Let aspiration end. The search is over. Let the Soul realise that it has reached the goal, and from that gateway to eternal Life and cosmic Peace let the word sound: "I am the seeker and the sought. I rest."⁸⁵

In other words, the Sixth Ray key tells us to end our desire and aspiration, to recognize that our search is over, to share in our soul's realization of fulfillment, to realize that we are what we had sought, and to rest.

The *Gospel of Truth* is a sermon on the theme of salvation. It can be puzzling to read, because the available English versions are translations of ancient Coptic translations, and because the missing original composition, which is thought to have been written in ancient Greek, seems to have been composed in a symbolic manner. Nevertheless, the *Gospel* can be seen as illustrating all elements in the Sixth Ray key. The following examples are taken from an earlier article.⁸⁶

The *Gospel* describes how to act:

Speak from (the perspective of) the superior day, in which there is no night; and from the star that does not set, since it is perfect. Speak, therefore, from the heart, for it is you who are the day that is perfect, and it is within you that there dwells the star that does not set.⁸⁷

The *Gospel* includes numerous allusions to both Old and New Testament verses, sometimes combining those allusions, so its symbols often can be understood by considering related verses from the Bible.⁸⁸ For example, day and night symbolize knowledge and ignorance, respectively, as in Romans 13:12: “The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light.” Thus, the above passage tells us to act as if we have reached the goal of illumination, which is the “superior day,” even though many illusions may still remain in us. This instruction is equivalent to what Bailey calls the “as-if” technique:

There comes a time in the disciple’s life when he must assume that he knows; he must take the position that he comprehends, and must proceed to act upon the comprehended knowledge ... Govern yourself always “as if” your divine comprehension was perfected and the result in your daily life will be “as if” all concealed glammers and all hiding deceptive veils were non-existent.⁸⁹

The “star that does not set” in the above passage appears equivalent to the “day star” in 2 Peter 1:19: “We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts.” The “star that does not set” and that dwells within us can be interpreted as the soul, because, in Bailey’s words, “ever the soul has endeavoured to carry increasing illumination, through the mind.”⁹⁰ Thus the passage tells us to share the perspective of our soul and that our soul is perfect, so we need to act from the standpoint of also being perfect.

The *Gospel* contains an extensive discussion on the father’s name, such as in this sentence:

Who then can utter his name, the great name, except him alone to whom the name belongs, and the children of the name, on whom the father’s name rests, and who themselves rest on his name?⁹¹

What does the “father’s name” denote? The Bible often uses a personal name as an indication of the bearer’s nature. For example, 1 Samuel 25:25 states: “for as his name is, so is he.” A change in the personal name often indicates a change in the person, such as the change from Abram to Abraham (Genesis 17:5). In the *Revelation of St. John*, “name” can be consistently interpreted as “nature.”⁹² If the same approach is used to interpret “name” in the *Gospel*, the “father’s name” denotes the divine nature. Thus the ability to “utter his name” signifies our ability to express the divine nature in our own lives. But for us to be “children of the name,” the father’s name must rest on us, and we must rest on his name. In other words, we must be aware of the divine nature within us and we must rest on that nature.

Near its conclusion, the *Gospel* characterizes people who are illumined:

They have neither envy nor moaning, nor is death in them. But they rest in him who rests, without wearying themselves or becoming involved in the search for truth. But they, indeed, are the truth, and the Father is in them, and they are in the Father, since they are perfect, inseparable from him who is truly good. They lack nothing in any way, but they are given rest and are refreshed by the Spirit.⁹³

Accordingly, people experience illumination as a state of rest in which they realize that their search for truth is over and that they are what they had sought.

In summary, the *Gospel of Truth* tells us to act as if we have reached the goal of illumination, to share our soul’s perspective of being perfect, to rest on the divine nature, and to realize that our search for truth is over

and that we are what we had sought. Thus, the *Gospel* is not only similar in meaning to Bailey's Sixth Ray key but actually uses the same language.

Ray Seven

The Seventh Ray is called the "ray of ceremonial order or magic." This ray is associated with ceremonial ordering, which 1 Corinthians 14:40 describes as the effort to "Let all things be done decently and in order." This ray is also associated with magic, for which Blavatsky quotes Johannes Trithem's definition:

The art of divine magic consists in the ability to perceive the essence of things in the light of nature ... and by using the soul powers of the spirit to produce material things from the unseen universe.⁹⁴

The *Hymn of the Bride*, which is also part of the *Acts of Thomas*, is written in a symbolic way. Its verses are interpreted in an earlier article and can be divided into two main parts.⁹⁵ As shown next, the interpretations of the verses in the first part are similar to how Bailey describes the Seventh Ray method of work.

The first verse of the *Hymn* states:

The maiden is the daughter of light,
Upon her stands and in her rests the proud
glory of kings.⁹⁶

Isaiah 54:5 advises, "For thy Maker is thine husband," which indicates that the personality ought to have a feminine, or receptive, relationship to the divine. In the above verse, "maiden" symbolizes the personality when it has this receptivity; "king" symbolizes the individual soul, because the latter is the inner ruler of the personality. The plurality of "kings" suggests that the personality can receive illumination from more than one soul, perhaps through healings or blessings offered by others. Thus the verse is interpreted to mean: The personality, when receptive to the inner divinity, is filled with light, because the illumination of souls passes down through the mind and into the lower nature. In other words, the verse depicts a

meditation practice through which a higher clarity purifies the thoughts, feelings, and motives of the personality. Bailey gives emphasis to such a practice in the Seventh Ray method: "It will be obvious to you that Seventh Ray disciples wield much power and for this reason the emphasis in all teaching given is laid upon *purity of motive*."⁹⁷

The *Hymn* has several verses that depict the flow of energies in the etheric body, such as this one:

Surrounding her are the groomsmen,
whose number is seven.

She herself has chosen them.

The seven major chakras are force centers within the etheric body and exist outside the dense physical body.⁹⁸ These chakras could be described as "surrounding" the dense physical body, because they are behind, in front of, and above it. The above verse says that the "groomsmen" are "surrounding" the maiden and are "seven" in number, so they are taken as symbolizing the seven major chakras. Thus the verse has this meaning: the illumined personality has chosen the activity of the seven major chakras by applying definite methods of awakening and charging to them. Bailey likewise emphasizes the role of the etheric body in the Seventh Ray method: "The divine principle with which the Seventh Ray humanity will be mainly concerned is that of life as it expresses itself through the medium of the etheric body."⁹⁹

The *Hymn* depicts the integration of higher and lower energies:

Her chamber is full of light.

It breathes forth the fragrance of balsam
and of every spice.

For a physical marriage, the bridal chamber is where the marriage is consummated through sexual union. For a mystical marriage, the corresponding chamber lies in the head within the space between the crown and brow chakras.¹⁰⁰ Thus the above verse is interpreted to mean: The chamber between the crown and brow chakras is where the light of the soul merges with the raised energies of the personality. Bailey also writes, "The Sev-

enth Ray disciple will bring the energy which he is wielding right down on to the physical plane, thereby producing integration.”¹⁰¹

The *Hymn* depicts the glorification of the personality:

Delightful is the sight of her,
She shines with radiant beauty.

It is taken to mean: The illumined personality is attractive in appearance, being a transparency that permits the inner divinity to shine forth. Bailey also speaks of the glorification of the personality, or form nature: “When the egoic ray is the Seventh or Ray of Ceremonial Law or Magic, the method is that of the glorification and comprehension of form in approach.”¹⁰² Here, the “egoic ray” refers to the ray of the individual soul.

Radiatory healing is depicted in several verses of the *Hymn*, such as this one:

Her garments are like the flowers of
spring,
And from them flows a sweet fragrance.

Garments are clothes that surround the dense physical body. The “garments” of the maiden, in the above verse, are taken as the mental, emotional, and etheric bodies, because they also surround the dense physical body.¹⁰³ Thus the verse has this meaning: The mental, emotional, and etheric bodies of the illumined personality are like the flowers of spring, because they emit healing radiations. Bailey likewise writes, “The keynote of the Seventh Ray disciple is ‘Radiatory Activity.’”¹⁰⁴

The *Hymn* depicts the role of sound:

Her tongue is like the curtain on the door,
Which waves to those who enter.

Its meaning appears to be: The illumined personality speaks in an attractive and friendly manner, encouraging the participation of others. Bailey also describes the role of sound: “By using the potency of sound, the disciple of the future will work and build the new world with its culture and civilization.”¹⁰⁵ Here, “the disciple of the future” could be taken as the Seventh Ray disciple,

because Bailey says, “we can look for an increasing number of Seventh Ray egos now to appear.”¹⁰⁶

The *Hymn* depicts the application of laws that govern form and spirit:

Her mouth is open and it well becomes
her,
Thirty and two are the number who sing
her praises.

It is taken to mean: The illumined personality communicates freely and openly, thereby gaining generous and joyful affections, and applies all 32 group laws that produce right relationships. Bailey makes related statements, using the term “atom” to denote a unit of consciousness:

The Seventh Ray disciple works consciously by means of certain laws, which are the laws governing form and its relation to spirit or life.¹⁰⁷

We have basic group relations, fundamental group laws which produce group interrelations, and bring about an essential union between all the forms of life ... 1. The three atomic relations. 2. The seven laws of group work. 3. The twenty-two methods of interplay. These thirty-two phases and ideas must be applied in degree to all atoms.¹⁰⁸

As shown by the preceding discussion, the verses in the first part of the *Hymn of the Bride* are similar in meaning to Bailey’s descriptions of the Seventh Ray method. Bailey writes, “The thought of soul-infusion must be held in mind—a soul-indwelling which culminates at the third initiation.”¹⁰⁹ Likewise, the first part of the *Hymn*, which depicts soul-indwelling, culminates in the second part, which depicts the ceremony of the third initiation. The latter emphasis on ceremony is another Seventh Ray characteristic, as Bailey explains, “The Seventh Ray disciple has ... knowledge of ritual (which is the ancient codified means whereby the attractive and expressive nature of the energies to be employed are organised and related).”¹¹⁰ Thus the entire *Hymn* depicts Bai-

ley's characterization of the Seventh Ray method, including its emphasis on ceremony.

Conclusions

This article considered three hypotheses: (1) seven archetypal paths exist that are aspatial and atemporal and that are associated with the seven rays; (2) the esoteric teachings found in the ancient world are contained in modern Theosophy; and (3) any ancient esoteric teaching is similar to one of the archetypal paths associated with the seven rays. These hypotheses were tested by comparing seven ancient esoteric teachings, which are veiled by symbols and allegories in seven ancient texts, to Bailey's modern characterizations of the seven ray methods of work.

The preceding sections demonstrated the following evidence: each of the seven ancient esoteric teachings is similar to one or another of Bailey's modern characterizations of the seven ray methods. This evidence has a noteworthy feature: Bailey's modern characterizations seem to be *independent* of the ancient teachings in the sense that her characterizations were not guided by or derived from them. Three justifications can be given for such an assessment. First, Bailey did not interpret any of the seven ancient texts in her own books. Second, her writings state that her characterizations are "newer truths,"¹¹ which indicates that they were not assembled from books by other writers who may have interpreted, or been influenced by, the ancient texts. And third, Bailey's characterizations were published during the twentieth century, so they are unlikely to have been derived from the ancient esoteric teachings, because those teachings were not understood, at least in the open literature, until the twenty-first century.

Our argument for the first hypothesis is based on what is called "hypothetical induction." John Norton, a professor of the philosophy of science, explains: "We require that the hypothesis H entail the evidence E, and moreover, that there is some assurance that E would not have obtained had H been false."¹² The basic principle of this approach

is that the ability of a hypothesis to entail the evidence is a sign of its validity. Let us consider the preliminary hypothesis: If two independent descriptions of an evolutionary journey are found at different places and times, and if those descriptions are similar, then an underlying archetypal path exists that is aspatial and atemporal and that guided them. Our evidence consists of seven pairs of independent yet similar descriptions of an evolutionary journey. The preliminary hypothesis entails the evidence: if that hypothesis is true, then the two descriptions in each pair are similar because they were guided by the same underlying archetypal path.

Another competing hypothesis might also entail the evidence, but that circumstance would be unlikely if the second condition of hypothetical induction were satisfied. Suppose that there is no underlying archetypal path that is aspatial and atemporal. In this case, each ancient teaching would be a fanciful account, because it would not reflect any underlying reality. Moreover, Bailey's modern characterizations would also be fanciful accounts for the same reason. Is it possible that two independent fanciful accounts would be similar in detail even though they appeared at vastly different places and times? Although possible, such similarity would be an astonishing coincidence. Thus the preliminary hypothesis satisfies the second condition, because there is some assurance that the evidence would not have obtained had that hypothesis been false.

Our evidence supports the preliminary hypothesis, because that hypothesis satisfies both conditions of hypothetical induction. If the preliminary hypothesis is true, then the evidence implies the existence of an archetypal path that is similar to each of Bailey's seven modern characterizations. Each of Bailey's characterizations exhibits a particular quality of force, or ray. Therefore, if the preliminary hypothesis is true, then an archetypal path exists that is similar to an exhibition of each of the seven rays. In other words, the evidence supports the preliminary hy-

pothesis, which in turn implies the first hypothesis.

Bailey's characterizations are part of modern Theosophy, so our evidence implies the following result: the seven ancient esoteric teachings are contained in modern Theosophy. The second hypothesis, however, makes a much broader assertion: any esoteric teaching in the ancient world is contained in modern Theosophy. Our argument for the second hypothesis is based on what is called "enumerative induction." This type of induction, in Norton's words, "licenses an inference from 'some As are B' to 'all As are B.'"¹³ The basic principle of this approach is that each instance supports the generalization. Enumerative induction, however, can lead to an erroneous conclusion. To minimize this inductive risk, we selected the seven ancient esoteric teachings so that they would represent many religions, many regions of the world, and many periods of time. Any ancient esoteric teaching is expected to come from one of those religions, regions, or time periods. Our argument would admittedly be much stronger if our sample of esoteric teachings was randomly chosen from the total population of ancient esoteric teachings and if we had a much larger sample size. Thus we claim only that the evidence supports the second hypothesis, rather than that the evidence establishes its validity in a statistical sense. This empirical support is tenuous, because the second hypothesis would be disproved if there were a subsequent acknowledgement of only one counterexample.

If the preliminary hypothesis is true, then our argument for the first hypothesis shows that the evidence implies the following assertion: each of the seven ancient esoteric teachings is similar to one of the archetypal paths associated with the seven rays. Therefore, if the preliminary hypothesis is true, our argument for the second hypothesis shows that the evidence supports the following assertion: any ancient esoteric teaching is similar to one of the archetypal paths associated with the seven rays. Moreover, the evidence supports the preliminary hypothesis through

hypothetical induction, so we are able to claim that it also supports the third hypothesis.

In conclusion, our evidence supports all three hypotheses, thereby showing that some of the teachings on the seven rays can be tested and be substantiated in a scientific manner. Our expectation is that the near future will see scientific experimentation applied to many sundry claims of diverse religions, which will provide a firmer foundation for religious practice and the elimination of needless controversy. Bailey herself predicts that "the growth and the development of the *Science of the Seven Rays*" will be one of the next immediate steps in the mental development of humanity.¹⁴

¹ Zachary F. Lansdowne, "Vedic Teachings on the Seven Rays," *Esoteric Quarterly*, Spring 2010.

² Alice A. Bailey, *Esoteric Psychology*, vol. I (1936; reprint; New York: Lucis Publishing Company, 1979), 316.

³ *Ibid.*, 61.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 391.

⁵ Alice A. Bailey, *Glamour: A World Problem* (1950; reprint; New York: Lucis Publishing Company, 1973), 130.

⁶ Alice A. Bailey, *Discipleship in the New Age*, vol. II (1955; reprint. New York: Lucis Publishing Company, 1972), 280-281.

⁷ Richard Tarnas, *The Passion of the Western Mind* (New York: Ballantine, 1993), 438.

⁸ Emil Mihelich, *Eden and the Individual* (New York: iUniverse, 2006), 127.

⁹ Donald Sandner, "The Split Shadow and the Father-Son Relationship," in Mary Ann Mattoon (ed.), *The Archetype of Shadow in a Split World* (Einsiedeln, Switzerland: Daimon Verlag, 1987), 374.

¹⁰ Bailey, *Glamour*, 65.

¹¹ Plato's theory of universals is presented in several dialogues, especially *Cratylus*, *Meno*, *Phaedo*, *Republic*, and *Theaetetus*.

¹² Helena P. Blavatsky, *The Theosophical Glossary* (London: Theosophical Publishing Society, 1892), 328.

¹³ Helena P. Blavatsky, *The Key to Theosophy* (1889; reprint; Pasadena, CA: Theosophical University Press, 1972), 8.

- 14 Helena P. Blavatsky, *Collected Writings*, vol. XIII (Wheaton, IL: Theosophical Society in America, 2002), 145.
- 15 Blavatsky, *Collected Writings*, vol. II, 89.
- 16 Blavatsky, *Collected Writings*, vol. VI, 183.
- 17 Helena P. Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, vol. II (1888; reprint; Pasadena, CA: Theosophical University Press, 1977), 636.
- 18 Blavatsky, *Collected Writings*, vol. X, 317.
- 19 Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, vol. I, 307.
- 20 Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, vol. II, 786.
- 21 *Ibid.*, 450.
- 22 *Ibid.*, 451.
- 23 *Ibid.*, 606.
- 24 Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, vol. I, 312.
- 25 Blavatsky, *The Key to Theosophy*, 369.
- 26 Blavatsky, *The Theosophical Glossary*, 346-348.
- 27 *Ibid.*, 186.
- 28 Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, vol. I, xxv.
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