

Consciousness, Cognitive Neuroscience and Divine Logic Embodiment: Suggestions for Group Work

Jon Darrall-Rew

As long as our brain is a mystery, the universe – the reflection of the structure of the brain – will also be a mystery.” - Santiago Ramón y Cajal, 1852-1934.¹

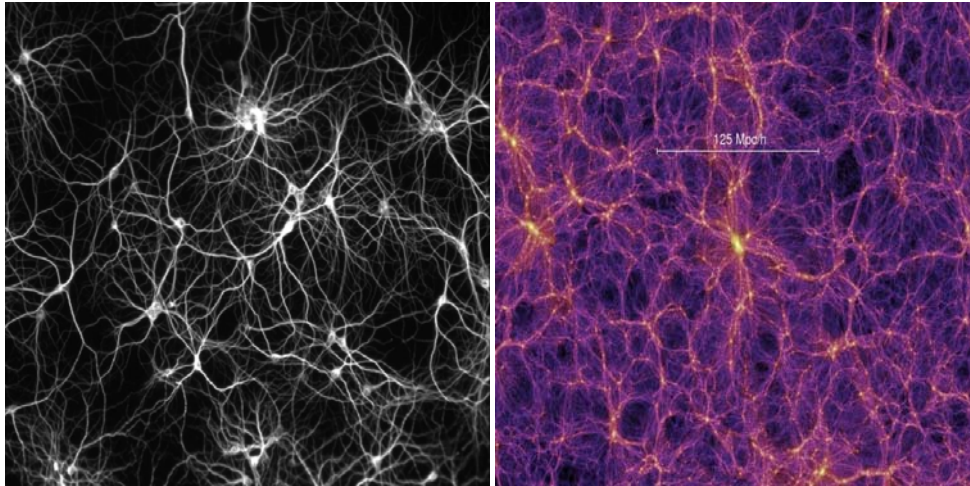


Figure 1 (left) - Representation of a small population of neurons (brain cells) within the 100 billion or so in the human brain.² Figure 2 (right) - Simulated representation of galactic clusters linked together by strings of dark matter (approximately 3.26 light years.)³

Abstract

From ancient Hermeticism, to Hindu cosmology, Kalachakra Buddhism, and the Trans-Himalayan tradition, one of the foundations of the esoteric system is the teaching that direct correspondences and analogies can be drawn between the mechanism through which the human individual functions, and that through which beings of planetary, solar and cosmic proportion also function. A specific analogy explored in the Bailey literature is between humanity and the planetary Logoic brain. Drawing on contemporary findings in the fields of consciousness science and cognitive neuropsychology, this essay explores this analogy in terms of its applications for group work. It is suggested that in this new age during which the orientation is increasingly oriented toward divine embodiment and integration, such research findings can be greatly efficacious in the

worldwide group's work of supporting the Planetary Logos' advancement on the cosmic Path, and the establishment of the Temple of Power on Earth.

Introduction

Within the Trans-Himalayan esoteric literature, the Master Djwhal Khul, also known as “the Tibetan,” or “the Tibetan Master,” most often considers humanity's position within the planetary life as embodying the planetary throat

About the Author

Jon Darrall-Rew is currently studying Psychology at Bangor University in Wales, UK, and has been a student of the Wisdom for the whole of his life. He has interests in the scientific study of meditation and consciousness, and the new Schools of the Mysteries. He can be contacted at jondarrallrew@yahoo.co.uk.

chakra. In certain other passages, however, the human center is mentioned in relation to alternative functions and roles within the planetary Logoi constitution,⁴ pointing to the existence of higher-order superordinate truths that reconcile such paradoxes. In one such passage Djwhal Khul delineates just such an alternative proposal:

Humanity is intended to be the medium wherein certain activities can be instituted. It is in reality the brain of the planetary Deity, its many units being analogous to the brain cells in the human apparatus. Just as the human brain, made up of an infinite number of sentient responsive cells, can be suitably impressed when quiescence has been achieved, and can become the medium of expression for the plans and purposes of the Soul, transmitting its ideas via the mind, so the planetary Deity, working under the inspiration of the Universal Mind, can impress humanity with the purposes of God and produce consequent effects in the world of phenomena.⁵

Given the strong associations drawn elsewhere in the literature between the throat chakra and the mental nature, connected as it is with the physical brain, such a passage as this can be seen not to stray too far from the conventional position, and as ever, Djwhal Khul employs the Laws of Correspondence and Analogy in order to expand our understanding of the planetary Life. In this essay, further exploration will be given to this association between humanity and the planetary brain, and through the use of said laws in a similar manner. Certain research findings and theoretical proposals from contemporary cognitive neuroscience will be advanced as potentially beneficial to the worldwide discipleship group's understanding of the Logoi constitution, and of its role within it.

As is mentioned frequently within the Trans-Himalayan literature, owing to it being one of the main foci of development in the previous solar system, the physical body is no longer considered a principle.⁶ This is the case both micro and macro-

cosmically. Just as the human unit no longer needs to direct any conscious attention to its basic physiological processes in order for them to function effectively, so too do the Planetary and Solar Logos have the workings of their dense physical constitution, located as they are on the systemic physical, astral and mental planes, dropped below the level of required conscious direction.⁷

This does not necessarily infer, however, that the focus of the Logoi gaze has shifted so completely as to be beyond the need to integrate the dense physical into the planned divine expression. In this relation, one is reminded of the following passage from the Old Commentary:

When light illuminates the minds of men and stirs the secret light within all other forms, then the One in Whom we live reveals His hidden, secret lighted Will.

When the purpose of the Lords of Karma can find no more to do, and all the weaving and close-related plans are all worked out, then the One in Whom we live can say: "Well done! Naught but the beautiful remains."

When the lowest of the low, the densest of the dense, and the highest of the high have all been lifted through the little wills of men, then can the One in Whom we live raise into radiating light the vivid ball of Earth, and then another greater Voice can say to him: "Well done! Move on. Light Shines."⁸

Thus it seems explicit in the Teaching that a fundamental aspect of the Plan, and ultimately Purpose itself, involves the realization of the Divine, in and upon all planes. In terms of the applicability and relevance of the above passage to our current times and the relatively near future, (Though in an ultimate sense this passage refers to great consummations many cycles hence.) we are reminded of the auspicious conjunction taking place between the Seventh Ray and Aquarian cycle. Such a conjunction allows the sevenfold Light Supernal found on the atmic plane to find location upon the physical plane,⁹ and thus the opportunity for great strides to surely

be made. Indeed, when speaking of the impulse behind the drive toward the Externalization of the Hierarchy, the Tibetan Master notes the demand of the Law of Synthesis to include all “five worlds of superhuman evolution”¹⁰ in enlightened spiritual expression. This obviously includes the dense Logoic body, our three worlds of the personality, of which it is said that the Planetary Logos is presently “unconscious.”¹¹

Returning to the Tibetan’s noted association between humanity and the brain of the planetary Deity, if the consideration of human units as cells within the Logoic brain is pondered upon, and we recognize the unique position of the human family to act as the medium whereby the divine Logoic Consciousness can be extended to all parts of its constitution, then reflection upon the current neuropsychological theories of how consciousness is supported by the brain may, perhaps, prove enlightening. Such considerations must, admittedly, be undertaken under the Law of Analogy rather than Correspondence, for caution must necessarily be exercised in such speculative analyses such as these.

Neuroscience and Consciousness

As is commonly understood within the

field of cognitive neuroscience, the vast majority, perhaps more than 90% of all neurocognitive processing, occurs unconsciously, that is, without any explicit conscious awareness.¹² Adding further weight to the ancient Hermetic axiom of “as above, so below,” like many complex biological systems, the brain is recognized as being, to some degree, hierarchically organized, both structurally and functionally. The structure of the cerebral cortex, or outer layer of the brain that serves its highest cognitive and perceptual functions, is traditionally differentiated into four lobes that serve different functions, perceptually and attentionally (Figure 3). Speaking crudely for the purposes of illustration, in the posterior lobe of the brain (the occipital lobe) for instance, is found the visual system; at the sides (the temporal lobes) the linguistic and auditory systems; on the top of the brain the sensory and motor areas are found which allow the processing of sensory information and subsequent physical movements to be planned and enacted in response to those signals respectively; at the front of the brain (the frontal lobes) is found the executive system, the most phylogenetically recently developed part of the cortex and the neurological base of such higher cognitive capacities as attention regulation, planning, strategies, and complex emotion.

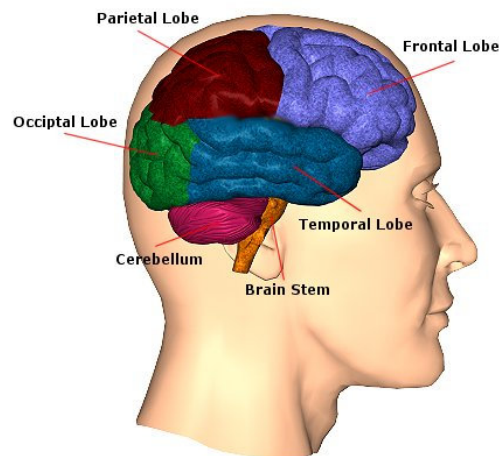


Figure 3. Representation of the lobes of the brain.¹³

These sensory and attentional systems are each differentiated into myriads of sub-

components, or “modules,” that serve a particular and specific role within the

overall system and whose output is eventually integrated with that of other modules, and ultimately with the output of other collections of modules in other lobes, to form an overall percept. If we take the visual system as a quick example, research has shown that at the lowest levels of its hierarchical organization, modules of approximately 150,000 neurons, or brain cells, process such specific aspects of a visual scene as lines of a particular orientation (lines at a 45° angle, for instance), with other modules of the same level differentially processing information regarding lines of other orientations, color, movement, spatial frequency and brightness, all independently. The roles of such modules are, as said, highly specific, and it is not until their information is selectively combined with that of other modules at the same level of perceptual organization, such as auditory or sensory information, and with higher, more integrative levels that their collective output may, perhaps, enter consciousness as a unified percept, the like of which you are experiencing as you look at these words. The key point to recognize here is that the vast majority of this activity, in terms of the individual and differentiated functioning of the modules of which the sensory systems are composed, is literally unconscious to the being in whose brain it is occurring. It does not require, and in the vast majority of instances does not involve, phenomenological consciousness. You are not, for example, experientially aware at this moment of the working of such aforementioned individual neurons responding selectively, for instance, to lines of a particular orientation on this page. This finding is at the root of the ambivalence demonstrated by many within the scientific community toward consciousness as anything “special.” At worst, theorists exclude consciousness from their spheres of investigative interest by declaring that it “is not good for anything,”¹⁴ and at best, often view consciousness as an emergent property, or simple by-product of brain function.¹⁵

Neuroscientific and esoteric views on consciousness

Both of these positions are naturally in direct opposition to that of the esoteric

teaching. The first demonstrates its own ontological naiveté and biased outlook by stripping consciousness of any prescribed value simply owing to its lack of clear contribution to the basic computational and mechanistic processes of interest. It thereby neglects the potential other benefits available to human beings as a result of consciousness, such as our inevitable growth and development that occurs precisely owing to the intensely rich subjective experience that we all know so well. Such growth offers an opportunity of immeasurable value, the worth of which is completely non-contingent upon the involvement of consciousness — its basis — in neurological function. The second position on the primacy of matter over consciousness, i.e., that consciousness emerges from and is not possible without a material substrate of sufficient sophistication, is naturally also somewhat in contradiction to the position of the esoteric teachings, which instead propose the primacy of consciousness, that consciousness (pure and unalloyed to physical, emotional or concrete mental processes) is extant prior to, and is not dependent for its existence on the brain. For our current purposes in this essay, the answer to which of these are primary is fairly immaterial, if the pun be forgiven, though I shall note incidentally that despite research having demonstrated beyond question that the brain is *necessary* for consciousness, at least upon the physical plane, it has categorically not been demonstrated that it is responsible for the *production* of consciousness.¹⁶ Incidentally, as an additional point, this recognition is at the heart of some newly emerging theories in consciousness research (though with their roots extending back to the very birth of western psychology), that are more in keeping with the esoteric teaching. These theories are called “filter theories.”¹⁷ They employ experimental evidence from near-death experience research, research into psi phenomena such as telepathy, and meditation research, in company with that which has been garnered from mainstream neuropsychological and philosophical inquiries, to demonstrate that (physical plane) consciousness is indeed primary to the brain, and is filtered (and therefore

necessarily limited) by the brain, rather than produced by it. The implications of such theories are profound for the scientific worldview.

In returning to consideration of mainstream consciousness research as described above, for our current purposes, the crucial point to be taken from it simply relates to the fact that there seems to be a specific point in information processing when a perception enters consciousness. The mechanisms whereby this is able to occur, and the necessary conditions for it, have been, and still are, the subject of extensive research and theorizing.

Two Neurocognitive Theories of Consciousness

One position taken on the matter proposes an answer in the form of what is called “*binding*,” and this relates to the notion that it is the simultaneous and synchronous firing of different groups of neurons, which differentially represent different aspects of a stimulus, a visual scene for instance (though they could equally represent the various aspects of an auditory, sensory or other type of stimulus), that allows those different aspects of the visual scene to be perceived as differentiated and yet part of the same perception.¹⁸ Furthermore, and most relevant for our current

considerations, is the supposition that it is this synchronous firing of different groups of neurons, or “*phase synchrony*” (with each group processing information regarding a particular part of the visual scene, to continue the visual example) that acts as a gating mechanism for consciousness.¹⁹ Therefore, as some studies have demonstrated, this theory suggests that a percept will only be registered consciously if those modules that are processing its different aspects, fire in a synchronous fashion (see Figure 4). Keeping the analogy outlined by the Master Djwhal Khul between human units and the brain cells, or neurons of the brain of the planetary Deity always in mind, it is interesting to note that this theory places the emphasis on the temporal rather than spatial relationship between different but yet similarly oriented (in terms of function) groups of neurons. This allows their output to become part of a transcendent conscious moment completely beyond their own individual existence and function. Similarly we should note that it is not through strength or rate of firing, but through *synchrony* of firing, that brain regions responsible for the same functions but yet disparately located are able to communicate with each other and interact with higher-order, more synthetically oriented systems.

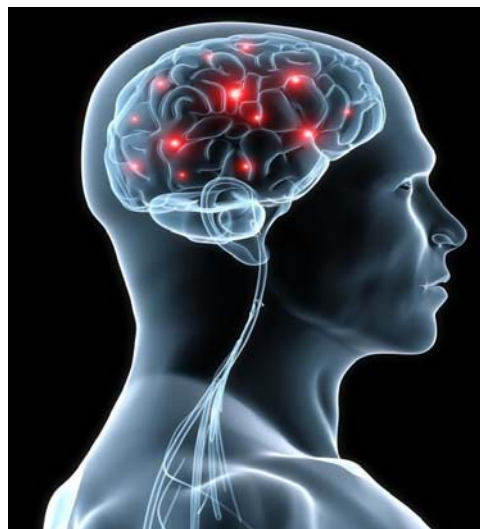


Figure 4. Representation of the synchronous firing of groups of widely distributed neurons.²⁰

As scientists have noted, however, though such synchrony may be *necessary* for con-

sciousness, certain experimental findings suggest that it is not *sufficient* for it. For

instance, one study noted the presence of phase synchrony in various brain regions in animals while under anesthetic, suggesting that its presence does not necessarily equate to the arising of a conscious moment.²¹ Working on the basis that phase synchrony is a necessary component for consciousness but not sufficient for it, Edelman and Tononi²² have suggested that a further ingredient is necessary for the arising of such a unified conscious moment, and this is what is known in the field as “*re-entry*.” Re-entry-related theories of consciousness are rooted in the fact that many researchers considered the conscious arising of perceptions as part of an exclusively feed-forward system, where small and specific pieces of information are increasingly integrated by progressively higher-order regions of the brain until they reach a certain location where “it all comes together,” and a conscious perception arises. Research has, however, been completely unable to locate such end-point regions. What *has* been recognized is that there are, in fact, even more neural connections going “back,” from the higher regions to those where the earlier stages of processing occur than there are those going in the opposite direction. Naturally, this is a finding that one would not expect were the system to operate purely in a feed-forward fashion. Building on Edelman and Tononi’s work, Lancaster²³ has suggested that conscious awareness of a particular referent may very well arise from a dynamic and reciprocal interaction between lower-order groups of neurons responsible for stimulus detection, and higher-order regions where internal representations (or memories, loosely put) of stimuli encountered before, are located. Crucially for this theory, consciousness is said to arise when a “match” is achieved between the signals detected by the lower-order assemblies and the hypothesized schemata in higher-order areas for what the object might be, with that match expressing itself in terms of phase synchrony achieved between the lower and higher levels. To illustrate this, Lancaster offers the example of holding a pen before his eyes. In this situation, the lower level groups of neurons will signal to the higher-order regions that a specific collec-

tion of features is present in the visual field. The higher-order group will then, based on situational context, previous experience and the clear visibility of the object, hypothesize that it is a pen that is in front of the eyes and the firing of the lower and higher level neurons would align in synchrony to produce a clear conscious perception and recognition of the pen in phenomenological awareness. If the hypothesized schemata for what the object might be is wrong, and does not match with the output of the lower-order stimulus detection neuronal groups, then phase synchrony will not occur and the higher-order assemblies will have to perform a further search of memory for what the detected set of features may be before said object may enter conscious awareness.

Fundamental here for our current purposes is the necessity for, and opportunity offered by, an established resonance between the lower and the higher, in both horizontal and vertical synchrony, which allows the emergence of such an aforementioned unified and transcendent conscious moment. Indeed, if one were to accept the primacy of consciousness as surely most esotericists would, one might recognize that this resonance between the lower and the higher does not allow the *emergence* of such consciousness. Rather, it provides a suitable congruency of conditions whereby the already primary and transcendent consciousness may engulf its constituent parts in identification with its All-pervading nature.

Application for Group Work

This brings me to a consideration of how such neuroscientifically-based theories of consciousness might inform the worldwide discipleship group’s understanding of the planetary Life and our place within it. It seems worth reiterating that such extrapolations drawn from the above information must come under the Law of Analogy rather than direct Correspondence, though the factors of synchrony and resonance seem to play important roles all along the great Chain of Being and may very well be ontologically-rooted keys to communication, union and revelation (whether mundane or super-

mundane) throughout the universe. Indeed, when speaking of the topic of the so-called “door of initiation,” the Master Djwhal Khul wrote, “It is only when the electrical energy of which the door is constituted and that of which the man is constructed at any particular time synchronize and vibrate in unison that the aspirant can pass through into greater light.”²⁴ In a manner most congruent with the example relating to the visual system previously mentioned, if we expand these ideas to the planetary level, we might consider the role of those groups all around the globe who constitute centers within the New Group of World Servers and who are acting as what one disciple has called “Registrants of the Vision”²⁵ (Figure 5), as embodying a role that is analogous to the lower-order assemblies of neurons previously discussed, which allow the detection of visual stimuli. Similarly, Hierarchy, the “Custodians of the Plan,”²⁶ arranged as they are into modular ashrams with each cell reverberating in synchrony with every other cell,

might be conceptualized as embodying the role of the higher-order assemblies that hold the schemata with which the lower-order groups seek a match. On the planetary level, these schemata exist as archetypes or “Energetic realities seeking to impress themselves upon the material plane, gathering and ordering forms into conformity with the law,”²⁷ all as sub-components of the overarching archetype or schemata, the Plan itself, and each holding a center of pure Life sourced in Shamballa. As theorists have suggested to be the case with the emergence of consciousness in the microcosm, it seems that it is only when groups of disciples are able to achieve synchronous functioning as *unified groups* that the opportunity exists for fusion, through synchrony of resonance, with the higher Ashramic, or at certain times, the Hierarchical center as a whole. This fusion allows the revelation of that which lies behind the two fused centers and the anchoring of that God-consciousness on Earth.

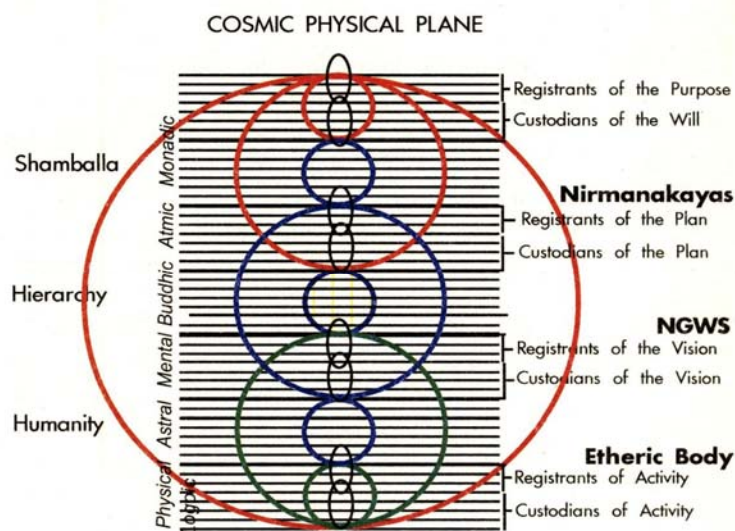


Figure 5. Chart considering the roles of some of the various groups along the planetary Antahkarana. ‘NGWS’ stands for New Group of World Servers.²⁸

Synchrony and group work

Embodied in these ideas can be seen the Law of Magnetic Impulse at work and the esoterically inclined neuroscientist or cellular biologist might perceive the working of this Law, whose esoteric name is the evocative “Law of Polar Union,” in the

previously discussed theories of phase synchrony and re-entry. This law is one which, we are told, governs group relations, esoterically considered, perhaps even all the way down to the neuron (invoking necessarily a broader definition of “Soul” as that which is the “interior”²⁹ of

any organism), and also “the relation of the Soul of a group to the Soul of other groups.”³⁰ In describing the working of this law, the Tibetan Master seems to be nearly at a loss in giving the rationale for its aforementioned esoteric name. Nevertheless, perhaps some clarification can here be added to this seemingly obscure nomenclature. Just as vertical union through synchrony between lower and higher order neuronal groups is contingent upon initial synchrony established horizontally within and perhaps also between the lower-order group(s) on the same level, so also may that be the case for the worldwide discipleship group(s) and Hierarchy.

The synchrony required from groups must surely exist on a number of levels and involves their use of the Technique of Invocation and Evocation, the cycle of the breath, understood in its widest connotations, the new Aquarian group-oriented energies, and the employment of the Seventh Ray in terms of “Ritual and Divine Ceremonial.”³¹ As individuals establish themselves as Souls they are necessarily drawn into relation with the planetary neural assembly or group among the New Group of World Servers in which they must find their place and through synchronized, rhythmic meditation, that group is able to establish itself as a single unified entity.³² Such synchronized and rhythmic occult meditation allows both the individual and the group access to that which “fires” in the human cell, the jewel at the heart of the Soul, which we are told “pulsates rhythmically as does the heart of man.”³³ Such unified groups, in touch with this pulse of Life at their center, can be and are, potent factors in anchoring the Hierarchical archetypes on Earth. This they do through the right use of the Technique of Invocation and Evocation, contingent as it is upon the right observance of the Law of Polar Union, in dynamic ritual under the Seventh Ray and electrical communion under Aquarius and their work is increasingly able to be dynamically empowered through the process and opportunity for group initiation. In working with such laws and ray energies, the group is able to extend the synchronization

that has hitherto existed only within the group, to one existing *between* groups; specifically, between the discipleship group in the world, and the Ashram. This results in the creation of a field in which revelation of the conscious intention of the Master, at the center of the Ashram, or even perhaps the Ray Lord in Shamballa along whose line the group and Ashram are found, can occur. It also allows for the establishment of a foundation through which that vision can be anchored in the world. Such is the opportunity available at the times of the full moon, with the need for an even wider synchronization at such times as the major festivals of the year and the equinoxes and solstices. In neuroscientifically informed consciousness research, it seems wise to point out that scientists no longer seek the source of consciousness (or indeed the majority of complex brain functions) in particular and individual modules, but rather in *networks* of modules, all synergistically active with precise synchronization in the millisecond range, and at these latter annual high points, unified groups of human cells can similarly extend their synchronization across groups also, in a horizontal sense, and vertically with Hierarchy as a whole. Indeed, we might expect the energy of organization³⁴ released through the Shamballa impacts to facilitate the arrangement of these group processes, and thus also the creation of a field in which the Consciousness of the One who is found at the core of all centers, and the Purpose as is visioned within His Great Mind and Heart, to begin to be known and anchored on Earth.

It is wise to notice, though, how just as with the neural assemblies in the visual system previously discussed, whose neuronal units perform independent roles (the registration, for instance, of lines of a specific orientation, or of color, of movement etc.) but who are unified into one group through synchronized firing, the synchronization demanded of groups does not require identical activity. On an intergroup level, synchronization may not exist, quite rightly, just as identical activity does not exist on an intragroup level between individual members of that group. Synthesis requires differentiation among the One,

and as is the great maxim of ecology, the strength of any system is embodied in the extent of its diversity. This is what allows the worldwide group to make the wide and comprehensive contribution it does, and to extend the tendrils of its fiery Light to all parts of the global system.

The Greater Context

To widen this discussion in such a manner as it may link up more fully with the planetary system, let us now take into consideration the evolutionary position of the Planetary Logos, and how the above explorations, both neuroscientific and esoteric, may be of benefit. The Planetary Logos is approaching, we are told, the second cosmic initiation,³⁵ and is at a crucial point in the establishment of His body of manifestation as a sacred planet.

If the correspondences between the individual way and the cosmic way reflect each other at all, then perhaps many would expect this to be one of the most challenging crises for the planetary Being. The reorientation and changes involved in the second degree are far reaching indeed, requiring the pilgrim to orient him or herself back toward their true nature, even if that orientation cannot be fully embodied until the third degree is taken. This necessarily involves the institution of new lines of thinking, new modes of perception, new patterns of behavior and certainly, the massive reorganization of the emotional life, with all of these changes expressing themselves in definite restructuring processes within the subtle bodies. Cognitive neuropsychology, most especially in the clinical field, has documented a strong degree of anatomical specificity in the brain, in terms of the degree to which

seemingly discrete neural circuits and areas of neural anatomy often support particular behaviors. Patients with lesions to certain brain regions through accident or disease often demonstrate deficits in spe-

cific behavioral skills, and yet maintain perfect functioning in other areas. One such case, that of a patient known in the literature as L.M.,³⁶ involved a syndrome known as Akinetopsia, where the patient was unable to perceive movement or objects in motion. Fascinatingly though, all other visual faculties (color perception, spatial perception, orientation, retinal disparity etc.) remained unaffected, implicating the anatomical separation between different visual faculties as responsible, with damage

having occurred to one of them that is specifically responsible for motion perception and nothing else. If one considers briefly just how many types of behavior that are as little noticed but as functionally important as that which was damaged in this case and which we exercise on an almost constant basis, one may begin to get some idea of the number of functionally distinct brain regions and neural connections within the cerebrum (what some have calculated as 10 to the 83rd power!³⁷).

The subtle roots of behavior

The brain is intended to be, and already is, to a certain extent, a synthetic instrument in which all aspects of a human being's constitution, personality, Soul and spirit, may be supported for expression on the physical plane.³⁸ It therefore seems reasonable to propose that the structural and functional organization of the brain reflects, as the *surface* structure and in one coherent anatomical locus, the *deep* structural and functional organization of the subtle bodies. What I mean by this is the supposition that just as within the brain particular behaviors are definitely sup-

As theorists have suggested to be the case with the emergence of consciousness in the microcosm, it seems that it is only when groups of disciples are able to achieve synchronous functioning as unified groups that the opportunity exists for fusion, through synchrony of resonance, with the higher Ashramic, or at certain times, the Hierarchical center as a whole.

ported by different brain regions and neural connections, so also would it seem reasonable to suggest that within the subtle bodies, particular behaviors that are eventually biologically, neuropsychologically and behaviorally rooted in the brain, have their source in specific centers and pathways of subtle energy. The often pointed-out primacy of the subtle over the gross that is described in the esoteric literature, would suggest that the neural connections that modern day cognitive neuroscience has come to investigate, are the physical plane exterior reflections of such subtle centers and energetic pathways existing in the subtle bodies, and that it is these subtle centers and pathways that are the real, deep level support for their respective behaviors. One might thus incidentally suggest that the structural and functional complexity of the centers and pathways in the subtle bodies must be at least as complex as it is in the brain, and this hypothesis is supported by the description of the etheric body as composed of “millions of tiny streams or lines of energy.”³⁹ This conjecture aside, it is my focus at this

stage to simply make the point that in a manner that is contingent upon our degree of personality integration and Soul infusion, all of the behaviors (inner and outer) that we manifest on a daily basis, personality-related, soulful, and for some even triadic, are likely supported by particular and specific subtle energetic centers and pathways within and extending between the bodies supporting these forms of consciousness.

Neuroplasticity, mindfulness and the technique of substitution

In a manner that provides an esoteric perspective on Social Learning theories and their neurological extensions, one might further suggest that just as modern day cognitive neuroscience has been able to roundly reject strong arguments of determinism through the recognition of the brain’s startling degree of plasticity, so also is it likely that these subtle energetic pathways that support particular behaviors are also possible of strengthening, diminishing, and radical reorganization.

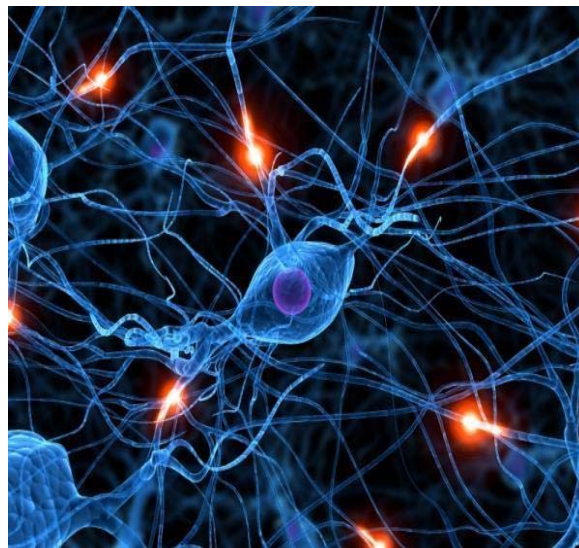


Figure 6. Representation of just a small number of neural connections that may be strengthened or weakened as a function of usage.⁴⁰

This finding relates to what is known in the field as “neuroplasticity.” It entails the recognition that the circuitry of the brain is actually quite malleable through experience and learning, with those brain regions and pathways that are repeatedly used becoming strengthened and those that are not used becoming atrophied and losing their connectivity. This observation is directly supportive of the Master Djwhal Khul’s discussions⁴¹ of how the turning of the disciple’s mental gaze and attention away from those lines of thought and patterns of behavior that are “contrary to yoga,”⁴² may allow the withdrawal of their energetic life-source.

For the individual disciple, application of this knowledge comes in the recognition that the maintenance of a healthy and exercised brain is fundamentally important. It is also important, in relation to the larger picture of the personality as a whole, the prototypes of said plastic brain connections in the subtle bodies, and in our efforts to establish right patterns of thought, emotional functioning, speech, and action. Often, when practitioners fail to demonstrate such behavior, they are apt to experience a sense of failure and despondency at their perceived lack of ability to live up to the high ideals of discipleship. According to the currently explored line of reasoning, however, though a healthy and cognitively clear-sighted recognition of incorrect action is required, the kind of full-bodied emotional reaction to perceived failure that is common to those disciples along the 2-4-6 Ray-line especially (who often evince a greater emotional investment in such matters), only serves to reinforce the emotional reaction. We have been taught that “energy follows thought,”⁴³ and that “the eye, opened by thought, directs the energy in motion.”⁴⁴ Thus, in this sense, one must care, but not care, and here, the practice of mindfulness demonstrates the energetic basis of its rationale. Mindfulness (understood within a Vipassana context), or the deliberate dis-identification of one’s attention (and thus one’s energy) from a particular

channel of cognitive, emotional or physical behavior, prevents the feeding of that particular behavior. And as the Tibetan tells us, if it is starved of such vitalization for a sufficient period of time, it will eventually die of atrophy. This is where the practice of substitution is also important, implemented, as it must be, through the creative imagination. Visualization, a faculty of the creative imagination, has been explained to us as an occult technique of tremendous value in actualizing and unfolding our true nature.⁴⁵ Thus it can be seen that through its adaptive use, we may begin to forge the kind of new subtle energetic pathways and connections that characterize the initiate, and in a slightly different sense, the Master.

Working upon this logic, it is, and has always been, these kinds of practices that facilitate the building of the new connections that have been found in the intermediate level meditative practices of the esoteric traditions. The Tibetan speaks to us of such things in terms of “as if” thinking. So too does Thomas a Kempis’ injunction towards the “Imitation of Christ,” or the Tantric practices of guru or deity yoga, as found in Tibetan Buddhism, in which the practitioner generates and stabilizes in visualization the perfect embodiment of particular divine qualities in the form of a deity or guru before transferring their point of identification to that deity or guru. Indeed, the XIVth Dalai Lama himself has said, “In brief, the body of a Buddha is attained by meditating on it.”⁴⁶

The planetary application

Simultaneously, this understanding of how the emotional nature is purified and transformed can also be applied to our understanding of the position of the Planetary Logos as He nears the second cosmic initiation. In this connection, the following passage is of interest:

Fundamentally, the task set before the Hierarchy is to “let in the light,” but this time not in the sense of revelation, of vision or of illumination. These latter are all aspects of Soul light; the work of the initiate is to aid

in the construction of the planetary body of light-substance which will finally reveal the nature of Deity and the Glory of the Lord. It is the planetary correspondence to the light-body through which the Christ and all the sons of God Who have reached perfection finally manifest. It is a vehicle created by the energy of Will, and it is implemented and “held in being” by the Will.⁴⁷

The Planetary Logos is attempting to anchor a seed of solar Will in this system, and to take control of His vehicles of manifestation. And just as mindfulness and substitution through the use of creative visualization must be employed by the individual disciple upon their Way, so also does the Planetary Logos find Himself in a similar situation as He faces this second cosmic initiation. His cosmic mindfulness must involve Him turning His eye away from certain ancient thought-forms of materiality, of such an exalted nature that they may appear as seemingly divine to the human eye, so as to end their energetic vitalization. These must be substituted, through His use of the creative imagination (focused as He is on the 4th sub-plane of the cosmic astral⁴⁸), for patterns of Logoic behavior more congruent with His divine aspiration. This may contribute to His capacity to align His cosmic astral and buddhic vehicles, and to sweep the cell-units within His body of manifestation into new activity in the creation of those energetic connections that are in line with His Purpose. Here it is well to remind ourselves of the quote from the Tibetan included at the beginning of this essay that described humanity as analogous to the planetary Logoic brain cells, and as the medium whereby the planetary Deity, working under the inspiration of the Universal Mind, can begin to work out the plans and purposes of the solar and cosmic Life as they relate to the Earth.

The Role of the Group

This is where we, as those Self-realizing units upon the cosmic physical plane, may play our part in co-

operation with the liberated hierarchies on the cosmic astral plane. The Tibetan describes the work of the Buddha, the Christ, and the Avatar of Synthesis as related to the founding of three great “Temples of the Mysteries (of which two already exist, and the third will later appear).”⁴⁹ He points out the work of the Buddha is related to the founding of the Temple of Light on the mental plane, the work of the Christ is related to the founding of the Temple of Love on the astral plane, and the work of the Avatar of Synthesis is related to the future founding of a “divine powerhouse upon the physical plane”⁵⁰ through which the Mysteries may be externalized⁵¹ and humanity’s innate divinity can be realized. The brain and the nervous system are instruments whose operation is fundamentally electrical in nature. The Temple of Power⁵² that we are now beginning to build on the (cosmic) physical plane is, in great part, the building and coordination of these new connections of Life within the planetary Logoic body and central nervous system. As dense externalizations of their etheric counterparts, they are what will allow the Planetary Logos to anchor this seed of solar Will on, and in, the Earth. A fundamental aspect of the Logoic project in the present and coming cycles is to fully integrate His physical and etheric bodies, and thus to “remember” Himself as He truly IS throughout the depths of His manifestation as well as the heights.⁵³ The word “power,” as included in the phrase the “Temple of Power,” can, in one sense, be understood in terms of a specific electrical definition; that is, the forging of those energetic connections of electric fire within the planetary Logoic brain and body, and the distribution of the Life principle under Aquarius throughout those circuits. Such distribution and circulation (Aquarius does, after all, have a special relation to the blood and circulatory system.⁵⁴) may allow Him to become fully “embodied,” and to operate His vehicles according to the highest Will. Tied in with this process, and crucial to it, is the newly inaugurated cycle

of Shamballa impacts and the Seventh Ray/Aquarian conjunction which focuses the dynamic power of these impacts directly upon the physical plane. In this way, the planetary Logosic physical principle can redeem his vehicles from both micro and macrocosmic perceptions of dualism in a tantric embrace of cosmic proportions.

Remembering the fact that the physical body of the Planetary Logos comprises the entirety of our three worlds,⁵⁵ these electrical connections can be posited to be rooted to the fiery flow of blue-white fire between the jewels of groups of causal bodies on the abstract mental plane. The Planetary Logos' intended physical behavior can then be supported by those groups of Souls⁵⁶ (analogous to the assemblies of neurons previously described) whose mental alignment and point of identification is sufficient to translate those fiery (im)pulses between and through the jewel(s) into enlightened behavior in the three worlds.

Triangles, Ray Schools and the Law of the Supplementary Seven

Preparatory to this is the Triangles work (and similarly oriented projects), involving the reorganization of the pathways of energy circulation throughout the three worlds. These pathways are the deep structures upon which right relationship and interaction are built.

Many scientists now place great emphasis on re-entry as key to the brain's capacity to support consciousness through its diverse modular networks. Similarly, it is through dynamical, reciprocal connections established between the men and women of goodwill throughout the world, that the plastic energetic connections throughout the planetary body may be sufficiently reorganized. This cooperative endeavor establishes a synergistic field of energy circulation on a global scale and a physiological supporting basis for the cosmic Soul-behavior of the Planetary Logos.



Figure 7. 'Group Work' by Lynda Vugler.⁵⁷

Within this framework, we might further consider the role of initiate-disciples in their various ray groups identified with the One in

Whom they live and move. We might also consider the role of the advanced Ray Schools that are to come, for they will surely

play a large role in this process. Initiates, we are told, work with the Law of the Supplementary Seven⁵⁸ which relates to their identified participation in the direction of Life, in its three-and-sevenfold ray differentiation, from its relative source in the seven planetary chakras, through the seven great Ashrams of Hierarchy and out into the world via the initiates' own sevenfold chakra systems. This law is described as "the great synthetic *Law of Life or of Spirit*."⁵⁹ Initiates are able to work with, and within it, owing to the increasing identification with the Whole. Such work necessarily involves the conscious direction of solar streams of Life into the body of the Planetary Logos along particular pathways, originating (relatively speaking) in centers of force within the solar Logoic body (the seven Planetary Logoi), and travelling via the currents of cosmic etheric space. As they enter the planetary body, they will necessarily be canalized along the already extant subtle pathways of energy within the etheric body of the Planetary Logos under the willful direction of the initiates. Naturally, as the Planetary Logos advances toward the second cosmic initiation, those who are able to work with this Law of the Supplementary Seven will necessarily undertake the previously discussed reorganization of those subtle etheric pathways. In discussing the initiate's work with this law, Djwhal Khul explicitly emphasizes that it is only possible in group formation, and that the most immediate task of such workers is to bring the three major planetary chakras, Shamballa, Hierarchy and Humanity, into right energetic relation. Additionally, in clear congruency with the above considered analogy concerning the synchronization required among neuronal groups within the human brain, and groups of initiate-disciples within the planetary brain and body, he outlines the need for such initiate groups to work with the "united breath" and in "united rhythm."⁶⁰

One might propose that as the externalization process proceeds under the Law of Synthesis⁶¹ and we move forward into the Aquarian/Seventh Ray conjunction in which the sevenfold Light Supernal is able to penetrate all the way through from the atmic to the

physical plane, the reorganization of the "divine circulatory flow" through the planetary body might be greatly facilitated by the founding of the Schools of Initiation. These Schools, composed of initiate groups of predominating ray hues in which work with the First Aspect is primary,⁶² might serve as great ray stations of Life under this Law of the Supplementary Seven. Initiate groups in "united breath" and with "united rhythm" will then draw upon the energy of organization to restructure the electrical pathways and connections within the planetary body so that right energetic relations exist between the three major planetary centers. In this manner can the Temple of Power be established on the physical plane and its seven living pillars of Purpose,⁶³ extending from "the lowest of the low" to "the highest of the high"⁶⁴ be raised. Thus can the Planetary Logos, in a realized identification of His place and divine mission within the greater solar, cosmic and perhaps even galactic Life, expand His capacity to express that which He truly IS, on all planes and through all states of consciousness.⁶⁵

Conclusion

Consideration has been given to an alternative conception of humanity's place and function within the planetary Being. The orientation of the Planetary Logos toward the integration of His physical and etheric bodies, and His embodiment of those bodies with and in His full cosmic consciousness has also been considered. Contributions made to the worldwide group's understanding of this topic and how it may play its part are drawn from contemporary findings in the field of cognitive neuroscience and consciousness research. Such extrapolations have been made specifically in relation to the new challenges to group work, and the esoteric intricacies of this fascinating new era of exploration under the proposal that certain natural and biological systems already exist that may provide enlightening insights into how to approach this work. It is recognized that in taking this approach, one is reasoning from the physical to the subtle and thus in a manner that is inverse to conventional occult dic-

tates, hence the explicit acknowledgement that such analysis must proceed under the Law of Analogy rather than the Law of Correspondence. It is hoped, however, that such analysis may contribute to the group's reservoir of understanding on this matter, which will become increasingly integral to discipleship as we advance into the Aquarian Age and the energetic opportunities it holds.

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