

The *Tao Te Ching* compared to Bailey's Technique of Integration for the Fourth Ray

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Abstract

The *Tao Te Ching*, an ancient Chinese book, is written in an enigmatic manner that makes it difficult to understand. Modern scholars differ in their interpretations of that book, resulting in many translations and commentaries. Alice Bailey's "Technique of Integration for the Fourth Ray" is a modern formula written with abstruse symbols. This article clarifies these two obscure texts by showing that they have similar passages.

Tao Te Ching

The *Tao Te Ching* may be the most influential Chinese book ever written, because it provides the basis for the philosophical school of Taoism, which is an important pillar of Chinese thought. According to tradition, it was written around the sixth century BCE by the sage Lao Tzu. The book's true authorship and date of composition or compilation are still debated. The Chinese word *Tao* literally means "way" or "the Way." *Te* means "virtue" in the sense of personal character, or inner strength. *Ching* means "canon," "great book," or "scripture." Thus, *Tao Te Ching* could be translated as "The Book of the Way and Its Power."

The *Tao Te Ching* has been translated into English more times than any other Chinese text. In fact, there are at least 112 English translations that can be downloaded from the Internet,¹ and at least 175 English translations altogether.² Some translations are significantly different from each other, and new translations appear every year. Each translation of the *Tao Te Ching* requires considerable time and effort to compose, so the new translators must believe that the earlier

translations are deficient in important respects. According to Holmes Welch, "It is a famous puzzle which everyone would like to feel he had solved."³ Translations that strive for literalness are sometimes criticized for lacking readability, clarity, and poetic beauty, whereas translations that are easy to read are sometimes criticized for being incompatible with the history of Chinese thought and for being based on Western Oriental fantasies. We primarily use the modern translation by John McDonald, because it is promoted by several Taoist organizations, and because it seems to us as especially easy to read and clear.⁴ Occasionally, lines are also cited from the translations by Dwight Goddard,⁵ Tao Huang with assistance from Edward Brennan,⁶ and Stephen Mitchell.⁷

Techniques of Integration

The *seven rays* are mentioned in the *Rig Veda*—the oldest known Hindu sacred text—and defined in modern theosophy as "the seven breaths of the one Life, the seven basic energies."⁸ Each ray is said to provide a pattern of integration for the spiritual journey. Alice Bailey, a theosophical writer, published "Techniques of Integration" for the seven rays that depict symbolically each ray's pattern.⁹ Bailey admits that she wrote these techniques in an obscure way: "It is

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difficult to make easily comprehensible the nature and purpose of these techniques”; “Our study of the Techniques of Integration was definitely abstruse and couched in language quite symbolic.”¹⁰

Bailey states, “these ray techniques are imposed by the soul upon the personality after it has been somewhat integrated into a functioning unity and is, therefore, becoming slightly responsive to the soul, the directing Intelligence.”¹¹ Here, the Soul is the inner divine voice or super-conscious self;¹² and the personality, or outer self, consists of the mental, emotional, and physical bodies. If Bailey’s statement is correct, then her ray techniques depict symbolically the archetypal patterns of integration that aspirants are intuitively directed to apply to themselves. In this case, the esoteric teaching of any religion may be a verbal formulation of one of these archetypal patterns, but with some distortions due to the limitations of words. Different exoteric religions may be manifestations of the same archetype but with varying distortions. Thus, if Bailey’s statement is true, it may be possible to show that various methods of psychological or spiritual integration are similar to her ray techniques, in part or in whole.

This article is concerned with only the Fourth Ray, called “the ray of harmony through conflict,” and shows that the *Tao Te Ching* has passages similar to Bailey’s entire Fourth Ray technique. According to Bailey, her technique has five stages: “1. Alignment. 2. A crisis of evocation. 3. Light. 4. Revelation. 5. Integration.”¹³ For each stage, the corresponding passage from the *Tao Te Ching* is listed, with regular font style and indentation; followed by the passage from Bailey’s Fourth Ray technique, with underlining and indentation; followed by our explanation of both passages, in italic style without indentation; and then followed by our explanation of the symbols in both passages, in regular style without indentation.

Alignment

Other people are joyous,
as though they were at a spring

festival.
I alone am unconcerned and expressionless,
like an infant before it has learned to smile.
Other people have more than they need;
I alone seem to possess nothing.
I am lost and drift about with no place to go.
I am like a fool, my mind is in chaos.
Ordinary people are bright;
I alone am dark.
Ordinary people are clever;
I alone am dull.
Ordinary people seem discriminating;
I alone am muddled and confused.
I drift on the waves on the ocean,
blown at the mercy of the wind.
Other people have their goals,
I alone am dull and uncouth. (20:6-15)¹⁴

Midway I stand between the forces
which oppose each other.

As their first step in becoming integrated, the aspirants achieve inner alignment, which enables them to observe their personality in a detached way, and discover the pairs of opposites that they use to construct their concepts of themselves and other people.

Both the Fourth Ray technique and the *Tao Te Ching* have the following implicit premise: human beings make sense of and organize their experiences by constructing concepts out of pairs of opposites. As a result, human beings confuse the actual world with their concepts of the world, and tend to think of the world as being divided into separate and independent parts, rather than as a unitary and interdependent whole. To avoid being misled by dichotomous conceptualization, human beings need to be aware that they are caught by the pairs of opposites and understand how this distorts their perception.

Bailey’s Fourth Ray technique provides instruction to aspirants on how to deal with the pairs of opposites. In the initial sentence, the standing position indicates inner alignment,

as in Romans 11:20, “thou standest by faith.”¹⁵ Alignment means bringing the integrated aspects of oneself into line with the next higher aspect to be integrated, which in this case is the Soul. “The forces which oppose each other” refer to a pair of opposites, and the midway position between these forces symbolizes detached observation of them. Thus, as their first step, the aspirants achieve the alignment needed to observe their personality with detachment, so that they can discover the pairs of opposites that they use in their own conceptualizations.

The technique depicts a *triplicity*: someone standing between a pair of opposites. Elsewhere Bailey provides the meaning of this symbol: “The moment a man differentiates his life into triplicities (as he inevitably must as he deals with the pairs of opposites and identifies himself with one of them) he succumbs to the glamour of separation.”¹⁶ Accordingly, the triplicity in the technique has the following elements: (1) a typical aspirant on the spiritual journey; (2) a personality trait that the aspirant incorporates into his or her self-concept, through being identified with it; (3) the opposite trait, which the aspirant incorporates into his or her concept of someone else, resulting in a feeling of being separate from the other person. For example, this feeling might be the pride of superiority or the jealousy of inferiority. These elements of the triplicity imply that the aspirants need to discover only the pairs of opposites—more specifically, the pairs of opposing personality traits—that they use to construct their concepts of themselves and other people.

All quoted or cited lines of the *Tao Te Ching* refer to McDonald’s translation, unless explicitly reported otherwise. Lines 20:6-15 provide six examples of pairs of opposing mental, emotional, and physical traits. The mental pairs are bright/dark, clever/dull, discriminating/confused, and purposeful/aimless. The emotional pair is joyous/joyless. The physical pair is rich/poor. These lines also illustrate the detached observation that reveals these pairs, the concepts of self and other people that are formed by these

pairs, and the feeling of separateness that comes from these pairs.

All things carry Yin
yet embrace Yang.
They blend their life breaths
in order to produce harmony. (42:5-6)

The masters of old attained unity
with the Tao.
Heaven attained unity and became
pure.
The earth attained unity and found
peace.
The spirits attained unity so they
could minister.
The valleys attained unity that they
might be full.
Humanity attained unity that they
might flourish.
Their leaders attained unity that they
might set the example.
This is the power of unity. (39:1-8)

Longing am I for harmony and
peace, and for the beauty which
results from unity.

The aspirants recognize their longing for harmony and peace between themselves and other people, and for the power that comes from unifying their inner and outer selves.

Line 42:5 of the *Tao Te Ching* mentions the Chinese words, “Yin” and “Yang.” In the earliest records, *yin* refers to “the north side of a mountain,” which is the dark area occluded by the mountain’s peak, and *yang* refers to “the south side of a mountain,” which is the brightly lit portion. As the sun moves across the sky, *yin* and *yang* gradually trade places with each other, revealing what was obscured and obscuring what was revealed. *Yin* and *yang* later became generalized so that they represent every pair of seemingly opposing forces that are interconnected and interdependent.

Line 39:1 mentions the “Tao.” The *Tao Te Ching* does not define this term, but instead states in its first line, “The tao that can be described is not the eternal Tao.” Although the Tao is said to be indefinable, lines 39:1-8

characterize it as the power that safeguards order and harmony in the world.

Elsewhere Bailey writes, “He [the aspirant] then, having discovered the personality, discovers the quality of his own soul life, and the purpose for which he has ‘appeared.’”¹⁷ The Fourth Ray technique is consistent with this sequence. In the first sentence of the technique, considered earlier, the aspirants discover their personality by observing it in a detached way. In the second sentence, which we are now considering, the aspirants discover the purpose for which they were born.

What is the purpose that human beings are to fulfill in the world? Bailey describes it as follows: “The *service* humanity is to render is that of producing unity, harmony, and beauty in nature, through blending into one functioning, related unity the soul in all forms. This is achieved individually at first, then it takes place in group formation, and finally it demonstrates through an entire kingdom in nature.”¹⁸

Both the Fourth Ray technique and the *Tao Te Ching* incorporate the foregoing purpose. In the technique, the aspirants long “for harmony and peace.” Lines 42:5-6 of the *Tao Te Ching* make a more general statement, saying, “All things ... blend their life breaths in order to produce harmony.” In the technique, the aspirants also long “for the beauty which results from unity.” Lines 39:1-8 provide several examples that illustrate the power of achieving inner unity, suggesting that such power is a worthy goal for one’s aspiration.

When people see things as beautiful,
ugliness is created.
When people see things as good,
evil is created.

The *service* humanity is to render is that of producing unity, harmony, and beauty in nature, through blending into one functioning, related unity the soul in all forms. This is achieved individually at first, then it takes place in group formation, and finally it demonstrates through an entire kingdom in nature.

Being and non-being produce each other.

Difficult and easy complement each other.

Long and short define each other.

High and low oppose each other.

Fore and aft follow each other. (2:1-7)

The spirit of emptiness is immortal.

It is called the Great Mother because it gives birth to Heaven and Earth.

It is like a vapor, barely seen but always present.

Use it effortlessly. (6:1-4)

I see the two. I see naught else but forces ranged opposing, and I, the one, who stands within the circle at the centre.

The aspirants see each pair of opposites as bound together as parts of a mutual whole, and they recognize that they are a spiritual entity confined in a personality.

At this point in the Fourth Ray technique, the aspirants see “naught else but forces ranged opposing,” which means that they recognize the oneness of things that they previously believed were different. Lines 20:6-15, given earlier, illustrate the contrasting differences that are perceived when a pair of opposites is first discovered. Lines 2:1-7, however, illustrate the subsequent discovery that each pair of opposites is bound together as parts of a mutual whole.

In the technique, the circle is taken as the personality, or outer self, and “the one, who stands within the circle at the centre” as the indwelling self. Elsewhere Bailey describes “the stage wherein the indwelling Self begins to be aware of Itself as well as of the form, and we talk then in terms of the higher and the lower self; we speak of the self and its sheaths, and of the self and the not-self. This dualistic stage is that of the aspirant and of

the disciple ... He begins with a knowledge that he is a spiritual entity confined in a form."¹⁹ Thus, the symbol of the circle and its center is taken as depicting the aspirants' recognition of their spiritual dimension.

Lines 6:1-4 also recognize the spiritual dimension, calling it "the spirit of emptiness." According to these lines, the spiritual dimension is the source of everything, is always present, and can be effortlessly used by human beings.

The Master puts herself last;
And finds herself in the place of
authority.
She detaches herself from all
things;
Therefore she is united with all
things. (7:4-5)

Peace I demand. My mind is bent
upon it. Oneness with all I seek, yet
form divides.

Aspirants demand peace and observe their minds to achieve that goal. They seek a feeling of unity with other people, yet they recognize having a feeling of separateness because of their identification with their mental, emotional, or physical traits.

For this portion of the Fourth Ray technique, Mitchell's translation of the *Tao Te Ching* provides a better match than does McDonald's translation. Mitchell translates line 31:5 as, "Peace is his highest value," with the possessive pronoun "his" referring to "a decent man." This statement is close to the technique's sentence, "Peace I demand." Mitchell also translates line 10:7 as, "Can you step back from your own mind and thus understand all things?", indicating 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.

Returning to McDonald's translation given above, line 7:5 states, "She detaches herself from all things; Therefore she is united with all things." This line 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.'"²⁰ Here, "these aspects of the mental principle" refer 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 the aspirants identify themselves with a mental, emotional, or physical trait, they become involved with a pair of opposites in which they contrast their trait with that of someone else, thereby producing a feeling of separateness, such as pride or jealousy.

The reason I have an enemy is
because I have a "self."
If I no longer had a "self," I would
no longer have an enemy.
Love the whole world as if it were
your self;
then you will truly care for all things.
(13:7-9)

War upon every side I find, and
separation.

The aspirants find themselves in conflict with other people, which they find is caused by having a separated self.

The Fourth Ray technique mentions both war and separation. Lines 13:7-8 of the *Tao Te Ching* make a much stronger association, stating that having an enemy is a necessary and sufficient condition for having a "self." Here, having a "self" means having a separated self, which is a self with a feeling of separateness. Does having a separated self necessarily lead to outer conflict? Two contemporary writers assert that it does, as shown by the following quotations.

Robert Perry, a commentator on *A Course in Miracles (ACIM)*, associates the pursuit of specialness with having an enemy: “No price is too dear for us to pay for obtaining specialness. We seek it in our special relationships, where others give us special love and their special selves. In this way we try to symbolically extract from them the specialness that God denied us ... We seek it with our body, adorning our body in order to attract it. We also seek it by accumulating idols ... All ways of seeking it involve attack, for specialness requires that others must be beneath us. It causes us to look for and rejoice at any sin we see in others. It makes everyone our enemy and so makes us feel attacked from every quarter.”²¹ Here, “specialness” is equivalent to pridefulness, which is the goal of a separated self, and “special relationship” denotes a relationship based on the pursuit of specialness.

Swami Ranganathananda, president of Ramakrishna Math and Mission, makes a similar point: “Narrow-mindedness, secretiveness, and hatred spring always from a sense of separateness. The sense of separateness gives rise to all kinds of selfish desires: the desire to exploit or overcome somebody else, and so on.”²²

A Crisis of Evocation

The greatest virtue you can have comes from following only the Tao; which takes a form that is intangible and evasive. Even though the Tao is intangible and evasive, we are able to know it exists. Intangible and evasive, yet it has a manifestation. Secluded and dark, yet there is a vitality within it. Its vitality is very genuine. Within it we can find order. (21:1-6)

One who seeks knowledge learns something new every day.
One who seeks the Tao unlearns something new every day.
Less and less remains until you

arrive at non-action.

When you arrive at non-action, nothing will be left undone. (48:1-4)

Knowing you don't know is wholeness.

Thinking you know is a disease.

Only by recognizing that you have an illness

can you move to seek a cure. (71:1-3)

Alone I stand and am. I know too much.

The aspirants rely upon their inner alignment and renounce prideful activity, but they know that they do not know how they ought to act.

The Fourth Ray technique incorporates two kinds of aloneness. “Alone I stand” depicts aloneness in the sense of reliance on inner alignment, because the standing position symbolizes alignment, as discussed earlier. Elsewhere Bailey describes how illumination is gained through such reliance: “Seek the pinnacle of loneliness, which is the sole place whereon truth can be known. This is an injunction to increase your capacity to withdraw into the focused point in the illumined mind where no one else can accompany you, and there await the arrival of the truth—that particular truth which your personality demands from your soul and which you feel—at any given time—it is essential that you grasp if your service and your progress are to be properly furthered.”²³

Line 21:1 states, “The greatest virtue you can have comes from following only the Tao,” which characterizes the Tao as supreme guidance. Line 21:2 states, “Even though the Tao is intangible and evasive, we are able to know it exists.” The phrase “intangible and evasive” suggests an intuition. Mantak Chia and Tao Huang, two Taoist teachers, have a similar understanding when they write, “We develop and trust our intuition as our direct connection to the Tao.”²⁴ Accordingly, the Tao is supreme guidance conveyed through the intuition, so lines 21:1-6 give instruction similar to the foregoing injunction from Bailey.

“Alone I ... am” depicts aloneness in the sense of loneliness, or lack of companionship. Paradoxically, this loneliness refers to the experience of the aspirants when they renounce prideful activity, because they have virtually no companions who take that step with them. Here, “prideful activity” is an attempt to gain or sustain a feeling of pride regarding a physical, emotional, or mental trait.

Bailey gives similar explanations: “Be prepared for loneliness. It is the law. As a man dissociates himself from all that concerns his physical, astral and mental bodies, and centres himself in the Ego, it produces a temporary separation. This must be endured and passed, leading to a closer link at a later period with all associated with the disciple.”²⁵ “I refer to the loneliness which comes when the accepting disciple becomes the pledged disciple and steps out of a life of physical plane concentration, and of identification with the forms of existence in the three worlds, and finds himself in the midway place, between the world of outer affairs and the inner world of meaning.”²⁶ Here, “astral” and “Ego” are synonyms for emotional and Soul, respectively, and “three worlds” refer to the physical, emotional, and mental worlds.²⁷

McDonald’s translation of lines 48:2-3, given above, says that seeking the Tao requires unlearning something new every day. Goddard’s translation of these lines, given next, describes the process as humbling oneself: “He who practices Tao daily diminishes. Again and again he humbles himself. Thus he attains to non-doing (wu wei).” Here, “non-action” in McDonald’s rendition, or “non-doing” in Goddard’s rendition, is a translation of the Chinese phrase *wu wei*, which denotes an important concept of Taoism. *Wu* may be translated as “without,” and *wei* as “act,” so *wu wei* may be translated as “without activity.” The association with humility indicates, however, that *wu wei* really means “without prideful activity,” as Chia and Huang explain: “The essence of Wu Wei is ‘not to act with desire,’ ‘not to engage egoistically,’ and ‘not to become possessive.’”²⁸

Thus, both the phrase “Alone I ... am” in the Fourth Ray technique and lines 48:2-3 in the *Tao Te Ching* represent the same step: the renunciation of prideful activity. Lines 48:2-3 indicate that the step is implemented in a successive manner. Bailey describes this renunciation as follows: “Ask and look for nothing for the separated self and eliminate all thought along the lines of lower self endeavour.”²⁹ Before making this renunciation, the aspirants had followed the selfish path of seeking pridefulness for the separated self. After making this renunciation, they try to follow the selfless path that is the opposite of the first one and that seeks nothing for the separated self.

The technique says, “I know too much.” What is it that the aspirants at this point know? Line 71:1 gives the following answer: “Knowing you don’t know is wholeness.” Plato, quoting Socrates, makes a similar statement: “I do not think that I know what I do not know.”³⁰ Knowing that they do not know how they ought to act, the aspirants seek help from an inner source of wisdom.

Light

Nurture the darkness of your soul until you become whole. Can you do this and not fail? (10:1-2)

There is no greater transgression than condoning people’s selfish desires,
no greater disaster than being discontent,
and no greater retribution than for greed. (46:3)

The love of unity must dominate, and love of peace and harmony. Yet not that love, based on a longing for relief, for peace to self, for unity because it carries with it that which is pleasantness.

Aspirants practice a type of meditation in which they seek inner unity with the Soul and spirit, which brings about inner peace and inner harmony, whenever they are tempted to act pridefully, such as based on a longing for

an excessive amount of things, for a stable material circumstance, or for a special relationship.

In Taoism, the Chinese word *hun* denotes an incorporeal part of a human being, as Chia and Huang explain: “The *hun* is the ethereal soul. At the time of physical death, it leaves the body and ascends to heaven to return to subtle realms ... Conscious activities, such as intuition, insight, and awareness, are generated by *hun* ... *Hun* is the impetus of reincarnation. It arises before the body exists and departs after the body ceases to breathe.”³¹ All of these characteristics are also true for the theosophical notion of the Soul. The word “soul” in line 10:1 denotes *hun*, which we construe as being equivalent to the theosophical Soul.

Lines 10:1-2 provide instruction on meditation. McDonald’s translation of these lines, given above, is somewhat ambiguous, so let us examine Huang’s translation: “Donning the spirit and soul, and drawing them into Oneness, Can this come apart?” Here, “darkness” in McDonald’s translation appears as “spirit” in Huang’s translation. Bailey also uses “darkness” as a synonym for “spirit.”³² McDonald’s phrase, “the darkness of your soul,” suggests, in Bailey’s words, the role of “the soul, as the intermediary between spirit and matter.”³³ Although McDonald’s translation tells us to become “whole,” Huang’s translation more clearly states that this wholeness is inner unity with the Soul and spirit, because “donning” means putting on, or wearing.

In the Fourth Ray technique, the first sentence provides similar instruction on meditation, if the “love of unity” is the love of inner unity, and if the “love of peace and harmony” is the love of inner peace and inner harmony. The second sentence also mentions unity, peace, and harmony, but reversing the order in which they appear in the first sentence.

Bailey says, “evil and good are reverse aspects of the same one reality, and evil is that good which we should have left behind, passing on to greater and more inclusive good.”³⁴

Thus the reverse order of the symbols in the second sentence suggests that this sentence depicts what should be left behind. The meaning of these symbols is obscure but is clarified by considering line 46:3, which also has three parts.

First, “a longing for relief” in the technique corresponds to “greed” in line 46:3. Greed is a desire for more of something than is needed. Any desire is felt as a deprivation and thus is a form of pain. The relief of this pain is an agreeable sensation called pleasure and occurs

through possessing the thing of which the subject felt deprived. Not all pleasures entail the relief of desire, however, as Ian Crombie, a commentator on Plato, points out: “The self-indulgent ... allow themselves no time to experience the pleasures whose pleasantness does not consist in relief of desire, and cannot conceive of the possibility that such pleasures are worth pursuing.”³⁵ “A longing for relief” is taken as denoting greed, because its pleasure primarily comes from the relief of desire rather than any intrinsic pleasantness belonging to the possessed things.

Second, “a longing ... for peace to self” in the technique corresponds to “being discontent” in line 46:3. Here, “peace to self” denotes a stable material circumstance, as Bailey explains: “The peace usually desired and discussed concerns material peace, and in every case is related to the personality, whether it is the individual personality or that of humanity as a whole. Therefore I deal not with peace, but am concerned with love, which oft disturbs the equilibrium of matter and material circumstance, and can consequently work against so-called peace.”³⁶ Discontent arises when something is desired that cannot be obtained. Longing for a stable material circumstance leads to being discon-

Discontent arises when something is desired that cannot be obtained. Longing for a stable material circumstance leads to being discontented, because the intrinsic nature of any material circumstance is change.

tented, because the intrinsic nature of any material circumstance is continual change.

Third, “a longing ... for unity because it carries with it that which is pleasantness” in the technique corresponds to “condoning people’s selfish desires” in line 46:3. This unity refers to the special relationship, because such a relationship attempts to satisfy the selfish desires of both of its partners. Perry describes the typical stages of a special relationship: “First we search for a person different from the rest, one who is more special and has a special body with special parts ... Then we offer her special behaviors and gifts that give her our specialness and, ultimately, give her our special self ... These ‘gifts,’ however, are attacks designed to make her guilty and so induce her to give her special self in return ... We (almost certainly) do not receive from her the specialness we think we paid for. So we resort increasingly to taking vengeance on her for not reciprocating.”³⁷

Revelation

Heaven and Earth are impartial;
they treat all of creation as
straw dogs.

The Master doesn’t take sides;
she treats everyone like a straw dog.
(5:1-2)

Pride brings its own trouble. (9:4)

Freed from desire, you can see the
hidden mystery.

By having desire, you can only see
what is visibly real. (1:5-6)

The word goes forth from soul to form. “Both sides are one. There is no war, no difference and no isolation. The warring forces seem to war from the point at which you stand. Move on a pace.”

During meditation, the Soul conveys the following intuition: “You are trying to decide whether or not to act pridefully regarding some circumstance, but these two paths are based on the same illusion, namely, that judgment and sense perception are reliable guides for activities. Although essentially the same, these two paths seem contradictory

because of the way you perceive them. Thus shift your perception by viewing them without desire.”

Lines 5:1-2, which characterize how a battle is perceived by “Heaven and Earth” and by “the Master,” suggest two ideas. First, both sides in a battle are essentially the same, because both sides are treated as “straw dogs.” Second, both sides in a battle are illusions, because a “straw dog,” even though it has the form of a ferocious dog, has only the erroneous appearance of power. Here, the term “illusion” means erroneous concept or belief.

ACIM also has the notion that a battle occurs only between illusions: “Truth does not fight against illusions, nor do illusions fight against the truth. Illusions battle only with themselves. Being fragmented, they fragment. But truth is indivisible and far beyond their little reach ... One illusion about yourself can battle with another, yet the war of two illusions is a state where nothing happens. There is no victor and there is no victory. And truth stands radiant, apart from conflict, untouched and quiet in the peace of God.”³⁸

The Fourth Ray technique mentions “both sides,” referring to opposing sides in a battle. The earlier portion of the technique implies that this battle is between two different paths of action: whether or not to seek pridefulness for the separated self. The selfish path is felt to be unsatisfactory, as shown by the earlier finding that it leads to outer conflict, and by McDonald’s translation of line 9:4, “Pride brings its own trouble.” The selfless path is also felt to be unsatisfactory, as shown by the earlier temptation to act otherwise, and by Huang’s translation of lines 7:6-7, “Not even relying on selflessness enables the self to be fulfilled.” Thus this inner battle is a choice between a pair of opposites, but with misgivings about each side.

The preceding discussion implies, however, that both sides in this battle are illusions. The statement “both sides are one” indicates that both sides are based on the same illusion. What is that common illusion? Mitchell translates line 52:5 as, “If you keep your

mind from judging and aren't led by the senses, your heart will find peace." Neither path has brought inner peace, so the common illusion is that judgment and sense perception are reliable guides for activities.

ACIM also associates illusion with those two factors: "Judgment, like other devices by which the world of illusions is maintained, is totally misunderstood by the world. It is actually confused with wisdom, and substitutes for truth."³⁹ "The body's eyes are, therefore, not the means by which the real world can be seen, for the illusions that they look upon must lead to more illusions of reality."⁴⁰

How can an inner conflict be resolved? Lines 1:5-6 provide the following answer: "Freed from desire, you can see the hidden mystery. By having desire, you can only see what is visibly real." Thus, the required effort is to step back from an inner conflict and then view it without desire. In the Fourth Ray technique, "move on a pace" is taken as depicting this shift in perception.

Making this shift in perception is a key step in the Fourth Ray technique, so let us examine alternative ways of describing it. Bailey says, "the task of the disciple is to become consciously aware—like a detached onlooking Observer—of these energies and their expressing qualities as they function within himself."⁴¹ Jiddu Krishnamurti, a religious philosopher, refers to the resulting observation as "choiceless awareness": "Ignorance of the ways of the self leads to illusion; and once caught in the net of illusion, it is extremely hard to break through it. It is difficult to recognize an illusion, for, having created it, the mind cannot be aware of it ... There must be an awareness of this total process, a choiceless awareness; then only is there a possibility of not breeding illusion."⁴² Thus, observation without desire is equivalent to detached observation and to choiceless awareness.

Thus the Master travels all day
without ever leaving her wagon.
Even though she has much to see,
she is at peace in her indifference.
(26:3-4)

If you can empty your mind of all
thoughts
your heart will embrace the tranquility
of peace.
Watch the workings of all of
creation,
but contemplate their return to the
source. (16:1-2)

"See truly with the opened eye of inner vision and you will find, not two but one; not war but peace; not isolation but a heart which rests upon the centre."

The Soul continues: "If you make this shift in perception, you will find, not partiality but instead an indifferent attitude; not war with different parts of yourself but instead a feeling of peace; not a feeling of separateness but instead the recognition of the inner divine center of all things."

To avoid the possibility of self-deception, three criteria can be used to ascertain whether the required shift in perception is accomplished. The first criterion is "indifference," which is mentioned in line 26:4. In the technique, "not two but one" indicates that the two paths described earlier are viewed with an indifferent attitude. Elsewhere Bailey writes about "divine indifference": "Note the use of the word 'divine,' for it holds the clue to the needed attitude. It is a different thing to the indifference of not caring, or the indifference of a psychologically developed 'way of escape' from that which is not pleasant; nor is it the indifference of superiority. It is the indifference which accepts all that is offered, uses what is serviceable, learns what can be learnt but is not held back by personality reactions. It is the normal attitude of the soul or self to the not-self. It is the negation of prejudice, of all narrow preconceived ideas, of all personality tradition, influence or background."⁴³

The second criterion is "peace," which is mentioned in both lines 26:4 and 16:1. In the technique, "not war but peace" indicates that inner war is replaced by inner peace. *ACIM* describes how either condition can replace the other: "The meeting of illusions leads to

war. Peace, looking on itself, extends itself. War is the condition in which fear is born, and grows and seeks to dominate. Peace is the state where love abides, and seeks to share itself. Conflict and peace are opposites. Where one abides the other cannot be; where either goes the other disappears.”⁴⁴

The third criterion is the recognition of the inner divine center of all things. Line 16:2 refers to such recognition by saying, “Watch the workings of all of creation, but contemplate their return to the source.” In the technique, “not isolation but a heart which rests upon the centre” depicts a similar recognition, because Bailey says that “it is through the heart that we find our way to the Heart of God,”⁴⁵ and refers to “the heart of God” as “the centre of all things.”⁴⁶

Integration

Returning to the source is tranquility

because we submit to Heaven’s mandate.

Returning to Heaven’s mandate is called being constant.

Knowing the constant is called “enlightenment.”

Not knowing the constant is the source of evil deeds

because we have no roots.

By knowing the constant we can accept things as they are.

By accepting things as they are, we become impartial.

By being impartial, we become one with Heaven.

By being one with Heaven, we become one with Tao. (16:4-11)

For this reason the Master embraces the Tao,

as an example for the world to follow.

Because she isn’t self centered, people can see the light in her.

Because she does not boast of herself,

she becomes a shining example. (22:6-8)

“Thus shall the beauty of the Lord shine forth.”

The Soul continues: “If you make this shift in perception, the love and wisdom of the Soul shall shine forth through you as impersonal service.”

Elsewhere Bailey uses the expression, “the beauty of the Lord of Love shines forth,”⁴⁷ which is quite similar to the wording in the Fourth Ray technique, and writes, “The soul is a Lord of love and wisdom.”⁴⁸ Accordingly, in the technique, the “Lord” is the Soul, and its “beauty” is love and wisdom. Making the aforementioned shift in perception would bring about a better alignment with the Soul. Bailey also writes, “The bringing about of a better alignment would also release more fully the love of your soul into your personality life and render you more radiant and attractive in the spiritual sense. This would increase your usefulness in service and supply a need.”⁴⁹ Thus, this segment of the technique has the following meaning: if the required shift in perception is accomplished, the love and wisdom of the Soul shall shine forth through the personality as service.

The foregoing passages from the *Tao Te Ching* summarize much of the Fourth Ray technique. Lines 16:4-6 describes meditation during the stage of Light: “Returning to the source is tranquility because we submit to Heaven’s mandate. Returning to Heaven’s mandate is called being constant. Knowing the constant is called ‘enlightenment.’” Here, “constant” appears to have the same meaning as eternal, and the phrase “submit to Heaven’s mandate” suggests the receptive form of meditation.

Lines 16:8-9 describe how inner unity, achieved through meditation, leads to impartiality, or indifference, during the stage of Revelation: “By knowing the constant we can accept things as they are. By accepting things as they are, we become impartial.” Lines 16:10-11 describe how impartiality leads to union with the Tao during the stage of Integration: “By being impartial, we become one with Heaven. By being one with

Heaven, we become one with Tao.” Thus, the *Tao Te Ching* explicitly has the notion that meditation, by achieving inner unity, leads to impartiality, which in turn leads to union with the Tao. Lines 22:6-8 describe the effect of a person who is one with the Tao, saying, “she becomes a shining example,” which employs language similar to that in the Fourth Ray technique.

My words are easy to understand
and easier to put into practice. (70:1)

“The hour is now.”

The Soul concludes: “You can easily understand what must be done and make the needed shift in perception immediately.”

Line 70:1 clarifies the meaning of the final sentence in the Fourth Ray technique. *ACIM* makes a related statement: “Nothing is so easy to recognize as truth. This is the recognition that is immediate, clear and natural.”⁵⁰ Accordingly, recognizing the truth about the Fourth Ray technique is easy, and accomplishing its steps, which involve recognizing other kinds of truths, is also easy.

Conclusions

Let us consider the following hypothesis: Bailey’s “Techniques of Integration” for the seven rays depict symbolically the archetypal patterns of integration that aspirants are intuitively directed to apply to themselves. This hypothesis can be tested by comparing Bailey’s ray techniques with various methods of psychological or spiritual integration that are thought to be inspired. The foregoing demonstration, which shows that the *Tao Te Ching* and the Fourth Ray technique have similar passages, supports this hypothesis and clarifies both 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.

When clarified, the Fourth Ray technique can be seen as having three main stages. First, through achieving inner alignment, the aspirants discover the pairs of opposites that they

use to construct concepts of themselves as being separate from other people, and they recognize that such concepts lead to outer conflict. Second, they reject the path of pridefulness and instead try to follow a second path that seeks nothing for the separated self. Finally, through detachment, they discover a third path that resolves their inner conflict between the first two paths. This third path is the shining forth of the Soul through the personality.

Elsewhere Bailey describes the same sequence of stages but in a more obscure way: “The first thing the aspirant becomes aware of is duality ... Thus the dual forces play their part until they are seen as two great streams of divine energy, pulling in opposite directions, and he becomes then aware of the two paths ... One path leads back into the dreary land of rebirth, and the other leads through the golden gate to the city of free souls. One is therefore involutory and involves him in deepest matter; the other leads him out of the body nature, and makes him eventually aware of his spiritual body, through which he can function in the kingdom of the soul ... Clear discrimination of these two paths reveals what is called in some occult books that ‘narrow razor-edged Path’ which lies between the two. This is the ‘noble middle Path’ of the Buddha and marks the fine line of demarcation between the pairs of opposites.”⁵¹

Why is Bailey’s “Technique of Integration for the Fourth Ray” associated with that ray? This technique provides instructions for accomplishing the purpose that Bailey describes for the Fourth Ray: “This ray of harmony through conflict (the conflict of the pairs of opposites) is necessarily concerned with the bringing in of that vibratory activity which will lead to unity, to harmony and to right relations, and to the release of the intuition.”⁵² Moreover, this technique is based on what Bailey calls “the Principle of Conflict, which is the outstanding characteristic of this Fourth Ray of Harmony through Conflict.”⁵³

What is the Principle of Conflict? Bailey writes, “It is the Principle of Conflict, latent in every atom of substance, which produces,

first of all, conflict, then renunciation, and finally emancipation; which produces war in some form or another, then rejection, and finally liberation.”⁵⁴ Here, the term “atom” denotes a unit of consciousness and could refer to a subhuman, human, or superhuman form of life. Thus, the Principle of Conflict brings about three stages of evolution for whatever form of life it affects.

Our exegesis of the Fourth Ray technique shows that it is simply an elaboration of the three stages that the Principle of Conflict brings about for aspirants on the spiritual journey. First, the aspirants become aware of their conflict with other people. Next, they renounce prideful activity because they recognize that such activity leads to outer conflict. Finally, they experience union with the Soul, which resolves their inner conflict.

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