

These multiple levels of consciousness function more or less autonomously. The soul's overall abilities and habits are improved and altered through the experiences of all levels, periodically consolidated into a unified framework. The soul may at any point choose to strengthen a particular area of interest or to try something new. At all times, however, it learns and grows. Humanity is a collection of animals whose surface control functions as a thin skim of ice over a very deep lake. The solid ice seems self-contained and unique, but in reality is just water in a different form than the fluid water of the lake. And within the water of the lake the bulk of activity occurs.

This is not to say that living in animal bodies is not worthwhile. Quite the contrary. We need the animal bodies to manipulate energy and experience in ways that allow us to consolidate our gains. Without a structured pattern of consolidation, we would rapidly become a hodgepodge of uncontrolled experiences. The purposes of evolution would not be served. The soul would not really grow, but merely continue to exist. Since nature does not allow things to remain in a steady state for long, the soul that didn't grow would eventually devolve into its component ener-

gies. This would mean the soul would cease to exist as an ordered, living entity, and become instead a disordered collection of nonliving entities. This is not an attractive goal even for the laziest soul. Consequently, all souls are deeply motivated to progress and to consolidate their experiences however they can. Some progress faster than others, but all progress.

Having a greater biological potential for intelligence has simply paved the way for greater environmental experience. The individuals involved must be motivated to exploit the potential; this motivation stems from the soul. It is this motivation that stimulates the individual to make the most of his abilities. When this happens consistently over many generations, the improvements in behavior are encoded in the organism's biological instincts and genetic structure. The species evolves, changing in keeping with new and expanded skills. Motivation, then, is the key to Darwinian evolution: the soul motivates biological evolution through cumulative changes in the behavior of host species. In time, the corporeal organism—the species—adapts its shape as well as its behavior to its new habits.

Defining these classifications of life-entities and elements of consciousness helps us understand our place in a multidimensional framework of consciousness, just as we can place ourselves in the multidimensional framework of space and time. The organization of consciousness is as perfectly harmonious and balanced as any other physical reality. Just as the mechanical cosmos is the result of a cosmic evolution, the Oversoul and all other living entities are the result of the evolution of universal consciousness. There is a planned order in evolution that is suggestive of a higher order, of a Creator. But the expression of the order unfolds in evolutionary terms, as each action is an organized response to predeterminate actions. Our goal within this evolutionary framework is to learn to control the environment rather than being controlled by it. To do so requires that fragments of consciousness explore in minute detail each aspect of physical reality. Our task is to explore aspects of the spacetime cosmos.

The concept of levels of universe can help us organize our thoughts on infinity. Each level of universe can be viewed as a building block of existence. There are infinite numbers of such building blocks, each one having its own unique substance and organization. All act autonomously to the extent that they only interact at their simplest level of organization. This simplest level, which my guides call the Universal Force, is the single unifying field from which all substance and action derive. Each level of universe is a specific permutation of this universal field and becomes a field unto itself. Within each of these fields further orders of organization can develop.

The hierarchical framework of these various personalities can also be described as concentric circles, personalities within personalities. Each offshoot is an expression or aspect of a greater self. Each offshoot likes to perceive itself as being unique and whole unto itself, but must also in some way be a part of external realities. Ultimately, the entire fabric of the universe is joined in this way. It is all one universal consciousness, expressing itself in a multitude of unique and fragmentary ways.

ROBERT ALLAN STEWART: "1990, 285 PP"
"PAST LIVES RECAPTURED"

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When as souls we cease to require biological organisms for our evolution, we will continue to express love through the new media we choose to use. Our expression of the ideal will then change in form and perhaps content, but it will remain an expression of love. This is the essence of evolution; as we become more evolved, we develop new skills and ideals, and always broaden and deepen the expression of existing ideals.

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There is probably no limit to the number of ideals we can enjoy. The purpose of life on earth is not just to live and make more life, but also to improve life. Biological evolution is a slow, steady process that foments this goal. It is fostered in itself by the efforts of each and every life-entity that joins a biological organism. Yet the entities themselves gain the most, for they are learning from the organisms and the experiences those organisms present. Each entity must choose its own tasks, always directing its main tasks at improving life in general. Such improvements may only be in terms of some minute progression in the development of the animal organism, or it may be in some more significant terms in exploiting some new habitat. Each action leads to some improvement in life, even when some actions are quite negative in the short term. Something positive can always be salvaged from the negative, some lesson learned.

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Even the most bitterly destructive acts can be perpetrated with the intent to do good for the self, or a social unit. I emphasize the phrase "with the intent" because causing great harm or failing to achieve good does not necessarily belie good intent. Nor does even a direct intent to do harm to someone else necessarily belie a corresponding intent to do good for the self or one's own people. What goes wrong is that the party causing the harm has not grown sufficiently to realize the advantage of selflessness. This is why our world bears such sadness and strife. Too many of us are not sufficiently evolved to realize that universal good is served, not by promoting self-interest over the interest of others, but by serving the interests of others first.

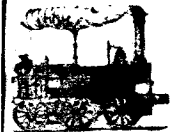
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This is a lesson that is difficult to learn because, when surrounded by those who would destroy us even as we help them, we are slow to develop trust. Trust is the essential first step on

The soul is motivated by its need to progress. As with any vacation retreat, there is the immediate exultation of the release from worldly concerns and worries. There is great beauty there, and great potential for rewarding pursuits. But also as with any vacation retreat, there is a new order which must be learned. The soul must adapt to the terms of the Afterlife, and the responsibilities of that particular phase of its development. In time, it is prepared to return to the work of incarnate life. The period of time spent in the Afterlife varies from incarnation to incarnation and soul to soul. No soul, however, is content to remain forever in a single state. The need for growth always eggs it on to search out new experience, no matter how reluctant the individual may be. Most souls actively seek out the challenges of growth. This is why explorers and adventurers are willing to risk life and limb for an experience. They realize the cost of personal progress and accept the risks happily, expecting full well (to grow) as the result.

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though one could easily argue that they are higher aspects of my own self. Once again, this criticism approaches the truth, for even the guides themselves (at least my principal guides) argue this very point, that they are indeed higher aspect selves of a unified Oversoul, one that includes the human soul as well as their's. However, this goes considerably beyond the conventional criticisms I could expect, and besides, my guides argue that the principal parts of the self occur outside the organic body. In other words, they see the human personality as an extension of their core being, rather than as a human critic might, who would see them as an extension of the human mind. The human personality, in other words, is just a shadow of the real self, a minor aspect self projected within the terrestrial world through the medium of a human body.

In addition, the soul learns to foment its own development. It realizes that it depends in many ways upon other beings and forces. It learns that helping others helps itself. This simple awareness paves the way for the development of further ideals, which do not necessarily have an immediate effect on its own condition.

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sively resolves the debate. And when you reincarnate, you have the opportunity to debate the issue again.

Adaptation can be described in corporeal terms, though the principles apply equally to the life-entity. If an organism accustomed to a warm environment suddenly finds that environment cooler, it must adapt. If the change is too sudden, the species may well fail and die out. But if the change is gradual enough, the species can adapt. This much has been scientifically resolved; no effective argument exists to counter the simple fact that organisms do indeed change their own being to adapt to environmental challenges and opportunities. These changes can be subtle or obvious. Given enough time and perhaps some special conditions such as isolation in different habitats, the individuals of a single species can begin to evolve in different ways. One species may branch out and evolve into several different species. After formulating this hypothesis, Darwin himself sailed from England to the Galapagos Islands off the coast of South America to observe these very principles in action.

What science has yet to resolve is (how) How does one species become another and how does one set of individuals within a species choose one particular evolutionary path over other potential paths? Darwin's finches, some 13 species of finches on the Galapagos Islands, served to illustrate for him the mechanics of diversification of species. Similarly in Hawaii some 22 species of honeycreepers are the descendants of a single species of tanager that drifted to the islands on the winds. Each has evolved into a species that exploits a facet of its environment, some catching insects on the wing, others developing long beaks for collecting nectar from flowers, still others having short, strong bills for cracking nuts. Yet all have the same ancestor, which has been verified through blood tests. Somehow, similar descendants of a single species developed into strikingly different species (the definition of species being a population naturally inclined to interbreed and thereby produce normal, fertile offspring with the same characteristics as the parents.)

What causes some individuals within the same species to begin selecting vastly different environmental responses? According to

classical Darwinian theories of random mutation, perhaps some of the honeycreepers happened to grow longer bills, and therefore were inclined to use them to gather nectar. But this to me seems altogether (too chancy) It requires that a particular individual who happens to possess a slightly longer bill would be smart enough to realize how to use it and then deliberately seek out another long-billed specimen and mate. The off-spring would thereafter have to continue this deliberate pattern until they had established their viability as a separate breeding population.

A more likely explanation is that one or more individuals discovered how to gather nectar and others copied this behavior. In time, a population associated by virtue of (habit) developed, and began breeding. Because their habits were passed on to their off-spring, and to the next generation in turn, the species began to adapt to the task. The actions themselves, conducted consistently over many generations within a particular breeding population, systematically caused the changes in physiology to occur.

Meanwhile, other breeding populations adopted different habits. Individuals with the same habits grouped together in breeding populations, which became increasingly exclusive as their habits became increasingly specialized. Perhaps fortunes of geography helped isolate groups initially, but in time the mere fact that certain individuals interacted through similar habits ensured that the various specialized branches eventually evolved into separate species. In short, the habits became encoded in the genetic material of the birds themselves. Their bodies adapted to the tasks set by habit and practice until the birds came to depend on the habit for their survival. In time, many new species took shape from the parent species.

This second hypothesis is much more likely. Supporting evidence is found in the habits of a population of English titmice. Some years ago, one of these small birds learned how to peck open the paper cap on a milk bottle. As the little bird returned morning after morning to peck open bottles and sip milk, other titmice began to copy its behavior. In a short while the behavior was spreading throughout England. Undoubtedly, if the titmice continued this behavior over many generations and came to depend on milk bottles as their main source of food, their bills

4^a and physiology would have begun to adapt to the task of opening and drinking from milk cartons. Unfortunately this test is unlikely, as the human packagers of milk have certainly by now adapted to some other, more modern packaging technology.

Even if this second hypothesis proves correct, we still have an unanswered question. What caused that particular titmouse to do something new? Why did other titmice copy the behavior? We can say they seized a new opportunity that didn't exist before, but this still doesn't provide a cause for that particular action. Why was that particular opportunity seized by that particular species? Why didn't the titmouse content itself with its existing source of food, or why didn't a starling or sparrow (two notoriously opportunistic species) learn to open milk bottles? Something drove this particular individual of this particular species to this particular innovation. (to attempt the untried) A decision was made, it was successful, and when it was demonstrated to be successful, others copied the behavior. If the behavior had not been successful, the titmice would not have begun copying it. At any given moment, there is an infinite range of opportunities before any given individual. What causes the individual to choose the opportunities it does?

* The potential for choice exists within all living entities. This potential for choice is the essence of life itself. It is the force behind survival. The individual must choose to pursue survival. For most organisms, even single-celled ones, the choice can be expressed as simply as "Do I flee, or do I continue feeding?" Microorganisms exposed to light under a microscope can be seen scuttling away. They perceive light and take the action consistent with their will to survive: they flee.

The flight response is one of the most elemental aspects of life. A nonliving substance exposed to light simply does whatever it does when struck by photons of light; for example, a sheet of white paper turns yellow. It does not have the capacity to identify with its state of existence as a white piece of paper and therefore resist the process of turning yellow. It simply exists and undergoes whatever chemical reactions the light stimulates. But living entities tailor their responses to their needs; the microorganism

flee, but the green plant turns toward the light source. It is quite impressive to see several hundred acres of sunflowers, each and every broad-faced flower dutifully turned to face the sun and tracking it across the sky from dawn to dark.

Given a choice between life and non-life, the life-entity must choose life. It is possible for people to choose to commit suicide or to die for a cause or to protect their loved ones. But this is not true death, the cessation of life. It is merely the surrendering of one state for another, the death of an organism, but not of the life-entity itself. Typically, the suicide who fails in his attempt realizes immediately that he has made an enormous mistake. Some do make several attempts, but are they really attempting to die or are they desperately crying out for help? The soul of the suicide, the accident victim, and the hero continues after the death of the body. The body serves as a vehicle and is relinquished. What happens then is a change of state.

At any change of state, the entity has an opportunity to make new choices. These choices are typically made with growth and fresh opportunity in mind. New directions can be set or old problems tackled anew. At all times, however, the life-entity is motivated to survive and grow. Even the suicide is motivated by a desire to improve his personal condition by ending what he views to be a hopeless state. In fact, Karma dictates that he will have to work out the problems sometime in the future, regardless. The successful suicide, then, might be described as a failed effort to resolve a genuine problem. Far from ending the unpleasantness of life, the soul is confronted with a compounded problem; it has taken away its immediate ability—its incarnate experience—to solve the problem. It must wait for a new vehicle to try again, and may have to wait a long time.

The healthy soul looks forward to its next challenge. It anticipates improvements to its lot and deliberately engineers the experiences that lead to the sorts of improvements it seeks. It must have some goal, whether that goal is as simple as mere survival or one of the higher ideals. Our life-dimension explores a very specific set of ideals, chief among them the development of mutual assistance, of love for others.

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 ✕ | Mutual assistance is a means of achieving one's personal goals by assisting others (achieve theirs). The general idea is that what improves the lot of those around you improves your own lot as well. Typically this is the case. However, as we well know, great disagreement can arise over what is best for whom. These disagreements, though at their heart highly motivated, can result in great destruction. Wars, sad as this fact may be, are motivated by one group of people trying to improve their collective lot at the expense of others they see as outside their sphere of loyalty. In other words, individuals within one social group identify only with other individuals within their group and perceive other groups as enemies. The mutual assistance is confined to the home group. This is an evolution or extension of our family and tribal instincts. These instincts can be applied in many ways within a given nation or culture.

| This stirring and mixing of a basic instinct can cause great confusion as well. Even if you identify with groups other than your own and wish nothing but the best for everybody, it is extremely difficult to know what the "best" is. These are the types of problems confronting us as we attempt to establish a truly global society. Not only do we have to contend with problems for which there are no clear solutions, but there are conflicts between many groups and nations that simply do not want to compromise. The result is that there is lots of work for any soul that wishes to advance its own well being by helping others. Our world offers a wealth of problems to solve.

d | There are many challenges our species and soul-race are attempting to meet. The soul does not just begin solving world problems as it pleases. It must first prepare. The souls of the Human Race have been preparing for these tasks a long time. Slowly, certainly, the experiences within the lower races of Man's Dimension have created the foundation of experience necessary to the task. First we must learn of this world and how to operate within it. Our introduction to this plane occurs in Serpentina, when we learn through the simple vehicles of the serpents how to manipulate atomical organism. These vehicles also give us first-hand experience of the reptilian ancestry of our

organic vehicle. Next, the ubiquitous rodents introduce us to life within warm-blooded species. Slowly, very carefully, the soul gathers its experience through the various levels of the life-dimension, adding each new experience to the foundation of its earlier experiences.

As the soul achieves the third and fourth levels, it begins to show stirrings of recognition of its overall purpose within the life-dimension. Each soul picks for itself its principal habitats, its preferences in terms of experience and nature, and its personal tasks. While these choices are not manifested in highly sophisticated ways during lower-order incarnations, they become more and more obvious as the soul advances through the middle levels of the life-dimension. Maternal instincts become stronger, the care and nurturing of young and other members of a social group are developed to higher expression. Members of groups stand lookout for predators, issuing warnings to others before fleeing for their own safety. Some band together to fight in self-defense as a group or to hunt as a group. Social bonds begin to form. In some of the highest species, interpersonal loyalties also form in special bonds or friendships between particular individuals.

The soul is the primary motivator in the selection of behavior. Over time a given species finds certain behavior to be rewarded, the reward being enhanced survival. It develops and refines the behavior, the behavior becoming increasingly encoded in the very make-up of the animal. Underlying this process is motivation. At the very outset of an innovation, it is not the species that motivates new behavior, but individuals. A species is only a set of individuals with common characteristics. The characteristics themselves are inherent to the species only because individuals of that species at some point in the past developed them. Each individual born to the species has the opportunity to use the common characteristics essentially unaltered, or to begin adapting them in some new way. In time, adaptations can change the collective behavior of the species. The changed behavior becomes fixed as a characteristic of the species and is bred into the actual form of the animal itself. Whether or not this happens depends on the opportunities available, with individual behavior motivated by the underlying instincts for survival and self-improvement on the



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 * part of each life-entity and on the creativity of individuals who may or may not conceive of doing something new. The result is that the species may change, and the soul-race using the species may change.

At the very least, new behavior changes the individual soul. Each life-entity learns something from each experience, then carries that experience on to its next incarnation. The reason a single species may not change much in its patterns of behavior over the millenia is that the individuals using the species learn what it has to teach, then move on. Then new individuals come to use the species, learn its lessons, and again move on. Just as Grade One forever teaches new children the letters of the alphabet, a single species may forever offer the same lesson. Other species, and man is an example, create for themselves new lessons. Even so, it is uncanny how many of our lessons remain the same; we still haven't learned to stop war, or to cease arguing about politics, or to calmly accept the loss of first loves. In emotional terms, the human condition described by Plato two-and-a-half millenia ago is essentially the human condition today. Children still resist learning from their parents' example; they're still rambunctious and often irresponsible. Older people are still slowing down, getting overly cautious in their habits, or occasionally acting with all the recklessness, greed, and foolishness they failed to express when they were young. People are still people and though every species evolves, all species evolve slowly compared with individual souls. For in human terms, once a soul learns not to make war, to heed the advice of others, and all the other human lessons, it is ready to move on to level ten.

Each incarnation brings to the soul new experiences. It may or may not learn a lesson the first time; it may or may not even recognize many of the potential lessons a given experience has to offer. A similar experience, at different stages of its evolution, will teach different lessons. Perhaps the soul may even draw opposing conclusions. As no two souls are ever at exactly the same stage of development in all aspects of their being at the same time, the potential for learning from any type of experience is infinite.

As the soul grows, it requires more challenging learning opportunities. The learning potential of any vehicle is never exhausted, but it does achieve a diminishing rate of return. When a certain balance is reached, the soul is ready to move on. The movement may be self-directed, or imposed by the conditions of its environment, including the will of the Oversoul. Eventually, however, all living beings move on from one stage to the next, because evolution never halts. A

Each of the ten levels of Man's Dimension has a principal lesson to teach. In the process, there are thousands of lesser lessons for the soul-race and infinite varieties of personal lessons for individual souls. Each lesson learned is a lesson that can be relearned and expanded upon at any time. Experience is infinitely variable, and any given experience can be turned to infinite varieties of use. Yet somehow the individual must make sense out of all its experience. It does this through a series of processes that are collectively termed consolidation.

Consolidation is the means by which the soul relates each new experience with all its previous experiences. We do this each time we encounter something new. We immediately search our memories for the most similar experiences we have had so that we can begin to understand the new experience or to achieve the best solution to the problem it presents. Never will two events be precisely the same, but there are degrees of similarity. Familiar situations may be easily handled, but may also be a source of continuing problems. Each of us must learn to handle our own chronic problems and deficiencies, trying to strengthen our weaknesses wherever we can. The more we learn about a particular event or condition enables us to deal with it more effectively—or less ineffectively. *

Consolidation is not just an informal process of evolution. To the soul it is the essence of growth. The soul must physically consolidate its own living energies so that it can continue to build a healthy pattern of growth. After each incarnation it consolidates its experiences into the living energy of its own being. Lessons learned are explored for their most lasting significance. They are compared with experiences from earlier incarnations to see if previous conclusions can be improved upon or modified. This



7^a base of experience, understanding, and wisdom is then carried forward to the next incarnation. After every two incarnations or so, a greater form of consolidation occurs. This is a life-cycle consolidation, when a complement of experiences has been gathered which are directed toward a given learning task. These life-cycles then combine to form stages within a level; when enough stages have been achieved to meet the needs of that level, the soul can advance to a new soul-race. Then a new set of experiences and challenges are set before the soul, and a new set of stages and life-cycles. In time, the soul reaches the Human Level, at which point it must prepare for yet another transition, the transition to an entirely new physical plane.

The soul consolidates not just its experiences but the material of its world. It incorporates the energy of its host plane into the substance of its self. To join a new plane is to begin to use new forms of energy as source material. This implies that new mechanisms must be put in place and that the individual soul must prepare itself for these changes. The process of evolution, then, is a one of continuous adaptation and growth. If growth stops, the entity is in danger. If it is in danger, it is more urgently motivated to progress. And thereby nature achieves a measure of balance. The life-entity evolves in its general course as required by nature, but forges its own unique experiences within that course. As the soul becomes more mature, it is able to take more and more responsibility for its own evolution. It improves its abilities of self-direction. Its state of being as a living entity, therefore, can be measured by its sense of responsibility to its own being and to others, and by its ability to direct the events of its own life.

In Man's Dimension, the first four levels are devoted to learning to manipulate the biological organism and introducing the growing soul to the principles to be learned from this life-dimension. The next four levels are devoted to expanding these initial lessons and preparing individual evolution in a more conscious and controlled manner. The souls of these levels also begin to look forward (from the soul's perspective, as opposed to that of the animal organism) to their future state as human souls. At this point, however, the view is hazy and indistinct; the soul is not yet

sufficiently mature to consistently direct its experience in its own best interests. This maturity does not develop until the Human Level itself, and only then when the soul is very nearly ready to transcend to level ten.

Until then, the soul pursues very much an animal existence. Its interests are those of predation and avoiding predators. It attempts to find successful patterns of life as it can within whatever species or organism it is currently using. And it begins to show its personal degree of motivation. There are souls that are greatly motivated, taking on more challenges for themselves than their peers, and those that are content to follow the paths blazed by others. In short, the animal consciousness becomes increasingly similar to human consciousness. If we look with unbiased eyes, we can see much of ourselves in the higher mammals—not because they are like us, but because they share with us a family of characteristics, the characteristics of Mammalia.

This is why the patterns of usage of the animal vehicles have developed the way they have. Each stage has a specific intent, engineered into the way each and every soul of this life-dimension must evolve. The patterns were not explicitly created by a higher consciousness, as we often suggest our ordered cosmos has been "created by God," but rather by the timely and fortuitous decisions of virtually numberless individuals making their best possible decisions at each turn of their progression. This gradual building of patterns is the essence of evolution. While not immutable, it does have a malleable strength. Like steel wire, it can be shaped, stretched, twisted, and altered in many ways, but resists radical change. It is tempered to bend rather than break.

The souls of Man's Dimension have their route of progression laid out for them by the very fact that they belong to this life-dimension. I hope in a future book to deal with (the issues that caused these particular souls to draw together in this particular life-dimension), but for now it is enough to say that they have common needs that are best served by this life-dimension. The first nine levels lead the soul from the simple experience of Serpentina to the exploration of higher principles at the Human Level. The soul thereby grows from an entity concerned only with its own continuance to one concerned with the well being of others.

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product of our experience. It is the engineering of our experience that tells us whether and when we are prepared to make the decisions that will lead us to higher worlds.

Here you must begin to rationalize your own feelings about moving on to other worlds. We all know the trials of this world, the unhappiness and pain that this transient life in flesh can engender. While there is no permanent bliss as promised by many spiritual gurus and prophets, there are indeed happier states—or at least, worlds in which the pursuit of happiness is much easier. However, if you are not happy in this world, chances are you are not ready to be happy elsewhere, either. Your world and your experience are making your decisions for you at every step. You interact with your world, and your reactions guide your progress. You can fight your progress or foment it; you can accept your hard knocks or try to overcome them as you are able.

However you choose to approach it, your life is largely the result of your overall mindset, a culmination of all your previous decisions and experiences. This process sets up many of your future experiences. (your mindset has much to do with how you will interact with them, as well.) If you find this world to be too difficult, the challenge of overcoming your problems too great, then you are probably not ready yet to consider another world in light of what it has to offer. Instead, you might view it as a form of escape, and what you are trying to escape from is your own self. This you cannot do, but you can, ever so slowly, and usually only after several incarnations, change how you interact with your life. What you do in this incarnation is only one battle in a long war (an analogy, I'm sure, originating in my own aggressive natural history as a human and a soul) or one opportunity in many to develop something more positive from within yourself.

The soul does not always recognize these truths. Nor does it always act to foment them. However, it is much more likely to do so than is the much frailer human mind. In this context, then, the slightly (and I emphasize "slightly") less-evolved soul of the seventh level is really trying to offset its fondness for power and action by using vehicles more inclined to passivity. However,

these vehicles are fraught with their own deficiencies, as all vehicles are. It is the combination of experience that builds the wholesome experience of the soul, not any one type. A concentration on any aspect or character generally results in an unhealthy obsession, which can only be cured by offsetting experiences of an opposite or expansionary nature. Like the child who borrows the same book from the school library week after week, the opportunity to grow is given over to a preference for the comfortable and familiar. Growth means risk and the pursuit of unknown things.

The soul is molded by such experiences, shaping its internal self in part by the animal devotion to the continuation of species expressed through its offspring. This is not an orderly growth of experience, but one that creeps into the awareness at all levels as the animal experience continues to build the soul.

I use the word "build" deliberately. I resist the word "change," because the soul is acquiring more self, quantitatively as well as qualitatively, as it evolves. While this indeed means it is constantly changing, its change is progressive. The soul is actually being built and shaped by its incarnate experience. It becomes what it has done, and this means its change is constantly orienting it to new directions. In the context of Man's Dimension, the soul is migrating from a very minimally aware form of consciousness to an active, thinking, decision-making, emotionally developed consciousness. The emotions grow as a result of what the soul brings to the animal world, but this beginning spark is nurtured and shaped by the terrestrial experiences.

Each incarnation adds something to the emotional development of the entity; while the soul adds its tiny bit to the overall evolution of each biological species it uses, the organisms themselves change the soul in major ways. We become, as souls, what the experience of this world allows or enables us to become. We become very much animal souls; our living energy is formed and shaped by animal experience and is indelibly organized to foment animal-like consciousness in the Afterlife as well in as the terrestrial world.

Chapter 30
The Final Path



It is not my intent to sketch out my human incarnations in this book; there have not been many, only five counting this one. Instead, I have sought to trace the general steps and stages of the soul's evolution through the lower orders. This evolution, as you are by now aware, is not controlled entirely by biological forces. Rather, it is controlled by the specific forces of the evolution of life-entities. A life-entity, while it may indeed use biological organisms as corporeal vehicles, is not constrained to evolving within such organisms.

In fact, the life-entities that use our terrestrial earth for their evolution are only some of the lifeforms of this planet. All of the planes of Earth are inhabited. Each plane is a portion of a physical spectrum of material energy; this material spectrum is itself just one level of universe in a universe of infinite levels or aspects of self. Just as our surface minds are only one aspect of our individual consciousness, our terrestrial plane is only one physical aspect of our planet. And beyond both mind and matter lies an infinite universe.

Nor is life constrained to this planet. There are other inhabited planets in the cosmos. There is evidence to suggest that some lifeforms have already developed interplanetary travel and have visited Earth. But even within our own planet, there are many forms of life we scarcely suspect exist. They live beyond our spatial realm, sharing the material nature of this planet. We form just one type of life in numberless varieties of lifeforms; our world is just one world in an infinite variety of worlds, worlds that are separated by space, time, and physical constructs we have not even begun to contemplate.

It is a useful exercise to let our minds wander over the potential realities of our world and our universe. Though we may not be exactly right all the time, we will develop many useful ideas that will lead us to better understandings of our physical existence. Just as Darwin provided a focal point in our understanding of the evolution of biological species, we need to develop a similar

focal point in our understanding of the development of life. And just as Darwin inevitably failed to tell us the whole story of biological evolution—a story biologists have yet to fully unravel—this book tells only a portion of the evolution of a single type of life-entity, that is, the human soul. It says virtually nothing of the many billions of other types of life-entities throughout the known and unknown universe.

Nor does it tell the whole story of the development of the soul. It picks up somewhere in the middle of the story, at the point at which the soul joins our earth-plane in a fundamental change in its evolutionary direction. The soul itself originates on another plane and evolves through several planes and numerous types of vehicles before it joins this plane. It joins Serpentina as a very young soul and evolves quickly through Serpentina and the lower orders of Mammalia. It then joins the Human Level for many years. The soul's stay in the Human Level can last many centuries and sometimes millenia. In time, though, the soul does move on.

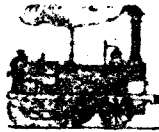
When it does, the new experience is still very similar to what we are familiar with here. This may sound strange, because how can another plane, constructed of less stable and less dense material than atoms, provide a lifestyle similar to that of terrestrial earth? The answer is simple. The souls that move on to this new plane are still very much oriented to a human experience. They reconstruct similar experiences in their new world because that is what is familiar to them. Their new world, however, offers a freedom that they could never find in this terrestrial world. They have far more freedom to shape the material of their new world than we have to shape our atomical environment. If a soul wants to move or create a mountain, it simply collects the necessary forces of consciousness (such tasks can involve a number of souls with a common interest) and moves sufficient energy into the form of a mountain. In terrestrial terms, of course, to move mountains we need tremendous amounts of dynamite, trucks, equipment, time, and human resources. Yet given enough energy and time, we can move mountains here, too. The difference is that in the next world, the task is easier because of the raw material evident there. But the will of the living entities is the same.

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Level nine is where we first learn to concentrate our wishes on restructuring our environment and lifestyles in a major way. We call this effort civilization and perceive it to be the process of developing cities, governments, armies, formal educational institutions, art, and structured leisure. But civilization can be expressed in a more generalized context. Civilization is the concept of a collective of individuals actively shaping every aspect of their lives, as best they can, for their own mutual advantage. This is the great advance man has made over the lower orders, though again it is not such a qualitative difference as it is a quantitative difference. Other animals use tools, shape their environment, and adapt their lifestyles to new circumstances for their own advantage. But man takes his intrinsic animal skills and makes much more of them. Ours is a species that concentrates intellectual energy in a tremendously productive way, changing our world enormously in a few short centuries. And we will change it more still.

As we change this world, the principal players of any given time will move on. We are familiar with biological death; all of us die. Our greatest contributors eventually leave our race for a higher race, that of the tenth level. Even in the context of reincarnation, no person ever lives twice. If a great person reincarnates, the personality that made him great was largely forged by the interaction of a soul with a specific corporeal body. When the body dies, that specific relationship dies with it. Though the soul carries with it all its experiences, its next incarnation is with a new body and this results in a whole new set of interactions between soul and corporeal organism.

When a baby is born, there is a brand new person, a personality that has never lived before and will never live again. The nucleus of that new person has lived in other bodies through many levels of experience, and experiences encountered through the new body will change in some modest ways every aspect of its being. This is the glorious thing about reincarnation; far from being a stilted revisiting of earth again and again, it is indeed a rebirth, the creation of a new personality that rises out of all the person-



alities that have gone before, and out of the life and experiences to come.

The soul must move on. It fulfills its needs for this plane and must move on to another. A soul that completes some great task on earth can find itself liberated from the need to reincarnate in our terms. It is probably safe to say that the Einsteins and Beethovens and Darwins of the world have freed themselves from the need to reincarnate *within this world*. However, they will have joined level ten, and there follow the specific reincarnational practices associated with that level's host plane.

The central principle of reincarnation is a common one, for it is cyclical as many things in the universe are. It provides an opportunity for new growth, stabilized experience, rest, and consolidation. Each of these aspects of life are essential, regardless of how highly evolved an entity becomes. As Genesis says, even God rested when his task was done. Undoubtedly God, once rested, chose for himself a new task.

Level ten is the label I am applying to an experience that appears again and again in human mythology. This is the life of eternal growth that lies beyond the Afterlife; it is the window to the soul's future. The world in which level-ten souls incarnate is a different plane than the Afterlife. It is a world that supports growth and life, as does terrestrial earth, rather than a world for resting following an incarnation. Still, it is similar in some ways to our Afterlife, because the Afterlife is a major force in preparing us for our eventual passage to the higher plane. Such aspects include an ability to shape matter easily and to develop skills of cooperation between souls. These skills are practiced in our world, too, but I have already alluded to the greater difficulties we have here in expressing them.

Level ten is an expression of human values in our highest terms. This is the higher world described in much of our mythology and literature and religion. It differs from the Afterlife in that it is more than a way station. It is a working plane in which new things are developed and exploited, whereas the Afterlife is more an area of experimentation, trial, and rest.

The need for the new world should be obvious to us. While many of us cry out (consciously or unconsciously) for a place of

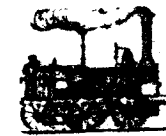
M permanent rest, none of us would be satisfied for long in such a place. There is no permanent bliss: all of life is a growing experience; you grow or atrophy. Because atrophying is not a pleasant prospect, we all grow. When we are tired, we rest. When we are rested, we are eager to learn more, do more, and periodically widen our horizons. No world can contain any soul forever; no soul can be content to stop its evolution. We will always grow.

A Some may see this as a gloomy prophesy. It is not. It is the most beautiful thing about being alive. It assures you that you will always have time to correct your mistakes, that no error of yours or your loved ones will be forever punished or be a permanent blockage in your progress. You will always overcome your problems, no matter how great they are. But you should be aware that some problems take more than one lifetime to defeat, and that each incarnation will bring with it new challenges. It's largely your own personal efforts that result in you defeating your problems and crowning your achievements. The choice is yours: you can rush forward, move slowly and carefully, or rest. And when tired of rushing, you can slow down; when eager to move faster, you can speed up; when rested, you can start out again. You have to be the judge of your own needs; you have to provide your own motivation and impetus. It is rarely the world around you that holds you back, but (you yourself). When you accept this, your efforts will be aimed most directly at your real needs.

I One final word. No one should be offended or amused at the thought of having reincarnated as other animals. Although this is not our culture's habitual way of thinking, we must recognize how little our physical sciences have learned about the human life force. Apart from measuring a few brain waves (science has learned nothing about the nature and substance of life.) Think about it. Although some people can be quite smug about the achievements of science and are sometimes derisive of such ideas as reincarnation and past-life recall, such opinions derive from ignorance. It is easy to view oneself as being open-minded or objective while actually catering to one's own biases. Too often, these biases are the products of a popular culture that has learned

Ultimately, each of us must satisfy our own mind as to the validity of such phenomena as past-life recall. I am satisfied because no other explanation resolves all the information and experiences I have come by in the past decade. Having come to accept reincarnation, the existence of higher beings as guides, and the soul's survival of bodily death, I can see how these factors work dynamically together in every aspect of my life. We all use past-life recall (subconsciously) all the time. We cannot do anything without some influence from our past lives. The reason is simple. We are the manifestation of all our experience. Things seem significant because we have learned that they matter, or we associate them with something familiar. We also juxtapose our experience with things we have not yet experienced: we may become interested in something new because we recognize it as something we have not yet explored to a satisfactory degree.

Each level of the life-dimension has its particular series of tasks and lessons, organized in major and minor blocks in the three sets of three levels and the tenth. In the end, the soul emerges more or less prepared for what is to follow in the next life-dimension. Concurrent to preparing the self for this higher experience, the individual soul tries to leave each level and life-dimension a better evolutionary vehicle than when it arrived. Thus, each soul joins a level or life-dimension, that has been patterned by the experience of all the souls that preceded it. It then has an opportunity to alter that pattern for the better, if it can. This is all a part of evolution, as the shifting scene adapts to new individuals and new external conditions. However, overall there is a structure and pattern. Each soul must fulfill certain requirements of experience before it can move on to the next level. It must learn its lessons.



female, it must fend off predators, sometimes other bears, that threaten its young. Life becomes responsibility, responsibility which becomes more and more conscious. In this second incarnation in Minor Omnivora, my first young are my last. I am