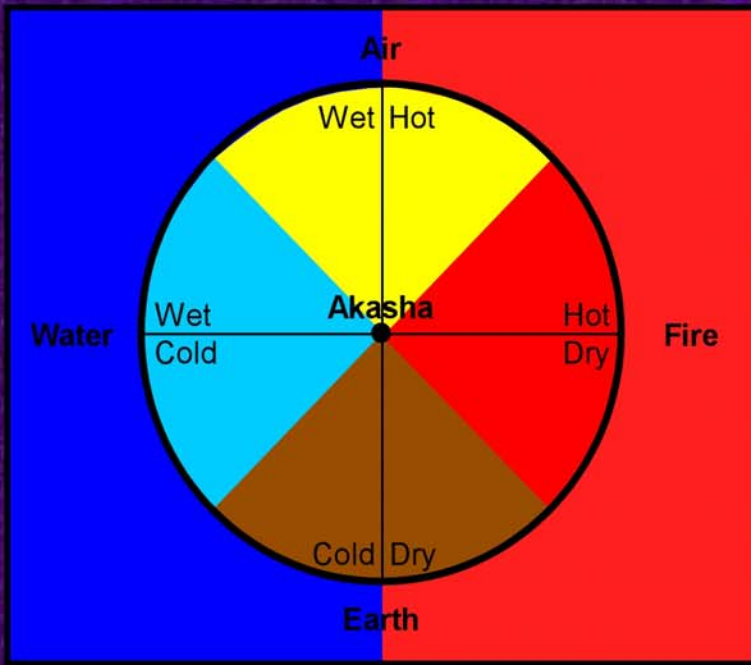


RAWN CLARK

A BARDON COMPANION

EXPANDED SECOND EDITION



A PRACTICAL COMPANION FOR THE STUDENT OF
FRANZ BARDON'S SYSTEM OF HERMETIC INITIATION

A BARDON COMPANION

Second Edition

*Dedicated to all sincere students
of Franz Bardon's writings.*

Rawn Clark

2010

A Bardon Companion: Second Edition

by Rawn Clark

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Preface to the Second Edition

Although it has been eight years since the first edition of *A Bardon Companion* was published, it has actually been about ten years since the bulk of my commentaries were written. In the ten years since writing my initial commentary I have answered literally thousands of additional questions in online discussion groups, personal correspondence and face to face meetings. From this interaction with hundreds of folks, spread all over the globe, pursuing Bardon's system of Hermetic initiation I have learned many lessons and insights regarding what does and does not *need* to be communicated in order to truly assist a student in their practice. I think even more importantly, I've learned better, more effective ways of saying those things that *need* saying.

At the forefront of this second edition of *A Bardon Companion* is a brand new commentary on all ten Steps of *Initiation Into Hermetics*. Here is the product of all fifteen years of my experience counseling students of Bardon's system. Unlike my first commentary, this time I have gone into much greater detail with Steps Six through Ten.

This new commentary on *IIH* was written between May and December of 2009 in the form of biweekly lectures given online at the *Franz Bardon Group* land in the virtual realm of SecondLife.com. They came into existence *only* because I was asked to give a series of lectures; otherwise they would most likely never have been written, so I owe a debt of gratitude to "Berny Bury" for the kind invitation!

Immediately following the new commentary I've included a fairly large collection of selected excerpts from my public and private correspondence spanning the period from 2001 through 2007. These are arranged according to the sequence of Steps in *IIH* and cover a variety of topics in a question-and-answer format.

The remainder of this second edition is a reprint of the entire first edition text of my commentaries upon *IIH*, *PME* and *KTQ*. For a long time I was undecided whether or not to replace the original *IIH Commentary* in this second edition with my newly written commentary but was eventually persuaded by my friend Christoph who urged me to include it and told me that the two compliment each other. Only minor corrections to spelling and updates to some information have been made to the first edition text; otherwise it's all there in the same form as before.

As always, I dedicate this book and its contents to all *sincere* students of Franz Bardon's writings. Time is short; make good use of each moment!

My best to you!
Rawn Clark

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New Second Edition
Commentary Upon *Initiation Into Hermetics*

Written between May and December of 2009

STEP ONE

PREFACE

Simple Beginnings

I have chosen this title, “Simple Beginnings”, to emphasize that Step One is just the beginning and that it is simple. The reason I say that the exercises are simple is because every exercise in Step One makes conscious and intentional use of completely natural processes and abilities. Ordinarily we use these abilities every day without thinking them in the least bit special or magical. What transforms them from the ordinary into the magical is the application of one’s conscious intention.

All too often a new student of initiation will read the Step One exercises and think that they are very complex and that completing them requires already advanced abilities, or that performing the exercises will require so much time each day that they will have no time left over for anything else, such as making a living and entertaining their friends, etc., etc., etc..

None of these assumptions are accurate.

According to his own words, Bardón arranged IIIH as if it was “*meant for the busiest man*”, and even though Bardón’s way of phrasing things may seem somewhat archaic and oftentimes confusing to a modern reader, the exercises he is describing in Step One are rudimentary and the essence of simplicity, designed with the absolute beginner in mind. Furthermore, according to Bardón’s own instructions, they are each to be completed relatively quickly, within one to two weeks in most cases.

Yet there are many, many folks who have been stuck on the Step One exercises, making little or no forward progress, for quite literally, years at a stretch. Or who, after several years, are still trying to make enough time available in their daily lives to begin pursuing the exercises.

Over the years I’ve heard countless explanations for why folks are stuck in Step One or for why they still haven’t begun the work they claim to be so eager to begin, but there seem to be only two actual reasons underlying all those differing explanations. First and foremost is an incorrect understanding of the exercises and second is a subconscious resistance to self-transformation.

Misunderstandings can be corrected with the inclusion of additional information or simply with new ways of explaining things, but

subconscious resistance is not so easily dealt with. All that I can do here is name it and explain it a bit. The actual elimination of subconscious resistance however can only be accomplished by the one experiencing it.

One fairly universal characteristic of the subconscious aspect of human awareness is that it abhors change. It's always doing its best to maintain the status quo, to keep things exactly as they are, familiar and, in the language of the psyche, "safe". To the psyche, familiar equals safe and unfamiliar equals danger, so when confronted with an opportunity for intentional self-transformation, the psyche often reacts out of self-preservation and erects whatever barriers to change it can create. When one's conscious intention is to transform the psyche then these barriers amount to self-sabotage. They are self-defeating in relation to the conscious intention but self-preserving in relation to the psyche's intention.

Most commonly these barriers manifest as an attitude of defeatism – "I can't do this", "it's too hard", "I'm not good enough", "it will take forever", "I don't have enough time in the day", "I'm too tired", etc. In other cases, they manifest in more concrete ways such as misplacing your copy of IHH; staying up too late at night so that in the morning you really are too tired to concentrate; experiencing sudden muscle cramps, pains or even headaches as soon as you sit down to meditate; and so on. They can even manifest as a certain fogginess of comprehension when reading the exercises from IHH, resulting in a complete or partial misunderstanding of things that you would otherwise have comprehended in an instant!

The psyche is very subtle and at first, very powerful. However, the wonderful thing is that the conscious mind can over-ride and re-program the subconscious mind, so all is not lost!

The best remedy for subconscious resistance is to truly decide to pursue the work of IHH, no matter what it takes. You must decide with all your power or force of will that absolutely nothing will prevent you from its pursuit. In the moment that you truly decide to do the work, the power which subconscious resistance wields over your conscious intention is greatly weakened, if not eliminated entirely. Any resistance that does remain is then easily dealt with through positive affirmations, simple bullheadedness and self-discipline.

The aforementioned manifestations of subconscious resistance all result in long delays in progress through the Step One exercises, but there is an even more pernicious manifestation that keeps many folks from even beginning the exercises. This is the almost pathological need to completely reshape one's life so that enough so called

“free time” is liberated. Of course, one cannot really ever know how much time per day is actually needed to pursue the exercises until one is actually pursuing them, so this quest takes on the mythical proportions of a perpetually unreachable goal. Often the excuse of “I want to devote myself full time” is given to justify waiting, and while this might seem to be a noble goal, it actually represents an imbalanced approach to Hermetics.

The fact of the matter is that starting the exercises of IHH does not necessitate a complete restructuring of one’s life. All that is required is a minor reshuffling of priorities. This results in enough time to devote to *beginning* the exercises. After that point, the benefits gained by pursuing the exercises will automatically change your perspective on how you use your time and awareness. Thus the practice integrates itself into your life, instead of you having to integrate your life into the vague concept of “practice”.

My advice to those stuck in this limbo-land of forever waiting for the right moment to get started, is to simply begin and do what you can do at the present time. Fit the practice into the confines of your present life and let the practice transform your life. This is far, far better than never beginning at all or wasting years waiting to begin.

MENTAL

There are four distinct mental exercises in Step One. The very first exercise of the mental training is the simplest of all. Simply sit down, close your eyes and observe your mind. The only actual work required here is to accustom yourself to being an uninvolved observer of your own mind. Just watch and let whatever happens happen without getting involved in any way. Don’t even judge what’s happening and especially don’t try to *make* anything happen. Just let it be whatever it’s going to be and observe. Simple as that. No different really than watching a bird fly across the sky or a car drive past. You, the observer, are separate from what you observe. At the same time though, you must *learn* about your mind by observing how it works.

One possible repercussion of detached observation of your own mind is that all those busy, relatively pointless thoughts that usually fill your mind might slow to a trickle. However, this must not be seen as a goal to be striven for. If it happens then so be it, but don’t try to *make* your thoughts slow down. Just observe, without intervention.

Lack of intervention or involvement is what denotes passive observation and learning this skill of separating yourself from your own surface mind is the main goal of the first exercise. This is so simple and rudimentary that after one week of practice you should easily be able to passively observe your mind for at least 10 minutes without once becoming involved in what you observe.

The second mental exercise is equally simple but only if you've mastered the first. This exercise is very similar to the Buddhist practice of "mindfulness" in which you simply keep your attention focused upon what you are physically doing in the present moment instead of involving yourself with the surface mind chatter. Since the subject of mind chatter is your emotional reaction to past events, thoughts, feelings, etc., involvement with your mind chatter naturally shifts your awareness away from what you are physically doing in the present moment. So in this exercise you are simply ignoring the mind chatter as you learned in the first exercise and now, instead of observing your mind, you are focusing your attention upon what you are physically doing.

The main difference here is that you are actively participating with your awareness instead of passively observing. However, since you are not devoting the major portion of your awareness to your mind chatter, the quantity and indeed the quality of your attention focused upon the present moment will seem unusually sharp and powerful compared to "normal".

Of course it can take a lifetime to reach a consistent Zen-like state wherein you are always absolutely rooted in the present moment, but that is not, I repeat, *not* what is expected here in Step One. All that is required, in Bardon's own words, is a "*certain skill*" in this exercise. This means that you must have become accustomed to actively participating with your awareness and be able to focus your attention where you want it and keep it there for several minutes at a time. That is the Step One goal for this exercise and this should take you a week or less of effort to achieve. Nonetheless, as Bardon stated, it is one of the exercises that should be practiced for the rest of your life and thus improved upon over time.

The third mental exercise is a natural extension of the second, namely the focusing of your attention upon a specific internal idea or train of thoughts instead of an external activity. This means that you turn your awareness inward once again and while ignoring the mind chatter, you focus all of your attention upon a pre-chosen idea. The only difference really between this exercise and the last is *what* your attention is focused upon. You are using and exercising the exact

same ability, namely your ability to focus your attention where you want it and keep it there for, in this case, at least 10 minutes uninterrupted. Again, this should take no more than a week or two at the most to achieve.

Now, in this context of each successive exercise being an extension of what is learned from the previous exercise, the fourth mental exercise of Step One is equally simple. This is the fabled emptiness or vacancy of mind. Here, the attention is shifted completely away from its involvement with thoughts and thinking and is focused instead upon the peaceful silence that exists in the absence of thought.

You will by this point have experienced the fact that between the closing of one thought and the arrival of the next thought a deep silence is perceived. This empty silence is the focus of the fourth mental exercise. Of course the maintaining of this focus upon emptiness requires that you completely detach yourself from any thoughts that might arise within your mind, similar to the detachment you achieved in the first mental exercise, and also like in the first exercise, you must passively observe the emptiness without any expectation. Within two weeks you should have become so accustomed to focusing in upon this emptiness that you can maintain an empty mind for at least 10 minutes without interruption.

Like the second exercise of mindfulness, the emptiness of mind exercise must be pursued beyond Step One and deepened through continual practice. It is a very important state of awareness and Being in regard to initiation that must be cultivated with dedication. In fact, its continued deepening was assumed by Bardón in the exercises of all future Steps. In other words, if you don't maintain its practice and go ever deeper into the internal silence, future exercises will be impossible to master. Nonetheless, all that is required in Step One is that you be able to maintain your focus upon the emptiness to the exclusion of all else for at least 10 minutes.

At the very most, it should take no more than 6 weeks to master these four simple mental exercises to the required degree for Step One.

ASTRAL

The astral work of Step One is of equal simplicity and should be pursued with the same speed as the mental exercises. In other words, the whole should be finished within the same allotment of 4

to 6 weeks so that the mental and astral sections are finished at roughly the same moment.

Step One is basically a process of gaining a rudimentary self-knowledge through self-observation. With the mental exercises it's the mind and its functioning that is observed; while with the astral work, it's the personality or character that is observed and cataloged. The ability to distance oneself from the object of observation and the ability to focus one's attention by choice are the tools applied to observation and cataloging of one's personality traits. Of course, these same abilities are what you are concurrently training through pursuit of the mental exercises, illustrating how the parts of each Step's coursework fit hand-in-glove.

The only thing accomplished in the astral work of Step One is a catalog of your positive and negative character traits, nothing more. Step One astral work is not about self-transformation, nor is it really about self-judgment beyond that required to discern between a negative and a positive trait. You observe yourself with a bit of detachment and write down a list of the personality traits you perceive. Then you analyze your list and assign each trait to an Elemental influence; and finally, you sort these Elemental types into three degrees of strength depending upon how intensely they influence your behavior and thinking. This three-part process is done once, focused upon your negative character traits and once, focused upon your positive traits, resulting in what Bardou called your black and white "*mirrors of the soul*".

As you might imagine, the second mental exercise of mindfulness will frequently aid this process of self-observation as you try to discern, in real time, what character traits you are expressing in any given moment. And likewise, the third mental exercise of focusing your mind on a single idea or train of thoughts develops the exact same ability you will be using to analyze your list of traits and assign them to Elements and strengths. Ultimately, the different sections of each Step support each other by developing the same abilities in slightly different ways, thus insuring balanced growth.

In the Step One mental exercises the only tool used was your own awareness. And so with the astral work, your only tool is your awareness. This is an important concept so I will repeat that statement:

With the astral work, your only tool is your awareness.

I mean that literally. You are not to rely upon any body else's opinion, interpretation, reaction, teaching, attitude, etc. This is about *you* evaluating *you* based solely and exclusively upon how *you* feel

about *your* self. This means throw away all those published lists of character traits, especially those written by Bardon in IIIH, and simply observe how *you* feel about each aspect of your character. Not what you *think* about your traits, but what you *feel* in the immediate present moment without thinking.

Remember, this is the astral work and as such it is rooted in, and focused upon, your emotions, so how you *feel* is the proper thing to observe and let inform you. Here, your emotions are the medium you are working with, just as your thoughts were the medium worked with in the mental exercises.

Fact is, only you know what is truly in your own heart and mind so only you can truly discern all of your negative and positive character traits with accuracy. If you turn to an external source for this information then you are looking in the wrong spot and you will not create an accurate soul mirror for yourself. The only place this information can be found is inside *you*, period.

There should be no delays in this process of self-cataloging, no lingering over it for months on end without ever finishing. This sort of lingering and obsessing is a manifestation of subconscious self-sabotage which must be banished if you are to generate something useful. Just be serious about it and get it done, without delays and excuses. Making your first list of negative character traits should take no longer than two weeks at the most.

I recommend that you aim for at least 100 items in your list. It does not have to be “perfect”. Perfection has no place in this process. The soul mirror you are creating is to be an organic, living, changing thing that will be your companion for the rest of your life, so let it evolve over time by not demanding that it be perfect at birth.

Perfection, or at least the striving for perfection, also has no place in the subsequent process of assigning each item on your list to an Elemental influence. Just do the best you can by meditating briefly on each item and note which Element feels correct. Don’t over-intellectualize this process either! You should spend no more than a few hours total on this, spread over no more than a few days. Remember, this mirror will be with you from now on so you can always correct errors that reveal themselves a day, a month or a year from now.

The final task of dividing the items within each Elemental category into three levels of importance should be given a bit more time and care. This division is actually more important, from a practical perspective, than the Elemental categorization since it will determine in Step Two which items you begin to transform first, etc. So take a

week to carefully decide which character traits influence you the most and which the least. Again, this doesn't have to be perfect either, especially since these ratios will change once you begin the process of self-transformation in Step Two.

At the most, you will have spent 3 weeks and a couple of days on the creation of your negative soul mirror and once it's complete, you should immediately turn to working on your positive soul mirror. This mirror is just as important as your negative mirror. Without it you would not have a balanced image of yourself.

One might naturally think that assessing the positive aspects of one's personality would be an easy and pleasant experience and yet most folks seem to find it more difficult than creating their negative mirror! In part this is due to our cultural need for at least the imitation of modesty and also in part to the fact that most of us are taught that we are not good enough in one way or another and therefore have no noticeable redeeming qualities. This of course is hogwash. Each person possesses positive personality traits regardless of how poorly they think of themselves. So once again it's just a matter of getting to it and looking within for the answers.

After three weeks at the most you should have completed your positive soul mirror, which brings the total time spent on the astral work to approximately six weeks. In other words, you finish the mental and astral work of Step One within the same time frame of 6 weeks.

PHYSICAL

These too are quite simple and are meant to introduce you to basic concepts that are elaborated upon in subsequent Steps.

Bardon began the physical section of Step One instructing the student to brush their skin and bathe in cold water first thing upon rising each morning and then follow this with a period of exercise. While these instructions seem quite specific and many attempt to follow them religiously, they are really meant to express a basic concept instead of prescribing a specific regimen. The idea is to do something that refreshes your physical body and eliminates any lingering tiredness before you begin working on your mental and astral exercises. This can take any form that suits you personally and does not necessarily have to involve brushing your skin and bathing in cold water. In other words, you need to create your own morning regimen, one that works best for *your* body and *your* life circumstances.

If you design a regimen that truly works for *you* then it will be relatively easy to stick to it and develop it as a daily habit. Aside from the physical benefits, this practice will strengthen your will power and your ability to develop positive habits, both of which are important assets to initiation.

The next sections on the “*mystery of breathing*”, the “*conscious reception of food*” and the “*magic of water*” are all rooted in a single, very simplistic principle and technique. The principle behind them is the fact that the Akasha, which is a natural part of all substance, attracts and captures thoughts and ideas, especially intentionally projected thoughts and ideas. So the technique simply takes advantage of this natural process by turning it into an intentional, conscious act.

Quite simply all one has to do is first formulate the idea one wishes to impregnate the air, food or water with, and then imagine that the Akasha of the substance has absorbed the chosen idea. This requires absolutely no physical exertion, nor really much in the way of mental exertion to accomplish. Many folks strain and grunt and act like they are trying to pound their idea into their air, food or water, but these are actually counterproductive practices. What is required is calmly focused thought and intention, which of course are abilities that the second and third mental exercises are meant to develop.

Bardon did not define any standards of “mastery” in regard to the physical exercises of Step One. What is required is that you develop a continuous practice or application of the basic technique. Through repeated application of the technique your ability to achieve your desired results will increase and this is what ultimately constitutes “mastery” of these rudimentary techniques.

Bardon also gave no time limits within which you must achieve success. Instead, he stated that the nature of the desire you impregnate your air, food and water with will in great part determine how long you will have to spend working in this way to achieve a noticeable result. This means that if no noticeable results have been generated by your work with the magic of air, food and water after six weeks, then you should not postpone moving on to Step Two once the astral and mental exercises have been mastered. In other words, don’t let a seemingly unfruitful practice of these techniques delay your progression from Step One to Step Two.

So that ends my description of how simple the work of Step One really is. Each exercise teaches a rudimentary technique or ability which can, and is designed to be, mastered relatively quickly. It

is not a Step which one should spend months or years obsessing over.

I know that many folks who have spent the past several months or years working on Step One will be feeling a lot of mixed emotions upon reading these words. Most folks in this situation that I've spoken to have expressed only the noblest of intentions and reasons for spending so much time and effort on Step One. And indeed, the attitudes of seriousness, sincerity and attention to detail are admirable and are in fact essential attributes for success with initiation in Hermetics, yet they still must be applied *appropriately*. Unfortunately, they become inappropriate when they prevent one from moving through the Step One work in a timely manner. So I say to anyone who has spent more than a couple of months on Step One -- let go of everything that is slowing you down, apply yourself to the exercises as I have outlined here and master them once and for all in a timely manner. Let them be as easy as they are instead of needing them to be unnecessarily difficult.

STEP TWO

MENTAL

The common theme in all of the Step Two exercises is creativity. Re-creating your personality, learning to create sensory impressions and exercising creative choice in regard to how you react to physical discomfort. The key then is to approach the work of Step Two with the spirit of creative play.

The sensory concentration exercises and your first experiments with pore breathing rely upon your innate ability to imagine and pretend. When exercised, strengthened and used with conscious intention, this *innate* ability of imagination becomes the *magical* faculty of “creative imagination”.

In Hermetic practice, the creative imagination is a tool that is used in very specific ways and with very specific goals. Many think that the point of developing the creative imagination is so that eventually you will be able to materialize objects out of thin air just with the mind, or that you will be able to alter reality to suit your desires merely with your thoughts and will power, but neither of these ideas is true. Its primary function as a tool is to connect self with other. Not to alter something external to self, but rather to alter one’s own self. Let me explain . . .

A fundamental aspect of the mental plane, made use of throughout the Hermetic training, is the Law of Attraction: like attracts like. In mental plane terms, things that share commonality, that are alike or similar, exist in close proximity; while things that do not share anything in common or which are opposites, always remain separated by the mental plane equivalent of distance.

This means that when you insert an ideation into the mental plane with your creative imagination, your creation will be magnetically drawn to whatever it shares commonality with in the mental plane. For example, if you create the idea of happiness within your own mind, and support it with the creation of appropriate astra-physical sensations, then similar ideas will surround your awareness on the mental plane. Very quickly your creation becomes a *factual reality* because it is supported by what is occurring in the mental plane.

Another example can be found in the practice of mental wandering. To get to the Venus sphere, one uses the creative imagination to fill one’s awareness with all the symbols that represent the essential meaning of the Venus sphere and thus one is automatically drawn

to the Venus sphere. It's by these means that one navigates within the mental realm or plane.

This is also the foundation of the Step Three exercises with the Elements. By creating with your imagination all of the sensations and ideas associated with an Element, you eventually connect with the factual, non-imaginary Element within the mental realm. Once this mental connection is established through repeated practice, it follows very quickly that there is no further need to imagine the effects of the Element. In other words, as magicians, we use the tool of our creative imagination to *lead* us to factual experience and perception.

Naturally, the Step Two sensory concentration exercises are quite important. Bardou designed them in such a way that they train your creativity with each sense independently and thoroughly so that by the end of Step Two you should be able to create any sensory impression you want and hold it steady for as long as you desire.

The basic technique is really quite simple and straight forward. We begin with direct perception, move on to memory and then go from there to true creativity which is not dependent upon memory. For example, with the visualization exercise, we begin by actually looking at the object we wish to visualize, in this case a simple pencil. First we look at a real pencil with our physical eyes and note all of its details. Then we close our eyes and call up the memory of the pencil we've just looked at and try to hold that memory-image solidly in our mind for as long as possible.

Ordinarily, when we look at something, such as our pencil, our visual cortex responds and specific synapses fire within the brain. This initiates a chain reaction of chemical messengers throughout the body. And when we *remember* the thing we just looked at, the visual cortex responds in the exact same way, followed by the same initiation of chemical messengers throughout the body. In other words, there is no difference to the brain between perceiving a thing and remembering a thing. And ultimately, there is no difference to the brain between something we have created with our imagination and something non-created that we have actually perceived.

The Step Two exercises with the senses are rooted in this fact. We begin by remembering the object/sound/taste/etc. we have just perceived, but then we depart from the "normal" by focusing our awareness exclusively and extendedly upon this image that we have brought forth in our memory. This prolongs and amplifies the firing of the brain's synapses, causing the memory to become something more than just a fleeting image/sound/taste/etc.

Once we are able to prolong the remembered image, we can then manipulate its appearance as if it were made of clay or some other easily changed substance (i.e., use our "plastic" imagination). In other words, we take intentional, conscious control of the image/sound/texture and therefore determine its nature independent of our memory. This is when we begin to create.

You see, this is really very simple! As with most of the Hermetic techniques, it's merely an intentionally focused prolonging of something we do all the time.

With practice, you will quickly become able to create images, sounds, smells, sensations, etc., that are original to your experience and which do not arise from your memory. This is the goal of the Step Two sensory concentration exercises.

Bardon laid out a very specific sequence to these sensory exercises: first sight, then hearing, then tactile, then smell and finally taste. And while it is best to preserve this sequence it is not essential that you do so. Each person is different when it comes to the sensitivity of their senses. Some of us are primarily visual and will most likely find the visual exercises the easiest to begin with, while others are primarily tactile and will find those exercises easier to begin with, and so on. What matters more than adhering to Bardon's stated sequence is that you meet with success with one sense fairly quickly. Once you have achieved success with one sense, the rest of the exercises become very easy to master.

Several years ago I met with a fellow who had been essentially stuck on the visualization exercise for a couple of years and he was very frustrated by his lack of success. Upon meeting him I recognized that his strongest sensory affinity was with hearing sounds so I suggested that he switch to working with the auditory exercises and gain his first success there, then move on to the other senses. He returned the next morning to say that the auditory exercise proved to be extremely easy for him and that his success with the auditory exercise informed him of what was meant by "success"! He then mastered all of the sensory exercises in a matter of a few weeks and finally progressed to Step Three after so many frustrating years of fruitless devotion to the sensory concentration exercises.

What is very important to adhere to though is Bardon's instruction to keep the senses *separate* from each other during the exercises. For instance, if you are creating the sound of a bird's song, you do not want to split your focus by also creating the visual image of the bird singing. Focus your creativity in just a single sensory impression at a time and, if you must, forcefully disallow any images to

accompany your sounds, or smells to accompany your tastes, etc. This isolates each sense as you are developing it and results in much more refinement and power than if you mix the senses at this point in the training. Multi-sensorial creation comes with Step Three *after* each sense has been trained *separately*.

One side-effect of these exercises that I have experienced, and which I believe most who do this work experience, is that training your senses in this way heightens their sensitivity and you are enabled to perceive more subtle nuances than before. For example, when I smell an aroma now, I smell it very deeply and perceive multiple layers within what used to be just a simple smell. This fact has greatly increased my appreciation for what the sensory world has to offer in terms of its beauty and variety. While this might seem inconsequential it must be noted that it is through sensory perception that we receive much of our astral-emotional nourishment. Who has not experienced the sense of well being that comes from observing a beautiful sunset, for example? Observing a sunset or anything else for that matter, with *trained* senses heightens and enriches the nourishing aspect of sensory perception. It's like the nutritional difference between eating a highly processed, pre-cooked, packed-in-plastic vegetable, versus eating one you've freshly picked from your garden.

ASTRAL

The Art of Self-Redemption

Redemption means to either give something new value or to return a thing to its original worth. Imbuing our personality with value, re-making it into an expression worthy of our deepest Self, is what self-transformation of the character is all about. We look into our soul mirror and discern what is *already* a worthy expression and what is not. Those aspects of our personality that do not measure up to what we want to be and that shame us instead of serving us, are dissected and transformed into traits that are worthy expressions of Self and which do serve us.

Many experience this as an extremely serious and difficult work, one rife with struggle and repeated self-defeat. Witnessing this always saddens me because I know what a joyous, liberating and empowering experience self-transformation can be!

I remember very clearly that moment when I first realized

down in my bones that I had actually and truly transformed a very negative and very strong character trait into something productive and beautiful. That was a moment of true freedom as I realized that I really and truly had the power to be who I truly wanted to be. Not some idealized superhero or some other archetype of human superiority, but to simply and completely be *my* Self. In that moment I knew it was not just possible but that it was now inevitable. This realization turned the work of self-transformation into an adventure, an opportunity to exercise my creativity upon myself and indeed, turned the work into an exciting and pleasurable practice.

I hope to convey to you some of the passion that I experience for the work of self-transformation and to increase your own understanding of practical ways to go about transforming your character.

Bardon began Step Two with a short treatise titled "*Autosuggestion or the Secret of Subconsciousness*" in which he explained the mechanism by which our conscious intention can be used to transform subconscious habit. Several years ago some one published an article very critical of one of Bardon's assertions in this treatise, calling it one of Bardon's "errors". What was criticized was Bardon's association of the intentional consciousness with the cerebrum or front of the head, and the subconsciousness with the cerebellum or back of the head. Clearly from a physical, scientific perspective Bardon's assertion makes no sense and would indeed constitute a sort of error in understanding the physical structure of the brain. However, Bardon did not intend it as such a literal statement. Instead, he was restating a bit of very ancient knowledge about the structure of human awareness.

In the ancient Hebrew kabbalah, the intentional awareness was associated with the Letter 'Resh' which means, "front of head or face" and the subconscious awareness was associated with the Letter 'Qooph' which means "back of head". In this case, the terms "front" and "back" must be understood in a symbolic sense; "front" meaning foremost, leading or exposed, and "back" meaning secondary, following or hidden.

On the Hebrew Tree of Life, the Path of 'Resh' corresponds to the Sun and is the emanation of Tiphareth (the seat of the Individual Self) unto Yesod (the seat of the personal self). This illustrates the fact that the intentional awareness of the Individual Self is meant to be the radiant power that illuminates the astral personality and, conversely, that the astral personality is meant to be a reflection of the Solar Individual Self.

The Path of ‘Qooph’ on the other hand, corresponds to Pisces and the Moon and, on the Hebrew Tree, is the emanation of Hod (the seat of the lower, primarily subconscious thinking awareness which generates the surface mind chatter) unto Malkuth which symbolizes the mundane, every-day awareness. This illustrates that it is the subconscious mind that ordinarily exerts the greatest formative influence over our day-to-day interactions with our environment.

However, the relationship between ‘Resh’ and ‘Qooph’, between Sun and Moon, illustrates that it is within the power of our conscious intention to determine the content of that formative subconscious reflection and thus transform its effect into a clearer expression of our Individual Self.

In other words, our conscious intention is capable of transforming the content of the subconsciousness. We cannot halt or eliminate the formative influence of the subconsciousness but we can surely transform the nature of that influence to such a degree that it consistently agrees with and conforms to the deeper will of the intentional awareness of our Individual Self.

Transformation of the personality or character is a matter of using the conscious intention to change the nature of the ingredients of the subconscious psyche. Once the nature of an ingredient has been transformed, it will exert a likewise transformed influence over the mundane awareness. Thus we take advantage of the way in which the subconscious and conscious levels of awareness naturally interact and use that interaction to our benefit. The subconscious *will* exert a formative influence over our mundane awareness, so when we change the nature of that inevitable influence we simultaneously transform the nature of our mundane awareness or personality. In this way, our subconsciousness becomes our greatest ally in the work of character transformation!

It does no good to treat any part of self as an enemy. Self-transformation is not an adversarial process! Your subconsciousness is not your enemy!

Your negative character traits are not your enemies either. They exist because they were at one point in time the best solution you could come up with for the question of how to meet your needs. Their original intention was to serve you in the best way possible. It’s just that with time they became outdated and ultimately antagonistic to your true needs. So all that’s needed to redeem them, to give them a renewed value as positive servants of your true will, is a bit of updating; a little of your conscious attention.

The vast majority of your negative character traits were

formed without your conscious, intentional participation. This means that your present personality is basically the product of sub-conscious choices of convenience. So just imagine for a moment what it would be like if your entire personality were based upon mature, conscious, intentionally formed and well informed choices.

That is the ultimate goal of the character transformation work: An intentional personality that clearly expresses and reflects your true Self.

Most of us come to this work with an *unintended* personality over which we experience very little formative control and which more clearly reflects the influences of our environment than the deeper aspects of who we truly are. So when we conceive of the sort of self-transformation that initiation demands, we at first are a bit overwhelmed by the magnitude and unfamiliarity of what must be accomplished. It's only when we've made some actual progress in transforming ourselves that it becomes clear that such work is in fact easy and pleasurable.

When we understand the mechanisms at play and how to employ those natural mechanisms to affect change, then transformation of the personality makes sense and becomes easy to accomplish. And when we understand that through this work we can actually become the person we feel truly comfortable being and proud of being, then the work becomes fun.

The first issue in beginning to transform your personality is the question of where to begin. I recommend that you start with the trait you'd most like to be rid of or which you feel the most automatic motivation to change. Let your innate motivation help you along, especially with your first experience in using these techniques.

So meditate upon your lists of negative character traits for a short while and pick one trait to begin your work with.

The second phase in the process of self-transformation is to come to a very deep understanding of the character trait. This requires a much deeper probing than what was required in Step One. So apply what you learned in the third mental exercise of Step One, namely the ability to focus your attention upon a single idea. In this case, your focus will be upon this single character trait. Examine it from every angle possible with an absolute honesty and openness. Let it reveal itself to your awareness as you penetrate deeper and deeper into it.

Each character trait, whether positive or negative, has at its root the fulfillment of some need. Your aim must be to discover exactly what need is at the heart of this character trait specifically.

Once the root need is discovered, it must be evaluated. First, is it still a genuine need now that you are an adult? The subconscious psyche is a creature of habit. It always strives to preserve the status quo, to keep everything always the same and thus safely familiar. So sometimes we will find that a character trait is the product of a need that no longer really exists as a need per se, but yet the mechanism that was meant to satisfy that need continues on out of subconscious habit. In that case, the character trait itself no longer serves any need.

But if it is still a valid need, then you must discover a more productive and positive way of meeting this need. How can you see yourself meeting this need while remaining true to your intentional self?

All of these questions must be answered in meditational contemplation of the character trait with the most severe and piercing self-honesty. If you lie to yourself about yourself then there is no point in pursuing this work. Only an *absolute* honesty will suffice to get at the true root of things internal.

The third action then in the process of self-transformation of the character is to devise a plan of action. True and lasting character transformation requires action -- all the better when that action is well thought out and planned in advance.

In a case where the original root need that gave birth to a character trait is no longer a valid, living need, then all that must be accomplished is the breaking of the subconscious habit of repeating this pattern of behavior. So in your planning, design an auto-suggestive phrase that counteracts the habitual behavior. For example if the trait is that you are needlessly and habitually critical of others, then an appropriate phrase might be something like "I do not need to criticize others."

And also design a replacement action that counteracts the habitual behavior. For example with criticism of others, an appropriate countermeasure might be something like seeking out one of the person's positive traits and focusing on that instead.

If, on the other hand, the original root need *is* still a valid and active need, then the auto-suggestive phrase will need to be slightly different. Not only does the old habit need to be disrupted, it also needs to be replaced with a new, more positive way of fulfilling the root need. In other words, it becomes more than just breaking a destructive habit; it must also encourage the new growth of a replacement habit that satisfies the root need in a new way.

So, working with the previous example of criticism of others,

let's say the root need has to do with feeding your own sense of self-worth. An appropriate auto-suggestive phrase then might be something like, "I see the good in each person, including myself." This counters the old habit and encourages a new, positive replacement habit that ultimately fulfills the original root need in a positive manner.

The replacement action will also need to be expanded upon if the root need is still valid. In this case you need to design two actions, one immediate action to break the old habit and one long term to truly fulfill the root need. The immediate action is what you do the moment you recognize that the negative character trait is manifesting. In our ongoing example of criticism of others that originally served the need for increased self-worth then the immediate action of "seeking out one of the person's positive traits and focusing on that instead" is still a valid example in terms of breaking the negative habit and replacing it with a positive habit, but it does little to address the long term need of increasing one's sense of self-worth. So an appropriate long term action might be something like learning and implementing interpersonal communication skills, for example. Ultimately it must be some long term action that fulfills the root need in a way appropriate for you.

Once your phrase and replacement actions are designed you can begin the actual hands-on work of transforming your character trait. I recommend very strongly that you apply every resource at your disposal to transforming this character trait. Devote your meditations; your magic of Air, Food and Water; all of your pore breathing; your auto-suggestion regimen; and, your practice of mindfulness to this one singular goal.

First thing in the morning just as you're rising into conscious awareness and at night just as you're settling in to sleep, repeat your auto-suggestive phrase at least 30 times. And during your morning and evening meditations spend some time contemplating the character trait. Whenever you are practicing the magic of air, food and water, impregnate the substance with your auto-suggestive phrase or with your desire to affect this specific self-transformation. Each time you pore-breathe, also inhale the intention behind your auto-suggestive phrase. Regularly pursue your pre-designed long term action and fulfill the root need of the character trait in a positive way.

And, perhaps most importantly, be always aware of your inner state to the point where you *immediately* recognize the negative character trait *as* it arises within you. This of course, is a form of the mindfulness you learned in the second mental exercise of Step One.

It's a sort of perpetual mindful introspection, in which you are continuously monitoring how you express yourself and what you are thinking and feeling *while* it is occurring.

Self-transformation is at its most effective when it occurs at the very moment a negative trait begins to assert itself, but this does not mean that a minute, an hour or a day after the fact is not also a fruitful time to act. What is important is that you act immediately once you've recognized that the negative trait has asserted itself.

The only moment in which we can ever truly exercise our own power is right here and now in the immediate present moment of time-space. This is the only moment in which we truly exist and the only moment in which the world around us truly exists. It is our true "place of power", so to speak, this bubble of now-ness that we inhabit. So the practice of mindfulness, which brings our conscious awareness firmly into the present moment of our existence, is of critical importance in the work of self-transformation.

The instant that you become consciously aware that a negative trait has surfaced, you must do the following things: First, stop. Stop the negative trait from continuing on its habitual course. Simply detach from its power over your behavior, much as you detached from the power that your mind chatter exerted over your intentional awareness in the first mental exercise of Step One. Detach and observe.

Second, begin repeating your auto-suggestive phrase inside your mind and third, implement your pre-designed replacement action.

Do this every time you recognize the negative trait asserting itself without exception.

Again, the three steps:

First, stop the negative trait from continuing.

Second, begin repeating your auto-suggestive phrase.

Third, implement your replacement action.

Stop. Suggest. Act.

All of this might sound like a lot of work but please believe me when I tell you that it gets easier and easier the more you do it. At first you might already have made a complete ass of yourself before realizing that it's your negative trait in action, but with each successive time you do catch it, the time it takes you to realize what's happening becomes less and less and quite quickly you find that you're catching it at the very moment it begins to arise. That is when the self-transformation rate of the character trait really speeds up and you start to notice the significant difference you're making.

Of course all of the other work you're devoting to this transformation -- your meditations, your magic of air food and water, your autosuggestions and your pore-breathing -- support and empower everything you do in that moment of recognizing the trait's arrival. All the fruits of your meditations, all the benefits of your work with air, food and water, all the changes to your subconscious mind wrought by your repeated autosuggestions, plus the regular satisfaction of the root need provided by pursuit of your long-term action, all converges in that moment to provide you with a truly awesome power to transform yourself.

Do not stop until you know in your bones that you have permanently transformed your character trait in the way you desired. Do not move on to working with a different or an additional character trait until you have met with success in regard to your first trait.

It's common for doubt to creep in about the correctness of your auto-suggestive phrase or about the appropriateness of the replacement action and even about the wisdom of your choice of character trait. But unless you have truly given it your all for a reasonably long period of time and have still made absolutely no discernible progress, you should not change anything. It takes time and repeated effort to transform the contents of the subconscious psyche so you must give your work enough time to prove itself. If after a month or perhaps two of sincere effort nothing has changed then go ahead and revise your auto-suggestive phrase and perhaps your replacement action and give that another month or two before judging its effectiveness. If nothing seems to work then this means you need to go back to the beginning and dig deeper into the root cause of the character trait.

Achieving success in the transformation of your first negative character trait is a magical moment in and of itself. An extraordinary feeling of accomplishment and powerfulness arises which will inspire your continued movement forward along your path of self-transformation. For the first time you will know without any doubt that these methods work and this will imbue your subsequent efforts with a new level of certainty and self-assurance.

You will also without a doubt notice that your whole soul mirror is changed by the transformation of just one character trait since all parts of self are interconnected. The "secret", if you will, of character transformation is that it gets exponentially easier each time you gain a success.

As Bardon explained, the goal with the *Step Two* phase of character work is the transformation of your most prominent negat-

ive traits. It is imperative that you respect and meet this goal before moving on to Step Three. Bardon did not state any time frame in which this is to be accomplished but this does not mean that you should progress at a leisurely pace! Go at it steadily and consistently without any breaks and you should reach your Step Two goal in a timely manner.

Mind you, this is just the Step *Two* goal. The ultimate goal as I stated earlier is the positivization of your entire personality. This should be achieved by the end of your Step *Three* work and before you move on to Step Four. Nonetheless, the transformation of your character is a lifelong work. Positivization of the character is not so much an end result as it is a process, a discipline that must be maintained throughout your incarnation. As long as you inhabit an astral body, you will be faced with the management of an ever-changing inner psychic landscape. So do make this discipline a matter of joy!

Before I close, I need to mention one attribute or rather an attitude that will aid you along the way, even with your initial foray. It is what I call “magical certainty”. Bardon often mentioned the need for the development of an absolute belief or confidence that your work will succeed and this is what I mean by the term “magical certainty”. Unfortunately Bardon gave no clues as to how one is supposed to achieve this degree of certainty other than a fairly vague reference to meditation.

The degree of certainty required for it to be truly a magical certainty is equal to what you experience when, for example, you hold a stone at arm’s length and let go of it. You know, with absolute certainty that the stone will fall to the ground because that has been your experience of gravity since birth. The stone has never floated upward instead of dropping so you automatically assume it will fall. If it did not fall, you would be shocked beyond belief and all of your assumptions about how the world works would be shattered.

This is the degree of certainty needed to generate a truly magical effect in your initiatory work. You must enter into the task with so much confidence it will work that you would be truly shocked if it did not work. This is the polar opposite of self-doubt.

The only method I have discovered for attaining a magical certainty in the face of self-doubt is, as Bardon hinted, through a very specific meditation. Focus your mind upon an example such as I gave of dropping a rock, or any action that you know without any doubt must result in a predictable conclusion. Concentrate upon that *feeling* of certainty until it completely fills your awareness and then transfer that *feeling* to your initiatory work. The goal is to become so

certain of success that you can't even conceive of failure.

PHYSICAL

Conscious pore breathing is just an elaboration of the Step One magic of air, the main difference being that instead of breathing with just the lungs, you are learning how to breathe with your *whole* body.

While we call this breathing, the pore breathing doesn't have to be associated with the breath. Clearly, you are not drawing air in through your pores in the same way you draw air in with your lungs. Instead, what you are drawing in through your pores are all the energetic constituents normally inhaled during regular breathing. In other words, you are drawing energy plus the Akasha into your body with pore breathing. And of course, when you tie this to normal breathing you are simultaneously inhaling the air with your lungs, but this is inconsequential to the exercise itself. It's tied to normal breathing only because this makes it easier to learn – it's simply easier to draw something insubstantial into your body when you mimic the act of inhalation. And besides, it feels very much like regular breathing does in that you feel an internal expansion as you draw the vital power into your body.

It is very important however, that you understand the magical aspect of pore breathing is not accomplished by your lungs – it's accomplished by your mind. So you do not want to engage in elaborate breathing practices such as taking extra deep breaths or holding your breath or counting your inhale and exhale, etc. Your breathing pattern and rhythm should be perfectly normal and unaltered during your exercises.

Eventually, in later Steps, you will learn how to simply coalesce energy, Elements, Fluids, Light and ideas into an object, for example, merely by willing it to occur, but how you get to that point or level of ability is by beginning here with mastery of pore breathing. So do give this exercise your full attention.

I recommend that at first you don't worry about whether or not you are actually inhaling the vital power or energy in your pore breathing. Set aside the obvious question of what the vital energy feels like and just focus on the idea and the sensation of inhaling with your whole body. For me, it feels like my physical inhalation creates a vacuum at the very center of my physical body and this vacuum draws air into it through my skin. I feel that passage of energy with my skin and muscle and bone as a physical sensation.

If it helps, use what you've learned from your pursuit of the visual sensory concentration exercise and visualize the vital energy entering into your body as you inhale. And if you've worked with the tactile exercise then also use your imagination to create the *feeling* of this entry of energy into your body. Remember, this will build a connection for you with the factual vital energy on the mental plane and thus draw the actual experience of the vital energy to you.

Once you are comfortable with the practice of pore breathing then begin to impregnate your inhalations with your auto-suggestive phrase or some ideation relevant to your soul mirror work. This is exactly what you mastered with the magic of Air in Step One just on a slightly larger scale. In this instance, your idea is intentionally bound to the resident Akasha of the physical air and to the vital energy itself, which ultimately is a more powerful practice than the Step One technique.

And then, you start working with the exhalation phase of the breathing cycle and literally exhale the opposite of your inhaled ideation. For example, you might exhale the essential meaning of a negative trait in order to help rid yourself of its influence. Bardon called this the magical exhalation.

Ultimately this too does not need to be tied in with physical breathing but it is nonetheless the best way to learn the magical exhale. This must be mastered to the same high degree as the magical inhalation because in later Steps you must be able to exhale or rid yourself of an accumulation of the Elements, vital energy, fluids, etc., with an absolute confidence.

For me the same sensations arise with the magical exhale as I experience during the inhalation except that they are reversed. This time I feel a great internal pressure at the center of my body which when I intentionally press down upon it, spreads outward from center with force and exits my body through bone, muscle and eventually skin. Again, I feel these as physical sensations.

I gather the entire negative trait, for example, into that pressurized space and force it out of my body with the magical exhale.

At first, the pore breathing takes a lot of concentrated effort but very quickly it will become as easy as . . . well . . . as easy as breathing! And once it's mastered, it can be quite fun and educational as well. There's a whole universe of energies and ideas out there to be inhaled and savored!

So that brings us finally to the last part of the physical section of Step Two: what Bardon titled "*control of your body*". Although these exercises were presented in the fairly simplistic context of a

physical discipline or self-determination, they are much more subtle than they first appear and have more far reaching implications than you might suspect.

I have always felt that there was something important missing in Bardon's sensory concentration exercise regimen; namely, the creation of different emotional states. Our emotions are as much a sensory apparatus as our eye sight or hearing and it's our emotional reactions to what our senses convey to our mind that really determine the quality and quantity of our perceptions.

The creation of a variety of emotional states in the same fashion as you'd create a variety of images, sounds, smells, etc., has many benefits. First of all it is *very* educational and serves to increase one's sense of empathy. Secondly, it broadens one's experiential comprehension of various emotional states that might otherwise remain enigmas due to their foreignness. Third and most importantly, it teaches emotional detachment; or rather, the ability to determine or create your emotional state regardless of how external influences might ordinarily affect it.

I had always recognized that creating emotional states plays a part in the self-transformation of character work since much of that discipline involves self-determination in regard to your automatic subconscious emotional reactions. But Bardon didn't address it specifically and head-on in the same way he did the senses of sight, hearing, feeling, smell and taste. Considering the initiatory importance of self-determination in regard to emotional reaction and its impact on the astral Equilibrium of the Elements, the only explanation that makes any sense to me as to why Bardon didn't provide equally explicit exercises for it is that in Eastern Europe of the 1950's, emotional states were not discussed as openly and readily as we are used to in this day. Whatever the reasons for his lack of *explicit* exercises concerning the emotions, he did manage to include *indirect* ways of reaching pretty much the same goal of emotional self-determination.

Sensation is merely the firing of nerve impulses to the brain but how we *feel* about those nerve impulses determines whether we experience a sensation as painful or pleasant and how we *feel* about the sensation determines how we react to it. But when you remove the emotional valuation of the sensation, all that remains is pure sensation, to which we may either react or not as we choose.

To succeed in Bardon's control of the body exercises you must learn how to disconnect from that *automatic emotional evaluation* of sensation and disempower its instinctive influence over your reactions. In other words, you must choose to inhabit the emotional state

we call “comfortable” when you experience what would ordinarily be deemed “discomfort”.

Sitting in the posture Bardon described will most likely be uncomfortable at first until you have learned to separate yourself from the natural inclination to readjust your body’s position. The same with not drinking water when you are thirsty or not eating when you are hungry, etc. Each demands that you first recognize your instinctual reaction and then supplant your unconscious instinct with a consciously intended alternative.

It is *very* educational to confront these unconscious emotional evaluations of sensation. For example, in real life I am a skinny boy with no protective fat layer so I get cold very easily. To me, cold equals uncomfortable so my instinct is to get warm, but when I set aside that emotional valuation of the sensation, my sense of discomfort disappears and I am then at ease when cold and even enjoy its refreshing quality. The cold no longer interrupts me, no longer influences my actions, and I am then at liberty to do as I please instead of being a slave to instinct.

In terms of your future practice, the ability to disregard physical sensation, whether painful or pleasurable, becomes important when you need to be physically still for several hours at a stretch or physically active for long durations. It’s important that you learn to rule your physical body instead of letting your body’s needs always rule you.

The essence of an Elemental Equilibrium is the power of self-determination. This means that you consciously determine what happens in your mind; what emotional responses you will enact; and what influence your physical body will exert over your behavior. All of these are within your ability to determine for yourself with conscious intention.

As I said at the beginning, Step Two is all about creativity. To me there is nothing as exciting as creating something with my own hands. So I was in seventh heaven when I first began the work of Step Two – what better to create than my self? For me, this is fun work, more akin to play really than work. I hope you too will find this same playful joy in being creative with your self and with how you live your life. Why not make them things of beauty and wonder that grace the world?

STEP THREE

PILLARS OF THE TEMPLE

Bardon opened Step Three with a brief discussion of four fundamental qualities necessary for a successful pursuit of Hermetic initiation. He called these the four pillars of Solomon's Temple and labeled them Knowledge, Volition, Courage or Daring and Silence. I will discuss each one in sequence starting with what he called "knowledge".

Clearly, knowledge is not a quality or trait. It's a result, a thing we gain through learning and is not itself a character trait. The fundamental quality then is an ability, willingness and eagerness to learn. In other words, the successful Hermetic is one who is capable of *learning* from every source and from every experience.

This is not just about stuffing our brains with facts and figures from books; quite the contrary, since very little true knowledge comes from mere dogmatic factoids. True learning involves personal experience; personal testing of information that one has assimilated; deep consideration of the veracity of information and then the practical application of any truths one has gleaned.

Every thing teaches us. Or rather, we can learn something from every moment of our lives . . . if only we are truly willing to learn the lessons that each moment holds for us. Every interaction, every perception, every feeling and every thought is a brand new opportunity for us to learn something new or to refine what we already think is true. But whether or not we choose to learn from any given thing or moment is entirely up to us.

What is required for genuine success with Hermetic initiation is a passionate desire for learning and an openness to whatever the lesson might be. In other words, we do not turn away from difficult lessons; we embrace them because they are our doorways to true knowledge. Nor do we run more eagerly after the pleasant lessons just for their pleasantness – we run because we wish to learn from *all* things.

Reading and absorbing the words and ideas of others is great but it is never the whole of true knowledge. It can help us broaden our horizons and introduce us to new ways of thinking and feeling and to new things to think and feel about, but it *must* be personalized through direct personal experience and involvement for it take form as true knowledge. True learning must encompass our mind, heart

and body. This is why just reading IHH does not make one into an actual magician. It's only through the personal experience of doing the exercises that the information becomes true knowledge and understanding. Only then does the Hermetic theory come alive within your mind, soul and body and become true knowing.

To my mind, there are three things that enable true learning. First is a sharp and versatile intellect, capable of seeing to the heart of a matter, of making connections between ideas and experiences, and of discerning between truth and falsehood, between illusion and objective reality. Second is objectivity of perception, which is why so much emphasis is placed upon developing your mundane and subtle senses. And third is a genuine desire, openness and willingness to learn—even better if it is an *eagerness* to learn.

Of course, each of these traits can be intentionally cultivated and strengthened.

A second fundamental quality necessary for successful pursuit of Hermetic initiation is what Bardon titled, "*volition*". This is the fiery power of your determination, the willfulness of your conscious intention; specifically, its ability to pass through any barriers that block your way. This requires an adroit balance or proportioning of fluidity and rigidity, of adaptability and bone-headed stubbornness. This kind of will must be able to change course in an instant when its course proves incorrect or impossible and yet be so stubborn that it will never cease searching for the correct path to its goal. And, will never cease pursuing that path once found.

This is most important in your character transformation work and your work with all the other exercises of IHH. It assures success.

Magical volition is eternally persistent – if it takes lifetimes to accomplish then so be it; that does not deter the magical volition. Magical volition is undeniable – it will always find its way through or around any obstacle. Magical volition is infinitely adaptable – instead of resisting changing circumstances, it readily changes tactics to best meet each challenge.

A third fundamental quality necessary for successful pursuit of Hermetic initiation is what Bardon titled, "*daring*" or "*courage*" depending upon which English translation you reference.

Personally, I prefer the word 'daring' over that of 'courage', because at the root of magical courage is a willingness to take risks -- willingness to risk suffering, willingness to risk failure and more subtly, willingness to risk succeeding. If you are willing to go through any experience whatsoever for the sake of reaching your goal then you are courageous.

Courage also requires groundedness in self, a steadfastness of character; otherwise it devolves into mere foolishness and needless risk-taking. True magical courage also requires a noble goal for which one is willing to risk everything in the attainment; otherwise it is a pointless waste of energy which debases true courage.

Courage is what enables us to take that next step into the unknown territory of self. To my mind the most courageous and noble act a human being can undertake is that of truly being their own self. Or, in the context of initiation, to engage in the work of intentional character transformation. Entering into the soul mirror work, it feels like we are risking the loss of everything familiar and dear to us – “what happens if we turn into somebody completely different?” is a common question. Facing that fear of rejection, alienation and aloneness takes great courage since inclusion, acceptance and community are so important to our well being

At first, courage is based upon imagination, belief, hope or faith, if you will. However, the exercising of courage breeds self-confidence and very quickly courage shifts its rooting to the firm ground of proven success. With each success, we learn that we are indeed capable of achieving our goals and of persevering to the end, so we no longer need to *imagine* that we’re capable – we *know* we’re capable and this self-assurance produces an even more powerful quality of courage.

Magical courage is the foundation of the persistence aspect of the magical volition or will. Without courage, the will has no staying power, no stick-to-it-iveness and is therefore easily defeated. But when the will is backed by a willingness to risk anything and everything, then it is inexhaustible and capable of persisting indefinitely.

The fourth and final fundamental quality for success in Hermetic initiation was titled “*silence*” by Bardon. Of the four qualities, this one is perhaps the most complex and by far the most difficult to explain. There are so many layers to the meaning of ‘silence’ in the Hermetic context.

One layer is that of simple self-preservation. Those who seek to penetrate the Hermetic Mysteries are, quite frankly much more difficult to control, thus they are perceived as dangerous to political and religious authorities whose primary function is that of controlling the masses of humanity. They are also a heretical threat to the dogmatic beliefs of religious fundamentalists and are often labeled as blasphemers, devil worshipers, witches, etc., in an effort to discredit them. In many times and places one risked one’s very life

to be known as a ‘magician’ or to display any knowledge deeper than accepted dogma.

In the western cultures this sort of fundamentalist reaction was more prominent in the past than it is today, but today a Hermetic magician faces the prominence of another age old danger. You see, there are and have always been government and military organizations who take special interest in those who profess great magical powers, all in the hope of either suborning them as weapons or destroying them as threats. In today’s world of ever increasing surveillance and ever decreasing privacy this is a far greater danger than religious persecution.

Another age old consequence of being a known magician is that suddenly there are a lot of people who want something from you, who want you to save them or cure them or make them rich or even turn them into magicians with a snap of your fingers and nod of your head. Once people put you into this box titled ‘magician’, they expect things from you based upon all of their ill informed assumptions about what a ‘magician’ is and does. All magicians are exactly the same, right? And certainly all Bardonian magicians are carbon copies of Franz Bardon, right? While not exactly life-threatening unless you are taken in by it all and have the ego need to make everybody like you, it can nonetheless be annoying and draining over time.

Over all, it pays to be *prudent* about what you reveal of yourself to others. In some contexts, it’s no problem at all to be completely open about your Hermetic practice and perspective, while in others it simply spells trouble. So this aspect of ‘silence’ is really about prudence and about judging the context appropriately.

Another layer to the Hermetic meaning of ‘silence’ is less mundane and more significant to one’s magical advancement. This has to do with the way in which the inner power of a very personal experience is diminished or dissipated by sharing that experience with others. Psychotherapy uses this fact as a healing tool with talk-therapy in which the patient tells the therapist or group all the details of a negative experience. The phrasing of the experience in words has a very powerful effect of distancing and expressing simultaneously, of encapsulating and releasing. Sharing of the experience spreads the emotional power of the experience to other hands. This process of talking about one’s problems clearly helps to diffuse their inner power and helps to put the emotional content into a broader, less self-centered perspective. Conversely, if the negative experience is kept secret and never spoken of then the internal emotional content

becomes toxic, causing illness.

The exact opposite is true of positive experiences and it's this fact that Hermetics makes use of when it speaks of 'magical silence'. Just as with a negative emotional content, the internal power of a positive experience also grows exponentially the less it is communicated to others. The difference is in the result – the internal growth of the positive experience exponentially increases in positivity, whereas the internal growth of the negative experience exponentially increases negativity. The negative produces a deadly toxin while the positive produces a sacred elixir.

A perfect example is the little secrets that lovers share only with each other. Those completely private moments of intimate affection that are never spoken about with others. And if they are put into words for other's ears they become immediately degraded, they lose their sacredness, their intimacy and their deepest inner significance. Such deeply personal experiences can never be truly communicated with words and the attempt alone transforms the originally fluid emotional content into fragile sheets of ice that shatter and quickly melt away.

In your Hermetic work it is vitally important that you cultivate the transformative inner power of your experiences through this aspect of 'silence'. If you do not ever put them into spoken words for another's ear or into written form for another to read, then their powerfulness will expand within your astra-mental body and thus increase your rate of progress in your initiation. Conversely, if you are always speaking of them to others or writing about their details for others to read, then the powerfulness of those experiences is diminished and the nature of the *experience* is transformed instead of *your* nature. This significantly slows one's progress with initiation.

Yet another layer to the Hermetic significance of 'silence' has to do with confronting and transforming your own ego needs. Why would you be inclined to speak about your Hermetic experiences and knowledge in the first place? Is it necessary? You can certainly share your insights, thoughts, opinions, etc., without ever using Hermetic jargon or without ever mentioning the details of your intimate magical experiences, so why would you do so at all?

There are of course good reasons in certain circumstances for sharing such things with others but those are really few and far between. Most often the answer to the question of "why?" has to do with some personal ego need such as the need to impress others or to dominate others with your dazzling intellect, etc. So the inclination to speak about your inner Hermetic experiences and accomplish-

ments must be examined each time it arises and when this is done with sufficient self-honesty, a natural reticence arises. In effect, this practice becomes part of the ongoing character transformation work.

So, those are the four fundamental qualities that when applied to your Hermetic initiation, assure success. An eagerness to learn, which opens you to boundless knowledge; an unshakeable determination which assures ultimate success in all your endeavors; a willingness to risk everything in the face of fear and thus gain absolute freedom; and, a disciplined reticence that nurtures your inner life.

MENTAL

There's not much to be said about these exercises since they're so straight-forward and, if you've mastered the work of Step Two, so simple. I do strongly recommend that you follow Bardón's sequencing here of starting with the simple and progressing slowly and sequentially to the more and more complex. Don't let your ego get in the way of going slowly and precisely! It's not a timed race with a prize for coming in first! The quality of your performance is what's important and a high quality is assured if you follow Bardón's step-by-step approach here. This work is an important precursor to the Step Four mental work of transferring your awareness, as well as being a support to your astral section work with the Elements.

Other than that, I can't think of anything helpful to add in regard to the multi-sensorial concentration exercises

ASTRAL

In Step One and Two, you've worked with the Elements somewhat indirectly and primarily as internal things. For example, you have been working with the internal Elements of your character traits and your progress with the sensory concentration exercises has affected your internal Elemental balance as well. But now with Step Three, you begin to work with them very directly and as *external* things.

As Bardón stated, it is very unwise to begin this work with the *external* Elements before having first attained a rudimentary *internal* balance of the Elements in your character transformation work. You should have *at least* transformed your most important negative character traits before beginning the astral work of Step Three. It's not so much that you risk injuring yourself. Instead, it's that you will most definitely hinder your progress.

This initial direct work with the external Elements will *amplify* your internal negative character traits, so you do not want to be amplifying something that is already dominating your character. This is self-defeating and inevitably leads to much greater difficulty in transforming the negative trait. On the other hand, if you have achieved the rudimentary Elemental balance, then this initial work with the external Elements will bring the lesser negative traits into greater focus for you and actually render them easier to transform, thus speeding your attainment of the astral *Equilibrium* of the Elements.

Either way, this Step Three work with the external Elements *will* stir the pot of your psyche, so to speak, and in the right context, this is a very good thing and a very necessary thing. The *whole* of the psyche must be brought to the surface and involved in the transformation of character and this work with the Elements guarantees that this occurs.

The point of these exercises is to introduce you to the *factual* Elements. To accomplish this, we use the tool of our creative imagination of the effects of the Elements to lead us to a non-imaginary experience of the Elements themselves. Do you remember what I said in the mental section about the Law of Attraction and the mental plane? Within the mental plane, similar things attract. So here we use the tool of our creative imagination to generate a very strong manifestation of the *effects* of the Elements – such as heat, cold, lightness, heaviness, etc. – on the mental plane and thus draw the *factual*, non-imagined Element to us. This is what I mean when I say that the exercises introduce us or *lead* us to the Elements themselves.

However, what we create with our imagination are the *effects* of the Elements, not the Elements themselves. For example, we imagine heat and radiant expansion with the Fire Element, but both of these are effects *caused* by the Fire Element; they are not the Fire Element itself. The Elements themselves, the *factual* Elements, are actually Principles, with a capital ‘P’ or more properly, “Philosophical Principles”. Principles though are very difficult to wield in the same way that a flame, for example, is easy to wield, so to learn how to wield a Principle we begin by wielding the *effects* of the Principle such as heat or cold.

The thing is, whenever physical heat is present, the Fire Element is active, so wielding the effect leads to being able to perceive and experience the underlying or causative Principle itself. Once the Principle is perceived and experienced then it becomes possible to directly wield the *Principle*, separate from the effect, and thus there

is no longer any need to use the creative imagination. In other words, when we accumulate the Principle itself, we automatically experience warmth without the need to create the sensation with our imagination.

As you are working with these exercises it is important that you remember the distinction between the effects of the Elements and the Principles themselves, because what you are really aiming for is an experience of the *Principles*, the *factual* Elements.

The Principle of Fire is the dissolution of rigid structure, the creation of space between solid things, the unbinding of all attachments between structural components, and so on. An *effect* of the presence of this Principle of Fire within a physical ice cube, for example, is that the atoms of water begin to move away from each other and bounce off each other more and more rapidly. This excitation of atoms is perceived as heat and as a melting of the solid ice, an unbinding of its rigid structure. Eventually, the liquid water turns to vapor as the atoms push further and further apart. Thus we see the *effects* of the Fire Principle as excitation, as expansion, as heat and as radiant force.

The Principle of Air is best illustrated as that space created by the Fire as it forced the atoms apart. It is the absence of structure, of density and of attraction. It is also the absence of repulsion. It is the resting state that exists without structure; thus its association with pure awareness. We perceive the *effects* of the Air Principle therefore as passive neutrality and weightlessness.

The Water Principle is the opposite of Fire. It's the closing of space between particles, the filling of the emptiness created by the action of the Fire Principle, the gathering together of separate things, the movement toward structure, relationship and organization. It is attraction and binding. Its *effect* is seen as cooling because it slows the activity of atoms and brings them closer together, condensing the substance.

The Earth Principle is a bit more complex. It's the cyclical interaction of the Fire, Air and Water Principles; which is to say it is rigid form, it is the dissolution of rigid form and it is the embodying of awareness in form, simultaneously. The Earth Principle appears to my eye as a very active state of constant change, of shapes endlessly forming and dissolving around a core of awareness. Its primary impression though is of form and substance, thus we associate the *effects* of density and weight with the Earth.

For these exercises we combine two techniques we've learned in previous work; pore breathing and the creative sensory imagina-

tion. As Bardon stated, “*This whole process of inhaling the Element through the body is, of course, a purely imaginary occurrence and should be exercised with the utmost plastic imagination of the Element.*” In other words, *you* have to make this happen, *you* have to create the Elemental sensations and *you* have to create the experience of their effects filling your own body. You can’t just imagine that the external universe is filled with the element and then start inhaling with the expectation that you’ll start feeling the Element’s effects in your body. *You* have to create those internal sensations for yourself.

The emphasis in these exercises is upon the physical, bodily sensations associated with the Elemental *effects*: expansive heat with Fire, constrictive cold with Water, calm weightlessness with Air and dense gravity with Earth. By basing the initial experiences with the *external* Elements upon an *internal* physical sensation, our eventual experiences of the *factual* Elemental Principles also become associated with physical sensations.

Establishing this connection between the Principle and sensation makes it much, much easier to attain the ability to wield and manipulate the more ephemeral Principles. It’s like the difference between someone telling you how to tie your shoes and actually using your fingers to tie them yourself. It isn’t until you’ve done it yourself, physically that the instructions really mean anything and you understand how to wield a shoelace.

You may, of course, add additional symbolism such as color, sound, imagery, aroma, etc., to your sensory imagination of the Elemental effects if that helps you. But beware of becoming too detailed or too specific. For example, with the Fire Element you may benefit from imagining the universe has turned a fiery red color and this will indeed be helpful, but if you go further and imagine the world filled with flames, then you start to hinder your ability to connect with the *Principle* underlying the *effect*. Flame is only one out of the infinite number of ways that the Fire Element may manifest so this sort of imagery is too specific and complex and thus leads you away from the Universal Principles.

It seems that a lot of people don’t understand Bardon’s instructions regarding these exercises so I will try to explain them more clearly.

Get comfortable in your usual asana and close your eyes. Use your creative imagination to create the sensation of heat surrounding you in all directions. You sit in the exact middle of a universe filled with the fiery heat of the Fire Element. Once your imagination is firmly established, begin inhaling this fiery heat into your body

through your pores.

Once each inhalation is completed you must use your creative imagination once again to create the sensation of warming within your whole body. Go slowly and take empty breaths while you create these sensations for yourself. In other words, do not stop inhaling or hold your breath, etc., while you are creating the necessary sensations. Inhale and exhale normally, through your nose, while you do this preparatory work and then use the magical whole-body inhalation when you are ready to actually take your next inhalation of the Element.

In total, you want to do seven of these inhalations during your first exercise. As Bardon noted, you should increase by one inhalation with each successive exercise until you reach a maximum of 30 inhalations.

Once you have completed your seven inhalations of the Element, you want to then exhale those seven inhalations with the magical whole body exhalation. You want to *completely* rid yourself of the Elemental sensation. This too is accomplished with your creative imagination. So take however many empty breaths you need to wrap your mind around expelling the Element's sensation from your body and when you're ready, grab hold of one inhalation's worth of the Elemental sensation and magically exhale it through your pores. Creatively imagine that it exits your body and returns to the external universe from where you imagined it coming originally. Creatively imagine that the heat within your body has diminished and that the internal pressure of the Element has decreased as well. All of this must be done with your creative imagination. As with the magical inhalation, work slowly and take however many empty breaths you need between each magical exhalation.

At this point, many folks worry that they haven't rid themselves of all the Element that they had previously inhaled and thus fear damaging themselves by having some left over after the seven exhalations; or conversely, that they have exhaled more than they inhaled and thus risk harming themselves by depleting their body's natural supply of the Element.. This self-doubt arises from the idea that these are the *factual* Elements – however, all that has been inhaled and exhaled are sensations created by your own *imagination*. At this stage you are not working with the factual Elements so there is no reason to fear. This whole process is in the hands of your imagination so it is up to *you* to imagine that what you have exhaled is equal to what you inhaled. At the end of your seven exhalations you must imagine that no sensation of the Element remains.

Once you have gotten used to the magical inhalation and exhalation of the Element with your eyes closed, start working with your eyes open. The goal is to be able to work with your eyes open instead of always having to close your eyes when you want to accumulate an Element; nonetheless, it is easiest to begin learning this technique with eyes closed.

Bardon presented a very specific sequence for this initial work with the Elements. Start with the Fire, then the Air, then the Water and finally, the Earth. This sequence is repeated throughout IIIH and it is wise to adhere to it. The fact is, once you establish a connection with the *factual* Fire Element by repeated practice of this first exercise, then your connection with the factual Air Element will come very quickly. Then, once you have connected with the factual Air Element, your connection with the factual Water Element will be very quick indeed, and so on.

My recommendation is that you work *only* with the Fire Element exercise until you establish your connection with the *factual* Element. Once you have connected with the *factual* Fire Element and you no longer need to *create* the sensation of heat during your inhalation, then begin working with the Air Element and create the Air sensations, etc, until you attain a similar connection and no longer need to create the Air sensation. Thus you will be working with the *factual* Fire Element while you begin your work with the *imaginary* Air Element. And once you've made the connection with the *factual* Air Element, then begin adding work with the *imaginary* Water Element to your daily regimen, and so on. By the end of your Step Three work you should be working every day with all four *factual* Elements.

Many take a different approach and start working with all four *imaginary* Elements each day, one after the other, thinking that they are thus speeding up their attainment of mastery. However, this actually slows progress and delays that initial connection with the *factual* Elements.

Mastery of the Step Three work with the Elements is very simply defined. You attain mastery of these exercises when you no longer need to use your imagination to create the Elemental sensations during your inhalation. Connection with a factual Element is apparent when the sensation arises spontaneously as an effect of your inhalation and is not created by your imagination. This is very important because all future work with the Elements is predicated upon the assumption that you are indeed accumulating the *factual* Elements and are not creating their effects with your imagination.

As Bardon wrote at the closing of the astral section of Step Three, the work with the Elements is “*the most important magical domain and he who does not possess the Elements will scarcely get on in magic science.*” We possess the Elements only when we are capable of working with the *factual* Elements. Otherwise, we are just engaging in creative self-delusion and that is not what constitutes Hermetic magic.

PHYSICAL

In Step Two and in the mental and astral sections of Step Three, we have been using our imagination to create sensory impressions. But now, for the first time, with the Step Three physical exercises of accumulating the Vital Energy, we use our imagination to cause energy to obey our will. Thus we begin to work with imagination’s second function, that of instructing or guiding energies.

Everything in the practice of Hermetic magic is accomplished by the magician’s own awareness. And all of the energies that are employed in Hermetic magic are wielded by the magician’s focused imagination and will. This is a fundamental law of Nature that Hermetic magic is built upon. All astra-physical energies are susceptible to the influence and control of mental awareness.

But this works only if we have first established a connection with the *factual* energy. For example, if we want the Vital Energy to fill an object then we imagine it happening and, assuming that we have indeed established a connection with the factual Vital Energy, the Vital Energy will do as we wish.

The pore breathing exercises of Step Two were intended to introduce you to the factual Vital Energy so that when you begin this Step Three work, you will no longer have to *create* the physical sensations associated with the Vital Energy within your body. They will arise spontaneously, on their own as a result of your inhaling the factual Vital Energy.

The Step Three physical exercises then are about directing, manipulating and using the *factual* Vital Energy. The first use is internal, focused entirely upon our own bodies. It isn’t until we get to working with the appendices that use of the Vital Energy is directed outward.

This reveals a three stage pattern which is seen throughout Bardon’s three instructional books; one that is fundamental to true Hermetic practice. Phase one: use the creative imagination to estab-

lish a connection with the factual energy. Phase two: wield the factual energy internally, upon one's own body. And phase three: wield the factual energy externally.

Phase one of this process was accomplished with the Step Two physical exercises and Phase two is presented here, in the physical exercises of Step Three. The phase three external work is presented in the appendices.

The phase two process of first wielding the energy internally, focused within your own body is essential to a true Hermetic initiation. It accomplishes two important functions simultaneously: first, it quite literally transforms your astral and physical bodies; and second, it informs you of exactly what effects you are achieving when you wield the energy. As Hermetic magicians, we are our own proving grounds, our own laboratories and our own experimental subjects.

I'm often asked "well, how do I really know if I've accumulated the Vital Energy correctly?" My immediate response is "you will know" and I say this because it is within your own body that you experiment and practice your technique, so you know first-hand what, if any, effect you're having. You *will* know when you get it "right" and when you get it "wrong".

Phase two assures that when it then comes to wielding the Vital Energy externally, you will already know from direct personal experience exactly what effect you are having upon your environment. For example, if you condense the Vital Energy into a friend's body to help them heal, you will know exactly how it feels to have the Vital Energy condensed in your own body and you will know from this how much is enough and how much is too much.

This internally focused work always begins with the whole body, the integrated physio-astra-mental body, and then moves on to focusing upon smaller body parts and organs, until every square centimeter of your body has been touched. It was in Step Two that we experienced the whole-body pore breathing of the Vital Energy and established our connection with, and direct experience of, the factual Vital Energy; so here in Step Three we begin with breathing through smaller body parts and internal organs.

We inhale the factual Vital Energy into one of our legs, from hip to tip of toe, and then immediately exhale it back to the universe. We breathe it in and then out and then in and then out for seven full breaths and then move to the other leg and repeat the same procedure. In this way we move through the entire body, part by part, going into ever greater detail over time until we have experienced breath-

ing the factual Vital Energy into and out of every individual part of our body.

But, and this is an important point here, in order to do what I've just described, we must focus our awareness into each of these body parts, some of which are very small and which you have never even felt before. Bardon described this with an interesting degree of brevity through the simple instruction "*transfer yourself, with your consciousness into one of your legs*".

When I first read that statement I said to myself, hey, wait a minute, is it really that simple? So simple that Bardon would just assume you were able to transfer your awareness into different parts of your body without any instruction or exercises or practice? The answer of course, is yes, it really is that simple because it's another one of those things that we do automatically, an instinctual response that happens without our intention or even recognition. The classic example is that of hitting your thumb with a hammer or stubbing your toe. Your awareness is immediately drawn to the point of injury and you experience with excruciating clarity the sensation of pain that exists there.

On a somewhat more intentional, yet still unrecognized level an example would be when touching a soft fabric with your finger tips, more of your awareness becomes focused within the nerves of your finger tips. Or when savoring a wonderful taste, your awareness becomes more focused within your tongue. Our awareness is instinctively drawn by sensory perception, especially those perceptions that trigger a "danger" warning. In effect, our awareness is automatically and unintentionally "transferred" to various parts of our body, all the time.

The difference here, in regard to the Hermetic training is the factor of intentionality. When we intentionally focus our awareness in a specific internal organ, we sense it with greater depth and thoroughness than when the transference is instinctual and unintentional.

And as it turns out, this simple act of intentionalizing the internal focusing of your awareness within parts of your body is an essential precursor to the upcoming Step Four mental work of transferring your awareness into the external world. For there is only the slightest difference between transferring your awareness into your foot and transferring it into an object 3 meters away.

If you find it difficult to intentionally focus your awareness within a part of your body then here is a simple experiment that will help you. Take an ice cube or anything cold and touch it with your finger. Focus upon the sensation of coldness that you feel in your

finger and place your awareness as completely as possible into the exact part of your finger that is actually touching the ice cube. Once you've succeeded at this, touch the ice cube to another place on your skin, such as your arm or face and focus your awareness again into the part of your body experiencing the sensation of coldness. Move the ice cube around from place to place until it becomes easy for you to quickly shift your awareness into the place experiencing the sensation of coldness. Now try intentionally focusing your awareness in your finger without touching an ice cube.

For these exercises with the internal organs, I recommend that you purchase an anatomical chart that shows exactly where each of the human body's internal organs is situated. Knowing where to focus your awareness will greatly aid your work.

When you have succeeded in focusing your awareness in each of your body parts and organs and have breathed the factual Vital Energy into and out of each one, then it is time to begin working with the *dynamic accumulation* of the factual Vital Energy. With dynamic accumulation, we are confining the energy within a limited space and building the density of the energy within that space. The more energy we accumulate within the confinement, the greater its dynamic intensity becomes.

We start with the accumulation of Vital Energy into the whole body. Accumulate seven inhalations of the Vital Energy at first and add one additional inhalation with each successive session. Since you are now working with the factual Vital Energy, there will be no need to creatively imagine the sensations that arise within your body. Here, the creative imagination is used only to confine the Vital Energy within your body. In other words, you must instruct the Vital Energy to remain within the confines of your physical body and, using your creative imagination, visualize its confinement.

Once a certain density or dynamism of the Vital Energy is achieved within the confined space of your body, it will naturally begin to radiate outward into your surrounding environment. At this point, you should use your creative imagination to augment and amplify its radiation by simply imagining that wave upon wave of the Vital Energy is emanating from you.

Bardon set a time limit of no more than 20 minutes per exercise but set no limit on the number of inhalations to be accumulated. This is because as you get more proficient at accumulating the Vital Energy, each inhalation will produce a larger quantity of the Vital Energy. Very quickly a single inhalation will equal the same quantity that you inhaled with 7 inhalations during your very first exercise.

With practice, the numbers become irrelevant and you must then become sensitive to the actual quantity of the Vital Energy, separate from the number of inhalations you've taken.

You should at all times be aware of your own bodily limitations and not increase the quantity of your accumulation too quickly. Give your body time to acclimate to the tension of your accumulations before increasing their intensity. In other words, expand your body's limits respectfully and gradually instead of rudely and all at once. This will make you much more resilient in the long run.

At the end of each exercise, you must expel *all* of the accumulated Vital Energy so that your body returns to its normal state. At first, this is achieved through the practice of whole body magical exhalation which you are already familiar with. Once this method is mastered, you begin to practice an explosive release in which the whole of the accumulated Vital Energy is released from its confinement all at once in a single expulsion.

When you have mastered these techniques of dynamically accumulating, radiating and then expelling the Vital Energy with your whole body, you must then turn to mastering the same with each and every individual part of your body. As with the opening exercise of breathing the Vital Energy into and out of each body part and organ, you must now systematically create a dynamic accumulation within each part and organ, radiate the Vital Energy from each organ and then expel the accumulation from each organ, first through magical exhalation and then through the explosive release.

To quote Bardon, *"The exercise at this stage will have answered its purpose if you have learned how to accumulate vital power not only in the whole body, but in each single part of it, and emit the rays of this accumulated force directly to the outside. When you master this exercise, the third stage of the magic physical training will be at an end."*

However, this is not the end of the Step Three work with the Vital Energy – there's still the matter of the two appendices whose work must be explored immediately after completing the physical exercises. This of course is the third phase of the pattern I mentioned earlier in which you begin to focus the Vital Energy externally, using it to accomplish various tasks.

ADDENDUM TO STEP THREE

Here, for the first time in your initiation, you are given the opportunity to use what you've learned thus far and perform what most

folks define as “magic”. The most common image of the magician is of one who manipulates their external environment through the use of occult forces, and that is exactly what the appendices to Step Three are all about. But beware! If you wish to continue making progress in your initiation, your spiritual advancement, then you must use these techniques and energies *only* for truly noble deeds. If you use them for petty reasons or to do harm and to disrupt, then your advancement will come to a halt and you will begin to recede instead of advance. The universe does not take kindly to the interference of little twits who like to always force the manifestation of their petty desires, especially those who do so through magical means. But if you act wisely, which is to say ethically and morally and with respectful restraint, then the universe will support you in all your actions.

So, enough preaching, let’s look at the appendices and see what gems they contain for us.

Bardon titled the first appendix “*space impregnation*” and the second, “*bio-magnetism*” mainly to differentiate between two basic types or arenas of usage. Space impregnation pertains to inanimate objects and bio-magnetism to working with living creatures. While this distinction does have some practical relevance in terms of goals, the rudimentary techniques are the same for both. So I’ll focus upon these techniques first and then talk a bit about usage afterward.

Whether you are working with an inanimate object or a living creature, technically speaking what you are doing is impregnating a defined space with the Vital Energy. There are two basic methods for accomplishing this. First is to accumulate the Vital Energy within your body and then radiate or project it outward until it fills the desired space. Second is to draw the Vital Energy directly from the universe into the desired space without it first passing through your body. The second is the more advanced technique so we’ll start with the first method which is based upon the whole body pore breathing.

Very simply, dynamically accumulate the Vital Energy into your whole body through whole body pore breathing until you become dynamically radiant. Increase your accumulation until you reach the desired size sphere of radiant Vital Energy surrounding you. For example, if you wish to impregnate a room with your radiation, then the sphere would need to be sizable enough to completely encompass the room.

If you wish to *dynamically* accumulate the radiant Vital Energy within a defined space, then you will keep inhaling the Vital Energy, increasing its dynamism within your body and thus its radiant

intensity. Simultaneously, you will need to use your creative imagination and force of will to keep the radiant energy confined within the spatial limits you desire and thus create a dynamic accumulation of the radiant Vital Energy.

Alternately, instead of filling the space through radiation, you can project the Vital Energy you've accumulated within your body, as a whole directly from your body into the desired object. This is accomplished, need I say it, with your creative imagination and force of will.

Either way, when you have accumulated the desired degree of dynamism or density of the radiant Vital Energy within the space then you must instruct the accumulated Vital Energy in regard to the following three factors. First you must give it a purpose, which means you must impregnate the accumulation with your desired ideation, such a health, success, peacefulness, etc., or whatever is most appropriate for the intended purpose. This is, of course, accomplished with your creative imagination and force of will.

Second, you must give it duration. By this I mean that you must define how long it is to last before it dissipates. Again, this is accomplished by the creative imagination and force of will in the form of a direct mental command. It is entirely up to you to decide how long the accumulated Vital Energy should occupy the space. Bardon gave several examples in this regard so I won't go into particulars as to what duration you should use for what task.

And third, you must give it sustenance. In time, your dynamic accumulation will dissipate and lose its dynamism so if you wish a longer duration for the accumulation you will have to arrange for its replenishment. This can be accomplished in two ways. Most obviously, you can periodically accumulate more Vital Energy within the space and thus revitalize its accumulated dynamism. Or, you can instruct the accumulation to continuously draw Vital Energy from the Universe and thus maintain its own dynamism without your needing to recharge it yourself. Again, this is accomplished with your creative imagination in combination with your force of will. First you mentally command that the accumulation replenish itself from the Universal supply of Vital Energy and then you visualize this replenishment happening.

Once you are finished instructing the accumulation in regard to its purpose, duration and sustenance, you must then eliminate all the accumulated Vital Energy remaining in your body. Simply release it back to the Universe while leaving the accumulated Vital Energy in the room or object you're working with. Spend several mo-

ments visualizing that the accumulation is functioning exactly as instructed before turning to other matters.

The second, more advanced method for creating a dynamic accumulation is to draw the Vital Energy directly from the universe into the desired space without it first passing through your body. This has a number of advantages. It diminishes your personal, astramental connection to the accumulation and thus to those who are subsequently affected by the accumulation and it takes considerably less time and effort to accomplish. In most instances, this is the preferred method.

There are two basic ways of achieving this. First is by using your creative imagination to visualize that the Vital Energy is coming from every direction, out of the Universe itself and is filling the chosen space directly and then using your force of will to cause your visualization to manifest as fact. Having worked with the pore breathing method for so long, this new method will make intuitive sense and should take very little time to master.

The second way is through transferring your awareness into the object, person or place that you wish to impregnate and then draw the Vital Energy from the Universe and thus fill the space with a dynamic accumulation of the Vital Energy. This however assumes proficiency with transference of awareness that is more relevant to Step Four than Step Three.

Whichever way is employed, once the accumulation is in place it must then be given purpose, duration and sustenance as described previously

So, those are the techniques presented in the two appendices of Step Three, boiled down to their essence. With just a bit of imagination they can be adapted and applied to achieve an almost infinite array of needs. To help stimulate your imagination I will now describe a few examples of how I personally use these techniques with the Vital Energy and some of the things I've learned over the years.

Whenever I'm working for or on myself, I always generate the accumulation within my own body and then either radiate it or, most often, project it into the desired space. For example, say I'm charging a crystal for personal use with a healing influence. First I draw the Vital Energy into my whole body if it is for general healing or into a specific body part if it is for healing of that particular body part, and create a dynamic accumulation of the Vital Energy.

Then I project the whole of the accumulation into the crystal. To achieve this I use my imagination to take hold of the entire accumulation, push it out of my body and direct it through the air into the

crystal. Almost like shooting an arrow. When I first started working with these techniques I also used my physical hands to sort of guide and direct the projection but after a time this became completely unnecessary. These days I simply use my awareness, unless I'm working with others in which case an accompanying physical movement will help increase the group's cohesiveness and keep everyone in sync.

At any rate, once the entire accumulation has entered the crystal I use my imagination to confine it permanently within the body of the crystal and to, in effect, integrate the Vital Energy into the molecular structure of the crystal. This decrease in size of its spatial limits greatly condenses the accumulated Vital Energy and thus greatly increases its dynamism. I always take a moment before proceeding to perceive the dynamic accumulation of Vital Energy now housed within the crystal.

Next I begin to instruct the accumulation in regard to its purpose. I do this through what I guess would be most accurately described as a command, but it's more than that. I don't literally speak to the accumulation and say "you are for healing". Instead, it's an intention that I hold very strongly and willfully within my awareness and I impress this awareness upon the accumulation. By doing this, I intentionally alter the essential nature of the accumulated Vital Energy and it *becomes* the purpose I've given it. Thus transformed, it can do nothing else other than fulfill this singular purpose.

Then I give it its duration or life span, so to speak. This too is delivered in the form of a mental command like what I've just described and the resulting transformation of the accumulated Vital Energy is the same.

And finally, I arrange for its continual replenishment from the Universe. This is more visualization than command though it's no less willful. When I first started working with this technique, I needed to use my creative imagination to visualize a connection forming between the accumulation and the Universal storehouse of Vital Energy and a continuous flow of energy into the accumulation from the Universe, all created with my imagination. But now, it's a matter of will and perception and no creative imagination is required.

When all of this is complete, I spend several moments perceiving the fact that all of these instructions have been realized. Since I projected the entire accumulation into the crystal, there is nothing remaining of the accumulation within my body to rid myself of.

When I wish to charge a larger space, such as the cabin I used

to live in, I will, as before create the accumulation within my whole body but this time I will transfer the charge through radiation instead of projection. I'll do as Bardon described and create a very intensely radiant accumulation of the Vital Energy within my body and emit the rays of this radiant force until they completely fill the space in which I'm standing. I will at this point confine the radiation within the room and let it radiate no further out into the surrounding environment. I then keep increasing the density of the accumulated radiance within the space until I reach the desired intensity.

At this point I push all of the Vital Energy out of my body and into the space, and then give the accumulation its instructions in regard to purpose, duration and sustenance. And as before, when it's all complete, I spend several moments perceiving the fact that all of my instructions have been realized.

If I'm charging a room or other large space from afar, I do not accumulate the Vital Energy in my own body and radiate it. Instead, I draw the Vital Energy directly from the universe and cause it to condense within the space until the desired dynamism is achieved. When I first began using this technique I needed to use my creative imagination to visualize all of this happening but now, as I've mentioned before, all I do is will it and then perceive it happening.

I find that transferring an accumulation through radiation is most gentle as it tends to insinuate its way into the target. Conversely, transferring through an explosive release of the accumulation from my body is the most forceful and abrupt. And the third option of projection is sort of the middle way between explosive release and radiation. So when I wish to be gentle and subtle I will radiate the accumulation. This is especially good when performing face-to-face healing or influencing of others. On the other hand, I will use an explosive release when forcefulness or lack of subtlety is required such as with self-defense or the prevention of an imminent accident. Projection though is usually the most practical method and can be used in nearly every circumstance with appropriateness.

When I'm working for someone other than myself, I only rarely accumulate the Vital Energy within my own body first. Instead, I will either stand outside of the target and draw the Vital energy directly from the universe, causing it to condense within the target or I will transfer my awareness into the target and from its inside, draw the Vital Energy into it.

Working from the outside is perhaps the simplest method and it requires the least amount of effort, but this in no way diminishes its value. It is very practical and is usually the most appropriate

method, especially when working for others. It implies the greatest objectivity and produces the purest accumulation of Vital Energy. By never passing the Vital Energy through one's own body, the accumulation remains untainted or influenced by one's astral "od".

On the other hand, when we use our own body as a vessel for the accumulation, our own astra-mental energies will naturally mingle with, and thus color or taint, the Vital Energy. This is unavoidable and it builds an energetic and karmic connection between you personally and the person you're working for. Most often this is a drawback, a disadvantage, but there are some circumstances where this is positive and appropriate, such as when your work concerns a loved one.

The transference of awareness method in which you literally inhabit your target with your awareness also generates an energetic and karmic connection but it is much milder, and less astral in nature. There is also very little, if any, tainting of the Vital Energy by your astral "od" using this method. Its greatest advantage is that it alone allows for infinite precision and delicacy. This method however, is possible only when you have attained some proficiency with the Step Four transference of awareness.

I hope that these few examples will ignite your own creative spirit and serve to inspire your own exploration of what all is possible with these techniques and with the Vital Energy itself. And while you are on your journey of exploration and discovery I hope you will keep the following in mind –

This is a test. What you do with these techniques and why you do it will determine your future as an initiate. So tread carefully, conscientiously and respectfully if you truly wish to reach the highest heights. This work with the Vital Energy is only the very beginning of what is possible and it's the quality of your actions and intentions that determine what portion of the possible you will achieve. Remember, the Universe is watching your every thought and deed . . .

STEP FOUR

MENTAL

Transplantation of Consciousness – Experiencing Other As Self

For me, Step Four was very exciting! So many factors come together here and the work of Step Four opens up vast new horizons just begging to be explored. The mental work opens us to an experiential understanding of every other living being from the inside out. And the astral and physical work brings mastery of the Elements, opening us to limitless possibilities as we explore the practical applications of this new media.

Before I address the mental exercises themselves, I need to speak first about the prerequisites for Step Four; what is required of you before starting out on the Step Four work. So I will describe some of the abilities you *must* have developed and to what degree and I will sketch for you a simple picture of what you *must* have achieved in regard to your astral Equilibrium of the Elements.

First and foremost, you *must* have reached an Equilibrium of the Elements within your astral body. This is an *absolute* requirement. If you try to proceed without this Equilibrium then you won't get far and you will find yourself staring over from Step One in the not too distant future. This initiatory system is self-protecting in that way; when you head off unprepared you inevitably loop back to the beginning where you must start all over again.

So, that raises the perennial question of what is an astral Equilibrium of the Elements and how do we gauge whether we've reached it or not. Unfortunately there are no absolutes, no universal standards by which to judge this since each individual is unique, but there are common characteristics or traits that I can at least describe. In the end though, it is up to you to judge your own state of Equilibrium.

The most basic definition of an astral Equilibrium is that your responses to your environment have become intentional. Your reactions and responses are no longer dictated by external events but are instead the product of your conscious, intentional choices. For example, you get to the supermarket check-out line to find it's quite long and slow. Formerly, you might have automatically become impatient and angry, but now you choose to wait patiently and without pointless anger.

In terms of negative character traits, you have mastered them all. This means that none of them can take over your reactions and instead, you are at all times master of how you *express* your emotions. Furthermore, as new negative character traits emerge or are uncovered, you are immediately in control of them.

This presupposes a consistent awareness of your own inner self, of your thoughts and emotions *as* they arise. You are always present in your thinking and feeling, and always in control of how you choose to express them.

While this does mean the absence of all *major* negative character traits, this does not mean a *complete* absence of negative character traits. However, those minor negative traits that do remain are never given the chance to exercise themselves. You are always in control of them, they never control you.

In general, an astral Equilibrium results in a certain calm self-assurance. Such a person is reliable and consistent yet adaptable to the ever changing demands of the moment. The qualities of kindness, consideration of others and even-headedness are also common attributes. But in the end, Equilibrium is judged by one's *internal* state, not one's external character.

Not only must you be master of your character, you must also be master of your mind before beginning the work of Step Four. You must by this point be able to enter into an emptiness of mind any time you wish and in an instant. Your emptiness of mind practice must by now be a deep source of inspiration, joy and peacefulness.

You must also have greatly deepened your practice of mindfulness into a constant habit of awareness. You always live in the present moment and are continuously aware of your inner environment.

You must also be able to affix your mind upon any idea or thought you desire and keep it focused for as long as necessary without interruption. And you must be able to create any sensory impression imaginable and maintain that impression for as long as necessary.

Furthermore, you must be master of your own body as well. You must be able to override its wants and needs at will to such a degree that no matter how uncomfortable or how pleased your physical body becomes, your mental focus is not adversely affected.

Your work with the *factual* Vital Energy must be well advanced through consistent pursuit of the work described in the appendices of Step Three and you must, before beginning Step Four, have made contact with the *factual* Elements through your Step

Three work of inhaling them.

If you are absolutely certain you have attained these prerequisites, then you are ready to begin the work of Step Four. But if any doubt remains in regard to your having met any of these standards, then you must improve upon them first. Otherwise, you will be wasting your time and considerable efforts.

So, on to the mental exercises themselves . . .

The title of these exercises is given as either ‘transplantation’ or ‘transference’ of consciousness, depending upon which English translation you reference. Both of these English words imply a projection of your awareness through physical space, into an object some spatial distance away from you. However, that is not in fact the method taught by these exercises. Instead, it is more accurately described by the English word ‘transmutation’ for indeed it is all about using your creative imagination to transmute the vessel surrounding your awareness. As with the initial exercises with the Vital Energy and the Elements, your creative transmutation of the vessel establishes a connection with the factual object on the mental plane. In other words, the transference occurs through mental-space, not physical-space and is more of a mutual coming together than an act of projection. In effect, you come to inhabit the object by adopting or becoming the object’s size, shape, color, purpose and location. This mental act of *becoming* is how awareness is transferred or transplanted.

Given time and practice and experience however, the process of using the imagination to create the sensory impressions of inhabiting an object becomes less and less necessary and eventually it does become a very simple act of projecting awareness, of simply moving your awareness into the target immediately, similar to the experience of focusing your awareness into a specific part or organ of your own body.

This technique of adopting or becoming other is fundamental to Hermetic practice and will be greatly advanced in future Steps. At this point however, its main function (aside from increasing your access to understanding and experiencing the perspectives of others) is to render your awareness more fluid and adaptive, more malleable.

There are five steps or phases to this technique. Bardon stated the first step as “*Similar to the concentration on objects, put some objects which you are using every day in front of you. Sitting in your habitual position, fix your eyes for a short while on one of the objects, and inculcate the shape, color and size of it firmly in your mind.*” In other words, get to know all the details of your target from

the *outside* first. You must impress all of the object's external details firmly in your mind, noting especially its shape, its size, its color and its surface texture. Later, when you're working with imaginary targets, this stage involves the actual creation of the target with your imagination, in which case *you* will be determining all of its external details.

Bardon described the second step thusly: "*Now imagine yourself being transmuted in this object. You must feel, in a way, as the object itself and adopt all its properties.*" Here you are using your creative imagination to surround yourself with all the physical properties of the target. In effect, you build the object around your awareness. For example if you've chosen a yellow pencil, you will creatively imagine that you inhabit the shape of a narrow tube that is painted yellow on the exterior. At one end is an eraser affixed with a metal band and at the other end you are sharpened to a point. Internally you are composed of fibrous wood surrounding a very narrow shaft of lead. You must build all of these sensations with your creative imagination until you truly feel that you are this pencil. Take your time and work slowly and carefully and when you feel that you truly inhabit the exact form of your target, move on to the third step.

And for the third step Bardon wrote, "*You have to be quite certain of the fact that you are fastened to the spot you have been put, unable to abandon it but through an outside influence.*" This is the point at which you complete your connection with the *factual* target. The goal is to so completely inhabit your target that you feel it to truly be your body. You are now bound to it in exactly the same way you are bound to your normal body of flesh and blood. Achieving this sense of captivity is very important. It's similar to the difference between being a tourist in a foreign land and being a native of that land. Tourism gives only a superficial experience and what is aimed for here is the deeper experience of permanent residency. Only then will you be able to learn things of true and lasting value from inhabiting your target. Once you have attained this sense of captivity, move on to step four.

Bardon stated step four as: "*You have also to consider the purpose of the object after being transmuted into it imaginarily.*" This is when you start *perceiving* instead of creating, for now you must *perceive* the purpose of your target from *its* inside and from *its* perspective. This is not a rational process of deduction; but rather, it's an intuitive experiential process of opening yourself to what this form communicates to you. Similar to the very first mental exercise of Step One, you must observe, without interference or imposition of

what you *think* the target's purpose is supposed to be.

Another term for what you are meant to perceive is the thing's *essential meaning* which might be quite different than its intended use, as in an object. And of course, when it comes to natural, non-manmade things, plants, animals, etc., and those targets that are created by your own imagination, the question of purpose or usefulness is inappropriate and one must contend with essential meaning instead. When you have come to understand your target's essential meaning, move on to the final step five.

Bardon described step five as: "*You should even be capable, by intense concentration, to regard your surroundings from the point of this object, and to grasp its relationship to other objects. For example: supposing the object happens to be on the table, you feel the relationship to this table as well as to all the other things on the table, including the room in which the objects happen to be.*" In this final stage you must perceive *as* your target. It's no longer you perceiving your target, but rather you perceiving your target's surroundings *as* your target perceives them. In other words you have so deeply and thoroughly inhabited your target that you are now capable of experiencing your *target's* perceptions.

We are naturally able to sense our relationship to our surroundings. For example, when you close your eyes, you can still sense that you are in a physical body, situated in a physical realm that is filled with various physical objects located at varying degrees of distance from your body. So what you are aiming for here is that same sensation of physical location, of physical relationship to the physical surroundings of your target.

At first, these perceptions will be only of a physical nature, such as sensing your target's spatial relationship with other objects, but with time and practice these perceptions will deepen and you will directly experience your target's astral and mental perceptions as well.

Your concentration and your inhabiting of your target at this point must be so deep that, as Bardon phrased it, "*It must be possible for you to overlook and forget your body completely.*" You exist only as your target. It should also be noted that nowhere in his instructions did Bardon say to close your eyes. All of this is done with your eyes wide open but, with your mind focused elsewhere, your physical eyes do not feed any sensory impressions to your awareness. The *only* sensory impressions that fill your awareness are those of your target.

When you reach this step in the transmutation of your awareness into an inanimate object it is then possible and wise to experiment with accumulating either the Vital Energy or an Element within the object you inhabit. Simply inhale the Energy or Element in the same way you did within your own body except that now, your body is the *object* you've inhabited. Build an accumulation of the Energy or Element, hold onto it for a short while and then exhale it from the object back to the universe from whence it came. Soon you will be able to transfer your awareness into any object you desire and create an accumulation from within the object itself.

Until you have thoroughly mastered this technique of accumulation through transference of awareness into an *inanimate* object, it is wise to avoid working with more animate life forms to avoid unintentionally harming them. But once it is mastered, you may use this technique for actual healing work with other living beings.

A little further on in the text of the Step Four mental exercises Bardon made a statement that is very revealing and explains why this transference of consciousness technique works. He wrote: "*Consciousness knows neither time nor space; it is consequently an akasha-principle.*" In other words, consciousness is not limited by time and space – it can be and is every where and every when and, going still further it is every why. And his statement that consciousness is an "*akasha-principle*" means that *every* thing is inhabited by consciousness. This is not a reference to just human consciousness's ability to inhabit any thing it chooses to but rather is a blanket statement about consciousness. *Every* thing contains and is a manifestation of consciousness. Thus when we use this technique to inhabit another with our consciousness we are able to connect with the thing's own resident consciousness on the mental plane.

There is nothing in this universe that does not contain consciousness; which means that there is nothing in the universe that we cannot connect with through this technique of transplantation of consciousness.

The form of a thing, its size, shape and color, expresses its consciousness. Conversely, a thing's form determines the experiences and perceptions available to its consciousness. Like everything else, our human bodies are expressions of our human consciousness and at the same time the limitations of our human forms, our five senses, two legs and hands, etc., establish the limits of our perceptual sensitivity and of what we are physically capable of doing and experiencing. For example, our physical bodies are too soft to experience standing on the surface of our sun and our eyes are not

sensitive enough to perceive ultraviolet light, so our forms limit what our consciousness can experience and perceive. But when we transplant our awareness into forms that are capable of these things then we can experience and perceive them with other-than-human senses.

And not only do we experience a different set of perceptions, we also experience a different structure or type of consciousness. What differentiates the consciousness of a pencil from that of a human being is its structure. So when we become the form of the pencil we also experience what it is like to exist with a different structure of consciousness. For example, a pencil is incapable of thinking because its structure of consciousness does not enable thinking, so when we truly and deeply become the pencil, we cease thinking and interpreting in the same way we do normally as human beings.

Of course it takes extensive practice in order to reach this level of integration in which you cease to be human and truly become the pencil in every sense. At first, all you will achieve is the sensation of being a pencil in size, shape, color and location, and you will interpret this experience in purely human terms. The eventual goal however is to experience other-than-humanness, to experience what it means to really *be* a pencil instead of just what it feels like to be a pencil-shaped human being. The only way to achieve this goal is through repeated practice with a variety of objects. This slowly softens the rigidity of your humanness and renders your consciousness more and more malleable, more and more plastic so that it may eventually adopt non-human structures.

We begin this work with simple, man-made forms for a number of reasons the most important of which is their dissimilarity to the structure of human consciousness. Because of their essential difference, it is easier for us to perceive our own biases than if we were to start out trying to inhabit an animal for example which is much more closely related to our human structure of consciousness than an inanimate pencil. With a similar structure of consciousness it is more difficult for us to truly understand the differences in structure since we find ourselves assuming similarities that do not exist. For example, with a dog, we tend to assume that its emotions are the same as our own human emotional responses and motivations and thus never truly come to understand the significant differences. So we start with inanimate, man-made objects with which we share no similarity in structure and thus learn about difference. It is also through this awareness of such radical difference that we begin to perceive our own unique structure of consciousness and once we have identified our own structure, we can then more easily set it

aside and truly experience a foreign structure without bias and without assumptions.

This is why Bardon laid out a specific sequence to work with. He said to start with inanimate, non-living objects, such as our pencil; then move on to living, but still inanimate, plants; then animals and finally human beings. I recommend the following, slightly modified sequence: start with man-made objects; then natural objects such as stones, shells, crystals, etc.; then plants, molds and fungi of every variety; then insects of every variety; then animals of every variety; and finally, humans of every variety. This progression will teach you what you need to learn about consciousness in many of its various forms or structures in a way that is guaranteed to free you from your normal human biases.

Have you ever wondered what it feels like to fly through the sky as a bird or burrow through the soil as a worm or swim through the ocean depths as a fish? Well, here's your opportunity to discover this and a million other things foreign to the human experience. Experiencing these things expands your mind and instills a deep empathy for everything else that exists within our universe. Establishing this depth of empathy is crucial to advancement into the higher forms of magic and especially into the higher levels of awareness.

ASTRAL

As I mentioned in my comments on the mental exercises, there are specific prerequisites that you *must* have achieved prior to beginning the Step Four work. Specifically in relation to the astral exercises, you *must* have attained an astral Equilibrium of the Elements and *must* have made contact with the *factual* Elements as a result of your Step Three work. If you have not established this connection with the factual Elements then you must continue with the Step Three exercises until you do since all of the Step Four astral work is with the *factual* Elements.

In Step three, we were using our creative sensory imagination to create all of the relevant sensations associated with each Element. Now however, this should be unnecessary. Having connected with the factual Elements, we no longer need to create these sensations. Instead, we will naturally perceive these sensations as being a natural consequence or effect of the presence of the Elements within our body. For example, when we inhale the factual Fire Element, we spontaneously feel its warming effect without having to create the sensation through imagination.

You will find that working with the factual Elements is quite different than the Step Three work with the imagined Elements. Here you begin work with the *real* thing, with genuine Universal Forces capable of transforming whatever they touch; and indeed, the astral exercises of Step Four are all designed to transform your astral and physical bodies, to expand their limitations and to deepen your astral Equilibrium.

You are by now quite familiar with the accumulation of the Vital Energy into each of your body parts and you will have noticed the ways in which this practice has subtly transformed your body and your relationship with all of the different parts of your body. You now know your body with a radically different degree of intimacy than you did before, you know exactly where each of your internal organs is located and you can know how each is feeling any time you wish, and you also now experience a much greater degree of control over the health and vitality of your body than before.

Overall, you are now more mentally present within your physical and astral bodies than you were before you began the exercises of IIIH. This heightened presence implies an equally amplified sensitivity to your internal physical, emotional and mental state on a continuous basis. Both of these changes – an increased sense of presence and a heightened internal sensitivity – are absolutely necessary for the Step Four work with the factual Elements because this work is all about perception instead of creation. You must now *perceive* the effects of the Elements produced by your *accumulations* instead of perceiving the sensations produced by your creative *imagination*. For example, when you accumulate the factual Fire Element into your right leg, you perceive the fact that your leg feels warmer and that it feels more vibrant and energized; you do not need to create these sensations with your imagination since they arise spontaneously as a natural effect of the accumulated factual Fire Element.

Since you are now working with the real Elements, there *is* need for respectful caution here. You *can* damage yourself if you are foolhardy, which of course is yet another reason why the astral Equilibrium of the Elements is an absolute prerequisite to Step Four. In the same sense that your work with the Vital Energy has transformed your bodies and has challenged your maturity, this work now with the factual Elements takes that transformation a significant step further. If you work recklessly and without respect for the great power of these Universal Forces, you will harm yourself. While it was difficult to seriously damage yourself with the Vital Energy, that is not the case here with the factual Elements. With the Elements, it is rel-

atively *easy* to do serious harm, so be careful and above all else, respectful. Don't rush this transformation process. It must proceed at a smooth, natural pace in order for it to result in a positive transformation.

As you are accumulating an Element within one of your internal organs, for example, you must pay very close attention to how the Element is affecting the organ. You must at all times be sensitive to the organ's limits in regard to the density of the Elemental accumulation. The instant that the organ starts to show signs of discomfort; you should stop intensifying the accumulation and thus give the organ time to acclimate to that density of accumulated Element. Then, during your next experiment, you will increase the density of your accumulation just a little bit more and in this way *gently* increase the capacity of the organ in respect to the Element. This will greatly strengthen the organ without damaging it in any way.

It is during and through this intimate work with your own internal organs that you learn about the effects of the Elements upon bodies in general. This is not information that a true magician learns from memorizing a list in a book. The true magician learns through direct *personal* experience and perception. So it is here, in the course of these exercises that you will learn what effect filling each organ with each of the Elements will have. You must therefore pay very close attention to how each organ feels when filled with an Element, what effect it has upon the organ, is it positive or negative, how much does it take to cause an effect, etc.

In order to truly learn about the Elements in this way you must set aside all your preconceptions about the Elements and simply observe without prejudice or bias of any kind. In other words, you must let the Elements reveal themselves *to* you and let them teach you about their nature.

Having mastered the Step Three work with the Vital Energy, the Step Four astral exercises are very straight forward and easy to understand. The first exercise consists of accumulating an Element within your whole body through pore breathing and then condensing and directing the accumulated Element into a single organ or body part. The only use of the creative imagination is in the process of shrinking the whole-body accumulation down and moving it into the chosen organ. Simply will it to happen and then visualize it occurring.

Decreasing the size of the accumulation will increase the density of the accumulated Element and will thus increase the potency of the accumulation. In other words, what feels like a mild accumula-

tion of the Fire Element within your whole body, will feel like an intense accumulation when it is constricted to the much smaller size of your right eyeball. So it is important at first especially, to slowly infuse the smaller organ with the accumulation and stop letting more enter the organ the instant any discomfort is experienced.

After a few moments of letting the organ acclimate to the accumulated Element, release the Element from the organ. Bardon described two methods for performing this release of the accumulation, both of which need to be mastered. First is to let the accumulation re-expand so that it once again is dissipated throughout the whole body evenly. Then simply exhale the Element through the whole-body pore breathing technique until you are completely free of the accumulated Element.

The second method is to release the accumulation from the organ directly to the external Universe. Instead of re-expanding the accumulation so that it fills your whole body, let it stream out in its entirety through your flesh, directly from the organ itself, sort of like a volcano erupting. This of course is much quicker, but also more abrupt and harsh so only the first method should be used while the organ is still acclimating itself to the Element. Once the organ *has* adapted a bit then the second method of explosive release will cause no injury and can be used liberally.

The second astral exercise relies upon the transplantation of consciousness into the organ or body part to accumulate the Element from within the organ itself, instead of accumulating within the whole body and then shrinking the accumulation down to organ-size. This is a much simpler, quicker and much more precise method and you might wonder why Bardon didn't start with this method instead of the more laborious one. The answer is that by starting first with accumulating the Elements within your whole body, you were gently acclimating your whole body, and thus all of its parts, to the accumulated Elements. This is a necessary preparation for the body that further minimizes the possibility of harming yourself.

Of course you worked with the same technique of transferring your awareness into your organs, one by one, and generating an accumulation from the inside during your Step Three work with the Vital Energy, so this technique will be no mystery by now. The only difference here is that you are working with the Elements.

You must systematically work with each of the Elements in all of your body parts and organs, using first the whole body technique and then the transference of awareness technique. The only exceptions to this are, as Bardon warned, your brain and your heart. You

should never accumulate any energy or Element into either of these two organs. To do so would cause a disruption of their natural electromagnetic balance and would disturb their functioning in possibly quite dangerous ways.

While all of the preceding work has been focused upon the physical body, its parts and organs, you must understand that you have been simultaneously affecting your astral body as well. Your astral body permeates and surrounds your physical body and thus occupies the same spatial location and has roughly the same shape as your physical body. Because they are so intimately connected, anything you do to your physical body has a simultaneous affect upon the same area of your astral body. So, for example, when you accumulate the Fire Element in your physical right leg, you are simultaneously accumulating the Fire Element in your astral right leg and the transformative effects of accumulating the Elements in this part of your physical body will also be manifest within your astral body. In other words, all of these exercises transform your physical *and* your astral bodies.

This fact is most apparent in the final exercise of the astral section, that of loading the Elemental regions with their Elements. The Elemental regions of the astral body occupy exactly the same spatial areas as the regions of the physical body. So when you do as Bardón instructed and fill each region with its corresponding Element, you are building an Elemental harmony between your astral and physical bodies.

The technique is very simple. Starting with the Earth Element, load the Earth region of your physical body with 7 inhalations. Then load the Water region with 7 inhalations of the Water Element; the Air region with 7 inhalations of the Air Element; and finally, the Fire region with 7 inhalations of the Fire Element. You should remain loaded in this balanced way for several minutes before releasing the Elements. The Elements are released in reverse order; first the Fire, then Air, then Water and finally Earth.

Once you've gained proficiency in this exercise you may begin to dynamically accumulate the Elements in their regions, remaining always conscious of maintaining a *balance* of dynamism within the four regions. In other words, the intensity or density of the accumulations should always be the same within each region.

This is a very healing exercise, very balancing for all three bodies and I recommend it highly. It's immediately balancing and grounding, placing one firmly in the present moment of time-space. For me, it remains a valuable life-long practice, one that I enjoy im-

mentally. Its practice at this moment in the sequence of initiation causes an astra-physical transformation that is essential to the work of the next Step. Without having gone through this specific transformation and integration of your astral and physical bodies, the work of Step Five with the so called “center point”, the projection of the Elements and the work with so called “passive communication” would prove very difficult if not impossible to master.

Before I move on to discussing the physical exercises I need to add one bit about the Elemental regions of the body . . . In describing the Elemental regions of the physical body, Bardon neglected to mention the arms. Picture a human standing upright with the arms relaxed and hanging down. The hands and wrists are naturally part of the Earth region; the forearms and elbows, part of the Water region; and the upper arms and shoulders are part of the Air region. Each of these parts should be included in the loading of the four regions. For instance, when loading your leg region with the Earth Element, also load both hands at the same time.

The practical importance of these divisions within the arms, especially the loading of the hands with the Earth Element, will become apparent in future work with the Elements. An example is the Step Five projection of Elements through the hands – invoking the Earth correspondence of the hands has the effect of condensing the Element being projected through it. Another example in this same vein is the physical section of the present Step, namely the work with finger rituals in which the Elements are all present together within the fingers of the hand – this is easier to accomplish when the Earth region correspondence of the hands is considered and incorporated.

PHYSICAL

Step Four closes with a section on personal ritual. Here, you must be creative and design rituals that are of intimate personal relevance. A ritual, for the true magician, is a short-cut. All it does is compress the hands-on labor into a short gesture. However, the compression of the hands-on labor takes a good amount of labor itself. In other words, creating the short-cut takes repetition. With the finger rituals for example, the employment of the Elements at first takes time and extra thought, but with steady repetition, the whole process becomes so rapid that all you have to do is move your fingers in the predetermined way and your will is immediately carried out.

Of course, these rituals are completely useless if you are not already capable of manipulating the *factual* Elements. They are only

short-cuts to the performance of things that you can *already* accomplish through the slower, hands-on labor. A ritual will not give you more power to do things -- it will only speed up the accomplishment of your will.

The finger ritual technique itself is very simple. If you condense the Elements into your fingers as outlined by Bardou, all you then have to do is touch the appropriate fingers together to release their Elements and thus accomplish your will. This requires that you predetermine how the Elements will interact and how they will be directed to carry out the desired effect. So, there is a combination here of four factors: the condensed Elements; the physical movement; the building of the ideation; and, the explosive release of the condensed Elements. In this way, you can very quickly fill your surroundings with an Element, or combination of Elements, and through their attributes, affect your will.

Just how effective your ritual will be depends upon your abilities. At first you will be able to only affect the mental sphere of your surroundings, but with practice your effectiveness will reach into the astral and eventually, into the physical sphere.

Start with the creation of one ritual and when that has been mastered, expand your repertoire by one ritual at a time. Be sure to master each ritual before you initiate a new one. I recommend no more than four rituals total as this gives you the opportunity to devise a series of rituals that depend primarily upon each one of the four Elements, while avoiding the dispersal of power that too many rituals can incur. It is good to devise enough rituals to meet your needs, but unwise to devise an endless number of them.

A lot of fancy ceremonial is taught in many of the magical groups, lodges and schools, but to the well trained "Bardonian" magician these are relatively unproductive practices. Prewritten ceremony does have its place, but true magic is spontaneous. It must come from the heart of the magician and fit the demands of the moment. The true magician has no need for public display or theatrics -- there may be times when these are appropriate, but the magician does not NEED them to affect their will. This is the lesson to be found here at the end of Step Four and the reason why I've titled them "silent rituals". Perhaps the best, most potent magic is performed silently and privately, without anybody else noticing.

The magical rituals that you create for yourself, no matter how simplistic, will serve you far better than those you learn from someone else. Enjoy yourself, be inventive, and always work for the betterment of all!

STEP FIVE

MENTAL

Direct Perception of Essential Meaning The Causal Root of All Things

I think for the modern reader especially, this is perhaps the most enigmatic section in the whole of IIIH. But with just a few essential bits of additional information it begins to reveal its meaning. The first essential bit of information that I suspect most readers are unaware of has to do with the philosophical conceptualization of a point. In geometry, a point has no dimension. It has no length, width or height. It is infinitely finite, infinitely small in relation to its surroundings. One could say that it does not exist as a physical thing but rather is solely a philosophical idea or construct meant only as an indicator of position within three dimensional spaces. With this idea in your mind that a point is dimensionless, infinitely finite and non-physical, listen anew to Bardon's introduction to Step Five --

"The wise Archimedes once said, 'Show me one point in the Universe and I shall lift the globe off its hinges!'

"Very few people probably know that this sentence is concealing a great occult mystery, namely the secret of the fourth dimension. As we all remember from our schooldays, every thing having a shape – a stone, a plant, animal, man – in short, every body owns length, width and height, definitions familiar to us. If in the middle of a form, for example a spherical form, we imagine a double-crossing; on the crossing spot we get a point, the so-called depth-point. And Archimedes certainly did have this point in mind, because it is actually the point of beginning, the starting point, the nucleus of every form. Regarded from this point, every form is symmetrically (uniformly) objective; that means, it happens to be in its true equilibrium. This is the base of the mystery of the fourth dimension, hence the concept of time and space, of timelessness and spacelessness, and therefore also the secret of space-magic. The scholar is advised to meditate very intensely about this problem, and he will be able to open up profundities he never dreamed of and a high intuition will be his reward."

Here then, Bardon is talking about a center-point, not just any point, but the *center*-most point of a three-dimensional form. This is an important distinction since the nature of an infinitely finite point

is that it always exists at the exact center of an infinite space. Considered in a generic, universal context, such a point exists at the exact center of the infinite Universe, but this is not what Bardon is focusing upon here. Instead, his focus is specifically upon the center-point of a *finite* three-dimensional form, such as the sphere in his example.

Because such a point is infinitely finite, it must exist within an infinitely large space; yet we are speaking here of the center-point of a most assuredly finite form. This is the “*great occult mystery*” Bardon mentions. In order to begin to comprehend this mystery you must do as Bardon instructs and “*meditate very intensely about this problem*” of the infinitely finite point.

The instructions for this meditation are very simple: Consider a point in space. It is infinitely small.

If you sincerely follow this concept in your meditation, it will lead you to many amazing realizations and experiences in regard to the nature of infinity. One of the first things you will notice is the sensation of *inward* motion as your mind tries to find the stopping place of infinite finiteness. The mind cannot grasp such smallness so it continuously strives for a smaller and smaller point which produces this sensation of falling deeper and deeper toward the final resting place of the infinitely finite. But of course, since it is infinitely finite, there is no resting place for the mind and thus it seems to contain an infinite *depth*, which is why Bardon uses the term “depth-point”.

Furthermore, you will be led to understand and indeed experience the fact that from the perspective of an infinitely finite point, the surrounding space is infinitely infinite. In other words, space extends infinitely in *every* direction from the infinitely finite point. So this point must therefore exist at the *exact* center of the infinite space. Or as Bardon stated it: “*Regarded from this point, every form is symmetrically (uniformly) objective, that means, it happens to be in its true equilibrium.*”

Once you have achieved this realization it becomes apparent that *every* point must exist at the exact center of an infinite space. Space still extends infinitely in every direction from *each and every* point within an infinite space. So, this means that every point shares in this property of centrality. No point can be said to exist off-center.

And then comes the Big Leap – the realization that every point contains within itself the essence of the whole infinity, just as the drop reflects the ocean in which it resides.

You must of course pursue this meditation for yourself and not rely just upon my description. Your work with Step Five *cannot* be based solely upon an intellectual understanding of the infinitely finite point; instead, you *must* experience these realizations first-hand in order to truly make use of them.

Having meditated intensively as Bardón instructed, you are now ready to begin the first mental exercise of Step Five. This is a preliminary exercise in which you practice transferring your awareness into the *center* of an object, *not* its depth-point. The difference between this exercise and the Step Four exercises with the transference of your awareness is slight. Here you are focusing your awareness at the center of your target; while in Step four you inhabited the entirety of the target, sensing its boundaries and its surroundings, etc.

The instruction for this exercise is very simple. Place a symmetrical object, such as a small ball or cube before you and transfer your awareness into its center-most point. When you are able to perform this exercise for 5 minutes uninterrupted, then move on to a differently shaped but symmetrical object and transfer your awareness into its center. When you reside at the object's center, try to make yourself smaller and smaller, as small as an atom. Work with a variety of symmetrical objects until this transference becomes an easy matter, then move on to the same with asymmetrical objects.

It's when you're working with the asymmetrical objects and shrinking your size further and further that you begin to realize that this point is not a spatial locale. It has no physical dimension and as noted in your meditation on the nature of an infinitely finite point, every point within the infinite space exists at the exact center of that space and thus "center" has no definite physical location either – it can be anywhere within the infinite space and still be labeled "center". By working in this way with an object's center, you quite naturally begin to identify the object's *depth-point*.

The depth-point is, in fact, a *philosophical* thing, not a physical thing like a form's spatial "center". It expresses and reveals the philosophical nature of the space; which is to say, it houses the essential meaning manifest by the finite object. If you spend enough time in this depth-point you will eventually perceive the essential meaning of the finite object. And so the next set of exercises concerns just that, transferring your awareness into the *depth-point* of objects.

Start as before with a symmetrical object and transfer your awareness into its exact center. Now you must sense the dimension and shape of the object, its external boundaries, and then make your-

self smaller and smaller until those boundaries are an infinite distance away from you.

This point is, of course, infinitely finite and it's by considering its infinite smallness that you transform the defined, finite size of the object into an infinite space. In other words, your own infinite smallness is what extends the physical boundary of the shape infinitely in all directions from your position. The object itself does not magically increase its size; but rather, it is your awareness that infinitely diminishes in size as you become the object's infinitely finite depth-point. Thus you are completely surrounded by the object as it extends infinitely in all directions around you. The object becomes your entire universe. Nothing else exists other than this infinite form with your awareness at its center.

If you look back to your first work with the Elements in Step Three you will recognize that you performed a nearly identical feat of imagination when you surrounded yourself with an imagined universe of each Element, so this should not be difficult for you to manage.

Hold this depth-point awareness without interruption for at least 5 minutes before working with a different object. Practice with a variety of symmetrical and then asymmetrical objects, each time transferring your awareness into their infinitely finite depth-point. When this becomes easy to perform with objects, move on to working with plants, insects, animals, humans and even objects that are not before your eyes.

Since this depth-point has no dimension -- no length, width or height -- it is in effect, "spaceless" and where there is no space and no matter, there is no time or duration. Thus the depth-point is an aspect of the spaceless and timeless (i.e., non-sequential) Akasha Principle. It is the infinite causal root of the finite form from which we can learn everything about the form and through which we can directly influence the entire form.

When your awareness exists at a thing's depth-point, you effectively transform the finite form into an infinite space. Since every point within that infinite space becomes its center-point, every point is thus the same; or rather, every point contains the essential meaning of the whole form. As we've established already, similar things attract each other within the mental realm, so when you inhabit a thing's depth-point, every point within the form is attracted to your awareness within the mental realm. Since all points within the form are exactly the same in terms of essential meaning, the whole of the form with all of its points piles up on the focal point of your aware-

ness, in effect spreading your awareness completely and uniformly throughout the whole mental body of the form. In other words, you encompass the entire infinitely infinite form with your awareness whenever you enter its infinitely finite depth-point.

An important Hermetic axiom, as it were, is revealed here; namely that *inhabiting the infinitely finite leads to encompassing the infinitely infinite*.

If you completely open your perceptive awareness and set aside all of your preconceptions, expectations, interpretations, etc. -- in other words, rise above your thinking mind -- then the form itself will communicate its essential meaning to your awareness. Everything is a manifestation of a unique quantum of essential meaning. Bardon used the term “Akasha Principle” to describe this root causal force but I prefer “essential meaning” since it is more descriptive and thus more practical. In any event, essential meaning is the root or essence of every thing that exists; each form being a perfect manifestation or expression of its essential meaning. Thus each form can be said to communicate its essential meaning. It doesn’t speak its meaning with words; rather its expression is perceived as an inner understanding that defies description and rebels against categorization and labeling. It’s therefore impossible for me to give you a concrete example of an object’s essential meaning but it is very simple to experience this, at least superficially, for yourself.

A simple experiment is to quickly look from one object to another and focus your awareness on the differences between how one object *feels* in comparison to the next and so on. You will perceive a subtle difference in the *feeling* generated by each object you view. This is a communication of each object’s essential meaning albeit at a fairly dense emotional level. With this experiment you perceive only one small layer or level of the object’s essential meaning. On the other hand, when you use a deeper, more focused and infinitely more objective state of awareness in your perception, you can directly perceive the raw essential meaning itself. This deepest layer of essential meaning is infinite in scope and it is this level of essential meaning that is perceivable from the object’s depth-point.

This depth-point interaction with essential meaning comes as a flash of insight that rushes into your awareness and fills it entirely with an infinite amount of detail. It is too much information for the thinking mind to encompass, so you must resist the habit of immediately thinking about the information filling your awareness and instead, focus upon the raw perception itself and the feelings it generates within your astral body. Wait until *after* you have vacated the

form's depth-point to begin thinking about and analyzing the information you have absorbed. I say this because if you begin thinking too soon, then you will not spend enough time *perceiving* and what you learn will be incomplete and thus inaccurate.

With practice it becomes very easy to quickly dip your awareness into and out of the depth-point of any thing or person and thus rapidly gain a very deep understanding of the thing or person based upon your perception of, and interaction with their essential meaning. Since essential meaning is an aspect of the akasha Principle this interaction occurs outside of time. In other words, it takes less than an instant for the fullness of understanding to fill your awareness. Conversely, it will take at least several seconds for you to then process this abundance of information with your rational, thinking mind.

The amount of detail communicated during this interaction with essential meaning is truly astounding. Once received, it is possible to filter through to any level of information you wish to know. For example, when interacting through its depth-point with the essential meaning of a pocket rock I carry, I can focus in on the first person to pick the rock up ages ago. Through this connection, I can also discover anything I wish to know about that person, who he was, what he did, what he thought, etc.

In addition to *perceiving* essential meaning through the depth-point, we can also *communicate* or *project* essential meaning into the depth-point and thus affect the entire form. For example, we can impress an idea or thought upon an object or person through their depth-point and it will immediately manifest throughout their entire form. We can likewise accumulate the Vital Energy or an Element uniformly within the object or person from the inside-out, so to speak, through their depth-point.

There are other methods of interacting with essential meaning that do not entail transference of your awareness into the depth-point, but these methods allow only for the perception of essential meaning and by their nature preclude an opportunity to affect the subject from the inside-out. For example, it is quite possible to perceive an object's essential meaning from observation of its external form – from the outside, as it were, instead of from the inside – and achieve the same relative depth of information as one receives through a depth-point. But since one is on the outside, it is only possible to affect the object from the outside-in, instead of from the inside-out as with the depth-point. Even though this technique does still require a highly cultivated degree of objective perception or openness, it is much simpler to master than working through the depth-point. It's primarily a

mystical technique used to increase one's understanding of one's surroundings and not to directly influence them.

Bardon's intention with the Step Five mental work however, is that as a Hermetic *magician*, you must encompass more than *just* perception – you must also be able to influence or change what you perceive. This is an important distinction between magic and pure mysticism.

I recommend that you experience the depth-point of everything you can, however briefly. Each moment of each waking hour presents us with innumerable opportunities to explore. Just looking around me now as I sit here writing, there is my coffee cup, my computer, a lamp, a bit of meteorite, a book, a feather, a stone, a small figurine, and on and on and on. The opportunities are endless and I have explored the depth-point of each of these things. And when I go for a walk in town I am constantly exploring everything I see from the old buildings to the people I see walking past to the birds sitting in the trees to the dog turds scattered along the sidewalk. I do not care whether it is a thing of beauty or ugliness; I explore them all without bias for the sheer joy of increasing my understanding and experience of all things. It is even possible to touch the depth-point of nonphysical things such as ideas and feelings, overall situations and moments in time, using this technique and all of these explorations are equally important.

Some things of course deserve a much longer and deeper probing. For example, experiencing the depth-point of each of the four Elements, of our planet Earth and our Moon and Sun should be prolonged sessions. Nonetheless, it is possible to probe anything and everything with this method and from each experience you will gain a treasure of understanding and experience attainable in no other way. This practice expands your awareness incrementally and readies your awareness for the Ultimate, Quantum Expansion of Step Ten.

Once you have mastered the technique of transferring your awareness into the depth-point of any object, plant, animal, human, etc. that you desire and interacting with their essential meaning; and furthermore, affecting them from the inside-out, you are then prepared for the final mental exercise of Step Five – inhabiting your own depth-point. This is placed last in the sequence because it's the most difficult. It's no more *technically* difficult to achieve than with a small ball, for example, but it is infinitely more difficult to achieve the objectivity required to truly interact with your own essential meaning.

As before, Bardón splits the exercise into two phases. First you must accustom yourself to maintaining your awareness as a small point at the center of your body. Bardón stated that this point is congruent with your solar plexus, situated between your spine and the frontal pit of your stomach. Of course in a male body this corresponds roughly the body's center of gravity and it is also correlated with the Akasha in Bardón's third book, *The Key to the True Quabalah*.

Once you have mastered the transference of your awareness to the center of your body and are able to maintain this awareness for at least five minutes without interruption, you must then begin to shrink the size of your awareness as before until you reach the infinite finiteness of the depth-point. You are completely surrounded by your own being as it extends infinitely in all directions around you. *You* become your entire universe. Nothing else exists other than this infinite you with your awareness at its center.

Once you reach this depth-point awareness, Bardón instructs that you meditate upon the following affirmation: "*I am the center-point of my physical existence; I am the determining power therein!*" Since this is an accurate and factual description of the depth-point, instead of an imaginary supposition, Bardón's affirmation will reinforce your objective connection with your own depth-point and enable you to perceive your own essential meaning.

This perception is very subtle and may be more accurately described as the experience of intentionally *being* your own essential meaning, instead of actually perceiving it. Because of its unfamiliarity, this experience might be quite disorienting at first so patience and persistence are necessary. Eventually though you will shift into a radically different perspective of yourself and of your life, one which is surprisingly objective and calm. You will stand separate from your mundane life experience, yet intimately connected to it as the causal force, able to perceive and influence all that concerns your being.

Bardón stated that "*This consciousness transference into your own Akasha-Principle is the genuine magical state of trance and represents the preliminary stage of the connection with the cosmic consciousness.*" In kabbalah, this state corresponds with Tiphareth and the Individual Self which stands directly below Kether and The One Self, and enjoys a direct connection with the influences emanating from the Supernal realm. And in the terminology of the Self-Healing Archaeous, this is the Fire region of the mental body, the Individual Self perfectly isolated and standing before the Akasha re-

gion or eternal mental body – the Greater Self.

Inhabiting your own depth-point is essentially an advanced form of the Step One emptiness of mind state. Depth-point awareness however, represents an important deepening and activation of the emptiness state. It is with this level of self-awareness, known as the Individual Self, that we hear the voice of our so called Holy Guardian Angel with the greatest clarity and understanding. It is therefore a very significant turning point in the sequence of initiation, the point at which one gains direct and reliable access to the most important internal source of guidance. This is the first stage of so called “adepthood”.

The depth-point or Individual Self is not only the prime place for receiving inspiration – the incoming breath – but it’s also the seat of expiration – the out-going breath. It’s the Individual Self that takes astral and physical form during incarnation and when physical death ensues, it is the Individual Self that lives on to reincarnate over and over. It is the breath of life that fills the astra-physical form. So when you inhabit your depth-point, you are absolute sovereign of your existence. From this point, you can affect any and every aspect of your astral and physical being from its essence to its manifestation. It is therefore the seat of your own Individual power, the most advantageous place from which to enact your transformative power upon yourself.

From within your depth-point it is also possible to access memories of your past incarnations since the Individual Self is the storehouse of all your previous experiences. This is accomplished by intentionally probing the infinite vastness of Self that surrounds your point of awareness for past life memories. Your projection of intention will automatically draw these memories to your awareness.

As Bardon noted, inhabiting your depth-point induces a state of mental Equilibrium, similar to the way in which the Step Four astral exercise of balancing the Elements in the four regions of the astra-physical body harmonizes the astral Elements. I experience this as a sort of standing above; separate from my astra-physical existence, in the same way as in the first mental exercise of Step One I stood separate from my mental chatter. Yet in standing separate, I know that I may influence any part of my astra-physical existence that I wish to merely by act of will. This ability to stand-back, to disengage during moments of extreme emotional or mental stress can be very empowering, grounding and balancing when it is most needed.

Bardon wrote: *“Working through this step, the scholar should be able to transfer himself, at any hour and in every situation, into*

his depth point, that means into the Akasha Principle, from there perceiving and influencing all that concerns his being.”

This implies that the more you practice this transference, the quicker and easier it becomes. Furthermore, his statement also implies that it is possible to inhabit your depth-point while simultaneously engaging in mundane interaction. In other words, it is possible to maintain awareness of the depth-point perspective while having a conversation with a friend, for example, and still be fully present and attentive to your conversation. The key to this is that once you have experienced your depth-point you know how it feels, you recognize it and this makes it exponentially easier to reacquire.

With time and repeated practice you become able to make an instant internal shift to your depth-point perspective without having to go through the meditative process Bardou described.

Once you are able to inhabit your depth-point while simultaneously engaging in mundane interaction, it becomes possible to perceive the Individual Selves of everyone and everything in your environment. This makes it possible to interact with others at an Individual Self level, Individual Self to Individual Self. This type of interaction is radically different than personal interaction which is often clouded by conflicting personal motivations. With Individual interaction, communication of essential meaning is direct and unfiltered.

Eventually the seating of your awareness *permanently* shifts from being rooted in your personality to rooting in your depth-point of Individual Self. As a consequence, you intentionally interact in all your affairs *as* your Individual Self *through* your astral and physical bodies. In fact, the work of the next Step in *Initiation Into Hermetics* presupposes that you have either made this internal shift or are at least well on your way to its attainment.

ASTRAL

The astral exercises, which focus upon mastering the external projection and condensation of the Elements, are divided into three basic parts: First is the projection of the Elements through the solar-plexus and through other parts of the body *into* a defined space. Second is the projection of the Elements through the solar-plexus *as* defined shapes. And third is the condensation of the Elements directly from the universe.

From a technical perspective, based upon what you have accomplished with the Elements thus far, these exercises should be quite simple and just require repeated practice to fully master. How-

ever, Step five is just as much about overcoming the final vestiges of your internal resistance to *letting* yourself do, and *letting* yourself accomplish as it is about increasing your technical proficiency. In other words, the ultimate challenge of Step five is to your belief in the actuality of what we call “magic” and so here you are forced to confront your disbelief in the reality of magic head on. Until you overcome this subtle doubting, you will make no appreciable progress in Step Five or you will become diverted into chasing after unrealistic and inappropriate goals.

Throughout this section, Bardón challenges your doubts by offering up tantalizing opportunities that would seem to prove, once and for all through the generation of physical phenomena that magic is “real”. But in each case he reminds the reader that pursuing these abilities to the degree of being able to accomplish such physical proofs would take years of constant practice *and* he points out that this is a distraction, a diversion from the greater, more important task of spiritual development -- once again reiterating the idea that Hermetic initiation is a path of *spiritual* development, not merely the development of fantastic and miraculous powers.

A magician does not *create* the powers that are wielded. A magician merely *directs* and *shapes* the powers provided by the *Universe*; the Elements, Fluids, Lights, ideas, etc., that already exist independent of the magician. A magician is merely a *conduit* of these substances, so most of the training exercises are designed to slowly break down your resistance to *allowing* these substances to pass through you.

The greatest hindrance to this allowing is disbelief or doubt that the substance itself is real and that its described effects are even possible. Hopefully most of this sort of doubt will have been purged through your previous work with the Elements but for most at this stage there will still be the question of whether or not the Elements are capable of producing physically measurable effects. So Bardón’s challenges are aimed precisely at this question, but he’s not really challenging you to *prove* the question; instead he’s challenging you to *examine* the question and especially to ask yourself *why* it’s important to you. He does this by first pointing out what’s possible and then telling you that to pursue it at this stage would be unwise and a waste of time, all of which should lead you to examining the desires and needs that are at the root of your doubts.

This of course occurs in the broader Step Five context of working with the depth-point in the mental exercises and tapping into your inner guidance with the physical exercises. All of which

focuses you deeply into your own self and ultimately, its connection with the Universe.

If you keep these factors in mind as you work with the astral exercises of Step Five, then it will go well for you but if you ignore the need for allowing, for being a conduit and the necessary confrontation with your doubts, then you will most likely get nowhere fast and end up completely frustrated. So let's move on to an examination of the exercises themselves.

The task in the first exercise is to repeatedly accumulate an Element within your whole body through the whole-body pore breathing and then to project it outward through your solar-plexus into the room or space surrounding you until you have created a dense external accumulation of the Element. The accumulation within the room or space must be dense enough that you can *feel* its sensory effects. With the Fire, your room must feel warm; with the Air it must feel light; with the Water, cold; and with the Earth, heavy.

At this point it's important to understand why this exercise involves the solar-plexus specifically. It goes back to what I said earlier about letting and allowing. From a physiological perspective, the solar-plexus is the abdominal brain, the seat or control center of the Sympathetic nervous system which controls the body's automatic systems such as digestion, heart beat, etc. In other words, it controls all those essential bodily functions that do not require our conscious participation – the functions we must simply *allow* to happen. Yet these functions may be handicapped or perverted by our negative emotional states. For example, anxiety will increase the heart rate and disturb digestion, etc.

From a Hermetic perspective, the solar-plexus is situated at the top of the Water region, near the division between the Air and Water regions of the astra-physical body: the “place”, if you will, where our thoughts most affect our emotional state, and conversely, where our emotional states most affect our thinking.

And from an energetic perspective, the Solar Plexus center is one of the main power chakras of the individual. It's associated with the functioning of the aura and with Mental and Astral plane sensitivity. Through this center the various spiritual energies enter for distribution to various parts of the body. The Solar Plexus chakra is also the center of psychic intuition.

All of these various factors I've just listed support what you need to accomplish with the Step Five work. With the depth-point work of the mental section, the solar-plexus supports your letting go of all your preconceptions and allowing objective perception of self.

Here in the astral section, it supports your letting go and allowing the Elements to pass through you. And in the physical section, it supports your letting go of your doubts and allowing your inner knowing to emerge.

So, getting back to the exercise at hand; when we project through the solar-plexus we must let go and *allow* the Element to pass. Projecting the Elements through the solar-plexus thus involves an examination of all that keeps us from simply allowing the Elements to follow our will. Often the first place we perceive this resistance will be in how we are holding our physical body during the exercise. Most will discover that they tense up, especially in the abdominal area, and try to force the Elements. If this is the case, then the first step in addressing those inhibitions is to completely relax your body and release all muscular tensions. This alone will usually lead to the discovery of the deeper emotional and conceptual blockages.

As I said earlier, this exercise of projecting the accumulation through the solar-plexus is technically quite simple. However it's another matter to build a projected accumulation within the room that is dense enough for you to sense its physical effects – to *sense* them, not *create* them with your imagination, but to actually feel them with your normal physical senses. To accomplish this you must act without reservation, without doubt and without any holding back. You must, quite simply, *allow* it to happen. Not expect it to happen or force it to happen. Just *let* it happen through you. The most difficult part is the act of getting out of your own way, but once you do, you will be amazed by how simple it really is.

A subtle form of getting in your own way is succumbing to the need for external physical proof such as relying upon a thermometer to substantiate a rise in the room's temperature. This is basically an admission of doubt in regard to the veracity of your own physical perceptions. You must rely upon and trust your *own* sensory perceptions instead of needing an external verification.

This first exercise is deemed complete when you are able to project all four Elements through your solar-plexus and fill a room or area with a dense enough accumulation to be felt physically. At this point you will have overcome your inhibitions in regard to letting the Elements pass through you freely and with all of their power intact, so working with the solar-plexus is no longer necessary and now you can achieve the next exercise of creating an equally perceivable accumulation by passing the Elements through your whole body and through various parts of your body.

Begin by projecting each of the Elements through magical, whole-body exhalation into the room or space and continue practicing until you attain the same degree of physical affect as you did through your solar-plexus. Once this has been mastered with each Element equally, proceed to working with projecting each of the Elements through different parts of your body. Of greatest practical value will be projections through your fingers, hands and eyes.

When this has been mastered with each of the Elements, the first phase of the astral exercises is complete. As you can imagine this alone is a fairly monumental work that may take many months of steady consistent practice to complete. The reward however, greatly outweighs the effort required.

The next phase of work presents a change of perspective. Till now we have been projecting an accumulation into a room or area so that the accumulated Element *surrounds* us and we feel its effects from every direction. Now however, the task is to project a smaller, contained accumulation that hovers in the air before us and which affects us physically from a *single* direction. Additionally, we are now working with molding the accumulation into a specific, defined shape. Because these exercises venture into new territory, they once again are focused in the solar-plexus. It's within the solar-plexus that we shape the accumulation and from the solar-plexus that we project the shaped accumulation.

So, begin as usual to accumulate the Element within your entire body with the whole-body pore breathing and then condense the entire accumulation down to the size of a small ball in your solar-plexus. This sphere should be about 6 inches or 15 centimeters in diameter and be a very dense, powerful accumulation of the Element. Next, let this sphere emerge from your solar-plexus, separate from your body and float in the air a short distance in front of you. Once it is separate from you, you should perceive its qualities physically. For example, your ball of the Fire Element will radiate physical heat which you will feel on your face. You must master this process with each of the four Elements equally.

Next you must master the same process with each of the Elements but in a variety of shapes and continue until you are confident that you can create and project through your solar-plexus any shape of accumulation you can imagine. Thus ends the second phase of the astral exercises.

The third and final phase of astral work involves yet another radical shift in perspective. Now we will work with drawing the Elements directly from the Universe into the room and thus create a

physically sensible accumulation without the elements ever passing through our bodies. By now you will thoroughly understand that it is your imagination that directs and shapes the elements so this exercise should present no great difficulty once you get the knack of it.

You know as a matter of fact that the Elements exist everywhere in the Universe surrounding you so it is a simple matter to cause them to accumulate and condense where you want them to. It's no different really than causing them to accumulate within your own body except that instead of inhaling them into your body, you draw them into the space surrounding you. Here though, you must really be ready to *allow* things to happen and let your imagination do the work. *Let* the Elements stream into your room and condense to such a degree of density that you feel their effects with your physical senses. You must master the ability to condense each of the Elements equally within your room by drawing them directly from the Universe to such an extent that you can physically sense their effects surrounding you.

The final Step Five astral exercise with the Elements is to draw the Elements directly from the Universe into a chosen shape which hangs in the air before you. Instead of filling the room or area so that the Element surrounds you, you must now create a shape that radiates the Element and thus affects you from a *single* direction. Begin by creating spheres of each Element and once this is mastered, create a variety of different forms until you are again confident that you can create any shape of condensed Element you can imagine.

By the end of the long months devoted to the Step Five astral work with the Elements you will have truly mastered the Elements.

PHYSICAL

To my mind, Bardón designed these exercises to be started *after* you have begun working with your own depth-point. The passive communication techniques themselves presuppose that you are *already* capable of inhabiting your own depth-point and yet that exercise comes last in the sequence of the Step Five mental work, so either Bardón expected the two preparatory exercises in passive communication to take many months to master or he intended for the student to postpone work with them until work with one's own depth-point had begun. The fact is, the work with your own depth-point will assist you in mastering the preparatory exercises, especially the first one, so whether or not it was Bardón's intention, it is *my* advice

that you do wait till you have begun inhabiting your own depth-point before beginning the physical exercises of Step Five.

The primary goal of these exercises is to convince you of the existence of, and establish communication with, the inner source of guidance known commonly as your “holy guardian angel” or “genius”. In point of fact this guidance is the manifestation of a higher level of your own awareness; your eternal mental body or Greater Self.

I mentioned this important source of internal guidance previously in my comments on the mental exercises of Step Five in relation to the work with inhabiting your own depth-point. Here then Bardou presents a second, less direct and therefore more passive form of interaction with your internal guidance. Through your depth-point you may come literally face-to-face with your Guardian but here, with the physical exercises, communication is more akin to a telephone or email conversation.

On its own, this technique can *eventually* develop into a more immediate and deeper interaction; but no exercise in IHH exists on its own and this one is no different. Along with this exercise you are also working with the mental depth-point exercises which eventually lead to inhabiting your own depth-point and this factor leads very quickly to an exponential deepening of the passive communication. Ultimately, the passive turns into active and you access an immediate, continuous, clear and completely reliable guidance.

A secondary goal of these exercises is to convince you of the existence of, and establish communication with, “*another world which everybody will enter and live in after passing away*” -- in other words, the astral and mental planes where, after death of the physical body, the astra-mental body spends a certain amount of time before reincarnating.

This is a very important precursor to development of the astral-mental senses and then wandering the mental and astral planes. Without a deep, in-your-bones conviction that these realms exist, the more advanced astra-mental work is impossible.

The key to these passive communication techniques is the disconnecting of your own will from your hand and this is the essence of the “*magical preparation*” of your hand. The first aspect is to render your fingers individually and then your entire hand free of dependence upon muscular action for movement. This is accomplished with the Air Element and a form of “*levitation*” or, more properly, weightlessness.

First the entire hand is filled with an accumulation of the Vital

Energy into which you must strongly impress the idea that you are in fact able to move your fingers and hand by your mental will alone, without having to contract your muscles, etc. In other words, that by merely imagining that your finger is rising, it rises without your having to physically raise it in the usual way with your muscles. After a few moments, release the Vital Energy from your hand and return it to the Universe. Here, the Vital Energy is merely acting as the conduit of your intention and setting the attitudinal stage, so to speak, for the next part of the exercise.

Now you must accumulate the Air Element in your forefinger and thus create a state of weightlessness within this finger. Focus your mind upon the fact that you can move your weightless finger merely with your will instead of your muscles and then will your forefinger to rise. You must have the feeling that it is your willpower that moves your finger, not your muscles. You can actually feel the difference – when you hold your finger up with your muscles, it will quickly tire and will take effort to keep aloft, but when you are using your willpower alone this does not occur and it feels as if your muscles are completely relaxed while the finger is aloft.

This exercise can be quite difficult and frustrating until you *let* it happen. Again, you must *allow* it to happen instead of forcing it to happen. This exercise depends upon how thoroughly you let go of your normal inclination to use your muscles for physical movement. You must sever the connection between your will and your muscles. Instead of flexing your muscles, you must shift your intention to causing your weightless finger to rise solely by force of will. No muscles are required for this at all so the more completely you shift your focus away from your muscles and allow your willpower to cause your finger to rise, the easier it will be. This is as much a mental shift as it is an emotional shift.

Once you have raised your weightless forefinger with your willpower, let it drop, again by force of your willpower, not your muscles. Practice this exercise with your forefinger until it becomes easy and then move on to the same with all of the other fingers of both hands. Once you've managed to lift all your fingers in this way, practice with your entire hand, lifting it and then letting it drop, all with your willpower and the Air Element. When this is mastered, practice with the other hand, and then with both forearms so that you are able to raise either forearm up to the elbow. When you are able to lift both hands, forearms and all your fingers by this method you may move on to the next exercise of "*exteriorization*".

With this next exercise you will learn how to sever your will

entirely from your hand and, for that matter any body part you desire. This is crucial for true passive communication; for without this separation of your own will or directing awareness from the medium of communication, in this case your hand, you would be most liable to interference from your own subconscious psyche and end up talking with yourself instead of a discarnate entity.

Although our will has its root in our mental body, it is enacted through and personalized by our astral body when it comes to influencing our physical body. It is our astral body that mediates between our mental and physical bodies and integrates them. So in order to truly sever the whole of your personal will from your physical hand, you must remove your mental and your astral hand from its physical shell.

I say this specifically because as a friend recently pointed out to me, Bardon repeatedly used the terms “*mental hand*” and “*spirit hand*” in his instruction for this exercise, seeming to indicate that only the mental body component needs to be exteriorized or relocated. However in practice, it is absolutely necessary that both components be removed – only when both components are removed does the empty physical shell become, as Bardon described it, “*visible*” in the *Akasha*. If only the mental component is removed, leaving an astra-physical shell, then the hand is visible only in the *astral* realm to astral entities and this is generally not enough for contact with one’s Guardian Genius.

The practice is very straightforward. Sit at a table and place both hands, palm down on its surface in front of you. Now imagine that your astra-mental right hand and forearm, from elbow to fingertips, descend out of your physical hand and forearm, passing through the table and coming to rest on your right knee below. They must feel exactly like your regular hand and forearm while you must have absolutely no sensory awareness of your *physical* hand and forearm. Focus on the idea that your physical hand is now a completely empty shell and that your real hand rests upon your knee. Then return your astra-mental hand to the physical shell and flex your fingers, move your arm, etc., to firmly reintegrate them.

Practice with your right and then left hand and forearm until you can easily exteriorize them for at least five minutes at a stretch. That completes the preparatory exercises so now I will turn to discussing the passive communication technique itself.

Each of the techniques Bardon described, whether it is with a pendulum, planchette or medial writing, requires four basic steps. First step is to gather the materials needed, such as pendulum,

planchette or pen and paper. Second is to “*magically prepare*” the hand and forearm by making them weightless (and thus easily moveable) through an accumulation of the Air Element and levitate them as necessary. Third is to exteriorize the hand and forearm. And fourth, is to enter your own depth-point and call out to the entity you wish to communicate with. Once these four steps have been enacted, communication may begin.

I’ll use the sidereal pendulum technique to illustrate these four steps in action. First, gather together all the ingredients Bardon described; the pendulum, thread and tinkling objects and set them up as instructed.

Second place both hands and forearms on the table in front of you and create an accumulation of the Air Element in your right hand and forearm up to the elbow. If you are normally left-handed, then use your left hand and forearm instead of your right. Next levitate (i.e., cause it to rise with your will) your hand and forearm until it rests on your elbow and the pendulum swings freely a couple of centimeters above the table surface.

Third, exteriorize your hand and forearm and let them glide through the table to rest on your thigh below. Your physical hand and forearm are now completely empty and will stay propped up on their own because of their weightlessness.

Fourth, you must shift your awareness into your own depth-point, into the Akasha, and call out to the entity you wish to communicate with. At first, it really should be your own Guardian Genius that you seek out, but eventually you should pursue communication with other entities as well.

Your desire thus placed in the Akasha will create a magnetic resonance within the mental realm and the desired entity will be drawn to you and will be able to use your empty hand to maneuver the pendulum.

When you are finished, you must intentionally and thoroughly reintegrate your astra-mental hand and forearm with the physical shell, release the accumulated Air element and then once again resume normal control over your hand and forearm.

The only case in which the levitation or raising of the Air Element-filled hand is not required is the example Bardon gave of having the hand in your pocket and using just finger movement for communication. In this case, the hand must be filled with the Air Element but does not need to be levitated into position. Furthermore, only the hand itself or just the fingers involved will need to be exteriorized.

As Bardou pointed out, abilities cultivated in future Steps will override these techniques of passive communication and make them seem quite primitive and cumbersome in comparison, but for the time being they are quite valuable and deserve to be pursued. To my mind, their most important gift in terms of your initiation, is that they instigate an ever-deepening relationship with your Guardian Genius and thus, with your Greater Self.

STEP SIX

MENTAL

At the opening of the Step Six chapter, Bardou once again, and for the final time, cautions the student as follows:

“Before I am going to describe the exercises of the sixth Step, I shall underline once more that all the previous exercises have to be under perfect control in order to keep the balance in the higher degree of development too. It would be absolutely useless to skip one of the Steps or to omit and neglect one of the exercises. Any gap would become very perceptible and the scholar would have great difficulties to make up for one or the other problem in his development. Consequently, the main condition for success remains an excellent basic training.”

This is no where more apparent than here in the mental exercises of Step Six. As I stated in my previous comments concerning the mental depth-point work of Step Five, the exercises of Step Six presuppose that you have either already shifted the seat of your awareness to your Individual Self or are at least well on your way to doing so. The Step Six mental work seeks to finalize and strengthen this shift which would prove impossible without the aforementioned success with the depth-point exercises.

During your meditations upon your own depth-point you will have come to recognize what I like to describe as the “ancient self”. This is the ancient spark of your Individual Self which expresses its essential meaning through your astra-physical body. It resides, so to speak, at the very center of your being and is like a spark of the Electric Fluid surrounded by the Magnetic Fluid of your astra-physical existence. It radiates its essential meaning outward from center in every direction like a sun casts its illumination into infinite space.

If you have not yet come to recognize, and in fact, exist *as* this central spark of self, then the work of Step Six will be impossible.

The very first task in the mental section of Step Six is a meditation through which you must come to know and intimately experience the quadrapolar structure of your own mental body. The key to this understanding is your experience of inhabiting the central spark of self which is, in Hermetic terms, the Fire region or aspect of your mental body.

As we learned in Step Four, the astral and physical bodies each possess four regions which correspond with the Four Elements. The

physical regions relate to four basic types of bodily function and the astral regions relate to four basic types or qualities of emotion. Similarly, the four Elemental regions of the mental body, which are to be the focus of this preparatory meditation, relate to four types of awareness. But here, we cannot think in physical spatial terms such as with the regions of the physical body which are spatially stacked one upon the other. Instead, we must think in terms of the differences and similarities between the types of *awareness* or consciousness that each human naturally possesses. These types of awareness are, in Hermetic terms, defined as Fire or will, Air or intellect, Water or emotion, and Earth or physical consciousness. These terms however, require some explanation before they become any sort of truly practical guide.

To say that the Fire region of the awareness is one's will is an over-simplification for it is really much more subtle than that. What is meant here becomes completely apparent if one has indeed progressed in the depth-point work to the point where an experience of the central spark of self has been attained. This central spark is the Fire aspect of awareness. What we think of as our will emerges from this central spark but the spark itself is more than just our expression of will.

It is the essence or essential meaning of who we are as an Individual. It appears radiant for the same reason that a sun appears radiant – because it exists in contrast to its surroundings. If a sun were set in a field of bright light, we would not notice its radiance since its light would be no different than its surroundings; but when a sun is set in the midst of the darkness of space, the contrast between the sun's light and the spatial darkness renders it visible. So it is with the central spark of self; its uniqueness differentiates it and makes it stand out from its background and thus we can see its radiant expression of essential meaning.

The homogenous background against which the spark of self stands in contrast is the universal Akasha of *undifferentiated* essential meaning. The spark itself is a blend of specific, *differentiated* essential meanings bound together in a unique combination. Therefore it shares aspects with its background and at the same time is distinct from the undifferentiated Akashic background. In other words, its *difference* is what makes it unique.

Because it is different, it affects and is affected by its surroundings due its very presence. In order to maintain and assert its uniqueness, the self naturally communicates its uniqueness to its surroundings and this natural expression of self is what we are referring

to here when we ascribe “will” to the Fire aspect of the mental body.

We are speaking here of the mental realm and so we must remember the Law of Attraction in which similar things are magnetically drawn together. As the spark of self radiates its unique essential meaning within the mental realm, it is drawn together with similar essential meanings and thus the *quantity* of essential meaning encompassed by its uniqueness grows. In other words, its immediate surroundings are transformed by its presence into a likeness of its own unique combination of essential meanings.

At the ever-expanding periphery of self – that point at which we recognize ‘other’ as distinct from ‘self’ – the self is also transformed *by* its surroundings as the essential meanings floating at the periphery are either integrated or rejected. If ‘other’ is integrated into ‘self’, then ‘self’ expands and is transformed to a greater or lesser degree. How we interact with ‘other’ essential meaning -- the quality or flavor, if you will, of our perception and expression of meaning -- is what we call ‘intellect’ and this is the Air region of our mental body.

The Airy ‘intellect’ reflects the unique nature or character of the Fiery spark and is seen in how the self interacts with its mental surroundings. Is one inquisitive and involved when encountering meaning or aloof? Is one open and adaptable or rigid? Is one forceful and eager or passive? Etc. These are but a few of the qualities that can be used to describe the nature or flavor of the ‘intellect’.

The ‘intellect’ regulates the rate at which its surroundings transform the self and the rate at which the self transforms its surroundings. The more open and assimilating the ‘intellect’, the more rapidly the self and its surroundings change; and conversely, the more closed and rigid it is, the slower the self is transformed.

The Fire and Air regions of the mental body exist whether or not the self is incarnate but the Water and Earth regions exist only *during* incarnation since they represent awareness of the astral and physical realms respectively. The Water region therefore, is the awareness we use to perceive and express emotional significance, the substance of the astral realm. Whereas essential meaning is universal in nature, emotional significance is personal and specific.

Our astral body is created by our intellectual interaction with our astral surroundings, by how our ‘intellect’ assimilates or rejects emotional significance. And it is the Water region or type of awareness that is capable of perceiving and expressing emotional significance through our astral body’s senses. It is thus our awareness of our own astral body and of the astral realm itself.

The most simplified definition of the Earth region of the mental body is the awareness which perceives and interacts with the physical realm; the awareness that perceives the world around us through our physical senses and enacts our will within our mundane lives. However, it is in point of fact the Fire, Air and Water regions united within the physical realm.

The deeper significance here is that every time we look through our physical eyes, our spark of self is simultaneously perceiving the essential meaning of the mental realm and the emotional significance of the astral realm and *this* is what informs our physical perception. By ‘informs’ I mean that if we had not perceived the essential meaning of the object we observe with our physical eyes then it would mean nothing to us; and if it were bereft of meaning, it would have no personal emotional significance to us and in the end we would perceive nothing through our physical eyes other than inconsequential refractions of light.

These mental and astral components are always there as part of *every* physical perception. Just as the Earth Element exists only as a result of the interaction of the Fire, Air and Water Elements, so here the Earth region of awareness is what combines the Fire, Air and Water regions. In other words, it is the Fire, Air and Water regions that inhabit the physical body and it is the Earth region of our awareness that integrates these astra-mental perceptions with those of the physical senses. Thus the Earth region of the mental body contains the whole of the Individual awareness or consciousness.

Ordinarily, we are not especially conscious of the astra-mental component of physical perception or even of the spark of self that burns so brightly through our awareness. The goal of this preparatory meditation however, is to make you intimately conscious of the actions of the whole of your awareness; to recognize the various parts or aspects of awareness and to become familiar with how they interact.

Bardon wasn’t specific in describing the details of this meditation, writing only, “*Look inward as into your own spirit, observe yourself and the function of the spirit and meditate on it. You must know how to imagine each of the functions corresponding to the Element.*” Clearly he expects each student to be capable of figuring out their own best solution to this question, but this doesn’t mean that starting out with an example is particularly harmful so I will describe for you an approach that I found very helpful:

Begin by inhabiting your own depth-point and experience the spark of self I described earlier. Sense that you exist as a spark of

the Electric Fluid, surrounded by a cloak of the Magnetic Fluid. You are, in essence, a Fluidic Volt. Focus inward upon your unique nature, your specific combination of essential meaning which distinguishes *your* spark from all others. This is the Fire region of your awareness.

Now turn your focus outward, into the boundary region where your Electric radiation begins to interact with the Magnetic cloud of essential meaning that surrounds you. Closely examine this interaction and get to know the nature of your own intellect. How do you interact with the ideas and meanings that you encounter? What are the unique qualities of your intellect? Observe and analyze. This is the Air region of your awareness, the aspect which perceives and expresses essential meaning or ideas and which assimilates them through thinking. Sense the discrete presence of your unique intellect within the mental realm of essential meaning that surrounds you and sense the mental realm stretching outwards from you in all directions.

Now press deeper into the surrounding Magnetic cloud with the Fire and Air aspects of your awareness. Notice how the essential meanings you encounter become more and more different than your own native essential meaning, more 'other', more foreign. And take note of how your awareness begins to ascribe varying degrees of *significance* to these different types or combinations of essential meaning. One is important, another less so, and yet another completely insignificant. This ability to perceive the significance of 'other' is the Water region of your awareness and the dense web of interrelationships of significance that is revealed by this perception is the astral realm. Sense how the interaction between your intellectual awareness and emotional significance creates an ephemeral body which encases the Fire, Air and Water regions of your awareness. Sense this astral body and sense the astral realm itself which surrounds you in all directions.

Now cast your conjoined Fire, Air and Water awareness out to the outermost edge of the Magnetic cloud that surrounds your spark of self. Encompass the whole expanse of this Magnetic cloud and become aware of your physical body and its place within the physical realm which surrounds you. Perceive all the sensations that your body affords you in this moment taking careful note of their meaning and significance – which is to say, remain conscious of the perceptions of the Air and Water regions and how they inform your perception of physical sensations. This is the Earth region of your mental body.

Remain for some time in this state of full consciousness of all four regions of your mental body and observe closely how they interact.

Now you must reverse this journey and travel back inward, shedding the layers or regions of awareness in succession until you once again inhabit just your Electric spark of self --

Let go of your perception of your physical body and the physical realm and refocus your awareness deeper into the body of the Magnetic cloud until you become aware of your astral body and the astral realm. Spend a few moments re-familiarizing yourself with the Water region of awareness and then let go of your perception of significance as well. Refocus your awareness deeper until you reach that boundary region where the Magnetic cloud first intersects the Electric radiance of your spark of self. Spend a few moments sensing once again your own pure intellect as you interact with the essential meaning of the mental realm that surrounds your spark of self. Now, finally, let go of your perception of external meaning and constrict your awareness to just the Electric spark of self, your depth-point, that infinitely finite point within the infinite realm of self. Spend a few moments in this state and then exit your depth-point in the manner to which you are accustomed.

If you start with this meditation as described and adapt it to your own unique nature, it will lead you very quickly to the level of understanding necessary for executing the Step Six mental exercises which follow. In fact, this meditation incorporates the very first exercise proper which Bardou described thusly:

“Another exercise is to ascertain oneself of the whole mental body in the astral body, and, together with it, in the material body similar to a hand in a fine silk glove which is put into a thick glove. Your hand ought to feel both gloves. The same thing is supposed to occur in the whole mental body. You should feel your spirit in the fine astral body and this one again in the material body. This feeling is the spirit. Meditate on this problem at any suitable opportunity. As soon as you are quite sure that your spirit is captivating the astral body as well as the material one, feeling and moving it, and that it is, as it were, your spirit which performs all the actions through the two wraps, you can again go one step further.”

In other words, if you pursue the first half of the meditation I described to the point where you are conscious of the fact that your mental and astral bodies are the animating factors within your physical presence and remain in that state until you truly experience that

it is your awareness that drives all your actions, then you will have achieved the intention of the first exercise.

In the next exercise you must make active use of what you have discovered about the relationship between your mental, astral and physical bodies. Here you must carry out your *actions* with full consciousness of the fact that it is your mental body which accomplishes each act with the help of your astral and physical bodies. The goal is tri-polar magical action in which you are consciously and intentionally employing your astra-physical body to accomplish the will of your mental body or awareness.

This should be approached slowly and incrementally, not because it is particularly difficult to achieve but rather because of what you will learn through patient observation, especially in the beginning. I suggest that you begin with a seated, closed-eye meditation such as I described earlier, and reach the state of awareness in which you are conscious of your three bodies working together with your mental body or awareness as the directing force. Then simply open your eyes and begin to observe your surroundings, all the while remaining conscious of the fact that it is your awareness which is directing this observation. Direct your body to stand up and move around while again, retaining the feeling that it is your awareness which directs the body and moves your legs and arms and eyes, etc. Do this for a few minutes and then end your practice. Repeat this as often as you can, extending the period of time you spend in this state with each exercise. Once you have become comfortable with this state of awareness, begin adopting it during your normal, day-to-day activities, no matter how mundane, for short periods at a stretch.

It's at this stage that you will learn the most, specifically about where the impulse for action arises. Many, if not most, of our actions throughout the day are not instigated by our own conscious will. For example, when you scratch an itch, look away from a too bright light, or take a breath, these actions are instigated by your physical body and the mental body merely complies with the demands of the physical stimulus. By careful observation you will learn to distinguish the source of all your actions and reactions. Some originate with your physical body, some with your astral body or subconsciousness and some will be genuinely instigated by your mental body, which is to say by conscious choice.

It is important that in the course of this exercise you begin to take conscious control over your responses to astral and physical stimuli. In other words, scratch your itch consciously so that this action is directed by your mental body awareness and enacted with the

use of your astra-physical body, instead of the other way round.

The main thrust of this exercise however is to train your ability to perform *significant* acts directed completely by your mental body, specifically by your central spark of self, enacted astrally through your astral body and physically through your physical body. This is the tri-polar, physio-astra-mental magic action in which each action is conducted with full conscious intention on all three planes simultaneously.

In this state, when you move your physical arm, the meaning of this movement is simultaneously manifest within the mental realm and its significance is manifest within the astral realm, because you have consciously employed all three of your bodies in unison. This is very different than normal random movement of your arm in that its consequences are manifest on all three realms simultaneously and with the full power of your conscious intention or mental will. Once you are comfortable with this tri-polar movement and can slip into the tri-polar state at any time you wish, you are ready for the next set of exercises which focus very specifically upon tri-polar perception.

What you want to achieve here is the feeling that it is your mental body awareness that perceives through your astral and physical senses. Tri-polar *perception* is a very natural progression from tri-polar *action* and forms the foundation of the Step Seven training of your subtle senses.

We begin with eyesight and become conscious of the fact that it is our mental awareness that perceives *through* our eyes – it is not our eyes themselves that perceive. The astral and physical eyes are merely the organs of perception, they are not the perceiver. So, while you are in the tri-polar state of awareness, look *through* your astra-physical eyes. Take very careful note of the fact that with your mental awareness you perceive the mental meaning of what you observe with your physical eyes along with its astral significance. Your aim is to become acutely aware of these mental and astral components of your physical eyesight. The more you are consciously aware of them, the more sensitive you become to these astra-mental perceptions and your astra-mental eyesight, so to speak, will become more and more acute.

Once you have become accustomed to tri-polar eyesight, perform the same sort of exercise with your hearing and hear through your astra-physical ears. In other words your mental awareness must perceive the mental meaning and the astral significance of the sounds you hear with your physical ears.

And once you have mastered tri-polar hearing, begin experi-

menting with tri-polar feeling and perceive the mental meaning and astral significance of each thing you touch and each sensation your body experiences. In other words, it's your mental awareness that feels the meaning and significance of roughness, smoothness, cold, heat, etc. *through* the nerves of your physical body.

Once tri-polar feeling is mastered you may work with tri-polar tasting and smelling if you wish. Such exercises should pose no difficulties but since tri-polar smell and taste are not of much use in magical work itself, mastering them is not required.

The final mental exercises of Step Six focus on combining the three primary tri-polar senses. First, work with combining tri-polar sight and hearing so that you perceive the meaning and significance of auditory and visual impressions simultaneously. Once you are comfortable with this, add in the sense of feeling or touch as well and perceive the mental meaning and astral significance of all three senses together.

When you are in a tri-polar state of awareness, perceiving tri-polarly through all your senses and carrying out each action with all three bodies simultaneously, you are fully present within the *now* moment of time-space -- a vitally important state of Being in relation to the performance of Hermetic magic. This is the goal of the Step Six mental work and is the foundation for all future work.

ASTRAL

To truly comprehend the exercises of this section one must first understand what Bardon meant by the terms "*Akasha*" and "*ether*".

The classical Greek Ether is the fifth Element or quintessence, the most rarefied energy from which the coarser Elements of Fire, Air, Water and Earth arise. In many cases, Bardon used the term "*ether*" in referring to a physical energy-substance, albeit such an ephemeral energy that it is just barely classifiable as "physical". This is the root energy that permeates the entire physical universe and is, as it were, the undifferentiated substrata of energy out of which all more solid matter is built. This is the specific aspect of ether that Bardon referred to when he used the terms "*astral-ether*" and "*universal ether*".

In most other instances, Bardon used the term "*ether*" to indicate what is more properly termed the Akasha which is a Sanskrit word used to indicate the non-sequential, causal realm that is timeless and spaceless or eternal in nature. The physical ether is a mani-

festation of this higher ether or Akasha. Similar to the properties of the physical ether, the Akasha also permeates all things but here this means more than just the physical universe as with the physical ether. The Akasha therefore permeates and causes all three realms of mental, astral and physical manifestation.

Throughout IHH Bardon seems to use these terms, ether and Akasha, interchangeably and it can be quite difficult to discern whether he means the physical ether or the higher Akasha! The only way to really tell is through an examination of the context in which these terms appear.

Nonetheless, the physical ether and the higher Akasha together represent a continuum of one thing – the principle of immanence, of a presence that dwells within everything. Thus the Akasha knows no boundaries of time, space or meaning since it partakes of every thing. Akasha represents the whole infinite expanse of essential meaning, from the undifferentiated eternal through the temporally specific.

In the Step Six astral exercises, we begin our work with the *physical* ether which is inhaled in the same way we inhale the Vital Energy or one of the four Elements. However, *it is from our depth-point that we perform the inhalation*, not from our surface awareness.

We first enter our depth point and then inhale the physical ether through our physical pores and into our physical bodies. But since the physical ether is an aspect of the Akasha, our inhalation doesn't fill just our physical bodies, it also penetrates more deeply to our astral and then mental bodies. So in effect, we end up inhaling the *Akasha* into our depth-point awareness.

It is our *depth-point* awareness that experiences the “*connection with all things*” that Bardon described. The physical ether connects our physical bodies to the entire physical universe, but it is the higher Akasha that connects the depth-point awareness of the Individual Self with the undifferentiated expanse of essential meaning and with the causal realm itself.

The primary goal of the exercise with the inhalation of ether / Akasha is to introduce the Individual Self found at the depth-point to the causal realm. It is into the causal realm that the exercise instructs us to place our wish, in this case, our wish for absolute mastery of the Elements.

The secondary goal however, is just as important although from a less mystical perspective, and that is to accustom us to working with the *physical* ether in much the same way as we work with

the Elements. It's the *physical* ether that is used in charging a magic mirror for example when we want to communicate over a great physical distance, not the higher Akasha.

So, let's review the exercises themselves.

Bardon begins: "*Take up your usual posture and close your eyes. Imagine you happen to be in the center of an unlimited space. Here is no above nor below nor any sideways.*"

You will recognize here that the phrase "*center of an unlimited space*" is a reference to the depth-point. So, naturally, you must enter your own depth point but here *it is vitally important that you remain conscious of inhabiting your astra-physical body*. You must be a depth-point within a body at the center of an unlimited space.

Bardon continues: "*This unlimited space is filled with the finest energetic matter, the universal ether. Ether is colorless, but to our senses it appears to be of an ultra-violet, near black-violet color and this is the color in which we do imagine the etheric matter.*"

This is the *physical* ether and you must imagine that it surrounds your *physical* body infinitely in every direction.

Bardon continues: "*You are inhaling this etheric matter and convey it deliberately, through the pulmonary breathing, to the blood.*"

Again, this is the *physical* ether which you are conveying to the blood in your *physical* body. Essentially, this is just a preliminary exercise in which you accustom yourself to manipulating the physical ether in the same way you do the four Elements or the Vital Energy.

Bardon continues: "*If you have achieved a certain skill in doing so, execute the same operation with consciously breathing, through lungs and pores, as you did in the accumulation of the vital power, but with the one difference, that you inhale the colored ether and fill your whole body with it, instead of the vital power. Performing this exercise you have to retain the feeling of being united to the entire infinite space. You have to be, as it were, completely secluded from the world. It is necessary to become familiar with this unusual state of mind.*"

So, now we come to traversing the continuum between the physical ether and the higher Akasha. Here is where the physical ether *leads* us to the Akasha. There are two important features to this exercise that differentiate it from the previous one: first, we are now using the whole body pore breathing and filling our whole body, not just our blood, with the physical ether; and second, we are now incorporating the "*feeling of being united to the entire infinite space.*"

The second feature, of connecting with everything within the infinite space, is what *establishes* the continuum between the physical ether and the higher Akasha since it is the underlying principle that unites these two. And the fact that we are filling our whole body with the ether-plus-principle, instead of just our blood stream, facilitates our movement along the continuum bringing us to the deeper experience of merging with the higher Akasha.

Since the ether and Akasha have the power to permeate and penetrate, their inhalation penetrates deeper than just the physical body and thus affects the astral and mental bodies as well when we inhale it in this manner. Remember, the aspect of self that is driving the inhalation is the *depth-point*, the central spark of self, so ultimately this exercise leads to the merging of this central spark with the Akasha itself. This is a *very* sublime state of awareness, or as Bardon under-stated it, an “*unusual state of mind*”.

Earlier when I was commenting about the mental exercises and the nature of the Individual Self, I stated that the Individual Self or Fire aspect of the mental body is defined by its difference from the background of undifferentiated essential meaning or Akasha in which it resides. However, the Individual Self is a combination of essential meanings drawn out of that undifferentiated background so it also shares just as much commonality with the background as it does express difference from it. The background Akasha is the source of the Individual Self.

The path that the Individual follows *into* the akasha is therefore its *commonality* with the Akasha, not its difference. In other words, it looks toward the ways in which it is similar to the background and since all of its parts are drawn from the background Akasha, all of its parts find commonality. The awareness then travels along these lines of commonality, so to speak and thus merges with the whole infinite expanse of the Akasha.

It is only when one has merged with the Akasha in this manner that one can insert a causation, in the form of an idea or wish, into the Akasha and thus affect all three planes.

This brings us to the final astral exercise with the Akasha. Bardon wrote:

“You are sitting in your usual position inhaling, through the lungs and all pores, a stream of Akasha and filling the whole body with it. At this point I should like to mention that Akasha cannot be accumulated in the same way as vital power. At the very inhaling, you must imagine that you are starting the control of the four Elements. Consider that you have already got the faculty of mastering

the Elements and that they fulfill everything you are ordering or wishing for, no matter on which plane the realization of your desire has to happen. You ought to feel with every breath your mastery of the Elements.”

Here Bardon is revealing a very important point about how a causation is carried along the continuum all the way from the Earth region of the mental body to the Akashic realm. Namely, that you must, at the very outset of work, imbue the *physical* ether with the idea or wish and as the physical ether expands into the Akasha, the idea is carried with it into the causal realm. In this exercise, it's the wish for mastery of the Elements that is transferred to the causal realm but this method is used no matter what the desire.

From a technical perspective what happens when a wish is placed within the Akasha is that it causes a clustering, so to speak, of relevant bits of essential meaning, which is to say it immediately manifests upon the mental plane. This mental manifestation then naturally accrues to itself more mental materia of like kind and eventually attains an astral density. Given time, the astra-mental manifestation will eventually attain a physical density, the amount of time depending upon the strength of the initial desire and its appropriateness.

Although this entire exercise is staged in the context of inserting a desire into the Akasha for realization, I think that there is a much more important side to the work presented here and that is the mystical experience of merging the Individual awareness with the Akasha. This is how one connects with the Greater Self, the Binah aspect of Self, the eternal mental body. And although this is not at all stated as the goal of these exercises it is an inevitable consequence of them. A connection with the Greater Self might not occur here in Step Six, but working with the Akasha *will* lead to this connection over time. So this is worth intentionally pursuing.

Another aspect of these Step Six astral exercises worth pursuing beyond what Bardon wrote is working with the *physical* ether. As I said, the physical ether is worked with in future Steps in much the same way we've learned to work with the Elements. The primary difference being, as Bardon pointed out, the physical ether cannot be dynamically accumulated. Since it has the power to penetrate all substance it cannot be contained under pressure, so to speak, since nothing can act as a barrier to its penetrating influence. All we can do is *fill* a space with the physical ether, but we can nonetheless direct it and project it like we do with the Elements. Since the ability to manipulate and wield the physical ether will be necessary in future

applications, it is worth developing the ability now in conjunction with the Step Six astral exercises.

PHYSICAL

Since the method of creating an Elemental is so simple, there's really nothing to add to Bardon's technical instructions which were quite well written. However, there is one issue Bardon glossed over that determines ultimate success with the creation of an Elemental; namely, the nature and source of the "Light" he instructs us to use. If you don't get this part right then no Elemental is actually formed.

All that Bardon wrote in this regard was: "*The magician imagines a large universal ocean of light, from the luminous matter of which he shapes an enormous ball of light, compressing, and hence accumulating it more and more with the help of his imagination until this ball has the size of approximately 12-20 inches or 30-50 cm. By this accumulation of light, the ball has become similar to a radiating sun.*"

An Elemental is effective within the mental realm; therefore it must be created *within* the mental realm and from a substance that has the power to affect the mental materia. So first off, we must enter the mental realm; which is to say we must focus our awareness within our depth-point by constricting our awareness to just the conjoined Fire and Air regions of the mental body. *This* is the aspect of the magician's awareness that creates an Elemental, not the mundane or the astral consciousness.

Next, within the mental plane where the Law of Attraction reigns supreme, we must imagine a "*large universal ocean of light*" surrounding us in every direction. What our imagination connects us with on the mental plane through the Law of Attraction is the radiant aspect of the Akashic or undifferentiated essential meaning. Within the mental plane this radiance of undifferentiated essential meaning appears as a colorless light of blinding intensity. Some say it is a "white" light but this is a misnomer as it has no definable color, not even whiteness.

We must then compress the *entire* ocean of light, into a sphere as Bardon described. The end result is a radiant sun-like orb of *undifferentiated* essential meaning upon which we then impress our will and in this way differentiate or make specific what was formerly undifferentiated. In other words, by impressing our instruction upon this orb we give it a specific meaning, purpose and duration, all of

which permeate and transform the entire radiant body of formerly undifferentiated meaning. This is what gives the Elemental its power to directly affect the mental realm.

I must say that an Elemental formed in this way is quite effective so long as it conforms to karmic necessity. However, if its purpose would go against some aspect of karma then it would be powerless. Only an Akashic volt has the power to counteract karmic necessity but that is a subject for a later Step.

STEP SEVEN

MENTAL

The sole task of the mental section of Step Seven is the attainment of a mental Equilibrium of the Elements. This is somewhat similar to the early work of attaining an astral Equilibrium of the Elements but at a much deeper level. Here, you must make changes to your fundamental self, instead of your superficial character.

The astral self transformation was all about positivizing your astral character. With the mental transformation however, it's all about *balancing* the Elemental qualities or regions of your mental body so that no aspect of your awareness is stronger than any other. This is *not* accomplished by weakening or transforming your strongest traits, but rather by building up your weaker traits until they are equal in strength to your strongest trait. For example, if the Fire region is weak in relation to the Air region, which is to say if your intellect is stronger than your will, then you must build up your will until it is equal to the strength of your intellect.

This is a fairly straight forward concept, however, we must not think in terms of the mundane meaning of the words Bardou used in describing the qualities of the mental body. Here, in the context of Step Seven, the terms 'will', 'intellect', 'feeling' and 'consciousness' indicate much more fundamental aspects of awareness than their mundane meanings imply.

Here, 'will' refers to the Fire region of your mental body and your awareness of, and expression of, your own unique essential nature. 'Intellect' refers to the Air region of your mental body and your ability to perceive, assimilate and express essential meaning. 'Feeling' of course, refers to the Water region of your mental body and your ability to perceive, experience and express emotional significance. And 'consciousness' refers to the Earth region of your mental body and the degree to which you are able to fully integrate your mental and astral awareness into your mundane existence.

As with the astral transformation, our work begins with introspective self-analysis, except that here you are not making a list of positive and negative character traits. Instead, you are simply analyzing the relative strength of each aspect or region of your mental body. You must determine which of the Elements are strongest and which are weakest and rank them in relative order from strongest to weakest.

With our mental Equilibrium we must take into account an additional factor beyond the four Elements; namely, the Akasha. Bardon used the term ‘conscience’ to describe the fundamental quality of the mental body in relation to Akasha. And in terms of exercises to strengthen this quality he listed “*realizing realities*”. These are very telling clues, so to speak, meant to point us in the right direction, just like the words ‘will’, ‘intellect’, ‘feeling’ and ‘consciousness’ led us to a deeper understanding.

With the word ‘conscience’ Bardon referred to our inner sense of knowing ‘right’ from ‘wrong’ and thereby leads us to understand that he is really speaking of our connection with our own Greater Self or eternal mental body, through the agency of our Guardian Genius or directly through merging with the Akasha itself.

Our Greater Self is the eternal aspect of our mental body or spirit and resides, so to speak, within the eternal, non-sequential realm. It’s the causal source of our central spark of self, the Fire region of our temporal mental body. As such, our essential nature, manifest as our central spark of self, is an *emanation* of our Greater Self Awareness into the sequential realm. Our temporal mental body is thus the *vehicle* of our Greater Self Awareness and in order to fully manifest our Greater Self within the temporal realm our mental vehicle must be Equilibrated.

The question then, in terms of the mental Equilibrium, is how strong is our perception and expression of the emanation from our Greater Self? How aware are we of the voice of our conscience from moment to moment, and how completely do we implement its influence? How strong is our connection with our Guardian Genius? How completely are we able to merge with the Akasha and thus with our Greater Self? And perhaps most importantly, how thoroughly do we manifest our Greater Self through our Individual Self and our personality?

Once you have completed the introspective self-analysis of your mental body and have determined which Element or Elements are strongest, you must then devise a regimen of exercises that will strengthen the weaker Elements of your awareness. Bardon described these exercises to a very limited extent and also provided a simple table of associations to guide us. But again, his words here are meant to point and lead us and shouldn’t be taken at face value. Above all, we must remember that the context here is Step Seven.

So, let’s review what Bardon *really* meant regarding exercises to be undertaken in the strengthening of the mental body’s Elemental regions:

With the Fire region, Bardon wrote about the relationship between Fire, light, eyesight and ‘will’ and suggested ‘optic’ or visualization exercises to strengthen this region. In the context of what you accomplished in Step Six, ‘visualization exercises’ really means that you should increase or strengthen your tri-polar perception of essential meaning through your eyes. Furthermore, his comments about ‘light’ indicate that to strengthen the Fire region of your mental body, you must work more thoroughly with the ‘light’ in the manner of Step Six’s instructions regarding the creation of an Elemental -- which is to say, you must exercise your ability to impress your will upon undifferentiated essential meaning and thus give it differentiation and specificity. Additionally, you must exercise your mundane will power in your daily life because each strengthening within the mental awareness must be reflected in your mundane existence in order for it to truly take hold as a *permanent* feature.

With the Air region, Bardon wrote of the relationship between Air and hearing and suggested ‘acoustic exercises’ but this doesn’t mean the Step Two style exercises as his words imply. Instead, this is a reference to increasing or strengthening your tri-polar perception of essential meaning through your ears. In other words, practice your tri-polar hearing. Furthermore, to truly strengthen your intellectual capacity you must actively increase your exposure to and consideration of new ideas and concepts.

With the Water region, Bardon wrote about the relationship between Water and feeling and suggested ‘emotional exercises’ to “render your spirit more emotional”. What this really means is two-fold. First, that you must exercise your tri-polar perception of emotional significance through all your senses, but especially through your tactile sense. Secondly, that you must pursue Step Two style exercises in which you create various emotional states within your astral body. And of course, in your mundane life you must strive to be more sensitive to the emotions of others and more expressive of your own emotions.

With the Earth region, Bardon mentioned the senses of taste and smell and the overall consciousness and suggested exercises that “*expand the consciousness*”. What this really means is that you must practice your tri-polar state of awareness and activity since this integrates your mental and astral bodies with your physical existence. Working tri-polarly with your senses of taste and smell will increase this integration, so these exercises are also advisable. Ultimately, it’s a matter of becoming more and more aware of your physical existence, more and more holistically connected with your moment-to-

moment life.

And finally, in regard to the Akasha, practice of the Step Five passive communication with your Guardian Genius and pursuing the Step Six work of merging your central spark of self with the Akasha, will both increase the influence of this aspect of your awareness. Bardón suggested exercises in “*realizing realities*” which means manifesting the Greater Self influx within every plane of your existence; mental, astral and physical.

So, having discerned which aspects of your mental body need to be developed more fully, you must pursue the appropriate exercises until you have successfully strengthened them to the point where all Four Elemental regions are perfectly balanced and thus equal in strength. This mental Equilibrium of the Elements *must* be attained before beginning the work of Step Eight and mental wandering, so do give it your all.

In regard to the Akasha, you do not have to bring this up to equal strength with the four Elemental regions at this point, although this will be necessary further on. For now, you must commit to always continuously develop and pursue this aspect of your awareness.

Once attained, the mental Equilibrium of the Elements requires very little in the way of the kind of continuous monitoring and maintenance that the astral Equilibrium requires. At the most, what one must guard against is an imbalanced increase of one Elemental region over the others. This can happen unintentionally in association with the Element you experience the greatest affinity with. For example, if you are naturally Watery, then you must be sure that the natural growth of the Water region of your mental body does not outpace the growth of the other regions. In this event, you would need to intentionally strengthen the other regions through pursuit of relevant exercises.

ASTRAL

As Bardón pointed out, odds are that your astral senses will have already been developed to a greater or lesser degree depending upon your natural abilities combined with the training you’ve undergone thus far. However, it is important that no matter how well developed you might feel they are at this point, you develop them further with these exercises.

The true astral senses are an amplification of the mental senses which, as we already have discovered, allow us to perceive the essential meaning and emotional significance of all that we experience

through our physical senses. The astral senses give these mental perceptions a more concrete form as images and sounds in addition to the underlying mental understanding.

You will, no doubt have already experienced this phenomenon, for example when you are wielding an Element or the Vital Energy and you actually see it. This is a form of clairvoyance. Similarly, you might actually hear the thoughts of the person into whom you have transferred your consciousness. This is a form of clairhearing. Likewise when you explore the depth-point of a person or object and you perceive images, sounds, emotional states, etc. from their past or present experience. This is a form of clairfeeling.

In each case, the astral images, sounds and feelings are informed by your concurrent perception of their mental essential meaning and emotional significance.

Our mental senses function on all three levels of existence, mental, astral and physical, and yet we use them exclusively to navigate, as it were, the mental realm itself. Our astral senses on the other hand, are functional on only the astral and physical planes and are used in conjunction with our mental senses when we move about the astral plane. Likewise, our physical senses are functional only on the physical plane and we naturally use them in conjunction with our mental and astral senses to navigate the physical plane.

Therefore, in the development of our astral senses we must consider their dependence upon the information gleaned by our mental senses *and* their connection with our physical sensory organs. Thus Bardon incorporates mental, astral and physical components in each of the exercises he describes for their development. With clairvoyance, he involves the physical eyes, the astral Fire Element and the mental Light. With clairhearing, he incorporates the physical ears, the astral Air Element and the mental ether-Akasha. And with clairfeeling, we employ an individually appropriate area of the physical body, the astral Water Element and the mental Magnetic Fluid.

Bardon also encourages the use of physical fluid condensers as containers for the Elements but these are optional tools whose functions can easily be supplanted by simple accumulations of the Elements.

So, let's examine the methods themselves, starting with clairvoyance, the astral sight.

First, you must adopt a tri-polar state of awareness in which you are conscious of all three bodies simultaneously. *In fact, all of these exercises with the astral senses must be performed while in a tri-polar state.*

Next, focus your awareness within your depth-point, your central spark of self, and connect with the universal Light upon the mental plane. This is the same Light or radiance of undifferentiated essential meaning that was dealt with in the Step Six creation of an Elemental. Now you must draw the entire body of this light into your physical body, so that it is evenly and densely accumulated throughout your whole body.

I should note here that guiding or drawing this Light from the mental plane, into your physical body is a task that you will not have encountered before but with just a little bit of experimentation and thought, you will quickly master it.

Once the condensed Light fills your physical body, you must impress upon it the idea that, as Bardon described, *“The light is penetrating everything, seeing everything and looking through everything. Neither space nor time is any hindrance to this light.”*

Then you must guide all of the Light into your two eyes. This further condenses the Light so that by the time all of it has moved into your eyes, each eyeball is like a radiant sun. Now spend several minutes focused upon the idea that the penetrating, all-seeing power of the Light permeates your astral and physical eyes, transferring to them the power of clairvoyance. When you are finished with the exercise, let go of the accumulated Light and let it completely dissipate until none at all remains in your eyes or in your body.

Repeat this accumulation of the all-seeing Light into your eyes as frequently as possible, all the while confident of the fact that the Light is rapidly transforming your astral and physical eyes and rendering them capable of clairvoyance.

To supplement and perhaps hasten this transformation of your physical and astral eyes, you may incorporate the Fire Element into your work. This can be done as Bardon described, with the use of cotton balls, soaked with a simple Fluid condenser which has been loaded with the Fire Element, and then applied over your eyes. Or, the exact same effect can be attained by simply creating an accumulation of the Fire Element that rests upon the surface of your eyeballs, a feat that should be very simple by this point in your training.

In time, this practice will transform your astral-physical eyes and render them capable of astral sight. Then, to use your astral vision all you have to do is shift your awareness to your astral eyes. In other words, you won't need to accumulate the Light into your physical eyeballs in order to use your astral sight.

Now let's deal with clairhearing:

Prepare in advance a couple of Fluid condenser loaded cotton

plugs into which you have accumulated the Air Element and impressed your desire for the faculty of clairhearing in your astral and physical bodies. Cram the prepared cotton plugs into your ears as tightly as possible. Alternately, you can simply create two suitably sized accumulations of the Air Element, onto which you have impressed your desire, and transfer them to your ear canals.

Now adopt a tri-polar awareness and then focus your consciousness into your depth-point, your central spark of self and connect with the Akasha. Draw the higher Akasha down the continuum and fill your entire head with the Akasha-ether. This means that the physical ether, along with the higher Akasha fills your entire head.

Then transfer or focus your awareness into both of your ears and spend several minutes focused upon the idea that the Akasha-ether permeates your astral and physical ears, transferring to them the power of clairhearing. When you are finished with the exercise, let go of the Akasha-ether and let it completely dissipate until none at all remains in your ears or in your body. Also, either disperse the accumulated Air Element or remove the cotton plugs from your ears.

As with the clairvoyance exercise, repeat as often as you can, with the constant assurance that this is transforming your astral and physical ears, rendering them capable of clairhearing. In time, your astral hearing will open and once fully developed, all you will have to do is focus your awareness upon your astral ears in order to activate and make use of your clairhearing; but prior to this point, you can activate your clairhearing for use by simply inducing the Akasha into the inner acoustic duct of either one or both ears.

Before I begin to discuss the clairfeeling exercises itself, I want to quote what Bardou wrote about the faculty of clairfeeling since it's important to keep this in mind while performing the exercise.

“The term clairfeeling means the faculty of perceiving and feeling all phenomena and powers occurring in the Elements and in Akasha. To this field also belongs the faculty of psychometry, that is the clear perception of present, past and future of any object, letter and so forth. Even the power of materialization of any thought, any being, no matter whether the point in question is a self-created being, or an entity already existing in the Akasha, belongs to this domain. Other faculties connected with sense perception and touch sensation can also be registered in the category of clairfeeling. Intuition, too, is originating in clairfeeling.”

At first, this description may seem like a mish-mash of various faculties but if you meditate deeply on all the ideas presented in

Bardon's words, you will come to understand the root which connects them all.

Before beginning the exercise, you must first determine which Element you experience the most affinity with. Bardon suggested that you look back to your original soul mirror and see which Element predominated at that time and in most cases this is likely a good method; however, during the course of pursuing the work of the six Steps between that past moment and the present moment, your Elemental affinity may have changed, so it's a good idea to base your choice of Elemental affinity more on your present state than your past.

The Element determines the area of your physical body you will work with in the exercise. Thus, if your affinity is with the Fire Element, then you will work with your head region, the forehead specifically; if it is the Air Element, then you work with your chest region in the area over your heart; with the Water Element, your abdominal region at your solar-plexus; and, if it's the Earth Element, your hands or thighs are used.

You must also prepare a Fluid Condenser soaked pad, into which you must accumulate the Water Element along with the conviction that the Element contains the power of clairfeeling and will convey this power to the astra-physical body area you've chosen to work with. Alternately, you can simply accumulate the Water Element atop the designated area as I've mentioned before.

For this exercise, you must lie down flat on your back, place the prepared Fluid Condenser soaked pad over the area in which you're going to develop clairfeeling (or accumulate the Water Element there and impress upon it the same ideas that were mentioned earlier in regard to loading the pad).

Next, adopt a tri-polar state of awareness and focus your consciousness within your depth-point, the Fire region of your mental body. Within the mental plane you must now imagine that you are completely surrounded by an infinite ocean of Water and then draw this Water from the mental plane to the physical plane and cause it to entirely fill your whole physical body.

Now transfer your tri-polar awareness into the designated sensory area of your physical body and, as Bardon wrote: "*Imagine that the magnetic power of the water you have accumulated within yourself will enliven the finest particles of your sensation-field and produce the astral clairfeeling. You must be able to imagine the magnetic attractive power of the water so intensively that it becomes an incontestable reality.*"

When you're finished, you must, as usual, rid yourself of the Element and remove the Fluid Condenser pad. Once your sensory region is fully developed, all you will need to do to activate your clairfeeling is to focus your tri-polar awareness into the designated region.

If you perform these exercises correctly and especially with a firm conviction, then they will develop your astral senses to a very high degree and the world will open itself to you in ways you've never before experienced. You must always however, remain in absolute control over whether or not your astral senses are active and be able to turn them on and off at will.

PHYSICAL

As with the last Step and all future Steps, the physical section no longer presents "exercises" per se, but rather examples of magical practice. Nonetheless, they do need to be pursued because of the techniques revealed, what you will learn from their performance and the changes that this new knowledge will induce within you.

This section deals with four basic techniques for creating Elementaries, which are astral beings intentionally created by the magician out of the Elements. Bardon's instructions are so explicit that there's nothing that I can find to add that would be of any actual value other than to say that I personally have found working with Elementaries quite pleasurable and rewarding.

STEP EIGHT

MENTAL

The mental exercises of Step Eight are devoted exclusively to the task of thoroughly mastering the art of mental wandering. This work alone will take somewhere between several months to a year or two to fully master depending primarily upon how completely you have mastered the work of the preceding Steps.

The technique itself sounds deceptively simple but in practice it turns out to be quite difficult. This is because what you perceive during your wandering must *not* be a product of your creative imagination. The point of mental wandering is an *absolutely* objective perception of your surroundings and this takes quite some time to achieve with any consistency and reliability.

Only half of the whole mental body is employed during mental wandering -- the Fire and Air regions, your central spark of self and your intellectual capacity to assimilate and express essential meaning. Your Water and Earth regions, your awareness of astral and physical sensations, are left behind, so to speak. Separating the aspects of your awareness that are capable of objective perception, from those aspects whose perceptions are subjective, is what enables the truly objective perception involved with Bardon's technique. Thus the subjectifying astral and physical aspects of awareness are not employed in Step Eight mental wandering.

In my comments on the mental exercises of Step Seven, I stated that mental Equilibrium of the Elements *must* be attained before beginning the work of Step Eight mental wandering and here is why -- in order to precisely and reliably separate the regions of the mental body awareness, there must exist an Equilibrium of strength among all four regions. If, for example, the Earth region were dominant, then there would be great difficulty separating awareness from physical sensation; if the Water region were dominant, then it would be difficult to separate awareness from the influence of emotions; and if either the Fire and/or Air regions were dominant then separation itself would be very unwieldy and difficult to control and tend toward self-delusion. The presence of a regional Equilibrium however, actually facilitates the accurate separation of the regions.

By this point in your initiation you are quite capable of focusing your awareness wherever you want, as well as disconnecting your awareness from where you don't want it, so isolating your

awareness to just two regions of your mental body will pose no problems whatsoever, neither conceptually or practically.

The Fire and Air aspects of the mental body are not influenced by relative emotional significance. Their domain is purely that of raw essential meaning; nonetheless, the Air region specifically is capable of perceiving the essential meaning of emotional significance. In effect, the Air region “translates” emotional significance and thus perceives its existence when one is mental wandering within the astral and physical realms. Similarly, the Air region “translates” the essential meaning of all *objects* encountered while mental wandering within the physical realm, rendering them, in effect, visible in the mundane sense of the word, as physical objects. In other words, you can mental wander the physical realm and perceive physical forms, and mental wander in the astral realm and perceive astral forms. And of course, when mental wandering within the mental realm itself, one perceives only essential meaning or mental “forms”.

Thus with the conjoined Fire and Air regions of our mental body, what I like to call our “solitary mental body”, we can wander the physical, astral and mental realms and objectively perceive whatever we encounter there. On the other hand, our astral body -- which is to say, the conjoined Fire, Air and Water regions of our awareness -- is capable of wandering only the astral and physical realms and is incapable of entering the purely mental realm. Likewise, our physical body is capable of action only within the physical realm and is incapable of entering the astral or mental realms.

Bardon’s exercises in mental wandering begin with wandering the physical realm and once this has been thoroughly mastered and the physical realm thoroughly explored, you are considered ready to advance to mental wandering the astral realm. Only when mental wandering the astral realm has been thoroughly mastered and explored are you considered ready to mental wander within the pure mental realm. If this progression is strictly observed then you will develop for yourself a truly dependable ability that will take you where you need to go to further your higher advancement. And if you choose to not so thoroughly apply yourself to this progression and only partially pursue wandering the physical or astral realms, then your result will be of dubious and unreliable value and incapable of taking you much further along your initiatory rise.

A thorough mastering of mental wandering is essential in regard to your “spiritual” or mystical advancement. The highest states of Being or Awareness are accessible only through the *highest* quality mental wandering. Partially or poorly trained technique doesn’t

suffice.

So let's turn now to an examination of the exercises. As I mentioned earlier, Bardou presented a very specific, and in fact a very rigid progression of little steps that must be taken in sequence, each of which must be mastered perfectly before the next step is taken. At every step along the way, the objectivity of your results must be tested and either verified or improved upon. Only when you reach the point where your results prove true consistently should you take the next step. In this way you will attain a reliable objectivity, and thus accuracy, and achieve the highest quality of technique.

Bardou described the first exercise as preliminary and preparatory for mental wandering proper. It is in fact, an exercise in the transference of consciousness, here into your own image reflected by a mirror. The primary goal is to cultivate your ability to use your mental "eyes", so to speak, from a perspective external to your physical body; in other words, to truly "see" your physical surroundings from the location of your solitary mental body.

Secondarily, by focusing your mental sight upon your own physical body, your experience of factual separation from it is strengthened. This exercise develops your ability to perceive your solitary mental body's immediate surroundings and allows you the perfect setting in which to verify exactly how objective and accurate your perceptions are through subsequent physical examination of what you saw with your mental "eyes".

Basically, the exercise involves sitting in front of a mirror, imprinting the reflected image into memory, then closing your eyes and creating the image of the mirror in your mind. Then you project your awareness into the mirror before you so that you are inhabiting your mirror image and looking out on your real body, etc.

What you must project into the mirror image is, of course, just the conjoined Fire and Air regions of your mental body. You must separate from the Water and Earth regions and leave them behind. You must, in fact, look at them and perceive your separation from them as fact.

At first, some use of your creative imagination might be required in order to connect with the *factual* reality and begin to objectively perceive. But reliance upon your creative imagination must be let go of as quickly as possible so that the shift from creation to factual perception is encouraged.

Once you are comfortable with perceiving your surroundings from the location of your projected awareness and have consistently verified the objective accuracy of your perceptions, you may move

on to the first true exercise in mental wandering.

This exercise begins with a few minutes of a specific meditation that Bardon described thusly: *“Do concentrate on your spirit. Think, while you are doing so, that it is your spirit which is seeing, hearing and perceiving everything and – absolutely independent from time and space – able to move around freely as if still connected with the physical body. The deeper the penetration of your meditation will be, the stronger your sensory experience and the certainty that your spirit is unrestrained and able to step out of your body according to your will, all the better and quicker will be your progress and your success in mental wandering.”*

This is a very important meditation. When Bardon wrote that you must *“concentrate on your spirit”* this means that you must focus your awareness exclusively into the Fire and Air regions of your mental body. You must turn your attention away from the Water and Earth regions and ignore them. This focusing unlocks, so to speak, the force that normally binds the solitary mental body to the astra-physical body. It still takes a confident act of will to actually separate the solitary mental body from the astra-physical shell and that’s where the affirmation intrinsic to the meditation enters in to play.

For many, the greatest hurdle is right here at the beginning -- actually separating from your astra-physical shell. It can be a surprisingly challenging conceptual shift. So starting out with a self-confident mindset is supremely helpful!

Bardon continues the exercise: *“Provided you have the sensation of inner liberty and self-determination, following this meditation, then imagine yourself stepping out of your body just as from a shell, and standing beside this body of yours.”*

Essentially this is the transference of your awareness into an empty space instead of into a mirror or object. There are at least three ways to approach this task. First is as Bardon described and to literally cause your mental body, in the shape and size of your physical body, to step out of your astra-physical shell and stand right next to it. This is perhaps the most challenging approach since emulating the physical act of stepping out of your astra-physical body can be quite difficult at first, mainly because it is ingrained in your awareness as a physical act, with predictable physical sensations attached to it.

A second and perhaps easier to manage approach is to float out of your astra-physical body, either in the shape and size of your astra-physical body or in the shape of a sphere which then expands until you have assumed the size and shape of your astra-physical body.

And a third approach is to creatively imagine a facsimile of your body stepping out of your astra-physical shell and then projecting your awareness into this imaginary self.

Bardon's literal approach is, of course, the superior choice, but whichever method you choose, the aim is that you must stand *as* your solitary mental body, in the same shape and size as your physical body, right next to your astra-physical shell.

Bardon continued: "*You must understand how to transplant your consciousness into your spirit in such a manner, that you can feel yourself like standing physically beside your body.*"

This is a somewhat deceptive statement. What he is really saying here is that you must practice long enough for your solitary mental body, the Fire and Air aspects of your awareness, to grow accustomed to translating its perceptions of essential meaning into the language of emotional significance and physical objects. Once this translating is occurring, your mental body perceptions are then experienced by your awareness in almost physical terms and it begins to feel like you're standing in your physical body instead of your mental body. At first, but only at first, you will likely need to use your creative imagination to create these perceptions of physical-like sensations.

I say "physical-like" here because mental wandering can never be *exactly* like being in your physical body. Instead, it can produce sensations only similar to the physical due to your awareness naturally translating its perception into the most familiar terms that it is accustomed to experiencing.

As soon as you're confident that you are indeed standing next to your astra-physical shell, start gazing around your surroundings with your mental "eyes" and take note of what you see. Again, at first, but only at first, you will likely need to use your creative imagination to create these environmental details.

When you are finished, take great care to thoroughly re-integrate your solitary mental body with your astra-physical body.

This first exercise must be practiced over and over and over and after each session you must look around with your physical eyes to verify whether or not your mental sight has been accurate in the details. Don't move on to the next step until you are able to "*perceive all the objects in the room as distinctly and truly as if you were looking at these objects with your physical eyes.*"

Now that you have perfected your ability to objectively *perceive* your surroundings as your mental body, your next task will be to master the controlled *movement* of your mental body around the

confines of your own home. It is very important that during this exercise, you fight against your natural inclination to zip around or fly, etc., and restrict yourself to moving as you'd ordinarily move within your physical body. In other words, you should walk normally and intentionally, as if you were a physical presence. This discipline will greatly strengthen the factuality of your mental separation from your physical body.

This is also to be an incremental process. Start out with first mastering controlled movement around the room in which your astral-physical shell is sitting. Once you are comfortable with this, pass through the door of your room and venture out into the surrounding rooms of your home. Wander your whole home and after each session, retrace your steps physically and verify the objectivity of your mental perceptions with your physical eyes. When you have mastered walking around your own home and your mental perceptions are consistently accurate, you may go on to the next step and venture outdoors.

Your first journeys outside of your own home should be for only very short distances, no more than a few blocks away. Here again, you should walk normally and intentionally instead of giving in to the inclination to fly or speed along. Bardson suggested checking in on local friends and visiting their homes to see what they are up to, etc. You can also visit local shops and other locations in your area. The idea here is that you visit local places and people you are already familiar with, without traveling too far away from your astral-physical shell.

At every opportunity, you should try to verify your mental perceptions, perhaps by taking a physical walk immediately after your session in which you re-trace your mental footsteps and compare what you see with your physical eyes to what you saw with your mental "eyes". Another method of checking the objectivity of your mental perceptions can be enacted during your mental wandering. Simply imagine that the person you see with your mental "eyes" is suddenly doing something entirely different, or that the building you see with your mental "eyes" is suddenly a different color or shape, etc. In other words, try to radically alter what you are observing with your mental "eyes" and if the change occurs immediately then you can be sure that you are not perceiving your surroundings and are instead, imagining them.

You must continue with this exercise of local wandering until you are absolutely certain that your mental perceptions are completely and consistently accurate. Furthermore, you must continue

until you become capable of perceiving sounds and sensations with your mental senses. When, after long and consistent practice, these goals have been achieved, you may move on to the next step of venturing further out into the physical world.

Until this point, all of your movement has been in the form of normal walking, just like you were moving within your physical body, but now you must master a new type of movement – I will call this “mental translocation”, for lack of a better term.

Even though our focus has been on perceiving the physical plane in these exercises, our mental body still exists upon and moves within the mental plane. When separated from the astra-physical shell, our mental body is not bound by the laws of the physical plane; but rather, obeys the laws of the mental plane. This means that our mental body is not limited by space or time. It can be in one physical location this instant and then in an entirely different physical location perhaps thousands of miles away in the next instant.

This is accomplished through the mental plane Law of Attraction. All you have to do is formulate the desire on the mental plane to be in a specific location and your mental body is instantly drawn together with that location on the mental plane. Mental translocation works for all physical, astral and mental plane “locations”.

Experiment at first with mental translocation to the local spots, friends, businesses, etc., that you’ve already visited through mental walking and gradually venture further and further away from your home, but always to places you’ve visited physically at least once in the past. When you are able to manage these translocations with success, start translocating to places you’ve never been before and explore those parts of the world that are new to you.

In addition to using mental wandering for relatively passive exploration and observation, during *this* phase of your exercises you must also become *active* while mental wandering and use the abilities you’ve gained to aid others that you encounter during your adventures.

When you have become satisfied that you have sufficiently explored the physical world you may venture into the astral and mental realms. The mental wandering of the astral and mental realms is dealt with extensively in the mental section of Step Ten and in Bardón’s second book, *The Practice of Magical Evocation* so I won’t go into it here.

ASTRAL

There is some confusion among readers of IHH about whether the Fluids come from the Elements or whether the Elements come from the Fluids. This confusion stems mainly from the way in which Bardon phrased his explanations, or at least, how his words were translated into English. Secondly, confusion arises from the nature of the exercises themselves which use the Fire and Water Elements to *connect with* the underlying Fluids.

The truth of the matter is that the Fluids are causal or superior to the Elements in that the Elements are produced *by* the Fluids. The four Elements are therefore manifestations *of* the two Fluids. The Fire Element is a manifestation of the Electric Fluid and the Water, a manifestation of the Magnetic Fluid. The Air Element is created by the neutral balancing of the two Fluids and the Earth Element, by the dynamic interaction of the two Fluids.

In the exercises Bardon described we use the Fire and Water Elements because they are quite familiar to us by now and thus make for easy access to their underlying or causal Fluids. For example, because of our familiarity with the Fire Element, it will be easy for us to recognize the presence of the Electric Fluid within its attributes. Likewise, our familiarity with the Water Element makes it easy for us to perceive its internal Magnetic Fluid. In fact, connecting with the Fluids is only possible once one has garnered extensive experience, and thus familiarity, with the Elements.

Bardon described two methods for accumulating the Fluids, an *inductive* and a *deductive* method. With the inductive method, the Element surrounds the body and the Fluid is drawn into the body from the Element. And with the deductive method, the Element is brought into the body and the Fluid is drawn out of the Element. The inductive method is mastered first and then the deductive method is mastered. After discussing these two methods, I will describe an additional, third method which becomes possible once one has become sufficiently familiar with the Fluids through mastery of Bardon's inductive and deductive methods.

The inductive method for accumulating the Electric Fluid is as follows. First *adopt a tri-polar state of awareness* and then imagine that your body itself is hollow and that you are completely surrounded by the Fire Element. Now you must imagine that the Fire Element is so radiant that it literally presses light into your body, through your pores and thus fills your hollow body to bursting with light.

Next, to quote Bardon, “*As soon as you have produced so strong an accumulation of light that your body is nearly bursting, you will feel, at the same moment, that your whole body, mainly your fingertips, have been loaded with a strong electric current. Do impress this perception very firmly on your mind, because this is factually the Electric Fluid I am talking about.*”

The sensation of the Electric Fluid is very distinct but may take some time to perceive at first since it has to be distinguished from amongst all the sensations you’re used to experiencing with the Fire Element. What is required here is a very careful examination of the sensations your body will experience as a result of the dynamic accumulation of Light. When you do sense the Electric Fluid for the first time you will know without a doubt that it is indeed the Fluid you’re experiencing. If there is any doubt, then you must keep practicing until you connect with the *factual* Fluid.

At the end of each practice you must, of course, let the Fire Element dissipate and completely rid your body of the Light and any Electric Fluid you may have accumulated. Keep practicing until you can easily generate a charge of the Electric Fluid. Only then may you pass on to the next part of the exercise, which is to impress your desire upon the accumulated Fluid.

Proceed as before with the inductive method up until you feel the Electric Fluid accumulating. At this point, impress your desire upon the Fluid that it “*does reinforce and increase your active powers in the spirit, in the soul and in the body.*” Then release the Electric Fluid from your body and let the Light and the Fire Element dissipate as usual.

This practice will strengthen all of your mental, astral and physical faculties associated with the Fire and Air Elements.

Once the inductive method with the Electric Fluid has been mastered to the point where it is easy to perform, you may begin work with the inductive method to generate the Magnetic Fluid.

The inductive method in regard to the Magnetic Fluid is very similar to the previous exercise except that it involves use of the Water Element instead of the Fire. As before, adopt a tri-polar state of awareness and imagine that your body is completely hollow, an empty shell. Now imagine that the Water Element completely surrounds you and furthermore, that your hollow body is sucking in the *magnetic, attractive power* from the surrounding Water Element.

Your prior experiences with this magnetic power of the Water Element in the Step Seven astral clairfeeling exercises should make this imagination fairly easy to accomplish. The feeling of the Mag-

netic Fluid is quite distinct from that of the Electric Fluid and once you connect with it factually, you will know without a doubt that it is the Magnetic Fluid you perceive. Bardon described it as “*a contracting, and at the same time, attracting force*”, and later as “*an astringent coolness and an attracting power like that of a real magnet.*”

As usual, when you are finished with your exercise, you must banish the Magnetic Fluid and the Water Element. Practice until it becomes easy for you to accumulate the Magnetic Fluid in this manner and then, as with the Electric Fluid, work with impressing upon the Fluid the desire for increased mastery of all abilities associated with the Magnetic Fluid, Water Element and Earth Element. Once this inductive method is easy for you to accomplish, you may go on to experiment with the deductive method.

With the inductive method you were essentially drawing the Fluids from the outside and filling your body with them. With the deductive method however, you are doing just the opposite – generating the Fluids internally and radiating them outward, so that they accumulate on the surface of your physical body.

The deductive method for the Electric Fluid involves generating a very dense and dynamic accumulation of the Fire Element within your whole body. This will cause a radiation, so to speak, of the Electric Fluid which will be felt on the surface of your body. The stronger the accumulation of the Fire Element, the stronger the radiation of the Electric Fluid.

The deductive method for the Magnetic Fluid is the same except that here you must create a very dense and dynamic accumulation of the Water Element instead of the Fire. This will likewise cause the Magnetic Fluid to collect on the surface of your physical body. As Bardon noted, this can have a temporarily paralyzing effect on the physical muscles, but this will pass with repeated practice.

Once both of these methods have been mastered with both Fluids to the point where you can perform them with ease and very quickly, you might wish to experiment with the following technique of my own devising which I find quite useful.

This method does not rely upon the Elements; instead, it taps into the Fluids directly upon the mental plane. First, adopt a tri-polar state and then focus your awareness into your depth-point, your central spark of self. Next, connect with the Fluid upon the mental plane and draw it down into your physical body. In this way, you can instantly draw as much of a Fluid as you wish into your body or even set up a continuous flow of a Fluid. To terminate your connection

with the Fluid simply exit your depth-point.

The next set of exercises teaches you how to accumulate and wield the Fluids. Bardon specifies that the inductive method be used to generate the Fluids, but the third method I described works just as well.

The first exercise is quite simple and is intended to expand your limits in regard to the quantity of the Fluids you are able to accumulate and the length of time you are able to withstand such an accumulation in your body. It also teaches how to isolate the Fluids from their Elements.

To begin, follow the inductive method and accumulate as much of the Fluid as you are able. Then, let the Element dissipate while holding onto the Fluid. Alternately, you may use the third method that I described earlier and simply fill your body with as much of the Fluid as you can stand. Hold onto this accumulation of the Fluid in your body for as long as you can and then let it completely dissipate.

Work in this way with both Fluids until the process becomes easy and quick to accomplish. Once you have reached this degree of mastery, move on to the next exercise. Here you will load the Earth and Water regions of your body with the Magnetic Fluid and the Air and Fire regions, with the Electric Fluid. The effect of this practice is very balancing and integrating and is quite similar to loading the four Elemental regions with their Elements. *The establishment of a Fluidic balance is essential for the Step Nine separation of your astral body and astral wandering.*

Using either the inductive method or my third method, accumulate as much of the Magnetic Fluid as you can stand into just the *lower* half of your body, the Earth and Water regions conjoined. And then accumulate as much as you can stand of the Electric Fluid into just the *upper* half of your body, the Air and Fire regions conjoined. Hold onto these accumulations for as long as you can and then let first the Electric Fluid, and then the Magnetic Fluid dissipate.

In addition to this upper and lower regional accumulation of the Fluids, I also recommend that you practice a left and right side of your body accumulation. While Bardon's upper and lower practice balances the Elemental polarities of Fire-Air vs. Water-Earth, practicing with a left-right accumulation balances the positive and negative polarities of each Element. First the Magnetic Fluid is accumulated into just the left side of the body and then the Electric Fluid is accumulated into just the right side of the body. The accumulations are held as long as possible and then the Electric Fluid, followed by the

Magnetic Fluid is dissipated. [Note: If you are naturally left-handed instead of right-handed then you should load the Magnetic Fluid into your *right* side and the Electric Fluid into your *left* side.]

The final exercise in the astral section of Step Eight is to lead these polarized accumulations into your hands. First, load both regions with their Fluids. The Magnetic Fluid is drawn up from the Water-Earth region, along the left side of your body and into your left hand. Then the Electric Fluid is drawn from the Fire-Air region and into your right hand. Alternately, you can start with a left-right regional split of the Fluids, instead of Bardon's upper-lower split, or you can load your hands directly with the Fluids using my third method and guiding the Fluids from the mental realm into your hands. [Note: If you are naturally left-handed instead of right-handed then you should load the Magnetic Fluid into your *right* hand and the Electric Fluid into your *left* hand.]

Hold the two Fluids in your hands for as long as you can and build up stronger and stronger accumulations. When you are finished, let the Electric and then the Magnetic Fluid dissipate. You may of course, make use of these Fluids by impressing a desire into them before you let them dissipate.

This work with the Fluids is very important and should be mastered thoroughly. Without perfect mastery of the Fluids it will be impossible to truly form effective Electro-Magnetic "volts" in Step Nine, for example. And in the absence of the Fluidic Equilibrium that naturally results from this prolonged work with the Fluids, rising to, so called, "higher" planes would be very limited, if not impossible. Really, all future work relies upon this Fluidic Equilibrium

PHYSICAL

Regarding the physical section of Step Eight, which concerns various simple magical techniques for influencing through the Elements, the creation and loading of Fluid Condensers, and the construction of a Magic Mirror, I haven't much to say. Bardon's instructions are quite clear. All I will say is that working with the Fluid Condensers is especially useful and that creating a Magic mirror for yourself is important if you wish to practice any of the many techniques Bardon's describes in the mental section of Step Nine. A Magic Mirror is a very useful tool!

STEP NINE

MENTAL

The mental section is comprised of a number of methods for using a Magic Mirror which were quite well explained so I see no value in my adding to Bardón's words. The astral and physical sections however, do require some further explanation.

ASTRAL

There are actually two parts to the astral section of Step Nine. The best known, of course, is the work with Bardón's method of astral wandering. Given less attention is the final astral exercise of impregnating the astral body with the four Universal or "divine" qualities, yet this exercise is by far the more important in terms of the ultimate aim of Hermetic initiation, union with The One Self.

So called "astral travel" and "out of body experiences" are very popular these days, seemingly everybody wants to do it and is looking for the quickest, easiest method. It's become just another addictive entertainment; part of the popular culture often treated like it was the latest high-tech computer game. Bardón's *astral wandering* however, is the exact opposite. It requires copious amounts of very serious work to master and is, in fact, life-threatening if precautions are not taken. This is not a game; this is initiation. This is not mere entertainment; this is *magical* practice.

Astral wandering has two basic uses: One is for experiencing the astral realm and interacting with astral beings with your astral body intact and thus your full astral sensoria; and second is to perform magical acts that will immediately affect the physical realm when you are unable to be physically present. In most instances however, a magician will employ *mental* wandering instead of the more involved astral wandering to explore the universe and enact their will.

There are several prerequisites to beginning this work with astral wandering. First is an unshakable *astral-mental* Equilibrium of the Elements *and* the Fluids. The astral realm is highly subjective in nature and can be very alluring at an emotional level so wandering within the astral realm requires a steadfast sense of self and the unshakable ability to remain centered and in control of your emotional responses.

Second is perfect mastery of mental wandering. The astral wandering technique is based upon your having perfect control over your exteriorized mental body and furthermore, it is your well exercised mental objectivity, gained through long practice with mental wandering, which insures that your astral experiences will not lead you into self-delusion.

Third is well developed astral senses. Without them, you would be, in effect, blind and deaf within the astral realm.

And fourth is reasonably good physical health and stamina. If you are ill or too weak, then astral wandering can become physically damaging and depleting.

The great danger in Bardon's technique is the risk of physical death should your physical body be touched by another person or even a large pet while you are wandering. As Bardon warned, such a touch would most likely sever the silver cord that connects your astral and physical bodies, making it impossible for you to re-integrate with your physical body; which is to say, your physical body would die. So you must be *absolutely* certain that you will not, under any circumstances be disturbed while astral wandering. Lock yourself into a room alone if you have to, it's *that* important.

Bardon's method is really quite simple. First, you separate your mental body exactly as was learned in Step Eight mental wandering. Then, using your imagination and will power, you *draw* your astral body out from your physical body and as soon as it stands separate, you step into your astral body with your mental body or awareness.

Once you have stepped into your astral body, you must integrate your mental awareness with your astral body. The binding agent is your breath or rather, the act of consciously breathing with your conjoined astra-mental body. This is quite different than the usual passive relationship we have with breathing when we inhabit our physical body. Then, the breath pretty much takes care of itself and requires no intention. However, back in Step Six, we learned to master tri-polar action in which all of our actions, including our breathing, were led or directed intentionally by our mental awareness, and this is what we must practice here in the binding together of our astral and mental bodies, except that now it is a bi-polar instead of tri-polar action.

To bind the astral and mental bodies and negate the attractive force between the physical and astral bodies, we must breathe with our *astral* body and direct this breathing with our *mental* awareness. In other words, our mental body must cause our astral body's breath-

ing similar to the tri-polar action in which our mental body causes our physical body to breathe. Once responsibility for breathing has been taken over by your separated astra-mental body, your physical body will stop breathing.

It's important to understand here that the Elements and Akasha absorbed through breathing is what sustains the link between the *mental* body and the *astral* body, or as Bardon phrased it: "*the mental matrix is kept working by normal breathing, which supplies the blood vessels with the four Elements, including Akasha, via the lungs.*" And furthermore, that what sustains the link between the *astral* body and the *physical* body is the Elements and Akasha absorbed through the digestion of food and drink.

By Step Nine you will have come to a thorough, experiential understanding of the connection between the four Elemental regions of the physical body, the astral body and the mental body and the ways in which the regions of each body relate to those of the other two. For example, the Fire regions of the mental body, the astral body and the physical body are each similar in terms of their functions. Additionally, you will have come to understand the connection between the Air region of the physical body and the overall mental body; and between the Water region of the physical body and the whole astral body. This is a concrete example of the Law of Sympathies or the Emerald Tablet statement, "As above, so below." Herein lays the key to understanding why the breath sustains the mental matrix and physical nourishment sustains the astral matrix.

The physical breath, the expansion and contraction of lungs, is driven by the rhythmic contraction and relaxation of the diaphragm muscle. The diaphragm actually forms the upper-most limit of the physical body's Water region, the dividing line, as it were, between the physical Water and Air regions. Since the diaphragm belongs to the Water region, its primary function is not that of breathing, but rather that of rhythmically compressing the contents of the abdominal cavity and thus creating the tidal movement necessary to proper digestion and excretion. The physical body relies upon the nutrients provided by the digestive organs of the Water region and, following the Law of Sympathies, the physical body likewise relies upon the astral Elements provided by the astral body through the astral matrix, thus binding the astral and physical bodies together in the common purpose of sustaining life.

This connection between the astral body and the physical Water region is further seen in the fact that the silver cord of the astral matrix is rooted in the physical body's navel. When a newborn child

takes its first breath, its mental body integrates with its astral body. But the cutting of the umbilical cord is the moment when the newborn child's astral body gains its first experience of relative autonomy and separation from its mother's astral body.

The mental matrix on the other hand, the violet cord that connects the solitary mental body with the astra-physical body, is rooted in the physical Air region at the solar-plexus or diaphragmatic interface between the physical Air and Water regions. As I said, it's the contraction and relaxation of the diaphragm muscle that causes the bellows of the lungs to open and close. Thus the Air region is dependent upon the Water region's diaphragm for breath, in effect binding the two regions and by extension, the mental and astral bodies.

Although this doesn't relate to astral wandering, it is interesting to note in the context of what I've just said about the Air and Water regions, that the Air region also contains the heart which is responsible for pumping the blood through the lungs. The heart is the Fire region's agent within the Air region; which is to say, it's empowered by electrical impulses that come from the brain. Conversely, it is the circulating, oxygen-rich blood, pumped by the Air region's heart that nourishes and sustains the Fire region's brain. Thus it is the beating of the heart that sustains the link that binds the Fire region of the mental body, the central spark of Self, with the Air region of the mental body and all the other regions of the physio-astra-mental body. And when just the Fire region of the mental body is detached a golden or white cord is seen rooted in the crown of the head.

So, getting back to the astral wandering exercise: The intention to breathe and the sensation of breathing must both be transferred to your conjoined astra-mental body in order to bind the astral and mental together and to override the natural magnetic attraction between your astral and physical bodies. This part takes extended practice and can be quite disorienting at first. It can also be quite frightening at a deep, pre-rational level because once you succeed at transferring your breathing to your astra-mental body; your physical body essentially slows way, way down, your breathing ceases and your heart slows to almost imperceptible levels. Our physical bodies recognize this state as an "I am dying" threat and self-preservation instincts naturally assert themselves. This is in part what empowers the magnetic attraction between our physical and astral bodies. It is only through will and understanding that this natural body-fear is overcome.

In truth, the body is not actually dying here. The heart does

still beat occasionally and some blood does still circulate and absorb oxygen from the lungs which, because they are completely relaxed, remain open to the subtle flow of fresh air. This oxygen-rich blood does still reach the brain and the brain does remain electrically active, though at a severely reduced rate. So as long as the two cords or matrices remain intact and feed the Elements and Akasha to the physical body, the physical body can remain viable in this state for a surprisingly long time, depending mostly upon how physically fit the body is in the first place.

By taking command of, and responsibility for, making your astral body breathe, your mental body keeps your astral body from returning automatically to your physical body. So, quite logically, to separate your astral from your mental body, you simply stop your astral-mental breathing. This loosens the binding between mental and astral and allows the magnetic attraction between physical and astral to reassert itself. Your astral body is then drawn back by your physical shell and physical breathing resumes automatically. Once your physical breathing has restarted, you may then reenter your astral-physical body and reintegrate your three bodies.

This exercise of separation and transference of the breathing has to be practiced over and over and over, until you have mastered it perfectly and are able to separate and reintegrate very quickly and easily. Only then may you go on to actual wandering.

Up until this point your focus has been riveted to your physical body and mastering the transferal of your breathing. But now, having mastered that part, you must turn your focus away from your physical shell and begin examining your surroundings. Take one step away from your physical shell and spend a few moments experiencing the resistance, and then step back. With each new exercise, take one additional step away until you can easily move around your home. Then venture outdoors being ever mindful of not going too far all at once.

At first, it will be very difficult to move even a step away from your physical body due to the natural attractive force between your physical and astral bodies. It's like trying to move through thick mud or against a very strong wind. But by moving just a step further away with each successive exercise you will slowly break free from this influence and eventually, you will be able to venture as far away as you wish without experiencing the slightest resistance.

To travel great distances with your astral body, you make use of the mental plane Law of Attraction and just like with mental wandering, imagine you are at your destination and you will instantly be

in the location you desire. However, this works only when you have finally broken free of the magnetic attraction between your astral and physical bodies.

As a sensorial experience, astral wandering is like an amplified physical adventure. You experience physical-like sensations that partake of a much greater emotional significance. It is also like an amplified mental adventure in that every perception of essential meaning is clothed in emotional significance. Everything takes on a luminous beauty that is rarely experienced through physical interaction or mental wandering.

Astral wandering is so enjoyable and pleasing to the emotions that, as Bardon noted, every magician will inevitably reach a moment when they are reluctant to return to their physical body and their mundane existence. This is a very transformative and important moment in a magician's spiritual evolution. It places everything into a context of choice. Does one choose to embrace life and return to the physical body or not? To be or not to be is one of those ultimate questions, no? And with astral wandering this question is the central "test", so to speak.

Once you have become proficient at the mechanics of astral wandering, you should give your wanderings an altruistic purpose beyond mere exploration and use them as opportunities to help others.

When you have reached this point with your astral wandering, have chosen life and are completely comfortable in your astral body, it is then time to begin the work of transforming your astra-mental body by impregnating it with the four Divine or Universal qualities.

Although Bardon wasn't clear on this fact and didn't state it explicitly, these "meditations" as he called them, on the four qualities must be undertaken *while the astra-mental body is separate from the physical body*. In other words, *during* astral wandering.

These are not normal meditations in the sense of their being purely mental explorations. Instead, these are to be ecstatic *astral* experiences of the four qualities. They begin with an intellectual consideration and building of the qualities within your awareness. This, as expected, creates a strong resonance within the mental realm and you are drawn together with the *factual* quality in this way, but the fact that you are bringing your astral body with you, so to speak, means that your experience of the factual quality is also astral. Your whole astral body becomes imbued with the quality and eventually this transforms and purifies your astral and mental bodies remaking them into vessels suitable to truly house and express these Universal

qualities in their fullness. In effect, you become an intentional and conscious astra-mental manifestation of the four Universal qualities.

This takes considerable time to accomplish. How long or how quickly depends upon your level of spiritual maturity at the outset. No matter how long it takes, this transformation of your astra-mental body *must* be completed prior to beginning the work of Step Ten.

What Bardon wrote about the four Divine qualities lacks in depth and there is a minor conflict between his list in Step Nine and what he listed in Step Ten. Clearly he assumed, and rightly so, that anybody who has sincerely pursued and mastered all the work up to this point will not need any sort of elaboration. In the present context however, of my giving commenting about this Step, it seems appropriate to take a few minutes to describe the four qualities in question, or at least relate some of my own understanding of them to you. To that end, I will read from an article I wrote in 2004 titled, "*Dimensions of the Divine: The Four Divine Principles Examined.*"

The Universal Quality of Fire: Omnipotence

This doesn't simply mean that the Divine is all powerful and therefore capable of doing anything It wishes. Instead, it means that the Divine encompasses all power and all force. This power is infinite in terms of quantity and quality. In other words, there is not a single erg of energy that is not a part of the Divine and there is not a single quantum of willing that is not an aspect of the Divine Will. When we as individuals enact our personal will, we are making use of the Divine Will. When our Sun shines, it is radiating an energy which is Divine in nature. When an electron spins within an atom it does so because it is moved by a Divine energy. When a thought forms within our minds, it is because there is a Divine Will which empowers its formation.

Another way of looking at this is that everything that occurs, every action and every manifestation of energy or force whatsoever, is a manifestation of the Divine Will. In the temporal realm, we often see and experience the action of forces which we find hard to perceive as having a Divine source or purpose, let alone a Divine permission, since they seem so counter-productive and so opposite to our conceptualization of Divine. We plead with the Divine to change this or that circumstance or pray that the Divine will defend us from this or that circumstance, yet all the while we are asking the Divine to counter Its own Self, Its own Will. When the circumstance is defeated or changed to our satisfaction, we think that the Divine has

answered our prayer, yet we remain ignorant of the fact that the original circumstance was itself a Divine Act of mercy.

The energy that powers our existence as individual beings is wholly Divine. We are each a spark of the Divine energy and we each employ that same Divine energy in all of our thoughts, words and deeds. The question is whether or not we use the Divine energy with respect and reverence for its Divine source.

Do we think thoughts, speak words and act in ways that honor the Divine origin of the energy we are using for our thinking, speaking and acting? Most often not. Hermetics however, affords us the opportunity to do so in a disciplined and consistent manner. The keys to respectfully wielding the Divine energy are self-knowledge, self-exploration and self-perfection. In other words, the path to power lies inward and is one of self-transformation -- one of transforming the self so that it harmonizes with the Divine Self.

When all power is recognized as Divine in origin, one then has the opportunity to let it flow through one's own individual self as Divine energy instead of manipulating it and reshaping it into a personalized energy, fit only to meet one's self-centered wants and desires. This releases the fullest potential of Divine energy since it is then allowed to flow unhindered into material manifestation.

From the eternal, non-sequential perspective, the only sort of power that the Divine ItSelf wields is the infinite will to be, to exist. All other types (quantities and qualities) of will are expressions of that Divine Will to Be.

The Universal Quality of Air: Omniscience

This doesn't simply mean that the Divine knows everything. Rather, it means that the Divine Awareness is infinite. All awareness is encompassed by the Divine Awareness. There is not any type (quantity and quality) of awareness that is not an aspect of the Divine Awareness.

The Divine directly and immediately (i.e., in each moment) experiences the infinite number of discrete quantas of awareness that compose the temporal infinity. In other words, it is the Divine Awareness which is aware through us and through every thing that exists. Furthermore, the Divine Awareness is eternal, which means that the Divine is simultaneously and non-sequentially aware as the infinite number of discrete awareness's which manifest throughout the entire infinite passage of time and sequence.

This is the Hermetic aphorism that "ALL is Mind or Aware-

ness / Consciousness". This is echoed in Kabbalah where we find the Letter Aleph, which is the Mother Letter of Air, spoken of as the "plan of the Primordial". All of which is to say that the Divine Awareness represents a universally sustaining continuity, the inherent nature of which results in this specific manifestation as we know it.

The inherent nature of Divine Awareness manifests within the sequential realm as "Legality". In other words, it is the template to which all materia must invariably adhere. The Divine Awareness serves as the matrix that gives form to all force or power. It is the Great Director and the Great Creator of each and every moment.

Encompassed within the infinite Awareness of the Divine are the infinite number of individualized quantas of awareness that populate the realm of sequence. Each experiences itself as discrete, yet each is connected to the Divine Awareness by virtue of its self-awareness. In other words, awareness is the common denominator which binds together the whole of creation. It is what we share in common with other human beings, animals, plants, rocks, clouds and all other things that fill the temporal realm. It is what binds us all together as Divine in nature.

By virtue of this connection with all other things, we can therefore communicate with all other things at the level of pure awareness. When we focus exclusively within our own pure awareness, we can then directly perceive the essential meaning of any other thing. A thing's essential meaning is nothing other than its individualized quanta of awareness -- its particular, unique manifestation of the infinite Divine Awareness. The awareness or essential meaning resident within each thing is what gives it form -- it is what causes the physical, astral and mental materia to coalesce into that specific form. Without the presence of that spark of Divine Awareness, the form would not coalesce and there would be no existence for that thing.

The Universal Quality of Water: All Love

This doesn't just mean that the Divine is a "good guy" who loves us all in spite of our short comings, someone we can call on when we get in a fix, etc. Instead, there is a very deep, mystical significance with infinite consequences implied here.

This is the Providence aspect of the Divine which provides everything that is involved in the eternal creation and sustenance of all that exists. We think of this in terms of love only because we conceive a certain separation between us and the Divine, so it feels

like a gift of love. In truth however, we are encompassed within the Divine so this is really an aspect of how the Divine naturally sustains ItSelf. It is not a gift given to us, but rather an impersonal fact of Divine nature. All of our needs, and the needs of everything, are eternally and perfectly met because that is an inherent part of Divine BEing.

At a personal, human level, this means that every thing that happens in our lives is an aspect and manifestation of the Divine Love. We also call it karma, which is nothing other than the Divine setting before us, in the absolute best manner possible, the lessons we need to learn in order to evolve.

Divine Providence provides us with exactly what we need, exactly when we need it. It never places before us something we don't need. Even the vilest of circumstances are, from the Divine perspective, necessary. Furthermore, they are presented according to the Universal Legality, which means that the form in which they are presented is the only form in which they could, in that moment, be presented to us.

The consequences of this astound the mind if one contemplates them deeply enough . . .

I would like you to picture yourself sitting in a meadow of spring grasses. The air feels clean and refreshing. The sun's rays caress you gently with their warmth. Everywhere you gaze you see the beauty of spring time. Now imagine that every thing surrounding you is conscious and aware. Imagine that the air you breathe is aware, that it loves you and intentionally sustains you. Imagine that the sun's rays are aware and are consciously and intentionally expressing their love for you by sustaining your body and soul with their gentle caresses. Imagine that the water you drink, the food you eat and the earth below your feet are all there to express their love by sustaining your every need. Now imagine that all the people you know are, likewise, expressions of this Divine Love which sustains you, albeit in less material ways. Now imagine that every circumstance of your life is also an expression of the Divine Love, eternally sustaining you.

The only time any thing feels like it is not a manifestation of the Divine Providential Love, is when we do not recognize it as such and therefore do not harmonize with it. It's when we ourselves are not consciously aware of our own role as manifestations of the Divine Love and do not harmonize our own thoughts, words and deeds with that Divine Loving, that we become blinded to the eternal and infinite manifestation of the Divine Love all around us.

But as creatures of the temporal realm which wield our human free will, it is our prerogative to choose whether or not we consciously harmonize with the Divine Love and therefore aid its expression, instead of hindering it. When we choose to not harmonize, we become blind to the fact that a difficult circumstance is in fact an expression of the Divine Love designed specifically to advance our personal evolution. This choice breeds difficulty, strife and the experience of suffering.

On the other hand, when we do recognize that every circumstance is an expression of the Divine Love and begin to consciously participate in the Divine Love through our thoughts, words and deeds, then strife and suffering disappear. We then become eager to face any challenge that confronts us because we recognize the value we will derive from not resisting it and from intentionally learning from it. In this way, we let the Divine love us and love through us.

The Universal Quality of Earth: Omnipresence

Omnipresence means more than just being every where. It also means being every when, every who, what and why. In other words, this is not just a spatial and temporal aspect of the Divine. Instead, it is physical, astral, mental and Akashic (i.e., eternal). Another term for omnipresence is immanence, which comes from the Latin meaning "to stay within its own place". The Divine is indwelling -- It fills Its own Self.

Omnipresence also implies infinite duration or eternity. Eternity is a difficult concept to grasp intellectually. Most often we think of it as "a really, really long time" or as an infinite sequence of moments, all strung together in a row stretching infinitely in all directions. But this is only how eternity appears to a sequentialized human mind, which knows only the perspective of existence within the temporal realm. Our only point of reference is that of living in time and space, so we naturally think in those terms. Unfortunately, it is this habitual thinking based upon appearances that prevents us from accurately conceiving of eternity.

The Divine is not immanent sequentially. That is to say, the Divine is immanent at this very moment throughout all that exists right now; *plus*, the Divine is immanent throughout the whole infinite span of time and all the infinite number of "nows" that have and will occur. *AND*, the Divine maintains this awareness uniformly throughout all of time and space. *AND*, the Divine Awareness experiences all the parts of the whole and all the moments of time, all at

once or simultaneously. In other words, the Divine experience of its own immanence is non-sequential. The Divine is eternally experiencing the first moment, the final moment and every moment in between, right "now".

The eternal realm is not separate from the temporal -- it is integral to the temporal. The eternal is immanent and its duration is infinite. Every single form however, exists only for a limited amount of time before it disintegrates and the immanent force which holds it together is released. The cyclic transition of an immanent force being contained within form and released from form and then contained in form anew, is also eternal. In other words, individual forms themselves are not eternal but the sequential process of immanent force inhabiting a variety of forms *is* eternal.

Thus throughout the whole infinite span of time-space, the Divine Awareness assumes an infinite variety of temporary forms, each of which is unique. Or rather, the Divine experiences an infinite temporal duration through a simultaneous, non-sequential existence as an infinitude of sequentialized temporary forms.

When we are focused exclusively within our mundane awareness, we have no cognizance of our eternal essence. We experience life as a short and rather chaotic string of moments; with a beginning, middle and end to each moment and to the whole string itself. On the other hand, when we focus upon our pure awareness -- that part of us which is infinite and eternal -- we begin to realize that there is reason, purpose and order to every thing. But this Divine order is recognizable only when we step out of our slavery to the minutia of time and view existence from an eternal perspective.

Since the Divine is infinite in its duration and is immanent within all things throughout all time, there exists an eternal Equilibrium wherein all forces exist in perfect balance. However, this perfect Equilibrium exists only as an aspect of the eternal realm. Within the temporal, sequential realm, each moment is imperfect and does not manifest a perfect Equilibrium. Instead of Equilibrium, the temporal realm exists as a state of continuous change in which balance is gained and then lost, re-gained and re-lost, over and over, *ad infinitum*.

The Mystery which connects the temporal imperfection with the eternal Perfection is that an infinite number of imperfect moments are manifest throughout the infinite stream of time-space and that infinite number add together to form the Perfection of eternity. It is the immanence of that Divine Perfection which causes the temporal imperfection to be in a constant state of evolution toward per-

fection.

By tending to our own path toward personal perfection and Equilibrium, we consciously participate in that Divine evolutionary force which moves the whole Universe toward the holistic Perfection of eternity. When we do this, we find that the Divine directly supports us along our path and the Divine immanence shines forth clearly through us.

PHYSICAL

The physical section of Step Nine is divided into three basic parts: First is healing with the Fluids; second is the loading of magical tools such as amulets and talismans with the Fluids and other energies; and, third is the creation and deployment of a so called, “*Electro-Magnetic Volt*” into the Akasha.

In regard to healing with the Fluids, you will at this stage have no need whatsoever for books on anatomy and diseases, nor lists of correspondences between organs and Fluids. All of this information is immediately accessible through use of your own astral and mental senses. You will see, feel and know what is wrong and how to heal it without reference to any external resource. There will be no guessing and no uncertainty.

I have nothing really to add to what Bardon wrote in regard to the loading of magical tools with the Fluids, Elements, etc. His explanations are certainly sufficient to spark your creative imagination!

About the third part however, Electro-Magnetic Volting, I do have a couple of comments. First, this is the highest form of what I’ll call “manual magic”, the magic performed with one’s own hands, so to speak. It’s on par with “non-manual” types of magic such as Kabbalistic utterance, the work of Bardon’s third book, “*The Key to the True Quabbalah*”, and higher forms of working with essential meaning that would have been the subject of Bardon’s planned fourth book, “*The Golden Book of Wisdom*”. Thus its practice carries with it a *grave and deep responsibility*. This is not something one plays at or attempts to use for anything but the most serious and sincere matters.

My final comment has to do with generating the large quantities of the Fluids necessary to create Volt that will be truly effective within the Akasha. Bardon specified that it must be at least 2 meters or 6 feet in diameter and creating this large an accumulation incrementally as Bardon suggested, can take an enormous amount of ef-

fort and time. On the other hand, if you employ the technique I described in Step Eight of connecting with the Fluids on the mental plane first and then drawing them down from the mental plane and into the physical plane, you will find that creating the size necessary for a Volt is made easier and much quicker. With practice, it becomes simple to set up a *continuous* flow of the Fluid and thus attain a diameter of one meter in just a few seconds time.

STEP TEN

MENTAL

The mental section is divided into three basic parts. First is the mental exploration of the four Elemental realms and consequent interaction with the beings that inhabit them; second, is the seeking out of a direct, face-to-face interaction with your Guardian Genius; and third, is the mental exploration of the planetary zones or spheres and consequent interaction with the beings that exist there.

Within the astral and physical realms, the four Elements are found only in combination and it is thus impossible to wander regions and encounter intelligences or beings composed of only a single Element within these realms. For such an encounter with the pristine, solitary Elements we must enter the mental realm.

The Elemental realms to be explored in this Step correspond to our planet earth; which is to say they represent the actions of the Elements in regard to our normal physical earth. These Elemental realms are composed of just that portion of the Elements involved in sustaining our planet earth. The Earth Element realm contains all of the Earth Element within our planet earth; The Water Element realm, all of the Water Element within our planet; the Air Element realm, all the Air Element; and the Fire Element realm, all the Fire Element involved with our planet.

Your normal mental body is composed of all four Elements in combination and this fact makes it unsuitable to enter into the realms of the solitary Elements. For example, the Earth, Water and Air in your normal mental body would be rejected by the Fire Element realm and you would be unable to gain access. So, in order to transfer your mental body into an Elemental realm, you must first fill it with the Element and, in effect, merge your awareness with the solitary Element. You access the Elemental realm by entering it *as* the pure Element.

Since these Elemental realms concern our planet earth and not the cosmos as a whole, when transferring your mental body into the realm of the Earth Element you will sink down below the surface of the physical earth itself. Likewise, when transferring your mental body into the realm of the Water Element, you will sink down into a physical body of water such as a lake or an ocean. To enter the realm of the Air Element, you will rise up into the atmosphere and to enter the realm of the Fire Element, you will transfer your awareness into a volcano or thermal vent, etc.

Of course, these locations lead to the Elemental realms *only* when you have merged with the Element. For example, if you were to sink your normal mental body, which is composed of all four Elements in combination, into an ocean you would *not* enter the realm of the Water *Element*. Instead, you would simply enter the mental realm of the ocean itself which, like yourself is naturally composed of all four Elements in combination. Only when your mental body has *become* the Water *Element* through and through will submerging into the ocean lead you to the realm of the pristine, solitary Water Element.

As we know, the Elements are Universal Principles; however, what we encounter here in the Elemental realms are only the ways in which those Principles manifest in the work of sustaining our planet earth. Within our planet, each Element manifests in specific ways and with specific purposes or tasks, and when we mental wander an Elemental realm we will encounter embodiments of these purposes. Underlying each purpose is an intelligent will, which in the Elemental realm takes form as a so called “being of the Element”. Each discrete quantum of intelligent will condenses the pristine Element into a specific form, a being with specific traits and characteristics of appearance that conform to its Element.

Thus in the realm of the Earth Element we perceive beings of a compact, solid form with a relatively short stature and dark attire. They tend to move slowly and deliberately and always appear to be busy at work on some Earth-related task. They are capable of great seriousness and of great cheer equally. Their inherent intelligence manifests as a light which illuminates their immediate surroundings. This is often described as a lamp or similar light source that the being carries with it. The intensity and clarity of this illumination is related to the quantity and quality of the intelligence which forms the particular being. Since the Earth Principle arises out of the interaction of the Fire, Air and Water Principles, the beings of the Earth Element share more in common with us quadrupolar human beings than the beings of the other Elements do. The realm of the Earth Element is thus the easiest to get to know and the beings of this realm are the easiest to make friends with very quickly.

In the realm of the Water Element we perceive beings with very fluid and supple, somewhat elongated bodies. Their movement is undulating and rhythmic, similar to the way in which a dolphin glides through the ocean waters. As beings of the Water Element their main feature though is their magnetic attractiveness, the strength of which is a direct reflection of the quality of their inform-

ing intelligence. The higher the intelligence; the stronger is the being's force of attraction. We perceive the magnetic attraction exerted by a being of the Water Element in whatever symbols our subconsciousness finds most appropriate or descriptive of "attractiveness". For many, it is perceived in the symbolic form of physical beauty, which is of course a completely subjective valuation based solely upon personal likes and dislikes. Thus a very highly placed intelligence of this realm might be so extraordinarily attractive that if any imbalances exist in your psyche, you might begin to experience sexual or even romantic feelings for them. In other words, your astral-mental Equilibrium of the Elements *and* Fluids is *especially* important in regard to wandering the realm of the Water Element.

In the realm of the Air Element we perceive translucent, almost transparent in some cases, beings of great delicacy and prettiness. They seem nearly insubstantial and their size is quite small in comparison to our normal human form. The features of their bodies are very colorful and incredibly detailed as if each was composed of an infinite number of distinct particles. They hardly ever seem to stay still for anything more than the briefest of moments. The higher their resident intelligence; the more ephemeral the being appears and the prettier its form. This means that the highest beings of the Air realm are the most difficult to perceive and therefore require the accumulation of a large body of experience within the realm of the Air Element before they are encountered.

In the realm of the Fire Element we perceive beings that look like individual flames, predominantly red, orange and yellow in coloration. These beings never stop their movement which is also like the flickering of a fire's flames, seemingly random and lightening fast. But even though these beings exhibit a constant, rapid movement, this doesn't mean that they are moving from one place to another; rather, their motion is anchored to a central still point of radiant energy or fire. All their intensity of motion is focused around and radiates from this still point, which itself may move from place to place as slowly or quickly as it needs. Their degree or quality of intelligence is manifest through the power of their radiation and the quality or color of light that is emanated. The highest beings of the Fire realm possess a truly massive radiation of energy that manifests with a nearly white-hot light.

Bardon suggested that you give your mental body the shape and size of a typical being of the Elemental realm you wish to explore and then fill it with the Element. For example, he suggested that you use your magic mirror to see what a being of the Earth Ele-

ment looks like and use that image as the template for shaping your mental body. In my experience however, this is less appropriate or advantageous than starting with a spherical shape and then letting the combination of the Element and your own awareness determine the ultimate shape. When you inhabit the Element filled sphere with your awareness, it will automatically take on the most appropriate shape and will thus be a genuine expression of *your* intelligence within the Elemental realm. The result is that who you really are is immediately reflected by your shape, size and features upon entering the Elemental realm. For example, your form within the realm of the Earth Element might possess a very bright light in comparison to the image you saw in your magic mirror. The advantage here is that the beings of the Element will immediately recognize your *true* Self and thus afford you greater hospitality.

During your encounters with the beings of the Elemental realms you may access whatever information you may desire in regard to the mental, astral and physical planes of our planet earth. But this work is meant to be about more than just the acquisition of information; it is also about your *giving* something of yourself to the Elemental realms instead of just taking from them. With each encounter you have an opportunity to give the gift of friendship, of kindness and of light.

By “light” I don’t mean some vague new-age feel-good clap trap; instead I mean the specific light of Self-Awareness. The beings of the solitary, pristine Elements do not possess our human quadrupolar type of self-awareness so when they encounter you, they experience your self-awareness as a blessing, a bringing of light into their comparatively dark existence. Just your presence alone serves an uplifting effect upon them but when you *intentionally* cause your awareness to radiate as a gift that you give to them, then they are elevated even higher.

It is this attitude of unselfishly giving for the sake of giving that leads you to encounters with the highest beings of the Elemental realms. If, on the other hand, all you do is take, you will never have the good fortune to befriend these higher beings.

Mental wandering of the Elemental realms begins with the realm of the Earth Element. Once the Earth realm has been thoroughly explored and you have made friends with higher beings, you then begin wandering the realm of the Water Element. Then you explore the realm of the Air Element and finally, the realm of the Fire Element. Only when all four of the Elemental realms have been thoroughly explored and you have become acquainted with the high-

er beings of each realm are you ready to travel to higher spheres beyond our planet earth.

For these journeys to higher planes beyond the earth you will need to a guide, not just any guide but *your* guide. Your guide for this upward journey through the higher spheres *must* be able to lead you all the way to the Saturn Sphere. No lesser guide would do. This guide, of course, is your Guardian Genius, the agent of your Greater Self. Your Greater Self (i.e., your *eternal* mental body or spirit of which your temporal mental body is just one of many projections) exists within the Saturn sphere, or Binah of the Kabbalistic Tree of Life. So only your own Guardian Genius *as agent of your Greater Self* is capable of truly guiding you where you need to go.

Your first extra-planetary task then is to make direct, face-to-face contact with your Guardian Genius on the mental plane. Since we are not concerned here with the mental plane of planet earth and are instead seeking a meeting on a higher aspect of the mental plane, we must rise up with our mental body beyond the earth. We do not load our mental body with an Element or in any way alter its appearance; instead we simply rise up, up, up and all the while call out to our Guardian Genius requesting a face-to-face meeting. Eventually your Guide will appear.

This is an utterly unique and individual experience so there is no benefit in my trying to describe such an encounter. Suffice it to say that it is a significant and utterly transformative encounter!

From that moment on, your Guide will lead you home, step by step to the eternal embrace of your Greater Self. Along the way, you will mentally wander the spheres of the Moon, Mercury, Venus, Sun, Mars, and Jupiter; or in Kabbalistic terms, the sephirot of Yesod, Hod, Netzach, Tiphareth, Geburah and Gedulah, in successive order, before crossing the abyss and reaching Saturn, Binah.

Once you have connected with your Guide, the technique for traveling to the higher planes will be made clear to you by your Guide, however in the context of this commentary it's worth noting that the method is quite simple. Bardou described it as "*ascending straight as a dart from the earth, concentrating on the sphere he wishes to visit, and according to his will, being attracted by the sphere.*" In other words, we employ the mental plane Law of Attraction and fill our awareness wholly with the essential meaning of the sphere we wish to explore.

For wandering the spheres of the Moon, Mercury, Venus, Sun, Mars and Jupiter, we use our solitary mental body, the conjoined Air and Fire regions of our awareness. To go *beyond* Jupiter however

and reach Saturn which lies across the abyss between the sequential realm and the non-sequential realm of eternity, we must shed the Air region of our mental body and journey with only the Fire region, our central spark of Self. Only the Fire region of the temporal mental body is capable of experiencing the non-sequential nature of the eternal realm.

ASTRAL

When it came to writing this part of the commentary and specifically to writing anything new about the subject of merging with The One Self, I was stumped. After re-reading my original commentary on this section I realized that I'd already written all I could possibly say of any value, so I have decided to simply repeat the words I wrote almost a decade ago:

The astral exercises of Step Nine culminated in the impregnation of the astral body with the four divine attributes. With Step Ten, this process is taken further and a direct link between the magician and deity is established.

While Bardon describes the basic Hermetic approach to this subject well, he really gives the passive reader no idea of its ultimate implications. His explanation may suffice for the serious student, but for the passive reader, it is perhaps too simplistic.

To begin with, I should clarify some of the terms I will be using. I do not like the term "God" with a capital 'G'. To me it seems too involved in religious conceptions and when it is used it generally brings a very specific religious image of deity to the reader. In order to avoid this, I will be using the term "Unity" to designate the ultimate, All encompassing deity, instead of 'God'.

I will use the term "god" or "gods" (with a small 'g') to designate the familiar religious concept(s) of deity. For example, when referring to the pantheon of lesser, more limited deities, such as the Greco-Roman or Kabbalistic deities, I will say "the gods". I feel it is important to differentiate between these two levels or forms of deity as each presents a different sort of work for the magician.

It is also, in this context, important to differentiate between the "communion" with deity and the "merging" with deity. With communion, there remains a separation between the consciousness of the magician and the deity itself. This is a form of face-to-face communication. With merging however, there exists an at-one-ness between the magician's consciousness and that of the deity. Here, the magi-

cian experiences no separateness from the chosen deity and in fact, the magician functions as the deity; or rather, the magician and the deity become one and function as one.

Bardon is not very clear in his description as to what level of deity he is speaking of where. The magician can commune or merge with the lesser gods from below (i.e., THIS side of) the veil of the Abyss. These forms of deity are sequentialized and are thus somewhat limited in their scope when compared to the Unity. These are the deities that Bardon refers to when he speaks about communicating with the various gods or deities.

While the Unity can be communicated with, on a face-to-face basis, below the veil of the Abyss, it is only when one has crossed the Abyss and entered the non-sequential realm that the Unity can be merged with. Once this merging with the Unity has occurred, the initiate is also instantly merged with all of the lesser gods.

Where confusion arises in what Bardon presents is that the four divine attributes apply more correctly to the Unity than they do to the lesser gods. But this confusion dissipates when the reader considers the previous mental exercises of this Step. Therein, the student was directed to rise along the planes. During that rise up to the edge of the Abyss, the magician will be able to work with the lesser gods at both a communicative and a merging level, and with the Unity, only on a basis of communion. Once the initiate reaches through the veil to the essential Saturn, then there is a merging with the Unity.

The communion with deity is similar to prayer, except that here there is a direct and immediate, real time (so to speak) reply. While prayer occurs in an upward, from-below-to-above direction, the actual communion with deity occurs at a more equal level, because the magician is impregnating their own form with the same attributes as the chosen deity.

The merging with deity, however, is a different matter. Here, the magician's consciousness must be skillfully brought into a state which exactly matches that of the chosen deity. Below the Abyss, the deity will, as Bardon states, meet the initiate half-way. This is part of the normal function of the lesser gods -- they mediate between the Unity and the human level of consciousness.

The merging with the Unity however, cannot occur below the Abyss. It is not so much that the Unity will not meet the initiate half-way (the Unity permeates All things, after all); rather, it's that the magician's consciousness is not capable of encompassing the Unity until she/he has passed into the non-sequential realm. Only

the mental body or spirit of the initiate is capable of this journey.

Even though the ultimate realization of the Unity occurs at a purely mental level, Bardón places these exercises under the astral or soul heading. The reason for this is because his technique begins at that level. The building of an image of deity and the impregnation of that image with the four divine attributes is an astral work. This practice eventually leads the student to manipulating the four attributes or qualities, independent of form or image. At that point, it becomes a purely mental operation and it is this transition to the mental realm that enables the initiate to conceptualize the Unity in its otherwise formless state.

I must caution you at this point that due to the finite nature of words, it is impossible for me to accurately describe either the Unity or the experience of merging with the Unity. Non-sequential experiences simply don't fit into such sequentialized things as words! Consequently, each thing I say in this regard will be only partially true and will convey things in a sequential manner that belies the essential non-sequentialized reality of the Unity.

But even in saying this I have implied things that are inaccurate. Case in point is when I say that the Unity is non-sequential. The deeper mystery is that the Unity encompasses both the sequential and the non-sequential realms, simultaneously. When I say it is non-sequential, I am referring more to how the Unity appears to our sequentialized human consciousness and not to its essential nature. Often, how we attempt to describe the indescribable involves pointing more to the differences between these things and "normal" things, than it does to their similarities. The greatest problem with this is that pointing out only differences seems to limit our understanding of the essential Unity of Being. In the hopes of avoiding that obfuscation, I will try to point out as many similarities as I can in what follows.

The first thing I should say in terms of describing the merging with the Unity, pertains to the sense of self that the magician experiences. The self-awareness of the Unity is often described as an "I am" state, but what is often overlooked is the fact that this deific sense of self-identity is of the same quality as that experienced by a normal human being. The only difference is in quantity as the Unity encompasses every thing that has existence and the individual human encompasses only a minute portion of that infinite expanse. It is, in fact, this continuum of likeness that the magician follows in the ascent or expansion of the quantity of consciousness. In simplistic terms, the magician stands firmly rooted in the quality of self-aware-

ness and expands the quantity of that awareness until it encompasses the Unity of All Being.

The implications of this in practice are that the magician, once merged with the Unity, experiences the entire universe as if it were in fact a part of their own self. There is no part of the infinite universe of which the Unity is not aware.

This brings us to the four attributes of deity, which I think will serve as a good foundation for further describing the ramifications of merging with the Unity. Please note that the four attributes listed in Step Ten vary slightly from those listed in Step Nine. It is the Step Ten list that I will concern myself with here, though it pays to compare the two on your own.

The four attributes are --

1) Omnipotence (All powerfulness): This is associated with the Element Fire. The sort of omnipotence experienced by the Unity, and by one merged with the Unity, is not akin to the popular conceptualization of a god "up there" who points down at us mere mortals and, poof!, things change according to "his" will. The Unity's omnipotence works from the inside-out of *every* thing, all at once. There is no splitting of consciousness at the level of the Unity proper -- the splitting of consciousness is only a manifestation of the Unity.

Within the Unity, there is also no willing akin to human willing. Instead, the Unity exists all at once, as a unified whole, and what we think of as divine will is merely the Unity being what it naturally is. When initiates speak about merging with the divine will and say things like "let Thy will be my will", an incorrect impression is given that the individual will is somehow transplanted by a higher will. This is not the case. The individual will is transformed by the experience of merging, not replaced. Again, an initiate follows the continuum of similarity as they rise to the divine. The thread of similarity here has to do with the fact that the human will is an aspect or manifestation of the divine will. And once again, the difference is a matter of quantity not of quality.

The omnipotence of the lesser gods is more limited than that of the Unity. Because they exist below the Abyss, they are finite, sequentialized creatures. Thus they are of limited, specific use to the magician. For example, in modern ceremonial magic, one must carefully choose the appropriate "god form" for the task at hand. But if one can merge with the Unity, then nothing is impossible.

But having said that, I should note that the magician capable of merging with the Unity will not be willing petty things nor things that violate the universal lawfulness. You must keep in mind that

this transformation touches the individual adept at EVERY level of his or her being.

2) Omniscience (All knowing): This is associated with the Element Air. The root essence of the Unity -- the stuff of which it is composed -- is consciousness. Every thing that exists (mentally, astrally and physically) is a manifestation of this consciousness. The consciousness of the Unity is self-aware within all of its parts or manifestations, simultaneously and fully. In other words, the Unity knows *every* thing, from the inside-out. This is not just the knowing of an external observer; rather, it is the knowing of a participant.

I wish for you to carefully consider the implications of this for the magician who merges with the Unity. Truly, any thing the magician wishes to know or explore is made instantly available. But this knowing will be from the inside-out in a most intimate manner. It is similar in quality to the sort of knowing we experience in our daily lives as we pass through a specific event. The difference is, as usual, in the quantity of the knowing. For example, we all know how to tie our shoes because we have experienced it numerous times, but in relation to the Unity we are like a small child who has never tied a shoe and our understanding of this mysterious art comes from the descriptions of our parents. In other words, the Unity knows *every* thing from the inside-out and the normal human knows only a relatively few things from this perspective.

I must say that the conceptualization of this sort of all knowing is quite different from the actual experience. The magician who merges with the Unity is not only *able* to know everything; she/he *does* know everything *while in the merged state*. Few magicians, however, choose to bring this knowledge back into their normal consciousness used for daily life. Knowing too much tends to take all the fun out of life -- there is no longer any surprise.

3) All-Love or Mercifulness (Divine benevolence): This is associated with the Element Water. Please note that in Step Nine, Bardón associates Immortality with Water.

The divine Mercy is similar in quality to human love, except that in the human manifestation of love we tend to direct it at specific persons, ideas and things. Thus our human love is more limited than the divine love and it is a projection from ourselves to something external (self-love aside). The deific love of the Unity comes from a broader perspective that includes *every* thing and it works from within each thing. It is without bias and is shared equally with All that exists.

It is common for us to wonder how the unpleasant aspects and

events of life can exist in a universe permeated by a Benevolent deity. The answer to this lies within the quantity aspect of the divine benevolence or Mercy. The Unity permeates the whole of the infinite universe all at once and completely, thus it has an eternal perspective from which every event is seen as conforming to the universal lawfulness of things. In other words, from the eternal perspective of the Unity, benevolence is an undercurrent in All events, even the most unpleasant ones.

Suffering exists for a reason. It teaches us lessons that we have not been able to otherwise learn through more pleasant means. So at the core of each unpleasant situation lies the divine benevolence that knows this is the way in which we must learn -- it is the root lesson that holds the benevolence, the manifestation of events is itself secondary. The only way sometimes, to perceive the divine benevolence behind unsavory events is to broaden one's perspective to include lifetimes instead of single moments.

An adept who has merged with this divine Mercifulness may at times seem very stern, but this should not be mistaken for a lack of caring. At its root is the awareness of a much broader perspective on things than the ordinary human consciousness is able to achieve.

Such an adept will feel a deep love and concern for all creatures and will manifest their loving kindness willfully and in the most appropriate manner befitting the occasion.

4) Immortality (The same as Omnipresence in this case): This is associated with the Element Earth. In Step Nine, Bardón lists Omnipresence here, but if you think about it, this is essentially the same as Immortality in that the Unity is an immanent thing and thus it exists throughout the whole of space-time. The divine Immortality is not the same thing as what we consider when we think about the immortality of a human form. Theoretically, human immortality (if such a thing were to exist) is strictly a moment-to-moment matter of prolonged duration. In other words, the immortal human would pass through time moment-by-moment. While the quality of this is similar to divine Immortality, the quantity is quite different. The Immortality of the Unity occurs at an eternal level -- the moment-by-moment duration is only a manifestation of the eternal Immortality.

But, and here's a big but, nothing that is either astral or physical in its nature is eternal or immortal. True Immortality exists only at the level of the eternal, non-sequential realm.

I compare the Immortality of the Unity with its Immanence and say that they are the same thing because the Unity's Immortality is eternal. It has no beginning and no ending and there is no 'who',

'what', 'why', 'where' or 'when' that does not partake of the Unity. The connection between these two may be easiest to perceive when you consider the space-time continuum. From the eternal perspective, the whole infinite span of space-time is perceived as one single present moment or as a grand, infinite "Now". But, since the Unity is Immortal and eternal, this perspective is not just a from-afar sort of experience; instead, it is experienced simultaneously from the inside-out -- from the perspective of each thing involved with the minute details of the physical manifestation of space-time, to the most ephemeral and comprehensive experience of space-time.

While the feeling or quality of Immanence is similar to what the student experienced in Step Six with the practice of being aware of their mental body within their astral and physical bodies, there is a difference in terms of quantity. For the Unity, there is no separateness -- there is no immediate sense of being *within* a body. Instead, the Unity completely fills the embodiments of its Immanence. The entire infinity of the manifest universe IS the Unity -- it is not the mere shell which houses the Unity. There is no separation between the "body" of the Unity and the Unity itself. When we look at a rock or a leaf or through an electron microscope at a single molecule, we are looking directly at the Unity. When we look at each other or within our own selves, we are looking at the Unity.

I will now close my comments upon the merging with the Unity with one final note. This pertains to the process the adept must undergo in order to integrate the experience of merging into their daily lives. Many fail to successfully re-cross the Abyss and return to their normal functioning consciousness. I presume you are aware of the many tales of mystics who have returned from an especially deep experience only to become raving lunatics. Here is where preparation and a proper training come into play for the Hermetic magician.

In many ways, the integration into the normal day-to-day consciousness of an experience of the non-sequential eternal realm is an even more difficult task than the achieving of such an experience. The experience of Unity is so foreign to our normal level of self-awareness that it, in effect, doesn't fit, in its entirety, within the confines of normal human consciousness. Thus it is of vital importance that the adept have a thorough working knowledge of their mechanisms of perception. Essentially, the adept must translate and interpret the non-sequential experience into terms understandable to the normal, sequentialized consciousness. Only in this way can such an experience be integrated at a normal functional level.

Upon the return to normal waking consciousness, the adept will be inexorably transformed. So deep and pervasive a transformation requires a reassessment and a readjustment of the adept's personality and individuality akin the Step One and Two work with the soul mirrors, but on a much broader level.

The adept will not be able to retain full consciousness of the infinite details encountered in the merging experience once he/she has returned to a normal state of awareness. These details (the fullness of the experience) must be compressed in the memory and be made available so the adept can draw upon them at any moment desired. But to experience the fullness of a merging experience, the adept must be within the non-sequential realm and be functioning with their higher mind. This dichotomy of being so close, yet so far, from Unity, can at first be very disorienting even for the most advanced adept. Once again, the training of the previous nine Steps is essential for success in this matter.

Furthermore, the adept must balance the transformational experience of Unity with their mundane lives in such a way that their internal changes are not laid bare for all to see. This may sound odd and you might ask "why?" The reasons for this are not esoteric; rather, they are extremely practical and are due to the circumstances of our present location along the continuum of space-time. In other words, considering the present state of affairs, it behooves the adept to not reveal their achievements because if they were to do so, they would be inundated by people demanding their wisdom or presenting themselves for the satisfaction of other needs. There have been, and there will again be, times when the adept can safely reveal themselves openly, but now is not one of those times. As a consequence, there are many adepts who have achieved Unity but keep this a well hidden secret.

As I mentioned earlier, Bardón has the student work with the four attributes from the outset of these Step Ten astral exercises -- even though they apply more strictly to the Unity than to the lesser god forms and even though it is the lesser gods that the student encounters first. The reason for this is that these four attributes will eventually lead the student to awareness of the Unity. While working with the lesser gods, the student must employ the four attributes in an uneven ratio appropriate to the nature of the chosen god form. Working with these varieties or flavors of godhood expands the adept's consciousness and prepares it for union with the Unity.

I hope that by this point you have become well aware of the importance of each Step of ITH. If any single Step has been over-

looked, the ultimate goal of this Great Work will remain unattainable. I also hope that you see how the whole course comes together at the end and creates a complete circuit.

PHYSICAL

I will not be commenting on the physical section since it's a self-explanatory listing of various advanced magical techniques.

New Second Edition
Correspondence Excerpts

Written between 2001 and 2007

THEORY

THE ELEMENTS

On the Elements

06 September 2004

>> *There's something I'm not clear about. If you draw a lot of one element to yourself, don't you somehow create an imbalance of it somewhere else? Where does it come from? Is it an infinite supply?*
<<

The Elements are *qualities* and therefore cannot be depleted through their accumulation. In other words, you are not accumulating a physically quantitative substance. Instead, you are accumulating a quality whose *effects* are quantifiable. This is why an accumulation of 3 inhalations of an Element will produce a smaller quantifiable effect than one of 30 inhalations.

>> *Quantity applies only to manifestation (things like matter and energy) and elemental force is clearly prior to manifestation, as is any metaphysical principle: as such it is not quantitative, and cannot be depleted.* <<

I think the point of confusion here is that when a magician accumulates the *quality* of an Element, s/he thereby produces a *quantifiable effect*. Take for example the first exercises with the Elements in Step Three. The first step is to creatively imagine the *qualities* of the Element as if those qualities filled the entire universe surrounding you. The second step is to begin inhaling these qualities into your body so that you experience their very quantifiable effect upon your body. It is the accumulated *quality* of the Element that directly produces the experiential *quantity* of an accumulation. This *quantity* does not come into existence until the *quality* of the Element has been accumulated.

>> *To me the answer might be closer to something along the lines of the accumulation of an element is but a dislocation of it from one area to another.* <<

No. It is the *transformation* of a quality into a quantity, or of a principle into a material effect. Consciousness has the power to cause such a transformation of a principle into a manifest effect by focusing itself intensively upon the quality within whatever realm of density (mental, astral and/or physical) and thereby accumulating the quality to such a degree that the materia of that realm is affected by

it. This effect, once generated, is transferable through projection and can be induced separate from one's own self through the transference of consciousness.

>> *Are the elements quantifiable on the mental and astral planes?* <<

Within the *sequential* realm (i.e., in the physical, astral and the sequential aspects of the mental realm), only the *effects* of the Elemental qualities/Principles are quantifiable. It is only in the non-sequential realm of eternity that the Elemental Principles themselves can be truly quantified in the sense that therein lays the root of their essential meanings.

The Elements Vs. Physics

12 November 2002

>> *It seems to me that the ancients saw the elements as fire, air, water and earth mainly due to an incomplete understanding of physics. Yet, Franz Bardon's system is so tied into these 4 elements. Can someone explain this?* <<

It certainly appears that way from our modern perspective which is so saturated with the philosophy of the physical sciences, but the ancients held a different understanding and a different philosophy. It's really incorrect to say that the ancients held an "incomplete" understanding of the universe or to assume that modern Physics holds a "complete" one -- each perspective is simply *different*. Each uses a different set of symbols to describe the same essential thing -- our universe. What distinguishes the Elemental model is that it encompasses more than just the *physical* aspect of the universe; whereas Physics focus just upon the physical universe. Therefore, it is *more than* Physics and can't really be compared directly with Physics. Much of Physics can be explained from a Hermetic perspective, using Hermetic symbols, but very little of Hermetics can (as yet) be explained from a Physics perspective, using the symbols of Physics.

The reason for this is because the Elements are not physically measurable things. Physics deals with the physical materia that naturally *adheres to the Elements*, so in this sense, Physics studies the *effects* of the Elements. Hermetics, on the other hand, studies the *action* of the Elements AND the *effects* of them. This is why I said that the Hermetic Philosophy is *more than* physics.

They also differ in methodology. Physics uses physical tools to explore the universe, whereas the Hermetic uses their own self --

their own physical, astral and mental bodies -- as the tools of exploration. This places the exploration into an entirely different context and in *that* context, the symbols of Elements, Fluids, Principles, etc., make perfect sense.

Meditation on the Elemental Regions

29 September 2004

I am often asked for some sort of written text that better explains the Elements and my answer is always that reading about the Elements is not the best way to actually learn about them. The best way to learn about the Elements is through meditation and direct work with the Elements.

The Hermetic mind-set which views the universe as being the result of an interaction between Elemental forces was derived from direct, personal internal and external observation. The most basic starting place for such observation and self-education regarding the Elements is one's own self. For example, in Bardons' *"Initiation Into Hermetics"*, the student begins their introduction to the Elements through the observation of their own character and the subsequent assignment of each character trait to an Element. But that is not the only place within ourselves where we can observe the qualities of the Elements -- we can also learn about them through the observation of our physical bodies and this is what I propose in the meditation that follows.

Lie down on your back next to a wall, with a couple of pillows behind your torso and head. The ideal position for this meditation is to have your torso elevated at a 30 degree angle and your head at 60-75 degrees. This assures a slight compression of the abdomen, an elevation of the heart above the legs and an elevation of the head above the heart. Get comfortable in this position and rest your hands, one atop the other, over your lower abdomen.

Become aware of your head region and gently descend into your chest region, then your abdominal region and end in your leg region. Relax all the muscles in your leg region starting from your feet and working your way up to your pelvis. Include your buttocks and sphincter muscle in this relaxation.

Now spread your awareness throughout your entire leg region and consider the ways in which your leg region manifests the qualities of the Earth Element.

Feel the inertia and still calmness of the entire region. Spend a

few moments meditating upon the fact that this region remains inert until movement is consciously willed, sending an electric signal from the Fire region of your body to activate the muscles of the Earth region. Meditate upon this region's utter passivity without that impulse from the brain. There is no motion within this region except for what reverberates through it's uppermost layer, from the Water region above where the rhythmic motion of the breath originates; and what reverberates through the veins, from the Air region above where the heart's rhythm originates the pumping of blood. No motion originates within the Earth region, yet those higher motions from the Fire, Air and Water regions are what sustain the leg region and animate it.

Now shift your awareness to your abdominal region and deeply relax the muscles of your abdomen and lower back. Now spread your awareness throughout your entire abdominal region and encompass the area from your hips up to, and including, your diaphragm muscle. As before, consider the ways in which your abdominal region manifests the qualities of the Water Element.

Feel the fluidity of all the organs of the Water region as they process the food and drink you have consumed and as they purify the blood that pumps through your veins. Focus upon the slow and regular rhythm of the diaphragm muscle's contraction and relaxation, contraction and relaxation, over and over in a seemingly endless cycle. It is like the gentle ebb and flow at the ocean's edge on a calm day, causing the breath to come in and go out, come in and go out, over and over. Sense how this steady rhythm impacts all the organs of the Water region, moving them back and forth like seaweed caught in a wave's current.

Located just below your sternum and above your navel lies the solar plexus of nerves which control most of the functions of the Water region. This "little brain" keeps the intestines contracting and relaxing as they should, keeps the diaphragm muscle contracting and relaxing as it should, keeps your kidneys and liver functioning and so on. Notice how all these functions carry on without out conscious (i.e., "big brain") intervention. We can take conscious control of some of these functions but our control is always temporary and soon enough, the "little brain" takes back control lest we die. A good example is our control over the diaphragm muscle -- we can stop our breath but only for so long before we are forced to breathe. While respiration (i.e., the actual exchange of oxygen with the blood) occurs within the Air region, it is controlled by the Water region.

The Water region is responsible for the absorption of nutrients and the expulsion of toxins. It causes the breath through which we

absorb nutrients and expel toxins; and, it causes the functioning of the organs that absorb the nutrients from our food and drink and that expel toxins through regurgitation, defecation and urination.

While the "little brain" has a high degree of autonomy and the organs of the Water region are responsible for much of the sustenance of our bodies, it is nonetheless dependent upon the heart beat of the Air region and the organs of the Fire region which serve as the seat of our conscious awareness. Without the animating force of consciousness awareness and the pumping heart, the "little brain" dies and the organs of the Water region cease to function. Yet it is the Water region which sustains the body and keeps it fit for consciousness to inhabit . . . one cannot exist without the other.

Now shift your awareness to your chest region and deeply relax the muscles of your chest, shoulders and upper back. Now spread your awareness throughout your entire chest region and encompass the area from your diaphragm up to, and including, your shoulders. As before, consider the ways in which your chest region manifests the qualities of the Air Element.

Feel the expansion of your entire chest cavity with the intake of breath forced by the expansion of your diaphragm. It is as if you are unfurling your wings and taking flight. It lifts your entire being, making it feel as light as air with the influx of oxygen to your blood. And then, with the deflation of your lungs forced by the contraction of your diaphragm, your body is momentarily focused upon the exhalation of carbon dioxide and, perhaps, upon expressing the distillation of your thoughts through speaking or singing.

The Air region lives with the same rhythm of the breath imposed by the Water region, but with the addition of a second rhythm imposed by the Fire region -- that of the heart beat. This is a much faster rhythm than that imposed by the Water region. It is here in the Air region that these two rhythms meet to serve their single purpose -- oxygenation of the blood. Fed by the lungs and powered by the heart, your life's blood is pumped to and from every corner of your body.

It is in service to your life blood that your heart and diaphragm interact and influence each other. For example when your heart beat increases and you need a greater supply of oxygen to feed its faster rate of blood flow, your breathing increases; you can slow your heart rate intentionally by slowing your breath rate; etc. In other words, the two rhythms of Fire and Water are interdependent and together, they create a third, more complex rhythm within the Air region.

Now shift your awareness to your head region and deeply re-

lax the muscles of your neck, face and cranium. Now spread your awareness throughout your entire head region and encompass the area from your shoulders up to the top of your head. As before, consider the ways in which your head region manifests the qualities of the Fire Element.

Herein lays the most complex organ of your body -- your brain. This highly specialized organ translates your consciousness awareness into electrical and chemical signals that are capable of communicating with your entire body and which allow you to communicate and interact with the external world. Your brain is a place of ceaseless electrical and chemical activity. The input of every active nerve in your body gets routed through your brain and your brain perceives and then interprets all of that input.

All of the sensory organs are located within the Fire region except one -- your sense of touch, which organ (the nerves) is spread throughout your entire body. Nonetheless all perception through the senses and all interpretation of those perceptions occurs within the Fire region.

The Fire region is also the center of expression. It is here that the signals originate which move your hands and feet, flex your facial muscles, form your mouth into words and synchronize your breathing in the service of speech. It is here that your consciousness translates itself into thoughts and words and feelings and causes them to be expressed.

The organs through which we physically feed ourselves (mouth and nose) and through which we astra-mentally feed ourselves (eyes, ears, sinuses, and tongue) are also located in the Fire region, while those systems through which we normally excrete (urinary and bowels) are located in the Water region.

The Fire region is the place where your consciousness integrates with physical existence. From here, your consciousness extends its will upon the Air, Water and Earth regions and, through them, upon your external environment.

Now expand your awareness to encompass all four Elemental regions simultaneously. Spend several moments meditating upon the interaction of each region with each of the other regions. Observe and experience their interdependence.

This meditation can also be expanded and applied to the Elemental regions of astral body and temporal mental body. For more information in this regard, I recommend the first three Lessons of the "Self-Healing Archæous" audio series.

KARMA / CAUSE AND EFFECT

Redemption, the Discipline of Karma

12 November 2001

>> *Would you mind penning a few words on what you mean by “redeeming” karma as opposed to paying back / suffering the consequences, etc? I have a feeling this is a very important point. Could you give an example? <<*

To re-deem a thing is to restore to it its original value or, to give it a new value. This is the proper action in regards to karma, as opposed to “suffering”, “wallowing in” or “paying back”.

Karma is best described by the Golden Rule: “Do unto others as you would have others do unto you.” The part that’s usually left out is: “For surely, what you do unto others will, in the end, be done unto you.” This expresses the fact that we live in a reciprocal universe wherein causation creates an effect that ultimately returns to its source.

In practical terms, this means that every one of our actions has consequence, either positive or negative, depending upon the nature of our action and its relationship to the environment in which it occurs. When our action is motivated by negativity or when it is inappropriate, a negative effect ensues. When this negative effect returns to us, we call it negative karma. Conversely, when our action is motivated by positivity *and* is appropriate, a positive effect ensues, and when this positive effect returns to us, we call it positive karma.

At its root, karma has one purpose: to teach us a lesson. What resolves karma is the learning of the lesson it seeks to teach us. With negative karma, this lesson is to never repeat the negative causal action. With positive karma, the lesson is a bit different; namely, that we must multiply positivity.

Negative karma is not redeemed when all we do is suffer its effects. It is only redeemed when we have completely integrated the lesson it carries for us. For example, when I was young and foolish, I cheated on my lover. This causation resulted in the ending of that relationship and in my entering into another relationship wherein my lover cheated on me. This negative karma taught me exactly how painful it is to be cheated upon. Once I integrated that lesson and learned to never, never cheat on another person, I was released from relationships in which cheating was a factor. Now, I would never cheat on another person and I do not attract people who would cheat

on me. Out of this negative experience, a positive result was achieved, and this is the aim of karma. In this way, I returned the original positive value to my negative karma and I gave to it a new value—I re-deemed it.

Similarly, positive karma is not redeemed by merely basking in its glow. To redeem positive karma we must pass our good fortune on to others and in this way multiply the positivity we receive. When we treat our positive karma in a self-centered way, it demeans it and drains it of value. But when we instead, spread our good fortune outward and share it with others, it then acts as a positive causation anew and within the lives of others. For example, when I was young and foolish, I was allowed, due to an accumulation of positive karma, to penetrate a ways into the Mystery. I basked and reveled alone in my discoveries and in the end they amounted to little—I drained their value away through my selfishness. Eventually I learned to share my good fortune instead of hoarding it all for myself. In time my good fortune multiplied as I repeatedly shared it, and now I share it freely and my penetration into the Mystery continuously grows. In this way, I increase the value of my positive karma—I re-deem it.

The key to the redemption of karma is our discovery of its essential lesson. When we experience either negative or positive karmic effects, we must look within for its root causation. We must seek out the causal act and understand why this act caused this effect. From this dynamic we must learn what it is about our actions that we must change (in the case of negative karma) or increase (in the case of positive karma). Otherwise, our karma will accumulate and repeat itself until we do make these discoveries. Karma is neither punishment nor reward—it is our most persistent teacher and task-master.

The greatest guide in this journey of discovery is our conscience. It alone will tell us where we have erred and where we have excelled.

I said previously that in order to be free from the wheel of Samsara (reincarnation), the adept must redeem karma the instant that it is created. At the moment of the adept's physical death, all personal karma must have been redeemed or reincarnation will ensue. Thus for the adept, the redemption of karma is a continuous discipline. As each negative effect is caused, its root lesson is immediately sought out and integrated; and as each positive effect is caused, its positivity is passed outward and multiplied throughout the lives of others.

It is important to note that it is the elimination of *all* accumu-

lated personal karma—negative *and* positive—that frees the individual from Samsara. Negative karma accumulates until we learn its lesson and change our behavior, but positive karma accumulates when we hold onto it and do not pass it freely on. Thus the adept gives freely and without reservation, acting as a *conduit* for positivity, not as a source. This is a subtle and important distinction between being a conduit and a source -- when you are a source of positivity, you accumulate positive karma, but when you are merely a conduit, you do not accumulate — you re-deem.

As incarnate beings we incur not only personal karma, but also group karma (i.e., family, nation, species, etc.). Personal karma we can redeem on our own, but group karma must be redeemed by the entire group. Thus, the redemption of group karma requires more time. As we redeem our own personal karma, we are doing our part in the redemption of our group karma. But we can never alone redeem the entirety of the group karma. All we can do is our part and actively promote the group's awareness that it has karma that requires redemption. This is where the multiplication of positivity enters in. As we multiply positivity, it helps redeem the group karma, or at least, brings the group one small step further toward its redemption.

When we redeem our own personal karma, we, in effect, remove ourselves from participating in the increasing of the group's negative karma—we therefore diminish the rate of accumulation. But we will still experience the effect of our group karma at a personal level, just as all the other members of our group experience it. For example, an instance of group vs. personal karma would be the destruction of our planetary environment. At a personal level, we can change our habits so that they are not destructive and we can promote the knowledge that our actions are destroying our planet, yet still we all experience the negative effects our species has wrought upon our environment. Until we learn, en mass, that our actions are destructive and then change our actions, we will all suffer.

Another example of where personal and group karma intersect is war. We can individually live in peace and manifest love, but until we, as a whole people, learn to live in peace and manifest love, war will remain.

When we redeem our own part of our group karma, we remove ourselves from many of the group consequences; or rather, we change our relationship *to* those group consequences and experience them in a more positive way. For example, when we live in peace and manifest love in our lives, we are less likely to find ourselves in

contentious, violent situations; or when we do, we deal with the contention from a place of peace and love.

Whether karma has a personal or group causation, it must be redeemed at a personal level. Ultimately, group karma is redeemed the moment all members of the group redeem their own personal parts in the group karma.

Karma is not an onus or burden, nor is it a debt owed. Karma is our greatest opportunity for spiritual growth; if approached correctly, Karma is our surest, most trustworthy, friend. It's our conscience turned outward for us to see. It's the voice of our Holy Guardian Angel, whispering its message of love. All we need do is listen, trust and follow.

On the Nature of Karma

22 September 2005

As human beings we possess “free will”, or more accurately “freedom of choice”. We have, at all times, an absolute personal power to choose between this or that action, thought, emotion, etc. And as Nature shows us clearly, for every action there is an equal reaction; or in this case, for every choice taken there is an equal consequence. And to the same degree that we are responsible for choosing, we are equally responsible for the consequences of our choices. There are no choices taken without consequences for which we are personally responsible.

The Universe in which we live exists solely for the purpose of our personal growth and maturation. As we weave our web of choices, the Universe reflects the natural consequences of our choices back to us. This is what we call “karma”. Karma is the primary expression of the Divine Principle of Love within the human experience. It is the Divine looking after us and making sure that we are always presented with the best opportunities to make the correct choices and thereby evolve “spiritually”.

The consequences inherent to each one of our choices affect the Universe and the Universe responds to this causation by adjusting and adapting itself to our choices. It adapts to our choices by reflecting their consequences back into our lives in whatever way will best serve for us to learn a better, more holistic way of being and of choosing. The only “motivation” for this reciprocation between us and the Universe is Divine Love. There is no anger, no “I’m punishing you for being a bad boy”, and so on, involved whatsoever.

Nor is there any “I’m rewarding you because you were a good

boy”. *All* of our choices have consequences to which the Universe must adapt itself, regardless of whether they were positive or negative choices. And since we do not attain an absolute Perfection as human beings, even our most positive choices produce consequences that contain lessons for still further growth. Ultimately, there is neither “good” nor “bad” karma—there is only ‘Karma’.

The causal agent of the Universe’s reciprocal reaction to our choices is often (in occultism) referred to as the “Lords of Karma”, said to reside within the (Hermetic) Saturn Zone or (Kabbalistic) Binah. This is really a poor symbolization of the objective truth in that it tends to keep us separate from these so called “Lords of Karma”. It implies that they are continuously looking down upon us and judging our every action, thought, etc. Unfortunately, this couldn’t be further from the truth!

The objective truth (as opposed to the subjective, symbolic truth) is that the causal agent of our karma is our own Self, just a higher level of Self than our incarnate mundane self. We each are intimately connected to our own “Lord of Karma”, so to speak!

The sole causal agent of our personal karma—the one who adjusts our universe so that it always leads us forward in our evolution—is what I call our “Greater Self”.

Our Greater Self is our eternal mental body which has no beginning and no ending and which exists at the Kabbalistic level of Binah (Saturn Zone), within the eternal realm. It is our Greater Self which projects our own Individual Self (among countless others) into the temporal realm. This projection of Self into the temporal realm also serves to create and sustain the substance of the temporal realm. Thus it is our own Greater Self, with whom we possess the most intimate relationship, which adjusts the Universe within which we exist, to always meet our deepest and truest needs (not necessarily our “wants”).

So instead of being about punishment and reward, Karma is all about Love. It seems negative at times to our experience but this is only because we are, in that moment, resisting what our Greater Self has set before us. If, on the other hand, we are able to recognize that *every* thing, thought, emotion, circumstance, object, friend, lover, etc., the Universe blesses us with, is there only to lead us forward in the best way possible for us in that moment—then there is neither good nor bad karma, but only Love. And when we live with this perspective on Karma, we evolve rapidly because we are then taking advantage of the absolute best opportunity, custom designed just for us in that moment, and are working hand-in-hand with the Divine in-

stead of resisting its Will.

In other words, Karma is a precious, precious Gift—not a burden or debt.

PHYSICAL, ASTRAL AND MENTAL PLANES

A Very Modern Question About Astral Projection!

06 June 2002

>> A question posed itself to me during my meditation the other night. I realize that it is impossible for someone to astrally project themselves past the zone girdling the earth. So what would happen if you were physically on the moon and astrally projected from there? If we were living on another planet, would this mean that there would be different sets of spirits that would have effects on us? If we colonized another planet would we have another equivalent of a zone-girdling thingy? Would this have implications on the locations of our re-incarnations <<

The planetary planes or spheres have nothing to do with the physical planets themselves. The connection is purely symbolic and Philosophical. This is true even of the zone girdling the Earth.

These planes, including the zone, each represent levels or densities of consciousness. Since we have dressed these levels in human symbols, they seem specific to our solar system and our home planet, but they are not. The fact that they do seem this way is due to the nature of human consciousness and not to the levels themselves.

The reason we dress them in human symbols is because we experience these *universal* forces in a human, Earth-bound context. Nonetheless, they are *universal* forces.

That means that what we call the zone girdling the Earth is really a zone of a specific level of consciousness (the astral) that surrounds physical matter, *All* physical matter. The entities that inhabit this level of consciousness manifest within our Earth environment in specific ways; so this, being that it is our only reference, is how we describe and symbolize these otherwise universal forces. Thus we define entities belonging to the degrees of the zodiac (relevant only to Earth) and assign them very Earth focused duties, powers, etc. But again, these Earth-oriented symbols express *universal* forces as they are perceived through the human eye.

So, to answer your questions:

If we lived on planet X, circling the distant star Y, we would

have a slightly different set of symbols to describe these universal forces, but they would still be the same universal forces that we were dealing with and trying to describe in terms relevant to our human experience of planet X. The zone exists in a separate, non-physical dimension, so to speak, in which physical location is irrelevant. In a manner of speaking, this dimension intersects with every point in physical space, simultaneously. When human consciousness rises into this zone, it is not rising into a physical place. Even though planet X is millions of light years away as the crow flies, the zone girdling planet X and the zone girdling planet Earth, are the exact same zone, the exact same astral "place". Therefore, if I were to rise from planet X into the zone, I would be rising into the same astral "place" as I would if I were to rise from Earth, into the zone. It is the self-same zone and it surrounds *all* physical matter. Of course on planet X, we wouldn't be calling the "higher" planes, Moon, Mercury, Venus, Sol, etc. We would use descriptors that were more relevant to planet X. Nonetheless, each set of descriptors would describe the same universal forces and planes.

My rising from the Earth zone to the Moon zone would take me to the same "place" as rising from the planet X zone to the next highest "Satellite A" zone.

Similarly if one were physically standing on our own physical Moon, one would still rise *with their consciousness* into the zone. This zone surrounds *all* physical things. This means that it is not the Moon plane (a mental density of consciousness that has nothing to do with the physical Moon) that surrounds the physical Moon; instead, it is what we Earthlings call the "zone girdling the Earth" that surrounds the *physical* Moon.

Your question about whether you'd die if you tried to rise from the Moon was interesting. What I draw from it is a question whether or not trying to rise into a mental plane, with the astral body, would be harmful. Yes? If that was indeed the essence of your question, then the answer is no, it would not be harmful for the simple reason that it's not even possible. The astral body is too dense to enter into the purely mental level. It cannot be forced and one cannot accidentally take a wrong turn and end up there, etc. It's simply impossible. A good physical analogy is straining a pot of lasagna noodles through a colander. The water passes through with ease, but the pasta won't fit through the small holes. The same applies to the inability of physical matter to penetrate into the astral realm.

What excites me so much about your questions is their modernity. The fact that we now do think in these terms of the genuine

consequences of living on other planets, presents us with an even greater need to understand the difference between our human, Earth-based symbols and the universal forces they represent. We must always remain aware of the fact that our symbols only *represent* -- they are not the universal forces themselves. We must always look beneath the dressing of symbol and seek out the thing being symbolized.

Light -- Fluids -- Elements:

Their descent from Mental to Astral to Physical manifestation.

February, 2002

>> I have been re-reading KTQ and saw a point related to healing that I think is also mentioned in IIIH. Bardon mentions that a damaged organ can be brought back to health by using white light and the imagination, by thinking with conviction that the organ is completely restored back to normal health. HOW do the light and the imagination combine to effect a healing? What process is followed from a hermetic point of view? <<

Physical materia adheres to an astral matrix which in turn adheres to a mental matrix. A strong conviction impacts the mental matrix and causes it to resonate in accord with the magical desire for health. The Light acts to enforce this resonance and carry it downward through the degrees of density into the astral matrix, and ultimately, into the physical materia. Without the empowerment offered by the Light substance, the mental impetus will take quite a bit of time to truly transform the astral matrix and may not ever transform the physical materia.

As the astral matrix is transformed, the physical materia adhering to it will also transform. The cells of the human body are ceaselessly dying off and being reborn. With each cycle of new cells, those newly formed cells pattern themselves upon the astral matrix as it exists in that moment. If the astral matrix of an organ has been transformed from a diseased state, into a healthy state, then the new cells will manifest health instead of disease. Eventually, the organ will be renewed.

How quickly this transformation occurs depends on several factors, such as the power of the magical conviction, the facility with Light work, and how thoroughly the patient has dealt with the karmic lessons that disease implies, to name a few.

>> How is the light that you are speaking of here related to ordinary light from a candle or lamp? What differences and similar-

ities does it have? <<

Every physical thing has an underlying astral matrix, composed of the four Elements. Physical matter adheres to this matrix and displays specific characteristics analogous to each Element. These are the characteristics that we know the Elements by -- that we symbolize them with. But these are just the reflections of the astral Elements as they are expressed by the physical materia in the process of adhesion. They are not the Elements themselves. The Elements are non-physical Philosophical Principles.

Each type of materia expresses the Elemental characteristics differently. For example, a mineral expresses Fire one way, a plant another way, and an animal still differently. To see the Element within the physical characteristic, you have to first understand the peculiarities of the adhering materia. The characteristics of the materia *symbolize* the Elements to which the materia adheres -- the Elements do *not* symbolize the characteristics of the materia.

So, in reference to the Light, the candle's flame would be a reflection of the astral Fire which in turn, is a reflection of the higher Light. In other words, the characteristics of a physical flame, through the process of physical materia adhering to an astral matrix, reflect the astral Fire Element; and the characteristics of the astral Fire Element, through the process of astral materia adhering to a mental matrix, reflect the creative Light.

>> When you say that the physical materia expresses the element's characteristics differently, do you mean that they, like fluid condensers, accept or absorb certain elements more readily than others depending on the uniqueness of the materia? And this is what gives the symbolic representation or analogy of the pure elements? <<

It's the other way around. Only certain types of materia are capable of adhering to the Fire Element or to the Water, etc. So when the astral matrix has a preponderance of Fire, for example, then the materia that adheres to this astral matrix will be predominantly the sort that naturally adheres to the Fire Element.

Only when it comes to the magical use of a Fluid or Elemental condenser, is the course of nature reversed and we use the properties inherent in the materia in order to hold our accumulation. In other words, we choose a materia that naturally adheres to Fire when we want to create a condenser for the Fire Element.

THE STRUCTURE OF SELF

On The Structure of Self

29 April 2002

>> *Why then are new spirits created?* <<

The span of time is infinite and in order to fill that infinite span, there must be infinite variety. This infinite variety cannot fit into a single temporal moment all at once so it must be spread throughout the infinite passage of time-space. So Individualized spirits come and go -- they are temporal. However, there are higher, more inclusive levels of spirit that are eternal. It is from this eternal root that the temporal, Individualized spirits spring forth. I call this level of Self the "Greater Self". It is subordinate (i.e., not as all-inclusive) to the Unity. These Greater Selves are eternal. This means that they have no temporal beginning or ending. Only the Individualized spirits (mental bodies) that spring forth from them have beginning and end.

>> *Now I'm confused, I thought the mental body or spirit was eternal?* <<

I think the confusion lies solely in words. The most difficult one is "individuality". At every level of BEing, there is the experience of individuality, even the Unity experiences this sense of individuality. However, only some forms of individuality are eternal. The physical and the astral individuality are temporal and only the mental individuality is eternal. However, the "Individual Self", corresponding to Tiphareth is temporal. This Individual Self is primarily a mental body but it is a transitional phase which only exists in relation to incarnation into physicality.

The Greater Self (corresponding to Binah) is the truly *eternal* mental body. In order for the Greater Self to incarnate into the temporal realm, it must split itself (as an eternal and therefore infinite thing, it cannot fit its entirety into the physical present moment all at once). It therefore splits its wholeness into Individual Selves and projects these into the upper (mental) reaches of the temporal realm. The Individualized mental body is what actually incarnates into physicality.

The Individual Self or temporal mental body is *very* long lived, but it is still *temporal*. Once it self-realizes as its Greater Self, it retreats into the Greater Self and stops incarnating into physicality. It does not die, per se, but it does lose its coherence. In this sense, the

Individual Self attains Unity since the Greater Self is inseparable from Unity.

It is the non-eternal Individual Self mental body that rises after astra-physical death to the "spiritual planes" (the various planetary spheres) where it resides until reincarnation. This is repeated over and over (a sequential, non-eternal process) until it is purified sufficiently and self-realizes. These planetary spheres are a (mental) part of the sequentialized temporal realm.

>> *I assume that the incarnated self is the one we are aware for the time being in the physical plane?* <<

Each Individual Self projects a single incarnation at a time. This is the self we are normally aware of while incarnate. However, through the process of self-realization, we raise our conscious awareness to, first the Individual Self (Tiphareth), and then by degrees to the Greater Self (Binah). At the level of Greater Self, we become directly conscious of the other Individual Selves projected by our Greater Self. While experiencing the Greater level of our awareness, we are cognizant of all these projected Individual Selves simultaneously and that becomes the definition of our sense of individuality. In other words, each step "up" opens us to a more inclusive sense of self.

>> *Between incarnations, there will be multiple copies of "self" in the temporal mental/spiritual plane. Presumably though we are only aware of one of these instances as our present "awareness" or "consciousness" at any one time - otherwise we have multiple "awarenesses" concurrently, which would be most confusing? But what determines which awareness or consciousness we are aware of at any moment in time of being?* <<

As it descends, consciousness splits itself over and over, increasing its diversity. With initiation or self-realization, we are following that splitting in reverse and in effect reuniting this split consciousness. At the level of physical corporeality, consciousness exists in its most specific, smallest, least encompassing form. As we rise "upwards", we integrate consciousness. The first level is that of the Individual Self and here we unite all of our Individual incarnations throughout the stream of time. This is the first level of re-unification of Self.

The next significant level is the Greater Self which encompasses a nearly infinite number of Individual Selves, each of which encompasses a very large number of personal incarnations. This is the second level of re-unification.

The third significant level is Unity. The Unity encompasses *all*

of the infinite number of Greater Selves and all of their projected Individuals, with all of their incarnated personas.

So, when a person dies and their astral body disintegrates, they are released to the mental level corresponding to their Individual Self, not their Greater Self. Since the Individual Self projects only one persona at a time, the awareness experienced is solely that of the Individual Self. There are no "multiple copies" as you suggest.

The Individual Self includes the memories and experiences of all the past incarnations and it is this inclusive aspect of self that then "plans" the next incarnation.

When in the course of incarnating, the personal self self-realizes as the Individual Self, it is the same as dying and reaching the mental level of the Individual Self, but without the loss of the personal self. Then, the personal and Individual levels of Self become united. It is only this unified persona-Individuality that is capable of self-realizing as the Greater Self.

When the persona-Individuality unites with awareness of its Greater Self, this indicates the temporal end of the necessity for incarnation *of that particular Individual Self*. This Individual Self is then either blended with the Greater, adding its consciousness to the Greater whole; or it is preserved by the Greater in order to serve a specific purpose.

>> *Is attaining "greater self" the same as attaining "Divine Unity"? Or is it one step removed? <<*

When an Individual Self self-realizes as its Greater Self, it is simultaneously at one with the Unity. This is so because the Greater Self is an eternal BEing and therefore fully conscious of the Unity at all times. There is, in fact, no separation (no sequence) between the Unity and the Greater Self except from the perspective of those of us looking "upwards" from "below".

Questions Regarding the Greater Selves

12 April 2004

>> *First, you have said that the Greater Selves project and condense their awarenesses into Individual Selves, who inhabit the time-space realm which results from the projection process. I assume that every Greater performs his projection "by himself". <<*

Well, yes and no, it's not quite that simple. Each Greater Self is responsible, so to speak, for the Individuals that it projects and each of the projected Individuals is an aspect of a specific Greater Self. However, the Greaters exist in the non-sequential eternal realm.

This means that even though their projections experience separateness, the Greaters themselves (*in addition* to experiencing separateness through their Individual projections), experience togetherness, commonality and an integrated awareness that is infinite and which includes the Unity/Kether. To say that the Greaters are just one thing or just one level of awareness is to underestimate how infinitely encompassing their awareness truly is.

>> *So, if each Greater Self performs his projection individually, and each projection results in the creation of a time-space universe, how come the time-space realm all the Individual Selves descend into is the same one (the one all of us currently inhabit)?* <<

All of the infinite number of projections by all of the infinite number of Greater Selves together causes one time-space universe. As I said, all of the Greaters are just as interconnected as they are discrete. Their Work is a collective or group work.

On the "Mystic Death"

04 August 2003

>> *You wrote a while ago that the student doesn't lose his ego as the result of the Bardone practice, "There is no 'loss' of identity in this process. There is only the transformation of identity." How does that concur with what Bardone states in IHH, "Only when he voluntarily surrenders his individuality and becomes one, will he voluntarily enter in to a dissolution which in mystical terminology, is depicted as the mystic death"?* <<

There is no *loss* in this dissolution of the Individual Self. It is instead, the Ultimate Transformation of identity, an *expansion* from the Individual to that of Unity with All.

Let me explain Bardone's terms a bit. Perhaps that will help you see what I mean more clearly:

"Individuality" here refers to the temporal mental body or Individual Self attributed to Tiphareth. The Individual Self is a projection into the stream of *time* from the Greater Self (the eternal mental body) attributed to Binah (the "Zone" of Saturn). The personal or physical self is the *time-space* incarnation of the Individual Self or temporal mental body.

Upon physical death, the personal self becomes re-absorbed into the Individual Self. It "dissolves", so to speak, into the Individual Self.

When an Individual Self has evolved sufficiently and therefore reaches the natural end of its cycle of incarnations, it will either *vol-*

untarily merge with the Greater Self from which it springs or it will *voluntarily* retain its Individualized structure and serve as a temporal agent of the Greater Self, undertaking any tasks required within the temporal realm.

What Bardou described above is the voluntary merging of the Individual with Greater Self. The Greater Self, due to its position in the eternal realm, is our personal connection with "God" or The Unity, as I prefer.

When this dissolution of the Individuality structure occurs, that quantum of the Greater Self is reabsorbed and withdrawn from the temporal realm. There is no *loss* of awareness here -- only an infinite *expansion* of it.

>> *If I passed this point of merging into the consciousness of the Divine godhead, would I have sufficient ego left to even care about the trivialities (perhaps a poor word, a better word being "details") of the past rungs on the tree of life?* <<

If you did not possess this quality of caring in sufficient quantity, then you would not be capable of such a merging in the first place. The integration of Loving Kindness must precede the merging since without this level of caring, it is not possible to simultaneously manifest all four divine qualities.

Past-Life Memories and the Individual Self

30 June 2004

>> *I do have a question regarding an individual's experience over multiple lives. Does an individual "Self" retain its unique set of experiences (i.e. memories and associated Karma) from one incarnation to the next?* <<

Yes, an Individual Self is the sequential or temporal mental body wherein the lifetime's memory of time-space experience is retained. An Individual Self "remembers" *every* moment of *each* of its incarnations, except that these "memories" exist within an ever broadening experience of a single *present* moment. Furthermore, the Individual Self is the true focal point of all the Karma generated during incarnation, which is how Karmic responsibilities pass from one incarnation to the next.

>> *In an earlier thread you stated that the incarnating spirit after death goes to the astral plane. Their astral body eventually disintegrates and the mental body eventually merges with the Greater (I hope I got that right). What do you mean by eventually? How long is eventually? Does a self have to merge with the Greater prior to in-*

carnating again? <<

Upon physical death, the focus of the astra-mental awareness is shifted to the astral realm. Over a span of astral-time, the persona works out all the unresolved emotional issues left over from the immediately previous incarnation. This is the dis-integration of the astral body and it takes as long as it takes, depending upon numerous factors unique to the persona. When that process is complete, the awareness of the solitary mental body or Individual Self is shifted to the mental realm. The level or “zone” to which the Individual Self shifts corresponds to the Individual’s level of spiritual maturity.

It’s at this point that the Individual Self becomes consciously aware of its Greater Self. When I spoke of “merging”, it was not an irrevocable merging; but rather more akin to a conference or face-to-face meeting. This interaction between Individual Self and its Greater Self occurs within the mental “zone” where the Individual Self resides, as opposed to within the eternal realm where the Greater Self resides.

Since this meeting involves the eternal and the temporal aspects of self, it does not involve any space-time duration. In other words, from our physical perspective, this meeting takes no time whatsoever—even though the experience itself can seem very prolonged or lengthy.

This interaction between Greater and Individual occurs before each incarnation. It isn’t until the Individual Self attains to the level of Binah/Saturn while incarnate that the opportunity to merge *irrevocably* with the Greater Self arises. The attainment of Binah while incarnate means that after the astral disintegration, the Individual Self automatically rises to the Saturn zone. This means that the Individual Self and its Greater Self have become as one. Only then is an irrevocable merging even possible.

>> Does a “forgetfulness” always occur between incarnations? Or does a more evolved mental body remember more than a less evolved one? <<

As a *person* evolves over lifetimes, the memories become easier to retrieve; or rather, to re-connect with at the level of the mundane awareness. And eventually, it is possible to intentionally incarnate without losing one’s connection to those past-life memories. In any case, by raising one’s conscious awareness to the level of the Individual Self, it is possible to re-connect with all of those past lives in the most intimate manner.

>> Given that trauma, tragedy, very painful death and criminal behaviour will no doubt feature if one goes back far enough,

how does one integrate these memories into oneself harmoniously? I have no doubt elemental equilibrium plays a crucial role, but as one progresses, does one learn additional techniques that aide this process? <<

Well, as you state, the Elemental Equilibrium is the crucial factor. The other thing is the awareness that these are *past* actions that one cannot change but must accept as being part of one's history. In a sense, this is no different than accepting the present self during the soul mirror work.

A Hermetic Perspective upon the "Soul Mate" Phenomenon And Other Multi-Incarnational Relationships

31 October 2005

While the term "soul mate" is commonly used to describe quite a broad spectrum of human relationships, from a Hermetic perspective it refers to a very specific and relatively uncommon phenomenon. It means far more than just an uncommon intensity of human love or an uncommon degree of rapport. It is, in fact, the most intimate and longest term sort of relationship that can exist between two human beings.

This sort of intertwining of lives occurs at the Individual level of Self and begins the moment that a single human Greater Self originally projects two Individual Selves into the same moment of time-space. Usually, when a human Greater Self (our Eternal Mental Body) creates or projects a quantum of ItSelf into the temporal realm, it projects only one quanta of ItSelf into a single temporal moment -- thus an Individual Self is "born" and begins its cycle of incarnations into the material realm.

Such an Individual Self (a temporal mental body), once projected into the stream of time-space, repeatedly descends into the astral and then material realms in order to incarnate physically. Throughout the incarnations of such an Individual, many human loves and relationships will develop that span many lifetimes, but none of them would qualify as a true "soul mate", regardless of their intensity or significance.

A true "soul mate" phenomenon occurs only when a human Greater Self projects/creates two new Individual Selves (temporal mental bodies) into/at the same moment of time-space. When this occurs, the two Individual Selves are inexorably entwined for the remainder of their existences. In other words, they will incarnate together throughout their entire existence, each time directly affecting

each other's lives and development in one way or another. As these Individual Selves progress throughout their span of time-space together, they will progressively weave themselves together and, upon the mental plane, will appear to be embracing each other like two snakes entwined.

This entwinement continues until either one of the two Individual Selves reaches the temporal end of their cycle of incarnations and permanently re-merges their quanta of temporal mental Awareness with their Greater Self (Eternal Mental Body). Often, both Individual Self "soul mates" will reach maturity simultaneously, but not always. When the two do not reach their maturity simultaneously, the one Individual who does reach it first may choose to preserve their Individuality astra-mentally, in order to directly affect their "soul mate" from that realm and thus continue to aid in their "mates" development.

During each incarnation as a human being, the Individual Selves will form some sort of relationship. Common relationships for "soul mates" are parent-child, siblings, mentor-student, "best" friends and, most potent of all, lovers or life-partners. Each of these relationships is highly charged in terms of karmic significance and pertains directly to the developing maturity of the Individual Selves involved.

The essence of the "soul mate" phenomenon is that it is a very powerful and focused manifestation of the Universal Force (or Principle) of All-Love at the personal (time-space-matter) level of existence. The two Individual Selves are repeatedly giving birth to each other, loving each other and teaching each other, over and over and over, throughout the whole of their existences. Over time, their incarnations become, in many respects, like astra-mental mirror images of each other, so close is their harmonization.

But just because the two are "soul mates" this is no guarantee that these relationships will all be "perfect", "easy" or filled with "happy endings". :) Nor does it guarantee that either or both of the incarnate persons will even be aware that they are true "soul mates". Ultimately, it doesn't matter whether or not an awareness of this relationship exists at the personal level during incarnation.

To my mind, there are two main reasons why it doesn't matter: Number one, all of our relationships with others should be treated as if they were with our "soul mate" (i.e., enacted with sincerity, honesty, respect and love). :) And of perhaps equal importance is number two, it is hard to know for certain that so-and-so is your "soul mate". ;-)

There are really only two ways to know for certain, both of which rely upon direct personal perception and both of which are prone to self-delusion and the influence of an emotional desire for an affirmative result.

One method is to regain conscious awareness of your past incarnations to the degree that you can willfully review them and, in effect, "remember" them. This is done by first focusing and seating your conscious awareness within the Individual (or Tiphareth) level of your own Self Awareness. [In the language of the Self-Healing Archæous: within the "solitary mental body", or "Fire and Air regions of the temporal mental body".] Then let your Awareness expand slightly with the Fire until you can perceive your own Individual Self as if from slightly "above". If you see that your Individual Self is entwined with another Individual Self and has been entwined since their mutual point of temporal origin, then this is an indication of a "soul mate" relationship with another Individual Self.

However, you must verify whether or not this is a self-delusional projection of an emotionally rooted desire to be in such a relationship with another Individual or person. Of course, if you have truly been able to focus your awareness within your Individual Self then there will be no emotional motivations involved, but therein lies the test -- have you truly focused your awareness??? A second test is whether or not you can make the entwining Individual disappear from your perception. If you can change the initial perception then odds are, it was not a reliable perception. But here again, there is a great possibility of self-delusion -- can you convince yourself that you can't change the "perception" if you have a deep seated emotional desire for your "perception" to be an accurate one?

So, assuming that your perception is that your Individual Self is entwined with another Individual Self and that you have verified this perception to your satisfaction for the moment, you must then look closer and see where you both incarnate together. Project your awareness "down" and "into" several of those incarnations and you will come to "recognize" your "soul mate" as they have been in those past lifetimes. You will see that even though their personalities are slightly different in each case, there is a recognizable essence shining through each face.

Then, using your mundane awareness (in its holistic sense of being an intentional combination of all the levels of Self-Awareness available), "scan" the people in your life for this essence that you've perceived as belonging to your "soul mate". A BIG caution here is that your mundane awareness naturally includes your emotional

body and all of its perhaps subconscious motivations!

The only other reliable (yet equally unreliable and equally susceptible to self-delusion) method that I am aware of relies upon the direct perception of a specific physical energetic that develops between two incarnate "soul mates" when they are both within close spatial proximity of each other. It is not uncommon for true "soul mates" to experience this physical energy without realizing what it is. And it is even more common for only one of the pair (the one more naturally sensitive or the one with trained senses) to perceive it. This energetic can become very addictive, to the degree that one literally craves the other's presence and feels temporarily "down" when the physical distance becomes too great. This physical energetic feeds both parties and is caused by the astral and mental energetics that are likewise caused when two "soul mates" come within close physical proximity of each other. This is a physical consequence of the powerful and focused manifestation of the Universal Force of All-Love at the personal (time-space-matter) level of existence.

It is actually very difficult (for me, at least) to accurately describe the physical sensation of this energetic since such perceptions are so intimately subjective. In general terms though, it feels very physically pleasing, electric and sparkly and as if it could sustain itself forever. :) I hate to say it, but it really is the sort of thing that one recognizes only when it is experienced. Usually, if there's any doubt at the moment of experience then odds are that you perceive something else. It is easy to misinterpret very strong emotions and/or sexual desire as being this specific energetic, so beware.

There seems to be a limited spatial radius within which this physical effect is felt. Unless its radius is consciously extended by one or both parties, it seems to be naturally limited to around 9 meters. This "natural" distance seems to increase substantially when two "soul mates" remain within visual range of each other, and of course, it can be extended as far as desired through conscious effort.

As I said earlier, this physical energetic that forms when two true "soul mates" are in close physical proximity of each other, is caused by a similar energy dynamic that forms at the astral and mental levels, only when the two are in close physical proximity. Although there is always a mental level energy dynamic in play between two "soul mates", this dynamic changes substantially and is greatly amplified when the two parties are in close physical proximity. At the mental level, this is seen as a radiant brilliance whose hue depends upon the maturity of the two "soul mates" -- it is a mutual

radiance. This radiation causes an excitement of the astral materia surrounding the two "soul mates" which quickly becomes very colorful and active with motion (usually circular).

So, if you feel that you perceive the physical energetic of a "soul mate" with another person, you can further investigate it at the astral and mental levels. But as before, this is all quite open to self-delusion and truly requires a very high degree of self-honesty.

Ultimately, it doesn't matter whether or not some one is your "soul mate". That is, until one or both of the Individual Selves nears end of their cycle of incarnations. Then, it becomes quite important, but by then there is certainty. The reason it becomes vitally important at that point has to do with the final resolution of the mutual karma between the two Individual Selves. This karma must, at that point, be consciously and intentionally resolved and this can take several lifetimes to accomplish.

"Soul mates" are blessed with the opportunity to develop a degree of intimacy unrealized in the majority of human-to-human relationships. Such intimacy may be used by both parties to speed their individual and/or mutual maturation process and thus attain final Liberation more quickly than "average". And even when this extraordinary degree of intimacy is not achieved, the relationship that still exists between the two "soul mates" will "stir" and "quicken" the karma (i.e., it will shorten the temporal lag between action and consequence) of each to such a degree that their evolution is still sped beyond the "average" pace. This effect is increased exponentially when the two parties are in close physical proximity of each other due to the physical-astral-mental energetic that arises in such a circumstance.

The "soul mate" relationship also presents a special burden to both parties because of the high degree of emotional and mental intimacy it produces. The attachment at these levels is so significant that when it is severed by life circumstances, a very deep emotional and mental loss is experienced by both parties and this loss can cause a debilitating sadness. It is not uncommon for a "soul mate" to "die of a broken heart" after their "mate" has physically died; especially if the two were lovers or if they were manifesting a parent-child relationship and the child "mate" died first. Additionally, emotional injuries that arise during their relationships will be felt more deeply and more painfully by both parties than in "average" human relationships. On the other hand, as their astral and mental harmony increases over time, they are both better equipped to resolve any differences that arise and mend any injuries that result.

Out of the currently incarnate human population of the earth, approximately 10 percent of us are paired with a true "soul mate". This fact is quite remarkable considering that the actual overall incidence of this phenomenon between human Individual Selves (incarnate and discarnate) occurs less than 1 percent of the time. But while this phenomenon is relatively rare between humans, it is quite common among other types of Individual Selves and, in fact, many types of Greater Selves create/project by this manner exclusively (e.g., the Greater's who are responsible for mineral life forms). In other words, many types of Greater Selves normally project large quantities of ThemSelves into the same moment of time-space; but with specifically human Greater Selves, this rarely occurs and when it does occur, it involves only two Individual Selves at a time.

Conversely, there are three other multi-incarnational relationships that commonly arise between humans but which are uncommon between other types of Individual Selves (and in many cases absolutely do not occur between some types of Individual Selves). The most common multi-incarnational relationships arise from interpersonal karma. For example, a person kills another person and due to the karmic consequences of their action, they will incarnate repeatedly with that other person until such time as the karmic issue is finally resolved between them. While this is an extreme and negative example, the instigation of this sort of multi-incarnational relationship can be anything which develops a karmic issue (positive and/or negative) between people that is not resolved within the lifetime during which it occurs. These relationships can span anywhere from just one following incarnation together, to thousands of incarnations together.

The second-most common multi-incarnational relationship that arises between humans is rooted at the level of their respective (and separate) Greater Selves. Within the eternal realm, Greater Selves experience affinity with other Greater Selves. To the mental eye, this is indicated by their "proximity" to each other -- Greater's who appear "close together", appear so because they are similar in essential nature and experience an "affinity" with each other. Their commonality draws them together, so to speak, and this is expressed through their projected Individual Selves. Thus, Individual Selves who are projections of Greater's who share affinity in this way, will often incarnate together and manifest some sort of mundane affinity as well. These relationships are invariably supportive and often span hundreds of incarnations, if not the entire temporal existences of the Individuals involved.

The third-most common multi-incarnational relationship is that shared by Individual Selves projected by the same Greater Self (but into different moments of time-space). In many ways, this is similar to a "soul mate" relationship but is not as intense, nor as karmically significant. Similar to the "soul mate" phenomenon, such persons will share an extraordinary commonality which can (and usually does) result in a deeply transformative relationship.

For the "average" person it is not very common to meet another incarnate projection of their own Greater Self, face-to-face. Instead, they are more likely encountered as influences from afar, such as an author whose writing really inspires you, or as a person whose life accomplishments really inspire you and resonate with you. However, as the Individual Self matures and moves closer to its final Liberation, face-to-face encounters become more and more common with each successive incarnation until at the end of an Individual's incarnational cycle, their lifetime is literally filled with encounters and relationships with others who share the same Greater Self.

Recognizing another projection of your own Greater Self is easy if you shift and expand the focus of your personal awareness so that you, in essence, become your own Greater Self. From this perspective, all the Individual Selves projected by your Greater Self are "visible", so it is just a matter then of investigating which of them are incarnate at the same time as you are and whether or not the person in question is among their number. It is also quite possible to simply recognize your own Greater Self manifest within another person, but this again presupposes a deep familiarity with the Greater Self level of your own awareness.

Face-to-face encounters with other incarnations of your own Greater Self are marked by a physical, astral and mental energetic similar to that generated by true "soul mates", but in this case it is much, much less intense. Since these encounters do not carry with them the degree of intensity of "soul mates", they tend to be less emotional and more intellectual, and generally filled with an easy openness.

While each of these multi-incarnational relationships are, in essence, specific manifestations of the Universal Force of All-Love at a personal level, the "soul mate" phenomenon is the most powerful and significant of them all. When it occurs, it indicates a mutual necessity to learn the proper way to experience, manifest and exemplify the Universal Force of All-Love at a personal level specifically. As the two "soul mates" mature through their cycle of incarnations together, they forever help one another in the fulfillment of this over-

riding necessity.

AWARENESS

Consciousness and the Brain

31 July 2005

>> *Is consciousness a product of the brain or is the brain a product of consciousness?* <<

The physical brain is the physical medium or organ which human-type consciousness requires in order to be able to directly interact with and directly experience the *physical* realm. Consciousness or awareness exists with or without the physical brain and is in no way its product nor is it in any way dependent upon the physical brain for its existence. However, if human-type consciousness wishes to directly experience or interact with the physical realm it must do so through a physical brain.

>> *Most of my own experience supports the theory that it's all up to neurons and brain chemistry. My own experience of oneness and expanded consciousness, and being god and beyond life and death, where induced by drugs, so is enlightenment a change in brain chemistry?* <<

No. Artificially altering your brain chemistry only produces an effect upon your *perceptual* faculties that produces a very, very poor imitation of “enlightenment”. True “enlightenment” is the transformation of consciousness itself, not of the brain chemistry. This transformation of consciousness itself permanently alters the way in which consciousness integrates with the physical brain and the clarity with which consciousness is able to fully express itself through the limitations imposed by the physical brain.

>> *And if the brain is damaged or the chemistry change by alcohol or sickness, is the enlightenment lost then?* <<

If the *structure* of the physical brain is damaged, then consciousness is unable to experience and interact with the physical realm in a “normal” way. The “enlightenment” would not be “lost” but its ability to express itself within the physical realm would indeed be altered or hampered. Temporarily changing the brain chemistry with alcohol or other drugs does not in any way affect true “enlightenment”.

How Does Physical Perception Affect the Astral and Mental Bodies?

03 February 2004

>> *I think I understand the basic description of how an idea moves from the mental body, then is “strengthened” as it passes through the astral body based on the emotional state of a person, then is manifested by the physical body, but how does it work going the other way? As in, what happens when something is experienced with the physical senses? Does it directly interact with the mental body to create an idea of what is being experienced, or is the astral body somehow involved? If so, how? <<*

It is our *mental* body that perceives. Which is to say, our *conscious awareness* perceives. We perceive *essential meaning* with the Fire region of our mental body; *ideas* with the Air region of our mental body; *emotions* with the Water region of our mental body (astral body); and, *physical sensations* with the Earth region of our mental body (physical body).

When our conscious awareness is focused within the Earth region, then the Fire, Air and Water regions of our mental body simultaneously perceive physical sensation, emotion, idea and essential meaning. However, at the level of our mundane awareness we are usually conscious of just the physical sensation. Nonetheless, it is our mental body which is doing the perceiving.

There is an infinitesimal time lag between the mental body’s perception of the essential meaning which underlies the physical sensation and the physical brain’s final processing of that information. The perception of the essential meaning simultaneously encompasses the Air region perception of that essential meaning at the level of ideas, but there is again an infinitesimal time lag between that and the physical brain’s processing of those ideas.

The physical brain breaks down and digests the perceptions of the Fire and Air regions *before* they reach the surface awareness. Part of that digestion process encompasses the perception of the essential meaning and ideas with the Water region of the mental body—the astral body and the emotions. This astral/emotional perception plays a very significant role in the physical brain’s processing of the physical sensation and indeed, is the main factor in the brain’s final product or response to the perception.

All of this happens very, very quickly and some parts (the Fire and Air aspects of perception) happen outside of time (i.e., they are simultaneous to the experience of the actual physical sensation). It

happens so quickly in fact, that very few humans ever realize the sequence of events. It's only through very deeply introspective meditation, akin to an advanced form of the Step One observation exercise, that the time lag and sequence of perception can be perceived.

On the Astral "Sight"

12 August 2002

>> *I was wondering about the actual mechanism of astral sight, how does the brain interpret it? When I see my bedroom through my closed eyes it appears clearer than with physical eyesight, more sharply in focus - even the peripheral vision, which with normal sight is blurred - and more intensely coloured. Since they are not actual eyes that are seeing, what sensory apparatus of the astral body is collecting the light waves to be imprinted on the brain and HOW for goodness sake? Is it even light waves that are being perceived? <<*

The intensity that you're experiencing is actually the mental component within the astral sensation. The mental component is more noticeable with the astral sensoria than it is with the physical sensoria. This is what makes the astral sensoria feel so different and exciting.

The astral vision is not dependent upon physical light (e.g., you can see clearly in a dark room). What your *astral* eyes perceive is the underlying emotional significance generated by the *essential meaning* (the mental component) radiated by all the things in view. Hence the "feeling" that more than just visual detail is being perceived. Each thing communicates its essential meaning at a mental level and with your astral sensoria you perceive this mental communication more directly and without the distractions of the physical sensoria, brain, etc.

We experience all of this normally within our physical senses but seldom notice these subtle layers of perception.

The physical brain is habituated to integrating the mental perceptions with the astral and physical sensations, so when we perceive things at the astral level, the brain will *automatically* translate these perceptions into physical sensations. [Bardon makes use of this in his Elemental accumulation exercises by *consciously* tying the astral perception of the Element to the physical sensation.] This explains why your astral vision is so physical in nature. The mental component of your astral perception is recognized by the brain and the brain responds as it would if light were triggering your optic nerve, etc.

The Scientific Vs. the Hermetic Understanding of Emotions

17 March 2004

>> *I'm trying to understand how the current scientific theory of emotions relates to the Hermetic theory of emotions. In the scientific theory, emotions are chemical in nature. They are said to result from the transmission of chemical neurotransmitters from a single neuron to either a single adjacent neuron or to a group of nearby neurons. This is supported by the fact that people can be made to feel a variety of emotions such as joy and sadness by injecting these neurotransmitters into the brain. In addition to the neurotransmitters, which have specific short term effects, there are also neuro-modulators and neuro-hormones which have longer, more generalized effects on moods rather than individual emotions. I'm curious how this would relate to the more subtle description of the astral body, especially since I assume that it is possible for the mental body to perceive the same emotions that the physical neuro-chemicals can produce when one is not connected to the physical body, either because of physical death or conscious separation. I also assume that the astral body is able to affect the production of these chemicals in the physical body, which I have a hard time making sense of. <<*

From the Hermetic perspective, the physical body is the *result* of the astra-mental body. In other words, all of the physiological functions are caused by the astra-mental body. For example, the production of neurotransmitters, modulators and hormones is caused by emotions and thoughts which occur within the astra-mental body of the individual. Neurotransmitters, etc., are not the *causes* of emotions—they are the physical *results* of emotions.

Granted, by artificially introducing certain chemicals, one can either induce or suppress certain emotional *manifestations*, but such actions do not alter the *source* of emotions and once the chemicals have been purged by the body, the same dynamic returns.

The question that this scientific model doesn't address is "What source of intelligence or consciousness causes the body to create neurotransmitters, modulators and hormones?"

Why are emotions referred to as illogical?

10 April 2004

>> *In your description of Netzach in the 8T meditation project, you describe it as "the realm wherein the universal emotional*

archetypes intersect with personal expression. This intersection is pre-rational. It happens at an immediate, spontaneous, illogical, experiential level.” I can see how logically analyzing an emotion can never come close to re-creating it, and I know how different people can respond to the same environment with different emotions because of the characteristics of their psyche, but the mechanisms causing the emotions seem quite logical and consistent. <<

You may be able to rationalize about emotions, and often to good end, but the immediate *experience* of emotion does not involve the rational intellect. The rational intellect can, *after* the direct *experience* of emotion, analyze and respond to the emotion but it cannot experience the emotion, it cannot *feel* the emotion. What it can do is *understand* the emotion, respond to the emotion and dictate the expression of the emotion. But again, in the immediate, direct *experience* of emotion, ratiion plays no part.

Exercises in Mental Discipline of the Emotions

18 December 2003

One important issue which Bardou didn't speak about directly in IHH is the necessity for control and discipline of the emotions. Although such emotional discipline is a direct result of both the mental discipline and the soul mirror work, it is still worthy of specific attention since so many budding magicians fall prey to their own habitual emotional reactions. Emotional discipline is also an important part of attaining the astral Equilibrium of the Elements that, if ignored, can lead to years of frustration.

While the *experiencing* of our emotions must not be suppressed, they must still be examined and understood, and their *expression* must be within our conscious control. Just as an initiate's thinking must be reshaped into a useful tool, so too must our emotions be transformed from knee-jerk reactions, into conscious choices of expression.

As with the transformation of the thinking processes, this transformation of the emotional processes begins with detachment and observation. Here then are series of exercises which will lead from observation, through to discipline and ultimately, to the conscious use of emotion as a means of clear Self-expression.

Exercise #1:

Choose a piece of music that is very sentimental and which you know can stir up a strong emotional response within you. Play it

through once and let its sentiment play with your emotions. Just go with its emotional flow. Abandon yourself to it and really get into the emotions it makes you feel.

Now play it a second time and, as before, go with its flow. After a few moments, step back from that flow of emotions and separate yourself from them. Observe them exactly as you observed the mind's chatter in the first mental exercise of Step One. Listen to the remainder of the piece of music from this detached perspective and observe how your emotional body is being manipulated by the music.

Now play it a third time and resist involvement with the sentiment of the music. Refuse to involve yourself in the emotions that result from the music's manipulation of your emotional body.

With a fourth playing of the musical piece, alternate between giving in to the experience of the piece's sentiment and stepping back from involvement. Work at gaining that power of choice to participate or not, as *you* wish.

Now choose other, equally sentimental pieces of music and practice your ability to engage and disengage at will. As you're practicing that ability, take careful note of the ways in which this mechanism works. What sort of input results in what sort of emotional result? Why? What parts of *you* are involved in that process? Etc.

Exercise #2:

Repeat exercise #1 but this time, with a piece of music that gets your foot tapping and your body dancing, something that stimulates and cheers you. As before, work to gain that power of choice to participate or not, and examine the workings of this mechanism as well.

Exercise #3:

Now repeat the same exercise, with the same aims, but this time, view a beautiful painting or picture that moves you deeply. Also view images that disturb you. As always, work to gain the power of choice to participate or not in the emotions that images elicit and examine the mechanism.

Exercise #4:

Now apply the same exercise to poetry and to stories that move you, both favorably and unfavorably. Gain that power of choice and examine the mechanism by which ideas affect your emotional body.

Exercise #5:

Now watch a movie or television program that you know will stir deep emotions with its strong sentiment. Exercise your power of choice and examine the mechanism by which images *and* sound *and* ideas affect you when they are combined.

Exercise #6:

Now extend this exercise to your everyday encounters and the emotions that they generate. Gain that precious power of choice and examine very closely the mechanism by which live interaction affects your emotional body.

Exercise #7:

This exercise is a departure from the first six. Here you must *create* an emotion within yourself. This is really an extension of the Step Two sensory concentration exercise, except here, the feeling one creates is emotional instead of tactile. Practice this in private meditation until you can invoke any emotion you wish, at will.

Exercise #8:

Now put these abilities into action and make your emotional expressions conscious acts of will. During your everyday encounters, first note the emotion as it naturally arises. Before you express it, examine it and see if it exists as you would choose to express yourself. If it does match your true will, then consciously and willfully express it as it is. If, on the other hand, it does not match your true will, then modify it and express an emotion that does.

>> *I have trouble distinguishing between detachment and repression, especially when it comes to emotional tones. What is the difference between resist involvement, refuse to participate and repression?* <<

Repression is when you deny the *existence* of an emotion that you are nonetheless experiencing. Repression is done out of fear and denial. What I suggest here however, does not *deny* the emotion that is experienced. Instead, it honors the emotion and then shifts the awareness to a position of detachment for the purpose of truly coming to know the essence of the emotion. Please note that in my previous post, I carefully distinguished between the *experience* of an emotion and the *expression* of emotion. It's the immediate participation in the experience of the emotion that one detaches from and examines the mechanism of.

With repression, you deny the emotion itself and separate yourself from it without ever coming to understand it. In this sense it still controls you just as much as if you had let it sweep you away. But if you do as I've suggested then you come to understand the emotions that arise within you. This enables you to *express* them *consciously and intentionally*, with the full awareness of what caused them to arise and what aspects of yourself are manifest through them.

>> *What is one supposed to do with emotional difficulties rising through self-crafting work? They seem to be reactions, a sense of "I"-ness, an old-self who resists change.* <<

Well, examine them, learn from them and transform them. Here is an example where emotional discipline is essential -- without it, these emotional reactions will delay your progress, but with it, these emotional reactions can move you forward even more rapidly because they hold within themselves the key to your advancement. Internal resistance actually points the way to where we *must* tread.

What Is the Definition of a “Thought”?

06 November 2003

>> *What is the definition of “thought”?* <<

To understand the definition of a ‘thought’, one must first understand the definition of an ‘idea’. An ‘idea’ is a finite quantity of infinite essential meaning as perceived by a mental body. A ‘thought’ on the other hand, is what a mind does with the perceived ‘idea’. An ‘idea’, even though it is a finite thing, holds within itself the potential for a countless number of ‘thoughts’ as the mind processes it. This ‘thought’ processing by the mind, is a matter of personalizing an otherwise impersonal ‘idea’. The personalization is accomplished by “clothing”, if you will, the ‘idea’ in countless reactions and evaluations. Thus the mind recognizes a swarm of different perspectives upon the original ‘idea’ that it perceived.

The mind’s chatter is primarily composed of emotional responses to the thoughts the mind generates to clothe an ‘idea’. This is a very dense and busy aspect of the mind which taps very directly into the subconscious.

When one detaches from participation in the mind’s chatter, that busy-ness fades to reveal the underlying ‘thoughts’ and the thinking process itself. It is within this context that one-pointedness occurs. And within the emptiness of mind, one directly perceives the ‘ideas’ that underlie ‘thought’.

BEing, Consciousness and Self-Awareness

18 Feb 2002

>> *What is the difference between 'consciousness' and 'awareness'?* <<

At first, we are barely *aware* of Self. It doesn't even enter into our daily lives as something of practical importance. But eventually we do become *aware* that there is this whole other layer of existence, both inner and outer, that we call Self. This is the first stage of Self-awareness. It is mostly investigative and Self is still a separate entity. Eventually we become *conscious* of Self. By 'conscious' (as opposed to 'aware') I mean that we come to a point where we know Self well enough that we begin to participate in Selfhood. We BE Self, if you'll excuse my poor use of Ebonics.

This, at least in my book, is the essential distinction between consciousness and awareness. Consciousness is participatory and immanent; whereas, awareness is a self-other dynamic.

BEing is consciousness of Infinite Self

On the Occult Anatomy of Minerals, Plants and Animals

08 November 2003

>> *Do plants, objects and animals have astral feelings in the same way as humans do?* <<

While every physical thing has an astral body, the structure of the astral body itself and its relationship to the mental and physical bodies, is different in each of the three categories you list. The astral body of the average human for example, is very complex and capable of a broad range of experience and expression. The astral bodies of most other animals are not quite as complex and not capable of the same degree of expression and experience as the human. An animal does experience emotion as they interact with their environment but it is significantly different than human emotion. The astral bodies of plants, while quite complex, do not experience "emotion", per se. They do interact with their environment and experience an astral reaction, but these reactions are very simple (unlike "emotions") and are necessitated by nature as opposed to choice. Objects, in general (unless they are infused with an astral charge through magic, worship, etc.), possess very rudimentary astral bodies and while they are capable of storing emotional/astral energies, they are incapable of experiencing emotions or of emotional expression.

>> *Do plants, objects and animals have thoughts in the same*

way as humans do? <<

For physical things, thinking requires a physical brain so only animals and insects are capable of thinking. However, every thing exists within an ocean of ideas, so to speak. The temporal mental body of every thing attracts ideas, ingests and expresses ideas, but not all temporal mental bodies are capable of interpreting, comparing and choosing from the ideas that surround them. An object for example, expresses at least one idea by its very nature but is incapable of doing anything other than purely expressing the idea(s). It does not filter those ideas or think about how it might want to express those ideas. A plant, since it has a more complex temporal mental body, experiences and expresses ideas, but again, it is not capable thinking (i.e., interpreting, comparing and choosing); whereas animals, which have rather complex mental bodies *and* brains, are indeed capable of thinking. Some species (such as humans, Elephants, Whales and Dolphins, to name a few) have very, very complex mental bodies with brains to match and are capable of profound thinking. In general, insects are capable of thinking but it is probably the most rudimentary type of thinking, except when it comes to hive- or group-minded insects. Some of the most complex insect group-minds are capable of profound thinking.

>> Do they have an immortal spirit in the same way humans do? <<

Yes. Every thing has an eternal mental body. Or rather, every thing is an expression of an eternal mental body / immortal spirit / Greater Self.

>> But there still is one kingdom missing: the mineral (and metallic) kingdom in special. This part of our matter cannot be classified as being only a part of "objects" in general. <<

In relation to the original question which was about thinking and feeling, the mineral kingdom does belong to the category of "objects", especially when compared to animate life forms such as plants and animals. However, I understand your Alchemical viewpoint of their significance! Just because something is not capable of thinking or emotional feeling, doesn't mean it lacks significance!

>> From my point of view - as you know an Alchemical one - one can find the purest expressions of mental and astral energies in minerals and metals. Perhaps that was the deeper reason why true alchemy primarily was concentrated on the so called mineral kingdom more than on the plant or animal kingdom, human himself included. The alchemists always said that the strongest energies are enclosed in the mineral kingdom. Who learns to release these ener-

gies from this kingdom will have much more energy at his disposal than he ever can concentrate in products derived from plants or animals. <<

The pure minerals and especially the pure metals express, through their forms, a single essential meaning or root idea more clearly than any other physical substance. The clarity with which they express their essential meaning is what generates their power—the essential energy you seek.

Power is a product of the clarity with which a form (be it physical, astral or mental form) expresses its (Akashic) essential meaning. The metals express their essential meaning with great clarity at each level -- 24k Gold being an example of perfect clarity in which even the physical form is a perfectly clear expression of the essential meaning. A human on the other hand, generally presents a very muddy expression at the physical level and of a compound essential meaning instead of a single essential meaning.

But at each level, that essential meaning is bound up in the form (be it mental, astral or physical). Form is the medium of expression. At the mental level, where form is at its most rarefied state, essential meaning is a radiant thing and one's mental body can easily perceive and absorb the power of its radiant clarity. At the astral level, the clarity with which an astral form expresses its essential meaning becomes an important factor in one's ability to perceive and absorb its essential meaning. At the astral level, the essential meaning has usually been muddied and compounded by its passage through the astral materia. However, with 24k Gold for example, which possesses a physical purity and clarity of expression, the astral expression is just as pure and radiant as the mental expression.

>> It seems that we are All One down to the level of Chokmah, but what about at the Binah, Tiphareth, and Yesod Levels of being? Say for example with animals- does each animal have a unique Personal self, Individual self and Greater self, or is there a group self at one or more of these levels, like a 'group dog greater self'? It seems to me that each animal has a unique personality, but do they each have a unique individual self that reincarnates as well? <<

Most individual animals do have a unique Individual Self that incarnates as one single personal self at a time. However, not all animals are the same in this regard. For example, there are certain fish species that possess a "hive" mind and each "hive" represents a single Individual Self and a single personal self, even though this is manifest in a series of simultaneous physical bodies. Such a "hive"

Individual might incarnate for several centuries duration while constantly renewing the bodies which compose its incarnate “hive”.

All things are part of a Greater Self at the level of Binah. With some animal species, all the Individual Selves and their personal incarnations belong to a single, species-wide Greater Self. But the more complex animal species represent several unique Greater Selves.

>> And what about plants and minerals? Is there only one eternal tree, or one eternal tree for each species, or for each tree? <<

Plants make for an especially interesting study. For some species of plants there is only a single unique, species-wide Greater Self. For other species there are several Greater Selves, each representing a specific variety within the species. Some plant species, for example the foresting trees, manifest many, many Greater Selves, each of which might incarnate as a specific group or forest of trees. There can even be several Individual Selves composing a really complex forest. Generally, each Individual Self will incarnate as several simultaneous personal selves, thus prolonging the temporal duration of a single incarnation for several thousands of years (as in the case of Redwoods).

Minerals, on the other hand, have a very simple occult anatomy (which is one reason why they are so useful in Alchemy). Each specific, unique mineral has a single unique Greater Self at the level of Binah. Each Greater Self manifests a single, unique Individual Self or temporal mental body. And while each of these Individual Selves manifests only a single astral body (of *very* long temporal duration), it will have countless physical representations which either exist in combination with other minerals, or exist in their (physically) pure state amid other minerals.

>> These higher levels of consciousness must be quite fluid if there can be several ‘beings’ manifesting through one place or organism (like a local deity and a more universal one like Mother Earth) <<

Consciousness is infinite and it “pools” or “collects” or “solidifies” at an infinite number of levels. It is really the sequentialized consciousness of the observer that splits this unbroken, infinite continuum into specific, defined and finite levels. Thus it’s just a matter of “where” (i.e., at which point along that infinite continuum) one looks or rests their vision, if you will. If one focuses upon the planet as a whole, then one sees Mother Earth, but if one narrows the focus to a specific location upon the earth, then one sees the Spirit of a

Mountain, for example.

TRUTH

Subjective and Objective Perception

08 March 2002

From a Hermetic perspective, we do indeed exist in relation to an objective reality. Normal human perception however, is a subjectifying process and it is only in this sense that we “create our own reality” or live in a subjective universe of our own making.

There are several levels of this subjective human universe existing between the poles of the human collective and the human individual. It has mental, astral and physical density. As a whole, it is a feature of the objective reality but it is a *very* small, finite part of this objective whole.

The human brain-bound mind is not capable of perceiving the infinite objective reality all at once. Therefore our mechanisms of perception interpret this infinite wholeness by reducing it to finite increments that are processed sequentially and related to and through the filter of the small human self. In other words, normal human perception is a *subjectifying* process of *interpretation*, not one of direct objective perception.

Normal human perception places us slightly out of temporal sync with the objective reality. The amount of this discrepancy is the time required for us to take a finite snapshot of the objective infinity, interpret that snapshot, and then integrate it into the sequence of past snapshots. During the phase of interpretation, we subjectify our perception and it is here that perception becomes more about the perceiver than the object of perception. This is where emotional reaction comes into play.

The result is that we treat our subjective perception as an objective thing; hence our confusion as to what is really real.

With IHH however, we are taught a different form of perception that is not “normal” in human terms. This is objective perception of the objective reality.

The first step in attaining objective perception is to learn to identify the subjectifying mechanisms of normal human perception within our own selves and then look for the underlying objective bits that initiate our subjectification. In IHH this is achieved with the early work of the soul mirrors, the mental discipline and the work with the

senses. This work slowly teaches us how to identify those factors of normal perception responsible for subjectification (i.e., responsible for reducing the infinite into sequential finitisms). Once we are able to identify these aspects of ourselves we can then filter them out and begin to perceive the objective cues upon which our subjectification is initially based. In essence, it's a matter of becoming so familiar with our own internal processes that we can then see what underlies them.

For example, if you know that you are looking through a red filter, you can eventually figure out that a green object looks black when viewed through a red filter. Obviously then, what appears black may in fact be green when you remove the filter and look at the thing itself.

By knowing the ins and outs of our own subjectifying filter, we bring ourselves closer to directly perceiving the objective reality. But this is like looking through a dark glass since many other things can, to use my analogy, create the appearance of black through a red filter. The only way to directly perceive the objective universe is to remove our filter of subjectification entirely. However, this requires more than just the normal brain-bound human mind.

Setting aside our subjectifying filter is the point of the *Center of Stillness Meditation* and of the middle work of IHH (such as the transference of consciousness) -- teaching one how to set aside the sensory input, and the input of the emotions and the mind's chatter, since these are at the root of our mechanisms of subjective perception. This reveals the raw mental body itself which is the only part of (human) self capable of perceiving infinity directly.

When the filter is removed, an entirely different universe is revealed—this is the objective universe. To perceive objectively, you must *become* the object of perception, which is to say, you must come into absolute sync with the objective reality.

This is extremely rare for the modern human, but not at all rare for the non-human beings that surround us. My favorite example of a being that perceives objectively is a blade of grass. Its body turns in perfect sync with the sun's rays. It doesn't need time to realize that the sun is actually striking it, nor does it need time to decide whether or not to turn. It exists in perfect sync with the objective universe and has no bubble of subjectivity that separates it from its objective surroundings.

This is the degree of perception that the work of IHH eventually builds into the magician.

It's important to consider this in relation to interpreting the

meaning of the later Steps of IHH and to interpreting the life of someone like Franz Bardon. In fact, it's an important factor in the interpretation of many things written by those who have gained the faculty of objective perception.

The early work of IHH is designed to inform you, through direct experience, of your own mechanisms of perception. These are primarily emotionally driven reactions to objective events that we encounter. The most important part of this process of self-discovery is the Step One soul mirror work where you pick apart and define your own emotionally rooted personality. This is the first step in identifying your own subjectifying filter through which you normally perceive *every* thing.

The Step Two work of character transformation forces you to learn that you can set aside your emotionally driven, habitual reactions and look at things more objectively. This is the second step toward objective perception in that it teaches you how your subjectifying filter alters the appearance of things and that you do have some control over it.

The Step Two work with the senses informs you of the nature of the sensory input and of its control. The Step Three work with the senses then teaches you their creative use. And so on. Throughout the course of the Steps, the faculty of objective perception is built piece by piece.

By the time you reach Step Eight and begin the work of mental wandering, this faculty is well established. It is even more so when you begin the Step Nine work of astral wandering. In Bardon's system these experiences occur entirely within the context of fully conscious, objective perception.

THE DIRECT PERCEPTION OF ESSENTIAL MEANING

An Exercise in the Direct Perception of Essential Meaning

05 May 2003

Every form is a manifest expression of an essential meaning. In other words, form communicates something of significance to our perceptual faculties. We always perceive essential meaning every time we perceive a form of any kind, be it mental, astral or physical. Ordinarily, this perception is an unconscious experience and consequently, we are seldom aware of the fact that we perceive this essential meaning. Yet it informs our every perception in significant ways.

As an experiment to demonstrate my point, I set out several small plastic figures in front of a couple of my “Hermetic Visitors” one day. These were toy caricatures of different dinosaurs, a Godzilla, King Kong, the Hunchback of Notre Dame, and so on. Each one of them expressed a unique and easily identifiable “personality”. For example, the little King Kong figure expressed a very gregarious personality, while the Hunchback expressed a hurt innocence.

Each one of these figures communicated something about itself through the details of its particular form. This ‘something’ is its essential meaning. The voice, so to speak, of that essential meaning is the form’s personality—i.e., its emotional tone.

The personality of each one of these figures is *very* easy to perceive, and because it “speaks” so loudly, it’s also fairly simple to directly perceive the underlying essential meaning that their personality communicates.

Having opened their awareness of this level of their own perceptual faculties, I asked my Visitors to examine the forms of the other objects in the room and try to perceive their personalities and underlying essential meanings. Most of the other things in my living room (where we were seated at the time) don’t “speak” themselves as loudly as the plastic figures do, until you get into the groove of this level of perception. But once you do get the grasp of it, *every* form is expressive of an inner, essential meaning.

This little experiment was quite a success! I recommend this experiment! It’s an excellent method for exercising the whole of one’s perceptual faculties.

The Magic of Essential Meaning

05 May 2003

Every form expresses its essential meaning. This holds true for those forms we create with our imagination as well. When we visualize a gold box, for example, the form we have created possesses its own essential meaning, expressed through a perceivable personality (or “emotional tone”), all of which is inherent to its form. The essential meaning, in this case, comes from us, the creators of this image. It is our own will which establishes the essential meaning of “gold box” and it is our own mind from which the visual details are harvested which, in turn, adhere to this essential meaning and result in the visual form of the gold box.

Herein lays an important mechanism of nature which magic takes full advantage of. Namely: *when an essential meaning is cre-*

ated, it serves as a causation which will take form. The density that the form will reach depends upon the force of will which empowers the creation of essential meaning. For example, given sufficient power of will, the creation of the essential meaning inherent to ‘gold box’, will result in an astral-density image which we can see with our mind’s eye.

Nature herself takes care of adorning the essential meaning with appropriate astral materia, drawing it as I said, from our own mind’s storehouse of images and emotional significance. It’s not something we can force or direct with the rational intellect alone. *Nature* directs the process, not us, and if we try to impose an ingredient that doesn’t fit with the essential meaning, Nature rejects it for us.

The same holds true for bringing an astral form into a physical density. Nature adorns the astral form with physical materia appropriate to the form’s essential meaning. In other words, physical form is the result of essential meaning, not the other way around. If you alter the essential meaning, then the form changes apace; but if you alter the physical form alone, you do not thereby change the essential meaning—all you do then is express it less clearly.

In each of these natural transitions, from mental to astral-density and from astral to physical-density, the magician has the opportunity to aid Nature and to speed Nature’s work by supplying a ready source of the raw materials that Nature works with. For example, one can accumulate the Earth Element (which contains Fire, Air and Water by nature) into an astral-density visualization, thus providing the raw materials it will need to gain physical density. Nature herself will see to it that what is needed is drawn from this source of raw materials, all the magician does is *supply* the resource—s/he leaves to Nature that which is Nature’s domain and doesn’t try to micro-manage processes so complex that only Nature can manage them.

“GOD” AND OTHER CONCEPTIONS OF “DEITY”

In the Image of G-d?

11 March 2002

>> *Bardon states that God made man in his own image. I understand the meaning of that completely - I think. But does that imply that humans are the superior physical race in the Universe?* <<

Here is my Understanding of this, but I must warn you that it

lies in contrast to most popular belief and in some small, superficial way, is contrary to Bardon's statement.

The modern conception of this idea stems from the Genesis 1 creation story. To my mind, it has been totally misunderstood. Primarily this has to do with the taking of highly symbolic statements as literal things instead of the symbols they are. There is also the additional factor of translation—Hebrew does not translate well into other languages. Attendant to the idea that humans alone are made in the image of Deity, is the idea of “dominion over”, also derived from a misunderstanding of Genesis 1.

In short (and believe me, I can be *very* long-winded on this topic) the Hebrew term translated as “man”, in the context of Genesis 1, refers to corporeal life of *all* kinds. The things that “man” (corporeal life) is to have precedence or superiority over (this does not imply a right to use) are the astral and mental realms, and the Elements that compose all three realms. The references to “beast, fowl, fishes, trees, etc.” in Genesis 1, are actually references to the Beings of the Elements—i.e., the astral Elements.

Corporeal life (i.e., *every* physical thing) is said to be “made in the image of Elohim” because it is composed of a mental, astral and material body that surrounds an Akashic root. In other words, *every* physical thing reflects the structure of the Whole.

We humans are, in general, very self-important creatures and it comforts us to think that we are special. This however, is The Great Lie, a delusion that blinds us to the greater reality of the Unity of *all* things. We are not special; we are only unique, just like every other thing that exists. But in our desire to be special, we create concepts of Deity that are made in our image as a way of justifying or validating our specialness.

On “Satan”

06 December 2002

>> *On a forum where I moderate religion, I got into a nasty dispute about the existence of Satan as a real and overarching source of evil on Earth. Even though I am Catholic, I never could accept something like Satan. I have always thought of it as a cognitive tool by which people rationalize their own mistakes.* <<

For the most part you're correct, the concept of Satan is a tool used by organized religion to distance the individual from the power to change themselves. By attributing one's own negativity to an external god-like being, it enables a denial of personal responsibility

and disempowers one's ability to change. This leaves the individual dependent upon the religious hierarchy.

The concept also presents a subtle schism to the psyche of the believer. For example, how can an all-powerful and perfect god be in contention with an equally powerful imperfect devil? This essential dualism simply doesn't fit with a mono theism and this confuses the psyche at an unconscious level, again increasing both the sense of self-powerlessness and dependence upon the religious hierarchy.

However, Satan does exist. Because this concept has been believed and, in essence, worshiped for such a long period, it has been given both mental and astral density by humanity. In effect, it has become the representative of (anthropomorphization of) all the negativity resident within the human *group*-mind. In other words, humanity creates its own devil, out of its own self and calls it 'other'. This is the greatest schism of all within the human group-mind.

ASCETICISM AND SEXUALITY

Homosexuality and a Hermetic Path

03 July 2002

>> *Is homosexuality an Elemental imbalance?* <<

It is only we humans who divide sexuality into hetero-, homo- and bi-. This has nothing to do with sexuality itself since all species that express sexuality, naturally express all three of these human-defined types. Sexuality is sexuality, period, and its sub-type is not a matter of differing Elemental balances.

Sexuality is an aspect of the mental body. As the mental body incarnates, it seeks out a life circumstance that best expresses its nature and which will lead to the learning of the lessons needed during that incarnation. It is fundamental and not a matter of mundane choice that arises during the incarnation itself. With the human being, each type of sexuality brings a specific set of life lessons because we are social creatures who live within the context of specific culture. In human culture, a homosexual faces a very different experience than a heterosexual.

Sexual orientation is not an issue of Elemental balance. Where Elemental balance comes into play is in the individual's response to, and enactment of, their sexuality, whether that be hetero-, homo- or bisexuality. This is the arena of concern so far as the impact of sexual orientation upon the Hermetic path.

A heterosexual person is no more or less suited to spirituality and Hermetics than a homosexual and vice versa.

>> *Can a Homosexual person advance in the path to perfection or is that something they have to overcome?* <<

Homosexuality, like hetero- and bisexuality, is not something to be overcome. The path of self-perfecting is built upon being your true self as completely and as clearly as possible. Since sexuality and sexual orientation are fundamental qualities that an individual possesses, striving for perfection would necessarily include manifesting one's sexuality in a self-defined positive way. This is true regardless of one's sexual orientation, and the specific type of sexual orientation makes this process no harder or easier than another. In other words, homosexuality itself presents no unique barriers to following a spiritual path. A bi- or homosexual individual faces the same basic issues of positivizing their sexual expression as does a heterosexual individual.

TIME

Expanding Perception of the NOW

06 July 2002

>> *I'm attempting to expand my perception of NOW by using the commonality of the "quality" of the event (all the actions involved that make up a teeth-cleaning event) - to achieve the "quantity" (experiencing the event as a whole without being directly involved mentally with the sequential enacting of each moment or detail).* <<

I suggest that in meditation you explore the Now itself. What defines Now? How long (duration) is Now? What differentiates Now from past and future?

In your tooth brushing example I see that you are trying to encompass a larger quantity of the *sequential* present-moments and are considering that a greater Now. In the temporal sense, where Now is perceived as the "present moment" (i.e., a sequential thing) this seems relevant. However, the Now and the present-moment are not exactly the same thing. The present-moment is our normal experience of the Now, but it is a sequential experience of a non-sequential, eternal and infinite thing.

Simply put, the Now itself, is infinite. It encompasses the whole temporal sequence of present-moments, not just a few of them

or a million of them. Nonetheless, as sequentialized creatures, we must approach this eternal experience of the true Now incrementally and, as you propose, increase how many present-moments we can encompass within a single Now of our conscious awareness.

Therein lays the key -- our conscious awareness. The present-moment itself is defined by our own sequential awareness of the temporal manifestation of Now. When our awareness is heightened (focused) we naturally remain conscious of the commonality between several present-moments in a row and thus have the experience that you describe of time seeming to shorten and compress. But it is only the physical tempo of time that seems to compress since our awareness of events is actually greater. In other words, even our experience of the physical speed of time's passage is dependent upon our awareness.

Oddly, what really takes you deeper into this encompassing more of the temporal Now, is to focus yourself down into the *infinitely finite* present-moment. This is the doorway to the infinite Now.

With your tooth brushing example, instead of focusing upon the thread of intention, you would focus solely upon the present-moment and let go of the *sequential process* of brushing your teeth. In fact, let go of *every* thing other than exactly what you are doing in the immediate moment.

On the Question of Free Will in the Temporal and Eternal Contexts

09 November 2003

>> *I have long been under the impression that there is no free will at any point as every action undertaken is a perfect representation of every circumstance that has lead to the present level of consciousness, thus any action / reaction that occurs in the physical is, by definition, the only action that could have taken place; any other response / action / whatever is physically impossible to happen. So the question is, to what extent is there genuine free will? <<*

For the sequentialized mind, the apparent conflict of free will is the most difficult aspect of the eternal perspective to integrate.

The fact that what is, is as it should and must be, applies only to what is -- i.e., to what *exists*. From an *eternal* perspective *every* thing exists and the whole infinite span of time (i.e., the sequential realm) exists as a whole—within an infinitely encompassing Now. So in the *eternal* realm, it's a fait accompli and there is no free will (in the mundane sense).

However, in the *sequential* realm the only thing that *exists* is the *present* moment of the sequence. In the sequential realm, the past doesn't exist, nor does the future exist. The only thing that exists in the sequential realm is a finite now. Since future does not yet exist, it is created by what transpires within the finite now. Free will is our ability to decide right now how we will act and it is these temporal decisions that create the future; or rather, when we make a choice, we change the now and move it forward through the sequence.

Within the temporal present moment we do have free will. In fact, everywhere within the sequential realm we have free will.

An important aspect of integrating the eternal perspective (or rather, the eternal experience) into the sequential layers of conscious awareness is learning how to hold these opposite perspectives simultaneously. One must be able to function within the temporal realm and consciously exercise their free will, while simultaneously remaining aware of the eternal perspective. And vice versa, while in the eternal perspective, one must also be cognizant of one's temporal existence and experience. [This deepens the eternal experience since its essence is that of participation (immanence) and not that of separation.]

This means that the enactment of one's temporal free will and the intentional creation of the future (i.e., continual re-creation of the now) are essential parts of true "ascendance". This is what brings the eternal into the temporal and "heals the rift".

The essence of free will is the power to choose. This power stems from Chokmah (Wisdom) and is an essential part of the sequential realm. It is not an "illusion" as many state—it is a Primordial Law.

>> *Also, does the extent of potential free will differ depending on the level of an initiate?* <<

No. One's freedom to will is infinite. What does differ is one's ability to manifest their will. This has primarily to do with the fact that the process of initiation brings the individual into ever greater harmony with the Divine. The petty will is transformed into the Divine Will. Ultimately, none of one's willings conflict with the Divine Will and there is then a direct and immediate manifestation of one's free will. But you must understand that the Infinite Divine Will manifests *through* the finite free will as it is exercised an infinite number of times throughout an infinite number of temporal present moments.

Many equate this with greater freedom, but this is not so.

>> *I am aware that this argument (i.e., there is no free will)*

can be used as the perfect cop-out for anything, but I think it's also a necessary realisation for ascendance. <<

To my mind, it's the easy way out. It absolves one from all responsibility for their actions and for the future. If that were the Ultimate Goal, then why bother.

This attitude/assumption is also indicative of dis-Equilibrium of the Elements in the temporal mental body, with roots in the astral personality structure. It reflects a character need to be absolved of, or to avoid, personal responsibility. Often, this is very subtle—so subtle that it doesn't make itself known to the initiate's consciousness until the work of integrating the eternal experience is begun.

MISCELLANEOUS SUBJECTS

Defining Hermeticism

22 September 2002

>> Please define Hermeticism for a beginner. <<

It may sound a simple question, but to answer it is not since the term “Hermetics” means so many things to so many different people. The best I can do for you is try to express what Hermetics, specifically Bardon's Hermetics, means to me.

There are several features of the Hermetic *philosophy* that are defining. Here are a few:

1) The philosophy of the Four Elements, plus the Akasha; and of the two Fluids (Electric and Magnetic).

2) The philosophy of the Four Realms: Akashic, Mental, Astral and Physical.

3) The philosophy of the three bodies: Mental, Astral and Physical.

4) The philosophy concerning the causal relationship between consciousness and time-space.

5) The philosophy concerning the structure of Self which declares that *all* things exist as part of the divine Unity of Self.

6) The philosophy that *all* things are alive and, in their own way, conscious.

7) The philosophy that not only are humans *capable* of communing with the divine, but that this is our birthright—our true “normal” state of being.

8) The philosophy that declares “know thy self” as being the first step toward knowledge of The One Self.

There are also features of the Hermetic *practice* that are defining and here are a few of those that are specific to Bardón's Hermetics:

1) Introspection and examination of the immediate, personal self. This is done within the context of the Four Elements and the three bodies. In Step One of IIIH, this is seen in the work of the two halves of the soul mirror and in the mental exercises. Through all of these, you come to know yourself—what you manifest currently and the mechanics of how you manifest it.

2) Self-transformation. This is also accomplished using the context of the Four Elements and three bodies. This is the longest, most arduous task since there are so many layers of Self to be transformed. The first stage is the transformation of the personality as witnessed by Steps Two through Four of IIIH. This entails the complete transformation of the astral body, hence all those exercises that develop the magical abilities. The second and far longer stage is the transformation of the Individual Self (i.e., the temporal mental body), as seen in Steps Five through Eight of IIIH. The third and final stage of Self-transformation is perhaps the most challenging; namely, the conscious integration of the Greater Self (i.e., the eternal mental body) into the Individual and personal levels of Self.

3) Transformation of the external world. Even though this is thought of as being concurrent with the task of Self-transformation, it is secondary to it and is actually part of the process of Self-transformation. When the Self-transformation reaches the completion of its third stage and the eternal mental body is consciously manifest at the level of personality, there is suddenly no “external” world — the formerly “external” world is then experienced as a part of Self. At that point “transformation of the external world” is *Self*-transformation.

4) Personal experimentation and direct personal experience. The practical work of Hermetics materializes the intellectual comprehension. It also provides the fertile ground from which the intellect may grow still higher.

5) A sharp intellect. Hermetics hones the mind to a razor sharpness.

6) The guide of Equilibrium. Every bit of the work of Hermetics is done to augment and create balance within the levels of Self. The first goal is the attainment of an astral Equilibrium of the Elements within the personal self. Once achieved, the goal then becomes a mental Equilibrium of the Elements within the Individual Self. All of this leads one to the Abyss between the temporal and

eternal realms, the crossing of which requires an absolute and steadfast Equilibrium.

7) Self-direction, or conscious control of the self. The Hermetic training teaches the student how to make conscious use of nature's own forces. This pertains to the natural forces that operate within ourselves and those that operate external to us. For example, Step One of IHH teaches the student the nature of their mind and trains them in the art of how to control it. It also teaches the student the nature of their own personality (soul mirror work) which is *the* crucial ingredient to the art of successful self-transformation. Furthermore, it teaches a rudimentary way in which the student can make conscious use of the laws of nature to effect external change (the Eucharistic magic of air, food and water). In order to grow in the ability to effect external changes, the student *must* learn the ability to control their own self. Self-control (i.e., the ability to define one's own responses to external and internal stimuli, instead of those stimuli being the determining factor) is an essential ingredient to attaining an Elemental Equilibrium.

8) A respectful and worshipful attitude. At the heart of the Hermetic philosophy and practice there lies a devotion to the divine Unity of Self, "The All". This manifests as a sort of moral code that emphasizes loving kindness toward others and service to humanity. This is the beating mystical heart that powers Hermetic magic. Even so, this spirit of respectful worship manifests itself in a multitude of forms, but it is the nature of Hermetics that its practice breeds unique Individuals.

IHH and Kundalini

29 January 2004

>> *Does Bardon's system raise the Kundalini in the initiate and if so at what stage.* <<

It's not a matter of raising the kundalini. It's a matter of the kundalini rising *of its own accord* as a natural consequence of the initiate's mago-mystical advancement. When initiation is *balanced*, the chakras unfold and the kundalini rises without any ill effects. This is because in a balanced Hermetic initiation, the kundalini and the chakra system are not forced. In fact, they are not focused upon at all.

The chakras are reflective of the initiate's inner state of maturity. They flower *of their own accord* when the initiate reaches the stage of maturity to which they correspond. The kundalini force *of*

its own accord naturally rises to fill the flowering chakra. When this *natural* process is left to its own wisdom, instead of being interfered with and forced before its time, there are no ill effects. Instead, it is empowering and immediately carries the initiate forward.

Ill effects on the other hand, are experienced *because* the individual has not reached the stage of maturity which *naturally* unfolds the chakras and the kundalini. In such a case, the kundalini meets resistance in the form of "impurities" (i.e., a lack of maturity) and, as is its nature when faced with this sort of resistance, the kundalini burns away at the impurities and at the surrounding area in the individual's emotional energy structure. From an Hermetic perspective this is ultimately destructive because, even if the *energetic manifestation* of those blocking impurities are effectively burned away, the level of maturity remains relatively unchanged and those *energetic* impurities inevitably re-manifest.

There are very complex eastern methods by which one can safely work *with* the kundalini, but, contrary to what most westerners surmise, they involve intensive focus upon one's level of maturity and its growth. In other words, these methods involve a great deal more than just trying to move the kundalini. Really, they are about using the kundalini (very carefully and precisely) to encourage one's maturation -- the goal being *maturation* and not the mere movement of the kundalini.

Bardon's system sidesteps all of these issues by focusing upon developing the initiate's mago-mystical maturity directly. In Bardon's system, the kundalini is left in nature's hands and its rate of rising is left to nature's wisdom based upon the initiate's own rate of maturation

When someone is suffering the discomfoting consequences of having forced their chakras open and their kundalini to rise unnaturally, the remedy is to focus upon the work of character transformation. Only in this way is the individual's level of maturity raised to par with their unnaturally elevated or active kundalini.

Predators, Energy Vampires and Astral Irritations

06 July 2002

There are several ways to view "negative" astral entities. One popular way is to set them up as combatants -- predatory entities that exist outside of one's own self and which seek to parasitize you and draw you down. The great problem with this way of looking at this dynamic is that it places you as the victim and gives your "attacker"

the advantage. With this dynamic in place, it is impossible to permanently rid oneself of these pests and one ends up expending all their energy in battle instead of in forwarding their own personal evolution. In other words, to combat them, you expend your energy defensively, if not offensively as some have suggested, and you never seem to have quite enough energy since there's always a bigger, more powerful predator around the next corner.

There is however, another way of looking at this dynamic that will rid you of these pests and which will forward your own personal evolution instead of diverting it. And that is to always look within to the "place" in your own psyche that these entities "attack". In point of fact, an entity can have no influence over you unless you give permission in one form or another. Most often this permission is given at a subconscious level that we're not normally aware of; hence the need to look within.

It's apparent that the vast majority, if not all, of these entities are generated by one's own psyche. Thus it is doubly important to look within.

It is impossible to *permanently* rid oneself of a part of one's own psyche through the use of the defensive techniques that many have described. Even if you magically sever the link between you and it, and dissolve the image of it that your psyche has created, it *will* spring anew since the basic environment which created it has not been changed (i.e., your own psyche). The only method that works for this kind of self-created pest is the soul mirror (or similar) work of self-transformation of the personality. This work directly addresses the unexplored psyche and transforms it into a known thing. It places you into a relationship of true powerfulness in regard to your own psyche and its automatic, subconscious reactions.

The work of self-transformation is not a "War in Heaven" sort of thing. It's not a battle. Instead, it's transformation. Transformation requires first finding a common ground with the thing to be transformed. It means accepting a thing for what it is, not what we'd like it to be or what it appears to be, etc.

These entities are not foes and they are not a threat. For those involved with the work of IHH, they are often manifestations of your own psyche generated (by your psyche) as a natural response to the work of self-examination. It's as if your own psyche is saying to your conscious mind, "Hey, look here! This needs work!" In truth, this is a manifestation of your inner or "Higher" guidance which is meant to help you in the work of self-transformation. If accepted on this basis, then the experience presents an invaluable opportunity to work dir-

ectly with the wisdom of your own guide and focus your attention on the parts of yourself that need the most attention.

If instead of reacting with fear and revulsion by pushing these entities away, you were to sit down with them and truly get to know them, you would learn something very valuable about the ways in which we sabotage ourselves. There is almost always some degree of internal resistance to self-change, just as there is to any change. Magic training also tends to stir the internal pot, so to speak, and all sorts of stuff bubbles to the surface. But this is as it should be and if true magical progress is desired then each thing that rises to the surface must be faced head-on and *transformed* (not "destroyed", but *transformed*).

>> *They attempt to prevent your awareness of them. They attempt to pacify you/turn you into a dumb animal. They will attempt to come between you and the divine. They so much do not want to be discovered that they will try to trick you into believing they do not exist. E.g. leaving you for some time so you think you imagined them, or encouraging you into a magical path that may be wrong for you so you think you're making progress when you're actually going in the wrong direction.* <<

What you describe here are the natural mechanisms of the human psyche in action, especially when parts of the psyche are under attack by other parts of the psyche and a schism develops. In other words, the more you try to separate yourself from a part of your psyche and deny that it is a part of yourself, the more manipulative it becomes.

>> *They are ugly and ungainly if you meet them on the astral.*
<<

Yes, the astral is the realm of symbol and these parts of the psyche -- especially when we are afraid of them and are denying that they are a part of self -- translate symbolically as horrific, ugly, "evil" creatures. However, their appearance says more about how we feel about them than it does about their own true nature.

>> *The kinds that are inconsequential astral leeches, by the above, coupled with cleansing/light/regular banishings/good astral hygiene. They are like bacteria that one picks up from not washing and from coming into contact with dirty people/places.* <<

If, through the work of self-transformation of the psyche, you afford them no place to attach themselves, then they are never a nuisance. And if you are pestered by such things, they can teach you nearly as much about yourself (i.e., where you need to work on yourself) as the self-generated creations of your own psyche. The "trick"

isn't to gain ever greater power to fight them with; instead, it's to so transform yourself that they have no interest in you. Then you can co-exist peacefully with them instead of endlessly doing battle.

THE STEPS

STEP ONE – MISCELLANEOUS

Recognizing Emotional Resistance to Progress

17 December 2003

>> *As Bardon attests, the early morning is one of the best times, and especially the most convenient time to practice. Some people seem to have no problems waking up bright and early and being disturbingly cheerful, unfortunately, I don't seem to be one of these people. Without the aid of an alarm clock I slept until 9:30 this morning - hardly early. Getting up a couple of hours earlier is like torture, and the cold shower is almost unthinkable now its winter. I don't think it's a soul mirror issue, it seems physical. Am I the only one who has this problem? <<*

Actually, I'd say that this *is* a soul mirror issue having specifically to do with will power and the level of your commitment. Initiation is not a matter of taking the easiest way out simply because something important is hard at first. Initiation is about changing yourself and about standing up to the challenges that naturally arise in the pursuit of self-transformation. The complaint of "It's too hard" must be rejected as being insufficient justification, as well as insufficient explanation.

For truly, when you think about it, if you *really* wanted to do your exercises early in the morning, you'd find a way. You would adjust your habits to accommodate an earlier rising. It's as simple as that. It's not something you're *physically* incapable of doing -- it's something you're *emotionally unwilling* to do.

As for the cold shower, this is also not a matter of your being *physically* incapable of doing it. If you do it as Bardon suggested with the brushing and then the brisk toweling off afterward, you do not end up chilled. What prevents you from doing it is again, an *emotional unwillingness*.

One aspect of these early exercises which focus upon physical habits is that they bring the student into a confrontation with this very issue of emotional unwillingness and thereby develop the student's force of will and self-discipline. Ultimately, this issue of breaking through emotional resistance is the very least of the challenges the student will inevitably face along the path of initiation.

The Fatigue Response

06 March 2004

>> *Since I have started practicing Bardon's exercises I feel more tired during the day than before. Has anybody had the same experience? Do you know any "energizing" exercises that could help me cope with the fatigue?* <<

At the beginning, fatigue is usually due to either a physical or an emotional cause. The most common physical cause (related to beginning the IHH exercises) is lack of sleep! Instead of shuffling our life around and omitting something less important, many folks will take time away from their sleep time. For example, getting up an hour earlier than before but not going to bed an hour earlier to compensate. A proper amount of sleep is important in the physical body's regulation of energy.

If that's not the cause, then the most likely culprit is emotional blockage of some sort. Tiredness is primarily an emotional state. For example, you can feel tired but then something exciting happens and you're suddenly energized. And conversely, you can feel full of energy and then something depressing happens and you're suddenly exhausted.

Most emotional blockages and feelings of tiredness arise (in relation to beginning IHH) because of the Soul Mirror and character transformation work of Steps One through Three. During the period of constructing your Soul Mirror lists, you should take very good care of yourself, physically and emotionally. Introspection of this sort and of this depth is bound to stir up all sorts of stuff, much of which you won't even be aware of at first.

One "trick" to avoiding this emotional fatigue is to apply the "thought control" exercise technique of *detachment* and *observation*, instead of involvement in each of the items you uncover through introspection. Introspection is very much akin to that first mental exercise of Step One in which you are merely "taking stock" of what *is*. You're simultaneously detaching yourself from what you are observing. In other words, you're not interacting *with* what you're observing. When you apply this to introspection, you'll find it much less emotionally disruptive and therefore, much less physically tiring. It also makes it easier to penetrate much deeper into your psyche and "*sweep out the dark corners*" as Bardon put it.

STEP ONE – MENTAL

Thought "Control"?

29 June 2002

Several months ago, a German visitor and I were comparing the German IHH with the English translations. Of special interest was what he had to say about the English phrase "thought control" as the title of the first mental exercise in Step One. According to him, this is only one of the possible translations of the German word and a poor one at that.

The problem with the word "control" is that we English speakers usually take it to mean "the exercise of restraint or direction over" our thoughts, but this is clearly *not* what Bardón is advising with this exercise. My visitor pointed out that the secondary meaning of the word is closer to the German original. That secondary meaning is "a standard of comparison", as in a "control subject" within a scientific experiment.

So, what Bardón was really intending, and which the standard English translation seems to obscure, is that with this first exercise, the student is merely taking stock of what normally transpires in the human mind. In other words, passively observing the machinations of the mind, without involvement, in order to understand the territory itself. This provides the 'control' or standard, which is an essential prerequisite to the work of altering how the mind functions.

Must We Remember Our Thoughts During the "Thought Control" Exercise?

09 January 2003

>> I started the "thought control/witnessing/monitoring" exercise, and I have a new question: Talking about the thoughts, FB writes that:

- "observe your train of thought for five minutes, and make an attempt to remember these thoughts" (p. 66).

- "it will be difficult for him (= the student) to remember all of them" (p. 67).

Does this mean that I not only have to observe the thoughts going through my mind (and remember them immediately after they arose), but that I have to remember all of them at the end of the 6-7-8 minutes of the duration of the exercise ? <<

No. Here again, the Ruggeberg edition gives a very different take on Bardon's words.

Where Merkur has "*observe your train of thought for five minutes, and make an attempt to remember these thoughts*", Ruggeberg has "*observe the train of your thoughts for five minutes trying to retain it.*" The word "retain" refers to not losing *the train of thoughts*, as is seen in a follow-up statement: "*The main point is not to forget yourself, not to lose the train of thoughts, but to pursue it attentively.*"

The second paragraph that you quote from is *not* an indication that the student is to memorize what thoughts transpired during the observation (that would not be a *passive* approach to one's thoughts!). Rather, this paragraph is pointing out that the mind will quiet itself when you passively observe it and withdraw your participation. This leads to fewer and fewer thoughts and at the end of observing a peaceful mind, the few thoughts that did arise will be memorable, without even *trying* to memorize them. So this paragraph is just pointing out the contrast between how busy the mind is at the outset and how quiet it becomes with practice.

There is a difference between being *aware of* your thoughts and *memorizing* your thoughts. When you attentively observe what transpires in your mind, you will, by the end of the exercise, have witnessed what sorts of thoughts arose and with what frequency and intensity they arose. And like observing anything, what you have observed remains as a memory, of its own accord and not because you have intentionally *memorized* it. At the end of the exercise, it's not what specific thoughts arose in what specific order that's important; it's the overall nature of the thoughts that's important and this requires no memorization.

More on Thought "Control"

06 February 2007

>> *As I exercise, this inner dialog always relates everything I do to the next memory with the same context. This inner dialog has the nature that I can perceive it but not be aware of thinking.* <<

Yes, this is the unintentional awareness in action. It's not exactly "thinking" in the normal sense of the word, since "thinking" is an action pursued by the intentional awareness, not the unintentional. With the unintentional awareness, this is a passive reaction instead of active thinking.

>> *Normally I can differentiate between intentional and unin-*

tentional but this seems to be a state where both become intertwined. But it is also more unintentional than that it is intentional; maybe the whole thing is unintentional? I am confused. <<

This exercise divides the intentional awareness from the unintentional awareness. It is with your intentional awareness that you are passively observing the activity of your unintentional awareness. The moment you begin to participate with and actively partake in the reactionary action of your unintentional awareness then you have lost the quality of intentionality of awareness and have abandoned your awareness to the unintentional.

>> Bardon suggests that the student just observe his thoughts during 10 minutes, without getting involved. If the student does not get involved with a certain thought (just observe it arising, and then going away), but does feel the emotions that this thought generates, than he is getting involved, right? The correct approach would be to detach completely, without getting involve with the thoughts, and with any emotion generated by them, right? <<

"Feeling" emotions is how we observe emotions, just as mentally recognizing a thought is how we observe a thought's existence. This is different than involving yourself with a thought or emotion. Involvement with a thought entails pursuing the thought and letting the thought influence and excite our thinking. Likewise, involvement with an observed emotion entails delving deeply into the *experience* of the emotion and letting that experience influence and excite your emotional state. Detachment in both cases means recognizing each as it arises and then immediately letting it go as we retreat from involvement with it.

Validating Internal Answers

02 February 2004

>> I would be thankful if somebody could give me a validation of at least some of the answers I got, because they are quite specific in nature and imply elements of theory (such as the meaning of Tiphareth) I don't have yet. <<

Assuming that you're not looking for an interpretation or validation from me, I do have a few pointers for you to consider.

#1) Since this one-pointed meditation is occurring within your own mind, all the symbols and answers you get also come from within your own mind. This means that in order to understand their meaning, all you need to do is probe further *within*. It's not a matter of reading up on what Tiphareth means. Instead, it's a matter of fur-

ther investigating what Tiphareth *already* means to you.

#2) This form of meditation is an Art. The artistry involved is one of opening and closing, expanding and restricting, your focus. For example, with the question of Tiphareth (or when anything comes up that you feel you don't understand fully) you will need to open your focus a bit and see where "Tiphareth/sun" leads you. Let it take you on a ride for a while by opening your focus to whatever arises in your awareness. Then begin restricting your focus again to those things that seem most relevant and important.

#3) After you've spent some time wrestling with the question, spend some more time *resting* with the question. By this I mean just rest with the question in your mind without trying to find the answer. Let it just sit there as a question. Sleep on it and then after a day or so, wrestle with it again. During the period of resting with the question, your subconscious mind will be working away on the question without any conscious interference.

The Key to Mental Discipline

21 March 2005

The key is not to "quiet the mind"; but rather, to *ignore* the underlying mental chatter. Ignore it and distance yourself from it by focusing your attention upon something of your choosing. Let the mental chatter continue on its own *in the background* without any participation on your part.

Mental discipline is about focusing your attention where you want it to be focused. If you are focused solely upon the objective of quieting your mind then you are in fact focused upon the dis-quiet and are feeding its continuation. So focus instead upon something other than that ever-present dis-quiet.

On the First Part of the Second Step One Mental Exercise

02 April 2005

>> *I'm working on the first thought discipline exercise. It's a bit overwhelming to me. I can disengage pretty well from my thoughts when I sit down to meditate with the thought control, but then when I jump back into the fray in my daily life, it seems that I just get overrun. Any attempt to make my thoughts run only along certain lines backfires and makes me even more unfocused. Force and tension seem to be my habitual ways of getting myself in line, but those only go so far. I keep hearing that the mind should be*

coaxed, not forced, and that focusing should ultimately be done without tension; but I don't have a clear sense of how to get there. Any tips? <<

Take the task incrementally. For example, begin with a commitment to focus yourself exclusively upon the task at hand for five minutes. Once you've mastered the ability for a five minute stretch, begin increasing the duration of your focus. Try this with a variety of activities throughout your daily routine. By approaching it in this way, you are not overwhelmed by the prospect because you are dealing with a manageable amount of time *at the outset*, instead of trying to immediately deal with the prospect of hours at a stretch. Eventually, you will find it an easy matter to focus your attention at will and for as long as you desire.

>> I actually have the ability to concentrate intensely for long periods of time, but by using strong force or self-compulsion that I hardly feel until I bring my attention back to my body (and feel the tension and pain). I am guessing that this form of concentration isn't very healthy. <<

This exercise is not about "intense" concentration. A good example of the goal state is when you're focused upon doing something you enjoy. Such concentration is a natural by-product of your interest in what you're doing and requires no force. The key for you might be found in this factor of interest vs. resistance. If you are resistant to what you're doing then focusing your whole awareness upon it takes force. Perhaps checking in on your resistance level and disarming it will help.

>> I can be aware of myself having distracting thoughts while driving, but I'm not sure how to get those thoughts out of my mind except by force, which seems self-defeating. What am I missing? <<

This exercise is not about fighting against the distracting thoughts -- it's about focusing upon the *intended* thoughts and actions. In other words, each time you do find yourself wandering from your focus, gently bring your focus back to its intended target. This is far different than fighting against intruding thoughts and trying to suppress them.

On the Emptiness of Mind Exercise

10 July 2002

>> When practicing silent mind, I am a little confused as to what Bardon himself meant, and also, what is desirable regarding practicing his system, taking the long term view, today. To my under-

standing, a truly silent mind is one which has attained literally Samadhi, i.e., gone beyond duality of self and other; and thus, can sit, in true silence and stillness. From my Buddhist background, this seems to me to be 'true' silent mind. However, is this what Bardon meant?? <<

What you are examining with the emptiness exercise is the Self. At first, you see only the small self of the personal mind, but as time goes by and your practice deepens, higher, more inclusive levels of Self reveal themselves within the context of your emptiness. Ultimately, this leads to the realization of the Unitary Self -- The One Self -- pure BEing. But all that Bardon demanded with Step One was that you take the very first step upon that long path and learn how to simply empty your mind of all thoughts. The rest of the journey toward Self, he leaves up to you to pursue.

Continuous pursuit of the emptiness of mind is essential to the entire work of IHH. Each future Step assumes that you've reached a certain stage in the deepening of your emptiness (and thus your cognizance of Self) that would be the natural result of your having continued in your work with the emptiness up to that point. Thus for example, the ability to transfer your consciousness in Step Four requires a certain understanding of Self to achieve, and this understanding is the direct result of having practiced the emptiness of mind throughout the previous three Steps. But if you've neglected the emptiness of mind, then the genuine transference of consciousness is *very* difficult to achieve. Likewise, if you haven't learned to empty your mind of all thoughts, then the Step Two sensory concentration exercises are *very* difficult to master.

Remembering What Transpires During the Emptiness of Mind State

06 January 2003

>> I have a question for Step 1, emptiness of mind. While doing this, there are times when I will forget my conscious self. But I am awake because I am sitting straight up; using the physical exercise of Step 2, while doing this exercise. And things just go blank. Is this correct? <<

Yes, so long as you are still *aware*. It's fairly common, at this stage, that you don't *remember* what transpires beyond thought (i.e., you forget), but you should remain aware *during* the emptiness. In time, you will find that the emptiness is really quite full -- the only thing it is "empty" of is thought.

As I explain (and demonstrate) in Lesson Three of the "Self-Healing Archaeous" audio series, the emptiness of mind state is the Fire region of the mental body. When you focus your awareness exclusively in this region through practice of the emptiness of mind, there is a direct perception of essential meaning which occurs beyond thought, idea, word, feeling, etc. It is pre-cognitive, so in order to become aware of what you perceive in that state, you must carefully return to a cognitive state. In the Archaeous, I recommend that you enter the emptiness from a one-pointedness state and then *return to one-pointedness* immediately after your emptiness. By entering *from* one-pointedness, you take your point of focus into the emptiness and it sets the stage, so to speak, for the direct perceptions within emptiness. Then, when you return *to* one-pointedness and examine your point of focus anew, the pre-cognitive direct perceptions from the emptiness take shape as thoughts, ideas and words. By doing this, you begin to build a bridge of continuous awareness between thinking cognition and the pre-cognitive direct perception of essential meaning found in the emptiness.

Deepening EOM: Encountering the Different Layers of Mind

05 May 2003

>> *I have been practicing "emptiness of mind" for about 6 weeks now. On a good day, my mind stays free of all but the most fleeting thoughts for minutes at a time. Lately however I have started to experience something new. As my mind empties of thoughts and (more or less stays that way) I have started to feel strong emotions (mostly joy). I can, with some effort, put that out of my mind too --- but should I? Is this emotion a distraction in the sense Bardon means it or is it OK to simply let this feeling flow through me while I practice EOM? <<*

Sorry, but you can't have a true *emptiness* of mind when you're experiencing strong emotions. These are indeed "distractions" in regard to the EOM exercise. However, that doesn't mean they are without value. I suggest that the next time this occurs; you shift gears, exit your EOM and enter into a one-pointedness with these emotions as your focus. Explore them through one-pointedness but not through EOM.

When pursued over time, the EOM exercise will reveal different layers of the mind. The first layer that's mastered is the level of thoughts in Step One, but there are other layers as well, such as that of pure emotions which you've just encountered. If you also treat this

layer as a "distraction" and learn to ignore it in the same way you have learned to ignore thoughts, then your EOM practice will reach an even deeper state.

More on Emptiness/Vacancy of Mind

01 September 2007

>> *With my focus on VOM, the thoughts only occur when necessary, mainly from outside of myself, and although it may be unrelated, it seems to amplify synchronicity, i.e. lots of coincidences occur.* <<

As I explained in my Self-Healing Archaeous audio Lessons, VoM occurs when your awareness is focused exclusively within the Fire region of your temporal mental body; when your awareness is focused exclusively upon *perception*. By exclusively, I mean that you have excluded thinking (the Air region of the temporal mental body), feeling (the Water region of the temporal mental body), and physical sensing (the Earth region of the temporal mental body) from your conscious awareness and are focused only upon *perception* without these additional layers of *interpretation*.

When this occurs, your conscious awareness is in absolute sync with the objective universe, with the NOW. It is the *temporal* state of BEing without DOing.

>> *What is the difference between thought and no-thought, i.e. how are they related?* <<

Both are aspects of *awareness*, one perceptual and one interpretive. Thinking is the purview of the Air region of the temporal mental body and perceiving is the purview of the Fire region. Thinking is the first stage of interpreting, personalizing and processing the perceptions of the Fire region. Without thinking, these perceptions cannot be integrated into the personality or day-to-day awareness.

>> *Is there a method (or something like that) that helps to take the step from "faint thoughts arising that mostly don't seem to be my thoughts" to "no thoughts appearing at all"?* <<

The *brain bound* mind, or surface awareness, never actually stops thinking while the body is alive. The point of EOM is to introduce you to the rest of Mind which is *not* bound by the physical brain and consequently, is not limited to thinking. So EOM requires that you *completely* ignore the surface awareness and the thoughts that constantly pass through it. To do this, you must willfully turn your attention *away* from thoughts and thinking, and focus upon the silence itself. In other words, apply the technique of one-pointedness

to the *silence* instead of thoughts.

>> *If I do the EoM-Exercise I will either concentrate on my breathing or force myself to be quiet.* <<

This exercise must use the *intentional* awareness with your intention aimed squarely at the goal of an *empty* mind. Focusing on the *breath* does not accomplish this (and was not anywhere suggested by Bardou). When focusing on your breathing, your intention is not focused upon achieving an empty mind. It does quiet the mind but, ultimately, does not accomplish the goal of an *empty* mind.

>> *But if I do this kind of concentrating [on my breathing] I will come to a feeling of being completely filled up with emptiness. I think nothing. There are no thoughts. For me it always seemed to be and felt like Emptiness/Vacancy of Mind.* <<

Focusing on the breath can be used as an *entry* into an emptiness of mind state but this is only due to the fact that it can have a quieting affect upon the surface awareness. It achieves this effect by *diverting* the intentional awareness in much the same way that focusing upon any "mindless" task can. Hermetic practice however (or at least Bardonian practice), is not rooted in *diverting* the mind. Instead, it is rooted in *directly addressing* the mind and intentionally using the mind's natural abilities as one wills. The ultimate goal in reference to emptiness of mind is to be able to enter into an empty state at will on a moment's notice, without any preliminaries such as focusing on the breathing.

If you do use a breathing focus to enter an empty mind state (or rather, to empty your surface mind of thoughts) then I suggest that once your mind quiets down, shift your focus away from your breathing and fix it immovably upon the *silence* of emptiness. A true empty mind state is much deeper than what is achieved when one's focus remains upon the breath (or any other activity/object/etc.).

Looking Back on My Own Experience of the Step One Mental Exercises

29 August 2003

>> *1. What were your first experiences as a beginner about the mind? About controlling it? The difficulties?* <<

When I first sat down and attempted the first mental exercise of Step One, it seemed impossible. My mind was so active and entirely out of *my* control, or so it seemed. The first hurdle for me was to believe that I actually did have control over it! I remember being very frustrated at first. It wasn't until I stopped fighting my mind

(fighting it took a *lot* of energy for zero result) and quit trying to arm-wrestle it down by sheer force of will, that my frustration passed and the excitement began.

>> 2. *What improvements did you notice, and how did they come about?* <<

The first improvement was that my struggle taught me not to struggle. Once I'd jumped that hurdle and was able to *passively* observe the activities of my mind I learned many things about the nature of my brain-bound consciousness. Number one was that it ended up being a pretty quiet place once I had disengaged and stopped participating in its activity. Number two was that the thoughts that did arise in that relative quiet were significant thoughts. They arose and dissipated on their own and from observing this, I realized that it was those seed thoughts that my surface consciousness turned into all that mess of randomness that typified my mind before. But those slow thoughts within the quiet were quite different than what my surface consciousness created out of them, so different that the surface chaos was unrecognizable as having any essential significance.

It was my success with the first exercise that enabled my success with the second. Specifically, it was learning the ability to detach my active awareness from participating in the surface consciousness.

>> 3. *How do you define concentration or "one-pointedness"? What thoughts are excluded? And how did you experience this?* <<

The second exercise is about learning how to focus your attention and how to keep it focused for a length of time. This can really only be done effectively within the context of a quiet mind.

This exercise was very easy for me once I had attained a relative quiet of mind. Instead of focusing upon one of the seed thoughts that arise in the quiet mind, I put one of my own invention into that environment and focused on *it*. At first this didn't work because once I focused on this new, foreign thought, my brain-bound surface awareness took over and began participating in the seed thoughts that were arising in the background and all hell would break loose! It was like trying to read while the TV's blaring. Part of your mind is still listening to the TV.

How I overcame that was by ignoring it. After a while, even that background noise turned to quietness and I was able to focus my *whole* attention on my created thought form.

There are no hard and fast rules about what to exclude and

what to include. Those are intuitive, self-directed choices. At first I stuck only to those thoughts that had a clearly direct relevance to my chosen idea, and ignored (i.e., didn't participate in) those thoughts that had no clear relevance. Later, I experimented with opening those parameters. From that experience, I learned which layers of association are worth pursuing and which aren't.

Then I experimented with focusing my attention upon the seed thoughts that naturally arose in the quietness. These were very fertile ground for exploration!

As soon as I got the hang of the exercise, it was no problem to maintain my focus for as long as I desired or as was needed.

>> 4. *How did and how do you experience "emptiness of mind"?* <<

This exercise is an extension, in some respects, of the first exercise, but it takes the well honed ability to focus your mind and keep it focused, to achieve a true emptiness. The hurdle for me was in letting go of those seed thoughts that arise in the quiet mind when I wasn't focusing it on anything else. I could let go of them easily if I focused on a created idea, but with this exercise there is no created idea to focus that attention upon. Even though in the first exercise, I had learned how to detach from participating in them, I discovered that it was a different matter to not even perceive them arising. This took a different sort of focus and a good amount of will power for me to achieve *complete* silence of *thought*. I found that this state required that I focus *just* upon perception of what *is*, and willfully ignore all thought processes of any kind. It was also here that I learned the value of setting aside the input from all of the physical senses beforehand. This eventually led to my composing the "*Center of Stillness Meditation*".

It took me about a month of steady effort to finally achieve a true emptiness of mind. After that, time became less and less of an issue and within another month I could hold the emptiness for as long as I desired.

The emptiness itself is very difficult to describe with any succinctness. It is infinite. At first it was absolutely dark and I felt completely alone. But this changed with time and I now experience it as filled with brightness. This brightness contains an infinite amount of information that supersedes "thinking". Thinking comes *after* its perception within the emptiness and is part of how I integrate it into my mundane consciousness. Its *perception* however, requires the complete absence of *thinking*.

>> 6. *Having controlled the mind, how does it make you feel*

in daily life? What are the benefits? <<

Self-determined, self-directed, self-conscious. It has turned my life into a conscious and intentional act, instead of being pushed about, willy-nilly by events, thoughts, and emotions. I am able to *use* my mind. I can focus it at any moment, regardless of what transpires around me. I can enter into an emptiness of mind at any moment I choose, again regardless of my surroundings. My mind is my friend and we get along well.

>> 7. How does this make the sensory exercises of Step 2 easier? <<

The mental exercises of Step One are what make the sensory concentration exercises possible. These Step Two exercises require that you be able to clear your mind of all else and be able to focus your attention upon *just* the exercise at hand. It also requires that you know, experientially, how your mind works and what to expect of it.

On Using Meditation Music

27 July 2002

>> Yesterday, I came to a conclusion that while I'm listening to meditation music, my mind clears more easily and it is much easier to do the exercise. But if I stop the music, then all those thoughts come in, voices and I just cannot concentrate. Could this be a barrier in the future, if I for now keep listening to music, or should I just turn the music off and do it the harder way? <<

The fact that listening to music makes concentration easier for you indicates that the part of your mind that otherwise distracts you is preoccupied with the music and thus doesn't distract you. The problem with continuing in this way is that there will always be a part of your mind over which you have no control due to the fact that you're avoiding a confrontation with it. But if you turn off the music and tough it out, you will eventually gain control over your *whole* mind instead of just part of it. I recommend that you turn the music off during your IIIH exercises and confront your whole mind.

STEP ONE – ASTRAL

Soul Mirror Tips

22 May 2002

>> *I would appreciate anyone's feedback on which element lust would belong to?* <<

This would be impossible for anyone but you to say, if your question is in relation to your soul mirror. In that context, "lust" is too broad a category for someone else to say which Element within *you* it pertains to. These really are the sort of discernments we must make for ourselves, based upon our own personal manifestation of each character trait.

In general however, lust is associated with the Element Fire in that it usually manifests as a passionate force. But lust can be Watery, Airy and even Earthy too.

What Element does your instinct tell you to associate? With the soul mirror work, this is usually the best guide for assigning your character traits to the Elements.

With the second of the many soul mirrors that I've erected over the years, I decided to try an experiment. The process of assigning the traits to the Elements in my first mirror was arduous, so I decided to approach it differently. This time I just assigned them as my immediate gut instinct told me, without those hours of pondering and indecision. I wrote these assignments down (it took all of 5 minutes) and set them aside. A few days later, I picked up my list of unassigned traits again and began the process of puzzling each assignment out the hard way that I had during my first mirror. This list (which took a couple of days) was a bit different than my 5-minute instinctive list. I employed the labor intensive list for my work of character transformation and as usual I ended up changing some of my Elemental assignments. In the end, my labor intensive assignments ended up evolving into a closer match to my 5-minute list than to my original labor intensive list! In other words, my instinctual list was ultimately more accurate than the list I had sweated over. It wasn't perfect, but it was better!

Granted, I had, by that time, a greater understanding of the Elements than when I did my first mirror, but even so, this may be as good a place to start as any. Once you've developed your instinctual assignments to the Elements, go back and examine them rationally. And then of course, as you work with them and begin the process of

self-change, you will understand their Elemental assignments much better. This, ultimately, is where your Elemental assignments receive their final refinement -- in the process of self-change.

More Soul Mirror Questions

22 January 2003

>> *I started the first step and already have problems to come to a hundred items in the soul mirror. I am stuck somewhere at 90. I checked almost my whole past but it's always the same words coming up. I always write down the word (like greediness or whatever) and a little note about which context. But now I am running out of adjectives (words like greedy, hateful, and angry). Or am I supposed to write down situations? <<*

One hundred items is a number to aim for, it's not an actual minimum requirement. So if 90 are what you can come up with, then that's what you've got . . . for now. As time goes by, you can always add to your list as you realize more items.

Nonetheless, it's wise to break down inclusive labels like greedy, hateful, angry, and so on. Each one of these can manifest in a variety of ways and arise in response to quite a number of different stimuli. So I suggest that you examine these broad labels and try to break them apart a bit.

The great advantage to be had in doing that deconstructing becomes apparent when you begin the Step Two work of character transformation. It is very difficult, if not impossible, to transform something as broad as 'anger', for example. But if you break it down into more specific *types* of anger then you can grab hold of one type at a time and transform it. By transforming one type at a time, you can ultimately transform 'anger'.

The relationship between your character traits and the Elements cannot be perceived with the rational intellect alone. This is why Bardou suggests that the student meditate deeply upon each of the Elements and upon the character traits. Meditation taps into *more than* just the rational intellect and reveals an understanding of the Elements unattainable by just thinking. I suggest that you apply the Step One mental techniques of one-pointedness and emptiness of mind meditation to delve deeper into the Elements instead of focusing just upon lists of character trait and Element associations.

>> *I think the strong emotions full of energy belong to Fire because of the projective or electrical energy they contain. Anger is often depicted with lightning bolts, red rays, etc. Confidence is seen*

in cartoons with a puffed-up chest, or like determination, with a certain set to the jaw-line. All these examples depict some form of energy expenditure to me, and so belong to Fire. Feelings like shyness are felt inwardly - drawn there magnetically, and so belong to Water and emotions. At least that's how I see it. <<

In general, you've got the right idea. The problem though, is that the items you've listed are the *results* of character traits. Anger, for example, is a Fiery *symptom* or *effect*, it is not a *root trait*. With the Soul Mirror work, you must find the root itself. The root of anger *might* be Fiery in nature but it can also be Airy or Watery or Earthy. This is why I say that these broad terms *must* be broken down situationally and examined until you've recognized their root cause.

The Elemental attribution of your own character traits is a *very* personal matter, so lists of correspondences only serve a limited usefulness in this regard. What exists as a Fiery trait for one person may well be Watery for you, so even if you do find your trait in a list, you must still examine it and decide *for yourself* which Element it truly belongs to for *you*.

It's inevitable that *at Step One* you will make some errors in your attributions because, at this stage, your comprehension of the Elements is fairly under-developed. But that changes as you progress and deepen your work with the Elements. Your understanding improves and so you later re-assign your character traits as needed. Your Step One Soul Mirror should be as good as you are capable of doing, but it is also an evolving work that you add items to as you discover them and cross items off as you transform them, etc. It does not need to be *perfect*.

My counsel is that you do your absolute best at this point, based upon your current understanding of the Elements. Accept its imperfection and promise yourself that you will make corrections to it as your understanding deepens. Striving for absolute perfection in these attributions, at this stage, often leads to folks spending months and months on this phase of the work alone and getting themselves so frustrated that they quit mid-stream.

>> Having (without too much difficulty) finished my negative soul mirror a little while ago, I decided today to move on to the positive soul mirror. When I sat down to write some positive traits I quickly came to a realization about myself and my self-image. I easily came up with just short of 200 traits for my negative soul mirror, yet I am struggling to get 80 for the positive mirror. This is something which is quite revealing for me and has meant that working on my positive soul mirror has actually been somewhat more upsetting

than working on my negative one. <<

What you've recounted is a common experience. I think this stems from our modern culture in which it's more acceptable to be self-critical than it is to be self-praising, so we hardly ever take the opportunity to analyze our positive qualities. When we're suddenly faced with having to do so, we draw a blank and struggle to see the good amidst all the bad. Part of this is because we're so ingrained to shun self-praise; but the thing is, the positive soul analysis is *not* about self-praise, boasting or egotism -- it's about taking *honest* stock of the good parts of our own self. This requires just as radical a degree of self-honesty as does the analysis of our negative traits! The soul mirror is not an exercise in self-deprecation, false humility or self-debasing. It's an exercise in *honest* self-examination and analysis.

Often, when it comes to the positive traits, a person who has done a very thorough job of the breaking down the negative traits in almost microscopic detail, will suddenly be listing very broad terms like "kindness" or "joy", and forget completely about the need to be specific. The result is a very lop-sided view of themselves as an overly negative creature; whereas, in reality, this is seldom the case with someone who is capable of having so deeply penetrated their negative side.

Some will think that the negative mirror is the most important, but this is only partially true. Granted, the focus of the character transformation work is upon the transformation of the negative traits, but the positive traits are *essential* to that process. They are our allies, so to speak, in that they point the way to success. So, ferreting out as many as you can, proves most beneficial during the work of character transformation.

Why Assign the Soul Mirror Traits to the Elements?

04 August 2004

>> I've never quite understood why we do this. <<

There are two primary reasons for this. Number one is that it places you into a different relationship with the items you've listed. It gives you a bit more separation from how personal these items are by intellectualizing them as you analyze which Element, their degree of occurrence, etc. This grants you a bit more power over them and helps enable your transformation of them.

Secondly, the practice invites you to consider the way in which the Elements manifest *within you*. This is an important precursor to

understanding how the Elements manifest *externally*. When you can personally identify how an Element feels inside of yourself, then you can more readily recognize it externally. And when you can manipulate the Elements *internally* in this way (of character transformation), then you can more readily manipulate them *externally*.

STEP ONE – PHYSICAL

Eucharistic Magic Miscellany

25 July 2002

It's very common when you begin to work with the Eucharistic magic, to *push* the idea into the substance in an almost physical way. Many will hold their breath and grunt or strain their muscles in some way, furrow their brow, etc., all in an effort to physically and energetically *force* the idea into the substance. This is a waste of energy.

This Step One and Two work of impregnation with an idea is done entirely with the mind. What you're doing is placing your idea into the Akasha resident within the substance and the *only* thing that has power in the Akasha is the mind or mental body.

So, it's far more productive to expend that energy mentally instead of physically. Physical movements might support your mental process and help you focus your mind, but the power of the Eucharistic magic resides solely with the mind. Ultimately, the Eucharist requires only a brief, very focused thought.

The Step One magic of breath, food and water -- the Eucharistic magics -- are probably *the* most misunderstood exercises of Step One. Bardon did a fairly poor job of clearly expressing himself in that section so it takes reading it with a fine toothed comb to get at the true essence of the Eucharistic magic (EM).

The EM is solely about the Akasha-mind connection. It is not an exercise in the accumulation or projection of astra-physical energy.

The Akasha is resident within every physical thing and it is this resident Akasha within the substance that one impresses their thoughts upon. The Akasha within the air we breath (not the Air Element) is the root cause of that air. When we impregnate this Akasha with our ideation, we are effectively adding our ideation to the root causation. When we then inhale the air thus impregnated, we are also inhaling its resident Akasha that carries the impression of our ideation. This quantum of air-Akasha then merges with the Akasha

resident in our own cells as the blood circulates and transfers the ideation into our own cells via the Akasha. As the root causation of matter, the ideation we have impressed upon the Akasha, weaves itself into the mental, astral and eventually, the physical matrix which surrounds the Akasha.

The EM is a completely *mental* exercise. The *only* thing you use is your mind. First you mentally formulate your ideation and then you transfer your ideation into the substance with your mind alone. This takes *no* exertion of energy. All it takes is mental will and the attitude of complete self-assurance. You must know, without a doubt, that your idea has been transferred to the Akasha resident in the substance.

When you ingest the impregnated substance you must again have no doubt that it is invading every aspect of your being. It will, by simple course of nature, do this in any event, whether you participate consciously or not.

I find that it is frequently very difficult to convince folks of the simplicity of the EM, but it really is a very simple exercise. Mostly, it's a matter of stepping out of your own way and stop making it so difficult. Just let your mind do the work.

The EM is closely related to auto-suggestion.

>> *EYE BATHING: I can't figure out how this one is working anymore. I thought that Water Magic was mostly based on using the magnetic properties of Water, but if I'm not using magnetism isn't that a bit outside the spirit in which this section has been written (Water Magic)? I don't feel like this one has been intended to be charged through Akasha, am I wrong? <<*

It is a confusing matter, so don't feel alone! In this section, Bardon talks about the magnetic properties of cold water and uses the term "magnetizing" but he does not explain *how* to "magnetize" the cold water. All he talks about *doing* in Step One is impregnating substances with an ideation via the resident Akasha. As a consequence of the fact that cold water is naturally magnetic, your ideation will also inhabit the physical molecules of the cold water very strongly, ever so slightly changing their physical structure. This makes for a stronger, more directly effective, charge of your mental ideation than if you were to use warm water or another substance. However, this "magnetization" is accomplished by the water itself, not by you. You are not instructed to employ any sort of energy other than your ideation which is attached to the resident Akasha of the water.

To truly magnetize a thing requires the accumulation and pro-

jection of the Magnetic Fluid and this is *not* what Bardon was suggesting here.

Why Bardon phrased these things in this confusing manner here and why he mentions the magnetic eye bath for the development of clairvoyance (which doesn't come until much later in IIIH) are both mysteries to me. IMO, this is a very poorly written section since it seems to confuse the heck out of most everybody.

The only way I made my own way through this part way back when was to take that section apart, word by word. When broken down in this way and analyzed intensively, it became apparent that Bardon did *not* intend for the student to be manipulating the Magnetic Fluid (i.e., "magnetizing") at this stage.

The "Mystery of Breathing"

27 February 2003

>> *Bardon, in IIIH the Mystery of Breathing heading (2001 edition p. 73) says "When you transfer a thought, idea, or concept, whether abstract or concrete into the air you are about to inhale, the Akasha principle of that particular air will accept that thought or idea and pass it on to the air substance though the electric and magnetic fluids."* <<

In other words, the Akasha resident within all material substances is susceptible to mental impress. It will take on an idea that is projected into it and then express that ideation via the Electric and Magnetic Fluids and their Elements. As the Fluids pass the ideation to the Elements, the ideation is integrated into the material realm ("air substance"). This was Bardon's point in his assignation of oxygen to Fire, nitrogen to Water, etc., in that these are the avenues by which the ideation passes into materiality via the Elements.

>> *Further, he says (p. 74) "The electromagnetic fluid charged with the idea or concept will lead the electromagnetic air tinged with the idea out of the bloodstream, through the astral matrix to the astral body and reflect it from there through the mental matrix to the immortal spirit."* <<

And here, he is saying that there is also an "upward" effect of this sort of magic which is carried out by the "electro-magnetic air". This is the primary effect of the magic of breath -- its effectiveness upon the astral and mental levels of the individual (as opposed to the magic of food whose effectiveness is primarily oriented to the physical)

His phrase "electro-magnetic air" is a reference to the Air Ele-

ment and its Fluidic charge *not the "air substance" or material air*. In other words, he's saying that the Akasha has passed the ideation on to the Fluids and Elements and now the *Air Element* is passing this ideation on to the astral and mental bodies via the Fluid it contains.

>> *Interestingly though, he describes the idea ascending to the immortal spirit, whereas I thought it should be descending into material world...? He says that idea is reflected from astral THROUGH mental and immortal - implying that astral level employs (controls) the other levels in action. <<*

Let's take a closer look at what he said: *"The electromagnetic fluid charged with the idea or concept will lead the electromagnetic air tinged with the idea out of the bloodstream, through the astral matrix to the astral body and reflect it from there through the mental matrix to the immortal spirit."*

Let me translate: The *electro-magnetic Fluid* (which Bardon ascribes to the Air Element) holds the ideation passed to it by the Akasha. The electro-magnetic Fluid leads the *Air Element* along with the ideation, out of the *physical* bloodstream and carries the Element+ideation through the astral matrix (which connects the physical and astral bodies), communicating your ideation to your astral body. After penetrating your astral body, the *electro-magnetic Fluid* carries your ideation still further, through the mental matrix (which connects your astral and mental bodies) and communicates your ideation to your mental body ("immortal spirit").

The astral is *intermediate* between physical and mental. It is *influenced* by both *and influences* both, but it does not "control" either.

Energetics and Usefulness of the Cold Shower/Rinse

11 January 2003

>> *Obviously with the cold shower, the energy movement within the body is what's important. Will this be discussed in later Steps or can - or rather will you explain why now, in Hermetic terms? <<*

Bardon doesn't discuss this energy movement that results from the warm-cold-warm sequence. In fact, he says very little about its benefits other than that it's refreshing.

Its effect is similar to the body brushing in that it's detoxifying and simultaneously stimulates the movement of energy throughout the nerves. While the body brushing detoxifies the skin itself (and stimulates the lymphatic system), the warm-cold-warm detoxifies

one's core physical energy by bringing it to the surface of the skin. As the core energy passes from core to extremity, it carries energetic impurities with it and releases them through the skin where they are removed by the magnetic properties of the cold water. The follow-up warming (with towel or water) has the effect of halting the exteriorization and allows the core energy to return to core.

This effect is, of course, amplified when you make it a *conscious* act. In other words, you consciously participate in the natural movement of energy outwards from core and consciously use this movement to rid yourself of any negativity or other energetic toxins. It can be very helpful in the self-transformation of one's character as you can attach negative character traits very easily to this core energy.

How Is "Mastering" An Exercise Defined?

24 July 2007

>> *Bardon explains the exercises in detail, but he doesn't say what he means by "mastering" an exercise fully.* <<

While this is a common complaint, it holds no water. Below are Bardon's exact words (taken from the Rugeberg edition) which clearly define the standards of "mastery" for each exercise in the first two Steps. I copied this far and no further only because I got tired of transcribing, but the same clarity is seen throughout the Steps. All one has to do is carefully read what he wrote.

Step One

Mental:

a) Thought Control -- *This exercise of controlling thoughts has to be undertaken in the morning and at night. It is to be extended each day by one minute to allow the own train of thoughts to be pursued and controlled without the slightest digression for a time of 10 minutes at least after a week's training.*

b) Discipline of Thoughts (mindfulness) -- *This exercise should be kept for a lifetime, because it is sharpening the mind and strengthening the consciousness and the memory. Having obtained a certain skill in this exercise, you may turn to the following one.*

c) Discipline of Thoughts (one-pointedness) -- *You must manage to concentrate on one single thought and follow it for 10 minutes at least.*

d) Vacancy of Mind -- *The purpose of this exercise will be attained if you succeed in remaining in this state for a full 10 minutes*

without losing your self-control or even falling asleep.

Astral:

- a) Introspection (negative traits) -- *If you do not succeed, within a week, in discovering all your faults, spend another week on these inquiries until you have definitely established your list of offenses.*
- b) Assignment of Faults to Elements -- *(one week maximum)*
- c) Dividing Faults into Three Groups -- *In the following week you will meditate on each single rubric dividing it into three groups.*
- d) Introspection (positive traits) -- *(one to two weeks)*
- e) Assignment of Positive Traits to Elements -- *(one week maximum)*
- f) Dividing Positive Traits into Three Groups -- *(one week).*

Physical:

a) Morning regimen of body brushing, bathing and exercise -- *This procedure ought to become a daily routine and be kept for life-time.*

b) Mystery of Breathing -- *In any case, you should not proceed to the imagination of another desire different before the chosen one has not been completely accomplished. In a pupil endowed with talents of a high order, success will manifest itself, at the earliest, after seven days, all depending on the degree of imagination and aptitude. Some one, for the realization of his desires will need weeks, even months, because the kind of desires will also play an important role.*

c) Conscious Reception of Food -- *It is most advantageous to foster the same desire in breathing as well as in eating to avoid any opposite vibrations or emanations in your body.*

d) The Magic of Water -- *see note above.*

The time limit for the completion of these exercises is fixed from a fortnight (two weeks) up to one month and is meant for people of average aptitudes. Those who have already practiced concentrating and meditating should get along with this space of time. Such as are not yet experienced at all, will, of course, have to extend their training period, success depending chiefly on the individuality of the pupil. For the practice, it would be useless for him to pass from one step to the next, without having completed the foregoing one, in such a way, that he is well up to it.

Step Two

Mental:

a) Visual Concentration (eyes closed) -- *The purpose of the exercise is accomplished, if you can hold on to one object, without any interruption, for five minutes.*

b) Visual Concentration (eyes open) -- *five minutes without the least incident.*

c) Auditory Concentration -- *five minutes.*

d) Sensory Concentration -- *hold on to this feeling for, at least, five minutes, without the slightest visual or auditory imagination. If you have acquired the faculty of concentration in such a degree as to be able to produce any sensation you like, and hold it fast, you may pass on to the next exercise.*

e) Olfactory Concentration -- *Exercise this kind of concentration until you will be able to, imaginarily, bring about any scent [without allowing any pictorial image to emerge], at will, and keep it for five minutes, at least.*

f) Taste concentration -- *If he has succeeded in producing any sensation of the taste chosen and holding on to it for, at least, five minutes, the purpose of this exercise is fulfilled.*

Astral:

Character Transformation -- *The purpose of this step is the balancing of the elements in the soul. The scholar ought, therefore, to endeavour quickly and surely to get rid of those passions which most hinder him from being successful in the magic art. Under no circumstances should he start with exercises belonging to the steps ahead, before being absolutely possessed with the exercises of the second step and having booked a sweeping success especially in balancing the elements, too. The refinement of character should be aspired after, during the entire course, but as early as on this level, faults rapidly gaining ground and bad qualities handicapping development in a higher order, ought to be eradicated.*

Physical:

a) Conscious Pore-Breathing -- *If you have succeeded in exhaling and inhaling, through your lungs and your whole body, this exercise is completed.*

b) Conscious Position of the Body -- *If you have managed to sit, at least, for half an hour quietly, comfortably and without any trouble, this exercise will be finished.*

c) Body Control in Every-Day Life -- *daily practice.*

>> *In my opinion we must try to delimitate with absolute precision what do we mean by "mastering" an exercise of IIIH. I put here three possible options, but I really don't know what is the correct:*

1) *That you have the inner certainty that you can do the exercise successfully because sometimes you have got it.*

2) *That most of the days you try it, you get it.*

3) *That ALWAYS you try it, you get it (with the logical exclusion of those particular days of very depressed mood (i.e. the loss of a friend, the break up of an affective relationship, etc). Then, options 1 and 2 could be interpreted as "mastering" an exercise or not? <<*

No. Only your "third option" qualifies. If one is serious about Hermetic initiation then it must be pursued with rigor and the conviction to not just achieve the "bare minimum". This is why Bardon most often used the phrase "*at least*" when stating his time minimums. "At least five minutes" means "I'll aim for at least 10 minutes" to the truly serious student! Even at the young age of 16, Dr. Kumar embodied this spirit when, after only minor instruction, he achieved 30 minutes of empty mind within 30 days of practice. He didn't make excuses about how hard it was or complain about how unclear his instructions were. Instead, he set himself to achieve a goal and let nothing get in his way. He thought for himself and figured it out. That is the "Hermetic spirit" which assures success!

STEP TWO – MISCELLANEOUS

Continuation of Previous Step's Exercises?

30 April 2007

>> *Do you mean I can quit doing the previous exercises as long as I deepen VoM and keep doing the new ones? I can see, for example, how the step 3 superimposes on step 2 (both concentration and energy manipulation are just taken one step further) but after that, will "transference of consciousness" (to say one) keep all the sensory concentration skills in shape? <<*

Yes, each Step builds upon the exercises of the previous Steps and expands the basic techniques you've already learned (assuming you have indeed "mastered" each by fulfilling the requirements Bardon stated). For example, the multi-sensorial exercises of Step Three sharpen and strengthen the techniques you learned (mastered) during the Step Two sensory concentration exercises. Thus there is no need to continue with the Step Two single-sense exercises once

you've begun work with Step Three. Furthermore, the sensory work is a form of the Step One one-pointedness mental exercise, so it is not necessary to continue that as an *exercise*. In other words, what is an *exercise* in one Step will become an *applied technique* that you use in subsequent Steps.

The one exception is the VoM "exercise". This should be continued for the rest of your life, so to speak. However, it should become a "practice", not just an "exercise". In other words, let your experience of VoM expand instead of keeping it as a rigid "10 minutes uninterrupted" *exercise*.

I also encourage you to read the entire text of IIIH straight through (at least once). This will give you a better understanding of how each Step depends upon what is "mastered" in the previous Steps and how each Step furthers what you have learned in the previous Steps.

STEP TWO – MENTAL

Dancing Visualizations!

03 January 2003

>> *When performing the Step 2 eyes-closed visualisations, my chosen object refuses - in flagrant disrespect of my threats, curses and implorings - to remain still! My object spins, jumps, dances, mutates..... and does everything but sit still! (Curiously, this doesn't happen when the same exercise is performed with eyes open.) For the 18 months or so that I've been working through IIIH, this has been a continual challenge. <<*

I get the impression from your descriptions that *you* are not in control of these visualizations and this concerns me somewhat. The idea here is that *you* create these visualizations by an act of will. These are not something that should "come to you", they are things that *you* create. As such, *you* are the one to determine whether or not they move or stand still. At no point should you be in the position of having to fight to control them. It's important that the images a magician creates remain within their control at all times.

My suggestions are as follows:

#1) If your visualization takes on a will of its own, dismiss it immediately and start over with re-creating a willed image.

#2) Since this doesn't occur when you work with your eyes open (an indication that you are more focused and willful when your

eyes are open), try starting with your eyes open and then take that stable image into your closed eyes.

Step Two Sensory Concentration Exercises - Part Four

13 October thru 04 November 2002

>> *I'll tell you where I am at with the visualization. I have had two successes and I don't know to what I can attribute them to. They were both "flashes." I have tried to get some again and have given up and maybe that's my problem. Lighting may have had something to do with it and they were reflective objects but- I am grabbing at straws. <<*

I think the most common block to the sensory concentration exercises and the visualization in particular, is that folks expect that their visualization needs to be seen with the physical eyes, just as if it were a real object. But this is *not* the case. The Step Two sensory concentration exercises are meant to train the *mind's* eye, ear, nose, tongue, etc., not their physical counterparts.

With Step Two, you are to see the imagined object with your *mind's* eye clear as day, but you will *not* see it with your physical eyes. The condensation of an imagination so that it achieves a physically perceptible degree of density comes later in the training and is *not* a requirement of Step Two.

The reason these exercises begin with the eyes closed is because it's generally easier to ignore the input of the physical eyes when they are closed. This lays bare the *mind's* eye, which is the subject of these exercises. Once this separation between the mind's eye and the physical sight is achieved with the eyes closed, the eyes are opened and you train again to create this same separation *while the input from the physical eyes is present*. In other words, by working with the eyes *opened*, you are strengthening the *separation* between your mind's eye and your physical sight -- you are not trying to strengthen the physical visibility of your imagined object.

Please remember that these are exercises from the *mental* training section. Their purpose is to train your creative *mental* senses.

>> *I had interpreted "plastically" to mean just that- not with the mind's eye. <<*

I know. I think we all do at first. I sure did and I was stuck on that exercise for the longest time (so it seemed) until I took a closer look at the context. It made no sense in the context of a *mental* exercise from Step Two, that Bardon would intend a *physically* palpable imagination. Once I realized that, I scrutinized the book again and

discovered that he hadn't meant "plastic" (or at least the original translator didn't mean it) in the sense of something hard and opaque like a piece of plastic. Instead, he meant it in the sense of "capable of being molded like clay" or "produced by molding". The mold-er in this case, is the *mind*. In *that* context of the meaning of "plastic", the Step Two sensory concentration exercises fit perfectly into the progression of the *mental* training revealed in the ten Steps. If "plastic" had been intended otherwise (in the 'piece of plastic' sense), its placement at *Step Two* would have produced a *very* imbalanced progression overall.

If you can look at this page and, with your *mind's* eye, see a pencil floating in front of the page, then you have succeeded in a plastic visualization with your eyes open. Now try to hold that visualization for ten minutes! Seriously, just keep it in front of your *mind's* eye for ten minutes. It really is that "easy" and sort of fun when you get the hang of it.

Your *mental* visualization will not be seen with your physical eyes at this stage (Step Two). That is not the point of these sensory exercises. The point is to separate out your *mental* senses and learn to develop and control them *independent* of your physical senses. You must develop your creativity with them to such an extent that your creations seem just like the "real" thing to your *mind*. If one of these creations isn't real to your *mind* first, it has no hope of becoming an astral or physical reality.

Therefore, Step Two *begins* the development of the creative, plastic imagination with the *mental* senses. Likewise, the Step Two astral and physical exercises begin the development of the astral and physical abilities that will compound with the mental abilities and eventually lead to your being able to create physically palpable imaginations.

The sensory concentration exercises are a form of one pointedness. But now, instead of being asked to perform the one pointedness as a means of investigation and the gaining of knowledge as you were in Step One, you are being asked to apply it in a creative manner as well. Instead of spending your will *on* stilling your mind and keeping it on point, you are now focusing your will *through* the one pointedness and releasing it to create a mental image, sound, etc., of your choosing.

Inherent to this process of isolating just one sense at a time *and using it creatively*, the student will naturally learn about the emotional component of each sensory perception and the impact that each mental sense has upon the astral and physical bodies. This fur-

ther defines the pure mental body to the student and helps them discern between their three bodies (mental, astral and physical), thus building upon what was begun in Step One in terms of defining the mental body through mental discipline and introspection.

A pattern of development that is seen throughout the whole of Bardons work is that the student must develop their ability to create at the mental level *first*. This is then developed to an astral density and then eventually to a material density. If the ability to create upon the *mental* plane is not mastered, there is no possibility of consistently creating upon the material plane.

>> *Now in the case of plastic visualization, how do I know when I have perfected the exercise? I am tempted to put in 2 years and get it right. Two years per sense is only 10 years and this would give me a rock solid foundation for future work! <<*

I am curious as to what value you perceive in being able to see your mental imaginings with your physical eyes? What advantage would this provide equal to spending two years on this one exercise from Step Two? Over-riding your physical vision in this way (though mental discipline) has no bearing upon making a mental creation into a physically solid thing. Tricking your brain into thinking that a mental creation is in fact a physical thing is not what gives it physical density. Nor does it sharpen any of your senses, mental, astral or physical. It has no practical application.

Do you understand that in order to make a mental creation visible to your own eyes in this way, all you are doing is tricking your brain? This is akin to the child's game of covering the eyes and thinking that you're therefore invisible to everyone else.

Achieving the ability to trick your brain in this way will not give you "a rock solid foundation for future work". However, training your mental senses to the degree I've indicated will. This is the degree *required* in Step Two in order to pass on to future Steps which will hone this ability into other, more advanced abilities. Step Two doesn't demand those more advanced abilities of you now. They are to be developed by different exercises than the Step Two *mental* sensory concentrations.

Bardon designed the three sections of each Step so that they take about the same amount of time for the student to achieve. Clearly, the mental section of Step Two is not intended to take years and years to accomplish when the astral and physical sections take only months. If that had been the case then Bardon would have been violating his essential premise of a balanced development.

>> *Is it a matter of "enfolding" the mental creations with the*

physical perceptions instead of "superimposing" one upon the other? <<

Yes! Two separate yet interwoven, simultaneous perceptions -- one perceived by the mind's eye and one by the physical eyes -- with the primary focus upon the mental image. This becomes even more apparent when it comes to working with the other senses. For example, you "enfold" the sound of a bell ringing with the ambient sounds of your surroundings. You hear the bell with your mind's ear and the ambient noise with your physical ears, simultaneously, but your focus is upon the imagined bell.

>> *In the same way that Franz recommends looking at a chosen object before visualising it in the mind's eye, is it appropriate to do the same with the other sensory objects? For example, to physically feel 'heat' for a few moments before beginning the sentience exercise, and then to re-experience physical heat once it's faded from memory? <<*

Yes! Have a rose at hand or a bowl of salt or a small bell, and so on. And also, as you go about your day, you can "harvest" sensory experiences for your exercises. For example, look carefully at some object that attracts you in passing and try to absorb (hence, "harvest") all of its details. Then use what you've harvested later in your visualization exercise. Doing similar harvestings with each of your senses will sharpen their perceptive faculty physically, astrally and mentally, all at the same time. This is because you are using them *consciously*, willfully and fully. Mixing this intensely *perceptive* exercise of harvesting the sensory impressions, with the intensely *creative* use of the senses in the IIIH exercise, is *very* advantageous.

Visualization #5

21 April 2008

Recent work with real-time imaging of the brain has established "scientifically" something that has been known to Hermetics for ages. When we look at a thing, our visual cortex responds and specific synapses fire within the brain which initiates a chain reaction of chemical messengers throughout the body. *When we remember the thing we just looked at, the visual cortex responds in the exact same way*, followed by the same initiation of chemical messengers throughout the body, etc. There is no difference to the brain between perceiving the thing and remembering the thing.

The Step Two exercises with the senses are rooted in this fact. We *begin* by remembering the object/sound/taste/etc. we have just

perceived, but then we depart from the "normal" by focusing our awareness exclusively and extendedly upon this image/sound/flavor/etc. that we have brought forth in our memory. This prolongs and amplifies the firing of the brain's synapses, causing the memory to become something more than just a fleeting image/sound/taste/etc.

Once we are able to prolong the remembered image/sound/flavor/etc., we can then manipulate its appearance as if it were made of clay or some other easily changed substance (i.e., use our "plastic" imagination). In other words, we take intentional, conscious control of the image/sound/flavor/etc. and therefore determine its nature independent of our memory.

You see, this is really *very* simple! It is merely an intentionally focused prolonging of something we do all the time. And as with many things in Hermetics, its pure simplicity and familiarity are what makes it so difficult to conceptualize accurately -- we always seem to want it to be more complex than it is. An important question to ask oneself in this regard is "Why do I want things to be complex?"

Step Two: Olfactory Exercises

20 February 2003

>> While visual concentration is easy to understand, since its medium is constant input, I have problems figuring out how I am going to perform the olfactory exercises. Since smell is dependent upon inhalation through the nose, wouldn't it be very difficult to simulate a constant concentration on smell? <<

The trick for me at least, was to focus my attention in the sensory organ itself. For example with the visualization exercises, your focus is primarily within your visual faculty, so with the other exercises your focus will primarily be in your auditory faculty during the hearing exercises, your olfactory faculty during your smell exercises, etc.

Choose an odor to begin with. Spend a few moments smelling it intensively, paying very close attention to the effect that it has upon your sinuses and your olfactory apparatus. Note where in your sinuses it affects you and how this effect is felt, etc. Then try to replicate this effect with your imagination alone. At first you will be tempted to inhale through your nose as you replicate the sensations with your imagination. This however, becomes unnecessary with a bit more practice and as you focus more completely upon the sensa-

tion within your olfactory itself. Eventually you will be able to continuously maintain the imagined odor independent of your breath.

Elemental Correspondences Between the Step Two Sensory Concentration Exercises and the Soul Mirror

16 August 2003

>> *I was wondering what the elemental correspondences are to the senses?* <<

For the Step Two sensory concentration exercises, the Elemental correspondences are:

Sight = Fire
Hearing = Water
Feeling = Akasha
Smell = Air
Taste = Earth

As always, sight is associated with Fire because: 1) Sight depends upon light. 2) Difficulties with this exercise point to imbalances in the Fire region of the astral body.

Hearing is associated with Water because: 1) The physical perception of sound depends upon waves striking your ear drum. This requires rhythm and frequency. 2) Sound directly affects the emotional body. 3) Difficulties with this exercise point to imbalances in the Water region of the astral body.

Feeling is associated with Akasha because: 1) The perception and interpretation of feeling is the most complex of all the senses and can excite memory-responses from each of the other senses. As one works with isolating each sense, there is almost always a feeling associated with whatever it is you are trying to create with that sense. 2) The perception of a feeling directly affects all three bodies. 3) Difficulties with this exercise indicate a global imbalance and as one transforms the most important negative traits (no matter which Element they pertain to), this exercise becomes easier.

Smell is associated with Air Element because: 1) Smelling requires inhalation of a quantum of atmosphere containing the molecules which the olfactory system then interprets. It relies *only* on the medium of air; whereas hearing can occur through water or even solid objects. 2) Perception of an aroma directly affects the mental body (that's one reason for using incense in ritual). 3) Difficulties with this exercise point to imbalances in the Air region of the astral body.

And finally, taste is associated with the Earth Element be-

cause: 1) Tasting something requires the introduction of liquid or solid matter into the mouth and its absorption by the tongue. 2) Perception of taste directly affects the physical body and, like the sense of feeling/Akasha, isolating the sense of taste will excite memory-responses from all of the other senses (especially that of smell/Air). 3) Difficulties with this exercise point to imbalances in the Earth region of the astral body.

STEP TWO – ASTRAL

On Elemental Equilibrium

20 December 2001

The Elemental Equilibrium is a dynamic state of active and constant awareness of self. Nothing within the self transpires without full conscious awareness. Each thought is evaluated as it occurs. Each emotion is evaluated as it occurs. And the only change that occurs in reaction to thoughts, emotions or events, occurs with one's full conscious awareness. In other words, the balanced individual is not thrown about willy-nilly by events or intruding thoughts.

This is why it is called "equilibrium". It is the solid foundation; the ground of self upon which the initiate stands and meets life. Just like in Tai Chi, if you stand in balance, then you can shift with external pressures without being toppled over or moved against your will.

The Elemental Equilibrium is not so much a discipline as it is a *choice*. I *choose* to remain grounded in myself. In order to remain grounded I have to continuously express my truest nature as clearly as possible. In order to know my own true nature, I must remain continuously aware of self. And this does not limit me since Self is limitless.

By focusing inward, we find the Infinite.

And by focusing inward we find the guide that replaces cultural dictates or even thinking -- our conscience. This is what should guide us *to*, and guide us during the maintenance of, our Elemental Equilibrium, not what we are brought up to think is right or what someone else tells us is right.

Our conscience is the voice of our "Holy Guardian Angel", speaking to us in every moment of our existence. It never misleads. It is the clarity of Self, flowing into us, seeking expression. All we need do is trust it and obey it.

>> *If we resist or give too much thought to the 'evil' or undesired quality, then what we end up doing is feeding it (energy) and getting into a 'tug of war' with it which only strengthens it.* <<

Yes. This is especially important in the work with the soul mirrors. Nothing must be resisted other than our inclination toward the habit of subconsciously formed responses that no longer serve us. These do take some resistance, but the type of resistance they take is one of ignoring them and turning the mind towards the positive, affirming, conscious alternative. Again, it's like in Tai Chi: From center we meet the external force and we direct its motion instead of letting it direct ours.

"Center" occurs at the exact spatial middle of any *whole* form. If we leave parts of our selves out of the form, then we cannot achieve "center" because we have not encompassed a *whole* thing.

Each negative serves a positive root. Within the personality, what makes a character trait "negative" is the fact that the form was developed without our conscious participation. Most often, the most bothersome negative traits stem from childhood, when our understanding of our selves and of the universe was poor and thus our responses tended to take negative (inappropriate, inharmonious) forms.

When we push away or resist the negative manifestation, we then have no basis upon which to know its positive root. The only way to unlock the positive core is to accept the negative form and consciously change it so that it *more clearly and accurately* expresses the *positive* root. And the only substance in our universe that acts as a solvent to negativity is love.

You might rightly ask, "But how can I love this awful part of myself?" Well, you don't necessarily have to always like a thing that you love. Certainly this is one of the bigger lessons of intimate relationships! When you don't like something about someone you love, you help them to change and become more likable. And since you already love them, you speak to them lovingly and tell them your thoughts in a way that nourishes them instead of demeaning them. So why not apply the same tactic with one's own self? I'll tell you, it works like a charm!

>> *I think you have clarified "equilibrium" but you have barely touched on "elemental". How do the various elements come into "imbalance" in the first place?* <<

Of concern here are the astra-mental Elements. As such, their balance is influenced by our emotions and our thoughts. At birth we possess an essential Equilibrium based upon our specific maturity of spirit. In other words, the astral Elements reflect precisely the mental

influx of our own Individual Self. This is represented in Astrology by the natal chart of the exact moment we emerge from the womb. This is the balance we begin with and modify throughout our incarnation.

As we grow and our emotional being takes concrete form, our natal Elemental balance evolves. The pressures of culture upon the nascent psyche bend it toward imbalance by their very nature. These influences develop un-conscious habits of reaction within the nascent psyche, which eventually result in an imbalanced personality. This is merely a matter of taking the path of least resistance as we learn to adapt to our environment.

Initiation seeks to redress this un-consciously formed imbalance through a process whereby all those un-consciously formed habits of reaction are transformed into conscious choices. [At first, this seems to increase the imbalance, but this is only an illusion generated by our becoming aware, for the first time, of the difference between a conscious choice and an un-consciously formed habit. It puts the un-conscious habit into sharp relief and makes it appear greater than it did before.]

STEP TWO – PHYSICAL

Pore Breathing and Rawn's "Inhalation of Beauty" Exercise

05 October 2002

>> I had an interesting pore breathing experience. One time when I was doing concentration exercises I could actually feel my body breathing just like Bardon says in IIIH. There was no visualizing involved. It felt like energy was being sucked into my body via the pores and going out when I was exhaling breath. <<

That experience is the goal of the Step Two pore breathing. In other words, that's how it's supposed to *feel* all the time.

How this *feels* -- not how it looks or how you think it should look -- is *the* most important key to mastering the pore breathing and the Vital Energy. If you focus just on the visualization aspect of pore breathing and of working with the VE, then the experience will remain predominantly mental. However, when your main point of focus is the *feel / sensation* of pore breathing and of the VE, then it becomes an astral and physical experience, supported *by* your mental visualization. Once you get the *feel* of it, it becomes very easy and very effective.

>> This leads me to believe that our bodies act this way re-

ardless of whether we are conscious of it or not. Doing concentration exercises just brings it to the forefront of your mind. <<

That's correct; however the unconscious pore breathing that the body does of its own primitive volition, is no where near as powerful as *conscious / intentional* pore breathing. Hermetic magic is essentially the *conscious* use of nature's own methods. It's that factor of *conscious use* that makes them "magical" and empowers them in ways that nature, when left to her own devices, does not generally achieve.

On its own, your body inhales many things through its pores; everything from the chemical constituents of the air to the thoughts and emotions of others. All of which eventually affect the whole of you: physical, astral and mental. Some things it inhales because it needs them for its sustenance, but there are other things it inhales that are toxic. This is one way in which we are intimately connected to our environment.

Conscious magical pore breathing on the other hand, is very specific and disciplined. A specific idea or energy is inhaled in a disciplined manner. Conversely, specific mental and astral toxins are exhaled in a disciplined manner. All of this is done *consciously* and with great focus, taking advantage of the body's own unconscious expertise in the matter. This is like taking sunlight and turning it into a laser beam -- it exponentially increases its power.

With magical pore breathing, any number of good things can be inhaled, things that nurture you at every level of your being, from physical to Unitary. One of the most nourishing things a human can inhale through magical pore breathing is Beauty, in any of Her forms.

Here's an experiment that might work very well for you.

INHALATION OF BEAUTY

Find a picture of what, to your tastes, is *the* most beautiful painting. Or go to your local museum. At any rate have this physical image in front of your physical eyes (no visualization required). Quiet yourself and think back briefly on the experience of pore breathing that you described above. Remember how it *felt* to inhale with your whole body.

Now focus your attention upon the image of Beauty before your physical eyes. *Feel* its Beauty. Focus your attention upon what it is that makes this image beautiful in your eyes and *feel* those things. When you *feel* the Beauty of the image, inhale the *feeling*,

through your pores to the very core of your being. Fill yourself up with this *feeling* of Beauty. Try to replicate the *feeling* of true pore breathing that you described. Let *feeling* rule the whole experiment -- let go of all attempts at visualization or rationalization of any kind and just *feel*.

When you've had your fill, ground yourself by *feeling* a connection between yourself and the earth beneath your feet, running down your spine deep into the soil like a tap root. Let any excess energy flow downward into the earth (Beauty is always a blessing to the earth). Then resume your normal waking consciousness.

After you reach this state of BEing what you eat, so to speak, it is then possible to exhale Beauty and in this way affect your surroundings. You can, in fact, continuously inhale and exhale the Beautified universe and create a resonant relationship between yourself and your surroundings. It is also possible, using this technique, to affect the temporal bubble that surrounds your consciousness. In essence, this Beautifies the immediate future and disperses any "resistance" in your path. It can also be easily turned into a sensory organ, so to speak, by which you can scan the temporal bubble.

On the Bardon "Asana" of Step Two

21 December 2002

>> *I have noticed that the Merkur translation makes a point of saying that the knees must be touching, while the older translation(s) seem to only say they should be even. I have nothing but strain in my muscles when I keep my knees together. Does anybody have insight into Mr. Bardon's true intentions, knees together or apart? <<*

The knees do *not* need to be touching. However, they do need to remain fairly close together (2-3") in order for your spine to remain erect. When your spine is straight and your knees are bent at 90 degrees, your knees will naturally be at the proper distance from each other for *your* body. This position must be relaxed, not one where you're straining to keep your knees touching. Bardon's statement about binding your feet is only if your knees keep spreading *far* apart. This usually occurs because your spine is no longer erect, so binding the ankles will help teach your body to keep an erect spine automatically by forcing the knees closer together. It may also help, in the beginning, to sit on a chair that's deep enough to support you to at least mid-thigh and has a very straight back. The thigh support will help keep your knees together, if they tend to spread, and the

straight back can be used to train yourself to the sensation of an erect spine. When you can relax, fully supported by the chair bottom and back, then move forward a few inches and master the position without back and thigh support.

STEP THREE – MENTAL

Sensory Concentration: Remembering vs. Creating

12 May 2003

>> Any tips on maintaining a "step into it" type multi-sense visualization for the full 5 minutes? I can maintain an unfamiliar scene much easier than a familiar one. <<

The multi-sense scene is a composite of single-sense creations. Sort of like in printing a color image composed of four color components (cyan, magenta, yellow and black). The "trick" is to layer each single-sense creation, one at a time, until your scene is complete. For example, begin by creating the visual component, then add the auditory component, then the smell component, then the tactile component, and so on, until your multi-sense scene is fully formed. Once the scene is complete, it becomes a simple matter of maintaining a one-pointedness of mind.

The fact that you can maintain an unfamiliar scene longer than a familiar scene is, I imagine, a fairly common experience. It was certainly my own experience at first until I analyzed the situation and realized that, with the familiar scene, I was relying upon my *memory* instead of using my *creative* imagination to construct the scene. When I shifted from reliance upon memory to actually creating the scene from the ground up, so to speak, it was no different from my work with unfamiliar scenes.

STEP FIVE – ASTRAL

The Importance of Distinguishing Between What Bardon Expects and What He Says Is Possible

27 August 2004

>> Both editions make it clear that the Step V trainee needs to master the condensation of the elements to the degree of physical tangibility - i.e. able to be observed by a non-initiate. <<

Well, that's not exactly true. Let me throw a few quotes from

the Ruggeberg edition (which, in my opinion, is the best, least biased English translation) into the mix here.

"It is not absolutely necessary, in this step [i.e., Step 5], to bring about such an amount of physical warmth that it can be measured with a thermometer. But supposing a magician takes a keen interest in working in this more spectacular way, he can specialise himself in this problem with the help of these instructions. The genuine magician however, will not be satisfied with such insignificant phenomenon, and rather prefer to further his own development, because he is firmly convinced that he can obtain much more, as time goes by." (p. 110)

In other words, pursuing the accumulation and projection of an Element to such a degree, *through the Step Five exercise, is contrary to the magician's further development.* In fact, such a desire *at this stage* may well point to a character imbalance.

"All the time he ought to feel the specific property of the element he is working with quite distinctly; he should be able to induce even a layman or ignorant people to see and feel the element in question." (p.114)

Notice how he says "should be able to" and not "must do". In other words, the *ability* and the magician's confidence are what matters here, not the factual demonstration. Nonetheless, if one has mastered the exercises up to that point, the ability to condense any Element to such a degree that another person can be *induced* to sense it, will be a natural result.

>> *Bardon did on occasion discuss various abilities that a one-sided, unbalanced regimen of exercises would develop. However, his manner of writing is different in this section. Rather than describing possibilities, he's giving instructions as to how a student can test their level of mastery.* <<

This section about lighting a wick is important but not as a test of one's magical abilities. Rather, it is a test of one's character development because it asks again the question of *why* one is pursuing initiation. By exposing what *can* be accomplished -- at a point in the training when to accomplish such a "spectacular" phenomenon would mean a diversion from the furtherance of their true development -- the student is faced with a choice: do I spend my time pursuing "insignificant phenomenon" or do I further my development? If the character of the student *needs* the sort of gratification derived from lighting a wick magically with the Fire Element, then at this point they will surely be diverted from forward progress while they spend the next several years perfecting their accumulation of the Fire

Element. If, on the other hand, they do not have that need within their character, they will move forward and master future exercises which make such a feat look truly silly.

As Bardon wrote immediately after explaining the tricks with the lighting of wicks and cotton balls -- "*The genuine magician will not waste his time with such dallying.*"

>> *I remember Bill Mistele mentioning somewhere that he failed to master the basic condensation exercises to the degree that Bardon expected of his students. As a consequence, Bill has for many years continued to return to the basic exercises to try to master them to the extent that Bardon intended, but with greater obstacles in place than if he'd tried to master them fully the first time round.* <<

Throughout IIIH, the student will encounter points where accurately understanding what Bardon truly *expected*, is critical to their forward progress. What Bardon *expected* is frequently different than what Bardon mentioned as *possible*. I think the first instance where this occurs is in Step Two with the sensory concentration exercises. Many folks get caught up in trying to condense their visualization to such a degree that they appear before the *physical* eyes as ordinary objects would. Unfortunately, this is *not* what Bardon *expected* of the *Step Two* student. Likewise, Bardon did not *expect* that the *Step Five* student would be able to light a flame with the Fire Element, freeze water with the Water Element, levitate objects with the Air Element, etc.

When one misunderstands the difference between what is expected and what is possible, and therefore pursues the possible instead of mastering the expected, they are creating an imbalance. For example, in order to condense the Fire Element to such a degree as to succeed in the cotton ball experiment, one would have to focus exclusively upon the exercises of condensing the Fire Element for a *long* time. Such an extended time of working with that one exercise with the Fire Element will invariably induce a state of physical, astral and mental dis-equilibrium. On the other hand, if one were to master what is *expected* in Step Five and progress through the Steps, they will, in *less time than it would take pursuing the Step Five technique*, gain the ability to *cause a condensation* of the Fire Element sufficient to ignite an alcohol soaked cotton swab (if they desire to).

>> *It seems one's character is tested a) because the very desire to do the 'miracle' indicates a problem - perhaps impatience,* <<

No, it's not a matter of impatience in such as case. Rather, it has to do with an egotistical need to show off and impress others which, of course, speaks of a deeper lack of self-worth. This need is

one of the most detrimental to magical advancement. Remember the "Pillar of Silence" . . .

>> *Doesn't one continuously outstrip one's previous abilities and thus render what was very difficult previously extremely easy?*
<<

Yes, but some things *must* be mastered *first* in order to be *able* to master the next "higher" technique. For example, one *must* master the Elements before the Akasha and Fluids; otherwise, working with the Akasha and Fluids would be fruitless.

>> *What I think now is that when detailed instructions are given, it is a sign that one must certainly do the work - even though later it might seem insignificant. But when Bardou mentions little effects such as these as an aside, and gives no specific further instructions, it is better to ignore the aside except as a curiosity, not to be pursued. Is this right?* <<

Not exactly. For example, he gave very clear instructions concerning the lighting of the cotton swab. However, it was not presented in the form of an exercise and this can often serve as a clue. In most every case, he does say something like "but the true magician will not waste their time". Aside from considering these "clues", what I recommend above all else is that you meditate, very deeply about these issues when they arise. From almost the first page, Bardou repeatedly advises the student to meditate, meditate, meditate, and much of the book was written assuming that the student will actually meditate about every question that arises for them.

STEP FIVE – PHYSICAL

Step Five: Real Vs. Imagined Communication

11 March 2004

>> *It is only during Step IX and above that the practitioner can evoke true external intelligences and not just the contents of his psyche - bearing this in mind, how come the passive communications of Step V with one's HGA and the deceased is real and not just brought out of the psyche?* <<

Number one, the Step Five technique is *passive* communication; whereas, Evocation is an *active* form of communication. The Step Five work is not *evocation*. Instead, it is passively making the medium of communication available for the use of the entity you wish to communicate with.

Secondly, with the Step Five work, the subjectivity vs. objectivity depends upon several factors, not the least of which is how truly one has mastered the exercises up to that point. The Step Five exercises will test the student's powers of discernment and this trains the student's abilities of *objective perception*, the honing of which are an absolute prerequisite to the Practice of Magical Evocation. In other words, the *passive* communication begins a learning curve which leads to the faculties necessary for PME.

The technique itself does not guarantee that your *initial* experiences with passive communication will be anything other than completely subjective expressions of your own psyche. However, consistent *practice* of the technique *will* lead you to the ability to discern between subjective self-projection and actual contact with an objectively separate, discrete entity that is *not* yourself.

STEP EIGHT – PHYSICAL

On Fluid Condensers

11 January 2003

>> *Now, since a fluid condenser is essentially anything that attracts and contains the magnetic and/or electrical fluid, is it not safe to say that this extends to substances that are astral and mental in nature as well? Is a visualization a fluid condenser? A thought? A strongly felt emotion? If so, what would be the consequences of this? How would you work with an astral or mental fluid condenser? Wouldn't a thoughtform/elemental be a mental or astral fluid condenser? <<*

Fluid condensers do not themselves automatically attract a charge of the Fluids. They have to be loaded with an accumulation by the magician. The one exception to this rule is the Philosopher's Stone. What distinguishes a Fluid *condenser* from any other thing which naturally is composed of the Fluids and Elements is the fact that a condenser is capable of *holding* an accumulation. Non-condensers will immediately radiate an accumulation and are not capable of holding on to the accumulation once charged.

You are correct in your idea of astral and mental condensers. A physical Fluid condenser immediately effects all three realms simultaneously and must be created within the physical realm, out of physical materia; an astral condenser, effects the astral and mental realms simultaneously and must be created within the astral realm, out of as-

tral materia; and a mental condenser, effects only the mental realm immediately and, likewise, must be created within the mental realm, out of mental materia. The process of creating astral and mental condensers requires a facility with each of these realms and the direct manipulation of their respective materia. For example, in order to create an astral condenser you would need to directly shape the astral materia itself, be able to finalize its form (i.e., give it stable duration), and then load it with an appropriate accumulation of Fluids/Elements. All of these tasks would need to be carried out within the astral realm.

>> *What is the difference between a fluid condenser and a substance that is naturally composed of the fluids and elements? Also, isn't pretty much everything composed of the fluids and elements? <<*

*Every thing is composed of the Fluids and their Elements. So, in this sense, form itself is a sort of Fluid combiner. This is different from a Fluid condenser in that the condenser can *hold onto* an additional accumulation of the Fluids, separate from the Fluids which compose its form. Another thing that distinguishes a condenser from other forms is that holding onto a really, really intense accumulation will not harm the condenser itself.*

>> *So then the human body would itself be a fluid condenser in and of itself, correct? After all, through the numerous exercises in IHH, Bardón has the student drawing in and accumulating the elements, fluids and lights within the self. <<*

The human being can be *transformed into* a Fluid condenser, but without this work of self-transformation, the human body is not, strictly speaking, a natural condenser. For example, when you load another person with an accumulation of a Fluid/Element, it will, with time, dissipate. The body does not *automatically* hold the accumulation. Plus, the body can be easily damaged by too intense an accumulation being present for too long a time.

By following the Bardón training you are transforming yourself in the ways necessary for you to become a Fluid/Element condenser which will automatically *hold* an accumulated charge for as long as desired, without harm. In certain circumstances this is a useful ability since it frees the consciousness from the labor of recharging an accumulation during an overly-long ritual. But then again, it's a minor advantage since the same effect can be accomplished in other ways (such as loading a separate condenser).

>> *However, at the same time, I do believe Bardón writes that you should gradually increase the accumulated charge within the*

body so not to overload the body like a capacitor or a circuit breaker. In which case the intrinsic ability for the body to retain an accumulated charge can be changed with practice. <<

Yes. This is *part* of the transformation process that enables your bodies to actually hold an accumulation without damage and without the need for constant replenishment. It's very much akin to what an Alchemist does to the materia at certain stages, wherein a process is repeated over and over until the materia reaches a certain fluidity. The structure of the materia is factually altered and this leads to new characteristics and capacities, etc.

>> I might be totally off base here, but isn't that the procedure within the first few steps of The Key to True Quabbalah? This might account for the changes that happen when one works with those exercises. <<

The preparatory Steps of KTQ are a continuation of the aforementioned process of transformation of the materia, but at a higher pitch, so to speak. In order for the KTQ transformations to have the correct effect upon the individual, the prerequisite transformations (Steps One through Eight of IHH) must *already* have taken firm hold. In other words, the preparatory Steps of KTQ only work (properly) upon a sufficiently prepared materia. Only after the materia has been transform again by the KTQ preparatory work, is one able to then *speak* Kabbalistically.

Kabbalistic speech itself however, is more than a condenser. It's more akin to a Philosopher's Stone in that it *automatically* accumulates, combines and sets into motion, the Fluids, without the need for loading by the magician. Kabbalistic speech is a creative act that *instantly* gives *form* to the raw, undifferentiated Fluids/Elements.

Fluid Condensers and the "Influence Through the Elements" Technique

29 May 2003

>> Bardon showed a way to use the elements with fluid condenser. A fluid condenser of the Air (impregnated with a wish) could activate the element Air. It's the same for the elements Earth and Water. <<

In these specific operations [see pages 191-194 of the Ruggeberg edition and pages 240-243 of the Merkur edition], the Fluid Condenser is secondary to the methodology employed (i.e., combustion, evaporation, mixture and decomposition). In other words, these *natural processes* are the *agents* of the Elements and the Fluid Con-

condensers themselves merely support or add to the result.

In fact, Bardon even stated that accumulating the Elements was optional and yet this is something one would normally do to empower (i.e., fill) a Condenser.

>> *My problem comes with the Fire element. Here, Bardon said any kind of condenser can be used to activate the Fire element.*
<<

Here, it is because the natural process of combustion will override any Elemental influences carried by an uncharged Condenser. Combustion is the physical corollary of the Fire Element at its most powerful -- absolutely nothing can stand in its way.

>> *If a condenser is full of the Water Element, does it make any sense to use it with the Fire element? According to what Bardon wrote, I would say yes, but it seems kind of strange to me.* <<

No, it would not make any sense. However, in the practices Bardon described in the section you reference, the Fluid Condensers have not already been charged (i.e., filled with an accumulation of the Elements or Fluids). In other words, he didn't suggest using a *charged* Fluid condenser for the Fire work. Therefore, there wouldn't be any conflict of opposites such as would result when trying to impress an accumulation of Fire upon an already charged Water Condenser.

>> *I guess it's not necessary to load these condensers with Elements for the single reason they are already full of elemental energy. All plants "contain" an element. For example, garlic contains the Fire element intensively (the Fire of Mars). Water itself is a kind of condenser. So, when you make a fluid condenser using water and garlic, you have already water impregnated with the Fire element. So then why should I load it with more Fire? I guess it's already saturated with Fire. No need to increase it.* <<

The point of a *condenser* is that it is capable of holding a condensed accumulation of an Element/Fluid. To quote Bardon (Ruggeberg English edition, p.194):

"Any object can be influenced by any fluid, regardless of being loaded electrically, magnetically, with elements or akasha through the aid of the imagination and the will. But according to the laws of analogy, and by experience, it has been found out that not each object and not each kind of liquid is suitable to retain an accumulated power for a long time or to accumulate it at all. Similar to the fact, that electricity, magnetism and heat do have good and bad conductors, the higher powers offer the same bipolar aspect. Good conductors own an enormous accumulative capacity, because the powers

concentrated in them are stored up and can be held back at will. In the hermetic science such accumulators are called 'fluid condensers'."

In other words, while the materials suitable for use as Fluid Condensers do indeed express an affinity for their corresponding Element or Fluid, they do not already possess an *accumulation* of said Element/Fluid. This means that an uncharged condenser possesses only the Elements and Fluids that make up its physical components. This amount of Elements/Fluids is not strong enough for magical work.

A condenser is only a vessel into which the magician must accumulate an Element or Fluid. It is the accumulation within the condenser that makes it a "magical" substance as opposed to a normal physical substance.

Take for example your hypothetical garlic water. The garlic does indeed express a relative predominance of the Fire Element; however, its primary constituent is the Earth Element (as is true of all physical things). So too with the water: it does express a relative predominance of the Water Element but its primary constituent is Earth. When you mix these two together you end up with an Earth that is strong in both Fire and Water. This is not strong enough or potent enough for magical work with the Elements and Fluids. It's not until you load this *condenser* with the Elements and Fluids that it becomes strong enough for magical work. It's only when loaded with an accumulation that it becomes noticeably stronger than common physical matter.

One reason why Bardon put these exercises/techniques at Step Eight was because Step Eight is also the Step in which the student learns to "master the Fluids". Until that point, the student hasn't learned how to accumulate and condense the Fluids. So really, the work with accumulating the *Fluids* into *Fluid* Condensers belongs to Step Eight. However, the student who has mastered the Step Five work with the Elements is certainly capable of making good use of the Fluid Condensers by way of accumulating the Elements into them. But unless the student is capable of accumulating at least the Elements into a Condenser, Fluid Condensers are of little use.

**A BARDON
COMPANION**

First Edition Text

PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION

On a few occasions, I have been asked to write some sort of student's guide to Franz Bardon's "Initiation Into Hermetics". Each time, I responded with something like "I can't think of anything to add." And for years I've held this opinion, but my experiences participating in an Internet e-board discussion group about Bardon's works has led me to reconsider that sentiment. So, when I was asked to rewrite the Franz Bardon FAQ that appeared on a popular website, I consented to write a few things concerning the first four Steps of IHH. Little did I know at the outset that I'd find all kinds of things to say! Word junkie that I am, I ended up writing no less than 37 full pages of commentary and answers to commonly asked questions. Even at that, hundreds more pages could be written.

Making things understood, presenting concepts in such a way that it is easy for the reader to grasp them, is the responsibility of the writer. But the writer's responsibility stops there -- it is up to the reader to do the understanding itself. And it's the reader who doesn't quite grasp the author's meaning that's the one responsible for trying to figure it out. That is indeed the failing of a written thing -- there is no chance for dialogue and for putting all your questions to the author for clarification. Consequently, many written things remain misunderstood by many, or at least only partially understood.

In the case of Franz Bardon's books, this is compounded by the fact that as he wrote them, he placed himself in the perspective of the student who is actually involved with the labor of the material he describes. For instance, when he describes the exercises of Step Five in IHH, he is saying things that only a student who has done the labor of the Step One, Two, Three and Four exercises, will understand. Thus, the student who is in the middle of Step Two, or the student who is reading IHH for the first time and hasn't even begun the work, will understand what Bardon wrote regarding Step Five, less completely than someone who has completed the Step Four work.

This was certainly the case for me and as I progressed through the Steps. I was repeatedly surprised to find that I had previously misunderstood things in the mere reading of the text that now made perfect sense because I had done the work leading up to that point in the path. It was within this thought that I found a reason for writing my commentaries.

I firmly believe that anyone who has progressed through IHH up to the start of Step Five, has no need for outside advice. The

student of Step Five will have mastered the most rudimentary techniques upon which the remainder of the course is constructed. Plus, the student will have learned the ability to puzzle out their questions on their own and will have, by necessity, honed this skill to a razor sharpness. At this point, IIH becomes much easier for the student.

This stage, typified by the student's ability to ask their questions internally and seek out answers through their own experimentation, is a necessary part of the path of initiation. As you trod the path of initiation, the responsibility for your progress falls more and more into your own hands. Inquisitiveness and inventiveness are both important allies of the student of magic and there are certain passages where that is all you will have at your disposal to work with.

I have tried to find a balance between giving this fact its due respect and trying my best to steer away from giving encouragement to those who wish to leap farther than they are truly prepared to step. My compromise has been to do two things in regard to IIH: First, I have limited my detailed commentary and practical suggestions to the "Theory" section and the exercises of Steps One through Four.

Second, I have written a commentary on Steps Five through Ten which outlines some of the points where Bardon's way of writing from the student's immediate perspective interferes with the understanding of the unprepared reader. I will not offer my practical advice for these later Steps other than in personal correspondence or conversation with practicing students of those particular Steps. The same holds true for Bardon's second and third books, the "Practice of Magical Evocation" and "The Key to the True Quabbalah." I should add here, that I don't expect I'll ever be asked such questions anyway. Everyone that I know that has reached these stages in their initiation does not need to ask the advice of another person, consequently they don't ask.

All of my internal rationale aside, I do have concern that those who read IIH or who look ahead to the Steps to come, will get the wrong picture of what it all really means. At many places in IIH, Bardon has to resort to metaphors that can only be understood if you already know what all went into the metaphor in the first place. It is difficult for the reader to make the subtle connections between what is learned in one Step and what is then applied in a new way in the next.

My concern is especially sharp when it comes to Bardon's PME and KTQ. All too often I have encountered students who pick

up PME and want to START with evocation while totally overlooking what Bardon says (repeatedly) about having to first reach the end of the Step Eight of IIIH (or its equivalent by other means) before beginning the work of PME or KTQ. It is easy to think from the mere reading of these two books that it is really possible to ignore Bardon's stated prerequisite, but the reality is an entirely different matter and Bardon's admonition is completely accurate. This sort of misunderstanding of PME is, in my opinion, due to a lack of background in genuine magic and the consequent inability to truly understand the deeper significance of what is being said. This is inescapably natural and what I have said is meant only as a statement of fact that must be dealt with openly and not as a criticism.

For this reason above all others, I will attempt, through my own commentary, to help the reader at least become aware of the places where this is an important addition to their understanding of the author's deeper meaning. Whether or not my comments actually add to your understanding is out of my hands -- all I can promise is that I will try my best.

I would ask that as you read my comments, you do so with this thought in mind: The only true teacher is experience. Even though a thousand sages will spend a billion words trying to explain the Mysteries, you will not truly understand their full implications until you yourself have penetrated what lies beyond the veil. But never let this dissuade you from doing your damndest to penetrate this veil -- it is only gossamer, as they say. The further you penetrate, the deeper your understanding will grow; and the deeper your understanding, the deeper into the Mysteries will you penetrate. Hold your conclusions with loose hands so that you may always be able to re-form them. Always remain willing to deepen your understanding -- the main barrier to this is holding on too tightly to our conclusions. Adopt your own conclusions not those of another. This is especially true considering that all I can offer you here are my own conclusions and yours might be far different than mine. The best I hope for is that reading about a few of my conclusions will inspire you to question and expand your own conclusions.

My best to you!
Rawn Clark
2002

Part One

Introductory Material

(First Edition)

FRANZ BARDON (1909 TO 1958)

His Life, Works, and Legacy

You might ask, "who was Franz Bardon?" For those who are not familiar with his work, suffice it to say that Bardon is considered to be one of the most important adepts of our age. According to Bardon himself, he was directed by Divine Providence to reveal to humanity the meaning behind the first four major arcana of the Tarot. While he fulfilled his mission, only his revelation of three of the Tarot cards were published and the fourth has been lost due to the twists of fate. The first card, the Magician, was revealed in "Initiation Into Hermetics" (IIH); the second card, the High Priestess, was revealed in "The Practice of Magical Evocation" (PME); and, the third card, the Empress, was revealed in "The Key to the True Quabalah" (KTQ). Only a small fragment of his revelation of the fourth card, the Emperor, remains and is found as an appendix to the book "Frabato", titled "The Golden Book of Wisdom".

With some occult writers, we are left with nearly every detail of their personal lives, while with others, we know no more than their pen names. The situation with Bardon lies somewhere between these two extremes. While we have, through the grace of Divine Providence, access to all of his published works, we can find only a small few details left over from his personal life.

What we do know is that he was born in Czechoslovakia in 1909 and that he died in 1958. He was the first of 13 children and an only son. According to legend, his spirit inhabited the body of young Franz at the age of 16, in answer to the prayers of his father, Victor, for the guidance of a personal teacher.

During his young adult years, Franz worked as a stage performer under the name "Frabato". His performances were reportedly of a unique nature in that he displayed and explained the occult practices so common in that day. According to all reports, he was one of the few such performers who was not a charlatan.

In his early thirties, because of his interest in the occult, he was imprisoned in a concentration camp by the Nazis. He survived three and a half years in the concentration camp but little is known publicly about his time there other than its obvious horror. At some point after that, he became well known as a teacher of Hermetics and worked successfully at a healing practice based upon those same principles.

It was during this period of his life that he wrote the three

books we now know him by.

According to legend, it was his healing practice, combined with the books he was directed by Divine Providence to write, that incurred the wrath of the communist government of Czechoslovakia which followed the war, and in the late 1950's he was again imprisoned. It was in prison that he apparently died.

He left behind a wife (Marie), a daughter (also named Marie), a son (Lumir), and a group of direct disciples. And, he left us three very important books in the annals of occult literature: IHH, PME, and KTQ.

It is impossible to truly know the inner life of an adept such as Franz Bardon, but we can discern certain things from his life, from the testimony of those who knew him, and from his writings. What stands out clearly for me is that Bardon's commitment to Hermetics was not about how great and powerful a guy he was. This sets him apart from many of his contemporaries and no where will you find braggartly statements about him other than from his disciples.

As evinced from what he wrote and what is known of his life, he was a humble, sincere and honorable man of great accomplishment. He was able to write down for all the rest of the world to see, a plainly spoken outline of the path of Hermetic Magic. Never before, and not since, has so comprehensive and so clear a guide been presented to the general public. Yet he managed to do this without touting himself as "The Magus of the Age", etc.

At the same time, Bardon was a very HUMAN being. He smoked heavily and experienced many difficulties with his health and life circumstances. I think it was perhaps these very experiences that enabled him to devise a path that was so accessible to the common man or woman. While his path demands that the student work to ennoble their character, he never resorts to judging the student's character himself -- that task he leaves up the student.

Nothing concrete is known about who Bardon's corporeal teachers were or from where he learned Hermetic Magic and Kabbalah. A good amount of speculation has passed under that bridge but the fact of the matter is that this question is relatively irrelevant. Certainly parallels exist between Bardon's system and other important systems of practice throughout the world, but where Bardon's ideas originated has no real bearing upon the fact that his system has been proven to work.

Nevertheless, the question often arises as to what Bardon's "Hermetics" have to do with classical hermeticism. While his hermetics do derive from the body of writings known as the "Corpus

Hermetica" (i.e., those ancient writings attributed to "Hermes The Thrice Greatest"), it takes a deep understanding of this work to see the similarities. The similarities are easier to detect with the later hermetic writings found in sources such as the "Kybalion" by Three Initiates, the "Emerald Tablet of Hermes", the "Seven Hermetic Letters" by Georg Lomer, and the occult hermetics of his day. To Bardón, hermeticism is the science of occultism, based upon the teachings of the legendary figure known simply as Hermes.

With his book PME, the parallels between what he writes and the standard works on Solomonic magic, are very obvious. Yet even here, Bardón offers the student more than most authors. The same is true of his book KTQ. Many modern students of Kabbalah don't even recognize KTQ as Kabbalah, but in truth, Bardón's approach reaches back to a more original form of Kabbalistic practice. In this case, the "even more" that he gives the aspiring student is a universal Kabbalah that is amenable to ANY language and therefore does not require the learning of biblical Hebrew.

Perhaps the greatest gift of Bardón's writing style is that he explains things in a very practical manner and does so without all the flowery language so prevalent in occultism. It is obvious from the outset, that the reader has found an author who speaks from long and deep experience instead of off the top of his head. The depth of his experience is often difficult for the reader to grasp, for he speaks, from beginning to end, from the perspective of someone who has done every stitch of the work for himself, and in this way he naturally conveys the concept that all he describes is obtainable, even easy.

Bardón wrote for both the common reader (one not really interested in hermetics other than as an intellectual oddity) and for the serious student of hermetic magic. Even someone who has had no previous experience with occultism can begin the work of IHH, since this work begins with the rudiments of initiation and gradually develops the student's magical abilities. Most who begin the work of IHH however, have had some occult training, but this is a two-edged sword, as it were, for often, the experienced occultist will find that they must unlearn some of what they have learned from other sources.

Of the many direct students that Bardón left behind, two are of special note. The first was his secretary, Otti Votavova, who was responsible for the book "Frabato" and for seeing to it that his writings remained accessible. While I have some problems with "Frabato" it is well worth reading if approached as a "Zanoni"-like

occult novel. I find it hard to believe that Bardon would have said some of the things about himself that were said in "Frabato". To me, it seems that Ms. Votavova's own love for her teacher amplified parts of Bardon's life out of proportion to their nitty-gritty reality. As I said, it is impossible to truly understand the inner life of so great an adept. According to the record, Bardon submitted to Ms. Votavova an outline of that period of his life covered in "Frabato" and left it up to her to flesh it out into a book. I'm certain that Ms. Votavova did her best (others assure us that Ms. V. loved the truth) but I'm equally certain that some parts of "Frabato" describe events with too symbolic a language. While I admire her work, I do not recommend trusting it as an accurate biography of Franz Bardon. At best, it does a good job of giving the reader the flavor of the man and an idea of the depth of his commitment.

Another direct student of note is the late Dr. M. Kumar. He relayed several tales of Bardon and was ever helpful to students of Hermetic Magic.

There are many other personages of note, but the one remaining that I wish to mention is Dieter Rugeberg. Mr. Rugeberg has spent several decades of sincere effort and expense to see to it that Bardon's books have remained available to the modern reader. He has also helped guide sincere students and has helped to keep the evolution of the public response to Bardon's work on the right track.

Today, we are blessed with the opportunity to purchase Bardon's works in print and to encounter others with the same interest through the Internet. We owe this fact to the efforts of not only Bardon, Votavova, Rugeberg, and now the folks at Merkur Publishing, but also to countless other modern-day magicians. Folks like Daren, Paul Allen, Ralf Mulberg, Tim Scott, and William Mistele, to name just a few, are helping to increase this legacy.

There are six books related to Franz Bardon. The first three are the books that he wrote: IIH, PME, and KTQ.

The next three books were written about him by others. The first and most famous of these is the pseudo-biography titled "Frabato The Magician". The second is a compilation of notes from the archives of his personal disciples, known as "Questions and Answers". And the last is known as "Souvenirs of Franz Bardon", written collaboratively by his son, Lumir, and one of his disciples, Dr. M. Kumar.

INITIATION INTO HERMETICS **by Franz Bardon**

The first book by Franz Bardon to be published was "Initiation Into Hermetics", known in the original German edition as "Der Weg zum Wahren Adepten". It appeared in 1956, approximately two years before Bardon's death.

This book forms the foundation upon which PME and KTQ were later written and it outlines the basic training necessary for one to become an Hermetic magician. It is composed of a fairly enigmatic-in-spots section on "Theory", followed by a series of exercises and practical work divided into ten "Steps".

Within each of the ten Steps, you will find three types of exercises: Mental/Spirit, Astral/Soul, and Physical. The exercises of each category are designed to compliment the exercises of the other two categorizes in each Step, thus the student performs the current mental, astral and physical exercise during each period of work or meditation. This assures the student of a balanced advancement -- and balance or equilibrium is a very important thing in Hermetic magic.

Each exercise is presented in very practical terms. At times however, Bardon is not altogether clear as to exactly what he means. I believe that this is on purpose -- it is the responsibility of every student to puzzle some things out for themselves. This is in fact, a vital component of any path of self-realization and empowerment, and believe you me, the course of IHH's ten Steps will hone your inventiveness and inquisitiveness to a razor sharpness.

Only the Astral/Soul exercises of Step One are presented with time limits (approximately three months). The reasons for this are specific (i.e., it doesn't pay to dawdle over this particular part of the work) as are Bardon's reasons for not setting time limits to guide the student through the rest of the exercises. The reason that there are no time limits set for the remaining exercises and Steps is that each student progresses at their own unique pace -- there is no standard length of time it takes one to make it through the entire ten Steps. It does not matter how many decades or lifetimes it takes you to complete this work. The only thing that matters in regard to IHH is that you master each Step completely, regardless of how long it takes you to do so.

The work of Hermetic Magic can fit in with any of your other philosophical interests. In and of itself, it holds no religious doctrine

yet is amenable to almost any. Throughout IHH, PME and KTQ this is left up to the student him or her self. In fact, many things in this course are left up to the student and that is as it should be.

To give you a better idea of the path outlined by Bardou in IHH, I offer you a reshuffling of the Table of Contents. Unlike the standard table of contents which lists the exercises by Step and groups the three categories of work together in each Step, I have adopted a different sequence and listed the exercises by category (i.e., Mental, Astral and Physical), leaving the Step designations as secondary. I believe that this better reveals how the exercises of each Step link together by category and form a continuum of growth or advancement.

Yet we should not ignore the fact that the exercises of each category within a Step, when pursued in unison, act to create a balanced level of achievement by the end of that Step's work. Nonetheless, I think by examining this reshuffled table of contents, you will broaden your vision of what this combining of elements produces. It may well help you pinpoint the goal of all the work involved with the mastery of Hermetics.

MENTAL [MAGICAL SCHOOLING OF THE SPIRIT]

Step One:

- * Mental Discipline --
 - 1) Observance of thoughts.
 - 2) One-pointedness of thought.
 - 3) Emptiness of mind.

Step Two:

- * Auto-suggestion.
- * Single-sense concentration.

Step Three:

- * Multi-sense concentration.
- * External projection of images.
- * Wrap-around projection of images.

Step Four:

- * Transference of consciousness --
 - 1) Into inanimate objects and plants.
 - 2) Into animate animals, insects, etc.
 - 3) Into other humans.

Step Five:

- * Space Magic (i.e., "Depth Point" concentration).

Step Six:

- * Meditation on your own spirit.

* Becoming conscious of the senses in the spirit.

Step Seven:

* Analysis of the spirit in regards to the practice.

Step Eight:

* Preparation for mental travel.

* The practice of mental travel --

1) In a room.

2) For short distances.

3) Visiting acquaintances, relatives, etc.

Step Nine:

* The practice of clairvoyance through magic mirrors --

1) Viewing through time and space.

2) Having an effect from afar through the magic mirror.

3) Various projection activities through the magic mirror.

Step Ten:

* The ascent of the spirit to higher planes.

ASTRAL [MAGICAL SCHOOLING OF THE SOUL]

Step One:

* Introspection or self-analysis.

* Preparation of the positive and negative soul mirrors in regards to the Elements.

Step Two:

* Astral or magical equilibrium regarding the Elements, transformation or ennobling of the character.

Step Three:

* Element Breathing: Inhaling the Elements into the whole body.

Step Four:

* Elemental Accumulation --

1) In the entire body.

2) In the individual parts and organs of the body.

* Establishing the harmony of the Elements in the appropriate regions of the body.

Step Five:

* Element projection outwardly --

1) Through the whole body.

2) Through the hands and fingers.

3) Without first passing through your body.

Step Six:

* Preparation to master the Akasha principle.

* Conscious calling forth of states of trance by means of the

Akasha.

* Mastering the Elements from the Akasha principle through an individual ritual.

Step Seven:

* The development of the astral senses (clairvoyance, clairaudience and clairsentience) with the aid of the Elements and the Fluid condensers.

Step Eight:

* The Great Now and higher self-analysis.

* Mastery of the Electric and Magnetic Fluids --

1) Control of the Electric and Magnetic Fluids - Inductive

Method.

2) Control of the Electric and Magnetic Fluids - Deductive

Method.

Step Nine:

* Conscious separation of the astral body from the physical body (i.e., Astral Wandering).

* The impregnation of the astral body with the four divine attributes.

Step Ten:

* Conscious communion with your personal god.

* Communication with deities, etc.

PHYSICAL [MAGICAL SCHOOLING OF THE PHYSICAL BODY]

Step One:

* Adapting to a normal and sensible lifestyle as a matter of habit.

* Morning exercises.

* Conscious breathing.

* Conscious eating.

* The magic of water.

Step Two:

* Conscious pore breathing.

* Conscious body posture.

* Body control in every day life.

Step Three:

* Lung and pore breathing of the vital energy in the whole body.

* Lung and pore breathing in the individual parts and organs of the body.

* Impregnation of a room with the vital energy or an idea.

Step Four:

- * Rituals and their practical application --
 - 1) Gestures.
 - 2) Body postures.
 - 3) Finger positions.

Step Five:

- * Preparation for passive communication with the invisible --
 - 1) Release (exteriorization) of one's own hand.
 - 2) Preparation of the fingers with the help of the pendulum, pencil, planchette, etc.
- * Practice of passive communication --
 - 1) With one's own guardian spirit or angel.
 - 2) With departed human beings and other beings.

Step Six:

- * Conscious creation of entities --
 - 1) Elementals.
 - 2) Larvae.
 - 3) Schemata.
 - 4) Phantoms.

Step Seven:

- * The creation of Elementaries (by four different methods).
- * Magical animation of pictures.

Step Eight:

- * Magical influence through the Elements.
- * Fluid (Electric and Magnetic) Condensers --
 - 1) Simple (single-Fluid) condensers.
 - 2) Compound (multi-Fluid) condensers.
 - 3) Fluid condensers for magic mirrors.
 - 4) Preparation of a magic mirror with the help of a Fluid condenser.

Step Nine:

- * Treatment of the sick through the ElectroMagnetic Fluid.
- * The magic of loading talismans, amulets and precious stones.
- * The realization of a wish through ElectroMagnetic spheres in the Akasha (i.e., "Volting").

Step Ten:

- * Various methods of acquiring magical capabilities --
 - 1) Suggestion.
 - 2) Telepathy.
 - 3) Hypnosis.
 - 4) Mass hypnosis.

- 5) Mind reading.
- 6) Psychometry.
- 7) Influencing the memory.
- 8) Working in the Akasha.
- 9) Room impregnation from a distance.
- 10) Messages through the air.
- 11) Exteriorization of only part of the astra-mental body to accomplish certain tasks.
- 12) Magical invisibility.
- 13) Advanced practices with the four Elements.
- 14) Levitation phenomena.
- 15) Natural phenomena.
- 16) Power over life and death.

THE PRACTICE OF MAGICAL EVOCATION **by Franz Bardon**

Bardon's second book, "The Practice of Magical Evocation", also appeared in 1956, shortly after the release of his first book, IIIH. While many books have been written about the subject of magical evocation, none compare with PME. Books such as "The Greater and Lesser Keys of Solomon", "Abramelin the Mage" and "The Ars Notoria", to name a few, provide only a small number of details as to the tools required, the ritual orations, and the spirits to be evoked, but say nothing of the theory, preparation and details so necessary to genuine success in this interesting art.

PME does not stand alone -- it is designed as an extension of the work begin in IIIH. In the introduction to PME and in several places throughout the text, Bardon warns that the student should approach the work of evocation only after having progressed through Step Eight of IIIH (or an equivalent initiation). All too often students have been lured by the glamour and romance of evocation into taking up this work before they are properly prepared to do so, and this, as Bardon repeatedly warns, results only in very dubious and possibly harmful experiences.

Without the proper training it is virtually impossible to understand the deeper significance of evocation. Generally, the unprepared student will think evocation to be fairly fantastical or strictly symbolic. Some believe that the ancient art of evocation is merely a primitive form of psychotherapy and for the uninitiated novice who steps into the practice unprepared, this is all that it will

be. The reason for this is that without the prerequisite magical training, the practitioner will evoke nothing more than images from their own psyche, instead of entities that have actual existence independent of the human psyche.

One key to the genuine practice of magical evocation is the ability learned in Step Eight of IIIH known as "mental wandering". The first step in any evocation is for the magician to establish a mental contact with the entity to be evoked through mental wandering into their respective sphere.

Another key to genuine evocation is the magical ability to work consciously within all three realms (mental, astral and physical) simultaneously. This alone is what transforms mere oratory and theatrical movement into genuinely magical acts.

The primary motivation for undertaking evocation is the exploration of the universe and the expansion of the magician's consciousness. It is not about gaining extraordinary powers over other people and events. Through evocation, the student may explore the other realms or spheres of existence (this is often called "rising through the planes") and may be able to learn of many things directly from the beings which inhabit these realms. Furthermore, some of these entities may be convinced to carry out the magician's will and perform tasks that would otherwise take the magician's extended attention to accomplish.

Bardon divides PME into three sections: Magic (theory and practice), Hierarchy (an expose upon the hierarchy of planes), and Illustrations (a grimoire of sigils for the various Elemental and planetary beings).

In the first section, Bardon explains the theory behind evocation and explores the rationale behind, and the making of, each of the classic ritual tools. These instructions surpass any such previously given by past authors. Bardon teaches that each aspect of the ritual regalia must be personalized and empowered according to the magician's own understanding and needs. For example, in Bardon's instructions regarding the Magic Circle, he gives no instructions as to which specific sigils and words are to be inscribed therein. Instead, he instructs the student to create a Circle that clearly represents the student's own understanding of the universe.

Another example of Bardon's unique approach is when he explains that the atmosphere within the Magic Triangle must match the atmosphere familiar to the entity which is to be evoked -- a fact unrevealed before.

In the section on the hierarchy of the planes, Bardon leads the

student through each of the planes in sequence and introduces many of the entities which inhabit them. Here you will find none of the language of former works on evocation. In the books of Solomonic magic, the entities described are of a low, demonic, nature, but those of PME are not. The beings listed in PME are ones contacted by Bardon himself and are most all willing to teach the student and aid in their advancement. For reasons of protecting the uninitiated dabbler, Bardon does not provide a detailed list of beings of either the Mars or the Saturn spheres.

PME ends with a grimoire of sigils for each of the entities listed in the section on hierarchy. Though this part of PME is often the most interesting to the passive reader, it is truly the least of importance to the practicing student. The student who has actually pursued IHH through the 8th Step will be able to discover these things for him or her self, as Bardon mentions in the theory and practice section.

It is interesting to note that the attitude of the practitioner of PME must invoke a different sort of relationship with the evoked entities than surmised by other books on the subject. In those other traditions, the magician is taught to be overly forceful and downright rude in an effort to gain and maintain control over the evoked entity. This is accomplished through all sorts of threats and exhortations about how the magician is supposedly working under the aegis of deity. Essentially this is rooted in the magician's fearful and secret knowledge that they are in fact unable to control anything when left to their own devices.

In PME however, the prerequisite training insures that the magician is actually capable of maintaining control over the entire evocation. For such a magician, there is no need of fear. Furthermore, the magician is taught to always be respectful, yet stern when necessary, but never rude. Just as with any interaction with another being, the evoker will receive a reflection of what she/he puts forth. Thus it is prudent for the one wishing to master the art of evocation, to always be kind, respectful and honest, and to never try to force another being against their will. This is how friends are made and it will lead to your winning over the heart of the whole universe.

There are many, many more entities inhabiting the various planes than are mentioned by Bardon. No grimoire can ever completely list all the entities it is possible for the magician to encounter. Who knows who you may meet when left to the whim of Divine Providence? Yet, the ability to go out and make contact with

entities unknown to you (i.e., those not listed in any grimoire) is a more advanced faculty and it may take meeting a familiar being or two before this becomes possible.

The serious student will, after due preparation, find no better guide to this ancient art than that provided by Bardon. And for the passive reader wishing to arrive at a more complete understanding of the mysterious practice of magical evocation, this book will be worth more than the reading of a hundred others.

THE KEY TO THE TRUE QUABBALAH **by Franz Bardon**

The third and final volume in the series by Bardon is "The Key to the True Quabbalah" (published in 1957). At least this is the last completed and published piece. A partial manuscript of a fourth book was later printed as an appendix to "Frabato" and it is rumored that there once existed a manuscript for a fifth book concerning Alchemy, but the latter was lost when Bardon was arrested by the communist government of Czechoslovakia.

The spelling "qUAbbalah" is unique but it is actually just as good as any other transliteration of the original Hebrew word into English. [I, however, will use the spelling "kabbalah" hereafter (it's easier to type and more automatic for me).] This is merely a reflection of the uniqueness of what you will find between the covers of this book!

If you are expecting to encounter yet another book on Western Kabbalah or one on the cosmology of Jewish Kabbalah, then you will be sorely disappointed because Bardon's "Quabbalah" is not exactly like either. The basic technique and its focus upon the letter-sounds, harkens back to an ancient Jewish practice of Kabbalah, but the exercises themselves are of purely Western Hermetic origin.

Bardon's Kabbalah is not dependent upon the twenty-two Letters of the Hebrew alephbet. In fact, he employs the German letter-sounds throughout. The Hebrew formulas that Bardon explains are all composed of the German letter-sounds and are approximations of the Hebrew. Unfortunately, neither Hebrew, German nor English script can accommodate all the sounds it is possible for the human mouth to create (I think perhaps Sanskrit comes the closest). Thus there are many other formulas than those that Bardon mentions. But this fact is irrelevant since KTQ teaches the student the technique which will enable them to truly speak the

universally sacred and creative language of kabbalah. A kabbalistic formula does not depend upon words in the normal sense -- its language is formed through intent and in accordance with the flow of Nature.

As with PME, Bardon warns the reader that the work of kabbalah should not be initiated until one has completed the first eight Steps of IHH or has achieved an equal training by other means. In one place he actually states that it is even better if one has also gained experience with PME. The training of KTQ requires the same sorts of abilities that PME requires of the student and if these prerequisites are not present, then little (if any) success will result. Certainly someone who STARTS with KTQ and thinks that they will thus master the true art of creative speaking will meet with no success until after many decades of ardent practice, and even then there are no guarantees. This art, even more so than evocation, requires a high degree of development at the outset.

KTQ is divided into three sections. The first section is titled "Theory" but this is not about the complexities of kabbalistic cosmology. Instead, it is about the theory behind uttering creatively.

The second section is titled "Practice -- Preconditions" and serves to teach the student the technique of uttering the simple, single-letter formulae. After a brief introduction, this section is divided into Steps One through Seven, similar to how IHH is structured. The lessons begin at the beginning, as it were.

Bardon speaks of a quadrapolar type of action required for true kabbalistic utterance, each pole of which corresponds to an Element. The first Element, naturally, is relegated to Fire. The student begins with the "pronunciation" (this has nothing to do with physical speech) of the single letters within the mental sphere as a certain color and shape. The exercises are similar to those found in IHH, except that they are infinitely more complex.

Next, the student learns how to employ the second pole, corresponding to Air, by "pronouncing" the single letters at a particular tone or note, simultaneous with their utterance as a color and shape.

The third pole (Water) of the quadrapolar action involves "pronunciation" through the invocation of a feeling or sensation corresponding to the letter.

These three poles form what Bardon calls the "three sense concentration" required for basic kabbalistic speech. After this, Bardon provides a brief, concise expose on the meaning of the numbers 1 through 10. This gives a clue as to what the fourth pole

(Earth) of the quadrapolar action is. Namely it is the speaking of the letters with all three types of sense concentration active at the same instant, and founded upon the 10 original creative ideas.

Bardon closes this section by giving instruction in the use of the first of four keys, in the four realms (Akasha, Mental, Astral and Physical), and how to cause effects in any of these realms or in all of them simultaneously.

The third and final section of KTQ is titled "Practice -- The Magic of Formulas" and is dedicated to the remaining three keys. Each key refers to the number of letters involved in each formula. Thus the second key involves combining two letters; the third involves three letters, and so on. There are ten such keys according to Bardon, but he gives instructions for only the first four. At the end of the twelfth Step, Bardon speaks about Elemental formulas and the use of Divine Names and Beings.

There are a few specific errors and omissions in the latter part of KTQ. I suspect that this was intentional and intended to offer a degree of protection to these deep mysteries and to shield the dabbler who would toy with them. It also serves as a test of the student's true abilities for it will require that the student confer with non-corporeal entities in order to discover these errors and omissions along with their rectifications. This ability is a prerequisite for the true kabbalist and without it the student will be able to penetrate only a short way into this Mystery of Mysteries.

Truly any person who makes it through even the second section and is able to speak the single-letter formulas, needs no physical guide beyond that point. To achieve such a high goal provides the magician with all the internal guidance necessary to reach even higher goals.

FRABATO THE MAGICIAN **by (Franz Bardon) Otti Votavova**

Prior to his death in July of 1958, Bardon gave his student and secretary, Otti Votavova (1903 to 1973), an outline for his biography. Bardon left it up to Ms. Votavova to flesh out the details and turn it into a readable book. Unfortunately for us, what resulted, while good reading, was not a strictly accurate biography.

The manuscript of "Frabato" was not completed until after Bardon's death and it did not see publication until 1979. Dieter Ruggeberg, the publisher, writes that it was with some trepidation

that he published "Frabato" under the name of Franz Bardon, since it was Ms. Votavova who actually wrote it. But eventually he was convinced to do so because he felt that listing Bardon as the author would give it the attention it deserved.

When I read "Frabato", I am reminded of Lord Bulwer-Lytton's book "Zanoni". Both share some details of the life of a man dedicated to the path of Hermetic initiation. "Frabato" however, covers only a moderate span of Bardon's life (from the time he was a stage performer till shortly before his final imprisonment), but it is enough to give the reader the flavor of the man and his works. Where "Frabato" fails, in my opinion, is when it comes to describing the inner life of Bardon. Nonetheless, "Frabato" does give some insight as to why Bardon wrote what he wrote.

Over all, "Frabato" is worth reading -- so long as you remember that it is not altogether accurate. Of special interest to Bardon's students are a memoriam by Ms. Votavova (written two months after Bardon died), an epilogue written by Mr. Rugeberg (in 1979), and two appendices. Both of the notes from Ms. Votavova and Mr. Rugeberg, convey some of the details of Bardon's life that are not present in "Frabato".

The first appendix is a fragment (only part of the first three out of ten chapters) of a manuscript in-progress titled, "The Golden Book of Wisdom". This book was supposed to have concerned the fourth leaf or trump card of the Tarot (the Emperor). To our great loss, there remains no complete transcript of the work, but what does remain, is very intriguing.

The second appendix is a manuscript titled "High Magic". When Mr. Rugeberg added this to a new 1982 edition of "Frabato", he was under the impression that this was written by Bardon himself. Since then, the truth has come out and we now know that this was none other than the book "Seven Hermetic Letters" by Georg Lomer. Apparently, Bardon was so impressed by this little book that he had it translated privately (prior to writing IHH), from the original German into Czech, for the edification of his own disciples. The differences between the original version of "The Seven Hermetic Letters" and that provided in "Frabato" as "High Magic", may well be due to the fact that it was translated from German into Czech and then, from Czech into English!

Many later students of Bardon's writings were puzzled at the differences between what is presented in "High Magic" and what is presented in IHH. "High Magic" is interesting (I have not read "The Seven Hermetic Letters") but it pales in comparison with IHH.

***QUESTIONS & ANSWERS* by Franz Bardon**

This little book, first published by Dieter Rugeberg in 1997, was put together by a group of Bardon's students sometime in the early 1950s, prior to the publication of Bardon's three books. What lies within these pages are the notes they took down of Bardon's oral teachings.

These notes were later edited by Dr. Kumar along with Silvia and Ulrich Ohm, and arranged under four section headings: concerning the mental plane, the astral plane, the physical plane, and the function of the akasha. The book is presented, as its title suggests, in a question-and-answer format, with a total of 185 entries.

While it doesn't contain any truly startling revelations or insights for one who has read Bardon's other books, it is nonetheless, of great value to the student. In Q&A some of the topics which Bardon speaks of in other places are amplified and explained in greater detail. Its greatest value, as Mr. Rugeberg states in his forward, is as inspiration for the meditations of the student. For certainly there is ample stimulus for thought within Q&A's pages.

***MEMORIES OF FRANZ BARDON* by Dr. Lumir Bardon & Dr. M. Kumar**

This little book contains reminiscences of Bardon recorded by those who knew him. It also contains a few pictures relative to Bardon's life.

Part Two
Commentary Upon
Initiation Into Hermetics
(First Edition)

INTRODUCTION

It is my honor to present to you some of my thoughts about the course of initiation presented in Franz Bardon's "Initiation Into Hermetics" (IIH).

[I will be employing the 1999 Merkur Publishing edition throughout my comments. The differences between this edition and earlier editions are minor. The only change is that the present English translation is easier for the modern reader than the original translation.]

When a student first approaches this work, questions inevitably arise. While the best way to answer these questions is for the student to meditate and consider and come to the answers on their own, this seldom satisfies the beginner and many will put the book aside out of frustration. These days, now that the Internet offers us an easy way of getting in contact with others who have been doing the work of IIH for many years, there is little reason for the beginner to have their simpler questions become a barrier to progress.

The answers to the deeper questions though, must still be sought out by the student on their own. In these matters, experience is still the only reliable teacher!

The thoughts that I proffer here come from my own personal experience of working through the Steps in IIH. It is up to the student to prove or disprove what I have written through their own pursuit of the work. What I write is only meant to expand upon some of the things that Franz Bardon outlined, it is not meant to supplant what Bardon wrote. Hopefully, my words combined with the text of IIH, will make it easier for the student to begin the work with greater confidence.

IIH presents a coherent course of initiation. It, unlike many modern systems of initiation, begins at the beginning. Each Step builds upon what precedes it. Therefore, it is prudent that the student skip nothing along the way. What seems simple in the beginning will prove itself to be essential to success in the longer run.

Initiation is not a race. It matters little if it takes you 30 years to reach the 10th Step or if it takes only 10 years. Progress at your own pace (without dawdling) and practice both patience and perseverance. I have absolutely no doubt that anyone who sincerely wants to take up this work will meet with the desired success if they steadfastly pursue IIH.

Each of the 10 Steps in IIH is broken down into three categories of work: Spirit (Mental), Soul (Astral) and Physical. Each of these categories are to be pursued hand-in-hand. This brings about a balanced progress that is essential to true advancement in magic. Never should the student go, for example, from the Step One physical exercises, on to the Step Two physical exercises, until the Mental and Astral exercises of Step One have also been mastered. If a certain set of exercises within a Step come easily for you and you complete that category of exercises before you complete the other categories within that Step, then simply improve upon your successes while finishing up the rest of the Step's requirements. The standard of success Bardon lays out for all three parts of each Step must be attained before progressing to the next Step.

The work of IIH requires discipline and commitment. At first the student will need to carve out the time from their daily schedule to accommodate the exercises. I advise that, if possible, the beginner devote at least an hour first thing in the morning and an hour each evening before going to sleep. But do allow yourself occasional exceptions to this regimen -- five days a week will suffice, but seven is better. Eventually this discipline will become a joy and the period during which it is an onus will pass quickly.

Nonetheless, it is important to consider this BEFORE one begins the work. First, the student should read through IIH a few times and get a feel of exactly what will be required. If you see no way in which your busy life can accommodate the time required for this sort of work, then it is best if you put off beginning the work until such a time as you are capable of reshaping your life. In the mean time, you can initiate the changes in your life that will eventually allow you the time for these pursuits.

Be good to yourself. Initiation is not meant to be torture. It is supposed to be, if not fun, at least interesting and inspiring. Improving oneself can be (and in my opinion, SHOULD be) a joyous pastime.

Initiation is not a path toward great riches nor power over others. If these are your goals then you will meet with no genuine success in the pursuit of magic. Asking yourself the question of why you are choosing this work, is essential. It is wise to spend a goodly amount of time thinking about your reasons for taking on this responsibility.

Throughout the course of IIH, your intentions will be tested over and over again. These mark the various "pitfalls" or "blinds" that are spoken of by those who have made progress in the work.

Only the "correct" motives will carry the student through certain parts of the path of initiation. If your motives are too selfish or too egotistical, then you will run into a wall and only a reevaluation of your motives will free you. This is a good thing and it is not meant as a blockage, per se. Instead, it is a vital part of initiation that guarantees that the student will either stay on course or give up the pursuit.

In this modern age when information is so easily accessible, we have the habit of seeking answers from external sources. We have lost the habit of looking within for our answers and of trying our damndest to figure things out for ourselves. While it is easy to accumulate a great deal of information and store it in our minds as knowledge, it is only through experience that information is transformed into understanding. The process of initiation is one of experience, not a mere accumulation of information. Thus, it is important to contemplate every idea you encounter in IHH and puzzle things out for yourself whenever possible. This is especially true when it comes to the "Theory" section. Much of what Bardon says in this section is a mere outline of the facts and is meant less as an answer to all your questions and more as something to spur your own meditation and contemplation. Please rest assured that some of the most confusing bits will clarify themselves over time as you gather more experience.

Initiation requires of the student a radical self-honesty. Watch out for kidding yourself that you have attained to something that you have not in fact attained to. And always be ready to lovingly criticize yourself.

We each have within us a most reliable source of guidance. This is the interior voice of our individual conscience. One of the most important lessons that I have learned is to ALWAYS listen to my conscience. It has never led me astray and I have come to a point where I NEVER disobey its dictates. I advise the same for you. Listen to and follow your conscience and your continued success will be assured!

I wish for you the greatest success in your path of initiation!

THEORY

THE ELEMENTS

The philosophy of Elements is, obviously, a human construct. It is one way in which we humans have attempted to describe the workings of the universe. But even though it is a human construct this does not negate the fact that it describes a real thing. To my mind, it is a description that works well. It gives me a tool by which I can work with the actual forces that it tries to describe. Granted, it is imperfect and does not exactly match the reality of things, but then again, an exact match would be impossible.

The forces that underlie the Elements do exist regardless of whether or not we try to describe them and regardless of whether or not humans are around to perceive them.

There are two very important things to keep in mind when working with the Elements. First is that the Elements are not the same as the physical phenomena whose names they share. For example, the Element Fire is not the same as the physical phenomena of fire. The names of the Elements are derived through the "law" of analogy. This means that the Element Fire possesses many of the characteristics of physical fire, such as expansiveness, heat, brightness, and the ability to transform what it touches.

All too often the student falls into the trap of drawing too close a relationship between the Elements and their analogous physical phenomena. This tends to obscure the deeper significance of the Elements and should, therefore, be avoided.

Second in importance regarding the Elements is the fact that in our physical realm, the Elements never act alone. All physical things are a combination of the Elements. For example, the physical phenomena of fire is not composed solely of the Fire Element. Instead, physical fire is composed of all four Elements working together (plus the fifth -- Akasha). A physical thing may show a predominance of one Element over the others, but it still contains all four.

The Elements exist in their pristine, separate sense only in the most rarefied reaches of the astral and mental planes.

THE ELECTRIC AND THE MAGNETIC FLUIDS

Bardon does not write extensively about the Electric and

Magnetic Fluids in the Theory section of IIIH. He does, however, speak of it in the ten Steps and in his other books, especially KTQ and Q&A. But in no one spot does he clearly and exhaustively define these terms.

Probably the first question that arises is what does he mean by "Fluid"? By Fluid, Bardou indicates an energy or essence that manifests motion and handles in a manner similar to water. Both Fluids are dynamic things. IIIH teaches the student how to manipulate or wield these Fluids, form them into whatever shape is desired and impregnate them with any corresponding wish.

These two Fluids are the primal polarity and are effective in every plane of existence. The Electric Fluid is the positive, expansive pole and the Magnetic Fluid is the opposite negative, contractive pole. As with a physical magnet, these poles cannot be separated -- they are manifest through the continuum that unites them in their eternal embrace. Both forces are equal and interdependent, and have been described in every culture in one way or another. At the highest level, these poles are expressed through the two faces of The One.

The Fluids are the root of the Elements Fire and Water. This is why, in the course of IIIH, the student looks within the Fire Element for the Electric Fluid and within the Water Element for the Magnetic Fluid. It is in fact, difficult for the student to at first differentiate between the primary Elements and the Fluids. But there is a difference -- it's just difficult to explain.

Within the Fire Element, the Electric Fluid is found in the Fire's expansiveness, heat and light. The Magnetic Fluid is found within the Water's contractiveness, cold and darkness. The Magnetic Fluid gives form to the Electric force and everywhere in our world, they act in unison. The Fluids are the two primal forces and the Elements are their extensions or modifications.

Each of the Elements can be said to have a specific ElectroMagnetic charge. The Fire Element is predominantly Electric and the Water, Magnetic. The Air represents a balance of the two Fluids (the continuum which connects these two poles) -- the perfect hermaphrodite, capable of accepting the influence of either Fluid. The fourth pole of the quadrapolar magnet, Elemental Earth, represents the combined action of these three ElectroMagnetic charges.

This is often difficult for the novice to understand. It requires careful consideration to see how, at a philosophical level, the combination of parts can sometimes equal more than the sum of its

parts. In this case, the amplification of effect occurs because the parts which combine are each dynamic things. Their dynamism makes them interactive and together, they make something new which does not exist at the level of their independent parts. Thus the Elemental Earth contains not only the Electric and Magnetic balance of Air, but also the raw polarities of Fire and Water. Together, they work in a dynamic, rhythmic and cyclic manner. It is the combination and interaction of these three dynamic parts that causes things to manifest solidity in each of the three mediums or substances (Mental, Astral and Physical).

The serious work with the Fluids doesn't begin until the eighth Step of IHH, so there is little point in listing too many correspondences for the Fluids here. Between now and Step Eight, you'll have plenty of time to become familiar with the Fluids on your own. In the mean time, here are a few notes from Bardon's own comments as relayed by his direct students in the book "Questions and Answers" --

MENTAL (page 24, question #19): *"The Electric Fluid fills abstract thoughts with pure Electric Fluid, warmth, expansion and dynamics. The Magnetic Fluid fills them with pure Magnetic Fluid and the opposite attributes. For example, the Electric Fluid expresses itself through its attributes in willpower, while the Magnetic Fluid expresses itself in the antipole of the will, that is, in manifested belief, an aspect of the productive universal power."*

ASTRAL (page 47, question #12): *"Clairvoyance is an Electric ability of the astral body; clairsentience and psychometry are Magnetic abilities."*

PHYSICAL (page 65, question #5): *"If we are under the influence of the Electric Fluid, then the Fire Element is more effective in us. In this case we feel hot, or we are active to higher degrees, we work more diligently, and therefore we are internally satiated with the Fire Element. Through the increased influence of the Magnetic Fluid we perceive coldness; should the Magnetic Fluid become satiated within us, elimination increases."*

(page 66, question #6): *"On the surface of the human body, the ElectroMagnetic Fluid is effective as radiating life-magnetism. The right side of the body is (in the case of a right-handed person) the active or Electrical side, whereas the left side of the body is passive or Magnetic. The opposite is the case with a left-handed person."*

"The Electric Fluid, through its expansion, causes radiating electrons on the inside of every body [i.e., physical thing], which on

the other hand are attracted by the Magnetic Fluid of the earth. [This explains "gravity".] The Electric Fluid is located in the Inner of everything created, therefore also in the center of the earth, while the Magnetic Fluid is effective on the surface of the earth an on everything created. . . The Electric Fluid produces the acids in all organic or inorganic bodies or substances from a chemical or alchemical point of view, whereas the Magnetic Fluid is effective in an alkaline manner."

Needless to say (but I'll say it anyway), the Electric and Magnetic Fluids are not the same thing as the physical phenomena of electricity and magnetism. While they are analogously related, they are not the same. The physical phenomena of electricity and magnetism are each primarily caused by their corresponding Fluid but they are not purely one or the other Fluid -- they are each composed of the four Elements with a corresponding polarized predominance of either Fire or Water.

It is impossible for me to describe what it feels like to accumulate and project the Fluids. The only way to gain this insight is through direct experience, the key to which is to take careful note, in your daily life, of the qualities I described above and look for them, especially as you work with the Elements.

THE "Od"

Bardon mentions "Od" in passing but doesn't really explain what he means by this term. I've heard several definitions of Od but from what I've gleaned of Bardon's definition, he is referring to the character of the individual or, in other words, the individual's expression of their particular Elemental composition.

The Od is primarily Electric in nature. Simply put, it is the energy that we each express through our accumulated thoughts and emotions. At the mental level, it is our attitude and the quality/quantity of our ideas, seen by how they influence others -- in other words, their emanation. In astral terms, the Od is our astral character or emotional composition, again in its emanative phase of influencing our surroundings. As to our physical body, the Od is the vitality we bring to life and express through our actions. Thus, one with a strong Od is generally outwardly gregarious and active, and one with a weak Od is passive and shy.

These three aspects of the Od work in unison to produce the overall Od.

One place where Bardon speaks of the Od is in the little book "Questions and Answers", under the Astral heading (page 50, question #21). This question concerns astral healing methods and gives an important clue as to what Bardon means by Od:

"We draw this accumulated vital energy directly from the universe and direct it into the astral body of the ailing person without passing it through our own body. Through this we prevent the weakening of our own vitality and at the same time prevent the mixing of our Od (character) with the Od of the ailing person; otherwise we can infect ourselves with the negative attributes of the patient."

While Bardon speaks here only of the Od in relation to astral healing, the same can be said of the mental Od in mental healing and the physical Od during physical healing.

THE QUADRAPOLAR MAGNET

Bardon speaks of the Quadrapolar Magnet throughout his books but still, many readers have difficulty with the basic concept, especially those who are not familiar with a Hermetic diagram known as the "Cross of Equated Forces" (CEF). The CEF diagram is a simplified picture of the Quadrapolar Magnet and helps immensely in the understanding of it. Please take a moment to draw one for your own study (or at least visualize along with my description).

Begin by drawing a circle with about a three inch (7.5 cm) diameter. Draw a vertical line, from edge to edge, through the center point of the circle. Then draw a corresponding horizontal line through the center point. This should net a quadrated circle, i.e., an equal-armed cross within a circle.

Now label the poles of the cross. Writing just outside of the circle, put 'Fire' to the right, 'Water' to the left, 'Air' on top, and 'Earth' at the bottom. Just inside the circle write the following: Above the Fire line, put 'Hot', and below, put 'Dry'. Above the Water line, put 'Wet', and below, put 'Cold'. To the left of the Air line, put 'Wet', and to the right, put 'Hot'. To the left of the Earth line, put 'Cold', and to the right, put 'Dry'. At the center of the circle where your two lines intersect, place a heavy dot and label it "Depth Point" or "Aethyr".

If you want to colorize your CEF, you will need to again divide your circle, this time, into eight parts. Reproduce your work of creating the equal-armed cross but this time, place it askew so that

it divides each of the four sections exactly in half. As you will see, this establishes quadrants for each of the Elements instead of just poles for the Elements -- the four poles of the Elements meet the edge of the circle at the center of each Elemental quadrant. Color the right-hand quadrant a bright red for the Fire. Color the left quadrant a cyan blue for Water. The top quadrant should be bright yellow for Air, and the bottom quadrant should be either a deep earthy brown or a deep olive green. [Alternately, you can use the color associations Bardon lists: Red-Fire; blue green-Water; pale, bright blue-Air; and, dark brown, gray, or black for Earth.]

And now, for a final touch, you can divide into halves (along the vertical Air-Earth line), the whole of the paper you are drawing on -- the Electric Fluid on the right and the Magnetic Fluid on the left. With the right-hand side of your page, you should paint the area -- outside of the circle -- a bright red (slightly more blue than the color you used for Fire). Similarly, paint the left side of your page (again, outside of the circle) with a rich blue color (not as bright or as greenish as you used for Water).

You can, through time, add any correspondences you desire to this diagram. What it accomplishes most admirably is to illuminate the ways in which the Elements interact.

The main reason that Bardon used the analogy of a magnet specifically, was to emphasize the interaction not only of the Elements, but more importantly, of the Fluids. Like with a physical magnet, these two opposite poles coexist. They both attract through their similarities and repulse each other through their differences. This is the same situation with the quadrupolar magnet but on a different scale.

The quadrupolar magnet is composed of four poles instead of two.. Three of these poles (the predominantly Electric Fire Element, the predominantly Magnetic Water Element, and the equally balanced ElectroMagnetism of the Air Element) combine and their interaction causes the Earth Element.

Some say that the Earth Element is not a proper Element per se, but is the interaction of the three "true" Elements of Fire, Air and Water. This is only partially true. It IS the interaction of three Elements, but the fact that these Elements are dynamic and therefore interact when in combination, results in the creation of an entirely new factor -- the combination ends up equaling more than the sum of its parts. It is this unique product of the interaction of Fire, Air and Water that we call Earth. Thus the Earth manifests as one of the poles of the quadrupolar magnet.

By the same twists of philosophic thinking, the quadrapolar magnet, just like the common bi-polar magnet, is more than its poles. It is also the cumulative interaction of its poles.

At the center of the quadrapolar magnet lies the "Depth Point" that Bardou speaks of in IHH (Step Five) and KTQ. This is nothing other than the Akasha or Aethyr, from which all else sprouts. The Hermetic's universe is infinite and one of the mysteries conveyed by the quadrapolar magnet is that this center point occurs every 'where', 'when', 'why', 'what' and 'who', within that infinity.

THE BEINGS OF THE ELEMENTS

In the on-line discussion board, the question recently arose as to whether the beings of the Elements are metaphorical and contained in the Psyche, or whether they are independent entities. This is a common question considering how much like a fairytale the writings about these beings sound.

The truth of the matter is that the beings of the Elements are, in and of themselves, entities independent from the human psyche. Their FORMS, however, are not independent from the human psyche. Sound confusing?

The beings of the Elements exist within the astral realm and as such they are seen to have a certain form. Their form is symbolic as is true of any astral form. Thus the form in which they are perceived varies from culture to culture. The European cultures generally view them as Salamanders, Sylphs, Undines and Gnomes, but, for example, an aboriginal African culture might perceive them dressed in an entirely different form.

We humans perceive astral beings differently since we each process our perceptions through different minds. But this does not negate their reality as beings which have an existence separate from our individual minds. It is only their astral FORMS which pertain to the human psyche, not their existence.

KARMA / CAUSE AND EFFECT

It is prudent for the student to contemplate hard and long upon the topic of cause and effect. This law is a friend of the magician as it is the workings of this law that magicians use to craft their ascent. For example, as you work at improving your character, you will follow certain practices which will cause your negative traits to be

replaced by more positive ones. Cause and effect is why practice makes "perfect".

Yet the magician will face instances where cause and effect cannot be used to advantage. A good example is in the work of healing either one's own self or another person. There are some illnesses which have a deep karmic root and the magician may find that there is nothing that he/she can do to improve a patient's condition. Likewise, there are certain inevitable events (hardships) that the magician cannot divert due to the fact that they are deeply rooted in a person's own karma. Seldom is the magician allowed to interfere with another's karmic debt.

It takes a certain amount of wisdom for the magician to accurately discern when she/he should leave a situation alone. This is only gained through experience.

PHYSICAL, ASTRAL AND MENTAL PLANES

This, like the philosophy of the Elements, is a human construct that seeks to describe universal phenomena. Its biggest failing, in my opinion, is that it implies separate, clearly defined realms. The truth of the matter however, is that the universe is a unified whole. There is no exact point where the physical plane ceases and the astral plane begins. Likewise, there is no exact point where the astral realm ends and the mental realm begins. One graduates into the next and all three interpenetrate each other.

We divide the universe into these three parts simply because it is an easier, more convenient way to grasp its wholeness. Like all such constructs, it is only a tool -- it gives us the practical ability to manipulate universal forces.

A simple rule-of-thumb to remember is that for a physical thing to exist, it must also have existence at the astral and at the mental level.

The astral realm exists due to the descent of the mental realm into (or towards) the physical realm. It is, for the most part, an intermediary phase. The astral substance translates rapidly into physical manifestation and is easily manipulated by mind.

In terms of our human being, our mental body corresponds to our conscious awareness and it penetrates both our astral and physical forms. When we perceive our mental body, its shape and color reflects our state of mind. It takes on a shape similar to our physical dimensions only when we spread our awareness evenly throughout our physical body.

Our mental body does not feel our surroundings in a manner similar to the perceptions of our physical senses. The senses of the mental body are merely analogous to the physical senses. For example, there is a mental sense that shares some of the characteristics of physical sight, but the mental sight reveals a far different universe than that of physical sight.

Our astral body corresponds to our emotional being or personality and it penetrates our physical being. When we perceive our astral body, its shape is very similar to our physical body and its color reflects the state of our personality and emotions.

The senses of our astral body are very similar to those of our physical body, yet also similar to those of our mental body. The astral senses mediate between those of the mental and physical bodies.

A good way to tell the difference between an astral journey and a mental journey is to gauge the degree to which our perceptions of our surroundings match those of normal physical perception. During an astral journey one will be able to feel texture, heat and cold, etc., and will be able to hear sounds, smell odors, and taste flavors. During a mental journey however, there will be no physical-like sensations.

Our physical body is temporary. It lives for a certain amount of time and then dissolves back into the universe and its constituents disperse. Our astral body is also temporary yet of longer duration than our physical body. Eventually, it also dissolves. Only our mental body or spirit is eternal. It descends into a long succession of temporary astral and physical forms but does not itself dissolve.

The three bodies of the human being serve as a handy analogy for understanding the interaction of the three corresponding realms. One of the advantages of Bardón's system is that it directly relates the three realms to the student's three bodies. In this way, the student learns to experience each realm by first experiencing its impact upon their personal experience. The path leads from the intimately personal to the universal.

RELIGION

The question of religion is often troubling for the beginning student. One is faced with deciding how to combine one's religious viewpoint (if the student even has a religion to which he/she adheres) with that of magic. Each student must, of course, puzzle this out for themselves.

The only advice that I can offer is that you keep an open mind. Truly, magic can coincide with any religion. It has indeed taken every form throughout the ages and can be found within every religion known to humanity if one looks with eyes educated in the rudiments of magic.

To the magician, the most important part of religion is the feeling of devotion that it instills in the practitioner. Devotion, especially as it manifests through the act of worship, is a very powerful force that the magician can employ in their process of spiritual ascent.

ASCETICISM AND SEXUALITY

Bardon is very clear about what he means by asceticism. Basically, he is speaking of self-discipline and self-control. He always recommends a balanced approach that does not stray into extremism of any kind. Nonetheless, the question frequently arises as to whether or not the student should abstain from all forms of sex.

While many different systems advise abstinence from sex as a way of attaining purity or of increasing the will power, etc., this is not the case with Bardon's system. For the magician, it is clear that a complete abstinence from something so inherent and natural to human physiology as sex, is a form of extremism that produces little more than imbalance. There may be occasions in the magician's life when a temporary abstinence from sexual release is productive, but this is rare and only for very specific tasks.

In general, a healthy sexuality is a vital part of leading a healthy, well balanced life. Not only is it an essential bodily function, it is also an essential part of one's emotional well being.

Many male magicians practice what is called "retention of the seed" and report that this is beneficial on many levels. This is a simple technique of putting pressure on the tubes which carry the semen and thereby preventing ejaculation. This does not usually adversely effect the male orgasm and in fact, often heightens the energetic effect that orgasm has upon the male body.

Several years ago, a fellow said to me that homosexuality is due to an imbalance of the Water Element and that it was something that the magician should overcome. After a little discussion it became clear that his feelings about homosexuality had nothing to do with magic, per se. His bias was due to his upbringing and his personal morals and was truly not founded upon the philosophy of the Elements.

In point of fact, this aspect of sexuality has nothing to do with one's Elemental balance. Homo-, bi- and hetero-sexuality are all natural and none is more nor less healthy than another. I should hope that no student will fear that their specific sexuality prevents them from following a magical path.

The only important parts of sexuality that effect one's spiritual growth and advancement in magic, are how one feels about one's own sexual orientation and how one treats others with whom one is having a sexual relationship. In other words, it is the emotional and moral aspects of sexuality -- those parts that the magician can change and improve upon -- that are of concern to spiritual ascent.

Getting back to the main topic; other forms of asceticism, such as starvation, self-flagellation, self-deprivation, and so on, are not advisable. These practices only produce imbalance. Equilibrium is achieved through moderation and disciplined control, and this is the path recommended by Franz Bardon.

TIME

Time is not a subject that Bardon discussed in the "Theory" section of IIIH. Nonetheless, I think it is of such importance to the student of magic that I have chosen to say a few words about it here.

It is difficult to separate the objective reality of time from our subjective, human perception of it. Both are of concern to the magician.

As physical human beings we experience time as a thing which stretches behind and in front of us. To us, time either seems to move forward, or we seem to move forward through time. Either way, we perceive time as having forward movement.

To keep track of this forwardness, we have constructed elaborate methods of measuring time's passage. We divide time into seconds, minutes, hours, days, weeks, months, years, etc.

At the moment that I'm writing this, it is 1:10 pm, Pacific Standard Time, on March 3rd, 2001. This fact has relevance to my mundane existence in that it helps me place myself into context with my scheduled routine, but as a magician, it has little relevance to me.

In magic, there is only one aspect of time that has true relevance, and that is the present moment or now. The exceptions to this are when the magician needs to set a duration to a certain magical act (such as when keeping a magical healing effective till a patient is well) or when aligning a certain ritual with favorable astrological events, etc.

The essence of time is sequential change. The number of changes that occur within each moment are truly infinite. There is no stasis -- no moment when change ceases and everything remains the same. This is the crux of what differentiates our subjective perception of time from the objective reality of time.

As physical human beings, we are not capable of perceiving the infinite number of changes occurring at each moment. All we can do is grasp hold of a small few of the changes at a one time. The mechanics of human perception are such that we take the equivalent of a photograph of the present moment -- altering it into a static, unchanging picture of events -- and then we decode its significance to us. This happens very rapidly and we develop a chain of these stop-action images and from this process we get the impression of forward movement similar to that derived from watching a motion picture made up of 24 static images per second.

This has the effect of putting us ever so slightly out of temporal and emotional sync with real-time or objective time. In objective time, there is only one part -- the present moment or now. Objectively, the Now is eternal and in a ceaseless state of change. It has no movement -- it simply IS.

The present moment has three components: 1) Infinite Change. 2) Infinite Continuity: This is what makes one moment so similar to what precedes and follows it. 3) Nowness: This is the sensation of immediacy inherent to our experience of the present moment.

Processed by the human brain, the infinite present moment is perceived as a sequence of finite moments. Thus we feel that there are past moments, present moments and future moments. But the magician should clearly understand that at the physical level of our existence, past is only a function of memory and future is only a function of our creative imagination. Neither past nor future can truly be said to exist presently.

In seeming contradiction to this, we speak of an eternity which encompasses the whole of time's passage and we quibble over whether or not we have free will. I say to you that there is no contradiction, or rather, the contradictions coexist quite comfortably. While the present moment is all that truly exists within the physical realm where time involves itself so intimately with space, in the most ephemeral parts of the non-physical realm where eternity holds sway, all of time (past, present and future, as it were) exists simultaneously and wholly.

Time is multidimensionally infinite. When one experiences

eternity, the whole multidimensional infinity of time is perceived as a unified Now. From this perspective, the issue of free will is irrelevant due to the fact that infinity implies that there are enough options to accommodate the infinite number of available courses one can choose to take. In other words, it takes free will to create and to follow the infinite number of choices which fill eternity. From the magical standpoint, this is the root truth behind many of the modern physicist's theories regarding the idea that there are an infinite number of universes following an infinite number of time lines. Eternity is not filled with infinite possibility; instead, it is filled with infinite actuality. In other words, all possibilities are actualized -- if they were not, then eternity would not be truly infinite.

What prevents us from constantly perceiving eternity with our normal awareness is the fact that as physical human beings we are intimately bound up in sequence. In every regard, one thing follows another. One idea leads to another, one action is followed by an effect, etc. To perceive eternity (or any infinity in its whole, for that matter) requires that one must remove one's self to a non-sequential perspective. This perspective is so foreign to our day-to-day existence that seldom do we even consider its implications, let alone its possibility.

The physical realm is ruled by both space and time. I must say though, it is hard to separate space from time for without the factor of time, space would not exist.

The astral realm mediates between the densely sequentialized physical realm and the non-sequential aspect of the mental realm. Thus the astral realm is not completely bound to substance and for this reason it is said that space does not hold sway in the astral. This is only partially true. For the magician this is especially true when it comes to astral journeying and astral communication with other beings. In other words, the well trained magician may travel to any physical place through the astral realm and communicate with another being regardless of where in space they may reside. Time (i.e., sequence) however, holds a firm grip upon the astral realm and to truly travel throughout time, the magician must work within the mental realm.

The mental realm spans both the realm of sequence (time) and the non-sequential realm (eternity). Within the highest reaches of the mental realm, there is no sequence and one steps out of time, as it were, and views things from an eternal perspective. In the lower reaches of the mental realm (that of sequential thought and physical matter) time is a factor. Only at the level at which the mental realm

intersects the physical realm does space become a factor, but this is a small part of the overall mental realm and thus we say that neither time nor space restricts the mental substance.

The student of magic will receive a great benefit by analyzing the nature of human perception and of time itself. Repeated meditations upon this subject, experimentation and reading the available literature will all forward the student's understanding.

And don't worry, there's plenty of time . . . <grin>

STEP ONE

PREFACE

In my opinion, the most important thing that differentiates Bardons system from most all of the other modern systems of magic is that it begins at the beginning. The crucial nature of these elementary, beginning steps is all too often overlooked by other systems and this does an ill service to the novice.

True success with magic is built upon a foundation of simple things -- the firmer the foundation, the farther the student will be able to rise. In Step One, the student will find the basics of the rest of the course: Meditation, Introspection and Self-Discipline. I cannot stress sufficiently how absolutely essential these three things are to genuine magic.

MENTAL

With Step One, the "Schooling of the Spirit" concerns three basic types of meditation. The first is titled "Thought Control", but this is sort of a misnomer. What is meant here is not direct, active control of what thoughts arise in your mind; rather, what is referred to is establishing yourself as an active observer of your thoughts. When the observer-perspective is established, the multitude of thoughts that normally arise, will naturally slow of their own accord.

The second type of meditation is titled "Thought Discipline" and has two phases of practice. The first phase is enacted in day-to-day life and involves disciplining your thoughts so that they pertain only to the task at hand. For example, if you're driving to work, you practice the shunning of thoughts that have nothing to do with the act of driving. The second phase of the practice is performed as a normal meditation (i.e., sitting with your eyes closed). Here, one chooses a single thought and shuns the intrusion of all other thoughts. It is best, in this instance, to begin with a simple, captivating thought. Each time your mind wanders, bring it firmly back to the chosen thought.

The third type of meditation is titled "Mastery of Thoughts" and involves the attainment of a vacancy of mind or an absence of thoughts. For those unfamiliar with meditation, this is often the most difficult task. It requires a good deal of will power and persistent effort. When thoughts intrude, you must learn to willfully shun them

and regain your emptiness. I assure you that this is not an impossible task!

Q&A--

1) *What is "thought control"?*

In the initial exercises of Step One, Bardón describes three sorts of mental discipline or meditation. The first type involves merely observing what goes on in your mind. In this exercise, the student does not block any thoughts, s/he merely observes what is present. Given time and repeated practice, you will notice that the flow of thoughts naturally slows down. But what is really happening is that you are re-tuning your mind to another, less cluttered, level of mentation. This is not something that you can force, so it does little good at this stage to be blocking certain thoughts while letting others through, etc.

Of concern here, is the other distractions that arise, such as that car alarm that keeps going off in the distance, or the bark of the neighbor's dog. These sorts of incidents can distract your attention from the observance of your thoughts. While such occurrences are not within your ability to control, your response to them is within your control. So, you must learn how to quickly dismiss these distractions and refocus your attention to the task at hand. At first this may be difficult, but with persistent practice, your ability to refocus will become so quick and absolute that such external events will no longer distract; or rather, the distraction will be so brief that it will not interrupt your practice.

Another sort of distraction is that you will be tempted to pursue the thoughts that arise in your mind. The point here however, is to distance yourself from involvement with your individual thoughts -- you are to be only an observer, not a participator. At first, this is also very difficult, but with persistent practice, you will learn how to distance yourself and observe.

No matter how difficult this exercise may at first be for you, do not give up. This is an essential precursor to the exercises which follow. You already possess the natural, generally unconscious, ability to do everything taught in IIIH -- all that the training does is bring what has previously been unconscious, into the realm of a conscious ability.

2) *What is "thought discipline" or "one-pointedness"?*

The second type of mental discipline or meditation described in Step One, concerns the one-pointedness of mind. Here you focus your thoughts upon a single idea and shun all other intruding thoughts. This practice eventually re-tunes the mind to a still higher level of mentation. If you have learned to manage external distractions with relative ease and have reached the state of an observer of your quieted mind, then all you have to do here is select a single thought and focus solely upon it. The sorts of distraction you will encounter here is the intrusion of associated and non-associated thoughts, and the habit that your mind has of involving itself in these extraneous thoughts.

If we consider the analogy of re-tuning the mind, it becomes obvious that the mind functions in predictable ways at each frequency. At the frequency of our normal day-to-day lives, thoughts come with great frequency and variety, and we exercise little control over them. At the frequency of the observer, the mind contains fewer thoughts, but the mind itself is still also functioning at the level of the day-to-day. The observer exercise merely shifts the focus onto another frequency, it does not make the day-to-day frequency disappear altogether. The same is true of the one-pointedness frequency -- the observer and the day-to-day frequencies still exist, only the mind is now tuned to a higher frequency. It's as if the background noise of the other frequencies still exist but are relegated to the background and taken out of the current focus.

Dealing with the intrusion of unwanted thoughts during the one-pointedness exercise is much like the management of external distractions you learned during the observer exercise. Part of getting your mind tuned into the correct frequency for one-pointedness, involves learning how to quickly dismiss these extraneous thoughts and refocus your attention. The more you do it, the quicker it becomes, and eventually, it happens so quickly that these distractions no longer interrupt your exercise.

Do not "battle" the natural workings of your mind as this leads only to frustration. The best tact is to coax your mind. You control your mind, not the other way around, and all you need do is take the control that you already have and make it a more conscious thing.

Again, do not give up if at first you fail. This is also a vitally important ability to master for the future exercises.

3) *What is "mastery of thoughts" or "emptiness of mind"?*

The third and final type of mental discipline or meditation

covered in Step One, involves the emptying of the mind ("vacancy of mind"). If you have sufficiently mastered the dismissal of distractions in the previous two exercises and learned how to limit your mind to a single thought, then reaching an emptiness of mind is the next logical step. This is still only a higher frequency of mentation, but it is a very difficult one to tune into unless you have mastered the observer and the one-pointedness exercises.

Perhaps the easiest way to reach the emptiness of mind is to go by stages. First reduce your mind to a single thought and then eliminate even that thought. If you are facile with the dismissal of distractions, then the distractions at this level will be quickly managed.

Before progressing to the Step Two exercises, you should have made good headway with your emptiness of mind exercises. Even a small few minutes of true emptiness will suffice to begin with but you must constantly improve upon this initial success if you wish to make headway further along the course of IHH. This is a basic magical technique which serves as a foundation for the rest of the work -- without this degree of mental discipline, many things are impossible in magic.

4) Should I keep track of all my distractions or just the major ones?

I recommend that on your first trial of each exercise, you do not bother counting your distractions. Focus instead upon managing them. In the case of the first exercise with the observer perspective, after you get the hang of it, start counting your external distractions -- the ones that actually interfere with your exercise. If you are able to manage a distraction rapidly and it doesn't interrupt you, then don't bother counting it.

With the other exercises concerning the one-pointedness and the emptiness of mind, count all the distractions that interrupt your flow of consciousness. Again, count only those that actually serve to interrupt you.

Counting and keeping track of your disruptions is not a necessary part of mastering these exercises. Its only importance is when it comes to gauging your progress. It can be very beneficial to be able to compare how many interruptions you experienced yesterday or last week, to how many you encountered today. By making these connections, you will be able to see exactly how much progress you have made.

In Step Two, Bardon mentions using a string of beads or knots

to keep count of your interruptions during your exercises. This is a good technique once you get used to it. Eventually, counting off another bead or knot becomes second nature and takes no interruptive thought at all.

5) *Why is five minutes the goal to aim for?*

Five minutes is one of those "at least" sort of goals. It is an arbitrary, but nonetheless good, rule to follow. The idea is not that you should strictly adhere to exactly five minutes; rather, the idea is that you should set a goal that is beyond the reach of your normal activity and one which will take a certain degree of commitment to attain. Never be satisfied with five minutes as the ultimate, end all goal -- always push beyond this limit. Ultimately, you should be able to reach and maintain these states for as long as you desire, regardless of whether that's for five minutes or three hours.

6) *Doesn't keeping track of my time cause a distraction?*

It can if you let it be. The way I work is I give the exercise a go and when I reach the state required, I flow with it for as long as I am comfortable with. When I'm done, I open my eyes and check the time. But while I'm doing the exercise, I don't think about whether I'm doing it long enough.

Another tact is to work at it until I suffer a major interruption. At that point, I open my eyes and check to see how long I went before I was interrupted. When I find that at least five minutes have passed before I was interrupted and that I can go for the same amount of time consistently, I then feel comfortable in assuming that I have attained my first goal.

How you measure your time is up to you and requires only a little inventiveness. I use a simple electric clock that doesn't tick, placed at my feet or otherwise within view. The problem with this is that I must remember what time it was when I started. Another alternative is to use a simple stopwatch, but that requires starting and stopping. All in all, use whatever method works best for you and affords the least interruption possible.

ASTRAL

In my opinion, this process of establishing the positive and negative soul mirrors is THE most important phase of initiation. The repercussions of this form of self-analysis will be felt throughout the

entire life of the student and will be of great benefit regardless of how far into the Steps of IIIH one penetrates.

What is required here is a radical self-honesty. The student must ruthlessly penetrate through all of his/her illusions regarding who they are and how they act in the world, and excavate the unadorned root of the matter.

Doing this may be very troubling as you face up to parts of yourself that are unappealing. Thus, it is a good idea to be especially kind to yourself as you go through the process of introspection. Treat yourself to enjoyable activities and pastimes that you might not otherwise entertain. Remember that the unsavory parts that you uncover are simply who you are at this moment in time -- never forget that you have the power to change these parts of yourself!

The point of this exercise is not to simply make you feel bad about yourself, but rather, it is to clearly define where you must begin in the process of self-change. If you do not have a clear grasp upon who you really are, then you have no reliable means of knowing what you wish to become, nor little means of getting there.

In this process of self-change, the student transforms what is already present into something better. It is not a method which simply rids your personality of its negative aspects. Instead, it takes the energy of a negative aspect and changes it into a comparable positive manifestation. Here nothing is discarded or lost -- it is all transformed.

In the Step One work, the focus is upon taking stock. The work of transformation is relegated to Step Two. So while you are searching out the positive and negative aspects of your personality, temporarily set aside thoughts about how you want to transform them and leave this part of the task to Step Two.

An important consideration in setting up your positive and negative soul mirrors is that this task is best done with complete privacy. Never should you share your mirrors with another human being! This is important in that it supports the sort of radical self-honesty that the task requires. You must engender the feeling of absolute safety as you write down things, many of which you would never share with another.

A medium sized spiral-bound notepad is sufficient. I advise against using a hard-bound journal because you may find yourself ripping out pages, especially as you begin the work of transferring your list of items to your Element sections. Besides, a spiral binding has the practical advantage of lying flat and does not need to be held open. [NOTE: Do not type your lists on your computer! Writing

your lists by hand upon paper personalizes the process and makes it considerably more intimate.] Without being paranoid about it, store your written mirror in a place where you can rest assured that its privacy will not be violated.

Begin, as Bardon advises, with the analysis of your negative traits. Write down absolutely everything that comes to mind, no matter how insignificant it may seem. Place yourself back into the different events of your life and see what there is to find. Keep track during each day of items that arise in the present. Meditate each day about who you are and in this way build a deep understanding of your negative side.

Franz Bardon suggests that you continue this analysis until you have a list of at least 100 items. Many people balk at this total, but I concur that this is a good standard to shoot for. If you find your list growing beyond 100 items, then go with it and continue until you feel satisfied that you have completely uncovered everything. If you find it difficult to make 100 items, then continue relentlessly until you do.

As you analyze your faults, make sure that each item is really something that YOU consider to be a fault. It is you who are judging yourself -- your list should not include the judgments of others.

Bardon suggests a time limit of one to two weeks for this part of the exercise (it is very rare in IHH that he sets out a time limit). This is important because this initial process of self-analysis should have a beginning and an end. It is not something to be dawdled over nor is it something that should be rushed, but it is something that should be attended to within a predetermined amount of time.

At the same time, the process of self-analysis is a life-long responsibility for the serious magician. I have, over the years, gone through this Step One procedure three times. Each time was separated by a few years and each time netted new results. This is another way for me to keep track of my progress, as well as being an exercise that is very helpful to my progress.

The magician must at all times be aware of who she/he is. The process of crafting the personality into what you desire to be is life-long -- achieving true absolute perfection is not possible as physical human beings. The best we can hope for is to be constantly involved with actively improving ourselves.

At any rate, to get back on track with the concerns of Step One: It is tempting, during the construction of your list, to rely upon the list of faults associated with the "Four Tempers" that Bardon included in the IHH text. I advise against this as the items he lists are

too general. Your list should be as specific as possible.

Where the Four Tempers come in most handy is in the next phase -- dividing your list into five sections by way of the Elements.

The division into Elements is often a very difficult task, but the important thing to remember at this stage is that it doesn't have to be perfect. Do the best you can (meditating upon the symbolism of the Elements will help immensely) -- you can always move an item to another category later if you find your original designation to be incorrect. In my first go at this process, my "Aethyr/Unknown" section was bigger than any of the other sections! It may take a while to figure out where they truly belong, but don't let that difficulty stop your progress.

Bardon does not specify any particular time limit for this phase, but try your best to accomplish this task within a week, or at the most, two weeks.

The final phase of this part of Step One is to divide each of your five sections into three categories of importance. Bardon suggests that this be done within a week's time, so don't get too carried away with this part of your analysis.

That completes the basic Step One work with the negative mirror and one now shifts to crafting the positive mirror. The same processes and time limits apply to this process. Devote as much effort to this list as you did with your list of negative items. With this phase, instead of trying to avoid feeling too bad about yourself, you will need to avoid getting a swelled head. :)

The end result is two mirrors of 100 or more items each, each divided into five parts containing three categories. This whole process should take no more than three months to accomplish.

Should the other exercises of Step One take you longer than three months to master (which, by the way, is quite common), then it will be wise for you to spend that extra time studying your mirrors. Try to understand your present state of Elemental equilibrium. Look and see how the different items from your lists relate to one another. Often, you can in this way uncover "complexes" built of many items working together. Spend a good amount of time getting to know yourself through this medium.

In closing, I repeat to you, this is a very, very important part of IHH and no effort should be spared in this regard. Even if you come to IHH after many years of introspection and feel that you know yourself very well already, do not skip this step! Even if you have made some progress in the past and then set aside the work for an extended period of time, still do not skip this task -- a repeat of it

may go very quickly for you, but still it should not be skipped.

Q&A--

1) *What if I can't come up with 100 items for each of my soul mirrors?*

Then keep trying till you do! The 100-item requirement is a good one since it pushes you to dig as deeply as you can. This is not meant to be an easy exercise that you could do without much effort. The idea here is to completely cleanse your soul and to hone your skills of introspection. This is a learned ability just like the mental discipline.

2) *When do I stop making my list? Should I continue indefinitely?*

This is the opposite of the first question. Some find hundreds of faults and have difficulty knowing when to stop for now. The point of this first exercise in introspection is to set a limited goal. If you find more than 100 items, then instead of continuing on indefinitely, limit your efforts to two weeks.

This is important because it is all too easy to wallow in self-criticism and thus avoid moving on to the part about changing yourself. Don't think of the overall process as being divided into sections so much -- it is a cycle, composed of two very important parts: introspection and subsequent self-transformation. Self-analysis alone doesn't accomplish much if there is no motive to change and improve what one finds. Likewise, self-change alone doesn't work for long if you haven't taken a thorough stock of what you already have to work with.

So, set yourself a limit of no more than two weeks for this phase of the cycle. This will suffice for now. You can (and should) always go back and add things to your lists later -- it does not have to be absolutely perfect on the first round.

Which brings me to the subject of the endless nature of this cycle of introspection/self-change. This is truly a life-long habit for the true magician. Over my time at this work, I have constructed three such mirrors of the soul, each separated by a few years. This is a process of constantly perfecting oneself -- there is no resulting absolute state of perfection. This is a dynamic and continuous process since, as humans, we are constantly changing and encountering new parts of ourselves.

For the purposes of Step One, you must see to your forward progression through the exercise along with your dedication to doing the best you can with it. This is only possible when you set goals and limitations for yourself. By approaching it in this manner, you learn the fundamentals of the process and you are then better prepared to continue working with it as the years stretch before you.

3) What should I do if I can't figure out which Element corresponds to a specific trait?

At this stage, don't fret over it. Simply assign the item to which ever Element seems most appropriate and those you absolutely can't figure, assign to that wonderful category titled "unknown". As you work with the Elements, your understanding of them will increase and you will be better equipped to decide if you've been wrong in your assignment.

At this point in the ten Steps, the actual Element each item belongs to is of less importance than the degree to which the item effects you. For the purposes of self-change itself, the second division into three categories of importance or frequency, is far more relevant than an item's Elemental correspondence. This is true because the actual techniques of self-change that you will be working with are not dependent upon the Elements themselves.

In the Step Two work of self-change, the changing of your traits will balance your Elemental composition regardless of whether or not you have assigned your items correctly. The main use of the Elemental division is that it gives you an idea of the quality of your overall Elemental balance or imbalance. This is when an accurate designation by Element becomes truly important, but at this stage it is of minor importance.

This does not mean that you should not try your best to determine the correct Elemental correspondence. You should commit yourself to pursuing your "unknown" category until you assign each item to an Element. Also, as your understanding of the Elements improves, review the items you have assigned and see if you still feel that you got it right. One advantage to not having to carve your soul mirrors into stone is that you can always go back and change your mind!

Some have found that researching the character associations of the zodiacal signs of astrology is very helpful as they try to discern which item goes with what Element. Some find solace in the more recent works on psychology, and so on. At any rate, there are written resources that will help. But by far, the best aid is if you spend time

meditating on the subject.

Another bit of practical advice is that when you encounter a truly puzzling item, look into it further. Often times, an un-categorizable item is one that is too complex and that can be broken down into more specific parts. Usually, those specific parts are easier to categorize into individual Elements than is the whole complex of traits. Again, meditation is the magician's handiest tool -- most answers are just inside, waiting to be discovered.

4) Under which of the elements would one place an addiction to substances, such as tobacco? I know FB himself dealt with this entity.

Well, as you've already guessed, there is no quick and easy answer. There are so many factors that contribute to an addiction that it is better if you break down these factors for yourself and deal with them individually instead of under the umbrella of 'addiction'.

I am also a smoker and have grappled with this issue at very close quarters. I quit smoking for three years and while it was very beneficial for the development of my will power, it had no effect upon my underlying addiction. From it I learned a great deal about how to manage my addiction, but it did not address the underlying emotional and mental aspects of my addictiveness.

Any addiction is composed of many more factors than the object of addiction. For example, my body is physically addicted to the periodic rush of nicotine. This is true of any truly addictive substance, whether it is something inhaled, eaten, injected or drunk. This is also true of the emotional states or activities that we are addicted to -- they each initiate chemical reactions within our physical bodies to which we can become addicted. While we can ameliorate the impact of the physical consequences of an addiction through abstinence, this does not address the other components of the root addiction (in many cases this has the opposite effect of amplifying those other components).

For me, smoking satisfied a certain inclination toward self-destruction. And it satisfied other needs as well: my need for social acceptance (this was back when everybody smoked); my need for something to keep my hands busy (probably the bane of every artistic soul); my need to distance myself from others; my need to have something entirely my own; and last, but by no means least, my need for pleasure (I actually like to smoke). Of course I could list a few more, but I'm sure you get my drift.

By breaking my addiction down into its component parts, the

assignment of the parts to the Elements was made relatively easy. And this gave me the key to remedying the root addiction. Very often in any work of healing (and what else is the transformation of one's character other than a healing process?) it is the root disease that is more important than its symptoms. This is especially true when it comes to the work with your soul mirrors. We can be going right along in the smug assumption that we've managed the symptom (e.g., I quit smoking) quite admirably, when all of a sudden we realize that we did nothing to remedy the root disease (i.e., my addictiveness) and, poof!, all of our hard effort was for nothing. Until you reach to the root of an addiction and tackle all of its parts, the addiction itself will persist. In my case, after three years of not smoking, I started smoking again. In fact, at no point during those three years was I NOT addicted to smoking -- all because I hadn't addressed the other components of my addiction.

When I first assigned the item "smoking" to an Element in my first go at my negative mirror, I listed it under the heading of the Air Element. There were, for me, some very Airy aspects to my smoking but this really didn't work for me in a practical sense. When I began to break it into parts, I found that initial item spread out all over the place. In the end, it belonged to no single Element, and I'm certain that where the parts fell into place for me will be very different for each individual. So much of the soul mirror cannot be given a universal Elemental correspondence. Where such universal standards apply accurately is only at a very superficial level of generalization. This is why the list of the character traits associated with the four temperaments that Bardou gives in IIIH is not all that useful -- it is too general.

Any time I have difficulty determining what Element to assign an item in my soul mirror to, I try to break it down into smaller parts. Invariably, this has solved my confusion and provided me with the handle by which to grab hold of and transform myself.

5) Why should I make a negative AND a positive soul mirror? Isn't just the negative mirror enough?

Granted, the primary purpose of the techniques of self-change is to equalize one's negative traits, but that is ultimately only half of the whole process. It is of equal importance that you nurture your positive traits.

It is also important in the process of introspection that you not look only at your negative side. This can be very depressing if you don't balance it with an equal look into your positive side. The

magician must walk in balance, as it were.

Another important reason why both mirrors are essential to the overall process is that often the answers to your negative traits are found amongst the list of your positive traits! In this way, you are already your own best friend.

PHYSICAL

This section of Step One opens with suggestions for a few simple daily exercises. The first concerns bathing and advises that the student bathe in a cold shower and brush the skin with a natural-bristle brush. This may sound silly but I urge you to actually try it. It is especially beneficial to the beginning student in that it very effectively opens the pores of the skin and facilitates bodily health. If you are arising very early to make time for your exercises, this technique will assure that you are fully awake.

The second set of recommendations concerns the establishment of a daily regimen of exercise. Again, this is especially beneficial for the beginning student as it draws the student's consciousness into a closer awareness of their physical body. This need not be taken to extremes -- the important aspects being the maintenance of flexibility and bodily vitality.

While these exercises are not strictly "magical", they are nonetheless, of importance and are pertinent to the further, more "magical" exercises.

The next section is titled "The Mystery of Breathing" and forms the basis of many of the exercises to come. It is important therefore, that the student pay attention to the mastery of this simple technique.

Please note that what concerns the student here is not the physical constituents of the air that are inhaled (oxygen, nitrogen, etc.), nor does it concern the vital energy inhaled. This is not "pranayama" nor is it an exercise to hyper-oxygenate the blood. The only thing of concern at this stage is the idea inhaled with each breath -- this idea represents the quality of what is taken in and is attached, by the mind, to the Akasha principle of the physical air.

It is vital that the student maintain their normal rhythm of breathing during this exercise. One should not lengthen the inhale or exhale and should not hold the breath at any point. It is normal for the beginning student to automatically lengthen the breath cycle because it takes a few moments to get one's thoughts in order. The

result is usually a longer inhale while the mind is establishing the idea to be inhaled and a lengthy holding-in of the breath while visualizing that the idea is penetrating the whole body. The reason this occurs is because the student is unfamiliar with the building-up of the idea and the visualization of its action upon the body, so to compensate, the breath is extended.

The problem that arises with this is that if this habit is continued then the student eventually associates the ability to breathe in this manner with extending the breathing cycle and it becomes impossible to accomplish this task with the normal breath. Learning to do this exercise within the confines of the normal breath is important because the magician may not always have the opportunity to slow the breath in order to perform the later exercises such as accumulation of an Element, etc.

With practice, the building of the idea and the circulation of it throughout the body, can be accomplished in a nanosecond. The trick to learning the exercises without altering the breathing cycle is to disassociate the ideation from the breath. For example, establish your normal, comfortable breathing rhythm and breathe normally as you build up the idea in the air surrounding you. Then, when the idea is well established, inhale a normal breath of the impregnated air. Do not hold your breath at this point, but instead resume your normal breathing while holding the idea in your body and circulating it. Let your exhale be just of air and not of your idea.

In other words, it is your mind which does the work, not your breath. The breath is only the carrier of the idea and it is not necessary to alter your breathing cycle to accommodate the speed of your thinking. With practice though, you will get used to the mental work and it will become fast enough for you to not have to insert extra "empty" breaths while you think. Eventually, your rate of thinking and visualization will match the rate at which you breathe.

Other important factors are:

1) The nature of your idea. The thought you inhale should be positive and concern your own spiritual well-being.

2) The degree of your conviction. You should cultivate an attitude of absolute assurance that your idea is quickly becoming a reality.

3) Persistence. You should persist with a single idea until your goal is realized before passing on to another idea.

The next two sections are titled "The Conscious Intake of Nourishment" and "The Magic of Water". These techniques are based upon the same principles as the mystery of breath -- an idea is

attached by the mind to the Akasha principle of the physical substance. Again, this has nothing to do with the physical properties (vitamins, minerals and other nutriments) of food and water. Our only concern at this stage is with the idea that the student must attach to the physical substance.

The same requirements (i.e., the nature of the idea, the degree of conviction, and persistence) apply to these exercises. This work with food and water should be carried out simultaneous with the breath exercises. In other words, you don't need to master the breath exercise before beginning this work with food and water.

These exercises should be made a daily habit. Do the breathing exercises every morning and every evening, and do the food and water impregnation with each meal. With a little inventiveness, you will be able to impregnate your food and drink unnoticed by others, even when you sit in a crowded restaurant or at a table filled with family members.

Q&A--

1) *Do I have to give up smoking, drinking and sex?*

No, you don't HAVE to do anything. But, if you want to succeed at the initial work of IHH it is advisable that you temporarily eliminate all mind altering substances. These substances remain in your blood stream for extended periods of time and they will effect how much control you are capable of exerting over your mentation. The idea of a magical initiation is that you must learn how to reach the equivalent altered states, of your own accord and without an artificial crutch to get you there. The well trained magician can match any altered state that a drug can induce -- AND control the nature and duration of the experience.

Once you have mastered your own mind, there is no reason why you may not indulge yourself in mind altering pleasures with moderation. Eventually, the only issue is whether or not the mind altering effect interferes with your magical practice. With attention to your timing, this can be avoided.

As to giving up all sexual expression, this is neither necessary nor advisable in the long term for the magician who seeks balance. Sexual abstinence breeds imbalance. Invoking this sort of specific imbalance may at times be of use to the advanced magician, but only for periods of short duration and for very specific tasks. If you have what is now called "sexual addiction", then a temporary abstinence

may be a helpful component of your recovery. But alone, denial will not resolve an addiction -- one has to reach to the root of an addiction and work at it from the inside AND the outside.

2) Do I have to become a vegetarian?

This is a common question and there are always disagreements as to whether vegetarianism is required of the student. At best, it's a good idea if your body feels comfortable eating only a vegetarian diet and you feel comfortable preparing only vegetarian meals. But, it is not a requirement. The potential benefits to one's health are undeniable but this is not an essential part of learning magic.

What is far more important is to eat a well balanced diet. One that provides your body with the nutrients and energy resources it needs, will suffice. Try to avoid over- or under-eating.

3) Does this mean I have to start taking up yoga or go to the gym every day?

Not unless that is what works best for you. The idea behind what Bardou calls "daily gymnastics" is just to keep your body limber and fit. You don't need to go to extremes in this regard. Another important thing here is that daily exercise brings you into a closer contact with the state of your physical body.

4) How does the magic of breath, food and water work? Does the water have to be cold?

It is only the Akasha Principle that is worked with in these matters. The Akasha permeates all things. By its nature, it is susceptible to any thought impressed upon it and it will transmit that thought to the matter it encounters. Thus, when you impress your thought into the Akasha permeating the air you breathe or the food and water you ingest, the Akasha will transmit that thought to the Akasha permeating your physical, astral and mental bodies. Through the agency of the four Elements, the thought will become a part of your physical makeup at a cellular level. This changes your body at every level.

This takes time -- it does not, at first, happen over night. With practice however, this can become a very effective tool for self-change and the rapidity of its effect will increase.

The temperature of the food or water you consume is not a factor in regard to the impression of a thought since it is only the Akasha you are working with. Where the coldness of the water becomes important is when you are accumulating the vital energy, an

Element or a Fluid into the water. Then, it is not the Akasha (which permeates cold and hot water equally) upon which you are impressing your will -- it is the physical or astral substance of the water itself and the colder the water, the more readily it will accept this sort of accumulation.

5) *Do I have to bless each meal and glass of water I consume?*

No, you don't have to, but by doing it every chance you get, you will be increasing the effectiveness of this technique.

STEP TWO

Step Two opens with a section titled "Auto-suggestion or the Secret of the Subconscious". This describes a relatively simple technique wherein the student formulates a positively stated phrase pertaining to an aspect of self that is in need of improvement, and then proceeds to repeat this phrase over and over, until it becomes rooted in the subconscious mind.

This is not a stand-alone technique -- it will not assure permanent change in and of itself. To truly effect change in one's self, affirmation must be joined with direct action. This is elaborated further in the section "Magical Schooling of the Soul".

Where this technique is most effective is for keeping the positive alternative to a negative trait at the forefront of one's conscious mind. By implanting the positive affirmation into one's subconscious mind, it will naturally arise each time that the corresponding negative trait rears its head. When combined with a commitment to direct action, this is an invaluable asset.

In my experience, the best times to do this repetition are immediately upon waking and just before falling asleep.

It is very important that the affirmation be phrased in the present tense and in a positive manner. For example, "I will quit smoking" does not suffice as it is both negative and not in the present tense. Far better would be "I am a healthy, happy non-smoker." Avoid phrases which include the word 'not'.

It is in this section that Bardón introduces the idea of working with a string of beads (or knots) to keep track of the number of times that the affirmation is repeated or to keep track of the number of interruptions incurred in the concentration exercises. This is a handy tool. I work with a length of yarn in which I have tied 40 simple knots. At each repetition or interruption, I simply move my finger past one knot. This is advantageous in that it frees me from having to count my repetitions or keep track of the number of interruptions. Thus, keeping track does not itself constitute an interruption or distract me from the task at hand.

MENTAL

The student must have reached the recommended degree of success with the Step One meditation exercises before beginning this section of the Step Two exercises. The ability to concentrate is essential to the work which follows.

With this section of the Step Two training, the attention is directed toward the five physical senses. The practice serves as an introduction to a type of meditation commonly called "creative visualization". But, as with many things in IHH, this is more than what is commonly meant or understood as creative visualization.

These exercises are an important first step toward the development of the subtle astral and mental senses. They are designed to achieve the following things: 1) To hone the student's powers of concentration. 2) To teach the student how to separate out one sense at a time. 3) To hone the student's physical senses.

The description that Bardou offers of these exercises is very straight forward and simple. The doing of them however, can be quite difficult for the average student.

Most students notice that the exercises with one sense will be more difficult than those of another sense and this is absolutely normal. The reasons for this are two-fold. First is the fact that we rely upon one or two senses more so than the others and so some of our senses will not be as well developed as others. This is easily remedied by focusing upon the sense at hand and consciously using it throughout the day. For example, if you have trouble bringing up the aroma of a rose, then go smell a few roses and concentrate upon their aroma. Pay special attention to how things smell and this will help develop your olfactory sensoria.

The secondary reason for the difference between one's senses has to do with the Elemental balance. Each sense is related to an Element and so when an Element is lacking, the corresponding sense is also lacking. Which of these exercises is easy and which is hard can tell you a great deal about the current state of your own personal Elemental balance. As you work at crafting a greater balance of the Elements in your personality (see Step Two, "Magical Schooling of the Soul") these discrepancies between the senses should ease.

The exercises with the sensory concentration should be carried out exactly as Bardou describes. Be sure to work with just one sense at a time. For example, if you are working with the smell of a rose, shun all images of the rose and all remembrances of roses past as they intrude upon your consciousness.

The sequence of senses should also be followed. They are presented in this sequence for very good reason and you should not spend five minutes with visualization, followed by five minutes with smell, etc., in a single sitting. Each sensory exercise should be mastered before beginning work with the next sense.

Choose simple images to work with when you are beginning

the visual concentration exercise. I advise against using complex images or objects such as Tarot cards. This tends to make the exercise much more difficult to master and serves no good purpose at this stage. Likewise with the other senses, choose simple things to work with.

Please note that in Bardou's description of the "sentience or feeling concentration", he refers only to overall body sensations such as heat and cold, and not to tactile sensations such as rough and smooth. It will do no harm however, to include tactile sensations in your work, but it is not a requirement.

Q&A--

1) *Does auto-suggestion really work? Why?*

Yes, it does, but not as a stand-alone technique. To be truly effective, it must be combined with direct action.

This is a very common technique these days, so much has been learned about why and how it works. Cutting away all the fancy language and superstition, the simple fact is that by repeating your wish frequently, you keep the thought in your surface awareness. Of course, this also integrates the thought into your subconsciousness. But of main importance is that it helps you keep the thought in your conscious mind and from there, it impacts your other thoughts and actions.

2) *What is the proper phrasing for my wish?*

Your phrase should be entirely positive (no 'not's) and in the present tense (no 'I will'). For example, "I am a healthy, happy non-smoker" is preferable over "I will not smoke."

Furthermore, when it comes to using auto-suggestion for self-change, your phrase should address the root of the problem, not the mere symptom.

3) *I can't visualize for beans, how do I overcome this?*

Number one, keep trying! Secondly, try looking at things more closely. Pay attention to their color, texture, size, shape, etc. As with any of the sensory exercises, the more acute your physical senses, the easier it will be to do these exercises. Persistent trouble with the visualization exercise can be indicative of an imbalance of the Fire Element, so if this is the case for you, then working at rectifying your Fire imbalance should make your visualization exercise go easier.

4) *Why are some of the concentration exercises easy and others difficult?*

There are two factors at play here. First is the acuity of your senses -- we tend to favor one or more of our senses over the others in our day-to-day lives.

The second factor is your Elemental balance. The senses are associated with the Elements and so when one sort of sensory exercise is more difficult, it may be due to an imbalance in the corresponding Element. Addressing that imbalance may help with your sensory exercise.

5) *I'm practicing Bardon's visualizations. I can imagine objects with closed eyes, but I still can't imagine objects with my eyes open.*

The main reason that doing the sensory exercises with your eyes open is so difficult is because with your eyes open there is more visual stimulation than with your eyes closed. When your eyes are closed, all you generally see is blackness and this allows you to easily concentrate on just your visualization. But when your eyes are open, all the images of your surroundings interfere with your concentration upon the visualization.

There are several ways to make the transition between eyes closed and eyes open a bit easier. One method is to work in a darkened room. This reduces the amount of visual distractions during the eyes-open phase and mimics the blackness of having your eyes closed. Once you can manage your visualization with your eyes open in a darkened room, then gradually increase the light in your room until you can master the visualization, with eyes open, in a fully illuminated room.

A second method is to stare at either a black surface of a plain white surface when you build your open-eyes visualization. This will also reduce the amount of visual distractions.

A third method is to stare at a wall or into space with your eyes slightly out of focus. This blurs your surroundings and thus diminishes visual distractions.

A fourth, and probably the most difficult method is to first build your visualization with your eyes closed and then, holding firmly on to your established visualization, open your eyes. Once your eyes are open, try to hold on to your visualization and let it float before your open eyes.

The key in any case is to ignore the increased visual details of your surroundings when your eyes are open. Truly all you should

concentrate upon is your visualization itself.

Many of the exercises require this sort of transition from mastery with the eyes closed to mastery with the eyes open. This is designed to teach the student how to make these abilities things that can be employed at any moment in their daily life.

When any exercise presents a difficulty for you, be inventive and try a variety of different methods to overcome the difficulty until you find the method that works best for you. I'm certain that in the above case, there are more than just these four methods for overcoming your difficulty. I hope that these examples will at least stimulate your imagination and inspire you to devise a method that works well for you.

6) Is it okay to skip from sense to sense or should I follow the sequence that Bardon infers?

The order in which Bardon presented the sensory exercises is important and for a reason. It is no different in the work of accumulating the Elements -- you follow the sequence of Fire, Air, Water and then Earth. The reasons for this are complex, but suffice it to say, you can trust Bardon on this. You will be wise to follow his directions exactly as stated. It is all too easy to fall into favoring one sense/Element and this violates the intent of a balanced magical training.

ASTRAL

While the Step One "Schooling of the Soul" concerned the analysis of the personality, the Step Two exercises put this analysis into motion. Here the focus is upon what I call "self-crafting", wherein the student begins the process of transforming what has been revealed by self-analysis, into a more positive manifestation of who the student wants to be.

Bardon recommends starting to work with the most bothersome aspect of the personality, but adds the proviso that if the student's will is weak, then she/he can begin work with a minor negative aspect. Truly, starting with the thing you want to change the most is the better way to go. But, if you really are lacking in will power, then starting small will build both your will power and your confidence.

It is of vital importance that you persist with your chosen item until you meet with the success that you desire. Do not ever give up

half way to your goal. If you feel stuck, then spend some time reevaluating your approach to the problem and see if you can come up with a better tact.

Choose only one item at a time and devote all your personal resources to its successful transformation.

Bardon suggests a three-pronged attack, as it were, consisting of meditation, affirmation and direct action:

Meditation -- Once you have decided upon an item to work with, spend a goodly amount of time in contemplation. Try to uncover everything about this item that you can. Each negative trait serves a positive purpose -- what makes it negative is that these aspects of ourselves usually are formed as subconscious responses. Delve deeply into the negative item and try to uncover the positive purpose that lies at its root. Then craft for yourself a more positive way of meeting this root need, one that is a fully conscious choice instead of a subconscious habit.

Affirmation -- Enough has already been said in this regard in the opening section on the secret of the subconscious. The important thing here is that your affirmation be carefully crafted to support the positive alternative to your negative item. Use what you have learned about the magic of food and water to also support this work of self-crafting.

Direct Action -- There are two aspects to direct action worth mentioning here. The first is the moment-to-moment kind. Simply put, this means that every time your negative trait arises in your day-to-day life, you must immediately stop yourself and concentrate upon your positive alternative. Replace your negative response with a positive one. This is a very powerful form of self-transformation which will directly strengthen your will. The second aspect of direct action is more occasional. Here, one must plan certain actions which support the positive alternative and meet the needs of the aforementioned root purpose. For instance if the root purpose behind your negative trait is to provide you with a sense of connection with others, then instead of satisfying this valid need through a negative manner, plan positive activities that will bring you closer to others in your community or family.

Practice makes perfect and after your first success, your next will come all the more quickly and easily. This work is very, very, very important to a steady magical rise and no effort should be spared. Since we are constantly changing beings, this is a work that never ends -- it only gets easier. Soon enough, you will get the hang of it and self-crafting will become a joy.

Please remember that the Elemental Equilibrium is not an absolute, static state. It is a thing that takes constant attention. You are not expected to achieve an absolute Equilibrium before beginning Step Three. What is expected however, is that you will have made major advancement toward Elemental balance. A basic balance of the Elements within the personality is essential for the work ahead. Without this basic balance and the commitment to constantly improve upon it, the student risks damage to their psyche and their physical health.

Q&A--

1) *Where should I start?*

It really is best if you start with the one item in your negative soul mirror that bothers you the most. Stick with it until your transform it to your satisfaction.

Conceding to a weak will is a dubious practice in my opinion. I know that Bardou says you can alternately begin with a lesser item and work your way up to the more important ones. But that really is not the best method. A strong will is essential to the magician so why not do yourself the favor of cultivating it from the outset? This might not be easy work for you, but none of it is impossible. Instead of starting with a small item, work with a big item and go at it in small, manageable increments.

2) *Am I supposed to change only my negative traits or am I supposed to tone down my outstanding positive traits as well?*

This is a common question. The Step Two work should be focused upon transforming your most powerful negative traits. At this stage, the greatest use for your positive soul mirror is its value as a guide to the rectification of your negative traits -- many times, the answer to what you should change a negative trait into, lies within your positive mirror.

Some will say that too much of a positive trait indicates an imbalance of the Elements. This is only partially true, for an overabundance of a positive trait is actually a negative trait and should be logged in the negative soul mirror as such.

3) *Help! I'm not making any progress with this, what do I do?*

Well, though I'm sure you're tired of hearing this, keep trying! Sometimes, you will need to go back and entirely reevaluate your

approach. Look again at the item you wish to transform, make sure you've penetrated to the root of the problem, and make sure that all the techniques for self-change you employ fit the item exactly.

Sometimes, true and lasting problems with this part of the work stem from not having the degree of commitment that is required. If this is the case, then work at developing your commitment, as well as your ability to assure yourself that your desired change is inevitable or has in fact, already come to pass.

PHYSICAL

The Step Two "Schooling of the Physical Body" exercises build upon those of the first Step. Here, we shift our attention from normal lung breathing, to what Bardón calls "pore breathing" or breathing with the whole body.

The pseudo-scientific rationale behind magical breathing is that the cells of the body are constantly regenerating themselves. They die off and are replaced on a fairly predictable schedule that varies from one type of cell to another. Our nutrition and our state of mind determines the health of the new cells. When we practice the magical inhalation of an idea, that idea becomes integrated into the structure of our new cells and thus we slowly transform our entire physical structure. This is why it is so important that the inhaled idea be circulated throughout the entire body.

The pore breathing technique is fairly simple and requires only a little imagination to accomplish. Bardón uses the dry-sponge-dipped-in-water analogy, but another good analogy is that of centering one's attention in the physical bones of the body and sucking in the air from there. Either way it is described, the feeling should be that one is inhaling air through the whole body at once. Please note that this is not something that is merely visualized, but rather, it is something that should be FELT by the entire physical body.

The first exercise in pore breathing involves the inhalation of what Bardón calls the "vital energy". Unfortunately for the new student, Bardón says very little about what this vital energy actually is. Consequently, this is a question that is frequently asked, so I will take a few moments to speak about the vital energy in the following Q&A section.

The exercises of this section of Step Two begin with the whole body pore breathing of the vital energy. Remember to avoid altering

the breathing cycle during these exercises. Here, just as with the Step One exercise of inhaling an idea through normal lung breathing, it is the mind which does the actual work, not the breath itself. As before, take empty breaths to accommodate the lag time between your ideation process and your normal breathing cycle.

Once this technique of pore breathing the vital energy is mastered, the student's attention is turned toward adding an idea to the Akasha principle (of the vital energy or of the raw air itself). Here, the idea is inhaled through the entire body in the same way it was inhaled in Step One through the lungs alone.

Next comes the practice of the magical exhale. This follows the same principles as the magical inhalation but focuses instead upon ridding the body/psyche of a specific thought or ideation (usually the negative counterpart of the inhaled idea). Again, it is important to not force a change in the normal breathing rhythm -- take those empty breaths as needed. If you've mastered the magical inhale, then the magical exhale should be very easy to master as well.

When focused upon the same concern, the magical inhale combined with the magical exhale, constitutes a very powerful method for self-change. Its potentials for positive impact upon the physical and psychic health of the practitioner are uncountable.

The Step Two exercises close with a section on physical discipline. Specifically, this concerns the primary working asana (or bodily position) that the student will use throughout the IHH work. Bardon recommends a sitting posture (some call it the "King" or the "Throne" posture), but a kneeling posture will work just as well for most students. It really matters little which particular posture you choose for this as long as it is one in which you find bodily comfort. For example, if you choose a lotus asana and can do it without your legs falling asleep from lack of blood flow then by all means use it, but if the lotus asana puts your legs to sleep, then choose another posture that does not have this effect.

This exercise can (and in my opinion, should) be applied to ANY posture the student finds themselves in throughout daily life. The point here is to attain the ability to be in any position and still be able to achieve both comfort and uninterrupted concentration.

As with Step One, it is equally important that the student not move on to Step Three until all of the Step Two exercises have been mastered. If one part of the exercises goes quickly for you then spend your time improving upon your abilities until you have completed the rest of the Step Two requirements.

Q&A--

1) *How do I breathe through my pores?*

Bardon uses the analogy of a dry sponge which absorbs the water. This is good, but I prefer the idea of breathing from the inside of your bones. This way you are drawing in the air from the inside of your self. There is no way to really describe how this feels, but with a little practice you'll get the hang of it on your own.

2) *What is the vital energy?*

There are two questions about the vital energy that invariably arise: "What is the vital energy?", and "What does the vital energy feel like?" The first question is less important than the second at this stage in the training but nonetheless, it is worthy of an answer.

The vital energy is a specific energy that has a specific constitution. It is composed of the Elements (Fire, Air, Water, Earth and Akasha) and the Fluids (Electric and Magnetic) in a ratio that has an affinity with living (animate) matter. When an animate being is surrounded with the vital energy, it naturally draws from the vital energy as much of the Elements and Fluids as it requires. Thus a blade of grass will draw a slightly different array of Elements and Fluids from the vital energy than will a human body.

The vital energy is an astra-mental substance -- it is not, in and of itself, something measurable through the use of physical instruments (although many of its physical effects are measurable). Since it is astra-mental, it has an affinity for physical matter and does directly effect the structure of physical things.

The specific ratio of Elements and Fluids composing the vital energy expresses a slight preponderance of the Fire Element and the Electric Fluid. It also expresses the positive polarity of the Elements and Fluids with greater strength than it does the negative polarity. This gives it the quality of vitality reflected in its name.

Most often, it is visualized as a slightly golden brilliance (due to its preponderance of the Fire Element and the Electric Fluid). It is also visualized by some to be of a pure white brilliance instead of having a golden tinge, but in my experience this is not the vital energy that Bardon speaks of here. This pure white (totally colorless) energy is also vital, but its effect is more universal and not as specifically suited to animate, living matter. In other words, the pure white energy will have a greater effect upon the structure of inanimate matter but will have less direct an impact upon animate

matter than the gold tinged vital energy. Since the focus here in Step Two is our own physical body, I highly recommend working with a vital energy that has a golden appearance.

3) *What does the vital energy feel like?*

As to the second, more important question about how the vital energy feels to the student's body, the main clue to this is found in the name this energy is given. This energy feels vital and it is stimulating and energizing to the human body. When performing the Step Two work with the vital energy, the student should feel this stimulation throughout the nerves of their entire body. Little more can be said for it is up to the student to find, through experimentation, their connection to this energy for themselves. With these clues and directions, you should have little trouble in this regard.

STEP THREE

Step Three opens with a discussion of the "four pillars of the Temple" -- Knowledge, Volition, Courage and Silence. Often, these terms are misunderstood, or rather, incompletely understood, so I will add a few words of my own to those written by Bardou in this regard.

Knowledge: This does not mean the mere stuffing of the mind full of facts and figures. This alone will not aid the student's magical rise. Rather, the type of knowledge important to the aspiring magician is that gained by combining study with practice. As any serious student of Alchemy will inform you, study alone does not make one an Alchemist. It is only through putting what one learns from study into practical use that true knowledge arises. This is what leads to Understanding and, eventually, to Wisdom.

Volition: Volition refers not only to the power of the magical will to overcome all obstacles, but also to the ability to invoke the feeling of absolute assurance that what one wills is real. This is especially important when it comes to the use of affirmations and the plastic imagination. Volition increases with practice -- it is something that can be cultivated. With a strong will, many doors which remain closed to the ordinary person, open for the magician. But never should the magician's will be a violent thing which rips through a barrier unconcerned. The sort of will the magician wields, is like the undeniable force of running water -- it penetrates obstacles by going around them instead of ruthlessly obliterating them.

Courage: This refers to an unflinching willingness to stand up to any obstacle and to face any challenge which confronts the magician. At the root of courage is the ability to control one's fear and to reach beyond its limits. This does not mean that one should ignore fear for it is a natural and important part of our mechanism of self-preservation. All that is meant is that when fear arises, it should be treated as a valuable bit of information and should, when appropriate, be set aside. Except in truly life-threatening situations, the magician does not allow fear to be a barrier to progress. This aspect of courage comes into play for the beginning student especially in regards to the work of introspection and self-change. Often times we will see things in ourselves that it takes courage to face and to overcome. A good meditation for building one's courage is to consider exactly what the consequences of a fear filled situation might be. Short of death or dismemberment, the consequences of

most situations are minor and are usually magnified out of true proportion by the fear itself. There are also other methods for building one's courage. For example, I have an innate fear of heights, so I chose for a short while to become a window washer. This required climbing some pretty tall ladders, but by practicing caution, I was able to go beyond my fear. I still have an innate fear of heights, but now I know that my fear exceeds the real danger and it no longer prevents me from testing my limits.

Silence: This is probably the least understood of the "four pillars". Some take this injunction to mean that absolutely no word of magic or one's experience with it should ever be mentioned, but this is not the case. If this were so, then why, for example, would Bardon have written and taught as he did? At its root, silence addresses two concerns: the personal ego and the sanctity of magical experiences. The part of our human ego that requires approval from others must be contended with by every student of magic. Here, silence about the nature and extent of one's magical experiences and abilities is very handy. If we start bragging about how all-powerful we are, then we feed this ego need and we become distracted from our higher purpose. By maintaining our silence in this regard, we avoid inflating this part of our ego and make it much easier for ourselves to contend with it. Also of note is that magical experiences are of a very intimate, personal nature. Their intimacy is easily violated when we speak the details of these experiences to another. Such a violation subtly diminishes the import of these experiences and does the student a disservice. Personally, I have no problem discussing the rudiments of magic, but never do I relay the intimate details of my own experiences. I have found this advantageous to my own rise and recommend this tact to you as well. This form of silence builds a very powerful charge of intimacy into your experiences that is unattainable in any other way.

MENTAL

These Step Three exercises take the student a step further into the art of creative visualization. Creative visualization as described by Bardon is fairly unique in that the student approaches it in a step-by-step manner and assumes absolute control over what is visualized. This technique is important to the student's furtherance in magic for several reasons. It strengthens the concentration and will, it makes the physical senses and their astral and mental corollaries

more acute, and it prepares the student for the later work of magical astral and mental wandering.

While at this stage the creative visualization is only a mental operation, it leads, combined with the other exercises, to actual astral experiences. The distinction between a mental projection that encompasses physical-like sensations and a genuine astral experience (which also encompasses physical-like sensations) is slight, but that is the point. Since it is so slight, mastery of the multi-sensory mental projection leads the student naturally to the art of astral projection. The main difference between these two is that in the astral projection, the realm visited is not reliant upon the mental projection of the magician; rather, the realm visited exists of its own accord. [The same can be said of true mental wandering except that in mental wandering there are no physical-like sensations.]

Another significant difference is that a true astral projection requires that the magician consciously separate the astra-mental body from the physical body and this does not occur with a mental projection.

Yet another aspect of these exercises that is worthy of mention is that through mastery of creative visualization, the student learns how to effectively build an image that can be wandered through astrally. A thoroughly crafted creative visualization effectively establishes a connection with its astral counterpart. For example, this is the secret behind the astral wandering of an occult symbol -- the symbol is projected through intense creative visualization which connects the projection to the symbol's astral counterpart and makes it a thing which can be explored with the astra-mental body.

With these things in mind, I hope it is apparent to the student of IIIH that these exercises are of great importance. As a matter of fact, each of the exercises found in IIIH are of great importance to a steady, balanced magical rise and none of them should be overlooked.

If the student has indeed mastered the single sense exercises of Step Two, then these Step Three exercises incorporating two or more senses at once should present no difficulty. These exercises are presented in a very specific sequence which should be followed exactly.

The first exercise involves the external projection of a scene. Bardon uses the example of a ticking clock wherein the student combines the visualization of the clock with the hearing of its ticking and chiming. This projection should float before your eyes. Bardon also talks of visualizing a stream or a field of wheat, etc., employing

two or more senses, but it should be noted that these also should be projections which are separate from the student -- these are not scenes that the student wraps around him/herself and stands in the middle of.

This first exercise is very much like the Step Two exercises except that more than one sense is employed at a given time. This exercise should be accomplished with the eyes open. The point of this particular exercise is to familiarize the student with combining the senses.

Only when the preceding has been mastered should you turn to the next exercise. This time you will work with your eyes closed and the visualization will be a personally familiar scene which is wrapped around you. This is far different from a projection which hangs in the air before your eyes and which is essentially separate from you. At first, you should make this scene only visual -- the point here being to familiarize you with the technique of stepping into a scene.

After this is mastered for five minutes, then create a scene and add sound to it. Then add sensation, etc. Here, you must involve yourself with the entire experience of your scene -- see its every detail, hear its every sound and feel its every sensation. Smell and taste can also be added to the visualization as appropriate.

Once you have mastered this technique with your eyes closed, proceed to experiment with your eyes open. You will have mastered this when you are able to achieve the same quality of involvement in your scene as you did with your eyes closed.

Next in sequence comes an exercise where you wrap an unfamiliar scene around you. Work as before with as many senses as seem appropriate. Start with your eyes closed and when this is mastered, shift to working with your eyes open. Working with a scene that is unfamiliar to you requires a greater degree of inventiveness and that is, essentially, the point of this variation.

Next, we turn to the multi-sense visualization of various animals. Start with stationary animals and master their visualization with eyes closed and then with eyes open. [Note: This is a projection, not a wrap-around scene.]

Now put those animals in motion and work first with eyes closed and then with eyes open. As before, begin with animals that are familiar to you and then move on to unfamiliar animals.

The final exercises of this section concern the visualization of human beings. Begin with familiar humans and project their image, without sound or smell or movement, first with the eyes closed and

then with the eyes open. Then move on to the same exercise with unfamiliar humans.

When this single-sense visualization is mastered, switch to familiar humans in motion and speaking. Employ as many senses as you can, working first with your eyes closed and then with your eyes open. Finally, repeat this exercise with humans unfamiliar to you.

This completes the magical schooling of the spirit for Step Three. At the end of these exercises your abilities with creative visualization should be well honed. You should be able to place yourself within any scene you desire, for as long as you desire, populate it with whatever animals and humans you desire, and be able to employ any of the senses you desire.

Q&A--

1) *How real should my multi-sense visualizations be?*

Ultimately, they should be so real that when you reach out to touch them, you are surprised that they have no physical substance. Their degree of detail should be so exact that you cannot visually tell them apart from the genuine article.

2) *Why do I have to work first with my eyes closed and then with my eyes open?*

These are both valuable abilities for the practicing magician. We start first with our eyes closed because that is generally an easier way to learn the basic exercise. Once it is mastered with the eyes closed it is then relatively easy to master the exercise with the eyes open. The same quality of the multi-sense visualization should be achieved with the eyes open as with the eyes closed.

3) *What's the difference between a visualization that hovers in the air before my eyes and one that I step into?*

These are also two valuable abilities for the practicing magician. An example of the "hanging before the eyes" type of visualization is the imagination of a ticking clock which hangs on a wall. Here, there is little direct involvement with the visualization itself.

An example of the "step into it" type of multi-sense visualization is the imagination of an entire room surrounding you. Here, there is an intimate involvement with the visualization and you can employ all five of your senses at once.

The exercises begin with the "before your eyes" type of multi-sense visualization because this is an easier way to learn the basic technique and makes the transition to the "step into it" type that much easier.

ASTRAL

Before beginning these Step Three magical schooling of the soul exercises, the student MUST (!) have first established a rudimentary balance among the Elements of the personality. In order to avoid any ill effects upon the psyche and the physical body, the student must be absolutely certain that there exists no negative excess of any Element in their personality. All of the most bothersome items found in the negative soul mirror must have been addressed and transformed.

This caution cannot be stated strongly enough. No matter how eager you are to progress, please do not, by any means, enter into these exercises until you have establish this rudimentary balance. If, for example, you still have strong negative aspects of the Fire Element that influence your personality, then working in this manner with the Fire Element will do nothing more than exacerbate that imbalance and cause you grief in the long run. If, on the other hand, you have transformed your prominent negative traits, then this work with the Elements will help strengthen the positive aspects of your personality and cause only joy.

As Bardón states, this work with the Elements is the deepest arcanum of magic. It forms the root of all true magical abilities and the student should pay close attention to these exercises.

The system outlined by Bardón in IIIH differs from all the rest in that the student learns how to cause magical effects by their own direct manipulation of the Elements. The student of IIIH does not start out by relying upon other beings for these effects (e.g., the Beings of the Elements, or rituals empowered by others, etc.). In IIIH, this is seen as later work that is only advisable once the student has themselves mastered the direct, hands-on manipulation. This is what, in Bardón terms, distinguishes the true magician from the sorcerer.

These magical schooling of the soul exercises combine the already established techniques of visualization, ideation and pore breathing. Simply put, the student visualizes their body surrounded by an infinite sphere of the Element at hand (e.g., red for Fire),

empowers the visualization with the ideation of the Element (e.g., expansiveness and heat for Fire), and then inhales this empowered visualization with the whole body.

Bardon suggests seven inhalations to start, building over time to thirty inhalations, and it is advantageous to follow his instruction in this regard. It is important that the student build slowly as this gives time for the body to acclimatize itself to the Elemental burden and thus the student avoids any ill effects.

Bardon suggests a particular color for each Element to facilitate visualization: Fire --red, Air -- blue, Water -- greenish-blue, and Earth -- yellow, gray, or black. Strict adherence to these correspondences is not absolutely necessary. Personally, I employ the following: Fire -- bright red, Air -- yellow, Water -- cyan blue, and Earth -- brown, dark gray, or black. These are the correspondences that I worked with before I encountered IHH and they are the most comfortable to me. So, if you have worked with a different set than that suggested by Bardon, by all means continue with it if it works well for you.

Of greatest importance in these exercises is the feeling that the Elements invoke within you. You must feel the heat and the expansiveness of the Fire and so on. This must become for you a physical sensation.

[Note: Bardon speaks here, and in several other places, about what can be accomplished with the Elements, etc. But it is important that you realize these are just examples of what can be achieved after years of effort and that they are not meant as requirements. These are extreme practices and are not advised for the student as they tend to divert one from the more important goal of a balanced magical progress.]

The exercises themselves are very simple. You begin by establishing the visualization and then empower it with the appropriate ideation. Then you inhale the Element with the whole body through the now familiar technique of pore breathing. Again, be careful to avoid altering the normal breathing rhythm -- take empty breaths as needed. Begin with seven inhalations and increase by one inhalation with each exercise till you reach a total of thirty inhalations. Once you have inhaled the proper amount of the Element, spend some time sensing the Element's attributes and circulating the Element evenly throughout your body.

When this phase of inhalation and contemplation is complete, you must then magically exhale (with the whole body pore breathing) the same amount of the Element that you inhaled. The

idea here is that you should rid yourself of all the excess of the Element that you previously inhaled. Use the same number of exhales that you inhaled, but be sure that you exhale exactly the same amount that you inhaled.

This is important because it is unhealthy to walk around with an excess of the Element for an extended period of time after your exercise. Likewise, it is unhealthy to go to the opposite extreme and deplete your body of its normal amount of an Element. In other words, exhale neither more nor less of the Element than you have inhaled.

Master this exercise first with your eyes closed, and then master it with your eyes open. Never neglect this habit of working with the eyes closed and then with the eyes open as it will become an important ability further on in the training as you apply these techniques in your daily practice.

Once you have mastered the magical inhalation and exhalation of the Fire Element and increased your capacity to thirty inhalations, then move on to working with the Air Element. Do not work with the Fire Element in one sitting and then the Air Element in the next, etc. Instead, master one Element at a time and work in the order Bardon recommends. This sequencing is important and the student is well advised to follow it exactly.

The Step Three magical schooling of the soul is complete when you can draw each of the four Elements into your body with equal ease and with your eyes open or closed.

Q&A--

1) *Is inhaling the Elements any different than inhaling the vital energy?*

The technique is basically the same -- surround yourself with a universe of the Element/energy and then inhale it. The main difference however, is that the Elements take a little more ideation than does the vital energy. Each Element feels different and their invocation is less easily sensed than the vital energy. Generally, the Elements take more concentration and you have to spend more time building the ideas associated with them.

2) *The directions say to slowly increase my inhalations. Does this mean I'm "dynamically" accumulating the Elements? How is this different from the Step Four exercise?*

In the Step Three exercises of breathing the Elements, there is a degree of accumulation and it does become dynamic (radiant), but there is no true "condensation" of the Elements. The "condensation" of the Elements is relegated to Step Four. More on this difference further on.

3) How clearly do I have to feel each Element? Do I really have to register a rise in temperature with the Fire Element?

Your sensing of each Element should be crystal clear. You do not have to actually take a thermometer and measure your bodily temperature, but you should progress to the point where you definitely feel an increase of your body's overall temperature. Likewise, you should feel the attributes of each of the Elements as a physical thing. With the Water, you should feel your body actually get colder; with the Air, lighter; and with the Earth, heavier.

4) What is the significance of the colors and sensations associated with each Element?

First of all, these factors help you get in touch with the Element itself. Secondly, the building up of the image (color and shape) and the sensation associated with a thing is a large part of future practice. Eventually, you will learn how to build not only the image and the sensation, but also the musical tone and the meaning of any force you want to project magically. Later in IIH and especially in KTQ, Bardon speaks of a "three-sense concentration" and a "quadrapolar action", based upon the Elemental correspondences. These Step Three exercises lay the foundation for these future magical abilities.

PHYSICAL

The Step Three magical schooling of the physical body exercises take the pore breathing technique to a new level. The first stage in this is the breathing of the vital energy into each body part. This is important for two reasons. The first, as Bardon points out, is that this will give you a degree of control over each and every part of your body. The second reason, not pointed out by Bardon, is that this educates the student about the manipulation of their own mental body.

As I stated in the "Theory" section, the mental body is very plastic and can assume any shape it desires and translocate to any

place it desires. Where you focus your mental body (conscious awareness), determines its shape. Thus, in the exercise which follows, when your concentration is shifted to a specific body part, you are, in effect, altering the shape and placement of your mental body so that it assumes the shape and location of the organ you are working with. This introductory practice exercises an ability which becomes very important in later Steps involving the transplantation of consciousness into other objects and beings, as well as the practice of mental wandering.

I advise that if you do not already know the exact location of the organs in your body, then buy a book which gives you a visual layout of the organs. Study this information before you begin these exercises.

The opening exercise involves breathing the vital energy into and out of each organ or part of your body. This is not an "accumulation" of the vital energy -- each breath that you inhale of the vital energy is to be followed by an exhale of the energy. Bardon suggests seven such paired inhalations and exhalations. The idea here is to learn how to breathe through each organ -- the accumulation of the vital energy in each organ comes later.

It is wise, as Bardon suggests, to begin with the feet and slowly work your way up to the head. In the body parts and organs that are paired (i.e., feet, legs, hands, arms, ears, eyes, lungs, kidneys, etc.) it is good to first breathe through each side independently and then through both sides simultaneously.

I think it is best if you lie down for this exercise, but sitting is your usual "asana" will suffice. Invoke a deep sense of relaxation throughout your body. When you shift your awareness to a particular body part or organ you must establish a clear, sensory connection with it. For example, when you shift your attention to your right foot, you should sense each toe, as well as every spot on the surface and interior of your foot. Only then should you begin the pore breathing. This is done from the inside of the body part or organ, so your consciousness must be firmly rooted in its interior.

While this is relatively easy with a foot or hand, it is more difficult with the internal organs since our sensory connection with them is generally less developed. Studying an anatomical diagram is very helpful in this regard and I assure you that, with a little effort, such a connection with your internal organs is quite achievable.

This first exercise is complete when you are able to breathe the vital energy in and out of every organ and body part of your body.

The next exercise involves the "accumulation" of the vital energy in the whole body. An accumulation is different than the mere breathing of the previous exercise. Here, instead of inhaling and then exhaling each breath of the vital energy, the vital energy is inhaled several times in succession and retained. Bardou suggests starting with seven inhalations (increasing by one inhalation with each exercise until you reach a total of thirty). With each inhale, the vital energy is retained and the following exhale is to be an empty breath. This builds the vital energy into a dynamic, radiant accumulation.

When you have reached the appropriate number of inhalations, spend several moments (remember to maintain a normal rhythm of empty breaths) sensing the radiance and the nature of the accumulated vital energy. When you are ready, then begin to exhale the vital energy (each inhalation should be empty during this process). Just as with the accumulation of the Elements, you should make sure that you have exhaled the same amount of the vital energy as you inhaled.

This exercise is complete when you are able to accumulate a dynamic charge of thirty breaths of the vital energy within your entire body and then are able to exhale the same amount of the energy as you have accumulated.

The next exercise should only be attempted after you have mastered the above. This exercise involves the explosive release of the accumulated vital energy directly back to the universe. The exhaling breath is by-passed and this is a much quicker method of releasing an accumulation. But, this practice requires a certain degree of resiliency as it can be damaging to a body not used to working with the dynamism of an accumulation of the vital energy.

To begin, accumulate the vital energy through the whole-body pore breathing. When you are ready to release the vital energy, do so all at once. It may help to tie this expulsion to a single exhale, but if a single exhale is not sufficient at the beginning, then by all means exhale whatever vital energy remains. With practice, you will become able to release the whole accumulation in one comprehensive explosion.

The final exercise of this section is to learn to accumulate and release the vital energy from each of your body parts and organs. [Note: It is advisable that you do not accumulate the vital energy in either your brain or your heart (especially if you have any heart disease). Simply breathing the vital energy in and out of these two organs is very beneficial, but accumulating the vital energy in them

is neither beneficial nor necessary. This is due to the electrical nature of their function.]

Begin by accumulating seven breaths of the vital energy into the body part or organ (increasing by one inhalation with each exercise) and follow by exhaling the same number of breaths of the vital energy as you inhaled. When this has been mastered with all the body parts and organs, then pass to working with the explosive release of the accumulated vital energy. The technique is the same as for the whole-body release, but you will need to take greater care to not abuse your individual organs. Work first with the explosive release of smaller amounts of accumulated energy and as your plasticity increases, move to larger, more dynamic accumulations.

Q&A--

1) *Bardon seems to use the word "accumulation" to mean two different things. Please clarify.*

There are actually three types of accumulation in IHH. First and simplest, is what I call a "passive accumulation". This is where you inhale and then immediately exhale a breath of an Element/energy/Fluid. This does not cause a build-up of what you are inhaling -- it only bathes you in the substance, as it were.

The second type is what I call a "dynamic accumulation". Here, you are taking several inhalations and holding them within your body. This typically results in a sense of radiance, where there is a certain degree of pressure felt by the accumulated Element/energy/Fluid.

The third type of accumulation is called "condensation". Here you inhale multiple breaths and build a dynamic accumulation. Then, you condense this accumulation into a smaller space. A condensation can also be accomplished by building up the Element/energy/Fluid into an object or body part directly to a degree that goes beyond a merely dynamic accumulation. In some cases, the difference between a dynamic accumulation and a condensation is subtle, but with practice you will be able to discern between the two. The work with condensing begins in Step Four. For the purposes of Step Three, all you need to concern yourself with is the dynamic accumulation.

2) *How am I supposed to feel my Pancreas, etc.?*

This is not as difficult as it may sound if you have mastered the mental discipline of the previous Steps. The best method is to

get yourself a map of the internal organs, and with that as your guide, do your best to pinpoint the location of each organ. Keep trying to locate your organs until you can actually feel each one.

The basis of this technique is the "transference of consciousness" described in greater detail in the Step Four material. This work of Step Three serves as an introduction to the more complex aspects of the transference of consciousness.

Simply put, what you must do is focus your attention upon the specific location of the internal organ or body part. Your conscious awareness IS your mental body, so what you are doing, in more technical terms, is condensing your mental body into the organ or body part of choice.

Persistence pays off!

3) How clearly do I have to feel each organ and body part?

By the end of Step Three you should be able to sense each organ and body part with great clarity. Since each organ is different, each will feel slightly different -- some you will be able to feel very intimately and others less so. I cannot predict exactly what you will feel with each organ, so it is up to you to decide when you feel enough.

Since you are moving your own mental body to a part of your own physical body, it is relatively easy for you to connect your awareness to the particular astral matrix of the organ or body part and sense what it feels. This is why the lessons in transference of consciousness begin with your own body and THEN progress, in Step Four, to transferring your consciousness to external objects and beings. Once you have mastered this technique within your own body, it is then easier to do the same sort of projection outward into foreign bodies.

4) Why is it advised that I should neither dynamically accumulate nor condense the vital energy into my heart and brain?

The electric nature of the vital energy is such that it interferes with the electrical functioning of both heart and brain. Thus it is unwise to accumulate an energy or Element into them. A passive accumulation or bathing of these organs is safe because there is no actual build-up of the energy/Element. Likewise, it is safe to accumulate a dynamic charge into the entire head or chest area, since there is no build-up in the brain or heart alone -- in other words, the accumulation is spread throughout the region and not focused solely upon the organ itself.

ADDENDUM TO STEP THREE

At the end of Step Three, Bardon introduces the student to the magical use of the faculties gained from the pursuit of the exercises to date. This is a very important juncture in the development of a magician and careful consideration should be given before proceeding in these endeavors.

Of greatest import to the further ascent of the magician is the personal morality or code of ethics that the magician adheres to. As Bardon warns, "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." A magician who wishes to rise steadily must sow only the seeds of goodness and compassion -- anything else will stunt the magician's growth and severely limit their rise. This is simply an inviolable law of Nature, a way in which the higher Mysteries protect themselves.

Hidden within Bardon's words regarding the use of one's magical faculties, is a valuable technique which should not be overlooked by the student. This is the technique of drawing the vital energy directly from the universe and instilling it into any object, person or space, without first passing it through the magician's own body. In healing work, this is the preferred method in that it avoids any negative impact upon the magician's being (by passing the vital energy first through one's own body, a subtle connection with a patient's disease is established).

The student should, by now, be able to design their own regimen of exercises that will develop the ability to draw the vital energy directly from the universe and into any object, etc. Please do not neglect to do so as the benefits will far outweigh the effort required.

Read through this section with care and devise your own ways to use the magical faculties you have spent so much effort to achieve. The options available to you are nearly limitless and making use of your abilities will only improve them. Be creative and inventive and remember to ALWAYS adhere to your moral code.

Q&A--

1) *In the room impregnation or the impregnation of an object, should I use the same gold-tinged vital energy that I used in Step Two?*

This depends upon the purpose of your impregnation and upon the type of object you are impregnating. If your impregnation is to

effect the health of a living thing, then use the gold-tinged vital energy. If your impregnation is meant to transfer a specific idea, then you are relying only upon the Akasha principle of the vital energy and it matters little which type you use. If you are impregnating an inanimate object, such as a crystal sphere, then the type you use will depend upon your purpose -- if your purpose is to effect other inanimate objects, then use the pure-white type, but if it is to effect living matter, then use the gold-tinged type. This may sound confusing, but really, with practice, it will become clear.

STEP FOUR

MENTAL

With the exercises of the previous Steps, you shall have learned how to imagine any thing, being or place, and how to concentrate your mental body (conscious awareness) into any part of your physical body with ease. Now, with Step Four, you will learn how to transfer your mental body into any object or being you choose.

This is a very delicate part of the magical training and how strictly you adhere to your personal moral code will directly influence your degree of success. If your motive is to supplant your will into another being, then you will assuredly fail in these exercises. But if your motive is only to increase your understanding of others, then you will succeed.

The transplantation of your consciousness into another object or being will provide you with a deep compassion for the limitations and travail of others. Your understanding of the mineral, plant, animal and human kingdoms will blossom in a way no other experience can match.

There are four sorts or stages of transplantation of consciousness. [In a previous post to the on-line discussion board, I outlined three types of transplantation, but I believe these four types outlined here do a better job of explaining this topic than the three types I described before.] The first stage is where you experience the physical limitations and dimensions of the object or being. Here, there is no connection to the sensations, feelings and thoughts of the object or being, and your experience is limited to your own sensations, feelings and thoughts concerning the object of your transplantation. This is the most primitive and superficial sort of transference.

The second stage is where you feel the actual sensations that the object or being feels. Still, there is no perception of how the object or being itself feels emotionally or how it thinks. At best, at this stage, you are able to surmise the emotions and thoughts of the other, but you do not experience them directly.

In the third stage of transference, you experience all the attributes of the object or being you have transplanted your consciousness into. For example, if you transplant your consciousness into a bird, you will feel the sensations of the bird's

flight, you will perceive the bird's emotional responses, and you will know the bird's thoughts. The same applies to any object (although most inanimate objects do not experience emotion or thought) or being you transfer your consciousness into. At this stage, you are an observer of the entire being. Of concern with this sort of transference is the personal privacy of any being you transfer your consciousness into. When it comes to transferring your consciousness into another human, you should never divulge their inner emotions and thoughts to another as this would violate their privacy and negate their right to choose for themselves what parts of their inner life they want to externalize or share with others. Think for a moment how you would feel if someone was to violate your privacy in this way -- learn from this to never cause this sort of injury to another.

With this third type of transplantation, you will have a deep understanding of the being but you will not be able to directly influence the being from the inside. What it does provide however, is a deep enough understanding of the being so that you will know exactly how to influence them from the outside. In other words, by knowing the sensations, thoughts and emotions of another, your understanding of them will allow you to predict the consequences upon them of your advice, healing efforts, etc. This is the stage associated with "mind reading" and is very advantageous for the healer or the psychotherapist.

The fourth and most complete stage of transplantation of consciousness can take years of work to master and is attainable only if one has strictly adhered to the highest moral code. With this fourth type, you switch from mere observer, to active participant. Not only do you experience the whole being (physical, astral and mental), but you also become one with the whole being. In effect, your mental body joins the mental body of the being you are transferring your consciousness into, and you thereby have access to an absolute degree of direct influence over the actions, emotions and thoughts of the being. However, the being into which you have transferred your consciousness to this degree, will also have access to your being from the inside out. Usually, the being you would transfer into in this manner, would not have the magical ability to even perceive your presence and take advantage of the connection you have established. Nonetheless, the consequences of the mutuality of such a connection should be considered beforehand.

The true magician will ask permission from the other being before initiating this most complete stage of transplantation of

consciousness. Every object or being is capable of expressing (in one way or another depending upon the sort of consciousness the object or being possesses), its willingness or unwillingness to participate in this most intimate sort of melding. If you ever try to violate the privacy of another being by overwhelming their unwillingness, it will be the last time you do so. This is a very high form of magic and if violated or abused, it will retreat from you and remain elusive till you redeem [Quite literally, "re-deem" means: to give new meaning to, or return the original meaning to, something.] the negative karma this act will naturally incur.

This ability is significant to the advanced magician. The advancing magician will do well to consider the implications of this ability in regard to the Step Ten work of merging with (i.e., "assumption of") a chosen god-form; with healing work of the most intimate level; with the merging at THE most intimate degree with a lover, friend, or guru/master; with advanced control of physical substances within the parameters established by Nature (remember, each physically manifest thing has an astral and a mental body as well, to which the advanced magician may connect in this manner); and, with the connection that two (or more) equally advanced magicians are capable of establishing. The possibilities are truly infinite and when explored to their fullness, they lead the magician to The Infinite.

At any rate, these exercises are well worth any effort you put into them. They form the foundation of many of the higher magics that IHH guides the student towards. For the purposes of Step Four however, the attainment of at least one experience of the third sort of transference that I described above, is sufficient, as long as one remains committed to pursuing the transference without rest, until the third type is mastered. It is even better if you have completely mastered the third type before passing on to Step Five, as that Step deals directly with the entry into the fourth type of transference.

The Step Four magical schooling of the spirit exercises follow the same pattern established in Steps Two and Three. The student begins with a few simple, inanimate objects and learns to transfer their conscious awareness into them one at a time. The goal here is to establish the first type of transference mentioned above wherein the dimensions of the object, its relationship to its surroundings, and its intended use, are perceived from the inside out.

When this first type is mastered with inanimate objects, the student shifts to objects from the plant kingdom. Here the goal is to establish the second type of transference wherein the dimensions as

well as the sensations experienced by the object, are perceived. For example, if you are transferring your consciousness into a tree, you experience not only the form of the tree, but also the way in which the tree senses its rootedness and senses its surroundings through the atmosphere.

Once this second type of transference is mastered with creatures from the plant kingdom, the student moves on to working with the more animate beings of the animal kingdom. Start with animals (including insects, etc.) that you can observe with your own physical eyes. Aim for establishing at least the second type of transference with them. [Establishing the third type of transference with an animal at this stage is quite difficult due to how different the thinking and emotions of an animal are from those of a human. It is best if you learn the third type of transference with a human before trying it with something so foreign to your experience as the inner workings of an animal.] For example if you transfer your consciousness into a bird, you should experience the limitations and advantages of its form and experience what it feels like to be in the bird's body. Once you have mastered this basic technique with animals you can experience first-hand, then move on to animals you imagine.

When you have mastered the second type of transference into an animal form, then shift your attention to other humans. Begin with humans who are familiar to you (preferably with someone you are observing with your own eyes at the moment you are doing your experiment). At first, establish the second type of transference wherein you sense the similarities and the differences of their particular form, and feel what it is like to be in their unique body. This type of transference should present no problems by now since you have mastered the exact same degree of transference with other sentient creatures such as animals and insects, etc. It is best if you begin with stationary people and then work with people in motion, sensing how it feels to move about in their bodies. Then do the same with people you imagine.

Once the second type of transference into other humans is mastered, begin expanding the depth of your transference until you establish the third type of transference. This comes easiest with someone who is already familiar to you, as you already experience some degree of mental and emotional connection with them.

Achieving the expansion of contact from the merely sensorial to the emotional and mental levels comes differently for each magician. I could say, "visualize your own consciousness expanding

within the other human until it makes contact with their emotional being and their mental being", or "quiet YOUR self and listen closely to the interior workings of the other human until you hear THEIR emotions and thoughts", but this would not begin to cover the various ways the magician can find to accomplish this third type of transference. Each student must devise their own best method -- if at first you don't succeed, try again with a new tact.

It is especially important here for the you to differentiate between what YOU think the other person is thinking and feeling emotionally, and what THEY actually are thinking and feeling. It is easy to imagine what they are experiencing and then falsely assume that our imaginings are actually the factual perception of their thoughts and emotions. To reach the genuine third type of transference with another being, the student must look beyond their own imaginings and perceive the actual thoughts and emotions of another.

Concurrent with this perception of another's present true thoughts and emotions, comes the perception of all their past experiences, thoughts and emotions. This is one way to tell the difference between your imagining of their thoughts, etc., and the actual perception of them. In other words, if you do not sense the person's past at the same time that you are experiencing their present moment, then you have not yet attained the third type of transference.

I should mention here that it is important for you to keep track of your own limits. Do not engage in so deep an empathy that you lose yourself in the other person's emotions and thoughts. Here, you are to remain an observer and not involve yourself directly, especially in their emotional state. It is all too easy to disrupt your own emotional state when you make this sort of contact with another's. An easy way to achieve this degree of control is to establish this sort of transference for only brief moments in the beginning. As you get used to keeping your own emotional being separate from another's, you can safely increase the amount of time you spend in this state of communion.

Once you have mastered this third type of transference with one person, begin experimenting with others, even those unfamiliar to you and those who you only imagine. It is always easiest to achieve this type of transference with people who are in front of your eyes at the present moment. With practice you should, for example, be able to sit in the middle of a busy restaurant and establish this third type of transference with any of the other patrons. Remember

to ALWAYS respect the privacy of others and NEVER reveal the details of what you have learned about another being in this manner.

When you have achieved this third type of transference with humans, return to your work with non-human life forms (such as animals and plants). This is somewhat more difficult because these other life-forms experience their worlds quite differently than humans do. Thus, experiencing their astral and mental bodies will reveal things that are foreign to your normal experience and which may be difficult for you to understand at first. In essence, you must learn how to translate their emotions and thoughts from animal- or plant-terms, into human-terms. This is no small feat but it is well, well worth the effort!

This constitutes an important step in the expansion of the advancing magician's consciousness. The ultimate goal of the magician is to encompass ALL consciousness or Being within the own consciousness. This is an infinite expansion of consciousness until one's own consciousness merges with The Unity of All Being.

This third type of transference into non-human life-forms expands the human consciousness to a great extent -- it is, so to speak, one finite step along the way to infinity. But take heart, we cannot encompass an infinity by taking an infinite number of finite steps -- at some point along the way, one takes a quantum leap from the finite into the infinite. When and how this occurs in the life of a magician is in the hands of Divine Providence. It is not something that can be forced -- all one can do is be patient and persistent.

The work of the Step Four magical schooling of the spirit is truly complete when you are comfortable with the third type of transference of consciousness into any human you desire to explore. Some headway should be made in the same degree of transference into plant and animal forms. At the same time, you should commit yourself to continuing your exploration of your fellow beings in this manner.

Q&A--

1) How does the transferal of consciousness work?

The transference of consciousness is actually the relocation of one's mental body or conscious awareness into an external object or being. In the first type of transference, your mental body does not make an actual connection with the mental, astral or physical body of the object or being into which you have transferred your

consciousness. In the second type, your mental body does make a slight connection with the physical sensoria of the subject. In the third type of transference, your mental body makes a slight connection with the mental, astral and physical bodies of the subject. And in the fourth type, the connection between your mental body and the mental, astral and physical bodies of your subject is complete and crystal clear.

2) When I transfer my consciousness into another person I feel afraid that I will lose myself in them. What should I do?

This is a normal sensation with the third and fourth type of transference. This occurs in the early stages of mental and astral wandering due to the fact that this action of separating your mental and astral bodies from your physical body imitates the death process. Thus, the fear stems from a very primitive part of your physical body's own rudimentary consciousness. In the transference of consciousness (a form of mental wandering), this presents a lesser obstacle than it does in the astral separation (which more closely resembles death to the physical instincts).

In truth, there is really very little chance of your actually losing yourself. Each of our bodies is connected by a subtle "thread" or "cord" and it is only when those threads are severed that true dislocation occurs. But this fact does not negate the physical body's instinct for self-preservation.

The way to overcome any reticence invoked by this sort of bodily fear is two-fold. First is that you must meditate upon the fact that your fear is unnecessary in this case. Try to convince your inner self that there really is no danger even though it reminds your body of the death process. Secondly, you should approach the third and fourth types of transference incrementally. Make your first experiences very brief and build slowly from there. This will introduce your physical body's rudimentary instinctive consciousness to the idea that this is a safe, nonthreatening practice. As your physical body gets used to the idea that this is not as dangerous as it instinctively suspects, this fear will recede and will no longer be a barrier to your progress.

3) I'm too empathic. How do I avoid adopting someone else's mood?

True empathy is the result of your mental body establishing a direct link with another's mental and astral bodies. For some (natural empaths), this connection is an easy matter to accomplish, but for

others, it must be learned.

The intimate link established during true empathy can only be invoked when the vibrational frequency of your mental body is in sync with another's. This provides the clue in both how to control and learn empathy.

The ability to establish an empathic link is a great boon to the magician. Yet to the natural empath who has not learned how to control their empathy, it can be a great burden. So, if you find yourself adopting another's mood through your empathic connection, you must learn how to control your empathy.

The first step in controlling your empathy is to take stock of your own mood. Clearly define your own state of mind and root yourself there. This gives you the ability to clearly distinguish between your own mood and the mood of the person you are empathizing with. As you enter into empathy with another person, keep a tight hold upon your own mood and act as a mere observer of their mood. At first, keep your distance and do not establish a direct link.

Once you have identified the differences between your mood and that of your subject, slowly begin to alter your mental frequency till it matches that of your subject. You'll recognize when you reach vibrational parity by the fact that you will be able to directly feel their mood.

To avoid becoming consumed by their mood, you must make your time of empathy very brief -- only a second or two at first. I call this "dipping" as it is a process similar to dipping your finger in to test the waters. Repeat this dipping until you are comfortable with maintaining the empathic link without totally merging with another's mood.

Essentially, what you are doing is matching only the exterior of your mental body with the frequency of the other's mental body while retaining your own frequency at the core of your mental body. This places you in the position of being able to directly control how deeply the other's mood penetrates into your mental body.

If you are a natural empath and find that you are empathic with just about any person you pass on the street, then you will need to shield or restrict your mental body during your daily life. A shield is simply an energy vortex that keeps your mental frequency stable and prevents you from unconsciously modifying your mental frequency to match that of another person. A shield acts as a barrier between you and another person's mental body.

To erect a shield you must first take stock of your normal

mental frequency. Then wrap an appropriate blanket of energy around your whole being and fill it with the idea that it will act to contain, and preserve the frequency of, your own mental being. Have it constantly replenish its energy by drawing it directly from the universe and instruct it to remain in place for as long as you consciously desire it to do so. In other words, make sure it stays intact until you wish to consciously establish an empathic link with someone.

With practice, shielding will help you regain control over your empathic ability and preserve your own state of mind. With even further practice you may be able to retain your shielding of the core of your mental body and then extend the periphery of your mental body in order to establish a safe empathic link.

No matter how unwieldy your natural empathy may seem at the beginning, you CAN learn to control it.

4) *How do I prevent someone else from transferring their consciousness into me?*

By this stage of IIIH, your will has become quite formidable. No one can transfer their consciousness into you without your allowing them to do so. So, if you feel that someone is trying to establish a mental link without your permission, all you have to do is willfully deny them entry. In extreme situations or if your natural empathy is untrained, you can always resort to shielding yourself and this will prevent invasion by another.

I must say however, it is very, very rare that someone else will even attempt to transfer their consciousness into you without your permission. There is no need for paranoia in this regard.

Many folks talk about being under "psychic attack", etc., but this too (when it is an actual attack and not just self-delusion) requires a certain degree of culpability or consent on the part of the person being attacked. Without your consent, any true attack will fail. Unfortunately, one has to make sure that there is no unconscious consent as well as conscious consent. It is far easier to deny conscious consent than it is to ferret out any unconscious consent, and this is why some folks find themselves susceptible to an attack even though they believe they've consciously rebuked the attack. Again, there is no need for paranoia in this regard. True psychic attack is a very rare thing -- it is usually a matter of self-delusion.

5) *Can I really control someone else in this way?*

Only with the fourth type of transference are you capable of directly influencing another person or being from the inside. The third type will provide you enough of an understanding of another that you can alter their behavior from the outside in much the same way that you do in daily life. In either way, but especially with the fourth type, you directly share in the karmic consequences of your interference.

I will warn you now to NEVER attempt to directly influence another being from the inside without their fully conscious consent -- you do NOT want to incur the negative karmic debt inherent in such an act. Even if you are effecting an innocuous, seemingly harmless, sort of influence, to do so from the inside without their consent is an abuse of your power that will surely incur some very unsavory consequences. Not the least of these consequences is that your magical abilities will suffer an extreme set back!

ASTRAL

With the Step Three magical schooling of the soul exercises, the student learned how to inhale the Elements into their whole body through the pore breathing technique. Now, with Step Four, the student learns how to dynamically accumulate the Elements in the individual body parts and organs. This is similar to the previous work with the dynamic accumulation of the vital energy.

At this stage in your development, you must be certain that you have established a clear Elemental balance, AND you must be able to maintain your balance. This means that you must by now be able to perceive the state of your balance at any given moment, and have the ability to correct any transitory imbalances you encounter. This is of vital importance and you should not, by any means, proceed with the Step Four exercises with the Elements until you have achieved your Elemental balance. If you proceed without this inner balance, you risk great harm to your psyche and your physical health.

As with the accumulation of the vital energy, the student is warned against accumulating the Elements into the brain and heart. Again, it is only the 'dynamic' accumulation with its building of pressure that is to be avoided. Merely bathing the heart and brain with the Elements or vital energy will do no harm, but when the Element or vital energy is condensed and the pressure of a dynamic accumulation is invoked, harm can easily be done.

The student begins in much the same manner as with the accumulation of the vital energy. Begin by accumulating seven breaths of the Element in the whole body through the pore breathing technique. Then shift the consciousness to the chosen organ or body part and condense the accumulated Element into that specific area.

This action of confining the accumulated Element into the smaller space of the body part or organ, condenses the Element and establishes a more dynamic accumulation of it. You should feel the attributes of the Element and a degree of pressure clearly in the chosen organ or body part.

When your contemplation of this accumulation in the chosen organ or body part is complete, then expand the condensed Element back to the whole body, spreading it evenly throughout the body and releasing its dynamism and pressure. When the Element is thus spread again throughout the whole body, release it back to the universe by means of the magical pore breathing exhalation.

Starting with the Fire Element, repeat this procedure with each of your body parts and organs (except your brain and your heart). Then move on to the Air Element, then the Water Element, and end with the Earth Element. Seven whole-body breaths will suffice until you have familiarized yourself with the accumulation of each Element into each body part and organ. Only then should you increase the number of inhalations and thus increase the pressure that your dynamic accumulation exerts upon your body parts and organs.

This exercise is significant for a number of reasons, not the least of which is that it introduces the student to the technique of "condensing" an Element. This is an important part of the magical use of the Elements.

Once the release of the accumulated Element through the whole body has been mastered, turn your attention to the technique of releasing the accumulated Element from the organ or body part directly back into the universe. This is no different than what you learned regarding the release of the vital energy. Simply exhale the condensed accumulation from the organ or body part directly, without first dispersing it throughout the whole body. With practice, you should eventually be able to release the accumulated Element in a single explosive expulsion, directly back to the universe from each organ and body part. This is a faster, more convenient technique and should be mastered with each Element and each body part and organ.

When the above has been mastered, attention turns to learning how to inhale the Elements directly into the body's parts and organs, without first inhaling them into the whole body. This is exactly the

same exercise you followed in the section on accumulating the vital energy.

Beginning with the Fire Element, place your consciousness into the chosen body part or organ and, from there, inhale the Element directly into the organ or body part and dynamically accumulate it. Start with seven breaths and increase from there till you have reached your limit of a comfortable level of tension. Do not over stress your body by accumulating too much of an Element at any given time -- work your way slowly as you increase the dynamic pressure of the condensed Element and stretch your limits carefully. Again, avoid the dynamic accumulation of an Element in either your brain or your heart.

When your accumulation is complete, release the Element back to the universe directly from the organ or body part itself. Start with a paced exhalation of the Element and work your way up to the explosive release.

Repeat this exercise with each of your body's parts and organs and with each of the remaining Elements.

The following, final exercise of this section is of immense consequence to the advancing magician. I urge you to proceed in this exercise with gentleness. Go slowly and take your time as this exercise should not be rushed. The healing and balancing effects of this technique cannot be overstated.

The balancing effects of this final exercise are achieved through the accumulation of the Elements into their corresponding bodily regions. The main difference in this exercises compared to the work you have already done, is that here all four Elements are held within the body at the same time.

The technique begins with seven inhalations of the Earth Element, accumulated in its proper region of the body. This is held and then one inhales seven breaths of the Water Element into its region, etc. Eventually, seven inhalations of each of the Elements is accumulated in its own region and held there.

It is as if you are building your own little planet within your body. First you set the foundation of Earth. Then you allow the Water to flow over its surface. Upon this you let the atmosphere built of Air, rest gently. Atop the Air, the Fire flames, radiating its light out into the depths of space.

Spend several minutes (at least five) in this state and perceive the balancing effects as your whole, microcosmic being realigns itself with the universal, macrocosmic balance.

When you are ready, gently release each of the Elements from

their regions, following the reverse order (i.e., Fire, Air, Water, then Earth). At first, master the release through the seven-breath pore exhaling of the accumulation and then slowly progress, in the usual manner, to the explosive release.

The question arises, regarding the four bodily regions, of what one does with the arms and hands. Bardon is silent on this subject so I will relate to you what I have found best in my own experience with this exercise. I relegate the shoulder, down to the elbow, to the Air region; the elbow to the wrist, to the Water region; and, the hand, to the Earth region. This seems to express their relative use and nature, as well as their interaction. Each modifies the movement of the next, with the hand (Earth) being the most complex modification of the initial motion of the shoulder (Air).

When the above seven-breath passive accumulation of the Elements into their regions has been mastered, it is safe to proceed with working towards a dynamic accumulation. Increase your accumulation by one inhalation in each region each time you practice -- retain the balance of the Elements. Slowly build the condensation and dynamism of the accumulated Elements and gently stretch the plasticity of the regions of your body.

Again, work with the two types of release: the magical exhalation and the explosive release.

Aside from the healing, balancing effects of this exercise, the student will also benefit as it prepares one for the later work of dynamically accumulating the Elements into external objects.

This exercise Equilibrates the Elements in all three of the magician's bodies (mental, astral and physical). The implications of this upon the magical ascent are uncountable. This is one exercise that you will doubtless repeat with joy throughout the remainder of your life!

Q&A--

1) *Is this supposed to be a dynamic accumulation or a condensation of the Elements?*

In these Step Four exercises, you start by establishing a dynamic accumulation in the whole body, and then you condense the entire accumulation into the smaller space of an organ or body part. Once this process is mastered, you turn to condensing the Elements into your organs and body parts directly, without first passing it through your whole body. Then, in the accumulation into the four

regions of the body, you are working with a dynamic accumulation directly into each region, followed by a building of the accumulation into a highly condensed state.

2) *Why should I avoid accumulating or condensing the Elements in my brain and my heart?*

These two organs, more so than any other organs in the human body, depend upon the body's own electrical charge to function properly. Their electrical balance is fairly sensitive to irregularities and when this is toyed with, damage can easily occur. Since each of the Elements carries its own particular electromagnetic charge, accumulating the Elements into either of these organs risks disruption of their normal electrical balance.

However, when an Element is accumulated in, for example, the Fire in the head region (in the Elemental balancing exercise), the electromagnetic charge of the Element is spread throughout all the organs of the region and there is thus no resulting disturbance of the balance within the brain. The same holds true when the Air Element is accumulated in the chest region and when the Elements are accumulated in the whole body.

3) *What is the practical use of this work with the Elements?*

First of all, the Step Four work with the accumulation of the Elements into your body opens you to many new options in maintaining your bodily health.

Secondly, the Elemental balancing exercise will have a great impact upon your goal of achieving an overall Elemental equipoise.

Thirdly, this work is what makes the finger rituals possible.

Fourthly, these exercises introduce you to the technique of condensing the Elements. This is a rudimentary part of true magic. Condensing the Elements into your own body is the first step in learning how to condense the Elements into external objects.

PHYSICAL

Step Four closes with a section on personal ritual. Here, the student must be creative and design rituals that are of intimate personal relevance. Of course, the abilities already learned and the personal morality of the magician play an integral part in just how effective any ritual may become.

A ritual, for the true magician, is a short-cut. All it does is

compress the hands-on labor into a short gesture. If the magician is not capable of performing the hands-on labor, then the ritual will be useless. Furthermore, the compression of the hands-on labor takes a good amount of labor itself. In other words, creating the short-cut takes repetition. At first, this is not a short-cut, but given time and effort, it becomes one.

A lot of fancy ceremonial is taught in many of the magical groups, lodges and schools, but to the well trained "Bardonian" magician these are relatively unproductive practices. Prewritten ceremony does have its place, but true magic is spontaneous. It must come from the heart of the magician and fit the demands of the moment. The true magician has no need for public display nor theatrics -- there may be times when these are appropriate, but the magician does not NEED them to effect their will. This is the lesson to be found here at the end of Step Four.

The magical rituals that you create for yourself, no matter how simplistic, will serve you far better than those you learn from someone else. Enjoy yourself, be inventive, and always work for the betterment of all!

Q&A--

1) *What is the point of creating these rituals?*

The path that Bardon lays out in IIH involves first learning the basic techniques of magic, followed by combining those techniques in ways that render them more useful. The idea here is that you must first gain the ability to do things the slow way, by hands-on, manual labor, and then learn to employ these techniques in a faster, less labor intensive manner. The creation of these simple finger rituals represents a faster way of doing the same thing that you can achieve through hands-on labor. It is a short step from mastery of these small rituals to the later work of creating beings that will carry out your will without your immediate attention. Throughout IIH you will see this pattern of taking simple things and making out of them more complex forms of magic.

Creating this sort of ritual takes lots of repetitive practice and this is the primary lesson to be learned through their mastery. Once you've gone through this process and mastered it, the creation of more complex rituals and learning the higher magical practices is made just that much easier.

2) *How does a finger ritual work?*

This is similar to the practice of managing intruding thoughts during the mental discipline exercises of Step One. By repeating the ideation process over and over, it becomes quicker and quicker, and eventually it reaches such a degree of rapidity that it becomes almost automatic. With the finger rituals, the employment of the Elements at first takes time and extra thought, but with steady repetition, the whole process becomes so rapid that all you have to do is move your fingers in the predetermined way and your will is immediately carried out.

Of course, these rituals are completely useless if you are not already capable of manipulating the Elements. They are only short-cuts to the performance of things that you can already accomplish through the slower, hands-on labor. In other words, a ritual will not give you more power to do things -- it will only speed up the accomplishment of your will.

The technique itself is very simple. If you condense the Elements into your fingers as outlined by Bardou, all you then have to do is touch the appropriate fingers together to release their Elements and thus accomplish your will. This requires that you predetermine how the Elements will interact and how they will be directed to carry out the desired effect. So, there is a combination here of four factors: the condensed Elements; the physical movement; the building of the ideation; and, the explosive release of the condensed Elements. In this way, you can very quickly fill your surroundings with an Element, or combination of Elements, and through their attributes, effect your will.

Just how effective your ritual will be depends upon your abilities. At first you will be able to only effect the mental sphere of your surroundings, but with practice your effectiveness will reach into the astral and eventually, into the physical sphere.

3) *How many rituals should I devise?*

Start with one ritual and when that has been mastered, expand your repertoire by one ritual at a time. Be sure to master each ritual before you initiate a new one. I recommend no more than four rituals total as this gives you the opportunity to devise a series of rituals that depend primarily upon each one of the four Elements, while avoiding the dispersal of power that too many rituals can incur. It is good to devise enough rituals to meet your needs, but unwise to devise an endless number of them.

STEP FIVE

MENTAL

Bardon begins his discussion of the depth point with a quote from Archimedes: "Show me a point in the universe [upon which to stand] and I shall lift the world out of its hinges!" Unfortunately, Bardon's explanation of what Archimedes was trying to say is not sufficient for the modern reader.

For the convenience of the uninitiated reader, Bardon speaks of the three standard physical dimensions and posits a fourth, non-physical dimension, but for the student of Hermetics (and for the modern physicist) this does not suffice. The Hermetic is conscious of the fact that there are more than just three dimensions to be contended with in the physical realm. Aside from length, width and height, there is another dimension that impacts physical matter directly, namely "duration". Each physical thing exists for a specific amount of time and this is important since at the level of the physical present moment, physical matter is not infinite. At any given moment within the space-time continuum, only a small part of the universe's physical infinity is expressed. In other words, the physical infinity of the universe exists in its entirety only outside of the realm of time, in the eternal realm. So, in the physical realm where the dimensions of length, width and height hold sway, the duration of a thing's physical form directly effects a thing's existence with the same magnitude as the standard three dimensions.

Bardon describes time as this fourth dimension but he does not state it as a physical dimension and therein lies the confusion, for the "point" that Archimedes refers to is not a physical dimension. Archimedes' point and Bardon's point are actually a fifth dimension, namely "meaning".

The dimension of meaning directly impacts the physical realm in that it is a thing's meaning (at the physical level, we see this in a thing's purpose) which determines the particular details of its appearance. But this is not a strictly physical dimension like the previous four. Meaning spans all of the dimensions of existence and impacts each in a similar manner.

In the physical realm, duration is the part of time that holds sway. In the astral realm, time becomes more than the limited duration of the physical realm as the whole duration of time opens to the astral eyes. And in the mental realm, time becomes eternity and

the mental eyes perceive the entire infinite duration of time as a unified whole. The differences sound subtle as I describe them but they are anything but. The significance of these three ways of viewing time are difficult to understand from within a time-space perspective.

The conception of the universe in Archimedes' time was that it is an infinite thing -- not only infinite in spatial terms, but also in terms of thoughts, ideas, emotions, meaning, and time. Similarly, Hermetic philosophy defines the three realms (mental, astral and physical) as each being of an infinite nature. The problem is that in order to perceive the infinity of the physical realm in particular, you must be able to change your perspective to that of a higher realm. In other words, you must shift your focus of attention from that of being centered in your physical body, to that of viewing the universe from within the heart of your astra-mental body. This removes you from the spatial restrictions of the present moment's duration and allows you to separate yourself from your intimate involvement in the physical present moment's life circumstances. This is the depth point perspective and from here, you can directly perceive a thing's meaning at an astra-mental level.

Another concept to consider in regard to the depth point is the unique nature of infinity. This is an important concept to the Hermetic which should be studied by every serious student.

One of the mysteries of an infinity is that any and every finite point that can be defined, exists at the exact center of the infinity. For example, where ever you stand within a truly infinite space, space will still stretch infinitely in every direction. In other words, infinity has no edges, per se -- it has only "center". Furthermore, this center point can be of any size and it will still be a finite center within the infinity.

Consciousness, being the root or Primordial principle, pervades the entire universe, at every level. At our level as human beings, we manifest this root consciousness most clearly as our individual awareness. Our individual consciousness is what ties us directly to the infinite consciousness of Being. We have, by virtue of this connection, the ability to place the finite center point of our awareness anywhere within the infinite universe and expand or contract it as we wish.

By pursuing the depth point, we free our center of awareness from the ties of the physical present moment and are then able to expand it and move it around.

The depth point is not a spatial coordinate. In other words, it

is not a physical place or thing. It is not, as some have erroneously assumed, the center of gravity of a physical form. These are meant only as analogies to enhance one's visualization and ideation during the process of reaching the depth point.

There are many ways of describing this depth point and the process of becoming aware of it. In one tradition that I am familiar with, the depth point is equated with Tiphareth (the kabbalistic sphere associated with Sol, the sun). In this system, the initiate is instructed to travel mentally to a temple of Tiphareth and once there, look down into a pool or a crystal sphere, and view their own life circumstances as if from above. This causes a certain disassociation from direct involvement in one's life circumstances and provides the initiate with a renewed, broadened perspective. The root feeling here is that one has made contact with one's own inner meaning and is viewing the physical expression of that meaning from one's own core. Pursued further, this perspective opens the initiate to viewing the entire passage of their existence (past lifetimes) up to that point in time.

From the depth point, the initiate can influence the physical manifestation of any thing from the inside out. Thus it is related to the previous Step's work of the transference of consciousness. Step Five expands upon the transference of consciousness and takes it to a new level. The work begins with the transferal of your consciousness into the depth point of other things and ends with the reaching of your own depth point.

But, if you work only from the perspective of placing your consciousness into the spatial center of a thing, you will not discover the true depth point. You must instead, reach for something deeper than a spatial coordinate.

Another mystery of an infinity is that a finite point within the infinity cannot encompass the infinity through expansion by finite increments. The only way to encompass an infinity is to become the infinity itself. This requires, at some finite point along the way, a quantum leap of expansion where the center becomes the whole all at once.

The depth point exercises are only one finite step along the way to encompassing the whole infinity. All they will do is make you a swimmer in the infinite stream of time. The final step is to become the stream itself, not a mere fish navigating its flow. But the depth point is the eye of the needle so to speak, through which you must travel in order to reach the ultimate expansion.

There are many levels or degrees of infinity. The infinity of

space-time is just the first which the Hermetic magician must needs conquer. When the human consciousness expands till its center encompasses the whole infinity of space-time, then this infinity becomes a "closed infinity" and the new perspective allows one to view other infinities directly. From this perspective, the entire infinity of time-space is perceived as a unified whole and the consciousness is free to focus on any part of that continuum at its own discretion.

The leverage that Archimedes spoke of is found within the depth point of every thing. This equates with the fourth, most complete type or stage of transference of consciousness I spoke of in the Step Four material.

In order to reach the depth point, the student must have mastered the emptiness of mind (from Step One) to a high degree. The student must be able to completely disentangle themselves from involvement with their physical senses as this is the key to reaching the depth point.

ASTRAL

The Step Five Schooling of the Soul exercises are similar to those found in previous Steps only now they concern the projection of the Elements. The techniques are exactly the same as those employed in learning to master the vital energy, so these particular exercises should present no problem to the student.

It may truly be impossible for the passive reader to understand what it feels like to accumulate, condense and project an Element. In the hands of the magician these Elements become very real, concrete things that can be condensed to such a degree that they become physically active. When Bardon speaks of condensing the Fire Element to such a degree that anyone can sense its heat, he's not exaggerating.

However, care must be taken in reading this section of IIIH since in many places Bardon informs the student of what is possible and then later says that what is possible is not necessarily advisable. The student of Hermetics strives for balance, especially in regard to their magical rise. Many of the possibilities that Bardon mentions can be achieved only after years of focused, one-sided practice and this often runs contrary to a balanced development.

So, if at the end of reading this section you are left with the impression that the student must master the Fire Element's

condensation to such a degree that he/she can actually measure an increase in temperature with a thermometer, then read it again. In point of fact, Bardón explicitly states that this and similar trickery are not a requirement of Step Five. The reason for this is that as the magician's abilities increase, higher forms of magic will enable the student to accomplish these sorts of things very quickly and without the years of effort it would take to master this ability otherwise.

In this and the following Steps, Bardón says that the projections (whether they be of an Element, Fluid, etc.) must be clearly perceived by the magician. They must be so condensed that the magician can actually feel them. Herein lies a problem for the passive reader in that the impression is given that anyone should be able to perceive the magician's projection (such as the heat of a room filled with the Fire Element). But the truth of the matter is that whether or not another person can, for example, feel the heat in a room that the magician has condensed the Fire Element into, is secondary. What is of most importance is whether or not the magician can feel these physical sensations themselves.

The degree of condensation of a projection is a function of the magician's own plastic imagination. By Step Five, the magician's creative imagination has been honed to such a high degree that the sensations accompanying their visualizations become real things, but the student should not concern themselves with whether or not their projections are felt by another at a physical level. The student has nothing to prove (magic is not a game of competition) and if this is held as a goal, it will interfere with the student's progress.

For the reader, it is important that you keep in mind what I have just said. In the chapters ahead, be sure to ask yourself whether Bardón means that it is the magician who must be able to sense a thing or whether another person must also be able to sense it. Most often, the magician's projection does not have to be so condensed that it is a physically sensible thing to an ordinary onlooker.

If we define "high magic" as being that which comes after the merging with a godform, then what is presented in Step Five would be considered somewhere between "low magic" and mid-range. At this stage, the condensation of a projection to such a degree that it becomes sensible to any person regardless of their magical ability, is a very difficult task. It is not impossible through these means, but it would require so many years of devoted practice that it would constitute a diversion from the main goal of a steady advancement.

PHYSICAL

The first three of the preparatory exercises listed here are interesting and their significance may not at first be apparent. The first exercise, which involves loading the hand with the vital energy and then causing it to move by will alone, is the most mysterious.

To explain its rationale and its importance will take some backtracking, so please bear with me. In the normal course of events, to move a specific muscle requires two things: energy and volition. For example, if you raise your arm, this requires the will to do so and the muscular energy to contract the necessary muscles. If either is not present, the arm will not rise. Within this context, we can define two types of muscular movement or contraction: voluntary and involuntary. An example of a voluntary contraction is when you consciously contract your biceps -- this requires a focus of your will upon a single muscle. An involuntary contraction occurs when for instance, you raise your arm and as a consequence your biceps contracts. Here, the contraction of your biceps is not directly willed but is a normal part of the primary will to raise your arm. More energy and will power are expended in the voluntary contraction of a muscle than in its involuntary contraction. The will to move a muscle comes from within your mind, but the energy required, comes from your body's own storehouse of physical energy.

In the first preparatory exercise, the body's own energy is substituted by the accumulated vital energy. Furthermore, the will power is not directed into the muscle itself but into the vital energy instead. The main function of this specific exercise is to teach the student the difference between the normal movement of a muscle (in this case the hand) and a movement accomplished by an external force. It also shows the student how to sever the connection between their own mind and their muscles, and still accomplish a movement.

The second exercise involves the accumulation of the Air Element and the effecting of movement by virtue of its weightlessness. This, of course, is a type of simple levitation caused by the Air Element. Again, the mind causes no actual movement of the muscles -- the movement is caused exclusively by the Air Element's weightlessness and the sensation is one of floating. This carries what was learned in the first preparatory exercise a step further and teaches the student how to sever even their will power from movement. In the first exercise, it was the will power, focused through the vital energy which caused movement via the muscles,

but in this exercise, it is the character of the Air Element itself (its weightlessness) which causes the movement. The only will power required in this exercise is that involved in accumulating the Air Element. Any contraction of the muscles is incidental and involuntary.

The third preparatory exercise involves the "exteriorization" of the hand. [Note: Bardon refers to the right hand, but if you are left-handed, then you should work with your left hand.] The term "exteriorization" means the conscious separation of your combined astral and mental (astra-mental) hand from its physical shell. This is the first step towards learning the technique of astra-mental wandering and here, it is applied to the passive communication with non-corporeal beings.

The exteriorization is not as simple a matter as it may sound to the passive reader. For the exteriorization to be complete, the astra-mental hand must feel exactly like the physical hand. For example, if you exteriorize your astra-mental hand and then lay it in your lap, you must be able to clearly feel the fabric of your clothing, the warmth of your own body, and the pressure of your hand resting on your lap. In other words, your astra-mental hand must be capable of all the same sensations as your physical hand was.

It is fairly easy to exteriorize only your mental hand, but to truly exteriorize your astra-mental hand is more difficult. So, to be sure that you have accomplished this astral exteriorization, you should use the aforementioned sensory standard.

When mastered fully, this astra-mental exteriorization completely severs your will from your physical hand. This is because it is your astra-mental hand that conveys your will to the muscles of your physical hand. The result is that your physical hand is now empty and is thus made available to the influence of an outside force.

Bardon states that a physical hand thus emptied of its astra-mental counterpart, is transferred to the Akasha. This is difficult for the passive reader to understand unless this is connected up with the Step Five mental/spirit exercises concerning the depth point. Perhaps a better way of stating it is to say that a physical hand, emptied of its astra-mental counterpart, is noticeable in the Akasha as a properly prepared environment through which a being can communicate with the physical realm directly, through the Akasha. [This is an example of why it is so important in the process of astra-mental wandering for the practitioner to establish some sort of protection or shielding for the vacated physical body.]

The depth point plays a big role in the passive communication practice. The practice consists of three phases. First is the preparation of the material devices such as the pendulum, planchette, or pen and paper; and, the preparation of the hand through exteriorization.

The second phase is the reaching of the student's own depth point. This places the student's mental body in the Akasha.

The third phase is the calling forth, from the Akasha, of the being you wish to communicate with. This calling forth occurs completely in the Akasha and you utter nothing with your physical voice. The being is then invited to use your physical hand for their communication.

Once the being has made its contact with your physical hand, you must open your eyes (while retaining your trance state) and proceed with your communication, asking questions of your chosen being and noting their answers. When the session is complete, you must, of course, re-integrate your astra-mental hand and remove yourself from your trance state.

Bardon counsels the student to focus mainly upon establishing communication with their own guardian genius or angel. Much has been said in the occult literature about the nature of this being, so I will not repeat it here. There are also many other methods of establishing communication with one's Guardian Angel. What Bardon presents here is a passive or indirect method which relies upon an intermediary such as a pendulum, planchette, etc. As Bardon relates, the point of this passive communication is to lead the student into a more direct form of communication.

A good supplement to learning the passive communication technique is to practice a simple direct communication. Let me explain: We each have access to the guidance of our Guardian Angel in each moment of our lives, through the little interior voice of our conscience. By practicing the attentive listening to your conscience, this communication becomes stronger -- especially if you adhere to the counsel of your conscience and follow its every dictate. Eventually, the inner conversation with your Guardian Angel can become two-way, where you ask questions and receive answers directly. Both this method and Bardon's method lead to the same place but Bardon's method teaches the student several important things that the method of listening to your conscience cannot. Listening to your conscience does not require exteriorization and mastery of this technique is a prerequisite for the work of future Steps. Furthermore, listening to your conscience is not a technique

that is effective in the communication with beings other than your own Guardian Angel.

Bardon speaks of the different ways in which the communications from a non-corporeal being may be perceived by the practitioner. Some will sense foreign thoughts in their own mind, some will see pictures or hear words, etc. Some may even establish a direct communication with their Guardian Angel on the first attempt at the passive communication, so it is vital that the student not limit their experience by holding too tightly onto their expectations.

STEP SIX

MENTAL

These exercises should remind you of the Step One and Two astral exercises of introspection and self-analysis, combined with the Step Two and Three mental exercises with the single- and multiple-sense concentration. In point of fact, the mental exercises of Step Six replicate this work at a higher level.

What Bardon describes of the meditations upon one's own spirit or mental body is, in practice, no where near as simple as it may sound in print. Little more can be said about these meditations beyond what Bardon has written since we are each so different and unique. It is up to the student alone to penetrate to the true significance of this initial exercise.

The exercises which follow, regarding the accustoming of yourself to the three-part (mental, astral and physical, simultaneously) action, are straight forward in their nature and should pose no problem for the student who has progressed this far.

As with all of the previous exercises, these concerning the spirit or mental body, are essential to further progress. They are rudimentary to future work with ceremonial ritual, astral and mental wandering, evocation, kabbalah, and many, many other forms of magic.

Learning the three-part action changes the seat of your awareness and actively connects your three bodies. At a deeper level, these exercises relate to a subject I've raised before, vis a vis, the mechanisms of human perception. I hope the importance of this subject is now obvious to the reader.

As I said, these exercises are not as easy as they may sound and Bardon's warnings about feeling disoriented are sincere. The three part action requires a very different degree of self-awareness and this takes some getting used to.

ASTRAL

Mastery of the Akasha is no easy matter. [Actually one does not "master" the Akasha, but one can master the techniques for working with the Akasha.] To begin with, you must first have attained to a very high degree of control over the Elements themselves. The Akasha will not allow you to do anything you are

not already able to do by means of manipulating the Elements directly.

Furthermore, and of special significance here, the quality of your character, as reflected by the ethics you adhere to, will directly determine your success with the Akasha. The Akasha will not allow you to create effects within it if you do not possess a noble character. That is the plain and simple, completely undeniable, truth.

As Bardon explains the exercises with the Akasha, he states that you must "imagine that you are in an infinite space where you are at the center." I want you to think back to what was said regarding Archimedes' fulcrum and the "depth point" concentration. From this, you will see that Bardon means that you must begin this exercise by transferring your consciousness into the depth point of your own body.

You are then instructed to inhale the Akasha into your body using the same technique you've used for inhaling the vital energy, etc. As Bardon points out, the Akasha cannot be accumulated by virtue of its essential nature. What he doesn't say is that this is not actually an exercise where you take in the Akasha; rather, it is about placing yourself fully INTO the Akasha. This is accomplished in two phases. The first phase is the transferal of your consciousness into your depth point (i.e., where 'you' intersect with the Akasha). The second phase is one of merging your center of awareness with the infinite, non-centralized Akasha. Bardon accomplishes this through the inhalation of the Akasha (through its color and its feeling) until the internal Akasha matches the external Akasha. This is not an accumulation, per se -- it is a merging.

Bardon states, and quite truthfully, that you will be able to manifest any desire from within the Akasha. What he doesn't mention, and assumes you will realize, is that when you reach this stage of development, what you desire will look very differently than it does now. You will have no petty desires, and even if you did, you would not be able to manifest them through the Akasha. Please take heed of this if you are tempted to work with the Akasha before you are truly prepared, for you would only be wasting your time and you can easily cause yourself some pretty nasty karmic consequences. Remember, the fact that the Akasha is the realm of cause and effect is what gives it its power over the Elements -- and, it is also what makes it so dangerous for the unprepared dabbler.

PHYSICAL

With the sixth Step, Bardon leaves off on listing exercises that pertain directly to the physical body, although what he describes can be said to be physical in nature. Beginning with this Step, the physical schooling sections will be devoted to certain magical practices.

In Step Six, Bardon explains the magical creation of Elementals (not to be confused with Elementaries) and makes the student aware of other similar creatures, such as larvae, schemata and phantoms. The reader may find Bardon's analysis surprising, for it certainly does not seem like what others have written on this subject in the past. Bardon, in his usual manner, penetrates to the heart of the matter from an Hermetic perspective.

In order to create a truly effective Elemental, the student must possess a very high proficiency with plastic imagination. It is also necessary that the student have mastered the depth point exercises since it is from within the Akasha that an Elemental is formed and sent off to the appropriate realm.

The creation technique that Bardon describes concerns a very simple Elemental that will be effective upon the mental sphere. From there, its effect may reach down into the astral and later into the physical realm, if this is the desire of its creator, but its primary focus will be upon the mental realm itself. This sort of Elemental is the best place to start. Once success has been achieved with this simple method, then you will be better able to create more complex creatures.

Bardon provides several rules that must be adhered to in the creation of an Elemental -- the shape and color, the name, the purpose or task to be accomplished, and the duration of its effectiveness. Another important rule to follow is that you must completely disassociate your mind from involvement with the Elemental once it has been created. You must be able to release it and turn your mind firmly to other matters. If you do not, the Elemental will remain attached to your own sphere and not become fully effective (if at all) within the realm you wish to send it to. You may, periodically, recall your creation to your presence and recharge it, but you must again release it completely so that it may go about its business without your meddling. This may seem an easy matter to the passive reader but it actually requires great mental discipline to release something you have created.

Again, your moral development is at issue here. Take care that you don't create something to meet petty needs for it will most likely turn and bite you in the butt.

STEP SEVEN

MENTAL

The mental schooling of this entire Step is devoted to the establishment of the mental Equilibrium of the Elements. In Steps One and Two, the work was with the astral Equilibrium of the Elements as regards the personality. The mental Equilibrium is a somewhat different matter. The mental Equilibrium is not expressed in as concrete a way and is not something that can be itemized like the personality traits. The analysis itself is a major task, but the rectification of any imbalance is based upon methods the student will have already learned. Bardón's instructions in this regard will suffice for the student who has done the work of Steps One through Six. As always, this work demands inventiveness and a deep insight into one's own self.

The mental Equilibrium has a direct effect upon the astral personality. The student may find it necessary to once again pass through the work of the soul mirrors and bring them up-to-date in relation to the improved mental Equilibrium.

Attainment of the mental Equilibrium roughly equates with the basic mind-set of a seventh degree initiate in many of the popular Golden Dawn-type systems. This is the grade of Adeptus Exemptus (exempt adept, 7=4) and without this fully integrated Equilibrium of the three bodies, there can be no rise to the next level of Magister Templi (temple master, 8=3).

ASTRAL

The seventh Step astral exercises serve the special cause of developing the student's astral senses, namely clairvoyance, clairaudience and clairsentience. As Bardón points out, this may not be necessary for every student who has reached this level. Many students will find that they already have a natural ability with the astral sensoria and others may have developed their senses to a sufficient degree as a consequence of the Step One through Six work. Still others, who have done the preceding work, will find that they have little or no ability with the astral senses, and it is specifically this type of student for whom the seventh Step exercises are designed.

We each, by course of nature, possess the astral senses and use

them continuously throughout our daily lives. Where we differ is in the degree to which our use of these senses is conscious. For most humans, our astral perceptions only reach our subconscious mind, but for those who are considered gifted, our astral perceptions reach our conscious mind and directly impact our actions, thoughts and emotions.

The reasons for this difference between individuals varies greatly. It can be due to the work we accomplished in past incarnations, or it can be due to mere happenstance (e.g., a severe accident or other traumatic incident), or even something so simple as our basic Elemental composition. The main barrier however, is the fact that our western cultures generally teach us to ignore and undervalue our more subtle perceptions.

Clairvoyance, clairaudience and clairsentience can all be learned. But despite what the passive reader may think, the techniques that Bardou presents in Step Seven will not work for someone who has not passed through the previous Steps. For these techniques to be anything more than a waste of time, the student must already possess the Elemental Equilibrium and must have gained the full awareness of their three bodies. Again, this is a point where intimate knowledge of the mechanisms of human perception proves invaluable. In short, the astral techniques of Step Seven are 'magical' techniques and require a magician for them to be at all helpful.

The astral senses are difficult to describe. They are more than their physical corollaries. For example, the astral corollary of sight, clairvoyance, is essentially visual yet it provides the clairvoyant more than just visual information. When the clairvoyant observes a thing with their astral sight, certain information about the thing is revealed at an almost intuitive level. The clairvoyant will perceive the thing's essential nature along with its current motivation or 'raison d'etre'. Ultimately, this normally passive sense can lead to an active form of two-way communication.

Similar things can be said of the other astral senses. For example, the clairaudient individual will be able to perceive the meaning of sounds and the clairsentient person will be able to perceive the meaning and the entire past of a thing that is touched.

The astral senses are what enables the magician to perceive the astral realm. This is an essential attribute for the magician who engages in astral wandering, for without the astral senses, the astral wanderer would walk deaf, dumb and blind. This is also an imperative faculty for the magician who wishes to practice

evocation, for without it, the evoker has no way of truly seeing the inner nature of what they have evoked.

It is hard to conceive just how radically the blossoming of the astral sensoria can effect the initiate's life. At every level, the amount of information that the initiate will be able to perceive in any given moment will be multiplied a thousandfold. But along with developing the astral senses the student must learn to control them. It is not convenient for the magician to always have their astral senses active -- sometimes ignorance IS bliss! There are many who suffer mental and emotional pain because they cannot shut off their more subtle perceptions. Thus the student of magic should do their best to avoid this pitfall by learning to develop AND control their astral sensoria.

The exercises of this section are straight forward and well described by Bardon. One must however, pay close attention to the details for success to ensue.

PHYSICAL

In the sixth Step, Bardon teaches how to create an Elemental. An Elemental is composed of light or pure energy, impregnated with an idea, given a form, a name and a specific term of life. An Elementary, the topic of Step Seven's physical schooling, is different in that it is composed of one or more of the four Elements. An Elemental's realm of influence is primarily mental, but an Elementary can be created to immediately effect any realm or combination of realms that the magician desires. Of course, the degree of its effectiveness depends upon the capabilities of the magician.

An Elementary has life, whereas an Elemental has only purpose. The life of the Elementary however, comes from the magician's own life breath. Thus the relationship between the Elementary and the magician who creates it, is similar to that of parent and child. Furthermore, a magician is karmically responsible for all of the actions of their Elementaries. Needless to say, great care must be taken in the creation of an Elementary.

In order to be able to create a genuine Elementary, the magician must have complete mastery over the Elements, for an Elementary is created through the projection and condensation of the Elements. The magician must follow the pattern of life and create three bodies for the Elementary -- a physical form or body, an astral

body and a mental body -- and, s/he must bind these bodies together.

In most cases, the physical form of the Elementary stays with the magician and only the astra-mental form is sent out to accomplish the Elementary's task. The realm to which it is cast depends entirely upon the task it is to perform and upon the will of the magician. All of the details are up to the magician for this is a true act of creation. Even so, certain rules have to be followed and since these are so well explained by Bardou, I have nothing to add to them.

An Elementary should be treated with a firm will, with love, respect and kindness. It should always be empowered with only a good purpose to fulfill. If you find that you are frustrated by your Elementary's inability to accomplish its assigned task within the time you have specified or in the manner you have specified, then back off. This is never the fault of the Elementary itself. It is due entirely to an insufficiency in your charging of it, or in your accumulation of the Elements, or in your impregnation of it with your ideation, etc. Or, it could be that its task is not allowed by Divine Providence. Whatever the reason, you can either make modifications (i.e., provide it a greater density of the Elements or refine its root ideation, etc.) that will make it more effective, or you can dissolve it and start over.

The termination of an Elementary takes nearly as much care as its creation. The process mimics exactly that of normal human death. Remember that an Elementary is connected to its creator in very real ways, so if the dissolution is too abrupt great harm can come to the magician's own self. In the rare case where an immediate, violent dissolution is necessary certain precautions must be taken so as to avoid personal injury.

The magician is free to create as many or as few Elementaries as he or she desires. But the passive reader would do well to consider the logistics of managing too large a brood! Unlike an Elemental which can form itself subconsciously, the creation of an Elementary is a conscious process and requires the magician's periodic attention once it has been released. A magician can draw an endless supply of Elementals to him or her self without having to pay them constant attention, but to create an endless supply of Elementaries is an entirely different matter.

The only truly practical way to achieve this sort of result is through still higher forms of magic. Thus the legends of magicians who possessed hundreds of Elementaries can indicate one of two things: Either -- 1) the legend confuses Elementals with

Elementaries and really indicates a magician who has figured out how to draw Elementals into their sphere -- or -- 2) the legend indicates a magician of very advanced capabilities who is able manifest as many Elementaries as desired by means of higher magical techniques than those described here.

The possibilities are endless when it comes to what a magician can accomplish through an Elementary. The creative practice itself will enhance the magician's inventiveness to unimagined heights. This work will also test the magician's ethical maturity and may likely purify the initiate through a trial by fire. It is hard for me to describe to you how deeply this touches the initiate -- it is MEANT to squeeze out the last shred of ethical imbalance and if it does not, then no further advancement is possible. The subtlety of these tests is incomprehensible to one who has not come to this stage of the work and the specific tests themselves are different for each individual.

I would like to project ahead to Step Ten for a moment in order to explain the significance of the purifying tests that go hand in hand with Elementary creation. In Step Ten, Bardou speaks about the communion with one's own personal god (one of the goals of IHH). Imagine if you will, the significance of this. Pretend, for the moment, that you actually are your highest idea of deity. Consider the infinite number of options at your disposal and think also of the infinite number of consequences, many of them quite terrible, that each of those options will manifest.

Now return to your normal sense of self and feel how overwhelming just that little glimpse was. The truth of the matter is that the reality is infinitely more. Imagine now, from your normal state, what it would be like to have your conscious awareness permeate every one of that infinite number of options and their possible consequences, simultaneously and fully. Imagine that absolutely every thing that is, was, or will be, is encompassed within your own being. Imagine that amount of responsibility and you will have some glimpse of why the magician must first pass through these sorts of tests in order that they may be able to reach so high a magical practice as communion with deity.

STEP EIGHT

MENTAL

We each are familiar with a simple form of mental wandering which we know as daydreaming. In a daydream we can project our imagination any where and any when. But there are many differences between a daydream and what Bardou describes here as mental projection, travel or wandering. The main difference is that in a daydream our projection is entirely imaginary and has little direct connection to actual events, whereas in mental wandering, we learn to observe actual events and places. In a daydream, we explore only our own inner mental landscape of desires, but through mental wandering we are able to explore the external universe.

Contrary to what the passive reader might assume, the magician does not simply exteriorize their mental body and right off the bat begin receiving accurate perceptions of their surroundings. It actually takes long and arduous practice to make the transition from the daydream-like imagination in which everything perceived is one's own creation, to the actual perception of what is real. There is no trick to making this transition other than repeated practice. For some, the training of previous Steps, combined with a native ability, may make this transition an easy matter, but for many students, this will take a great amount of effort and time.

The first exercise of this section involves sitting in front of a mirror and transferring your consciousness into the reflected image of your body. Some have assumed that this practice has something to do with a magical land that lies within a mirror's reflection but this is mere superstition and the student of magic will immediately see that this is not the case here. The point of this exercises is simply to accustom the student to the transferal of their mental body into their own image and the perception of their surroundings from that perspective. This is only introductory.

For the actual work of mental wandering, the student does not rely upon the transferal into a mirror image. Instead, the student transfers their awareness into their own mental body itself. Here you will see the importance of the Step Six work of becoming conscious of your own mental body. To begin the mental wandering, the student must sense their mental body with full consciousness and then step with it, out of the astra-physical shell or body. This is very different than a mere transferal of consciousness.

Bardon cautions the student against giving in to the feeling of freedom that is immediately felt once the exteriorization has been achieved and it is wise to heed this warning. This is important as it teaches the student control. The recommended approach is one of incremental steps.

At first the student is to stand very close to their physical body and observe the details of its appearance. Then the student looks around at their surroundings. Only when the surroundings are clearly and accurately perceived is it wise to venture further. This is followed by walking into the next room or a short distance from the physical body.

At each stage, the student must learn to clearly and accurately perceive the details of their surroundings. To verify the reliability of their mental perceptions, the student must examine the same area when in their physical form and check to see if what they perceive with their physical eyes matches what they perceived with their mental vision. Again, you will see the importance of past work, specifically that of developing the subtle senses in the previous Step.

An important factor in the alignment of your mental vision with that of your physical eyes are the meditations that Bardon explains. At the beginning of each mental wandering exercise, the student is instructed to meditate upon the ability of the mental body to perceive the external universe with accuracy. The student must be assured, at a very deep level, that this is so. This is reminiscent of the Step Six exercises concerning the action of the spirit but here it is taken to a new degree since the mental body is now separate from the astral and physical forms. Here, the student must learn how to look through the mental eyes alone and not through the astral and physical eyes as before. This difference may seem subtle to the passive reader but it is very significant in the actual practice.

When the student has reached the stage where their mental perceptions reliably match the physical reality of their immediate surroundings, then s/he may venture further. At a certain point (distance of travel), the student will no longer be able to travel physically to the same location and verify with their physical senses whether or not their mental perceptions match the physical reality. Thus it becomes necessary to test the accuracy of their mental perceptions by trying to alter what they see by imagining it differently. If the imagination alters what is perceived then the student will know that their mental perceptions do not match the physical reality. With repeated practice the student will eventually reach the state where their mental perceptions are accurate and

reliable, and they will no longer be able to effect their surroundings with their imagination alone. This is the crux of the matter when it come to genuine mental wandering -- it is very easy to project what you want or expect to perceive and fool yourself that this is indeed real when it is in fact not. It is also easy to convince yourself that you are unable to change things with your imagination and thus short circuit your ability to test your perceptions. This is especially pernicious and should stand as a warning that the previous Steps must first have been completed since the preparatory work is what provides the magician the ability to know when this subtle sort of self-delusion is happening.

When the student reaches, after long practice, the stage where their mental perceptions are accurate regardless of the distance traveled, then and only then, is it time to venture into other realms. To where and to when the mental wanderer may travel is limitless and dependent entirely upon the maturity of the initiate. The mental wanderer may also be able to cause magical effects upon their surroundings, from within their mental body, by following the practices learned in previous Steps.

I have said in the past that there is a way to tell the difference between a mental journey and an astral journey. The main difference is in the nature of the sensations that the wanderer can perceive while separated. When one wanders with the astra-mental form (astral wandering), the sensations will be very similar in quality and quantity to those experienced by the physical body. But when wandering in the mental body alone, the perception of sensations will be of a lesser quality. But I must warn you that the mental body is capable, through the plastic imagination, to amplify the lesser mental sensations to such a degree as to be almost like those of astral wandering. Nonetheless, there is a distinct difference. The true astral sensations invoke a near physical feeling of ecstasy.

Mental wandering is the magician's most amenable tool when it comes to exploration of the external universe. With the mental body, the initiate is capable of traveling to any 'where', any 'when' and any 'why'. This is not the case with astral wandering where the magician is limited to exploration of the astral and physical realms -- the astral body is simply not fine enough to penetrate the mental realm itself. The advantage of astral wandering is that the magician can cause magical effects from the astral realm immediately, whereas with mental wandering it takes greater effort to cause an effect to manifest upon the astral and physical levels. At times, it is advantageous to be able to manifest an astral density in order to

communicate directly with astral beings, etc. But for most purposes, mental wandering will suffice and with extended practice, mental wandering can net the magician the same effectiveness as astral wandering.

The main point of mental wandering is to familiarize yourself with the universe. This is especially important as a preparation for still higher work, specifically that of merging with deity (which by its nature is omnipresent). A part of the preparation for the actual experience of omnipresence involves getting the feel of the infinite nature of the universe through a thorough exploration. Furthermore, without the ability to wander mentally, the art of evocation is an impossibility for the student.

For the magician who has completed the eighth Step, the universe is an open book.

ASTRAL

This section begins with a few words about the magician's character and achievement. This is a very important matter and what Bardon says should be considered deeply by the aspiring student before proceeding any further.

Bardon speaks about the Akasha preventing the unprepared from further progress and about it "protecting" the Mysteries from those who would abuse them. I would like to clarify this a bit for the passive reader.

These functions of the Akasha are very real but they are not of the nature of a parental or demagogic intent per se. They are simply laws of Nature. In other words, this aspect of the Akasha is not meant as a punishment for those who would step beyond their true capabilities. There is not genuine, conscious intent here such as we would think of it in human emotional terms. The Akasha acts, in this regard, without bias -- this is just the way the universe is structured. It is not so much that the Akasha consciously prevents the rise of the unprepared student; rather, these requirements that Bardon speaks of are, by their very nature, what opens the Akasha and allows for a deeper penetration into the Mysteries. This is a difficult concept to describe and I can only hope that my words have clarified the matter for you to some minor extent.

The actual exercises of this section concern the manipulation of the Electric and Magnetic Fluids. Bardon describes two methods for accumulating the Fluids -- the inductive and the deductive.

By inductive, Bardon means from the outside in. In other words, the corresponding Element is visualized as surrounding the student and the Fluid is drawn from the external Element and accumulated within the interior of the student's body.

By deductive, Bardon indicates a reverse process. The student accumulates the corresponding Element, in the normal manner, within their own body to such a degree that the Fluid itself accumulates on the surface of their body.

Both of these methods serve different purposes as outlined by Bardon. The primary purpose of the inductive and deductive exercises however, is to prepare the magician for the regional accumulation that follows. Here the student accumulates the Magnetic Fluid in the lower region of the body (that of Water and Earth) and the Electric Fluid in the upper region (that of Fire and Air). This is similar to the accumulation of the Elements into the four regions explained in Step Four. Once this is mastered, the student extends the exercise and directs the Fluids from these regions into the left (Magnetic) and right (Electric) sides of their body, and eventually, condenses this accumulation into their right and left hands accordingly.

After extended practice of these very complex and difficult exercises, the student becomes a master of the Fluids and can at any moment charge either hand (or both) with their appropriate Fluid. This allows the magician to do many things in a blink of an eye that would otherwise have taken more time and effort to accomplish through the manipulation of the Elements.

There are two important things for the passive reader to understand here. First is that the Fluids are the essence of the Elements and thus, the magician can accomplish things more quickly and effectively through the use of the Fluids than through the labor of the Elements. The second thing has to do with the nature of the student's ascent from 'lower' magic to 'higher' magic. What differentiates 'higher' from 'lower' magic is the degree to which the student masters the essential nature of the forces employed. Here, the hands-on labor of the Elements is considered 'lower' because the magician is not working with the deeper essence of the Elements but with their outer form. The work with the Fluids however, is considered 'higher' because the magician wields the true essence of the Elements. There are still higher forms of magic than the mastery of the Fluids. An example is that of communion or merging with deity, for deity is the essence of even the Fluids.

PHYSICAL

Here again, the exercises listed have nothing to do with the magical schooling of the physical body. What Bardon presents in this Step are various techniques that the student can employ for their own purposes. The student of Alchemy (the physical application of Hermetics) will find these techniques of great interest.

There is little that I can add to what Bardon relays in this section other than to comment upon his recommended use of gold in the Fluid condensers. Many will think that this presents a large expense, but this is not the case. I purchased a simple homeopathic preparation of gold chloride several years ago (a little goes a long way) for just a few dollars. This homeopathic preparation is very effective and I recommend it highly. Contrary to what one might think, there is enough gold in a gold chloride solution for use in a fluid condenser.

[NOTE: In the introduction to both PME and KTQ, Bardon states that the student must have completed Step Eight of IIIH before beginning the work of magical evocation and/or kabbalah. Please consider for a moment the degree of training and magical maturity of one who has genuinely made it to this stage. Such a one will possess an absolute magical equilibrium, be capable of the three-part action, be able to journey with their mental body with ease, and have absolute control over the Elements and Fluids. All these attributes are essential for success with evocation and kabbalistic speech. Anyone who dares to begin work with PME and KTQ before reaching this stage risks great harm to their mental, emotional and physical well being.]

STEP NINE

MENTAL

In the introduction to this section of Step Nine, Bardón speaks of the many common methods for developing the subtle senses. I should hope that this will explain to the passive reader why many well trained magicians have so little respect for the seemingly endless number of new-age books written about clairvoyance, etc. These practices are truly harmful to the untrained practitioner. Unfortunately it may be years after following these practices that negative symptoms show themselves and many who suffer will not equate their illnesses with their past pursuit of these exercises.

Another important factor, from a magical perspective, is that the results of these practices are uncontrollable by the practitioner. Especially when it comes to the ingestion of hallucinatory substances. While these may reveal a broader perspective upon the universe to the practitioner, they do not allow one to control the "trip" nor do they allow one to determine the length of the "trip". Both of these factors would be abhorrent to the well trained magician.

The exercises of the magical schooling of the spirit in Step Nine concern the proper use of the magic mirror. This is a very handy tool for the magician and is essential for the work of PME.

While Bardón's instructions are explicit concerning the proper use of the magical mirror, a certain aspect of the practice may be unclear to the passive reader. This concerns the fact that when projecting into the mirror, it is with the mental body alone that the magician travels. The magician may explore the astral realm with the mental body in this manner, but when journeying with the astral body into the astral realm, the magic mirror is not employed.

ASTRAL

With the ninth Step astral exercises, the student begins the work of true astral wandering, commonly known as astral journeys or out-of-body-experiences. Bardón's explanations are very explicit and should, of course, be followed to the letter. But considering the large number of books written upon the subject since IHH was first published, I feel it necessary to add a few words of caution and clarification for the passive reader.

To begin with, I'd like to discuss Bardón's technique. He recommends that the student first separate their mental body and then draw forth their astral body. This is wise considering the course that Bardón has established, but it is not altogether necessary. It is just as easy to rise out of the physical body with the astral and mental bodies conjoined. This eliminates the step of merging the exteriorized astral and mental bodies, but may, at the same time, present difficulties at first.

The second thing to note are Bardón's concerns about the cessation of breath and heart beat that occur with his method. Part of what he says about the dangers this presents in terms of being touched by another person (or animal) during separation, are phrased for the purpose of dissuading the uninitiated from pursuing astral separation. But, and here's an important point, it is possible for the well trained magician to maintain the physical breath and heartbeat if desired and thus minimize the danger.

The rationale behind this is that during an astral separation, the silver cord (astral matrix) which connects the astra-mental body with the physical shell, remains intact. The well trained magician is able to keep this connection active enough to sustain the physical breath and heartbeat. All that is transferred to the astra-mental body is the responsibility for the impulse to breathe, not the physical breath and heartbeat itself. To accomplish this, the magician must split their conscious awareness to a certain degree and leave part of it behind to maintain the normal physical functions. When done properly, this does not diminish the depth of the astral experience. One key to this is the joint separation of the astral and mental bodies.

Other than that, the only thing I can add to Bardón's instructions is that it is necessary to afford some degree of protection to the vacant physical shell once you have separated your astra-mental body from it. Please think back to the Step Five exercises concerning passive communication. Therein, the task was to vacate a hand which placed it within the Akasha, so to speak, and made it available to the possession of other entities. The same holds true for the entire body when you vacate it. This means that it becomes susceptible to occupation by another, non-corporeal entity and this should be guarded against. The simplest way to do this is to erect an energetic shield around your physical body that is impressed with the ideation that it will prevent any other being from taking control.

Now, I will move on to other matters that have nothing to do with the instructions provided by Bardón.

It is important that the passive reader understand the dangers

of astral separation, especially in light of what has been written by others upon this subject. Many writers assert that astral journeying is a simple matter and can be accomplished by anyone who makes the sincere effort. The magician however, will be well aware that this is not the case. Much of what is labeled as astral journeying is nothing more than a type mental journeying. I have spoken already about the differences between a mental journey and an astral journey so I will not repeat myself here.

The greatest danger is the fact that a true astral separation is, as Bardon states, an ecstatic experience. It is stimulating at a near-physical level and this can be a very addictive undertaking since it so extremely pleasurable. But this is a merely physical sensation, not a spiritual ecstasy. The well trained magician is capable of handling physically pleasing sensations in such a manner as to not allow them to distract from their ultimate goal. This however, is not the case with an untrained practitioner and the danger of distraction is very potent. Many have fallen into this pit of pleasure and belayed their progress. Now I do not mean to belittle physical pleasure as I consider this one of the advantages of a corporeal existence, but it is not the goal of the magician. It requires of the magician a very strong will to avoid this pitfall.

The ability to control one's reactions to any given situation is of prime importance to the magician, especially when it comes to interaction with the astral realm. Astral beings can easily manipulate the emotions and perceptions of the magician who does not possess a high degree of self-control. It is very easy to become self-deluded while within the astral realm, so it is imperative that the traveler be able to distinguish between their own desires and expectations and the objective reality. This is one reason why astral wandering is placed so late in IIIH.

The astral traveler who has not previously developed their astral senses to a high degree of reliability will find themselves deaf, dumb and blind once they separate from their physical form.

Astral travel serves a limited function when compared to mental travel. In the solitary mental body, the magician can reach into nearly every realm, but with the astra-mental body, only the astral and physical realms can be reached and explored. The one advantage is that while in the astra-mental form, the magician can interact directly with astral entities. When in the solitary mental body however, some astral entities will not be able to perceive the mental body of the traveler. Also, the magician can more readily cause effects upon the astral realm directly from within the astra-

mental body. It is also easier for the magician to condense their astra-mental form to such a degree that it becomes physically apparent to other physical beings, than it is to do the same with the solitary mental body.

As a final note, it should be said that there is a big difference between astral wandering and lucid dreaming. Many maintain that lucid dreaming is a form of astral wandering but this is not the case. Granted, lucid dreaming involves the astral body, but the difference is that in lucid dreaming all one can explore is one's own inner psyche -- there is no journeying beyond this realm into the broader astral realm itself. The dream state is a specific state that is very personal in its focus. It can lead to genuine astral wandering, but when it does, one is no longer in the dream state itself.

The Step Nine astral exercises end with a section describing a series of meditations that must be undertaken concerning the nature of deity. This is very, very, very important work and is an absolute necessity before beginning the work of Step Ten and the merging with one's personal deity. Bardón, of course, specifies four basic attributes of deity corresponding to the four Elements. Each of these aspects must be understood from the inside out, as it were. Please note that when Bardón speaks of "God", he is not referring to the lesser gods of which there are an uncountable number, but to the Unitary, highest form of deity imaginable.

PHYSICAL

Here again, these are not specifically "schooling" exercises but more in the line of suggestions for practice.

Bardón begins with the subject of healing. It should be clear that this is not the sort of healing that is learned from the study of books on treatment modalities and human physiology. The magician who has progressed to Step Nine will have the ability to perceive the cause and the ramifications of any disease with their own subtle senses and there will be no doubt in the mind of such a healer as to how to best effect a cure. As to the occult anatomy of the human body that Bardón speaks of, this too will be evident to the eyes of the initiate who has progressed to this Step and they will have no need of a listing of what organ is composed of which Fluid, etc.

Every healer is limited, by the will of Divine Providence, as to the scope of what they may cure. Seldom will the magician be allowed to extinguish a disease that is essential to the karmic

fulfillment of another individual. This factor will also be evident to the eyes of the magician who has reached this level of development. Karmic debt is the responsibility of each individual and it is only through the will of Divine Providence that the Step Nine magician is allowed to interfere in this regard.

The section on healing methods is followed by a discussion of various techniques for the loading of objects such as talismans, crystals, etc. There are a nearly infinite number of methods to achieve such a loading and Bardou introduces a few of them merely to spur the initiate's creativity.

Step Nine closes with a discussion of magical "volting". This is a very advanced technique and a truly effective one. Needless to say, only the magician of a very high ethical maturity will be allowed to enact their will by these means.

STEP TEN

MENTAL

This, of course, is the final Step of IIIH. Reading it may give the impression that it is just like any other Step, but this is far from the case. The completion of this Step, above all the other Steps, is in the hands of Divine Providence. It may take lifetimes for an initiate to complete this Step or it may take only the blink of an eye, or anywhere in between. There is no way to predict what course the initiate might face in this part of their journey, as this depends entirely upon the particular maturity and accumulated karma of the individual.

But just because the realization of a thing may be beyond our ultimate control, doesn't mean that we cannot succeed if we try. In fact, the only way to succeed in this case IS to try. The initiate who patiently persists will, without a doubt, eventually reach their goal. There must be a fearless caution and a willingness to see it through to its ultimate end, regardless of what may come along to test the initiate. Knock and you shall be answered, to paraphrase an ancient bit of wisdom.

At this stage in the magician's advancement, the responsibility for seeing to it that their process of initiation continues forward, is in the hands of the magician alone. No corporeal being will be able to assist the magician through this stage. Even the initiate's own Holy Guardian Angel is limited in what it can do to aid the magician in this regard. By knocking, the magician may get an answer, but it is up to the initiate to open the door and enter.

In western kabbalistic terms, the work of Step Ten corresponds to the final approach to the Abyss -- which lies between Chesed and Binah (the Jupiter and Saturn planes) -- culminating in a successful crossing of the Abyss (i.e., the reaching of Binah/Saturn which confers Unity). The Abyss marks the barrier between the kabbalistic "worlds" of Yetzirah and Briah, of the sequentialized realm and the non-sequential realm (also known as "chaos"). In spite of the symbolism used in my description, this Abyss is not a spatial thing -- it is composed entirely of MEANING. The crossing of this Abyss completely, and forever, transforms the consciousness of the initiate, for from the "other side" of the Abyss, the initiate perceives eternity.

The work of this section of Step Ten concerns the exploration of the various spheres and planes of existence through mental

wandering. The student begins with an exploration of the realms inhabited by the beings of the Elements.

The passive reader may easily think at this point that Bardon is completely out of his mind and has wandered off into fantasy land, but this is not the case at all. Granted, what he describes sounds exactly like a fairytale, but there is a reason for this. The realms of the Elements visited by these means are perceived in a highly symbolized manner. Symbols are the matter which composes this particular plane. Thus the experiences of this plane are described in a symbolic manner that approaches the fairytale. However, the actual experience itself far exceeds the description and with the "visual" perception of each symbol, the magician will also perceive many other levels of information. Finite words can only capture a small portion of the experience, so when we describe our experiences in these realms we must resort to metaphor and story telling.

In my discussion of a past Step, I mentioned that it is difficult for some astral beings to perceive the mental body of the magician. That is not the case with the Elemental realms for a couple of reasons. The first is that though these realms are astral, per se, they are a very fine vibration of the astral materia. Remember in my discussion of the astral realm in the "Theory" section of IIIH where I said that the three realms actually merge into one another? Well, the part of what we define as the astral realm that we are concerned with here can be said to lie in its upper reaches. Thus, the beings which inhabit this realm have little difficulty in perceiving the mental body of a magician.

The second reason that the beings of the Elements are capable of perceiving the mental body of the magician in this case is that the student is instructed to carefully craft an image of their mental body that is recognizable by the being at hand. For instance, when exploring the Earth realm, the student takes on the appearance of a gnome. This adds a layer of symbolism to the student's mental body. Furthermore, the student builds the density of this body by filling themselves with the Element and merging with the Element itself. Together, this creates a density of the mental body that is easily perceived by the beings of this plane.

Once this special body is prepared, the student projects into the appropriate realm. The passive reader should at this point consider the amount of training required to accomplish these things for real and will, hopefully, realize the necessity of the work of previous Steps.

Bardon lays down a few very specific rules for the exploration

of the Elemental realms. The first, of course, is the aforementioned building of an appropriate body. The second rule is that of not speaking first. This is very important and perhaps an analogy or two will help you to better understand the rationale behind the rule.

One good analogy comes from the myths concerning a spirit's need to be invited into a person's home before gaining entry. If permission is given, then the entity will have free reign, but if the rule of permission is violated, then the entity risks capture. In the case of the magician wishing to converse with the beings of the Elements, it is the magician who is seeking entry into a new realm and must receive permission before gaining full rein. The magician who violates this rule and forces him or her self upon the beings of a foreign realm, risks capture as Bardon points out.

Another good analogy is that of the human immune system. The magician is a foreign substance entering the realm ruled by the respective beings and if any threat is perceived, the beings of that realm will respond in a protective, defensive manner. If, on the other hand, the magician shows that they are no threat by being respectfully patient, they are then integrated into the Elemental realm.

A third rule regarding exploration of the Elemental realms is that the magician must display their "superiority" to the Elemental beings they encounter in order for these beings to become willing to converse with the magician. I fear that for the passive reader, "superiority" will be misunderstood in this context. This is not the sort of common superiority that comes from the end of a bigger stick! The magician does not enter the realm at hand and start bragging about their achievements or enact displays of their prowess, pushing the beings there around at their whim. Rather, the sort of superiority meant here is not the kind you have to prove to another. The only way the magician communicates their superiority is by openly being exactly who they are. This is the sort of superiority that these beings comprehend. It is not forceful -- it is honorable and respectful. The mental body that the magician has crafted for their explorations will communicate who they are, in no uncertain terms, directly to the Elemental beings. The initial reticence of these beings is only natural for they have learned not to trust humans and so they wait awhile to see if the magician is consistent in who they are. Again, I hope you will see the importance of the training of the previous Steps.

The magician will encounter many different types of beings in these realms. In spite of the male oriented description that Bardon

provides, the same sort of attractions can occur for a female adept and for those of an other-than-hetero sexuality.

A magician must be able to understand the symbolic nature of the experience of the Elemental realms. In these realms it is not the form that is the core issue here, it is the meaning symbolized by that form that should concern the magician. The adept must be able to remain steadfast within their own central self in order to avoid the pitfall of getting stuck in these realms. These experiences can be very enticing and it can truly take forever to thoroughly explore their every nook and cranny and learn everything there is to learn. All of Bardon's warnings about getting too emotionally involved with the beings of these realms is very truthful. The magician must always remember that this is only a stop along the way and that there are higher, less transitory goals to attain.

The magician must make choices and decide when they have explored enough to continue further. I should add for the passive reader, that the experience of exploring these realms is not exactly linear. In other words, one can experience a large portion of each realm within seconds of elapsed clock-time. Thus, exploring "enough" does not necessarily entail years and years of effort to achieve.

The next task of Step Ten, once the Elemental realms have been explored sufficiently, is to seek out direct, face-to-face, contact with one's own Holy Guardian Angel (HGA). In Step Five, Bardon gave instruction on how to achieve a passive form of communication with the HGA, and this Step represents a quantum difference in the depth of this communication.

To fully explain the nature of this HGA would require an extensive treatise on the subject of the overall occult anatomy of consciousness and I'm unwilling to present such a diversion here. So, it will have to suffice when I say that the HGA has its root in the sphere of Saturn or, in kabbalistic terms, Binah. Also in kabbalistic terms, Yesod, or the Lunar sphere, is the "throne" of Binah. Thus it is before the student engages in rising to the Lunar plane that one encounters the FORM of one's HGA. Please note that I've said "the form of". The HGA itself, is formless, but for this sort of direct communication, the perception of a form is essential. At this level of communication the student does not merge with their HGA and there is no knowing of the HGA from the inside-out, as it were -- this comes later. At best, the experience is like when two very dear friends, who can read each other's minds, meet and converse.

Bardon's description of how this meeting transpires is actually

very accurate. The density of symbolism at this level, with this particular entity, is very minor and communication is direct and generally not intensely pictorial.

This guide will not fail the magician so long as the magician has achieved true Equilibrium. Otherwise, this can be a very disturbing experience and the imbalanced person can easily be led astray by their own ego. Many have returned from this encounter with the impression that they have been endowed with some sort of grand mission to save the world, etc., and have then gone about embarrassing themselves to no end by announcing just how important they are to the overall scheme of things. The reason for this is that they have not seen through the delusions of their own psyche and reached deeper into the genuine contact with their HGA. In reality, the HGA is ruthlessly honest and never deceptively builds nor diminishes the ego of the magician. To do so would run contrary to its essential purpose as the most intimate guide.

Beyond this point, the adept needs no other guide, but for the passive reader Bardon instructs that the student must then proceed to explore the other planes of existence. He lists them in the established planetary order, beginning with Luna and ending with Saturn. There are realms beyond Saturn (this refers to the philosophical realm, not the physical planet) but this subject is beyond the scope of the present discussion.

As a final note, I will add that Saturn represents three things: 1) The appearance of what lies beyond the Abyss as it is seen from THIS side of the Abyss. 2) The Abyss itself -- the veil that separates the sequential realm from the non-sequential realm. 3) The non-sequential realm that lies beyond the Abyss.

Consequently, the exploration of the realm of Saturn has three phases. The first phase involves the image presented of the Saturn realm as it is approached from below. This is as much of this realm as can be perceived through the medium of sequentialized symbol. In other words, it is a representation and is not the realm itself. This aspect of Saturn can be explored in a manner similar to the lower planetary realms and this brings the initiate face-to-face with the veil of the Abyss itself.

The second phase involves the penetration of this veil. Only Divine Providence, through the agency of the magician's HGA, can offer guidance in this regard. The experience is different for each individual.

The third phase occurs simultaneously with the penetration of the veil. Here the initiate enters the realm of eternity and once this

realm is entered, complete oneness with The Unity is made available to the initiate. It may take the initiate many years to fully integrate this experience of Unity into their daily lives, but the experience itself is eternal.

This is the ultimate goal of the path of Hermetic Magic. It correlates exactly with the merging with one's own personal god ('merging', not just 'communion with') elucidated in the next section of Step Ten.

ASTRAL

The astral exercises of Step Nine culminated in the impregnation of the astral body with the four divine attributes. With Step Ten, this process is taken further and a direct link between the magician and deity is established.

While Bardon describes the basic Hermetic approach to this subject well, he really gives the passive reader no idea of its ultimate implications. His explanation may suffice for the serious student, but for the passive reader, it is perhaps too simplistic.

To begin with, I should clarify some of the terms I will be using. I do not like the term "God" with a capital 'G'. To me it seems too involved in religious conceptions and when it is used it generally brings a very specific religious image of deity to the reader. In order to avoid this, I will be using the term "Unity" to designate the ultimate, All encompassing deity, instead of 'God'.

I will use the term "god" or "gods" (with a small 'g') to designate the familiar religious concept(s) of deity. For example, when referring to the pantheon of lesser, more limited deities, such as the Greco-Roman or Kabbalistic deities, I will say "the gods". I feel it is important to differentiate between these two levels or forms of deity as each presents a different sort of work for the magician.

It is also, in this context, important to differentiate between the "communion" with deity and the "merging" with deity. With communion, there remains a separation between the consciousness of the magician and the deity itself. This is a form of face-to-face communication. With merging however, there exists an at-one-ness between the magician's consciousness and that of the deity. Here, the magician experiences no separateness from the chosen deity and in fact, the magician functions as the deity; or rather, the magician and the deity become one and function as one.

Bardon is not very clear in his description as to what level of

deity he is speaking of where. The magician can commune or merge with the lesser gods from below (i.e., THIS side of) the veil of the Abyss. These forms of deity are sequentialized and are thus somewhat limited in their scope when compared to the Unity. These are the deities that Bardon refers to when he speaks about communicating with the various gods or deities.

While the Unity can be communicated with, on a face-to-face basis, below the veil of the Abyss, it is only when one has crossed the Abyss and entered the non-sequential realm that the Unity can be merged with. Once this merging with the Unity has occurred, the initiate is also instantly merged with all of the lesser gods.

Where confusion arises in what Bardon presents is that the four divine attributes apply more correctly to the Unity than they do to the lesser gods. But this confusion dissipates when the reader considers the previous mental exercises of this Step. Therein, the student was directed to rise along the planes. During that rise up to the edge of the Abyss, the magician will be able to work with the lesser gods at both a communicative and a merging level, and with the Unity, only on a basis of communion. Once the initiate reaches through the veil to the essential Saturn, then there is a merging with the Unity.

The communion with deity is similar to prayer, except that here there is a direct and immediate, real time (so to speak) reply. While prayer occurs in an upward, from-below-to-above direction, the actual communion with deity occurs at a more equal level, because the magician is impregnating their own form with the same attributes as the chosen deity.

The merging with deity, however, is a different matter. Here, the magician's consciousness must be skillfully brought into a state which exactly matches that of the chosen deity. Below the Abyss, the deity will, as Bardon states, meet the initiate half-way. This is part of the normal function of the lesser gods -- they mediate between the Unity and the human level of consciousness.

The merging with the Unity however, cannot occur below the Abyss. It is not so much that the Unity will not meet the initiate half-way (the Unity permeates All things, after all); rather, it's that the magician's consciousness is not capable of encompassing the Unity until she/he has passed into the non-sequential realm. Only the mental body or spirit of the initiate is capable of this journey.

Even though the ultimate realization of the Unity occurs at a purely mental level, Bardon places these exercises under the astral or soul heading. The reason for this is because his technique begins at

that level. The building of an image of deity and the impregnation of that image with the four divine attributes is an astral work. This practice eventually leads the student to manipulating the four attributes or qualities, independent of form or image. At that point, it becomes a purely mental operation and it is this transition to the mental realm that enables the initiate to conceptualize the Unity in its otherwise formless state.

I must caution you at this point that due to the finite nature of words, it is impossible for me to accurately describe either the Unity or the experience of merging with the Unity. Non-sequential experiences simply don't fit into such sequentialized things as words! Consequently, each thing I say in this regard will be only partially true and will convey things in a sequential manner that belies the essential non-sequentialized reality of the Unity.

But even in saying this I have implied things that are inaccurate. Case in point is when I say that the Unity is non-sequential. The deeper mystery is that the Unity encompasses both the sequential and the non-sequential realms, simultaneously. When I say it is non-sequential, I am referring more to how the Unity appears to our sequentialized human consciousness and not to its essential nature. Often, how we attempt to describe the indescribable involves pointing more to the differences between these things and "normal" things, than it does to their similarities. The greatest problem with this is that pointing out only differences seems to limit our understanding of the essential Unity of Being. In the hopes of avoiding that obfuscation, I will try to point out as many similarities as I can in what follows.

The first thing I should say in terms of describing the merging with the Unity, pertains to the sense of self that the magician experiences. The self-awareness of the Unity is often described as an "I am" state, but what is often overlooked is the fact that this deific sense of self-identity is of the same quality as that experienced by a normal human being. The only difference is in quantity as the Unity encompasses every thing that has existence and the individual human encompasses only a minute portion of that infinite expanse. It is, in fact, this continuum of likeness that the magician follows in the ascent or expansion of the quantity of consciousness. In simplistic terms, the magician stands firmly rooted in the quality of self-awareness and expands the quantity of that awareness until it encompasses the Unity of All Being.

The implications of this in practice are that the magician, once merged with the Unity, experiences the entire universe as if it were in

fact a part of their own self. There is no part of the infinite universe of which the Unity is not aware.

This brings us to the four attributes of deity, which I think will serve as a good foundation for further describing the ramifications of merging with the Unity. Please note that the four attributes listed in Step Ten vary slightly from those listed in Step Nine. It is the Step Ten list that I will concern myself with here, though it pays to compare the two on your own.

The four attributes are --

1) Omnipotence (All powerfulness): This is associated with the Element Fire. The sort of omnipotence experienced by the Unity, and by one merged with the Unity, is not akin to the popular conceptualization of a god "up there" who points down at us mere mortals and, poof!, things change according to "his" will. The Unity's omnipotence works from the inside-out of EVERY thing, all at once. There is no splitting of consciousness at the level of the Unity proper -- the splitting of consciousness is only a manifestation of the Unity.

Within the Unity, there is also no willing akin to human willing. Instead, the Unity exists all at once, as a unified whole, and what we think of as divine will is merely the Unity being what it naturally is. When initiates speak about merging with the divine will and say things like "let Thy will be my will", an incorrect impression is given that the individual will is somehow transplanted by a higher will. This is not the case. The individual will is transformed by the experience of merging, not replaced. Again, an initiate follows the continuum of similarity as they rise to the divine. The thread of similarity here has to do with the fact that the human will is an aspect or manifestation of the divine will. And once again, the difference is a matter of quantity not of quality.

The omnipotence of the lesser gods is more limited than that of the Unity. Because they exist below the Abyss, they are finite, sequentialized creatures. Thus they are of limited, specific use to the magician. For example, in modern ceremonial magic, one must carefully choose the appropriate "god form" for the task at hand. But if one can merge with the Unity, then nothing is impossible.

But having said that, I should note that the magician capable of merging with the Unity will not be willing petty things nor things that violate the universal lawfulness. You must keep in mind that this transformation touches the individual adept at EVERY level of his or her being.

2) Omniscience (All knowing): This is associated with the

Element Air. The root essence of the Unity -- the stuff of which it is composed -- is consciousness. Every thing that exists (mentally, astrally and physically) is a manifestation of this consciousness. The consciousness of the Unity is self-aware within all of its parts or manifestations, simultaneously and fully. In other words, the Unity knows EVERY thing, from the inside-out. This is not just the knowing of an external observer; rather, it is the knowing of a participant.

I wish for you to carefully consider the implications of this for the magician who merges with the Unity. Truly, any thing the magician wishes to know or explore is made instantly available. But this knowing will be from the inside-out in a most intimate manner. It is similar in quality to the sort of knowing we experience in our daily lives as we pass through a specific event. The difference is, as usual, in the quantity of the knowing. For example, we all know how to tie our shoes because we have experienced it numerous time, but in relation to the Unity we are like a small child who has never tied a shoe and our understanding of this mysterious art comes from the descriptions of our parents. In other words, the Unity knows EVERY thing from the inside-out and the normal human knows only a relatively few things from this perspective.

I must say that the conceptualization of this sort of all knowing is quite different from the actual experience. The magician who merges with the Unity is not only ABLE to know everything, she/he DOES know everything *while in the merged state*. Few magicians, however, choose to bring this knowledge back into their normal consciousness used for daily life. Knowing too much tends to take all the fun out of life -- there is no longer any surprise.

3) All-Love or Mercifulness (Divine benevolence): This is associated with the Element Water. Please note that in Step Nine, Bardon associates Immortality with Water.

The divine Mercy is similar in quality to human love, except that in the human manifestation of love we tend to direct it at specific persons, ideas and things. Thus our human love is more limited than the divine love and it is a projection from ourselves to something external (self-love aside). The deific love of the Unity comes from a broader perspective that includes EVERY thing and it works from within each thing. It is without bias and is shared equally with All that exists.

It is common for us to wonder how the unpleasant aspects and events of life can exist in a universe permeated by a Benevolent deity. The answer to this lies within the quantity aspect of the divine

benevolence or Mercy. The Unity permeates the whole of the infinite universe all at once and completely, thus it has an eternal perspective from which every event is seen as conforming to the universal lawfulness of things. In other words, from the eternal perspective of the Unity, benevolence is an undercurrent in All events, even the most unpleasant ones.

Suffering exists for a reason. It teaches us lessons that we have not been able to otherwise learn through more pleasant means. So at the core of each unpleasant situation lies the divine benevolence that knows this is the way in which we must learn -- it is the root lesson that holds the benevolence, the manifestation of events is itself secondary. The only way sometimes, to perceive the divine benevolence behind unsavory events is to broaden one's perspective to include lifetimes instead of single moments.

An adept who has merged with this divine Mercifulness may at times seem very stern, but this should not be mistaken for a lack of caring. At its root is the awareness of a much broader perspective on things than the ordinary human consciousness is able to achieve.

Such an adept will feel a deep love and concern for all creatures and will manifest their loving kindness willfully and in the most appropriate manner befitting the occasion.

4) Immortality (The same as Omnipresence in this case): This is associated with the Element Earth. In Step Nine, Bardón lists Omnipresence here, but if you think about it, this is essentially the same as Immortality in that the Unity is an immanent thing and thus it exists throughout the whole of space-time. The divine Immortality is not the same thing as what we consider when we think about the immortality of a human form. Theoretically, human immortality (if such a thing were to exist) is strictly a moment-to-moment matter of prolonged duration. In other words, the immortal human would pass through time moment-by-moment. While the quality of this is similar to divine Immortality, the quantity is quite different. The Immortality of the Unity occurs at an eternal level -- the moment-by-moment duration is only a manifestation of the eternal Immortality.

But, and here's a big but, nothing that is either astral or physical in its nature is eternal or immortal. True Immortality exists only at the level of the eternal, non-sequential realm.

I compare the Immortality of the Unity with its Immanence and say that they are the same thing because the Unity's Immortality is eternal. It has no beginning and no ending and there is no 'who', 'what', 'why', 'where' or 'when' that does not partake of the Unity. The connection between these two may be easiest to perceive when

you consider the space-time continuum. From the eternal perspective, the whole infinite span of space-time is perceived as one single present moment or as a grand, infinite "Now". But, since the Unity is Immortal and eternal, this perspective is not just a from-afar sort of experience; instead, it is experienced simultaneously from the inside-out -- from the perspective of each thing involved with the minute details of the physical manifestation of space-time, to the most ephemeral and comprehensive experience of space-time.

While the feeling or quality of Immanence is similar to what the student experienced in Step Six with the practice of being aware of their mental body within their astral and physical bodies, there is a difference in terms of quantity. For the Unity, there is no separateness -- there is no immediate sense of being WITHIN a body. Instead, the Unity completely fills the embodiments of its Immanence. The entire infinity of the manifest universe IS the Unity -- it is not the mere shell which houses the Unity. There is no separation between the "body" of the Unity and the Unity itself. When we look at a rock or a leaf or through an electron microscope at a single molecule, we are looking directly at the Unity. When we look at each other or within our own selves, we are looking at the Unity.

I will now close my comments upon the merging with the Unity with one final note. This pertains to the process the adept must undergo in order to integrate the experience of merging into their daily lives. Many fail to successfully re-cross the Abyss and return to their normal functioning consciousness. I presume you are aware of the many tales of mystics who have returned from an especially deep experience only to become raving lunatics. Here is where preparation and a proper training come into play for the Hermetic magician.

In many ways, the integration into the normal day-to-day consciousness of an experience of the non-sequential eternal realm is an even more difficult task than the achieving of such an experience. The experience of Unity is so foreign to our normal level of self-awareness that it, in effect, doesn't fit, in its entirety, within the confines of normal human consciousness. Thus it is of vital importance that the adept have a thorough working knowledge of their mechanisms of perception. Essentially, the adept must translate and interpret the non-sequential experience into terms understandable to the normal, sequentialized consciousness. Only in this way can such an experience be integrated at a normal functional level.

Upon the return to normal waking consciousness, the adept will be inexorably transformed. So deep and pervasive a transformation requires a reassessment and a readjustment of the adept's personality and individuality akin the Step One and Two work with the soul mirrors, but on a much broader level.

The adept will not be able to retain full consciousness of the infinite details encountered in the merging experience once he/she has returned to a normal state of awareness. These details (the fullness of the experience) must be compressed in the memory and be made available so the adept can draw upon them at any moment desired. But to experience the fullness of a merging experience, the adept must be within the non-sequential realm and be functioning with their higher mind. This dichotomy of being so close, yet so far, from Unity, can at first be very disorienting even for the most advanced adept. Once again, the training of the previous nine Steps is essential for success in this matter.

Furthermore, the adept must balance the transformational experience of Unity with their mundane lives in such a way that their internal changes are not laid bare for all to see. This may sound odd and you might ask "why?". The reasons for this are not esoteric; rather, they are extremely practical and are due to the circumstances of our present location along the continuum of space-time. In other words, considering the present state of affairs, it behooves the adept to not reveal their achievements because if they were to do so, they would be inundated by people demanding their wisdom or presenting themselves for the satisfaction of other needs. There have been, and there will again be, times when the adept can safely reveal themselves openly, but now is not one of those times. As a consequence, there are many adepts who have achieved Unity but keep this a well hidden secret.

As I mentioned earlier, Bardón has the student work with the four attributes from the outset of these Step Ten astral exercises -- even though they apply more strictly to the Unity than to the lesser god forms and even though it is the lesser gods that the student encounters first. The reason for this is that these four attributes will eventually lead the student to awareness of the Unity. While working with the lesser gods, the student must employ the four attributes in an uneven ratio appropriate to the nature of the chosen god form. Working with these varieties or flavors of godhood expands the adept's consciousness and prepares it for union with the Unity.

I hope that by this point you have become well aware of the

importance of each Step of IIIH. If any single Step has been overlooked, the ultimate goal of this Great Work will remain unattainable. I also hope that you see how the whole course comes together at the end and creates a complete circuit.

PHYSICAL

In this final section of Step Ten, Bardón describes a few possibilities for the magician to consider in regard to their magical practice. I see no point in adding my thoughts to this section as Bardón is perfectly clear.

EPILOGUE

In his own epilogue to IIIH, Bardon states: "Occult abilities are mere side effects; you could consider them a compass for spiritual development, designated for noble purposes only, and as aids to your fellow man; that is why they are reserved only for the true magician." Many people have the impression that a highly advanced magician will, by necessity, be constantly practicing the magical abilities that they have acquired. But this is not always the case. Just because you possess the ability to accomplish something, does not mean that you must do so. With initiation, the acquiring of magical abilities is not the point -- the point is to learn them as a path to higher achievements. An interesting, rather ironic, part of the Mystery is that the attainment of great magical powers (and here I do not refer to mundane powers which are usually abused by those who possess them) renders the magician uninterested in needlessly altering the universe. As the magician passes a certain point in their ascent, she or he may actually initiate fewer and fewer mundane magical actions.

The goal of Hermetic initiation is essentially spiritual, but the path to that goal involves the acquiring of many mundane abilities. Without learning those abilities and going through the transformations that their learning brings to the initiate, the ascent would halt at a very low level.

I would hope, through my many remarks that you have so patiently read, to convey to you the manner in which the sincere student must consider the attainment of the many, seemingly glamorous, magical abilities that Bardon describes throughout IIIH. These are not the goals to strive for -- they are only interesting scenery along The Way.

One can spend decades or lifetimes, learning abilities that will greatly impress others, but in doing so one will only be delaying their ultimate realization. This is the Long Way. The Short Way is found when one does not become too involved in (attached to) the magical trickery and instead focuses upon the ultimate goal. There is no less achievement in this Short Way -- rather, the achievement is greater, sooner. This is The Way that Bardon directs the sincere student toward in IIIH.

Part Three

Commentary Upon

The Practice of Magical Evocation

(First Edition)

INTRODUCTION

As I begin my comments upon Bardon's second book, "The Practice of Magical Evocation" (PME), I must reiterate that I will not be offering practical advice to the student in regard to the actual work of evocation. Instead, my comments will focus upon, hopefully, making the oftentimes obscure remarks made by Bardon, more understandable for the passive reader. For the student who is properly prepared for this work, no advice that I could give would be necessary for their own advancement in this art.

The comments I offer here come from my direct experience with the work of evocation and are not based upon theory or speculation.

As Bardon states in this book and elsewhere, only the student who has completed Step Eight of his first volume, "Initiation Into Hermetics" (IIH), or who has received an equivalent level of initiation by other means, is to be considered properly prepared for the work of evocation.

Even so, the magician who has completed only the eighth Step of IIH will face some difficulties with evocation. At the very outset of any operation of ceremonial magic, the magician must first be able to raise their consciousness sufficiently to act as a deity, but the actual communion with deity is not addressed until the tenth Step. So, for a magician to be capable of exploring the full potential of this art, they must have reached Step Ten. However, this does not preclude a Step Eight initiate from being capable of at least beginning work with evocation.

The reason for this is that the magician who has completed the eighth Step will be master of mental wandering and of the Elements, the Akasha and the Fluids. Having reached this stage, the magician will possess all the rudimentary abilities required to function at a level similar to deity. Thus the magician will know enough about what it means to be at one with deity so as to at least function at the level of mental and perhaps astral evocation. As the student progresses through Step Nine, and especially through Step Ten, their facility with evocation will steadily increase.

Many choose to ignore Bardon's warning in this regard and their results are indeed dubious. I hope, in the comments which follow, to make it plainly clear to you, dear reader, just why this is so.

To begin, I think it important that you understand the

difference between the terms "evocation" and "invocation" as these two are often transposed incorrectly. Invocation means to draw a thing into one's own consciousness or into the magical circle itself. Evocation, on the other hand, means to draw forth a thing externally or into the magical triangle. An evoked thing is never drawn into either the magical circle or into the magician's own consciousness.

Many ceremonial rituals begin with an invocation of deity. In this way, the ritualist draws the presence of an external deity into their own consciousness and into their ritual circle. The reason for this act is that the ritualist supposes that this will afford a greater amount of power for enacting their ritual. In other words, an invoked thing is always an external thing which has been drawn into the practitioner's own self. Thus, for example, the exercises in IIIH dealing with the accumulation of the Elements are a form of invocation.

PME does not concern invocation. Its only concern is evocation or the bringing of an external being into external manifestation. At no point are such beings drawn into the magician's own consciousness.

This point may seem minor at this stage, but I hope to clarify exactly how truly significant it is throughout the whole practice of evocation. At no point in magical evocation does the magician invoke -- not even deity -- but I will explain this more fully further on.

There have, of course, been many books written about evocation and many occult schools teach a version of this art. But never before have so many details of the true practice been revealed and never in so plain a manner. The main reason for this is a lack of understanding -- that of the authors and that of the audience to their books. For the passive reader, it is nearly impossible to understand evocation except at a very superficial, purely intellectual level. So, I warn you now, it will do little good to read PME or my commentary, if you have not at least read Bardon's first book, IIIH -- no matter how many other books on the subject you've read.

One school of thought holds to the idea that evocation is nothing more than an ancient form of psychotherapy. Unfortunately, it is difficult to refute this premise given the fact that if one follows the standard approach to evocation this is all that it will be. The reason for this is that when an uninitiated person tries to practice evocation, all that they will possibly evoke is the contents of their own psyche. While this can be therapeutic, it most usually is not since the evoker is deluded into thinking that the evoked entities are

actually external beings and not evoked from their own imagination.

The true magician however, is not fooled by their own psyche and is capable of recognizing self-delusion. Only such a one can truly evoke an external being.

PART ONE

MAGIC

Here Bardon tries to give the reader an understanding of what is meant by the term "magic". There are two points in this section that I'd like to explain a bit further.

The first is his differentiation between "black" and "white" magic, good and evil. As he points out, the concepts of good and evil will not hold sway over the magician since such a one understands that the universe is a unified whole, not a dualistic opposition of parts. From the Hermetic perspective, the defining of things into opposite camps of good and evil is secondary to the personal distinction between right and wrong. Both good and evil are subjective judgments we make in order to navigate through the twists and turns that life presents, but neither exist as objective, inherent qualities. Every thing that exists, exists because it is the will of Divine Providence that it exist.

It is important that the magician understand this before they begin the work of evocation as this knowledge will effect how they relate to the many beings that they will encounter. Some of those beings will be unpleasant and troublesome but it does no good in relating to such beings if the magician holds to the bias that the being is "evil" by nature. This only puts up a barrier that the being will likely rebel against and which the magician will be unable to penetrate.

The evoker must understand that every creature is equal in the eyes of Divine Providence.

The second point I'd like to speak to is Bardon's distinction between a "sorcerer" and a true magician. Many have adopted the word 'sorcerer' as an honorific and so this distinction is often difficult for the modern reader to understand. To Bardon, a sorcerer is less than a true magician for the simple reason that a sorcerer is not in command of the forces he or she wields. An example of what Bardon means by sorcery is when a novice learns a ritual or ritual words and employs them without having first learned either their significance or the way in which they effect their results. In other words, the sorcerer relies upon the knowledge and work of others for the effectiveness of their "magic".

The true magician on the other hand, knows the universal laws and works directly with the forces of nature to effect their own magic.

This distinction is very important when it comes to the art of evocation. Even among the circle of modern students of IHH, there arises instances of sorcery. For example, many students have been told to make for themselves a talisman corresponding to a spirit named Emrudue. This is nothing other than sorcery (especially considering “Stejnar's "discovery" about the encoding of names that Bardon employed) since the student has no genuine understanding of what they are doing or of its consequences.

[Historical Note: Several years ago someone suggested (erroneously) that Bardon had instructed that students of IHH should make, for themselves, an amulet of “Emrudue” to help further their progress. In point of fact, this is **NOT** what Bardon said. In PME, under the heading for “Emrudue”, Bardon states: “If a person not initiated into magic wears the seal of the seventh head of the Moon sphere, manufactured during the astrological period of the seventh moon station and engraved on silver plate, he or she will have good luck and success, and, above all, have any earthly desire fulfilled.” This is *not* a suggestion that the uninitiated attempt to make their own seal; instead, this is suggesting that the uninitiated wear a ***magically prepared*** seal, crafted by an initiate. An initiate would know that the name “Emrudue“ is useless in this regard and would have the trained ability to craft a truly magical seal of the “seventh head of the Moon sphere“.]

Likewise, the occult schools and books that teach the novice complex rituals that rely upon special words and movements are also nothing other than a form of sorcery. For any word that is not fully understood by the magician is not to be employed during a ritual act. Fortunately for the novice, these practices border upon theater more so than they do upon actual sorcery.

Another important distinction is that the sorcerer seeks only power and glory instead of spiritual advancement. Consequently, the way of sorcery results in little, if any, spiritual rise.

As a final note to this section, it is good for the reader to understand that when Bardon refers to "jugglery", he means the slight-of-hand tricks performed by stage magicians.

THE MAGICAL AIDS

Here Bardon seeks to explain the rational basis of the various magical aids or tools. There are some very significant things for the reader to consider here.

First is that a magical tool has no power of its own, generally speaking. The power or effectiveness of a tool comes directly from the magician. Thus, a tool one inherits will have no special power until the inheritor instills it with their own power. Nor will another person be able to tap into and use the power that a magician instills within their tool.

The second important point is that a magically prepared tool must be treated in a respectful manner. For instance, many groups say that one can use a kitchen knife as a magical Athame and then return it to the kitchen drawer for regular use. While this may technically be so, it is of little practical application since the knife would have to be recharged each time it is used ritually.

A magical tool grows in power each time it is used. But this power can never exceed that of the person who wields it. All that a tool can do is save the ritualist time.

To the student of ITH, there is no particular mystery to the charging of a magical tool. It is simply a matter of filling the tool with the appropriate ideation, Fluid, energy or Element, following the techniques learned in ITH. The specific details of the construction of the tools will be dealt with further on, but the important consideration at this stage is that each tool must meet the specific understanding and abilities of the individual magician.

All the previous books that delineated exactly what the shape and color of the tool must be and which exact sigils and words must be inscribed thereon, are all full of misinformation. These things depend entirely upon the desire of the individual and will in no case infer special powers upon the tool if the magician does not fully understand the significance of each aspect.

In essence, the tool is an extension of what is already present within the magician and it must reflect this, with accuracy. Thus each magician's tools will, by nature, be different from those of another magician. The only necessary similarity will be in the nature of their specific functions.

It is always best if the magician constructs their own tools from scratch. While this may be an easy matter with some tools, it does present difficulties for others. For instance, the making of a magic sword may be beyond the ability of the magician and s/he will have to purchase one pre-made. But this is of little essential consequence since it is in the charging of a tool that it gains its real power. If a tool is purchased however, it must first be cleansed of the residue of thoughts and emotions that it has absorbed during its manufacture, prior to its actual charging.

The final point I wish to raise concerns the magician's attitude toward their ritual tools. The tool is used to quickly bring the magician's consciousness up to a certain level. The magician does not invoke the tool's power or ideation into their own consciousness. Instead, the tool acts as a key to the rapid raising of the magician's own consciousness to the required level.

For instance, when the magic wand is applied, the energy is not drawn from the wand itself; rather, the energy is drawn from the magician and projected through the wand once the wand has served to raise the magician's awareness of the specific energy to be used. The magician does not invoke the awareness of this energy from the wand, but instead raises their consciousness to the energy and manipulates it from there, through the wand. This may be a difficult concept to understand (it certainly is difficult to describe) but as you read further its significance will become more evident.

THE MAGIC CIRCLE

As I said earlier, the magician does not invoke anything during an evocation, not even deity. But here Bardon describes the magical circle in terms that sound similar to the invocation of deity that opens many popular ceremonial rituals.

Indeed, the magic circle is meant to be a representation of the magician's individual understanding of deity and of the universe, but this is not employed as an invocation of same. Instead, and here's where the training of IHH is important, the magic circle acts only as a key for the magician's own rise of consciousness. In short, the magician, instead of invoking deity, must raise their consciousness till it merges with deity. This is what is meant by the magician acting as deity while within the magic circle. This is not invoked from outside; rather, it is built up from within.

As Bardon points out, there are as many ways to draw a magical circle as there are magicians. The books and schools that tell the student exactly how the circle is to be constructed are useless to the Hermetic magician. The magician's circle must exactly match the magician's own understanding of the universe or deity. Thus, as the magician's understanding matures, so will their circle change.

A mundane circle, like you would draw on paper, has no intrinsic value. A Magical circle, on the other hand, does have intrinsic power. It has the specific power of affording protection or shielding for the magician who stands at its center. Essentially, it

acts as a barrier to any unwelcome external force. I can think of no circumstance where the magician might want to invite another entity into their magic circle other than the fellow humans they may be working with during a specific ritual. In other words, a magic circle allows no entry once it has been cast.

This does not however, limit the magician. Effectively, the magician can travel within their magic circle to any realm whatsoever.

Bardon suggests constructing a physical circle, but while this may be wise for the beginner, it is not strictly necessary. A magic circle can just as readily be constructed entirely within the mind of the magician, but such a circle is less reliable for evocation.

A magic circle is, more properly speaking, a sphere. This shape is a perfect physical representation of infinity and thus deity. The magic circle is a multidimensional sort of thing and the physical circle is merely where the magical sphere intersects the present moment of space-time.

"Casting" a magic circle denotes two operations. First is the mental operation wherein the magician raises their consciousness to the level of deity. This is accomplished during the drawing of the components of the circle, such as a physical circle, appropriate names, canticles, and figures, etc. The second operation is the actual projection of a sphere of energy that intersects the physical outline of the circle. This is not, strictly speaking, a mental operation as it involves the actual projection of a specific (astra-mental) energy.

Bardon mentions this energy with a single, very interesting sentence: "The binding force of the circle is generally known in magnetic magic." In the neo-Wiccan tradition with which I am familiar, the energy used for casting a circle is described as the "blue fire". With eyes that can see such things, it is the same energy one sees surrounding the full moon at midnight.

There are, of course, many methods for creating a magic circle. If one is fortunate enough to have a spare room that can be devoted to a temple space then it is possible to create a permanent circle, so to speak.

The essence of a magic circle is not the physical trappings. Its essence is the consciousness of the magician. Thus it is possible to create a magic circle without any paraphernalia at all. But this takes long practice to master. The magician's circle casting will evolve with practice and may eventually become a very simple operation.

When a properly trained magician casts a true magic circle, then the magician has indeed become at one with deity and therefore

stands at the exact center of the universe. Without this ability, a circle casting is not magical.

The magic circle is the primary and most important tool of the ceremonial magician. Second, especially for the practitioner of evocation, is the magic triangle. All other tools it is possible for a trained magician to do without.

THE MAGIC TRIANGLE

As I have said, the magic triangle is the second most important tool for the evocationist. It is similar in nature to the magic circle in that it also forms the foundation of the evoker's working space. While the magic circle encompasses infinity and acts to keep all unwanted external influences from reaching the magician's person, the triangle, on the other hand, acts to both confine and to accommodate the evoked entity. This confinement is important during an evocation ritual since it is unwise to allow an evoked being free reign in our realm. Besides, it is nearly impossible to get an evoked entity to materialize without these confines.

Like the geometric form of a circle, the geometric form of a mundane triangle has no inherent power. But, as before, the magical triangle does possess its own specific power. Through the law of analogy, the magic triangle represents the cohesive power of manifestation or form. This does not just refer to forms composed of physical substance but also to forms composed of mental and astral substance.

Similar to the relationship between the magic circle and the sphere, a magic triangle is, more properly speaking, a tetrahedron. The physical magic triangle is merely where the tetrahedron intersects physical space-time.

As Bardon points out, the essence of the magic triangle's effectiveness is due to its relationship to the number three. An important aspect of the magic triangle that is not all that clearly stated in Bardon's description is that the triangle is drawn AFTER the magic circle has been erected. In other words, it must be drawn while the magician is at one with deity for it to be of any effect at all. These two factors (the magician's level of consciousness and the analogy of number three), plus the energy projected while drawing (or retracing) the triangle, are what make it magical.

One thing that Bardon neglects to mention here is that the magic triangle is never placed within the circle. It is to be placed

within easy reach of the circle, but outside of it, and in whichever quarter is most appropriate. Bardon recommends placing the triangle in the East.

As Bardon points out, the magic triangle should be constructed of the same material as the magic circle. This may seem irrelevant, but I assure you that in practice it is not. Furthermore, the triangle can be constructed in whatever manner of detail the magician desires. The only rule is that it have three unbroken sides. An equilateral triangle is best for most uses and it is always situated so that it points away from the center of the magic circle.

Both the magic circle and the magic triangle serve to contain the two atmospheres relevant to the evocation. The magic circle holds the atmosphere suitable for the magician-as-deity, and the magic triangle contains the atmosphere relevant to the being evoked.

During a ritual of evocation, the magic triangle may be used to house the magic mirror, a Fluid condenser, the sigil of the being that is to be evoked, or any other such aid.

THE MAGIC CENSER

The magic censer is one of two tools that pertain to the atmospheric requirements of the magic triangle and to the being that is evoked therein. The other tool is the magic lamp, but as you will see in my discussion of the magic censer, the lamp is not strictly necessary. Actually, even the censer is not strictly necessary -- all that is essential is the atmosphere itself.

For the censuring to be truly effective, the magician must still retain their unity of consciousness with deity. To begin the censuring operation (i.e., the building of the appropriate atmosphere regarding the triangle) the magician must first charge the space accordingly. When evoking a being of the Elements, the room or space must be filled with the corresponding Element and/or Fluid. When evoking an extraterrestrial being from one of the planetary spheres, then the room must be filled with the appropriately colored Light, etc. Without an appropriate charge such as this, a true evocation would be impossible.

The second phase of the censuring operation is less of a necessity. Here is where the censer itself comes into play through the burning of an appropriate incense. This is a great aid in the physical condensation of an evoked being if one wishes to achieve a visible physical appearance. In effect, the incense provides the

necessary physical substance for the being to combine into a physical form. It also serves as an aid to the magician's consciousness.

Choosing the correct incense is entirely up to the student -- there are numerous books on the subject. The penultimate method for determining the correct incense for any occasion is to ask, through mental wandering, the being one wishes to evoke, which scent they prefer.

The specific form of the censer itself is irrelevant. It can be a simple dish if that satisfies the magician. Most prefer something more ornate, but here, practicality is the main determining factor. The censer's ability to strengthen the magician's concentration through its symbolism is secondary.

THE MAGIC MIRROR

If we consider the magic circle and triangle as the primary evocational tools, and the censer and other regalia concerned with the atmosphere as secondary, then the magic mirror is among the tertiary class. This class of tool primarily concerns the actual drawing of the evokee into the magic triangle. Also among this third class of tool are the sigils of the various beings.

A secondary use of the magic mirror is as a doorway for projecting one's mental body into the realm of the being that will be evoked. [This use of the magic mirror is discussed in Steps Eight and Nine of IIIH.]

A magic mirror can also be employed as a supplement for the maintaining of the proper atmosphere. In fact, a practicing evocationist may want to employ more than one mirror, each of which will always serve the same single function. For example, the magician may choose to use one as a platform for the being to appear upon and a second mirror to maintain the atmospheric charge. However, a magic mirror is by no means a necessity since all of its functions can be carried out by the properly trained magician without the aid of any tool.

During an evocation, the evoked being may be asked to materialize through the magic mirror, but only if it is placed within the confines of the magic triangle. Bardou speaks about placing it at the apex of the triangle -- outside of the confines of the triangle -- but this is only done when its function concerns either the atmosphere or if it is providing an extra boost of energy for the evoked being. For most atmospheric uses, it can be placed anywhere within the ritual space.

The type of mirror used is up to the magician. A solid Fluid condenser-based mirror (such as Bardon describes in IIIH) is, of course, best, but for most occasions, a simpler one suffices.

THE MAGIC LAMP

The magic lamp belongs to the second class of tool as it pertains to the ritual atmosphere. Bardon explains well the use of such a lamp and speaks highly of its usefulness. I agree and have found it to be very helpful in maintaining the color of the atmosphere while freeing up my consciousness for other matters during the ritual.

One can employ numerous lamps during a single ritual if desired. For example, the magician could arrange seven green lamps around the triangle (or elsewhere) when evoking a being of Venus.

As with the censer, the shape of the magical lamp is determined more by its functionality than its aesthetic.

Even though they may seem to be the most convenient, Bardon warns against using electric lights. He raises a very valid point here for the modern magician. Electro-magnetic fields DO exert an interruptive force upon many delicate magical operations and evocation is no exception. For any magician who lives in a house that has electrical wiring within their walls, this must be taken into consideration.

THE MAGIC WAND

The magic wand belongs to a fourth class of tool each of which expresses the magician's own power. Other tools in this class are the sword, knife (dagger or Athame), trident, bell, magical wardrobe, etc.

The wand is the most common tool associated with the magician in popular lore and it is indeed a handy tool. But, it is not strictly necessary as in most cases a finger will do for directing any energy the magician desires. The shape of the wand symbolizes the straight line; i.e., the extension of will.

This tool should be made by the magician's own hands and it must never be allowed to fall into another's possession. The magical wand(s) of a magician should, if at all possible, be destroyed before their death.

The shape and composition of the magical wand is dependent

only upon the magician's needs and great creativity must be employed in its crafting. Here, function is just as important as esthete. The average evocationist is likely to have several wands, each devoted to a specific practice or need.

Bardon does an admirable job of describing a few of the possibilities, so I will not belabor the point further.

THE MAGIC SWORD, DAGGER AND TRIDENT

These three tools are actually variations upon the same theme, namely, to act as a symbol of the magician's authority. These belong to the aforementioned fourth class of tools which extend or express the magician's will.

Primarily, these weapons are employed when evoking the lower, "demonic" beings which tend to be unruly. But it does no harm to always have the sword passively displayed as a symbol of one's authority whether it is wielded during the ritual or not.

It is generally more difficult to make a sword, dagger or trident with one's own hands. If this tool is purchased, then it must be thoroughly cleansed of any astra-mental residue remaining from its manufacture, before it is decorated and charged by the magician's own hand.

The charge for these implements is one of Light, sufficient to clearly represent the magician's own authority. If the magician is incapable of properly charging a sword in this manner or does not truly possess the authority the sword implies, then such an implement should not be made nor should it under any circumstances be used. Any being upon which the magician may find occasion to use their sword will be able to instantly see whether or not the magician actually possesses the authority they are representing. If this authority is not actually present, then the being will see this as a goad and will double their rebelliousness.

As Bardon mentions, these implements may also be used as defensive weapons. They, when properly charged, will be able to repel, and possibly destroy, any bothersome influences that may invade the sphere of ritual operation. Indeed, the knife or dagger, is the proper tool for all banishings.

The shape of the sword and dagger is similar to the wand in that it represents a straight line. With the wand, the emphasis is upon the ends of the line; but here, the symbolic emphasis is upon the edge of the line -- its sharpness and its ability to cut. In this regard, the

wand is Solar and the sword/dagger is Martian. Both express power, just in different ways and to different degrees.

THE MAGICAL CROWN, CAP OR MAGUS-BAND

This is the uppermost part of the magician's ritual wardrobe (i.e., that which is worn on the body of the magician throughout the ritual) and partakes of the fourth class of tool. The function of the crown is two-fold: one is as a statement of the magician's authority for all to see, and second, is as an aid to the magician's raising of their own consciousness.

In terms of the sequence of an evocation, the magician begins by first arranging the necessary accouterments and then puts on their magical wardrobe. The adornment of the body is the preparation for the actual ritual work of casting the circle, etc. It begins the process of putting the magician in the correct state of mind.

The crown or magus-band, represents the maturity of the magician and is most always associated with an oath on the part of the magician, swearing them to always follow the highest of ideals. A magician may have, if desired, more than one such head dress, but it is better if only one is made in such a manner that it serves all purposes.

This should be constructed by the magician's own hand and made with the finest materials within the magician's means. It should be an object of great beauty, filled with all the symbols pertinent to the magician's understanding of deity. The magician must be cognizant of every symbol that appears on their head dress, otherwise it should not be employed.

The magician's head dress should be treated the same as a holy relic for this increases its power considerably. Never should the magician wear it inappropriately. This, and all the other articles of the magical wardrobe, should also be destroyed before the magician's death.

THE MAGICAL GARMENT

This is perhaps the most intimate of all the magical regalia. It is the magician's second skin, as it were. Every effort should be taken to make this with one's own hands. For the beginning seamster, buttons are not necessary as a pull-over robe will do just as well.

If at all possible, the raw fabric, the thread and needle, should be cleansed of all astra-mental residue remaining from their manufacture, before the garment is constructed. During the construction itself, the magician's mind should be absolutely focused upon the task at hand and upon the magical significance of the robe. In this way, the root ideation will be sewn into each stitch.

As Bardon warns, this garment should not be touched nor seen by another individual other than those working directly with the magician during ritual. It should be worn only during magical operations. For practical purposes, the magician will want to fashion at least two robes: one for normal magical operations and one reserved solely for evocation. Violet silk (only silk should be used -- raw silk being the easiest to work with) will do admirably for almost all purposes.

The magic robe symbolizes the magician's purity, both to other beings and as an adjunct to the magician's own rise of consciousness. Similar to the magus-band, the robe should be treated like a holy relic, and should always be carefully stored when not in use.

THE MAGIC BELT (OR CINCTURE)

This completes the magic wardrobe proper. The symbolism of the magic belt is of the straight line that has, through the will of the magician, been bent into a circle with the ends joined by tying. This is the Ouroboros, the snake eating its own tail.

The magic belt represents the Elemental Equilibrium of the adept, won though hard labor. If this equilibrium has not been attained then the magic belt will be nothing other than a pretty adornment, suitable more for theater than ritual magic.

The magic belt cinches together all of the magician's own powers and abilities, thus it too is sworn to an oath when consecrated. In many ways, it corresponds to the Element Earth and its power to condense things and join one thing to another.

So long as the magic belt is made with one's own hands, it matters little what specific substance it is composed of. Of course it must be an aesthetic fit with the rest of the magic wardrobe, but the details of this are entirely up to the individual. It does not hurt to make the magic belt out of material that will also serve as a sort of Fluid Condenser, but this is not strictly necessary since its main significance will be to the magician's own mentation.

Whether it is to be buckled, buttoned or tied is of little

consequence. I prefer to tie it since this is more fitting with the symbolism I wish it to express. With a tied belt, you can even use where you place the dangling ends to further strengthen its symbolism (i.e., in front, in back, or to either side).

FURTHER MAGICAL AIDS

Here Bardon lists several other opportunities for the construction of magical tools. Some of these are supplemental and have nothing to do with the ritual of evocation itself and others are of great value.

These tools are:

1) Pen, ink, engraving pencil, needles, thread, fabric, paper, colors, and consecration oil. This category concerns the implements necessary for construction of the other tools, sigils, etc. Each of these items is consecrated and empowered, and reserved solely for ritual use.

2) Salt, incense, chalice (cup), paten, whip, and bell. These are actual ritual tools. Although they are not strictly necessary for an evocational operation, they are of great value in other ceremonial (especially in the consecration of the major magic tools). While the first four are fairly well known, the last two deserve some explanation.

The whip need not be too large and it is best, of course, if you can fashion it with your own hands. Its function is similar to a magic sword or dagger, but it does not threaten death in order to manifest authority.

The magic bell is a very fascinating tool. I use several in conjunction with my ritual pursuits and find them to be extremely effective. The sound of a bell is penetrating and can completely transform the tenor of a ritual space. A bell of the proper note and resonance can easily be used as a quick method of summoning a specific entity once such an agreement has been made between the magician and the being in question.

Bardon states that the bell must be made of electro-magicum but in my experience this is not necessary. I employ bells made of either brass or silver and these have always served me to my satisfaction.

3) The magic chain. This belongs to the category of the ritual wardrobe. Also in this specific sub-category, belongs ritual jewelry such as finger-rings, bracelets, pendants, brooches and ear-rings. Each of these is meant to symbolize the magician's accomplishments

such as with the magic chain and its symbolism of membership in the brotherhood of magicians.

There comes a point of overkill with the ritual adornment. Unfortunately, many modern magicians fall into the delusion of thinking that wearing all kinds of fancy jewelry will somehow increase their power. In reality, all this does is inform the spirits evoked by the magician that the magician is not as truly powerful as they would like to pretend. In my opinion, the simpler the better. Any being that is evoked will be able to immediately perceive the magician's true status, and excessive (especially unwarranted) adornment will not positively influence the being's perception of the magician. This form of adornment is strictly for the maintenance of the magician's own state of mind.

One tool not mentioned by Bardon, is the magic staff. This tool is similar to the magic lamp in that it symbolizes the magician's wisdom. The lamp expresses this through its power of illumination, but the staff expresses wisdom as a solid, practical force. The magic staff also represents the long labor of the adept and implies a degree of maturity. It is the wisdom-based grounding strength of the adept.

As with the bell, the magic staff can be employed as an instrument of rhythm during a ritual. It can also be used as a guide for the consciousness as it rises through the planes. For example, a series of tamps with the magic staff can correspond to the numerical kabbalistic sphere to be traveled to.

There are of course, an nearly endless number of possibilities when it comes to the construction of magical aids. How many and for what purpose is entirely up to the needs of the individual.

THE PENTACLE, LAMEN OR SEAL (SIGIL, TALISMAN, ETC.)

While these things have been grouped together by Bardon, they are really separate things that serve separate functions.

The magic pentacle serves to represent a universal power, and is usually displayed during ritual when the magician feels the need for greater power or influence over the evoked being. The pentacle is kept handy within the magic circle.

The lamén is another symbol of the magician's authority, belonging to the category of the magic wardrobe. It is similar to the sword/dagger and the whip, but on a more spiritual, mental level and with less actual threat. The lamén is worn by the magician and is thus kept within the magic circle during the actual ritual.

The talisman, however, is displayed when the magician feels the need for protection. It evokes the protective power of a specific entity, deity or ideation. It too is kept within the magic circle and within convenient reach (in a pocket is good).

The sigil, which Bardon does not actually list here, is used as one means of calling forth the evoked entity into the magic triangle. The sigil is, so to speak, the signature of the being and it may act as a gateway through which said being may be called forth into our realm. During such an operation, it is drawn magically upon paper or some other medium and placed in the center of the magic triangle.

THE BOOK OF MAGIC FORMULAE

This is a misnomer. A better title would be "The Magical Diary", for this is truly no more than a journal of the magician's experiences. Some call it their "Book of Shadows". I cannot stress sufficiently how important it is to keep such a journal. This is where the magician writes down an exact telling of the construction and consecration of each tool, of the plans and preparation for each ritual, plus a detailed outline of the ritual, and a retelling of the experience of each ritual enacted.

The value of this sort of note taking is that the magician can then easily go back and examine what's been done. It's also like an address book should the magician ever want to go back and reestablish contact with an entity worked with before.

As Bardon notes, the magical diary is a very personal thing and great care should be taken to assure that it does not fall into the wrong hands. This is another thing that should be destroyed prior to the magician's death.

In the midst of speaking about how past authors of grimoires, etc., have resorted to obfuscation in their writings, Bardon states: "In order that the real truth, true ideas and spiritual facts might never be known by the public, many code-words and secret formulae have been introduced, the deciphering of which has been reserved to the mature." This is very important in regard to Bardon's own writing of PME. Since the cat has already been let out of the bag, so to speak, I feel free to alert you to the fact that Bardon also used a code when he named the beings of the spheres.

I suspect the reason Bardon did this was because he wanted to afford some protection to the uninitiated dabbler. This reinforced his warning that the magician must have first reached the end of Step

Eight of IIIH, before pursuing PME. For truly, any person who has reached such a level will, on their own, very quickly realize that a code was used and that the names as published are useless.

Whether or not the magician chooses to encode the writings in their magic diary is totally up to the discretion of the individual. Encoding has many advantages, not the least of which is that a code can act as a sort of short-hand and make the taking of notes an easier process.

Near the end of this section, Bardon provides an outline of an evocation ritual. I have only one disagreement with his outline and that has to do with the order of things. Once I have all the necessary accouterments in place, I prefer to put on the ritual wardrobe (robe, belt and cap) before I cast the magic circle. In other words, I would put items 13 through 16, after item 5.

IN THE DOMAIN OF THE SPIRIT BEINGS

Here Bardon provides a well written expose upon the various planes or spheres that the evocationist will be working with.

The first zone to be contended with is our normal sphere of every day existence. This physical realm is explored during the IIIH Step Eight work of mental wandering and is thus considered preparatory to PME.

It is important to note here that one can neither evoke a being from a sphere higher than one's own level of maturity, nor travel to such a sphere. In other words, someone who is mature enough to reach the Mercury sphere cannot genuinely reach the Venus sphere until they have thoroughly explored the Mercury sphere. The exploration and the interaction with the beings of the sphere are what raise the magician's level of maturity.

The first zone concerning the evocationist is the "zone girdling the Earth". In the kabbalistic cosmology, this zone equates with Malkuth -- "Kingdom". [Malkuth comprehends the physical realm but only at its lowest point.] Many kabbalists state that all ten spheres (Sephilot) are reflected within each sphere. Thus in Malkuth there would be a Malkuth-of-Malkuth, a Yesod-of-Malkuth, a Hod-of-Malkuth, etc. These are the levels of density that Bardon refers to.

Bardon states that for the beings of this realm, as well as for the adept who explores this realm, the "ideas of time and space do not exist." This is not altogether accurate in an absolute sense. Time

-- sequence and duration -- and space -- specific location -- do still exist, but one is not bound by these factors in the same way we are in the normal day-to-day world. In other words, the magician can travel to any time or place within this realm but cannot encompass the whole of either time or space from within this realm. The magician may travel to any specific moment/location of time/space but cannot be in more than a single moment/location of time/space at once. Eternity belongs to the realm of Saturn and beyond.

In several pagan traditions, it is believed that when a person dies, their soul becomes a part of the natural surroundings and spreads itself evenly throughout the material realm. From an Hermetic point of view this is an accurate analysis and can be easily related to what Bardon describes of the eventual place of residence of a departed soul.

All the beings within the zone girdling the Earth are tied, in a direct way, with the physical universe. Thus we find departed spirits awaiting their next incarnation. This is the realm in which the astral body slowly decomposes. Furthermore, we find the Elemental beings and the zodiacal spirits that rule over the natural functions, etc.

This is the closest and easiest astral realm for the magician to reach.

Since this is the realm where the soul resides after physical death, it behooves the magician to explore it fully and especially to seek out the place they will end up after death. A well trained magician will be able to transfer many of their ritual regalia, etc., to their place of final residence and can, if they so choose, continue to influence the physical realm from there after they have passed over. Some have been known to maintain an astral presence such as this for an extended period of time, enacting their own special mission. But eventually, even this form must be abandoned and the adept will either reincarnate or will free themselves, with the grace of Divine Providence, from the wheel of rebirth and merge totally with the Divine.

At the end of his discussion of the zone girdling the Earth, Bardon states: "The earth-zone is by no means bordered in any way; it stretches out over the cosmos, not only over the ball of the earth." This may be a difficult idea to comprehend, especially since it's called the "earth" zone. But this title, along with the other planetary titles for the spheres, have nothing to do with the physical planets themselves. These are merely analogies.

We say "earth-zone" in order to signify the manifest universe.

As Bardon states, the zone girdling the earth, pertains to the whole manifest cosmos. The other, higher zones are connected to this earth-zone through the spheres-within-spheres I mentioned earlier. Thus, as the evocationist calls forth a being from the Venus zone, for example, this being will have to descend through the Venus level of the earth-zone, in order to appear in the physical realm. Conversely, a magician must have reached the level of maturity signified by the Venus-of-Malkuth level of density, in order to be able to travel to the Venus zone or to evoke a being from that zone.

Bardon goes on to name the remaining seven zones. Their kabbalistic equivalents are:

Moon = Yesod (Foundation) = #9

Mercury = Hod (Splendor) = #8

Venus = Netzach (Victory) = #7

Sol = Tiphareth (Beauty) = #6

Mars = Geburah (Severity) = #5

Jupiter = Gedulah/Chesed (Mercy) = #4

Saturn = Binah (Understanding) = #3

There are however, two kabbalistic spheres beyond Binah (Chokmah/Wisdom and Kether/Crown), but these are not of concern to the evocationist since the "beings" of these spheres do not have forms in the common sense and thus cannot be evoked. There are, of course, "realms" beyond even Kether, referred to in the kabbalistic cosmology by the name "Ayin" (translated into English as "naught" or "no thing"), but these "realms" are so far beyond the ken of our realm of Being that they are truly incomprehensible to us as human beings. Only The Unity is capable of comprehending these "realms".

ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF EVOCATIONAL MAGIC

This entire section really has nothing to do with a discussion of the advantages and disadvantages of evocation. A better title might have been "WARNING". Here Bardon speaks about necromancy, sorcery, contracts, and all the reasons why he warns against dabbling in this art if you're not truly prepared. To my mind this shows how concerned Bardon was for the safety of the average reader.

THE SPIRITUS FAMILIARIS OR SERVING SPIRITS:

This is an interesting discussion since most past books on the subject hold that the having of a hoard of serving spirit (familiaris) is

to be the goal of the evocationist. Many grimoires even go to the length of listing how many servants such and such a demon has under their command, etc.

But as Bardon points out, this is not a necessary part of evocation. It is good for the evocationist to experience the service of a familiar at least once, but it is not a practice that must be taken to extremes. A familiar can be quite handy at times for the accomplishment of simple tasks and may save the magician a great deal of time, however it also comes with its own responsibilities and the magician may instead decide to handle things for themselves. If you consider the time and effort an evocation ritual takes, the net savings in time must be carefully evaluated.

I would like to note that some of the higher beings will place serving spirits into the magician's sphere on their own as a blessing to the magician. This takes none of the magician's own attention and is never an intrusive thing.

MAGICAL EVOCATION

Here is where Bardon actually talks about the advantages and disadvantages of magical evocation, with an emphasis on what the true prerequisites are. I'll go through these prerequisites one at a time:

1) Well honed astral (and mental) senses. Without these senses, the magician would be unable to gauge the truthfulness of any being evoked, let alone perceive them in their astral form within the triangle.

2) The magical implements or regalia. These are necessary for the beginner. They may, however be dispensed with once the magician has mastered a certain realm, and then the evocation of the beings of said realm can be achieved very easily and without ceremony. But each time the magician advances to a new realm, the magical tools must once again be employed. Evocation is a cyclic process of graduation from novice-to-master-to-novice-to-master, etc.

3) The ability to create the appropriate atmosphere suitable to the entity evoked. This refers to the abilities learned through the first eight Steps of IIIH. Specifically, the ability to condense the Elements, Fluids and Lights.

4) Facility with mental wandering. Without the ability to mentally travel to the sphere of the relevant being, a true evocation

would be impossible. This is the first step (after the casting of the circle, etc.) of an evocation proper. This is how the magician 'invites' the being to appear in the magic triangle. Also, any mystery as to the being's correct name, shape, powers and sigil will be clarified at this point.

5) The magical authority. This is the most essential ingredient of a true magical evocation. By authority Bardon does not mean mundane power-over. The true magical authority comes from the inner maturity of the magician and is made manifest through the magician's unity with deity. The communion and merging with deity is, as I've said before, more properly a part of Step Ten of IHH, but by the end of Step Eight, the student will know enough to effect this sort of contact with deity -- at least enough to work with the evocation of the beings of the Elements.

6) The three-part action. This is not mentioned here specifically by Bardon, but I think it's worth listing. By three-part action I mean the ability to work with full consciousness of one's mental, astral and physical body, simultaneously. Bardon speaks of this in the Step Six, mental exercises when he instructs the student to become cognizant of their spirit working within the glove of the astral body and the physical body. This is a heightened state of awareness wherein each movement is supremely intentional. Without this ability, ritual movements are mere theater.

Following this discussion of prerequisite abilities, Bardon mentions a few things about the evocation ritual itself. The first issue concerns the need to have the entire ritual planned out, everything from what sort of incense, to exactly what sort of oration (if any) is planned. This must all be committed to memory BEFORE beginning the ritual. Especially if the magician plans any sort of pre-written oratory -- such things should not be read, they should be spoken from the heart or they will have no appreciable effect.

As Bardon points out, there should be no unfilled pause in a ritual. No stumbling for lack of remembering what comes next. An evocation is like a maestro's concerto: there may be pauses designed into the flow, but they are PREGNANT pauses, filled with meaning and intent. It should be the same with the evocation -- it too is an art.

Next, Bardon mentions that the conversation with an evoked being occurs in the language most deeply known by the evocationist. If the evocationist speaks several languages, then the conversation will occur in the language that the initiate uses internally. This does not mean that an evoked being speaks or understands the specific

language of the evocationist. On the astral and mental planes all communication occurs at the level of un-worded meaning. There really is no "angelic language" in the common sense -- no language filled with words that are strange and difficult to pronounce as some would have you believe.

As I said, the universal language is that of pure meaning. It is in the perception of this meaning that human language comes into play. Essentially, the translation from root meaning, into the evocationist's own language, transpires within the subconsciousness of the initiate. Conversely, the spoken words of the evocationist are translated by the initiate's subconsciousness into pure meaning. This two-way translation occurs spontaneously and without the will of either the initiate or the evoked being.

One can, with long practice, set aside spoken words and communicate directly by means of pure meaning. Another method is to converse with visual and audible symbols, but this is less efficacious than either words or pure meaning.

So much of the reality of the art of evocation has been shrouded in superstition and fear. As an example, Bardon mentions that for the true magician there will be no poltergeist-like phenomena -- no elevating table, shattering mirrors, nor howls in the night. There must also be no surges of emotion during an evocation, nor any extreme physical sensations. Such things are the mark of an unprepared dabbler, not of a true magician.

A truly prepared magician is in total control of an evocation or any other ritual operation. Both the evoked spirits and the magician him or her self, are under the vigilant control of the evocationist. Here again, the absolute necessity of a proper training makes itself clear.

Next, Bardon raises the issue of how effective an evoked being might be when directed by the magician to carry out a specific task. At first, all that the magician will be able to carry out through the agency of an evoked being, will pertain strictly to the mental realm. In other words, the being will be able to effect only the mentation of either the evoker or others. With time, the mentation thus affected will, of its own accord, manifest upon astral and, eventually upon physical levels, but this occurs in the due course of nature and is not a direct, immediate effect. The energy that the evoked being uses in the fulfillment of such a task generally comes from the magician's own self. It may also come from the universal storehouse of energy, but access to this storehouse must first be commissioned by the magician. In some cases, an evoked being may be persuaded to

employ their own energy for the accomplishment of the magician's appointed task, but this should never be a complex task. It is far friendlier to provide the fuel for the evoked being than to demand it of the being itself. It's like paying for the gasoline when someone offers you a ride. :)

With continued practice and as the magician's abilities mature, one will be able to by-pass the natural mental-to-astral-to-physical descent into manifestation and cause an effect directly upon the astral sphere. This requires a greater condensation of energy for the evoked being to work with. Simultaneous with the projection of an effect upon the astral sphere, a coherent cause is created in the mental sphere. But here again, it will take some time for the effect to naturally descend into a physical manifestation.

Eventually, the magician may be able to cause a physical effect through the agency of an evoked being. Similar to an astral effect, there will be a simultaneous creation of a fully formed mental and an astral causation. This requires a great facility with the condensation of the Elements.

Generally, it is easier for the magician to cause physical effects directly, for themselves. Remember, no evoked being is able to do anything for the magician that the magician cannot already do through their own hands-on labor. The only exception to this is when the dabbler meets up with a negative being who is trying to get the person involved in some sort of parasitic "contract". But such an encounter will never transpire for the truly prepared magician. In the hands of a properly trained magician, the art of evocation poses no threat whatsoever.

Near the end of this section, Bardon repeats the old injunction about how the stars influence but do not compel. This is absolutely true. For the magician, astrological considerations will be a valuable adjunct but not a necessity. If convenient, a ritual may be timed so that it coincides with favorable astrological aspects, etc., but never does the absence of this sort of synchronization preclude an evocation.

Astrological influences effect only those things that have corporeal existence. It is geo-centric. It does not matter one wit in the astral or mental realms, what position a certain planet is in on the physical realm. The only effect the magician might experience in regard to ritual timing is that the physical circumstances surrounding the ritual will be eased if the astrological influences are deemed favorable, or made more difficult if they are unfavorable. This (whether positive or negative) will be seen in the preparation of the

ritual space and in the ease with which any physical effect, or any effect pertaining to the astral or mental body of a corporeal entity, will be accomplished. But to the well trained magician, these effects can be easily overridden.

Bardon concludes by saying that at the end of the evocation ritual, the magician must lead the evoked entity back to its own, native realm. This is rarely mentioned in detail in other books on evocation, other than to provide the practitioner with all sorts of exorcisms and fairly abusive orations which threaten dire consequences if the entity does not immediately return to its realm. This is like rudely shoving a visitor out the door immediately after coffee and without a warm farewell. What is the motivation then to return or even to remain friends?

Kindness is the solvent used by the evocationist and it dissolves all resistance. Evocation is similar to courtship -- it never hurts to walk your date home. ;-) Thus the magician will always escort the evoked entity back to its appointed realm. This not only cultivates a good relationship with the spirits of the realm being explored, but also assures the magician that the entity has indeed found their way home.

It is vital for the evocationist to ascertain that the entity has truly departed at the end of any ritual working. This is a big part of the final conclusion of a ritual during which the magician must completely sever their thoughts from the past magical work. Bardon raises this issue in IHH when he speaks about the creation of an Elemental. Once the Elemental has been sent off to perform its appointed task, the magician consciously stops thinking about the Elemental and in this way frees the Elemental from the magician's own sphere. This same rule holds true for most works of ritual magic -- the ritual must be ended completely before the magician leaves the ritual area. This is done by severing one's thoughts of the ritual; cutting them off entirely for a period of time so that the ritual and its work may gain some degree of independence. This is yet another instance where a good training is essential.

Of course after the ritual, the evocationist will spend some time taking detailed notes of the experience, and will thus have to engage in thinking about the ritual. It is best if there can be a period of several minutes (completely bereft of thoughts about the ritual) between the end of the ritual and the note taking, allowing for the immediacy of the connection to weaken. When note taking, and later, when merely remembering the ritual, the magician will have to take care that they do not become so involved with their memory of

the ritual that they, in effect, reenact it magically in their mind. At first, this may be difficult, but for a well trained magician it will be quickly mastered.

THE PRACTICE OF MAGICAL EVOCATION

Here Bardon describes the itinerary of an actual evocation ritual. He does not go into minute detail and describes only a very easy, uncomplicated evocation. He does however, do an admirable job of informing the passive reader of what the bare-bones of an actual evocation ritual would be like.

As he points out, the practicing evocationist will adapt this basic model to fit their own individual preferences. Since anything I could add by way of description would be useless to the passive reader and unnecessary for the trained practitioner, I will refrain from elaborating upon what Bardon says in this section.

PART TWO

HIERARCHY

In this section, Bardon describes the various planes of the planetary hierarchy and lists a sizable number of the entities one may encounter there. There is nothing of value that I can think of to add to this section other than to say that Bardon's descriptions are accurate and truthful. The only difficulty is that he encoded the names for many of the spirits of the hierarchy, as I've discussed earlier.

INTERCOURSE WITH BEINGS, GENII AND INTELLIGENCES OF ALL SPHERES BY MENTAL TRAVELING

In the course of IHH, mental travel comes before astral travel. This may seem odd considering the popularity of supposedly astral "out of body experiences". The reason for Bardon's sequencing is that astral travel is more difficult, more limited and more dangerous. As Bardon points out, one cannot travel beyond the earth-zone while wearing one's astral body -- the astral body is simply too dense to exist within the purely mental realm.

In essence, a body must be either an exact match, or lighter than, the medium of the plane to which it travels. For example, you cannot pass with your physical form into the zone girdling the earth. Likewise, you cannot enter the moon-zone wearing your earth-zone body. Conversely, you can venture into the earth-zone wearing your moon-zone body, but in order to cause a direct effect in a lower zone, you must condense it to the specific vibration of that lower zone.

Mental wandering is a primary tool for the magician and is essential to the evocationist. Here, Bardon describes its application in exploring the planes of the planetary hierarchy.

MAGICAL TALISMANOLOGY

This section covers items of practice that have already been addressed.

EPILOGUE

This is a lovely epilogue to PME. I would like to close with

the following excerpt:

"Even if only a few human beings are able to go through this course, my second work will have fulfilled its intended purpose. For my books do not belong to the literature which is only read and which afterwards is left to get covered with dust in libraries and corners of bookcases; quite the contrary, my works are destined to serve as a guide and aid to those who have grown up to hermetics and high Adeptship through the coming centuries. In the course of time, millions of human beings will keep to the indicated methods of teaching, putting them into practice to promote their own development and strive steadily after perfection."

PART THREE

ILLUSTRATIONS

Here Bardon displays the sigils (seals) for each of the entities of the hierarchy that he has described previously. This may aid the evocationist at the initiation into a new sphere, but soon after, the magician will find these things out through their own mental travel. In any case, it is wise, when using another's sigil, to verify whether or not it is the one most preferred by the entity to be evoked.

The sigils that Bardon gives are quite different from those given by other grimoires. Many of the older sigils were derived by connecting the various elements of planetary squares or other ciphers, but Bardon's sigils were not derived in this way. His sigils come directly from the beings involved and are, in this way, the being's own signature. They are thus ultimately more effective for evocation. This is not to say that sigils derived by other means are ineffective; it's just that they are less direct and rely more upon the ideation of the evocationist. The ability of these other sigils is a "built up" thing, fed by repeated, traditional use.

For the most part, Bardon's sigils are composed of expressive lines, curves, squiggles, etc. Some of the more complex sigils however, also contain recognizable figures and letters. These too are expressive marks. It should be noted that, especially with the sigils of higher beings, these sigils should not be relied upon since their expressiveness has been translated through the psyche of Franz Bardon -- the evocationist will want to make a sigil that translates this expressiveness through symbols more relevant to their own psyche.

The majority of Bardon's sigils are delivered as black lines, while some of the more complex ones are delivered in color. These colors signify certain planetary, Elemental or Fluidic influences. The ones given in color are reproduced as shown, on a white background, with the planetary color surrounding or outlining the sigilic form (decagon/earth-zone, octagon/Mercury-zone or square/Jupiter-zone). The sigils given in black are actually drawn in the color appropriate to the being's realm or Element. Alternately, they may be drawn in black upon an appropriately colored paper.

Bardon has listed only a small few of the entities one can meet. The ones he chose to list here are ones that he contacted personally and who consented to having their sigils printed for all to

see. These beings have also committed to looking favorably upon the sincere students of Franz Bardon's works. Essentially, when one first uses one of these sigils, one works under the personal aegis of Bardon. In this way, Bardon has given a benefit or advantage to the beginning evocationist.

RAWN'S EPILOGUE

I hope that, through my comments, I have in some small way helped you to better understand the significance of PME and of the true nature of the art of magical evocation.

Part Four
Commentary Upon
The Key to the True Quabbalah
(First Edition)

(Commentator's) INTRODUCTION

Writing this commentary upon Franz Bardon's third book, "The Key to the True Quabalah" (KTQ), has been a struggle of sorts for me. In the past, I have been extremely reticent to discuss the actual practice of this Art openly. To me, kabbalah is a very sacred thing and it pains me to see how often it is misunderstood and its concepts abused. So I have historically refused to say too much about it for fear of promoting the sort of disrespect that is everywhere rampant.

Yet many have asked, quite sincerely and respectfully, for some insight or at least some guidance toward a truer understanding. So I have been torn between, on the one hand, wanting to oblige the sincere student, and on the other hand, maintaining the integrity of this sacred tradition.

On the occasions that I have written about kabbalah, my thoughts have been met with an interesting variety of reactions. For some, my ideas were too radical, especially for those involved with the Western Hermetic sort of kabbalah popularized by the likes of the Golden Dawn. The reason for this discomfort is that I speak openly about how the Western understanding of kabbalah is so very different from the original Jewish tradition, and this is usually perceived as a criticism and a personal affront. In other words, to most Western Hermetic kabbalists, I'm too Jewish in my approach. And unfortunately, to most Jewish kabbalists, I'm too Western in my approach! ;-)

I recognize that my understanding of kabbalah is neither strictly Jewish nor Christian. In fact, my study of kabbalah has not been shaped by any specific religious perspective -- I am neither a Jew nor a Christian. I am an Hermetic, through and through, and my analysis is thus unhindered by religious dogma. Granted, my understanding also lacks something that only someone who has been raised in Judaism can achieve with Jewish Kabbalah, but then again, it matches that lack, point for point, by the fact that I am thus able to view kabbalah from a variety of perspectives freely.

Even though my understanding of kabbalah is not a religious one, this Art is no less sacred to me and I am no less protective of its essential truth, than is a Rabbi who has spent his or her life immersed in its study.

With these things in mind, I grappled with the idea of writing a commentary upon Bardon's KTQ. Should I say all of what I want to

say, or should I, instead, increase the confusion and protect these sacred mysteries from those who would treat them as playthings? Seeking some counsel in this regard, I conferred with my inner guidance and sought out the spirit of Franz Bardon. From this experience I received clear permission to follow the middle course. Thus I will say what I want to say, but I will also leave some things unsaid that are truly the responsibility of the magician to discover for themselves. As Bardon points out, anything that one can say or write about kabbalah will mean nothing to one who is unprepared to understand it. Ultimately, these mysteries protect themselves.

Throughout the writing of this commentary, I sought out the guidance of the spirit of Franz Bardon. Each time that I sat down to write, I touched my favorite photo of Franz until I felt the appropriate tingle up and down my spine that indicated contact, and then I asked that he guide me to write something truly useful to the student of Hermetics. I feel that I have accomplished this and hope that you will feel the same.

Prior to beginning the actual writing, I had expected my commentary to be rather brief, but as it turns out, this commentary rivals my IHH commentary in length and thoroughness.

Like my own, Bardon's Quabbalah is neither strictly Jewish nor strictly Western Hermetic. Bardon blends a Jewish understanding with an essentially Western Hermetic methodology. His correspondences come directly from the Sepher Yetzirah and some of his techniques mirror the works of ancient Jewish kabbalists, but the remainder of his approach is Western. What is most new in Bardon's KTQ is his explanation of *how* one makes a word truly a matter of kabbalistic speech. Never before has this been so plainly stated. This same technique is hinted at in the Sepher Yetzirah, but it is done in so symbolic a language as to be hidden from view. Bardon however, explains this mystery much more plainly and in terms comprehensible to the modern reader.

At the same time, Bardon leaves certain things unsaid that I think the sincere student will benefit from reading. Primarily, these have to do with the relevance of kabbalistic cosmology or philosophy; explaining the sequence of truly kabbalistic "formation" or at least relating Bardon's sequence to that displayed in the Sepher Yetzirah; and, the specifics of what the student just starting out along the path of Hermetics can begin doing in regard to the practical study of kabbalah. My goal with this specific commentary is to express my thoughts concerning these matters and to encourage the reader to look beneath the layers of frivolous speculation found in most books

on the subject of kabbalah, and thus excavate the truth. You, dear reader, must still do the digging, but I hope the shiny new shovel I'm loaning you will make your labor easier.

[NOTE: I will be employing the 1986, Third Edition of KTQ, by Dieter Rugeberg, throughout this commentary.]

THE KEY TO THE TRUE QUABBALAH

(AUTHOR'S) INTRODUCTION

Bardon begins his introduction with a warning similar to that found in PME. Namely, that only the person who has done the work of his first book, IHH, is considered properly prepared for the work of KTQ. Here, he implies that the student must have first mastered the entire ten Steps of IHH, but further on, he modifies this to say that only the first eight Steps must have been mastered. The truth lies somewhere in between, for the magician who is beginning Step Nine of IHH, can indeed begin the Steps of KTQ, but will not be able to use the second, third and fourth keys until well after completing the tenth Step of IHH. The first seven Steps of KTQ will likely take just as long to accomplish as the final two Steps of IHH and will, in fact, facilitate the final Steps of IHH and the work of PME.

Bardon cautions that beginning with KTQ, without having first done the work of IHH and PME would be of little benefit. This is a very accurate statement since the basic techniques of kabbalah require certain magical abilities that would take longer to learn through this particular practice than through the work of IHH. Furthermore, the first seven Steps of KTQ prepare the student's own microcosm for truly creative speech, and if the student's microcosm has not already been matured to a certain degree by the work of Hermetics, then this preparation would take, literally, decades to achieve.

Contrary to popular occultism, where the student begins with supposedly kabbalistic practices immediately, in the Jewish tradition from which kabbalah arises, this is a very late study. One must at least master Torah and Talmud as a prerequisite to kabbalah. This translates as decades of study and practice *before* beginning the work of kabbalah. It is commonly said that one must be at least 40 years old to begin kabbalah and many have mistaken this as an age requirement. In truth it is merely a symbolic way of expressing the need for a certain degree of maturity that is usually related to being 40 years old.

Bardon uses the remainder of his introduction to explain that this book is like no other book on kabbalah available. If you are expecting a book on kabbalistic cosmology, philosophy or on the proper religious observances, you will be sorely disappointed. Essentially, Bardon uses the term 'kabbalah' to indicate the cosmic

language or creative speech, and not the corpus of Jewish kabbalah. He does however draw upon the Jewish kabbalah, but states that an understanding of kabbalah is not a prerequisite to the practice of creative speech. While this is true, I would argue that such knowledge surely doesn't hurt and may in fact make all the difference in the ease with which one will ultimately master this Art.

If you are well versed in kabbalistic philosophy, then KTQ will present you with a deeper understanding that will likely cause you to reconsider many of the conclusions you've drawn from your prior studies. This is especially true if you are familiar with the root document of Jewish kabbalah, know as the "Sepher Yetzirah" (Book of Formation).

Bardon also argues that you do not need to have studied biblical Hebrew in order to master creative speech. This is true, but is untrue if you wish to understand Jewish kabbalah. In Jewish kabbalah, the Hebrew Letters are of paramount importance, and English translations of Hebrew are ALWAYS incomplete and lead to misunderstanding. In this regard, one does not need to be able to speak the Hebrew language, but one must be able to read it and understand its structure, etc. Without this ability, one can penetrate only so far into the mystery of kabbalah. Yet even then, there is much in the way of confusion to be navigated since many kabbalistic texts seem to contradict one another. Needless to say, kabbalah is a difficult and consuming study.

Kabbalistic texts are very similar to Alchemical texts. Both are cloaked in so dense a symbolism as to be penetrable only by those who already know enough to recognize what the author is speaking about. Many instances where readers have thought that one author is contradicting another are nothing more than instances where the separate authors are speaking of slightly different perspectives and are not in fact disagreeing with each other. But there are also many instances where authors do disagree and one must, in these cases, discern which is speaking from direct experience and which is speaking only from theoretical knowledge. Many books concerning kabbalah have been written by the latter and are completely useless.

[Note: In my commentary, I will be referring to the Sepher Yetzirah, so if you are not familiar with this text, my comments may be of little use to you.]

PART I: THEORY

THE QUABBALAH

Here Bardou briefly explains what distinguishes kabbalah and a kabbalist, from magic and a magician. Briefly, kabbalah is the cosmic or divine language through which creation was/is enacted. This is not an intellectual language such as English, French, Chinese, etc. It is not used for purposes of communication between separate beings. Instead, it communicates intent and meaning directly into manifest substance, be it mental, astral or physical substance.

The phrase "the word of g-d" should not be taken literally when relating it to kabbalah. Kabbalah is not based upon the silly idea that some fellow in a white robe and long hair, sat in his throne and spoke a bunch of words, and poof!, the world was created. This is meant only as a symbolic representation by way of the "as above, so below" law of analogy (i.e., likeness). What it represents is the natural descent of spirit (Mind) into matter, which on a cosmic, divine level, occurs outside of time-space (i.e., in eternity).

Where kabbalah differentiates from magic is that in kabbalah, the connection between intent and manifestation occurs outside of time-space and all the natural processes of descent are bypassed. With magic, on the other hand, the magician works from within the realm of time-space and the transition from initial intent into manifestation does follow the natural processes of descent. Only when the magician has succeeded in consciously uniting with the divine, are these natural processes circumvented. Thus, only one who can truly merge with the divine is capable of kabbalistic speech. The kabbalist is the highest form of magician.

Yet I should be clear that kabbalistic speech is not the equivalent of the "original" divine creative use of the word. The "original" (the use of the word 'original' is problematic since this act occurs at a level beyond the realm of time-space) divine creation made "something out of nothing" or "existence out of non-existence", to paraphrase the sages. Whereas human kabbalistic speech works at the next lower level and makes something new by combining things that already exist. In other words, we modify the original creation and are a part of its evolution -- we do not make "something out of nothing".

The kabbalist, by way of analogy, connects with the original divine creative force and, through the use of kabbalistically spoken

letters, mimics the macrocosmic creativity in a microcosmic manner. Consequently, only the individual who has achieved the highest level of ethical maturity is capable of true kabbalistic utterance.

To illustrate the student's path into this sacred science, Bardon says: "To achieve this maturity and height of quabbalistic initiation, the theurgist must first learn the letters like a child." This is born out in the *Sepher Yetzirah* (S. Y.) which mainly concerns the *preparation* for true kabbalistic speech. In the S.Y., one begins by integrating the Sephiroth at the most subtle level and then slowly introduces them as progressively denser expressions. Then one begins "learning" the letters and integrating them into the Sephirotic structure. Only when the entire structure of Sephiroth and letters is built, does one begin *using* the letters creatively.

In KTQ, Bardon focuses upon the integration and the use of the letters and mentions the Sephiroth only briefly as the ten primal numbers/ideas. I believe the reason for this is that the work of IIIH and PME fairly well accomplishes the integration of the Sephiroth in ways equivalent to what the S.Y. describes.

Bardon goes on to state that KTQ does not concern itself with the mantic (predictive) or numerological (in the modern sense) kabbalah so popular in occult literature. While true kabbalah has nothing to do with these practices, it does have much to do with numbers -- as symbols for ideas. Hebrew itself has several levels of meaning. Each letter represents an idea, a numerical value, and a physical sound.

It is important to note that Hebrew numbers are not the same as modern numerals. In the Hebrew *language*, the numbers are spelt out and are not shown as integers such as '1', '2', etc. But when it comes to the individual letters, each has its own value. For example: Aleph=1, Beth=2, Gimel=3, Yod=10, Kaph=20. To signify the numerical value and ideological significance of 13, one could combine Gimel and Yod (3+10=13). However, in Hebrew there is often more than one way to symbolize a specific numerical value. With 13, one can also use ABY (1+2+10=13), ABGZ (1+2+3+7=13), HCh (5+8=13), DT (4+9=13), GDV (3+4+6=13), etc. The higher the numerical value, the more options there are for expressing it through letter combinations. Thus one can express many nuances of meaning depending upon which, and how many, letters one uses.

This doesn't become important until much later in the practice (Step Five: The Ten Quabbalistic Keys) when the fourth pole of the quadrupolar concentration is encountered. This is where Bardon speaks about the numbers 1 through 10 which represent the ten

primordial ideas underlying the creation. What Bardon leaves out is the manner in which these 10 ideas relate to the letters themselves.

MAN AS QUABBALIST

This is a lovely essay on what it means to be a kabbalist. Bardon says more here than actually meets the eye, but this, I think, would be apparent only to one who truly understands the path of the kabbalist.

One passage I'd like to elaborate upon is where Bardon writes: *"The functioning and working between body, soul and spirit comes to pass automatically with every human being, no matter whether he has been initiated into the secrets of hermetic science or not. For the quabbalist this is the multiplication table: he knows all the processes and is therefore able to arrange his life in accordance with the universal laws."*

This says two important things. One is that the natural processes, which are generally subconscious in the average person, are conscious and willful within the kabbalist. Second is that these processes, developed into conscious faculties, are the material that the kabbalist works with (the "multiplication table"). This means that the kabbalist must first integrate the multipliers (the Letters and numbers) into their own three bodies, and then, in the act of kabbalistic speech, project these attributes from within themselves, outwards. It is this projection outwards from within that establishes the connection with the divine creative word.

Therefore, the kabbalist must be conscious of their three bodies (mental, astral and physical) at a most intimate level and must also be able to manifest the universal qualities within them. In KTQ, this is accomplished (assuming that the student has indeed worked through at least the eighth Step of IIIH) through the work of Steps One through Five. Steps One through Four build the universal qualities into the initiate's three bodies. Step Five introduces the fourth pole of the quadrapolar concentration -- the numbers -- which further integrates and orders the universal qualities. Only then is the initiate truly prepared for the first key of kabbalistic speech.

Another passage I would like to note is: *"The genuine quabbalist thus is a representative of the Creation, but he remains the most obedient servant of the universal laws, the more he becomes an initiate, the humbler he is towards Divine Providence. He is, indeed in possession of the greatest power, yet he will never use his power for his own purposes, but only for the welfare of mankind."*

Many have sought the knowledge and use of the true kabbalah merely for the purpose of gaining great power, but none of these have succeeded. This will always be the case. Part of the Mystery is that in order to achieve this high a degree of initiation, one naturally outgrows all petty desires. Another part of the Mystery is that power this great is bound by the universal laws and can never violate those laws. In other words, even if the kabbalist could wish to use this art for a mundane purpose, he or she would not be able to.

I would like for you to carefully think about the deeper significance of this. Consider for a moment all of the truly horrific things that occur in our world daily. Throughout every moment of our human existence, these things have been occurring to one degree or another. Simultaneously, there have always been individuals among us who have wielded the great power of the creative word or kabbalistic speech, any one of which would, in theory, have had the power to rectify these tragedies. But herein is another part of the Mystery -- they have not rectified these wrongs because this would violate the universal lawfulness. The kabbalist does not work 'against the darkness'; instead, the kabbalist works 'for the Light'. There is a difference here that should be carefully considered, for the kabbalist realizes that the darkness is just as lawful a thing as is the Light.

One final comment for this section concerns the passage: *"On the way to perfection there should not be any haste. Everything takes time and needs the necessary maturity for its perfection."*

I know of at least one group who is taking the KTQ and having their novices (folks with little or no magical training) begin the practices with the tripolar concentration exercises. I think this and similar approaches arise out of a basic impatience with the prospect of a long magical development. This is a great failing in our modern world for it misses so much of the richness of life and especially of magic. Truly, someone who approaches kabbalah in this manner looks forward to decades, if not lifetimes, more effort than one who begins with IHH. But there is little that can be said to dissuade this approach -- how many of us as children truly listened to our elders?

For those of you who are willing to listen to your elders, then please do heed Bardon's words and take your time. Starting with KTQ before you've passed through the work of IHH is The Longest Way. Truly, the shorter, quicker Way is to do the work of IHH first. Even so, the true kabbalist will still take lifetimes to reach perfection -- but don't short-change yourself since many who come to this work

with a serious intention have already spent lifetimes along The Way. To the kabbalist -- one who has attained an eternal perspective -- time is of no concern.

THE LAWS OF ANALOGY

The difference between an intellectual understanding of the laws of analogy and a magical understanding is significant. The magician not only knows the laws intellectually but also experientially. The work of IHH integrates the macrocosmic laws directly into the magician's own microcosm. This is what enables the magician to actually manipulate those laws.

If you have not read the seminal document known as "The Emerald Tablet of Hermes", then I suggest that you do so since it forms much of the basis of the Hermetic approach. It is from the "Emerald Tablet" that the oft repeated phrase "As above, so below; as below, so above" is derived. This is the most rudimentary statement of the law of analogy.

In kabbalistic cosmology, this is found in the doctrine of emanation. Accordingly, Kether (the highest, primordial Sephirot) contains within itself the remaining nine Sephirot, in a state of unrealized potential. Each successive Sephirot contains both the realization of those that precede it and the potential for those that follow. Thus the universal qualities exist throughout every level of the creation either in potential or in manifestation.

Bardon mentions "chaos" in passing but I'd like to comment further. To say that there is no such thing as chaos is, on the one hand, an accurate statement, but on the other hand it doesn't afford any insight into why people think that such a state exists. Chaos is a term that expresses a certain degree of ignorance and merely identifies a state of existence that supersedes time-space (i.e., sequence). In the eternal realm, things exist without the ordering of sequence and from the normal human sequentialized perspective, this realm appears chaotic. This is because, as sequentialized beings, we have no reference points by which to understand the non-sequentialized realm. Chaos exists only in the minds of humans.

Next, Bardon refers to the "Sepher Yetzirah" and I must say a few things in this regard. The S.Y. does not speak of the "original" creation -- it speaks of the "formation". This is a bit complex so please bear with me while I explain.

In the kabbalistic cosmology, there are four "Worlds". The

first world is called "Atziluth" and this is the "original" archetype within which all the manifest universe exists in a state of unrealized potential.

The second world is called "Briah" (creation) and this is the "original" creation. The book (sepher) that describes this phase (in VERY symbolic terms) is the first chapter of Genesis (i.e., the creation story). It is from this passage of the Torah that the "32 Paths of Wisdom" were derived (from the 32 times that the Name "Elohim" is mentioned). At the stage of "creation", the entire universe exists as manifest, yet un-realized, potential. This is the nadir of the non-sequentialized realm, known commonly as "chaos".

The third world, known as "Yetzirah" (formation), is the concern of the S. Y. At this stage, the lower mental and higher astral aspects of the universe are manifest AND realized. It is this level of "formation" that the kabbalist employs, but in order to employ formation, the kabbalist must first achieve a Briatic level of consciousness. This Briatic consciousness is the same as union with divinity. Creation, whether it be divine or mundane, is always a downward/outward projection of self. Thus it is from the higher level of the Briatic/creative consciousness that one engages in "formation".

The fourth world of the kabbalist is "Assiah" (making). This encompasses the lower astral at its apex and the material realm at its nadir. The S.Y. does not refer to "making", but only to "forming". Yet from our normal Assiatic perspective, "formation" is "creation".

The S.Y. refers to "formation" but this is also the first step in "making". Bardón draws out what the S.Y. has to offer the kabbalist and extends it into the realm of "making". This is what I meant earlier when I said that the S.Y. concerns mainly the preparation for true kabbalistic speech.

It is important, when considering these four worlds and the four types of creation, to understand that the realms of Atziluth and Briah exist outside of time-space, so these creative acts do not occur in any sequence. In other words, it is not proper to say that they "did" occur or in what sequence. Much time and intellect has been wasted trying to specify which part of the "original" creation occurred first, second, third, etc. The "original" creation occurred all at once.

The levels of Yetzirah (formation) and Assiah (making) on the other had, do occur with sequence and are what constitute the realm of time and space. This is the level at which the kabbalist works.

In closing this section, Bardón mentions the analogies

pertaining to the letters and numbers, without going into any detail. In fact, no where in KTQ does he explain the numerical analogies of the letters. I presume it is because of space considerations and the fact that it is up to the student to investigate these things on their own. Further on, I will be providing the numerical corollaries for most of the letters Bardon uses based upon their relationship to the established numerical values of the Hebrew Letters. There are however, similar numerical systems in existence for the English, Greek and Latin alphabets that run contrary to the one I will provide. It is my contention that Bardon's kabbalah relies upon the Hebrew analogies and not upon these more recent developments.

Where number comes into play in KTQ is with the fourth pole of the quadrapolar concentration. Bardon is a bit vague about this, but basically the fourth pole is the ideation conveyed through number. This must be taken into consideration because it is the final key that unlocks the universal lawfulness and allows for material effectiveness. The four poles are: Fire/Color, Air/Tone, Water/Feeling, and Earth/Number. Each pole is part of the complete analogy of each letter. Only when all four poles are perfectly integrated is true kabbalistic speech possible.

ESOTERICS OF THE LETTERS

Here Bardon delves a little more deeply into the analogy of the letters which form kabbalistic speech. Yet still he gives no specific corollaries.

One thing the reader must understand is that these analogies are not applied to mundane words, or as Bardon puts it, intellectual language. It does little good to examine the analogies to the letters that compose the English word "dog". The analogies have no relationship to the meaning of this word since it is only an intellectual word and not a kabbalistically composed word.

It may be difficult to comprehend exactly what significance letters may have in terms of actual creation. To do so, one must distance oneself from taking the concept too literally. Do not assume that "god" literally spoke a language in the human sense and thus effected the creation. But as a symbolic statement, it bears close examination.

In human terms, speech is our primary form of communication. Through language we externalize an inner meaning and through this expression we give this inner meaning shape and

some degree of concrete manifestation. With kabbalistic speech, each letter or group of letters expresses a specific idea or meaning that we wish to externalize and bring into manifestation. The letters act as a conduit for this particular meaning.

Now, meaning is no simple thing, especially the expression of it, so we combine the atoms of meaning (the individual letters) and form more complex molecules (words), then we put these molecules together to form concrete substance. Furthermore, each letter is expressed in each one of the three realms (mental, astral and physical), giving it even more depth of meaning -- fleshing it out, as it were. Ultimately, the kabbalistic language can encompass a truly infinite variety of meanings. This is what transpired with the "original" creation which is infinite.

Analogy is a microcosmic thing. In other words, at a macrocosmic level there is no need for analogy since all meaning exists directly in its raw or primordial form. It is only in the expression of meaning that requires analogy.

Thus the analogy or esoterics of the letters mimics the divine creative expression in *human* terms. And since we are humans, we use letters kabbalistically to creatively express our inner meaning.

Bardon mentions the analogy between the ten fingers and toes of the human body, and the ten primordial ideas that serve as the foundation of the manifest universe. In the kabbalistic cosmology of the S. Y_ however, there are more analogies than just this drawn between the human form and the cosmic form. For example, there are three (the number of kabbalistic Elements) "Mothers in the breath filled soul": head, womb, and respiring chest. There are seven (the number of planets) "apertures in the breath filled soul": two eyes, two ears, two nostrils, and the mouth. There are twelve (the number of the zodiac) "directors in the breath filled soul": two hands, esophagus, stomach, spleen, liver, intestines, gall, two kidneys, and two feet.

Thus we find that each letter also corresponds to a body part, while the ten primordial ideas or Sephirot correspond to the fingers (positive) and the toes (negative).

As an aside, I think it is important to note at this point that in the S.Y. there are only three Elements, expressed through the "Mother Letters". These Elements also correspond to the three Hermetic realms of Mental, Astral and Physical.

The uppermost Element is Fire, represented by the Hebrew Letter Shin. This roughly corresponds to the Mental realm. The middle Element is Air, represented by the Hebrew Letter Aleph,

which corresponds to the Astral realm. The lower Element is Water, represented by the Hebrew Letter Mem, corresponding to the lower Astral and Physical realms. In the Genesis, chapter one, creation story, the Shin/Fire is referred to as the "upper Waters", and the Mem/Water as the "lower Waters". Needless to say, the Hermetic conception of the Elements and realms differs slightly from that of the Hebrew kabbalists.

The idea of Earth as an Element comes later in the development of kabbalistic philosophy and can be seen, in an obscure way, in the arrangement of the "32 Paths of Wisdom" tradition. Here, Aleph/Air is the eighth Path, Mem/Water is the sixteenth Path, Shin/Fire is the twenty-fourth Path, and Tav/Earth is the thirty-second Path. Thus each Element is a multiplication of the number eight, and this, in an esoteric manner, signifies that the Letter Tav corresponds to the Element Earth.

One can also draw parallels between the four kabbalistic worlds and the four realms of the Hermetic. Thus: Atziluth=Akasha, Briah=Mental, Yetzirah=Astral, and Assiah=Physical. Of course these are rather loose associations, but they are close enough for the purposes of this present work.

THE COSMIC LANGUAGE

Here Bardon clarifies the difference between the cosmic language of kabbalah and that spoken between non-corporeal beings such as the beings of the Elements and of the various planes. This latter, Bardon calls the "metaphorical language". Simply put, it is a matter of quadrapolarity versus monopolarity. Each being speaks with the single pole of its realm, whereas the cosmic language is spoken with all four poles simultaneously. Thus the metaphorical language is not creative throughout the whole cosmos as is the quadrapolar language.

Only a being capable of uniting itself consciously with deity can achieve a quadrapolarity akin to deity, and thus speak creatively. This may be difficult to comprehend, but the key to it is that we are beings which span the entire gambit of creation. We are composed, in the terminology of metaphysics, in the divine image and thus we are able to unite ourselves consciously with the *whole* of the creation. A being of one of the higher, non-corporeal planes, is not able to encompass the whole of the creation since it cannot truly encompass the physical realm. We are unique in this regard. Which

is not to say that we humans are the only corporeal beings capable of this, but rather, that only a corporeal being of a certain basic structure is capable of this. In other words, there are other physical, non-human beings capable of quadrapolar expression.

THE MAGIC-QUABBALISTIC WORD -- TETRAGRAMMATON

Bardon's explanation of the Tetragrammaton ("four-part word") is problematic for a number of reasons. The most glaring of which is his association of the individual Letters to the Elements. Unfortunately it is a bit more complex than Bardon implies. Please bear with me as I try to better explain the significance of the YHVH.

First of all, YHVH is "unpronounceable" because it has never been given vowel points in the Hebrew language. It is the vowel points that make a Hebrew word utterable. [All of the Hebrew Letters are consonants which require separate figures called "vowel points" in order for them to be spoken.] This tradition arose out of the esoteric idea that this is The Name of g-d, and as such, it deserves the utmost respect. Therefore, it is never spoken aloud -- *except in kabbalistic speech*.

A Jew reading aloud from the Torah will never vocalize YHVH. Instead, the word Adonai (ADNI = "lord") is substituted. Later renderings of YHVH, such as the Christian Jehovah or the modern Yaweh, are merely inaccurate conveniences of intellectual language and have no true power.

The fact that YHVH is not vocalizable presents difficulties when the Torah is translated into another language. Most often the word "lord" or simply "god" is used, but in the Hebrew Torah, the YHVH is very important. YHVH is often combined with other indicative terms such as ADNI or ALHIM or TzBAVTh, and in each case will mean something different.

There are kabbalistic practices, such as those of Abraham Abulafia, which do speak the YHVH by inserting vowel points, but this relies upon quadrapolar, kabbalistic speech and is not a matter of intellectual language.

Now, regarding Bardon's association of the Elements to the Letters of YHVH, his attributions as given are profoundly incorrect. I cannot explain why this is so other than to suggest that the difficulties with the manuscript that the publisher notes may be a contributing factor. I don't imagine that Bardon so misunderstood as to have really believed what is printed in KTQ.

At any rate, Bardon puts the correspondences as follows: Y=Fire, H=Air, Vav=Water, and the final H=Earth. In reality the correspondences should read: Y=Fire, H=Water, V=Air, and the final H=Earth. Yet even this is a twisting of the deeper meaning. It is convenient for the Hermetic, but it is not strictly accurate from a kabbalistic perspective.

In the S.Y., 1:13 it says: "He chose three letters from among the Elementals, in the Mystery of the three Mothers: Aleph, Mem, and Shin. And He set them in His Great Name." Thus, through a few twists of esoteric logic, Y=Shin/Fire, H=Mem/Water, and V=Aleph/Air. As in the Genesis, chapter one, creation story, where there are upper and lower Waters, the H of YHVH serves in two capacities, and at the end it signifies the Element Earth and the nadir of the lower Waters.

From an Hermetic standpoint, the YHVH represents the sequence of the Elements thus: First the two primordial polarities of Fire and Water come into existence -- Y & H. This is followed by the product of the polarization, Air, the mediating influence -- V. The final interaction of Fire and Water, through the continuum of Air, results in coherent manifestation, Earth -- the final H. Since this is 'Form', it is more akin to Water, thus it is represented by the letter H.

When working with the YHVH kabbalistically per Bardon, the Y=Akashic realm, H=Mental realm, V=Astral realm, and the final H=Physical realm.

Thus Bardon uses the YHVH to signify both the quadrapolar concentration pertaining to the four Elements, and the four realms within which the kabbalist must work.

Toward the end of this section, Bardon mentions the Shemhamphorash. For clarity's sake, I should point out that this Name is not composed of 72 letters as Bardon infers. Rather, it is composed of 72 three-letter names, which in combination make up the 72-Fold Name. The shemhamphorash is derived from three lines, containing 72 letters each, found in Exodus and which, with a little trickery, are broken down into 72 three-letter groups. This belongs to the third key and is seldom used in its total as a 216th key conglomerate.

THE MANTRAS / THE TANTRAS

Since these two sections really have nothing to do with kabbalah and since I know little of either, I will not comment upon them.

MAGIC FORMULAS

Here Bardon clarifies the difference between the common magic formulas such as "Abracadabra", which fill many popular books, and those referred to later as kabbalistic formulae. Kabbalistic formulae are nothing other than the Letters spoken in a kabbalistic, quadrapolar manner, either singly or in combination. The lesser magic formulas, are not of the same ilk and their effectiveness, if any, comes from either the entity involved or from a volt built up by repeated use.

THEORY OF QUABBALISTIC MYSTICISM

Bardon makes the point that over the centuries, many mystical writings have been misinterpreted; either taken too literally or not literally enough. This is very much the case with kabbalah and each student must wrestle with the interpretation of these ancient writings. What Bardon offers in the following sections on practice, seems to cut through this confusion and penetrates to the heart of the matter.

I will now diverge a bit from the thread Bardon is developing in this section and will concentrate on a few matters that I think are important to the student of the true kabbalah.

As I mentioned previously, Bardon speaks of a quadrapolar concentration: Fire/Color, Air/Tone, Water/Feeling and Earth/Legality (Number). With this quadrapolar concentration, the kabbalist must work tripolarly: Mentally, Astrally and Physically. In other words, one uses the quadrapolar concentration within each of these three realms, through one's own three bodies, simultaneously. This is similar to the Alchemical philosophy which posits three philosophical principles (Mercury, Sulphur and Salt) and four Elements (Fire, Air, Water and Earth).

When Bardon mentions the uttering of a kabbalistic letter, he speaks of three phases or modes: mental or silent, whispering, and aloud. The first is effective only upon the mental plane and occurs solely within the mind of the kabbalist. The second mode, whispering, occurs aloud but with only the breath and mind, and without any vibration of the vocal cords. This is effective only upon the astral plane. The third mode, aloud, involves mind, breath and vibration of the vocal cords, and is effective upon the physical plane.

When uttering a letter kabbalistically, whether with mind, breath or vibration of the vocal cords, great care must be taken in

pronouncing only the letter involved and not the vowels associated with the common pronunciation of the consonants. For example, when we pronounce the letter 'B', we say "bee". This means that we pronounce both the consonant 'B' and the vowel 'E'. In kabbalistic speech however, only the 'B' itself is to be pronounced.

In kabbalah, the consonants are divided into groups according to the way in which they are formed in the mouth:

Dentals: Z, S, Sh, R, Tz

Palatals: G, I, K, Q

Gutterals: A, Ch, H, O

Linguals: D, T, L, N, Th

Labials: B, V, M, P

The vowels, on the other hand, do not fit into any of these groups and are therefore of an entirely different nature, dependent only upon breath and the shape of the mouth, etc.

The best way to understand these consonantal groupings is to carefully practice with each letter in a whispering mode. Once you have mastered the correct pronunciation with breath alone, then integrate the vibration of the vocal cords. As you work with the various letters, you will notice that some are explosive and of short duration, such as the 'K' or the 'T' sounds, and others can be extended, such as the 'S' or the 'R' sounds. The vowels, of course, can also be extended to the limit of the breath.

Each of these features correspond to the meaning of the letters and must be mastered *before* one begins the actual practice of the quadrapolar concentration. This is especially important when speaking them mentally. As anyone who has done the work of IIIH will know, the exact sound must be reproduced in the imagination.

True kabbalistic speech is a very complex matter. First there is the quadrapolar concentration, then the tripolar action, then the placement or projection of the letter into the appropriate realm, and then the actual pronunciation of the letter as noted above. All of which must occur simultaneously.

The question will arise as to where Bardon got his correspondences and why there are other sets of correspondences that seem to contradict these. For example, there is a system of colors used in the Golden Dawn and its derivatives known as the "Scale of colors for the four worlds". These colors have absolutely no relationship to those offered by Bardon yet they are an effective scheme.

Essentially, there are many such valid systems and what Bardon offers here is merely one such. However, it is important to

understand that each of these systems nets a different result. Similar to mathematics, different components result in a different sum. For example, the use of the color sky-blue for the letter 'A', combined with the tone 'G', the feeling of 'ease' and the legality of the number 'one', will result in the effect noted by Bardon. But, if one uses instead, the color 'bright pale-yellow' and the tone 'C' for the same letter, a different effect will result.

Ultimately, there is no absolutely correct correspondence. But, there is a correct correspondence for each effect one wishes to incur.

The question will also arise as to how one will know if one has achieved the correct color or the correct tonal value. The key to this is the kabbalist's own intuition. For example, the correct tone, when achieved will be apparent to the practitioner in much the same way as when one tries to match tone with a song on the radio. When you reach harmony, it feels right. Thus it is for the kabbalist when they reach the correct tone or color and the sensation of harmony occurs. In other words, you will know with certainty when you reach this harmony and if you do not feel this certainty, then you must continue practicing and refining until you do.

For kabbalah to truly reflect the infinite nature of the creation, it must be capable of an infinite variety of expression. This occurs not only through combination of the letters but also through the infinite variety possible within each letter. At first the kabbalist learns just one set of correspondences for the letters and then, with long practice, learns a greater variety of expressions for each letter. This, after all, is an art form, not a science.

Bardon reproduces the equivalent of only 21 of the 22 Hebrew letters -- only the Tav (Th sound) is unaccounted for. He also lists two letter sounds that are not, strictly speaking, in accord with the Hebrew alphabet -- Bardon's 'J' and 'U'. Although, Bardon's 'J' may be considered a phonetic aspect of the Hebrew Gimel (in its secondary, soft form) *or* a symbolic equivalent of the Hebrew Tav; and his 'U' may be the equivalent of one of the Hebrew vowel points. [At a symbolic level, Bardon's 'U' is most likely Chirik and I have indicated it thus in the upcoming charts that you will encounter in my discussion of Step I.]

Bardon lists only 27 letter sounds, but there are many more, all of which have creative value when spoken kabbalistically. But in practice, at least in the beginning, this is unimportant.

Towards the end of this section, Bardon writes the following: "It corresponds with the construction of genuine quabbalah, of true quabbalistic mysticism, that these four basic qualities of the spirit

[i.e., the quadrapolar concentration] be first kept apart by the quabbalist to enable him later to project a letter, with its powers and analogies, practically into the spheres of the spirit, the soul and the physical matter within himself and outside of himself, now using all four basic qualities of the spirit." What this rather long sentence means is that the training must by necessity occur in parts and each part must be developed fully and separately before they can be effectively combined. Thus Bardon follows the same pattern as he does in IIH of gradual and balanced training. The student learns the speaking of all 27 letters, integrating one pole at a time, and once each letter is mastered, the four poles of a letter are then combined kabbalistically as the first, single-letter key. Then, once the quadrapolar use of all the single letters is mastered, *within the mental, astral and physical realms*, the student begins to work with the second, two-letter key, etc.

QUABBALISTIC MAGIC

Here Bardon defines the difference between the preparatory work of kabbalistic mysticism and true kabbalistic magic. By kabbalistic magic he means the actual kabbalistic speech. By kabbalistic mysticism, he means the work of IIH and that of the first five Steps of KTQ. This latter prepares the three bodies of the kabbalist and integrates the universal qualities to such an extent that they may then be used creatively. This process utterly transforms the entire being of the kabbalist and makes of her or him a true reflection of the macrocosm.

Bardon states the following: "*To speak quabbalistically means to create something out of nothing.*" This is not strictly accurate although Bardon does not mean it to be taken absolutely literally. As I hinted previously, only once was "something made from nothing" and that was during the 'original' creation of the macrocosm. The kabbalist however, works within the microcosm and therefore merely reshuffles the already established "something" into new forms. Figuratively speaking, this seems like making something out of nothing, but strictly speaking it is not the same. It is important that the student of kabbalah realize this from the outset otherwise there is danger of self-delusion. The kabbalist is only the *agent* of Divine Providence, not the fullness of Divine Providence herself.

Near the end of this section Bardon makes the following, somewhat premonitory, statement: "It is reserved to Divine

Providence alone to decide whether I shall be allowed to publish systematically any further keys relating to the micro- and macrocosm. This, of course, depends, above all, on the question of how much longer I shall have to remain on this planet."

Shortly after the writing of this book, Bardon was incarcerated for the final time and eventually died in prison. His statement gives us an interesting insight into this amazing person. One thing it tells us is that he declined the available knowledge of his own fate. In other words, he chose to *not* know his exact future even though such knowledge was readily available to him.

I suspect that what we have of KTQ is a first draft of a manuscript that Bardon had hoped to refine. It certainly has its rough spots, and as Dieter Rugeberg notes, the original manuscript no longer exists. There are parts of KTQ that, on the surface, contradict other parts -- although these seeming contradictions resolve themselves with further study -- and there are some passages where it seems Bardon tried out several ways of saying a certain thing and thus repeated himself. All of these things would, I presume, have been rectified in a rewriting of the text.

PART II: PRACTICE

PRECONDITIONS

Here Bardon once again stresses the fact that the student must have already done the work of IIIH, at least through the eighth Step. Without this training as a prerequisite, the student will be wasting a great deal of their time and effort.

One must, at the very least, be able to work in a tripolar manner, i.e., with one's spirit, soul and body, simultaneously and with full consciousness. One must also have achieved the unshakable Elemental equilibrium. One must also have trained their senses (mental astral and physical) to such a degree that they can project any image, sound or feeling with absolute clarity. One must also be able to transfer their consciousness into the Akasha, into the mental realm and into the astral realm.

However, the training through Step Eight of IIIH will take the student only so far into kabbalah. The training of the two final Steps of IIIH must be mastered before the initiate can use the keys and speak kabbalistically. This is because the true kabbalist must be able to merge their consciousness with divinity.

It is also wise for the serious student to confer with a being of the zone girdling the earth and confirm all of the information provided in KTQ. This can be easily accomplished through mental wandering. Having done this myself, I can honestly say that there are no serious errors in the information provided in Part Two of this book. The only real error is in regard to the anatomical attribution given to the letter 'Z', but this may easily be an oversight common to a first-draft manuscript. However, there are problems with some of what is presented in Part Three. I assume this was intentional and meant as a means of protecting this sacred art. It is up to the serious student to find these things out for themselves.

Bardon mentions the nature of the Step One exercises. These concern the first pole of the quadrapolar concentration; that of Fire or the visualization of color. As Bardon points out, the individual variations in the perception of color is not an issue here. These are not, strictly speaking, physical colors. They are *mental* colors and as one who has passed through the work of IIIH will realize, mental and astral colors are quite different than physical colors. For one, they have a broader spectrum, and second, they express meaning more directly than do physical colors. Thus, when one practices the light blue of 'A', the correct hue and intensity will reveal itself to the

student. As I mentioned previously, the student's own intuition will alert them when harmony is achieved. Once again, the importance of a proper training makes itself evident.

To a great extent, the mental perception of color is a function of the magician's maturity. Thus each magician will harmonize with a light blue that is appropriate to their own maturity. Regardless of maturity, it will still be a light blue, but what gets communicated by that color will vary with the level of maturity and this will be reflected in the quality of the light blue one harmonizes with.

The same can be said of the later Steps or other poles of the quadrapolar concentration. Thus the quality of the Air/Tone will depend upon the student's maturity, as will the quality or depth of the Water/Feeling. So too will the depth of understanding of the Earth/Number (legality).

STEP I -- MYSTICISM OF THE LETTERS

Thus begins the actual work with the letters. This Step pertains strictly to the Fire pole of the quadrapolar concentration. As in IIIH, Fire relates to the capacity of visualization.

When working with the Fire pole in this Step, the actual speaking of the letter occurs only at a mental level. In other words, you will be neither whispering the letter, nor speaking it aloud. The point here is to bind the color oscillation to the ideation of the letter at a mental level.

Nonetheless, one must still work tripolarly; i.e., with the unified mental, astral and physical bodies. This was discussed in Steps Five and Six of IIIH. Briefly, this entails being conscious of the fact that your astral and physical bodies encase your mental body and act as a single unit.

As with the similar exercises of IIIH, you must be cautious that you avoid extending your normal breathing rhythm. Each exercise should be accomplished within the span of your normal breath. There should be no inhaling more deeply and no holding of the breath either in or out. If your process of ideation and visualization does not, at first, fit within a single breath, then take "empty" breaths while your ideation catches up to your natural breathing cycle.

The exercises of this Step will be familiar to anyone who has done the work of IIIH. There are no new techniques here.

Here are two charts. I will be referring to them frequently throughout the remainder of my commentary. Take a few minutes now to familiarize yourself with them.

CHART #1 PER BARDON:					
	FIRE POLE --			AIR POLE --	WATER POLE --
LETTERS: Bardon/Hebrew	COLOR	ELEMENT / REGION	ANATOMY	TONE	ELEMENT / FEELING
A / Aleph	Light Blue	Air / Chest	Lungs	G	Air / Ease
Ä / Kametz	Light Brown	Earth / Legs	Anus	C	Akasha & Earth / Pen. & Wt.
B / Beth	Light Violet	Water / Abdomen	Right Eye	A	Earth / Weight
C / Tzaddi	Vermilion	Fire / Head	Stomach	D	Fire & Air / Heat & Ease
D / Daleth	Dark Blue	Earth / Legs	Right Ear	C	Fire / Heat
E / Tzere	Dark Violet	Fire / Head	Spine	D	Akasha / Penetrating
F / Vav	Light Green	Water / Abdomen	Left Hand	F#	Earth / Weight
G / Gimel	Grass Green	Earth / Legs	Left Eye	F	Water / Cold
H / Heh	Silvery Violet	Water / Abdomen	Right Arm	A	Fire / Heat
Ch / Cheth	Violet	Akasha / Plexus	Left Leg	D#	Water / Cold
I / Yod	Light Opal	Earth / Legs	Left Kidney	G	Earth / Weight
J	Dark Opal	Earth / Legs	Diaphragm	G#	Water / Cold
K / Kaph	Silvery Blue	Fire & Air / Head & Chest	Left Ear	B	Fire / Heat
L / Lamed	Dark Olive Green	Air / Chest	Spleen	F	Air / Ease
M / Mem	Blue-Green	Water / Abdomen	Hollow of Abdomen	D	Water / Cold
N / Nun	Dark Flesh-Red	Fire / Head	Liver	A	Water / Cold
O / Ayin	Dark Ultramarine	Fire / Head	Pharynx	C	Earth / Weight
Ö / Cholam	Dark Orange	Fire / Head	Testicles / Ovaries	D#	Akasha & Earth / Pen. & Wt.
P / Peh	Dark Gray	Earth / Legs	Right Nostril	B	Earth / Weight
R / Resh	Bright Gold	Akasha & Water/ Plexus & Abd.	Left Nostril	C	Earth / Weight
S / Samekh	Purple (Brick) Red	Fire / Head	Gall Bladder	G#	Fire / Heat
Sh / Shin	Blazing-Red	Fire / Head	Brain	C	Fire / Heat
T / Teth	Brown-Black	Earth / Legs	Right Kidney	F	Fire / Heat
U / (Chirik?)	Shining Black	Akasha & Earth / Plexus & Legs	Pancreas	B	Akasha / Penetrating
W / Qooph	Lilac	Akasha & Air / Plexus & Chest	Intestines	G	Water / Cold
Y, Ü / Shurek	Pink	Fire / Head	Heart	C#	Akasha & Earth / Pen. & Wt.
Z / Zayin	Light Yellow	Air / Chest	(Right Leg)	G	Air / Ease

CHART #2			Per S. Y. – [Short Version]			Per 32 Paths of Wisdom
HEBREW LETTER	NUMERICAL VALUE	LITERAL MEANING	S. Y. KINGDOMS	S. Y. ETERNITY	S. Y. NEPESH	BRIATIC INTEL.
A -- Aleph	01	Ox	Breath	Air	Chest	Perfect
B – Beth	02	House	Life / Death	Saturn	Right Eye	Overflowing
G -- Gimel	03	Camel	Peace / Battle	Jupiter	Left Eye	Transparent
D – Daleth	04	Door	Wisdom / Folly	Mars	Right Ear	Luminous
H -- Heh	05	Window	Sight	Aries	Right Hand	Illuminating
V – Vav	06	Nail	Hearing	Taurus	Left Hand	Root
Z – Zayin	07	Sword	Smell	Gemini	Right Foot	Mediating
Ch – Cheth	08	Fence	Speech	Cancer	Left Foot	Pure
T -- Teth	09	Snake	Taste	Leo	Right Kidney	Scintillating
I -- Yod	10	Hand	Coition	Virgo	Left Kidney	Disposition
K -- Kaph	20	Cupped Hand	Wealth / Ruin	Sun	Left Ear	Influence
L – Lamed	30	Ox-Goad	Action	Libra	Liver	Will
M -- Mem	40	Water	Waters	Earth	Womb	Eternal
N – Nun	50	Fish	Motion	Scorpio	Spleen	Faithful
S -- Samekh	60	Prop	Anger	Sagittarius	Gall Bladder	Exciting
O -- Ayin	70	Eye	Mirth	Capricorn	Esophagus	Natural
P -- Peh	80	Mouth	Grace/Ugliness	Venus	Right Nostril	Fulfilled Desire
Tz -- Tzaddi	90	Fish-Hook	Thought	Aquarius	Stomach	Corporealizing
Q -- Qooph	100	Back of Head	Sleep	Pisces	Intestines	Perpetual
R – Resh	200	Head	Seed / Desolation	Mercury	Left Nostril	Trial
Sh -- Shin	300	Tooth	Fire	Heavens	Head	Imaginative
Th -- Tav	400	Cross	Dominance/ Servitude	Moon	Mouth	Serving

VOWELS	SOUND	GROUPS	LETTERS
Kametz -- a	"ah" as in "father"	Dentals	Z, S, Sh, R, Tz
Tzere -- e	long 'a' as in "bay"	Palatals	G, I, K, Q
Chirik -- i	long 'e' as in "seen" or, short 'i' as in 'pin'	Gutturals	A, Ch, H, O
Cholam – o	long 'o' as in "old"	Linguals	D, T, L, N, Th
Shurek – u	long 'u' as in "tune"	Labials	B, V, M, P

You will notice, in the first chart, that at the far left I have listed Bardon's letters and assigned corresponding Hebrew Letters (consonants) and vowels to the most of them. I derived these correspondences based upon the relationship of the later correspondences (such as the "Anatomy" and the Water Pole's "Element/Feeling") to those found in the Sepher Yetzirah (Short Version, per the Ravaad).

The first two letters of the list deserve some explaining. In Hebrew the Letter Aleph, commonly given in English as 'A', is a consonant and is actually silent in the spoken language. Aleph is ALWAYS accompanied by a vowel point and this is what makes it pronounceable. Some have argued that it was originally a consonantal vowel, but in regards to the Hebrew of the kabbalah it is always silent and strictly consonantal.

Each consonant has what is called a "natural vowel". This natural vowel is found in the word for each consonant. Thus with "Aleph", the word, the natural vowel is Kametz ("ah" as in "father").

But you will note that the second letter is Umlaut Ä, to which I have assigned the correspondence of the Hebrew vowel point Kametz (the natural vowel of Aleph). Thus both Aleph ('A') and Umlaut Ä, have the same essential sound in this context. But -- and this pertains to what I said earlier about each letter sound having the possibility of encompassing many different meanings depending upon the correspondences attached to it -- only at the level of their sound and legality do these two letters match. Each of their further correspondences are different. For example, the color of 'A' is light blue, but the color of Umlaut Ä is light brown. This is what differentiates between them, not their basic sound.

To assist you in differentiating between the two in practice, I suggest that you give the 'A' of Aleph the long 'A' sound ("a" as in "same"), and the Umlaut Ä of Kametz, the short "ah" sound proper to it.

A similar distinction belongs to the difference between the 'O' and the Umlaut Ö. To the plain 'O', I have assigned the Hebrew Letter Ayin. This also is usually a silent consonant which usually requires a vowel point to be spoken. At first I was uncertain where to assign the Ayin in Bardon's lettering, but based upon the later correspondences, the 'O' proved to be the correct assignment.

Some of the remaining letter assignments may seem illogical (such as 'C' with Tzaddi or 'W' with Qooph) but each of these was rectified based upon the match between Bardon's later correspondences and those of the Sepher Yetzirah. I will explain

each oddity when I come to it.

At this initial stage however, these considerations of which of Bardon's letters match with which of the Hebrew Letters has little relevance other than as a guide to pronunciation or sound. There are no known sources for the color and initial Elemental regions of the Fire pole, within the corpus of Jewish kabbalah. Not until we come to the anatomical correspondences is there substantiating evidence from the kabbalistic literature.

You will note that the Elemental regions of the Fire pole seem to conflict with those of the later Water pole. Do not worry, this is not an error. This is merely due to the difference in level to which these two poles correspond. With the exercises of the Fire pole, the task is to begin the process of integrating these universal qualities into your own microcosm, but when you come to the exercises with the Water pole you will have already made some progress in this task of integration and thus you will be integrating at a new level.

Now, to get down to business. ;-)

The first exercise involves learning how to bind the color oscillation to the letter sound at a purely mental level. Remember, you must work tripolarly, which means that even though this is a purely mental operation, you must perform it with your whole being. Your mental body pervades both your astral and physical bodies simultaneously.

In practice this translates into the fact that you are to fill first the room, then the universe, and then your own body, with the light blue color as you mentally speak the letter 'A'. This simple operation must be mastered both deductively and inductively, similar to the work with the Elements, the Lights, and the Fluids in IIIH.

Please note that at this stage you are not to give the color a specific shape. Granted, it does have color and thus, to a certain degree, form, and you do fill the room, the universe and your body with it, thus giving it some degree of shape. But make no mistake, this is different from what comes next.

What comes next, once you have mastered the deductive and inductive method of the above, is that you must now give it a specific shape. The actual shape is up to you, but generally a simple, condensed sphere is the easiest to work with. This gives the color oscillation some degree of astral density. This is an exercise in condensation.

Once you have mastered the above, you can then move on to the next letter and master its color oscillation deductively and inductively, first without regard to shape and then with a specific

shape.

In each section, Bardon seems to list the Umlaut vowels in different places, In some cases they follow their whole vowels and in others, he places them at the end of the alphabet. In my charts, I have put them in an order that integrates the Umlaut vowels into a more natural order. It is best, especially with the Fire pole, to follow the order given by Bardon. Thus the letter 'B' would come next in this exercise.

Practice exactly the same regimen with each of the letters in succession. Master each one completely before progressing to the next. This integrates the universal qualities at a specific level of your microcosm and forms the foundation for all further work.

The next series of exercises with the Fire pole consist of invoking the color oscillation into the respective Elemental region of your body. First, as you mentally speak the letter 'A', you must evoke the light blue color directly into your chest. The 'A' in your chest must be condensed until it is almost bursting with the light blue color. Once again, this must not disrupt your normal breath nor may it cause inordinate muscular tension. These things are to be avoided from the outset.

Next, you must work with the 'A' deductively. That is to say, you draw the light blue color *from the universe*, into your chest region. For example you inhale the 'A' into your chest from the universe by the breath and then through a species of pore breathing. Here, it is not just through the pores of the skin that you inhale the light blue color, but with the entire chest itself. This technique is the same as that learned in the early Steps of IIIH.

The next exercise is a bit more complicated. Here you must learn to project the light blue color outward into the universe. At first you fill the universe with the light blue color directly by exhaling it from your chest. Then you must condense it into a specific shape as before, but the difference is that in this instance it comes from your chest and is then condensed externally.

Once you have mastered all of the above with the 'A', you can then move on to the next letter. Each successive letter must be mastered in the same manner as the 'A' by following the exact same regimen of exercises.

Here, Bardon lists the Umlaut Ä as the next in order and the 'B' comes third instead of second. Again, I urge you to follow the order given by Bardon and not that given in my chart. It may not matter much in the end result, but Bardon did this for a reason, so it is wise to follow his lead in any case.

Here Bardon reminds the student that there should be attention paid to the thorough elimination of the letter's color oscillation at the end of each exercise. This is exactly the same advice he gives in IIIH during the exercises with the Vital Energy, the Elements and the Fluids, and is based upon the same reasoning. Never neglect this step.

When all of the letters have been mastered in this manner, you will have reached the first discernible level of your kabbalistic practice. This marks a significant integration of the universal qualities of the letters into your microcosm, at least as regards the Fire pole.

The next stage of practice involves the infusion of each organ or body part with the color oscillation of the letters. This still pertains to the Fire pole, but here you are using the letters to directly influence the various aspects of the occult anatomy. In other words, here you are using the letters kabbalistically for the first time.

This is an important step in fully integrating the fire pole of the universal qualities into your own microcosm. This is just as transformative as the similar exercises found in IIIH.

The following exercises require two basic things. Number one is a familiarity with human anatomy. In other words, you have to know the precise position of your own organs within your body. Anyone who has done the work of IIIH will be familiar with this already and if you have not done the work of IIIH then you have, plainly put, no business doing THIS work.

The second requirement here is a facility with the transference of consciousness, for you must be able to transfer your consciousness into each and every organ or body part of your own body. Now, strictly speaking, this is not JUST a physical operation. Granted, you do transfer your consciousness into your physical organs, but it is not only your physical organs that you are impacting and transforming. You are simultaneously transforming the mental and astral components of these organs.

If you compare the first chart with the second chart, you will notice that the "Anatomy" listings of the first chart equate to the "S.Y. Nephesh" listings of the second chart. At first this may be hard to discern, but if you compare the Hebrew Letters associated with Bardon's letters in the first chart, to the Hebrew Letters listed in the second chart, you will clearly see the commonality.

Here is where the similarity between what Bardon presents and that presented in the S.Y., first becomes apparent and important. In kabbalah the "Nephesh" is an important distinction and it does not

mean "physical body". The Nephesh, which translates roughly as "breath filled soul", equates more closely to the Hermetic's astral body. Although it also pertains to the mental body, it more clearly points to the connection between the astral anatomy and the subsequent physical anatomy. Thus the present exercise focuses upon the physical organs and not upon the astral organs, but by doing so, the astral and mental organs are simultaneously effected.

The exercise begins with the letter 'A' and its light blue color oscillation. First you must transfer your consciousness, this time into just your lungs instead of your entire chest region. Then you must inhale the light blue color of 'A' from within your lungs. Which is to say, that you are not outside your lungs, breathing the light blue color into them, but rather, you are within your lungs themselves, drawing the light blue color into them from the outside. At first, this is done with the breath and then it is done through the sort of pore breathing I mentioned previously; i.e., with the whole body of the lungs themselves.

At first this is a fairly passive accumulation but once this has been mastered, you must then work at condensing the light blue color until it reaches a very dynamic state.

You must always remember that it is from within the organ itself that you are to work. This is different from the preceding exercise with the Elemental regions since in that exercise there is no actual transference of consciousness. In most cases, the Elemental Region has no direct relationship with the organ of the occult anatomy.

Once you have thoroughly mastered this exercise with the letter 'A', then you may proceed to the remaining letters, one at a time, and in the order given.

Since Bardon's letters match in an often odd manner to the Hebrew Letters, I will speak of each odd one in the order given by Bardon.

A = This corresponds to the Hebrew Letter Aleph. In the S.Y. and elsewhere, Aleph is always associated with the Element Air and thus, with the chest. Bardon simply extends this analogy to the lungs.

Ä = Here I have given the association of the vowel point Kametz. There are no anatomical associations to the vowel points given in the S.Y..

C = Here I have given Tzaddi as the Hebrew Letter. Though they don't match in a strictly phonetic sense, at least in American

English [however, the letter 'C' is used in the phonetic 'tz' sense in the word "czar"], they do match in so far as their anatomical and Elemental correspondences. The designation "stomach" in the S.Y. is problematic due to the fact that the Hebrew word actually refers to an organ found in a cow. But, this has been determined by past sages to refer to the human stomach nonetheless.

E = I have given this letter the association of the Hebrew vowel point Tzere. Again there are no anatomical associations given for the vowel points in the S.Y..

F = Here I have associated the Hebrew letter Vav. If you have practiced the pronunciation of the letters as I suggested, you will see how these two sounds, the 'f' and the 'v', are identical. The only distinction is that the 'f' is pronounced only by the breath, and the 'v' with vibration of the vocal cords.

H = The S.Y. gives "right hand" instead of "right arm". There is no essential difference and this is a pattern Bardon follows -- hand becomes arm for Bardon and foot becomes leg.

Ch = Cheth has a guttural sound and is not formed at the teeth like the 'ch' sound is in English. Again, Bardon gives left leg and the S.Y. gives left foot.

I = This is the Hebrew Letter Yod. Bardon sometimes uses 'J' when he means to indicate Yod (such as in the Tetragrammaton) and this causes some confusion.

J = This is not the Hebrew Letter Yod. In Hebrew there is no direct phonetic corollary to this sound except possibly in the soft form of the Letter Gimel. But generally, the soft forms of the double, planetary Letters are not given a separate set of correspondences.

In terms of its Water pole correspondence (Water / Cold) and of its Earth pole correspondence (the legality of #400), it relates to the Hebrew Tav. I will mention more in this regard further on.

However, Tav does not relate directly to what Bardon gives as the anatomical correspondence. In the S.Y., Tav is assigned the Mouth, but Bardon gives Diaphragm (for 'J'). Yet if you make an esoteric leap of irrational logic, then it is fairly easy to relate these two since the diaphragm controls the breath necessary for the vibration of the vocal cords during speech, hence mouth.

K = The 'k' sound has two corollaries in Hebrew: the Kaph and the Qooph. The Kaph is given here for two reasons, one of which I will speak of further on and the second of which pertains to the match in anatomical and Elemental correspondences.

L = In the S.Y., Lamed is associated with the Liver and not

the Spleen. For some reason Bardon switches the associations between Lamed and Nun. Whatever his reasoning, it works!

M = In the S.Y., Mem is given the association "Womb". In essence this matches Bardon's "hollow of the abdomen".

O = I have associated the Hebrew Letter Ayin here for two reasons. Number one, the Ayin is frequently given the "oy" sound and this is reasonably close to the 'O' sound. Secondly, the correspondences for Ayin found in the S.Y. match those attributed by Bardon to the 'O'.

Here again there is some confusion in the S.Y. in that the text refers to an organ of a cow. But this is equivalent to the human Esophagus, and the Esophagus is, for all intents and purposes, equivalent to Bardon's Pharynx.

S = Once again, the S.Y. uses a word appropriate to the anatomy of a cow. Many different interpretations of this have arisen over time but the one that makes the greatest sense to me, and which has proven itself in practice, is the gall bladder, to which Bardon agrees.

Sh = In the S.Y., Shin is the "Mother Letter" of the pristine Element Fire. In all of the Hebrew images of the Tree of Life, Shin is always the uppermost of the three horizontal paths, and is consistently associated with the head in human anatomy. Here Bardon gives brain instead of merely head, and this is, in fact, closer to the true significance of Shin than head.

T = Based upon the anatomical and Elemental correspondences, this is definitely Teth and not Tav. In Bardon's system of letters there is no phonetic equivalent to the Hebrew Letter Tav.

U = There is no direct equivalent of this letter among the Hebrew vowel points, so I have not assigned one. Nevertheless, I believe, based upon practice, that this is the equivalent of the vowel point Chirik, at least so far as its correspondences are concerned. In the case of each vowel point equivalent, the Water pole Elemental association involves the Akasha, and this is no exception.

W = This is perhaps the oddest attribution and the most difficult to comprehend. Bardon comments that the 'Q' sound is an equivalent of the 'K' and so he does not list it as a usable letter. But, he does list the 'W' which has no Hebrew equivalent. The clue is found in his particular spelling of "Quabbalah". One cannot pronounce this without inserting the 'w' sound, yet this is clearly not how is spoken in the Hebrew language. Thus for Bardon, the 'Q' infers the 'W'. In practice, the 'K' or Kaph sound is the equivalent of

the Qooph, but the correspondences are quite different. Bardon's attributions for the 'W' match those listed in the S.Y. for the Qooph.

The anatomical attribute of Intestines is again one of those words in the S.Y. that actually describes an organ found in a cow. Consensus seems to lean toward this signifying the intestines in human anatomy and since this matches what Bardon gives, and has proven itself in practice, I feel quite comfortable with this rather odd seeming assignment of Qooph to Bardon's 'W'.

Z = The Hebrew Letter Zayin clearly matches with Bardon's 'Z'. However, Bardon lists "Heart" as the anatomical corollary. This is an error. I presume it is one of those little errors that pop up in any first-draft of a manuscript. Or, it could be a problem in the publication. Either way, the correct correspondence is the "Right Leg". This attribute is missing otherwise in Bardon's list, whereas "Heart" is already given to the 'Y/Umlaut U'.

At the end of the exercises of this Step, you will have mastered the Fire pole of the quadrapolar concentration, in its solitary form. As I said before, this Step will completely transform you at every level of your being. But this is not the final transformation along the way to becoming a true kabbalist.

STEP II -- QUABBALISTIC INCANTATION

This Step concerns the second, Air pole of the quadrapolar concentration. As the Element Air corresponds to the acoustic sense, these exercises pertain to the musical note or tone appropriate to each letter.

There are those who question Bardon's assignment of notes to the letters. It is, of course, best if you check with a being of the zone girdling the earth and verify the note given for yourself. All I can say is that in my own practice I find Bardon's assignations sufficient.

Bardon uses a scale composed of 10 notes, some of which belong to more than a single letter. This matches with the Jewish tradition, but unfortunately there no longer remains any written text that explicitly states which note goes with what letter. Many hints remain but these are in a very obscure symbolic language and so there is uncertainty.

In Hebrew kabbalistic practice, there are not only notes associated with each letter (by way of the vowel points) but also a specific movement that accompanies each vowel's pronunciation. This however is not a part of the kabbalistic practice suggested by

Bardon, but it does make for an interesting adjunct if you eventually wish to explore this additional dimension of kabbalistic utterance.

As Bardon points out, the tonal quality does not, in practice, have to be exact. It helps if you have access to a tuning fork or similar musical aid, but it is not strictly a necessity. Just take your natural highest note and your lowest comfortable note, and divide between them accordingly until you end up with ten distinct notes. This will suffice. However, if your notes are exactly pure and accurate, all the better. If nothing else, this will increase your confidence.

With the Air pole, the physical pronunciation (whispering and vocal vibration) becomes important and you will need to integrate the three modes into your practice. Begin working only with the mental utterance, reproducing the specific note in your mind as in the IHH exercises with the auditory concentration.

Then proceed to master the same through the whispering (breath only) mode of utterance. With whispering it is difficult to produce a variation of tone since this is normally a function of the vibration of our vocal cords. Nonetheless, I urge you to experiment with the shaping of your mouth as you whisper the letters. As anyone who has studied the vocal art of singing can inform you, the shaping of the mouth is important in the reproduction of tone. So, your tones may ultimately display only subtle differences in the whispering mode, but it is well worth the effort to learn the difference. This will also help guide you to the correct vocal pronunciation of the letter sounds. At any rate, when whispering the tonal quality is expressed primarily at a mental level.

Once the whisper mode has been mastered, you should begin working with the vibration of your vocal cords. This requires the reproduction of the correct mental tone, the issuance of breath as in whispering and the appropriate vibration of the vocal cords. In other words this is a combination of modes. Simply speaking the letters aloud will not have the same effect as uttering them mentally and with the breath simultaneously. This tripolarity of action is what makes them kabbalistically effective upon the physical plane.

In short, the solitary mental utterance is directly effective upon the mental plane. The whispering mode which combines the mental utterance and the breath utterance, is directly effective upon the astral plane. And the vocal utterance, which combines the previous two modes with the vibration of the vocal cords, is directly effective upon the physical plane.

The exercises of Step II are meant to bond together the color

oscillation of the Fire pole and that of the tonal oscillation of the Air pole. The procedure is similar to that of the Fire pole in that you must master each letter's color and tone, both deductively and inductively, in the whole body, the Elemental regions of the body, and in the specific organs of the body. You must be able to give it shape and density in the same manner as you did with the color oscillation alone.

Bardon instructs that you may either master each letter completely, in all these ways, in succession; or you may master each separate task with all of the letters in succession. In other words, you can either master the 'A' in the whole body, and then the 'B' in the whole body, etc., and then move on to mastering the 'A' in the Elemental region, and then 'B' in the Elemental Region, etc. Or, you can master 'A' in the whole body, then in the Elemental region, then in the organ, and then move on to the 'B'. Either way suffices though I prefer to follow the same pattern as the Fire pole exercises.

When the tonal oscillation has been fully integrated with the color oscillation within your microcosm, you will have come one more step toward your goal of a true kabbalistic utterance. This act will once again completely transform your whole being. Although this time the transformation may not seem as dramatic as was the Fire pole transformation.

The integration of each of the four poles obliterates all of the dross from your being. It's as if you are within the Alchemist's crucible, being purged by the fire and transformed into the purest Gold.

STEP III -- AQUA VITAE QUABBALISTICAE

This Step introduces the third pole of the quadrapolar concentration, namely that of Water and sensation or feeling. You will note that for the most part, the Elemental attributions of this pole do not match up with the Elemental regions of the Fire pole. There are very valid esoteric reasons for this, the primary of which is that these two poles represent very different aspects of the universe. Fire and Water are, after all, polar opposites. So please do not fret over this seeming inconsistency for it is no inconsistency at all.

The Elemental correspondences here are of an interesting derivation and they match exactly the S.Y. in all but one case (and there it is a tangential match). All three Hebrew Mother Letters, A-M-Sh (which correspond to the three pure, kabbalistic Elements),

match exactly their S.Y. attributes. Five of the planetary Letters, B-D-K-P-R, match to the Elemental significance of their zodiacal signs of *rulership*. The Letter G (Gimel) which corresponds in the S.Y. to Jupiter (per Ravaad), is not associated with the sign of its rulership, but with the sign and Element of its *exaltation*. The Tav (Moon) has, as I mentioned previously, no phonetic corollary in Bardon's letter system. However, if one takes it as the symbolic equivalent of Bardon's 'J', then the Elemental correspondence matches the zodiacal rulership of the Moon. And Bardon's equivalents of the twelve zodiacal Hebrew Letters (H, V, Z, Ch, T, I, L, N, S, O, Tz, Q) match with their sign's Element.

The zodiacal and planetary correspondences for the Hebrew Letters are found in the second chart, under the heading "S.Y. Eternity". In the S.Y., the word for "eternity" is "Olam". This word is often translated as "Universe" but in my opinion this is an oversimplification of its essential meaning. Literally, it translates as "the whole span of time" or "eternity". This is laid in contrast with the word commonly translated as "year" which means literally, "the measured *passage* of time". The attributes designated by "eternity" concern the universal attributes symbolized by the seven philosophical planets, the Elements and the zodiacal signs. The attributes designated by "year", on the other hand, pertain to the universal qualities of the seven days of creation, the seasons, and the lunations or months. These are meant as levels of the same philosophical thing and do not pertain to their physical corollaries.

With the Water pole you will find that some of the letters pertain to more than a single Elemental feeling. The only consonant that has this double attribute is 'C' or Tzaddi (Fire and Air). Three of the vowels (Umlaut Ä, Umlaut Ö, and Y/Umlaut Ü) combine Akasha and Earth. The Akasha as a solitary factor pertains to the remaining two vowels ('E' and 'U').

The practice of the integration of the Water pole is similar to that of the Air pole except that this time there is the addition of the appropriate feeling. Thus with the letter 'A', you must utter it with the color oscillation of light blue, the tonal oscillation of G, and the feeling oscillation of ease, all at the same time. However there is a difference between the exercises of this Step and the last two in that you do not yet work with the Elemental regions nor the organs of the body. In other words, you will be working only with the body as a whole and with the external space and universe.

Here it is good to master each letter completely (i.e., deductively and inductively, in the whole body, the room and the

universe) before moving on to the next letter. Likewise, it is wise to follow the sequence given by Bardou.

Once this pole has been mastered with all of the letters in the manner given above, you are then prepared for the next Step which also pertains to the Water pole. The next Step however, employs the letters tripolarly and in a kabbalistic manner, similar to how you used them monopolarly and bipolarly within your organs in order to transform your being. Only in the next Step you transform yourself by way of the Water pole's Elemental regions instead by way of the organs.

In the following I will be noting the rationale behind the Water pole's Elemental attributions. I will go through the consonants one by one. I will not address the vowels since there are no S.Y. corollaries given for these.

A = Aleph, the Mother Letter of Air.

B = Beth / Saturn, which rules Capricorn, an Earth sign.

C = Tzaddi / Aquarius, an Air sign.

D = Daleth / Mars, which rules Aries, a Fire sign.

F = Vav / Taurus, an Earth sign.

G = Gimel / Jupiter, which is *exalted* in Cancer, a Water sign.

H = Heh / Aries, a Fire sign.

Ch = Cheth / Cancer, a Water sign.

I = Yod / Virgo, an Earth sign.

J = No Hebrew phonetic corollary, but in practice this equates symbolically to the attributes of Tav. Therefore, J = Tav / Moon, which rules Cancer, a Water sign.

K = Kaph / Sun, which rules Leo, a Fire sign.

L = Lamed / Libra, an Air sign.

M = Mem, the Mother Letter of Water.

N = Nun / Scorpio, a Water sign.

O = Ayin / Capricorn, an Earth sign.

P = Peh / Venus, which rules Taurus, an Earth sign.

R = Resh / Mercury, which rules Virgo, an Earth sign.

[According to Dieter Ruggeberg, the correspondence for 'R' is missing from the manuscript, but if one checks with the next Step you will find the proper attribution.]

S = Samekh / Sagittarius, a Fire sign.

Sh = Shin, the Mother Letter of Fire.

T = Teth / Leo, a Fire sign.

W = Qooph / Pisces, a Water sign.

Z = Zayin / Gemini, an Air sign.

STEP IV -- QUABBALISTICAE ELEMENTORUM

With the last Step you learned the rudiments of the final pole of the three-sense concentration. These are the first three poles of the quadrapolar concentration, the fourth pole not being a type of sensory concentration, per se (the fourth, Earth pole is covered in the next Step).

Yet this Step is, in many ways, an extension of the last. It seeks to integrate the three-sense concentration into your microcosm and transform you yet again. That Bardon placed this Step separate from the last should give you some indication of its importance.

This is the transformational work of the Water pole. It transforms in a manner similar to the initial transformation of the Fire pole (i.e., by way of the Elemental regions), but here, the Elemental regions are of a different nature. If you have not gone through the transformation of the Fire and Air poles, then the transformation of the Water pole will not take.

The work of this Step is similar to the work with the Elements in the regions of the body as given in Step Four of IIIH. Here, this Elemental balance is achieved kabbalistically instead of with the accumulation of the Elements directly. If the IIIH balancing work has not been accomplished then this work here will not only be impossible, but actually quite dangerous to your well-being.

The work of this Step can be extended further than Bardon indicates. You can, once you have mastered the rudiments, treat it in a similar manner as the IIIH exercise of Elemental balancing and fill each region with a letter and retain it until all four regions are similarly filled. This is even more balancing than the IIIH exercise. You can even take it so far as to invoke all of the letters relevant to each region and retain them. This gives an entirely new dimension to the exercise, but should not be attempted until such time as this Step is completely mastered. Of course, at the end of each exercise the letters should be dismissed and one should never walk around with the letters filling the Elemental regions for prolonged periods of time.

In the IIIH, Step Four exercise, the student begins with the Earth Element and works upwards through the regions, ending with Fire. In other words, the student begins with the solid foundation and layers ever more ephemeral substances upon this until the Fire itself dances at the top, firmly anchored by what lies below it.

The exercises here however, approach this from the opposite

angle, by beginning with the Fire region and working downward. This effects a sort of descending condensation instead of an ascending liberation. Without having first achieved the transformation that the ascent brings, the descendant transformation is impossible, for it has nothing to descend into.

Kabbalistic creation is essentially a downward matter of the descent of force into form. The exercises of this particular Step are crucial to the learning of this sort of creative descent. They also establish a certain structure within your own microcosm that is essential to the ability to create in a kabbalistic manner.

Yet even with the completion of this Step you will not possess all of the abilities necessary to work with the first key, since this is only 3/4 of the quadrapolar concentration necessary for this work.

Unlike the Fire pole exercises with the Elemental regions, this exercise requires the transference of consciousness. In other words, here you must transfer your consciousness to the relevant region and perform your exercise from there. This is not an exercise where your consciousness fills your whole body and you condense the letter and direct it to flow into the relevant region.

Unlike the exercises with the bodily organs, you are not to go through the letters in an alphabetical order. The reason for going in alphabetic order instead of working through the organs in descending order, was to avoid inducing too great a congestion of the blood in the areas of your body. But that is not an issue with this Step's exercises. You are not to work with the three-sense concentration in your individual organs -- this is not safe.

The exercises of this Step begin in the Fire region -- the head. Each of the letters associated with the Fire region are to be mastered, one at a time, before moving on to the next, Air region, etc. In the four true Elemental regions, you must work both deductively and inductively, but in the Akasha region, you work in neither manner since the Akasha cannot be accumulated.

The order of work is not alphabetic even within the Elemental group of letters. Bardon gives a very specific order of the letters that must be followed exactly. Thus the order for the head region is: Sh, S, H, D, K, T.

Please note in Bardon's explanation of this region's letters that he makes reference to the difference in each letter's sound: 'S' and 'Sh' as "hissing sounds"; 'H' as "hot breath"; 'D' as "expansive"; and both 'K' and 'T' as "explosive". These instruction relate directly to the nature of how these letter sounds are formed mentally and in the mouth.

Each letter must be mastered in the mind, the breath, and the vocal vibration modes. Also each letter must be uttered with the three-sense concentration and in the manner of the tripolar action (mentally, astrally and physically, simultaneously). Thus the first letter of the Fire region, 'Sh' must be pronounced in its color oscillation (blazing red), its tonal oscillation (C), and its feeling oscillation (heat), simultaneously -- at first in the mind only, then whispering, and finally, aloud.

This is, as you can imagine, a difficult operation when you consider the fact that you're also tossing in the factor of a transference of consciousness.

To further complicate things, Bardou reminds the student that the tree-sense concentration must be maintained during the dismissal of the letter that has been invoked. I would add to that this concentration must be maintained throughout the entirety of the operation, as must the tripolar action. If, during the operation, you lose track of this double triplicity or of your transferal of consciousness, then you must at any cost reestablish it before you dismiss the letter. Otherwise, you will not completely dismiss the letter and will, in this way, cause yourself harm.

When all the letters of the Fire region have been mastered, then you may move on to the Air region or Chest. The order of letters in this region are: A, Z, L. Remember, you must master each individual letter completely, in all three modes, before progressing to the next.

When the Air region has been mastered, then you begin with the Water or Abdominal region. The order in this region is: M, N, W, J, Ch, G.

Next follows the Earth region from the coccyx down to the tips of the toes. The order here is: I, O, F, R, B, P.

Next follows a double region -- the Fire and the Air regions, conjoined. This means that you must transfer your consciousness into the region from the top of your head, down to the bottom of your chest. Thus the feeling is one of heat and ease joined together -- you do not work with one Elemental feeling and then the other. The letter for this double-region is 'C'. This particular letter sound is an explosive (like the 'T') that hisses (like the 'Z').

The next region is that of the Akasha, specifically the plexus. This however is a bit of a misstatement since in reality what is meant is the "depth point" described in Step Five of IIIH. While the plexus is the physical corollary of this depth point, it is the true depth point to which you must transfer your consciousness. If you merely

transfer your consciousness into the region of your plexus, you will not be able to achieve the true manifestation of these important letters. Once you transfer your consciousness to your depth point, you fill your *whole* body with the relevant letter.

These specific letters are very important. Each of Bardon's letters that pertain to the Akasha are vowels and correspond to the Hebrew vowel points. Here, as with the Hebrew language itself, the vowels are what tie the consonants together and empower them for true kabbalistic speech. In other words, without the Akasha you attain nothing. This does not mean that with each kabbalistic utterance you must adjoin a vowel, for in many subtle, esoteric (i.e., unexplainable) ways the vowels are implied in the utterance of a letter. What I mean to say here is that without the true integration of these Akashic vowels into your own microcosm, true kabbalistic speech is impossible.

The letters of this (solitary) Akasha region are 'U' and 'E'. They both have Akashic colors. The 'U' is a shiny black that reflects a violet tinged light, while the 'E' is so dark a violet as to be almost black in appearance. The main difference is that the 'E' is an absorptive black and the 'U' is reflective. In this region they both exhibit a violet nature.

The final three letters are bipolar in that they pertain to both the Akasha and the Earth Element. Essentially, they are manifest qualities of the Akasha. The trick with these letters is to once again transfer your consciousness to your depth point, but this time you will fill only the Earth region with the letter. You will not be able to accumulate these either and you must work with them in the same manner as the solitary Akasha letters. The letters of this region are the three umlauts: Umlaut Ö, Umlaut Ü (Y), and Umlaut Ä.

Once you have completely mastered each of the 27 letters, you may then experiment with the Elemental balancing I suggested earlier. I recommend you employ the first letter of each region (Sh, A, M, I), then both of the solitary Akashic vowels (U & E), and finally, the dual Akasha/Earth Umlaut Ä. Once all seven letters are formed within you, retain them for a few seconds and then thoroughly dismiss them in their reverse order.

At the close of this Step Bardon states: *"These exercises make man achieve the perfect consciousness of the micro- and macrocosm, which in the Orient is often called the 'nirvi-kalpa-samadhi'."* This is very much the case but I must say that this alone does not empower one to use the first key in a truly kabbalistic manner. What lacks here is the fourth pole of the quadrapolar concentration so essential

to kabbalistic utterance. This fourth, Earth pole is the subject of the next Step, at the end of which one will be completely fit for the practice of the first key.

STEP V -- THE TEN QUABBALISTIC KEYS

Although Bardon does not explicitly state it anywhere in KTQ, this Step concerns the fourth, Earth pole of the quadrapolar concentration. The first three poles are easily related to the senses but the fourth pole is not. Yet this *is* a sense, just not a sense in normal terms. Or, more accurately phrased, this must *become* a sense.

The fourth pole concerns the perception of the universal legality as expressed by number. Each of the universal ideas upon which the creation is founded can be expressed by the numbers 1 through 10. Thus the attainment of this final pole of the quadrapolar concentration involves the integration of these numbered ideas into one's own microcosm to such a degree that one can immediately perceive the universal ideation underlying each idea, event and thing.

Bardon saves this fourth pole till Step Five of KTQ because it pertains to the Earth Element. In other words it is what ties the other poles together as is the nature of the Earth Element. Even so, the learning of the ten numbers should actually start years prior to picking up KTQ. The reason is that it literally takes years to effectively integrate the numbers into one's perspective to a sufficient degree for kabbalistic speech.

It is difficult to explain the manner in which the integration of these numbers is so important. I suppose the simplest way to put it is that the numbers give structure. From this structure, all else flows and multiplies itself unto infinity. No matter how complex a thing may be in its final, most dense manifestation, it can still be resolved back to its original idea or number. By doing this with a thing or an idea, you connect yourself with the universal structure and thereby gain access to a specific level of influence over the created thing.

Without this cognizance of the universal ideas represented by the numbers, there is no inner connection to the essential structure and thus no possibility of true kabbalistic speech. To utter a letter without cognizance of the ideation underlying it is not true kabbalistic utterance and will have little effect.

Kabbalistic numbers have absolutely no relationship to the currently popular fad of numerology. These numbers are not used

for mantic purposes, instead they are like a filing cabinet where you categorize things by number. In other words, they are analytical tools for increasing one's understanding.

In the Hebrew kabbalah, the science of the relationships of numbers is called "gematria". It is not absolutely necessary that you learn this science (but it doesn't hurt) since this mostly concerns the analysis of Hebrew words. Much of what passes for gematria is actually just a mental exercise of a dubious nature.

What is important is that you inculcate these ten universal principles into your consciousness and build a clear structure with them. They must become not only conscious, but also subconscious aspects of your own mentation.

Bardon repeatedly states that it is not necessary to study the Jewish kabbalistic cosmology, but here I must respectfully disagree, especially since so much of Bardon's quabbalah is based upon the Sepher Yetzirah. I think this is an especially wise study when it comes to the ten numbers and the universal structure they imply. So I personally recommend to you that you study kabbalah, and furthermore, that you begin your study early on as it takes years to grasp even the rudiments at a level suitable for kabbalistic utterance.

Bardon offers a brief outline of the significance of each of the numbers from 1 through 10. This certainly does not suffice for practical application and will undoubtedly require further study on your part. One of the best tools for gaining an understanding of the numbers is a small ditty provided decades ago by Paul Foster Case in his book titled "The Tarot". This is a series of 11 brief statements pertaining to the numbers zero through ten, titled "The Pattern on the Trestleboard". [A trestleboard is a table upon which the mason would put the architectural plans for the structure being constructed.]

Here, Case lists eleven numbers instead of just ten. This is handy since the canticle for zero helps one to understand the significance of the multiples of ten. In other words, if you combine the meaning of 'zero' with the meaning of 'one' you receive the deeper significance of 'ten'. However, the ancient way of signifying numerical values in the Hebrew system does not include the use of the zero and thus the value 'zero' is not a part of kabbalistic speech -- zero is not considered to be one of the universal ideas pertinent to the *manifest* creation.

At any rate, here is the text of "The Pattern on the Trestleboard":

THIS IS TRUTH ABOUT THE SELF

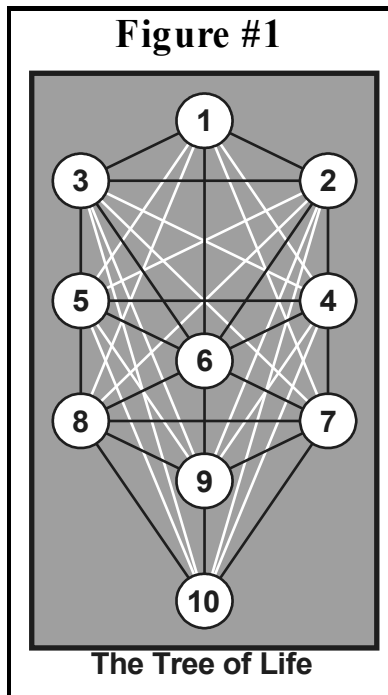
0. All the power that ever was or will be is here now.
1. I am a center of expression for the Primal Will-to-Good which eternally creates and sustains the universe.
 2. Through me its unfailing Wisdom takes form in thought and word.
3. Filled with Understanding of its perfect law, I am guided, moment by moment, along the path of liberation.
4. From the exhaustless riches of its Limitless Substance, I draw all things needful, both spiritual and material.
5. I recognize the manifestation of the undeviating Justice in all the circumstances of my life.
 6. In all things, great and small, I see the Beauty of the divine expression.
7. Living from that Will, supported by its unfailing Wisdom and Understanding, mine is the Victorious Life.
8. I look forward with confidence to the perfect realization of the Eternal Splendor of the Limitless Light.
9. In thought and word and deed, I rest my life, from day to day, upon the sure Foundation of Eternal Being.
 10. The Kingdom of Spirit is embodied in my flesh.

I recommend that you commit these eleven statements to memory. Take them one at a time and over a span of several days build each one into your memory. Once this is achieved and you can recite the eleven statements by heart, then begin meditating upon each one. When you are faced with a certain task or problem, go through these eleven statements and contemplate their significance in regard to your concern. This will not only inculcate them more deeply into your mind, it will also provide you with significant insights into your concern.

The numbers relate to the Sephirot of the kabbalah thus:

- 0 = Ain Soph Aur = "Limitless Light"
- 1 = Kether = "Crown"
- 2 = Chokmah = "Wisdom"
- 3 = Binah = "Understanding"
- 4 = Gedulah = "Mercy" or "Loving Kindness"
- 5 = Geburah = "Severity" or "Justice"
- 6 = Tiphareth = "Beauty"
- 7 = Netzach = "Victory"
- 8 = Hod = "Splendor"
- 9 = Yesod = "Foundation"
- 10 = Malkuth = "Kingdom"
(or, just as easily, "Queendom")

Here now is Figure #1 which is a diagram of the basic structure of the kabbalistic Tree of Life, representing the universal structure. This shows the essential relationship of each number to the others. While there are at least three major versions of the Tree of Life in the Jewish mystical tradition, this is the one most pertinent to the work of KTQ.



The next important issue in regard to the numbers is the relationship of the letters to the numbers. Bardon gives no information in this regard. However, since he adheres so closely to the S. Y. it is possible to draw the numbers from their Hebrew corollaries. These are the numbers I use in my own practice and I will vouch for their accuracy. The one difficulty with this approach is that in the Hebrew the vowel points are not clearly associated with number. At a practical level, they generally equate to the number 'zero' (which is to say that they encompass all ten of the universal ideas), but on occasion it is necessary to associate them with the Sephirot and thus one of the whole numbers.

One such system is as follows:

Ä = Kametz = Kether = 1
E = Tzere = Binah = 3
Ö = Cholam = Tiphareth = 6
U = Chirik = Netzach = 7
Y, Ü = Shurek = Yesod = 9

Thus the numerical value of Bardon's letters are as follows:

A = 1
Ä = 0 or 1
B = 2
C = 90
D = 4
E = 0 or 3
F = 6
G = 3
H = 5
Ch = 8
I = 10

J = 400 [This is the legality of the Hebrew Letter

Tav. In practice, I find that this is proper.]

K = 20
L = 30
M = 40
N = 50
O = 70
Ö = 0 or 6
P = 80
R = 200
S = 60
Sh = 300
T = 9

U = 0 or 7
W = 100
Y, Ü = 0 or 9
Z = 7

As Bardou points out, single digit numbers (1 through 9) represent mental effects, double digit numbers represent astral effects, and triple digit numbers represent material effects. Yet they can all be resolved into one of the simple numbers by adding their digits and thus one finds their root ideation in its purest form.

But please understand that just because a numerical value is in the two and three digit range does not mean that they are ineffective at higher levels. The number of digits in the numerical value simply points out the level at which they are most effective or most significant. For example, the letter 'R' which has a value of 200, is quite effective upon the mental and astral planes, but is most effective upon the material plane in a manner reflective of its reduced number '2'.

I will warn you now that if you seek a direct linear and logical connection between the numbers as represented by the letters and that of the primal ideas represented by the Sephirot, then you will become quite frustrated in short order. This is a very complicated matter and rational logic applies to only a small degree. To truly penetrate to the depth of the relationship between these two you must set aside rational logic and reach into the realm of intuition and inspiration.

Essentially, what interferes with a rational comprehension of this is the fact that the letters represent a different level or aspect or manner of creation than the Sephirot. This is impossible for me to elucidate in this commentary so all I will be able to do by way of assisting your comprehension is to offer the following Figure #2.

"Hebrew Tree". This is the image of the Tree used throughout most of the evolution of kabbalah. It predates the Ari Tree and is the one that he "rectified" so that it would be in accord with the Zohar. Here you will notice that there is now a greater amount of space between the #1 and the #6 and that the #10 is less integrated into the whole. This represents the appearance of the Tree within the kabbalistic world of Yetzirah ("Formation"). This is the Tree structure I recommend for work within the astral realm.

The third image to the right is the Ari's (Rabbi Yitzchak Luria, late 16th century) image of the Tree. This is the epitome of Lurianic kabbalah which is reflective of the Zohar. Here again, there is a further disconnection of Malkuth and the lettered paths take on new shape. In practice, I use this Tree structure for work within the material realm as it refers most clearly to the kabbalistic realm of Assiah ("Making").

The reason I offer these three images of the Tree to you is because they very accurately reflect the relationship between the ten numbers and the manner in which the letters mix and express the universal ideas. Most commonly, the Hidden paths are not depicted when the Tree image is given. But I have included them here because they are significant clues as to how the numbers relate to one another. That these paths are not given letters is significant as they are not "spoken". In other words, they are a matter of personal experience and are unique to each individual, thus they cannot be described by universal symbols such as number and letter.

The Tree of Life image is the structure you must inculcate into your three bodies, most especially into your mental and astral bodies, in order to be a truly effective kabbalist. A very effective method for doing this is to visualize the Tree within your mental and astral bodies. For example, with your eyes closed, sense the size and shape of your mental body, and then back into the graphic image of the Gra Tree. This places Chokmah at your left temple and Binah at your right, etc. Build your visualization out of light, first establishing the ten Sephirot and then adding the paths, both lettered and unlettered. As your understanding of the Tree's components deepens, bind these to your visualization so that each part has significance and not just form.

The same can be done with the astral body and the Hebrew Tree, and with the physical body and the Ari Tree. Eventually, this structure will completely permeate your being and your ability to utter kabbalistically in accordance with the universal legality will become automatic.

There also exist other good techniques for penetrating to the deeper meaning of the numbers and letters. One good technique comes from the Western Hermetic tradition and is known as sphere- and pathworking. This is a process of mental and/or astral wandering of the Sephiroth and Paths. Since there are plenty of books already in print which describe this practice in detail, I will not write further about it here.

Unfortunately, Bardou does not explain how one is to incorporate number into the quadrapolar concentration. To fill this gap, I offer the following.

In practice there are two levels at which you employ legality. The first is the cognizance of the specific legality represented by the numerical value of the letter(s) you are dealing with.

Second is the numerical legality of the intent with which you use each letter. In other words, each letter can be used for different purposes which exist within the bounds of its specific legality. For example, Umlaut Ö can be used within the physical realm to either learn about Alchemical transmutation or to effect any number of Alchemical transmutations -- which aspect you wish to manifest depends upon your intent, yet each will concern Alchemical transmutation and thus fall within the legality of Umlaut Ö.

So, if you wish to incorporate the fourth pole of the quadrapolar concentration into your utterance of the letter 'A', you will first connect with the essential legality of 'A' (i.e., 1) and then with the legality of your intent in the use of the letter. However, to master the fourth pole with each of the letters, prior to their actual use, you should consider only their essential legality and confine your intent-legality to the number zero.

To learn the use of the fourth pole, you should practice each letter in the standard order, pronouncing it quadrapolarly only into your whole body. Do not fill either the Elemental regions nor the organs, by themselves. Master the quadrapolar use of each letter, both deductively and inductively, and in each of the three modes (mentally, whispering and aloud)..

Thus, for example, with the letter 'A' you will pronounce it with a light blue color oscillation, a tonal oscillation of G, the feeling oscillation of 'ease', and the legality oscillation of #1, simultaneously. First you master it in the mind-only mode, then in the mind+breath mode, and finally, in the mind+breath+vocal vibration mode.

Progress through each of the letters in sequence until you have mastered them all.

If you have previously integrated the numerical legalities into

your psyche, then this process with finalize this integration. This is the final transformation that enables you to utter the letters in a truly kabbalistic manner. This step is what brings your own microcosm into accord with the universal, macrocosmic qualities.

Once you have mastered the fourth pole of each letter in this manner, you are ready to begin work with the first (single letter) key.

STEP VI: THE TETRAGRAMMATON, THE QUABBALISTIC FOURFOLD

KEY

In this Step, Bardón describes the basic rules of kabbalistic utterance concerning the first four keys. Here is a short list of the basic rules of thumb:

Mental Effect: In order to create an effect upon the mental plane, you must not give any shape or any time limit to your utterance. You must utter quadrapolarly only in the mind-only mode. Your intention must be absolutely clear.

Astral Effect: In order to create an effect upon the astral plane, you must give a specific shape (i.e., spatial dimension) to your utterance. It must have no time limitation imposed. You must utter quadrapolarly in the mind+breath mode. Your intention must be absolutely clear.

Physical Effect: In order to create an effect upon the physical plane, you must give a specific shape *and* a time limit to your utterance. You must utter quadrapolarly in the mind+breath+vocal vibration mode. Your intention must be absolutely clear.

With the first, single-letter key, you must transfer your consciousness into your depth point, i.e., into the Akasha. All work with the first key originates in the Akasha. Whichever realm you want your effect to occur directly in, you simply follow the standard rule of thumb pertaining to that realm.

For clarity's sake I will describe the utterance of the letter 'A' as a single-letter key.

To begin you must clearly define your intention and perceive its legality. Then you transfer your consciousness into your depth point (the Akashic realm). Then you utter the letter 'A' quadrapolarly, giving it a light blue color oscillation, a tonal oscillation of G, a feeling oscillation of 'ease', and a legality oscillation of #1. If you desire this utterance to be effective directly upon the mental plane, then you must utter the 'A' in the mental-only mode, giving it neither shape nor specific duration. If you desire a

direct and immediate astral effect, then you utter the 'A' in the mind+breath whisper mode, giving it shape but no duration. And if you desire a direct and immediate physical effect, you utter the letter 'A' in the mind+breath+vocal vibration mode, giving it both shape and duration. You must build the density of your utterance and when you are satisfied, you must release it into the realm concerned. It is at this point of release that the effect actually occurs. When your utterance is complete, you must return to your normal waking consciousness and turn your attention elsewhere.

If you wish for an effect to be manifest directly into the astral or the physical realm, your utterance will by-pass the intermediate realms and occur directly in that realm, by simply following the appropriate rule of thumb. You can also set up a mental effect that will eventually act as the cause for an astral and, ultimately, a physical effect if you so choose, but the immediate effect will occur in the mental realm. The direct effect occurs in whichever realm you design your utterance to accommodate. For example, if you insert your effect upon the astral realm, there will be no direct effect upon the physical realm, and within the Akashic and the mental realms, there will be a simultaneous causation created, but this will be spontaneous with the astral effect, and will not require reliance upon the natural descent of causation.

The disadvantage of the first key is that it requires a transference of consciousness into the Akasha. The second, two-letter key, requires a transference into the mental realm and this is somewhat more convenient. The third key requires that you transfer your consciousness into the astral realm and the fourth key requires no transference at all, and is thus the most convenient.

The mastery of each successive key further transforms you. You cannot simply begin with the utterance of the fourth key, since the ability to create a direct causation of an effect upon the physical plane -- *from within the physical plane* -- requires a complete transformation of your being. This is the ultimate integration of your own microcosm and the macrocosm.

The first key must be mastered completely before progressing to the next key. This is a longer process than it sounds, for you must master the single key use of each letter (27), in the four planes (x4), thus you face 108 operations -- at least. Often it will take more than just one attempt to master a letter, so I would multiply this by two at the very least (=216).

With the second, third and fourth keys, you do not need to master all of the letter combinations that are possible. The more the

merrier, but the mastery of the first key will enable you to immediately master any combination you choose. I suggest you work with at least twelve of the two-letter combinations and six of the three-letter combinations, before beginning work with the four-letter combinations. Ultimately, the fourth key is the most advantageous, so you may end up mastering several of these, but this depends entirely upon your own specific set of needs and appointed tasks.

The rules for the use of the second, third and fourth keys are more complex than those of the first key. This is a reflection of the greater number of options each of these keys present.

For example, with the second key, one can work in two manners. The first involves the projection of both letters into the mental realm or body and the second manner involves the projection of the first letter into the Akasha and the second letter into the mental realm. Either operation is done with the consciousness firmly rooted in the mental realm.

Likewise the third key can be projected in its entirety into the astral realm, or the letters can be split by projecting the first letter into the mental realm, the second into the astral realm, and the third into the physical realm. Or you may even group the letters into two plus one, and project the first two into the astral realm and only the last one into the physical realm, etc. Each successive key presents with a significant increase in the number of options.

Once you have mastered the first key all of these thousands of options will be self-evident.

STEP VII -- THE FIRST KEY, THE SIMPLE LETTERS

As I said previously, the first key is enacted from within one's own depth point -- the Akasha. It is, as Bardón points out, best to employ this key only for the purpose of your own spiritual development. If you use this key for another person or being, you will, since you are working from within your own depth point, be incurring the karmic debt (which is a consequence of any causation rooted in the Akasha) associated with the effect you are causing for this other person. In other words, the karma is tied directly to you. This is okay when you are working for yourself since this would be the case in the normal course of events, but when you work from within the Akasha for another person, you will be taking on a burden whose resolution you would not otherwise incur. I warn you that this

can quickly get out of hand. It's like prescribing a second medication to counteract the negative side-effects of first, and then a third to counteract the negative effects of the second, etc., ad infinitum.

If you wish to cause an effect upon your own mental, astral or physical body, then you will need to *project* the letter into your relevant body. This sort of projection will be very familiar to anyone who has worked their way through IHH, so I will not elaborate further.

However, if you wish to create a causation within the Akasha itself, then you will not project -- you will only release it into the Akasha proper, without regard to its manifestation throughout the other planes. In this case, just like when causing an effect on the mental plane, your utterance must be in the mind-only mode.

Bardon gives no specific order of exercises for mastery of the single key. There are several options which will be self-evident by now, but here is what I recommend.

Begin with the utterance at the Akashic level and master each letter, one after the other, in this mode. I suggest that you master all those with the (reduced) legality of #1, then those of #2, etc. That would establish the following groups: #1=A, Ä, I, W. #2=B, K, R. #3=G, E, L, Sh. #4=D, M, J. #5=H, N. #6=F, Ö, S. #7=Z, U, O. #8=Ch, P. #9=T, Y/Ü, C.

Once each letter has been mastered in the Akasha, then move on to the mental projection of each letter in the same order. Following this, master the astral projection of all the letters and then finally, the physical projection.

You could just as easily master the mental, astral and physical projection of an individual letter after you have mastered all 27 in the Akasha, but whatever you decide to do, it is best to master them all in the Akasha first.

You can, of course, master each letter in all four phases (Akasha, mental, astral and physical) individually before going on to do the same with the next letter, but in my opinion, this presents an uneven development -- remember, this work transforms you. It is far better to layer this transformation and bring it forth in stages.

Bardon finishes out this Step with a description of the effectiveness of each of the single letters in all four of the pertinent realms. It so happens that this list is the basis from which the guides to the two-, three and four-letter combinations derive. So, I offer Chart #3, which abbreviates this list.

CHART #3 PER BARDON:				
LETTER	Use in the Keys --			
	AKASHA (First Key)	MENTAL (Second Key)	ASTRAL (Third Key)	PHYSICAL (Fourth Key)
A	Wisdom	Enlightened Mind	Mastery of Air	Mastery of Air
Ä	Cognition of Life and Death	Mastery of Thoughts	Mastery of Desires	Mastery of Physical Matter
B	Perception of Polarity	Mastery of Fluids	Volting	Mastery of Polarization
C	Eucharist	Mental Influence	Astral Influence	Physical Influence
D	Creation	Mastery of Mental Matrix	Mastery of Love / Eroticism	Fertility
E	Cosmic Consciousness	Intuition	Mastery of Astral Matrix	Materialization
F	Legality and Harmony	Mental Legality	Astral Equilibrium	Quadrupolar Magnet
G	Divine Grace and Mercy	Mental Peace	Happiness	Abundance
H	Power of the Word	Understanding	Influence Over Fate	Understanding of the Word
Ch	Clarity and Purity	Understanding of All Languages	Rhythm and Life	Mastery of Water
I	Karma and Evolution	Memory and Conscience	Mastery of Astral Matrix	Mastery of Analogy
J	Cosmic Love	Mental Ecstasy	Sympathy and Attraction	Progeneration
K	Omnipotence	Manifestation of Faith	Courage and Endurance	Treasures
L	Divine Virtues	Morality	Magic Equilibrium	Mastery of Vitality
M	Mastery of Water	Mastery of Life and Feelings	Mastery of Water & Magnetic Fluid	Mastery of All Fluid Things
N	Supreme Happiness	Mastery of Mental Matrix	Self-Preservation	Movement and Coherence
O	Justice and Legality	Legality of Harmony	Contentment and Poise	Success and Happiness
Ö	Transformation	Qabbalistic Alchemy	Astral Projection	Alchemical Transmutation
P	Mystic Longing	Devotion and Humility	Longing for Purification	Reproductive Instinct
R	Freedom and Independence	Absolute Security	Ingenuity	Comprehension
S	All-Penetrating Power	Mastery of Electric Fluid	Clairvoyance and Prophecy	Control of Consciousness
Sh	Original Fire and Light	Highest Enlightenment	Mastery of Fire	Mastery of Electric Fluid
T	Divine Inspiration	Inventiveness	Mastery of Astral Magic	Mastery of Analogy
U	Comprehension of Akasha	Intuition and Inspiration	Transfer of Consciousness	Mastery of Akasha
W	Cosmic Intuition	Clairsentience / Concentration	Clairaudience and Mysticism	Discrimination
Y or Ü	Original Rhythm	Intuition and Inspiration	Prophecy	Condensation
Z	Cognition	Intellect and Talent	Artistic Faculties	Endurance

PART III -- MAGIC OF FORMULAS

STEP VIII -- THE TWOFOLD KEY -- DOUBLE LETTERS

STEP IX -- THE USE OF THE THREEFOLD KEY

STEP X -- THE USE OF THE FOURFOLD KEY

STEP XI -- QUABBALISTIC USE OF DIVINE NAMES AND BEINGS

STEP XII -- THE QUABBALIST AS ABSOLUTE MASTER OF THE MICROCOSM AND THE MACROCOSM

I choose to not comment upon these Steps. Primarily this is because anyone who makes it through the seventh Step of KTQ will definitely not need anything more than what Bardon gives. Secondly, the use of the letter combinations is often alluring to the unprepared person who may be tempted to experiment before they are ready to do so with safety and I have no wish to further encourage such an error.

EPILOGUE

Bardon's epilogues are always a treat. To a certain degree, he steps out of his role as sage teacher and reveals a side of himself otherwise hidden. Yet even here he conveys a deep and profound sagacity. I suppose it is impossible to fully separate the message from the man.

At any rate, I would like to leave you with the following brief quote from Bardon's epilogue: *"On earth every human being has two teachers: firstly, him- or herself and, secondly, fate. What man is not able to achieve by his own diligence, practice, renunciation, pain, grief, etc., will be served up to him by disappointments and buffets of fate. Life is a school, not an amusement fair."*

NOTE OF THE PUBLISHER (BY DIETER RUGGEBERG)

At the end of KTQ, the publisher adds a note warning the reader that KTQ "contains some mistakes, particularly concerning the relation of the Elements to some letters." I must strongly disagree with this statement. There are no errors as far as the Element-to-letter correspondences go. There is one error regarding the anatomical correspondence to the letter 'Z', a few errors in the third and fourth key Steps, and in the Step XI material concerning

the use of the 72-fold name. But as Mr. Ruggeberg points out, the student should, in any event, first verify these things with a being of the zone girdling the earth before beginning practice.

Appendix

An Essay on “Shielding”
(First Edition)

Shielding

The first thing to be said on this subject is that there is no need for paranoia, especially if you're following a balanced path such as Bardon's. The universe is NOT out to get you! ;-) Many folks have put forth the idea that there is danger around every corner when you're pursuing a magical path, but this is simply not so — unless of course this is what you are always expecting in the back of your mind. The thing is, when you set yourself up in this way for continual difficulty, that is exactly what will be drawn to you, but this has nothing to do with the following of a magical path.

Therefore, it is important as you work with shielding, to stay away from the inclination to paranoia. A shield is not a thing which should merely serve to assuage your fear; instead, it is to be a thing which promotes your self-confidence.

There is no avoiding the inevitable, so if you think that a shield will forever keep you from encountering unpleasant experiences you are just plain wrong. Even the strongest shield will not buffer you from the karmic consequences of your actions.

What a shield can protect you from are impersonal, stray influences and influences that are directed specifically at you by others. While the latter is rare, the former is quite common. For example, as you move throughout your day, you will inevitably encounter the foul moods of others or the emotional residue resident in particular places, etc. Repelling these influences is where a shield is most effective.

The philosophy (quality) that underpins a shield is important. Personally, I prefer a shield that alerts me to any incoming or ambient negative influences and then gives me the option to either let them in, or reject them entirely, as I see fit. We can learn many important lessons from our encounters with negative forces and unpleasant circumstances, so avoiding them entirely misses the point. It would be like living your life with your head buried in the sand — it gets awfully hard to breathe and you miss so much of what goes on around you. ;-)

The influences that a shield can protect you from are, by nature, of mental and/or astral density, therefore a shield is composed of similar material. The best shield is energy based AND impregnated with a specific ideation. By extension, such a shield can protect you from much physical harm since by erecting a wall through which mental and astral influences cannot pass, you

therefore avoid the physical consequences of those forces. But here again, this is only effective so long as these consequences are not of a personal karmic nature.

There are three basic types of shielding which I will now discuss: 1) Drawing down the Kethric Light. 2) Surrounding oneself with the Vital Energy. 3) Working with the Akasha.

1) USING THE KETHRIC LIGHT

By this term I mean to indicate any shield that employs energy (Light) drawn down from “above”. An example of this is the Golden Dawn’s “Middle Pillar” exercise or the “Rose Cross”. Both of these effectively draw down energy from a higher source than the individual and use it for the individual’s protection.

This can, of course, be done in less formal ways. For example, merely through visualization the same effect can be caused.

Before engaging in any sort of shielding, a banishing of negative influences should be undertaken. Whether that be done through a ritual such as the Golden Dawn’s “Lesser banishing ritual of the pentagram” (LBRP) or through other magical means, is of little importance, so long as it is done. A simple visualization will also suffice. The reason this is necessary is that it does not pay to bind any negativity to yourself, inside of the shield you will be taking such care to create. It is far wiser to wrap your shield around a cleansed space.

When crafting a shield from this higher Light, it should always descend from above your head and slowly wrap itself around your entire body, from head to toe. The Light should descend in a clockwise direction (i.e., it starts from your left side and rotates around your front, over to your right side, and then around your back to your left side, etc.). Your shield should stay in this constant circular or spiral motion.

Your shield **MUST** be impregnated with its underpinning ideation. Namely, that it protect you in the manner you desire and that it stay put for as long as you desire it to.

Unless you are establishing a very temporary shield, you will need to arrange for its replenishment. This can be accomplished in two primary ways: 1) You can keep it connected to its source. 2) You can disconnect it from its origin and direct it to replenish itself from the universal storehouse of Light. The latter is preferable.

2) USING THE VITAL ENERGY

This is the type that I use for my permanent shield as it is the most versatile and is the easiest to maintain. By ‘Vital Energy’ I mean the energy that Bardon describes in Step Two of IIIH.

In my experience, the best form of the Vital Energy to use for shielding is not the golden tinged variety but the clear, white variety. This seems to have less of an affinity to the human body and therefore is not disturbing to the nerves when surrounding the body for extended periods of time. However, it should be pointed out that creating a shield out of the Vital Energy is not exactly the same thing as accumulating the Vital Energy since here one does not permeate one’s entire body with the Vital Energy as one does in the accumulation.

The initial procedure is as follows:

Sit comfortably, lie down or stand erect, as it suits you, and completely relax your body from head to toe. Banish all negativity from your mind and body, and concentrate upon the feeling of harmony.

Draw the Vital Energy to you so that it surrounds your entire body. Do not let it permeate your body, only let it surround you. If you are able, condense the Vital Energy to a very high degree.

Now set the Vital Energy in motion and let it rotate clockwise as before. Be sure that it surrounds your entire body, even under the soles of your feet.

Next, you must impregnate it with your ideation. Give to it its predetermined purpose.

And finally, arrange for its duration. Here you are faced with many alternatives. I recommend that you bind it to the universal storehouse of Vital Energy by directing it to constantly replenish itself from this source. If you do not do this, then it will dissipate once you redirect your attention away from it.

As for the duration of your shield itself, you can either make it a permanent thing or make it so that it will materialize only when you think of it, or anything in between. Don’t forget that you can always change your mind later and modify it so that it better suits you needs.

Once these things have been taken care of, you can then return to your normal everyday awareness or you can proceed further. If you stop here, take a moment occasionally to sense your shield. The “further” steps require a bit more training than this simple procedure.

The first “further step” is to extend your shield to your astral body. This is done by first sensing the dimensions of your astral body and then creating the same shield of Vital Energy for it as you just did for your physical body. All of the same rules apply as regards rotation of the Vital Energy, impregnation with your ideation, replenishment and duration. End this step by joining your physical shield with your astral shield.

The final “further step” is to erect a shield around your mental body. The procedure is exactly the same except that here you must be able to sense the dimensions of your mental body. All of the same rules apply and you end the operation by joining your three shields together so that they act in unison.

As I said previously, I employ this sort of triple-shield for my own permanent shield. Within my underpinning ideation is the idea that this shield will alert me of ANY incoming influence. This provides me the opportunity of either accepting it or rejecting it at will.

For the most part, I am seldom conscious of my shield. But when I am entering a situation or space that I expect will be filled with stray influences of an unfavorable or unwanted nature, I have simply to focus on my shield and there it is, ready and able.

Until I had perfected the connecting of my shield to the universal storehouse of Vital Energy, I had to periodically replenish it. I suggest that you check the status of your shield periodically, especially in the beginning. As you work with shielding, this process of replenishing will become easier and much faster, and eventually, unnecessary.

If you care to, this sort of shield may be bound to a physical object and/or a spoken phrase. For example, my triple-shield is bound to three pinky rings that I always wear: my physical shield is bound to a simple silver band; my astral shield, to a simple yellow-gold band; and, my mental shield, to a not-so-simple white-gold band. All I have to do to ignite my shield to its strongest force is touch these rings.

I have also bound my shield to a simple phrase that I learned during my Wiccan studies. This phrase is: “I cast out all negativity [the banishing] and in its place let harmony be [the blessing]. I now invoke the law of three [this is where the three parts of my shield are ignited] and as I will, so mote it be.”

I highly recommend this sort of Vital Energy shield to all students of IIIH. It does not interfere with the training and it will help preserve you from harm. Of course, the greatest preservation from

harm is the attainment of the Elemental Equilibrium, so it should never be assumed that mere shielding will do in its place.

3) USING THE AKASHA

This is a more “advanced” technique that requires great facility with the Akasha. It also serves a somewhat different function than the previous two types of shielding. Here, the greatest advantage has to do with avoiding negative influences that are directed specifically at you. It does also offer protection from those pesky stray influences, but one who is capable of working with the Akasha in this manner is generally impervious to such influences already.

As before, this technique is of no use in attempting to avoid one’s karmic debt. This is because karma resides within the Akasha and there is therefore NO escape from one’s karma.

The particulars of this technique are very difficult to describe to someone who has no facility with the Akasha, and for someone who does understand the Akasha, any explanation I could offer would be unnecessary, so I will not be going into the particulars. Instead, I will speak only in general terms — hopefully not too enigmatic!

Essentially, this technique involves wrapping oneself with the Akasha, but it is not the body that one wraps. Instead, it is a specific level of one’s being that is encapsulated. I call this level “beads and threads”, since that is how it appears to me. The “thread” is the individual lifeline and the “bead” is the present moment of the individual incarnation. Another appropriately descriptive name might be “spheres and rods”.

At a perceptual level in this realm, incoming influences are seen as threads or lines that intersect the individual sphere/bead at an angle different than the individual lifeline. The degree of angularity indicates the temporal relationship of the incoming influence. For example, if the influence intersects on the horizontal (the individual lifeline runs vertical) then it is coming from a very recent source, but when the influence intersects at a nearly vertical angle, then the influence is very old and may even be karmic in nature.

At any rate, if you’re capable of finding this “place” you will recognize my meaning.

At first, it is only possible to encase one’s own sphere/bead with the Akasha, but with time, it also becomes possible to encase

the rod/thread as well. Eventually, it is even possible to encase the beads and threads of others, and thus afford them a similar degree of protection.

Here's how it works: By encasing yourself, at this specific level, with the Akasha, you are, in effect, removing yourself as a target for any incoming influence. When such an influence finds no target, it dissipates. Therefore, this sort of shielding is NOT a rebuff of the force, nor is it a "return to sender" sort of mirror-shield. Instead, it totally and permanently dissipates the incoming force and the original energy behind the force is absorbed into the undifferentiated storehouse of raw energy.

I recommend this sort of shielding as being essential for any magician doing very advanced work, especially those doing the kind of work that, by its nature, elicits a strong negative, opposing response from those that are, by their nature, prone to such responses to extremely strong positive works.

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A BARDON COMPANION

By Rawn Clark

Although it has been eight years since the first edition of *A Bardon Companion* was published, it has actually been about ten years since the bulk of my commentaries were written. In the ten years since writing my initial commentary I have answered literally thousands of additional questions in online discussion groups, personal correspondence and face to face meetings. From this interaction with hundreds of folks, spread all over the globe, pursuing Bardon's system of Hermetic initiation I have learned many lessons and insights regarding what does and does not need to be communicated in order to truly assist a student in their practice. I think even more importantly, I've learned better, more effective ways of saying those things that need saying.

At the forefront of this second edition of *A Bardon Companion* is a brand new commentary on all ten Steps of Initiation Into Hermetics. Here is the product of all fifteen years of my experience counseling students of Bardon's system. Unlike my first commentary, this time I have gone into much greater detail with Steps Six through Ten.

This new commentary on IIIH was written between May and December of 2009 in the form of biweekly lectures given online at SecondLife.com. They came into existence only because I was asked to give a series of lectures; otherwise they would most likely never have been written!

Immediately following the new commentary I've included a fairly large collection of selected excerpts from my public and private correspondence spanning the period from 2001 through 2007.

The remainder of this second edition is a reprint of the entire first edition text of my commentaries upon IIIH, PME and KTQ. Only minor corrections to spelling and updates to some information have been made to the first edition text; otherwise it's all there in the same form as before.

As always, I dedicate this book and its contents to all sincere students of Franz Bardon's writings. Time is short; make good use of each moment!

My Best To You!



(Author Photo by David Coleman 2009)