

# DIVINE CREATION AND INITIATION

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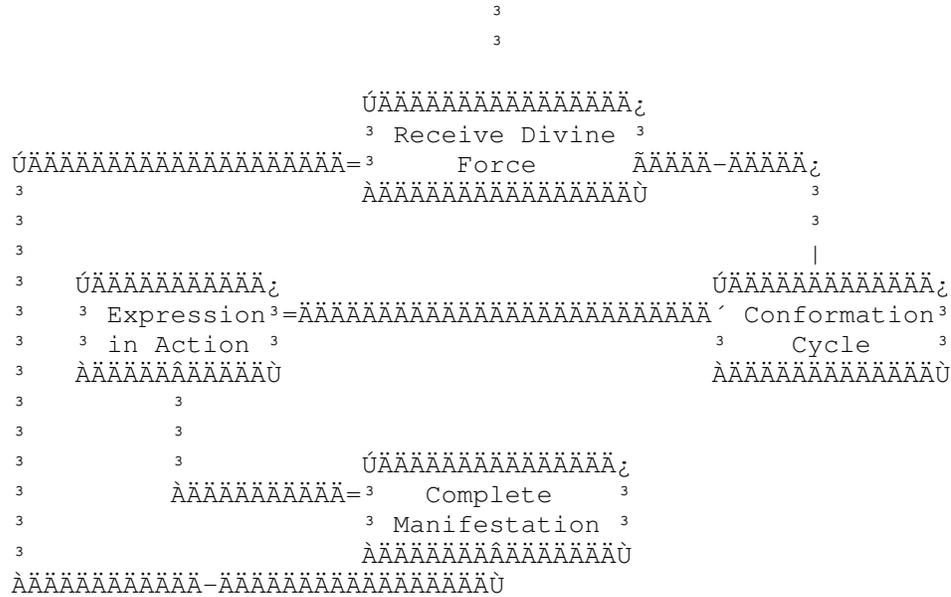


Figure 1. Cycle of Divine Creation and of Initiation

## The Process of Divine Creation

In the largest context, an individual's initiation does not occur in isolation. Rather, it is a single thread in the continuing act of divine creation. The full intent of the creator is only worked out through a multiplicity of such threads, linked through energetic resonance into a quasi-biological whole. I use the word "biological" deliberately; the logic of spiritual interrelations is indeed "biologic", the logic of living things, but tremendously expanded and generalized.

The relation between the creator and the initiates who respond to the act of creation has strong correspondences to the relation between our conscious selves and the cells in our bodies, though the former relation is not so limited as the latter. We can gain an understanding of the larger process by reference to its microcosmic analogue.

Each cell in our bodies contains in essence the information needed to create the whole. But the cell is not the whole, nor is any given cell versatile enough to switch places with any other cell in the body. A liver cell remains a liver cell, even if implanted in the heart. A brain cell remains a brain cell, even if moved to the genitals. Each

cell is a particularization of a range of potentials out of the vastly greater range inherent in the genetic material it contains.

Just so, each individual contains within himself the essence of the entire universe of which he or she is a part. "Man is a microcosm", the saying goes. But clearly the individual is not the universe; he is contained within it, both objectively and subjectively. Equally clearly, no two individuals are interchangeable, no matter how much the philosophically shortsighted would wish to make it so. Each is a particularization in time and space of the effectively infinite potential of the universe at large.

When a conscious entity decides to take a particular action, the process by which the intent is effectuated proceeds in four overall stages:

1. Appearance of the intent in consciousness.
2. Transmission of the intent along neuronic paths to the various parts of the body.
3. Modification of the behavior of individual cells in response to the transmitted signals.
4. The effectuation of the intent in the form of some sort of action.

Between stages one and two there is a gap; in some way not understood by either philosophers or scientists, the singular intent of the being becomes transformed into the multitude of signals necessary to direct the action of the body. No one knows exactly how this transformation is performed, only that it does occur. While many different explanations have been put forth, the evidence to date is insufficient to resolve the issue.

The process by which divine intent is made manifest follows four similar stages:

1. The appearance of the divine ideal which is to be made manifest.
2. The response of a group of adepts to that ideal, and the creation of a group of iconic or symbolic thought-forms to act as link between the ideal and the lower worlds.
3. Apprentices sensing the transmitted intent and unconsciously or consciously modifying their individual patterns of thought to conform to it. They act on these thoughts within the mundane world, producing
4. The final manifestation of the ideal in time and space.

The divine ideal, while wholly unitary, has three aspects when perceived by a conscious entity: Its Note, or initial impulse, its Intent or Will expression, and the active Vibrations by which it can be successfully manifested. Mages of different degrees are identified with one or more of these aspects, and through their identification are able to create a condition under which the ideal can be sense by adepts.

As in the previous case there is an apparent gap between the first and

second steps in this sequence, which is called the "Abyss" in magickal parlance. It is difficult to describe how this gap is perceived by a mage without resorting to mystic jargon that may ultimately be meaningless to anyone except another mage. One can speak glibly of "being" and "becoming", and leave the reader no better informed than before.

Another way of looking at the matter is to say that at each stage of this fourfold process of creation, an additional quality is added to the archetypality of the divine ideal, elaborating on its nature and creating manifestations having both greater specificity and greater multiplicity than the original.

As perceived on its own level by a mage, the divine ideal is complete, unitary, and self-sufficient. It simply is, with no apparent beginning or end. It neither acts nor is acted upon. It appears so nearly universal and encompassing that even the possibility that something exists which is not "what it is" practically disappears.

When the conditions created by the mages cause the divine ideal to be brought down into the second stage - "below the Abyss" - the quality of relatedness is added to its archetypality. The ideal no longer appears to exist simply in itself, but now is perceived in relation to something which is not itself. This simple addition of the potential for relationship brings about a shocking transformation; shocking because it is not just a change from one-thing-in-itself to one-thing-in-relation-to-one-other-thing. Rather the change is from absolute unity directly to infinite multiplicity. In the act of crossing the Abyss, the mage or adept goes from one extreme of existence to the other with no intermediate stages. It is as if one took a single step and found oneself at the other end of the universe.

The existence of two things demands the existence of a third thing; the existence of a third demands a fourth, and so on. Once one steps away from singularity there is no stopping until there is a cosmos full of things, an effectively infinite field in which everything is potentially or actually in relationship to every other thing. And more, everything can be related to every other thing in a multitude of ways, so that we have infinity piled upon infinity.

In contrast to this first transition, the passage to third and fourth stages merely adds qualities of greater specificity to the infinitude of the second stage. A limited set of potential events gets selected out of the infinity of possible relationships and proceeds towards full manifestation. There is no radical transformation as there is between the first and second stages.

Stage two corresponds to the state in the individual where an idea in consciousness becomes transformed into the many nervous signals necessary to direct the body's response to the intention. This stage belongs to the adepts, whose primary concern is with the establishment of relationships between things, the creation of magickal links. As individual neurons are to the idea in consciousness, so adepts are to the divine ideal. Each adept picks up particular aspects of its potential expression, those which relate to his own nature and position. Each adept creates links between the ideal and those things within his own sphere of influence which reflect its nature. Additionally each acts as a transmitter, passing the sensed potentials on to other adepts with resonant natures who are focused at lower levels.

If sufficient magickal links are created, the divine ideal eventually becomes established in Tiphereth as a self-sustaining thought-form. This thought-form acts as a secondary center of focus for the divine ideal, concentrating and amplifying the forces transmitted along the magickal links, and sending out new signals into the lower worlds. This thought-form is also an "ideal", an expression of the original ideal within time and space and the context of human perceptions. Unlike the original it can be sensed by apprentice-level beings, and translated by them into a series of concrete goals within the manifest world.

The works of some adepts partially bypass this thought-form and act directly on the lower worlds. One type of adept concentrates on the "multiplicity" aspect of stage two and brings this aspect down into the lower worlds to be expressed as intellectual formulations or ideas. Another type of adept concentrates on the "relationship" aspect, manifesting it in the form of artistic creations. By providing these links directly into the worlds inhabited by apprentices, they provide apprentices with patterns by which they can learn to sense to the ideal expression in Tiphereth.

Passing to stage three adds the quality of active response or intelligent activity to the creation. This stage corresponds to that stage in the individual where the neuronic signals reach their goals in various parts of the body. These signals, acting on non-neuronic cells, cause those cells to change their state of activity in ways that conform to the conditions set by the signal. The cells take energy and matter from their environment, transform it in accordance with the signals, and release it back into the environment. The release may come in the form of movement, as in the case of muscle cells, in the form of chemical secretions that produce global or localized changes in the rest of body, in the form of changes in electrical or magnetic conductivity, or several other ways.

Note that the signals coming to the cell do not force the cell to perform in a specific way, nor do they direct the cell's activity in detail. Remember that each cell is a particularization of the overall potential of the body. Its innate nature defines and expresses a specific set of those general potentials. The signal it receives need not contain any information at all as to how the cell must respond. The cell knows by its nature how it must respond, and does so automatically, translating a generalized command into a specific set of activities.

In the process of divine creation, this third stage belongs primarily to the apprentices. The quality of intelligent activity has much greater scope in their work than in the cell.

Cells exist in a more or less fixed relationship to the rest of the body, and each is particularized to express only a few types of activity. Their response to incoming signals is also fixed to a limited range.

Human beings, while still particularized with respect to the universe as a whole, otherwise possess a remarkable freedom of action. They exist in a constantly changing relationship to other humans and to the rest of their environment. Unlike cells any human being can perform a

vast range of activities, depending on the contexts in which they are acting. Most importantly humans, within the extremely broad limits of their particularizations, are capable of defining and re-defining their own activity within the "body" that is our world. And paradoxical as it may seem, apprentices have a greater freedom in this regard than do either adepts or mages.

Apprentices are in a way repeating the actions of the adepts, but on a lower level. The adept takes the singular will which is the divine ideal and translates it into a multitude of potential relationships, which in turn eventually coalesce again into the expressed ideal in Tiphereth. When an apprentice senses an expressed ideal, its influence is translated in his or her mind into a set of goals or possibilities for self-expression. Those that are congenial to the person's nature are incorporated into the person's self-image, thoughts, and emotions. Then, in the course of the apprentice's life in the world, situations arise in which action can contribute to the achievement of these self-chosen goals. Through the intelligence inherent in his being, the person chooses those activities that will help to make the goal manifest.

Note that the choice of actions comes entirely from within the apprentice's being. The expressed ideal in Tiphereth contains no specifications concerning the way that the ideal is to be manifested, but only of the intended result. The manner in which the apprentice acts towards that goal is always a matter of free choice. Adepts and mages participating in the act of divine creation never attempt to force or coerce the apprentice into a particular course of action. At most, they will arrange to provide the apprentice with opportunities for action in line with the goal. But even in these cases, the choice of whether to take the opportunity, and what to make of it, is wholly within the hands of the apprentice.

This acknowledgement of free choice is not only a matter of ethical action on the part of adepts and mages; it is a matter of utter necessity if the divine ideal is to come into full manifestation.

It is the task of apprentices to create the final links between the divine ideal and the material world. Because they are still close to the material pole, they are best qualified to make the final adjustments that will fit one to the other and complete the creation. Their natures are exactly suited to this work, and no higher initiate can do it better.

By becoming more directly identified with the divine ideal in its primary form, mages and adepts have sacrificed some of their freedom of action within the lower worlds. Close identification with the divine will excludes many courses of action that are in accord with that will, but which require close identification with the material pole of existence. They can not maintain an identification with both the divine and material poles at the same time. Since they had previously passed through the apprentice stage, adepts and mages are still capable of acting directly on the material world, but only by temporarily reducing their degree of identification with the ideal. The more attention they have to pay to purely material affairs, the less of the higher identification they can maintain.

Another consideration is that when the divine will touches directly on

the lower worlds, without the buffering provided by intermediate links, its action is inevitably destructive. Matter and the substance of the lower mind is at present incapable of absorbing the divine will directly, and contact with it would result in a subjective equivalent of vaporization, destroying all form beyond possibility of reconstruction.

Finally, adepts and mages must consider that all acts of divine creation must take place in ways that encourage the continuation of the process of initiation. This seems to be a precondition for any sort of divine creation within the human Tree of Life. What little we know of the Cosmic Tree suggests that it is universally applicable in that realm as well. The rule as gods view it is that matter must be continually transformed into spirit, until all of it has been transformed. The means by which this is done is the process of creation and resulting initiation.

Through the combined effects of the individual activity of many apprentices, the divine ideal is eventually brought safely down into full manifestation. A final quality is added to the series, which can be called objectification or externalization. The actions of apprentices over time create an activity in the material world which takes on a life of its own, and is seen as having an existence independent of those who worked to create it.

In many cases, this "objectified" ideal does not actually exist in matter. Rather, it exists as a form on the astral plane, having sufficient organization to maintain itself and gather energy to itself without further conscious effort on anyone's part. Since most of humanity is currently focused on the astral plane or on the adjacent areas of the lower mental planes, they perceive it as real and act accordingly in their daily lives, even though the thing they perceive can easily be shown to have no existence when it is viewed with a strict definition of objectivity. Among the most obvious of such objectified ideals are the various organizations that make up the social structures of current-day cultures. "Government" is such an ideal, as are religions, corporations, money, and many other things to which we routinely grant the status of "real". But in many other cases, the end result of the process is truly "objective", that is, having existence in matter.

From the divine viewpoint, all the sephiroth below Tiphereth are equally "material"; the stuff of the astral and mental planes is simply matter in a different state than that of Malkuth. So the establishment of a divine ideal in the matter of any of these planes is considered a successful creation.

There are several more factors that should be considered by the reader who is attempting to gain a clear mental picture of the process of divine creation. The most important of these points is that this process is not all "one-way", does operate solely from the top downwards. Between and within each stage there occurs feedback, a constant dance of adjustment and readjustment.

In the body, the reactions that take place in the course of externalizing a thought influence in turn the next thoughts to arise in the person's mind. Cells send information back along the neural pathways, telling of their current status and what they will be capable of doing





highest level possible. The conformation cycle is the process by which this goal is attained.

Figure 2 represents the cycle of activity by which an initiate absorbs divine force coming into his or her sphere. This figure falls within the box labeled "Conformation Cycle" in Figure 1.

This cycle is applicable to the initiate's actions both with respect to his own initiations and with respect to his participation in the Great Work. The only difference between the two cases lies in what kinds of forms are being destroyed and created in the process. In initiation, the forms are actually forms that make up part of his individual being. In the Great Work, the forms are those that he creates to act as magickal links to bring the divine ideal into manifestation.

The conformation cycle contains another cycle within it, which is not shown because it is constantly in action throughout the process. This inner cycle is the cycle of invocation and response. At each step of this process, the initiate is in constant need of a contact with the incoming divine force. At the very beginning of the process, it is his desire and intent, directed upwards through the planes, that generates the initial inflow of force. As the power gathered from that first inflow is expended, he is constantly re-invoking the force, replenishing the power so that the process can continue.

Invocation and response may take the form of formal ceremonies and magickal efforts, or it can simply be a continual "looking towards" the divine with a desire to draw it into contact again. In any case, the directed intent and desire of the magician attracts both the force and the attention of interested beings on higher levels, who provide him with assistance in bringing down the force, and also assist with suggestions as to appropriate forms that might be created to hold and channel the force. Without this constant renewal of contact, any effort to reconfigure form to match the force will fail.

Throughout the following sections the word "form" will be used as a generic term for that on which the force of the divine ideal acts. It is perhaps not the best term available, but after reviewing many more technically specific terms from philosophy, phenomenology, and metaphysics, I find the use of such terms would not add any significant understanding to the subject being dealt with here.

The viewpoint from which the process of conformation is described is one in which the consciousness of the initiate exists in an intermediate area between a positive and a negative pole. The positive pole in this discussion is generally the divine ideal in one of its three aspects. The "negative" or more material pole is in most cases not the sephira Malkuth, as is conventionally the case, but rather Tiphereth.

The conformation process is one that takes place on the same planes in which the adept normally works, and it is usually only the adept in whom the process takes place consciously. Conformation to the divine ideal always takes place before any appearance on the more material planes, even such an abstract appearance as a thought that can be described in words.

So the material aspect of the process, the "forms" on which the divine

ideal works, are the formulations of relationships, the magickal links with which the adept does his work. When speaking of "forms", of the "breaking up of forms" or the "creation of forms" we are speaking of either (in the case of initiation) the formulated relationships that maintain the internal connectivity and unity of the individualized adept, or (in the case of divine creation) of those magickal links the adepts create between the divine ideal and the lower worlds.

#### Phase 1: Destruction of Old Forms

The first effect of an inflow of divine force is always destructive. The "vibrations" of the force have a tendency to break up any form that is incompatible. This effect is represented cabalistically by the planet Mars and the tarot card The Tower.

Mythologically, Mars has always been associated with a rise to the heights, followed by a sudden disaster and a subsequent rapid fall. The disaster is usually caused by the entry onto the scene of a new and unanticipated factor, often through divine intervention. The Tower of Babel story is a classic example. To understand how this relates to the conformation cycle we have to back up a little bit.

As was shown in Figure 1, the entire process of initiation is itself cyclic. As the cycle progresses, it gradually draws away from the divine ideal and towards full objectification. Eventually all the divine force received gets expended, and the individual has to continue to build using energy drawn from within himself and from his environment. After objectification has been completed, the process must take a jump back to its first step to acquire a new flow of divine force from a yet higher level.

In the interim period, between objectification and the new inflow, the individual builds up and elaborates on the fundamental forms and ideas previously established. He works to extend those into areas of life and experience not directly touched upon in the course of initiation, both in the material world and on the magickal planes, re-interpreting all of his being in terms of the new perspective. From the highest level at which he can perceive, he works to build up an accurate reflection of his perceptions throughout the lower parts of his being. As more of his being is integrated into the scheme, the original forms and ideas take on the psychic equivalent of mass; they become more rigid, more difficult to move, adjust, or change. They become less transparent to the divine force on which they were built.

This is a necessary step, and the natural consequence of the stage of objectification. Once this structure is formed, the individual need not expend more of his own energy to maintain his consciousness at the high level achieved in the prior initiation. It becomes his natural state of awareness, and only movement out of that state requires expenditure of energy. Instead of having to hold himself high in the air by the force of will, he is held up in the air by a strong tower, which supports him against the downward pull of matter.

Somewhat paradoxically, it is during precisely this time, when his internal expression of his initiation has become objectified and has begun to take on a quality of rigidity, that the initiate can contribute the most to the Great Work. The reason is that since he no

longer needs the force provided in his last initiation for his own internal use, he can afford to expend any additional flows of that same energy in outwardly-directed activity, building the impersonal iconic and symbolic forms needed to channel that energy into the lower worlds.

Consciousness of the needs of the Great Work can make a great difference in the extent of the rigidification that occurs, and thus in the amount of time between initiations and in the difficulty experienced in the course of the next initiation. A certain amount of it is necessary, but the motivation of the individual can vary the amount that actually occurs remarkably.

In a person who is primarily concerned only with his own advancement and power, the process of rigidification tends to continue to its natural limits. That is, it goes on until all of the lower bodies have been fully fixed in the new formation, and the formations have begun to build up a "crust" around the person's awareness on its own level. It can extend even further, into the person's relations with planes higher than that on which the awareness is focused, by creating assumptions and restrictions of thought concerning the next steps that will be taken in his development.

With this wholly personal motivation, the person becomes encysted in his own thought-structures, locked up in his own tower. The walls of his tower block him off from direct contact with the planes from which the force of his next initiation must come. As a consequence, the force of invocation needed to produce a response from the higher levels is greatly increased. He must also depend on the responding powers to answer with a degree of force sufficient to blast apart the thought-formations in which he is embedded. And if the force is sufficient to do so, then the experience of the next initiation will be literally shattering and disastrous to the present form of being, a full expression of the events represented in the Tarot card.

At the other extreme, in the person who is wholly convinced that his own initiations serve only the purpose of making him better suited to participate in the Great Work, the rigidification tends to stay at the minimum needed to support his awareness at its new level and to serve as a foundation for the next initiation. Between the time when his initiation becomes externalized and the time when the next initiation begins, he concentrates not on building up the lower being into conformation with his own centralized point of perception, but rather on keeping the lower being in a state of fluid responsiveness to the needs of the divine creation, regardless of whether those needs match what the individual awareness thinks of as its own advantage.

In this case, the lower levels of being will still be formed into structures relating to what the person currently perceives of the divine ideal. The difference is that these structures will be decentralized and impersonal. It is as if the initiate, rather than building a tower for his sole use and protection, were building a grand plaza in the air, an open structure that could be used by anyone who chooses to do so, freely and without restrictions. He considers himself neither the architect nor the owner of these structures, but only a builder, one of many contributing to the overall effect as a service to the world.

Creating a sense of service, of contribution to the Great Work, requires the conscious development of several attitudes:

1. The attitude that the results of initiation are not the property of the initiate, but are only held by him temporarily as a matter of public trust.
2. The attitude that the benefits of the initiation must be extended freely to all who have need of it and want it, but must not be forced upon any against their own preference.
3. The attitude that each person who makes use of what he has freely given must be allowed to make use of it according to that person's own perception of the goals and ideals, and can not be restricted by the one who gives.
4. The attitude that the work as a whole is the product of a vast number of workers, and that the contribution of any one of them is not so much greater than that of the others as to make him more important or worthy of respect than others. The attitude that it is the divine structure being built that is worthy of respect and appreciation, not those who did the work. Conversely, that no person is unworthy of respect simply because his apparent participation in the Great Work is small or nonexistent.
5. The attitude that service given freely to others is service given to oneself.

It must be emphasized that the concept of service as it is presented here does not mean the same thing as either "servitude" or "servility". At all times, the one who seeks to serve in the Great Work must demand for himself the same freedoms that he willingly gives to others. He must at all times be the sole arbiter of the extent to which he serves, the type and limits of that service, the interpretation placed upon that service, and the manner in which that service is performed.

No other being, not even a god, has the right to demand that he perform acts that are against his own nature or inclination. As was shown in the preceding section of this paper, the needs of the Great Work are such that they can only be accomplished through freely given cooperation. If circumstances seem to be pressuring a person towards a certain course of action that he would not willingly participate in, then that course is not part of the Great Work.

It must also be pointed out here that the person who has committed himself to submission to the demands of his social group, who is truly servile, will have as great a difficulty in attaining initiation as the person who is wholly committed to just his own personal advancement. He is just as locked into a tower of rigid forms as the self-oriented person. Only, the tower in his case has been constructed by others, out of the instinctual needs of the social group and the mass of conventional thoughts and behaviors built up over the centuries. To receive the touch of divine force, he must be blasted out of his tower much as his polar opposite would.

It is only through this concept of the Great Work, of free service freely given under the divine ideal, that the conflicting poles of

human social experience are reconciled and blended into a single path. The individualist remains free to do his own will; the socialist remains free to help his fellow humans. All that either sacrifices is something to which they had no right in the first place: the use of force or coercion against others.

Going back to our discussion of the destruction of forms, this attitude of service frees the individual from many of the pains, difficulties, and seeming terrors that the more self-oriented types experience along the path of initiation. The one who is wholly committed to service in the Great Work does not perceive the structures he has built as being in any way his own property or possession, but rather as things that are only temporarily in his care. When the time comes to create new forms to conform to the inflow of force in a new initiation, he can let loose of them with a minimum of difficulty. Since by definition the inner worlds become more inclusive as one progresses through them, he knows that what will replace that which he gives up can only improve his ability to participate in the Great Work. He is not attached to the icons and symbols he has built, and so experiences no loss in giving them up.

Another important point is that because the willful server has not built his conceptions into a separate, monolithic structure, only those parts of his decentralized structure that are incompatible with the new flow of divine force will be destroyed. The majority of the parts will remain intact. For the person trapped in a personalized or socialized tower, this is not the case. Many parts of that tower, if not so closely bound together, would not be destroyed by the new force. But because they are bound together, when one falls they all fall. The difference is that between a minor inconvenience and a full-blown psychological disaster. Additionally, the fact that his intent is habitually focused on sensing the divine ideal means that he will be better able to maintain his awareness on a high level during the process of destruction, and to a certain extent will be able to direct it to critical points, making the process more efficient.

Most of us will fall somewhere between the trapped dualities of fully individualized or fully socialized mental constraints on the one hand, and the full freedom of the willful server on the other. The extent to which we will be able to make the destructive aspects of initiation occur in a smooth and controlled manner will be determined by the extent to which we make an effort to adopt the perspective of the willful server in the Great Work.

#### Phase II: Expansion and Absorption

It was mentioned in discussing the process of divine creation that the divine ideal or initiating impulse is translated by mages into two complementary aspects: a "Will" or "Intent" aspect and a "Vibratory" aspect. It was the vibratory aspect that brought about the destruction of incompatible forms in the previous phase, and which will be used to test the newly synthesized forms in the last of the four stages of the conformation cycle. In this phase and the next, it is the "pattern" aspect which predominates.

Since this "Intent" exists above the Abyss, it is difficult to give a precise definition of what it is. It exists in the sephira Chokmah,

which is the archetypal "potential Son" which is eventually brought into being in the lower worlds as the "true Son" in Tiphereth. Tiphereth being among those sephiroth where the principle of relationship is most important, its archetypal precursor must in some way be concerned with the universal potential for relationship inherent in the divine ideal. It seems a contradiction to say that dualistic relationship exists within the unity of the divine ideal, but this is a failure of description, not of fact. The relationships contained within the Will aspect of the divine ideal are only potential, not actual. They are the relationships that must be achieved if the divine ideal is to become fully manifested.

It is this intent aspect, brought down into the worlds of the adept as a force expressing potential relationship, with which the initiate is concerned in the next two phases.

Destruction of the old forms frees the individual temporarily from ties to the lower levels of his being. The inflow of divine force now provides a channel by which the consciousness of the individual can move upward into a new level of inclusiveness. His horizons are expanded and new modes of perception appear as the force floods through him. This stage is represented cabalistically by Sol, and the tarot card The Sun.

Initially, this raising of consciousness comes automatically and without effort on the part of the initiate. For a while, the individual floats above the world, separated from it and unaffected by it, yet feeling intimately connected with all that occurs there. He feels full of light, free, and unconditioned. The forms which formerly held him are no longer a constraint, and the time has not yet come for new forms to be created. He takes in and re-radiates the force like the sun at noon.

If the person simply basks in the pleasure of this experience of unconditionality without making a conscious effort to absorb it into his being, then the old forms that were broken up eventually will reform into something like their original condition. The shards of thought left over from the breakup act as seeds around which the matter of the inner planes accumulates until the old structures are complete again.

The person has to consciously grasp the inflowing force and use it to pull himself up to the highest level possible. He must make an effort to identify himself, to the extent that he is capable, with the divine Will. Holding himself on that high level, he must direct the force into his lower bodies; by comparing the remaining forms to the intent inherent in the divine force, he determines which of them will be of use in the new creation and which will not. He then uses the force to burn away, to occultly vaporize, all the other shards of form left over from the destructive stage, as soon as he becomes conscious of them. Through this process of grasping and directing the force, he gradually forces out of his lower bodies all energies that are incompatible with the divine intent as he is currently able to sense it, and replaces them with the incoming initiatory energy.

For each of the three types of persons mentioned above (the socialized, the individualized, and the willful server) this stage presents certain opportunities and certain hazards.

For the person who is submitted to social constraints, this stage represents the first experience of freedom and individuality. He becomes aware for the first time that the forms and symbols that bind him are not himself and do not originate from himself. Characteristically, he reacts to this by becoming deliberately unconventional, taking his former constraints and turning them upside down. He develops a sense of vast humor at the actions of his fellows who are still constrained, and has great fun disturbing their tranquility. Unfortunately, judgment usually flies out the window along with the constraints, with consequences in his relations with others that can be rather embarrassing. In short, he makes a grand fool of himself.

If he continues in his foolishness without consciously trying to grasp that which has given him his freedom, then eventually the force of the initiation will run out and his awareness will fall back into the lower levels. Without the sustaining presence of the force to heighten his awareness, he usually falls into a pattern of "conventional unconventionality", trying to maintain the conditions created in himself by the force without either the perspective or the energies needed to create a true reflection of it. The patterns thus created are a travesty or unconscious mockery of what could have been created had he not lost hold of the force.

Since the beginning of the experience was a true initiation, the person is often unaware of his "fall from grace", thinking that the course he is following is the normal course after the Solar initiation. He may think that he is still in an initiated state and try to pass on the "wisdom" he has gained, getting into contact with others in similar state to develop a "philosophy" or "style" of magick reflecting the mocking form.

Such philosophical travesties can be identified by their lack of internal consistency, their lack of humor and self-criticism, their non-specific contempt for anything normal or conventional, a frantic emotionalism that is obvious to everyone except the philosophy's practitioners, and a body of magickal techniques centered on ways to destroy forms, rather than on bringing more inclusive forces into the awareness.

Following the techniques of one of these travesties may indeed enable the practitioner to get back up to the stage of freedom following the destruction of forms for short periods. But because there is no more inclusive force available to pull them him up any further, he inevitably falls back down into the lower levels again. He becomes a yo-yo perpetually bobbing up and down between the solar and the lower mental levels.

By consciously taking in the initiatory force and using it to burn away those mind-sets and behavioral patterns that were imprinted on him by society, the person submitted to social constraint achieves a true solar consciousness, a true individuality in which the source of all his behavior is his own inner being. The removal of social imprinting leaves him aware in full consciousness of the "expressed ideal" in Tiphereth, and able to bring it down into the lower worlds in completely appropriate forms. Eventually as he becomes more fully aware of that ideal (in the form that it comes to him through his own soul) he enters the ranks of the adepts and becomes a conscious

creator of magickal links in the Great Work.

The fully individualized person is normally possessed of at least some solar awareness to start with, and may in fact be living consciously as a soul within the worlds of the Tree. All adepts have full solar consciousness, and the problems of being trapped in the structure of self-created relationships is characteristic of adepts. For them, this problem comes from a failure to release forms created as part of the Great Work.

It is the nature of the solar consciousness to draw energies around itself. The purpose of the soul is to act as a lens or focus for energies coming from the core of being so that those energies might be properly directed for use in the lower worlds of the Tree of Life. This centralizing and attractive aspect of the soul is the means by which that focus is achieved. In its attractive aspect the soul is in fact an embodiment of the principle of relationship, and it is through its own nature that the soul creates the magickal links between the divine ideal and the lower worlds.

The inflow of force from the divine ideal under normal circumstance will keep the adept from becoming too centered in this solar awareness. When the force is present, it is unmistakably clear to the individual awareness that it is not the center of being. But as was said earlier, the manifestation of a divine ideal goes in cycles, and also has periods of greater and lesser strength within its larger cycles. It may be that, for reasons totally beyond the adept's control, the force of the divine ideal ceases to flow through him for a time and no amount of invocation on his part will bring it back. He experiences a time of dryness.

If this time goes on too long, the soul will continue to work at forming appropriate vessels for the force out of the substance of its own being, using such energy as it can draw from its immediate environment. But without the presence of the divine will, the strength of the soul's own attractiveness is too strong to be fully overcome. The created iconic structures, instead of being released into the magickal world to do their work, become "stuck" to the adept. As more and more of them are built, they form a shell around the adept until he is trapped in a structure of his own creations. It is not fully his fault, except in very rare cases, but it happens nonetheless. When the force begins to flow again, or a new force from a higher level comes in, these forms have to be blasted away.

A similar problem occurs when the adept reaches the lower edge of the so-called "Abyss". At this point in his development, the adept has effectively exhausted the potentials for relationship inherent in his own soul. Yet the soul continues to build structures of relationship; its nature does not permit it to do otherwise. The conscious being comes to a point where he feels trapped in an endless cycle of old expressions, each one following predictably on the one before. Nothing seems new, and it sometimes feels as if the divine force has abandoned him permanently. This is the experience of the Wasteland or Dark Night of the Soul.

In either of these cases, it becomes a true struggle for the adept to continue in his course towards the divine. He feels as if he is smothering in his own wastes. The sense of hopelessness and despair

becomes a constant undercurrent to his experience and must be fought against continuously. It is only by drawing on his inner reserves of will that he is able to continue at all.

When the adept again experiences an inflow from the divine and it begins to break up these accumulated forms, his sense of relief may be so great that he just wants to lie back and enjoy the experience for a while. But as was the case with the socially-imprinted apprentice, if he does not consciously expand his awareness and absorb the incoming force then the structures he has created will again gather around him and cut him off from the divine. He must consciously draw himself up to a point on the magical planes that is wholly above those on which the forms exist. And, from that high point, he must direct the force downwards to vaporize and disperse the incompatible forms. And, as with the apprentice, the divine force replaces that which it disperses, remaining in the adepts being to be the material of new forms.

The apprentice goes through this stage consciously only once; it is his initiation into the ranks of the adepts. The adept goes through this stage and the succeeding stages many times, each time gaining a higher perspective and a greater understanding of the links that make up the body of the divine creation. Eventually, after he has exhausted the potential for relationship in his individuality, this stage of expansion and Absorption brings him to a point where the quality of divine will in his being exceeds the quality of relationship, and he moves into the ranks of mages.

For the willful server, this stage presents few problems; being focused on the accomplishment of the Great Work more than on his own advancement, he has few difficulties in destroying old forms. He has no attachment to them. His problems, when they do appear, are of another sort.

While the mode of free service freely given can be accomplished by persons of any grade of initiation, its primary source is on the planes "above" the "Abyss". It is a primary expression of the divine ideal as it is being worked out in this current age, as the expression of divine love was the divine ideal in the preceding Piscean age.

The consciousness of those focused in the first three sephiroth is not directed downwards into the worlds of matter, but rather upwards towards the source of the divine ideal. The problems of those who are fully committed to service to the Great Work will tend to reflect this direction. (Though, being imperfect as we all are, they are also likely to experience some of the problems of the other two groups.) The main problem of the willful server is premature abandonment of the lower worlds. He has little trouble releasing old forms and burning away the debris. Instead, he is likely to become so identified with the incoming divine force that he abandons any sense of a need to bring it down into the worlds of men. Such an identification is only appropriate for those who are mages. For them the goal of initiation is total freedom from the Tree of Life, and entry into the greater Tree of Cosmos, passing from the path of initiation onto the Star-Roads, the ways of perpetual creativity and discovery.

For those who express the way of service in the lower worlds, this course is inappropriate. If they follow it anyway, they become the sort of spaced-out mystic who is unconcerned with anything within the

world, even his own life, so long as he can get lost in the divine. The world becomes unreal to them even while they remain in it. Thus the task of the willful server in this stage is the delicate one of maintaining an attachment to the world, but not too strong an attachment. Should he become too strongly attached, then he will begin to experience the problems of the other two types spoken of here, and will have to work out those problems before returning to his primary mode of service.

### Phase III: Synthesis of New Forms

The process by which the initiate creates new forms for the divine ideal is the most difficult phase of the cycle of conformation to describe. The previous two phases and the following phase have readily-comprehended material analogies; understanding of those phases is merely one of extending known principles to new realms. This phase also has its lower correspondences, but they are not well understood even by those who are engaged in the activity. Both this current phase and its lower correspondences contain the element of creativity, which in its essence is a characteristic of the divine, and as subject to difficulties of description as any divine aspect, for reasons described in the first sections of this paper.

Because of this problem, we have to resort to more symbolic methods of describing what goes on in this phase. As a framework for the discussion, I begin by taking some excerpts from an ancient book in the library of group with which I serve in the Great Work. Meditation on the sequence of steps shown here should provide the reader with an intuitive comprehension of the process.

1. The artist rises to the height, and from that height surveys the field of work.
2. The word goes forward. The work proceeds.
3. In the land below, the myriad beings sense the sound of the word, and respond each in their way. The worthy come forth; the bad retreat; and those that hear the sound but incomplete find their paths diverted into loops not of their own devising.
4. The myriad responding vibrate in harmony with the word, but know it not. They see not the artist, nor know him save through the sound of the word. It is for the artist to see, and to join them each in their proper place within the great design.
5. Gently, o artist! Thy materials are but wisps of thought. The touch of your will must be gentle, subtle, lest they be torn and broken.
6. Gently does the artist's sound direct the myriad creatures in their motions. Remaining themselves, yet they begin to move as well within the dance of the pending creation.
7. The dance begins with each alone, each in his own path. Yet as the sound of creation becomes more pervasive, so do those paths bend and curve, and in their motion the faintest outline of the pending creation begins to appear. Creatures touch and separate again. Behind them

in their motion spin out threads of the seven primary powers in their forty-nine divisions. So is the matrix of creation built.

8. The dance of motion settles into formal mode; the creatures move and flow along paths of elegant simplicity, each one balanced against all others.

9. The artist sounds the word again, but at a higher pitch. The myriad creatures caught within the web of powers vibrate in their place, attempt to match the higher pitch, yet their natures constrain them from doing so. The excess will flows into the web-threads; they expand their length. No longer tight between the creatures they connect, the threads loop and soar in dimensions previously unknown. They put out children, which link in nexuses where no creature stands.

10. From the mouth the artist sounds the word; the heart of the artist casts forth nodes of attraction on which the truly new will form. The eye of the artist directs the nodes to gather in the empty nexuses of the web. The nodes put forth their call, and from the unknown places they draw forth that which is the Heart of Newness.

11. The Heart opens, and heat floods the web. The motion of the dancers changes and the web expands. Upon those nexuses where the nodes dwell there come forth creatures new and wondrous to behold, yet fully one with the elder creatures taken from the prior cycle.

12. The dance again in formal mode, the creatures balanced once again in swirling movements.

1. As in the previous phases, emphasis is placed on the necessity for the initiate to do the work from the highest level he is capable of reaching. Since the intent of this phase is to create forms reflecting the divine ideal, and to create magickal links between those forms and the ideal, the consciousness of the initiate must be raised to the highest level of which it is capable, and at that point must attach itself to the divine ideal.

This phrase introduces two other concepts as well. First, that the initiate must remain detached from the things he is bringing into the synthesis. The initiate's personal preferences, beliefs, desires and intents must not be allowed to touch in any way upon the material of the work. The divine ideal must be the sole guiding factor, whether that ideal emanates from the divine monad at the core of the initiate's own being, or from some greater source.

The depiction of the initiate as an artist emphasizes that the work being done is an act of creation. For the duration of the act the initiate becomes the vehicle of the divine creative power, a channel through which that power flows so that creation may be extended deeper into matter.

2. The divine creative power begins by elaborating itself to express its two subordinate aspects: the divine plan or Word of Chokmah ("the word goes forward"), and the divine activity or vibrational energy of Binah ("the work proceeds"). "Goes forward" and "proceeds" both include the idea of extension, that is, of the divine will directing itself into relationship with something not itself.

The initiate, identifying with the divine ideal, must take the force of the ideal and project it into the lower worlds. He must project what he perceives of the divine plan onto the matter of the lower worlds, and stimulate that matter into action through the use of vibrational energy.

The creation of the synthetic forms takes place in two stages. In the initial stages of the form-building phase, concentration will be on those things already existing within the lower worlds that reflect some aspect of the divine ideal. Gathering these together into a pattern roughly reflecting the divine ideal provides the foundation on which the truly new aspects of the ideal can be implemented.

The possibilities for change and creation depend on the current state of that to which the change is being applied. There must be a pre-existing potential for change of a particular type in the material of the lower worlds before such a change can be brought about. Each change must build on that which came before. No creation springs full-blown into existence wholly unrelated to preceding events.

This point is so obvious that it becomes subtle. In our normal lives we have massive amounts of information, collected through experience, on the potential for change inherent in the objects making up the mundane world. We use this information so automatically that in most cases, inappropriate changes never come to the surface of consciousness. It takes a deliberate effort to bring them to mind.

Similar restrictions exist on the inner planes. A divine ideal can not be manifested unless at least portions of the world, as it currently exists, are able to respond to its impulse. But unlike the case on the physical plane, one is not limited to only those changes that are fully capable of development in the material as it exists. So long as at least a few aspects of the divine ideal generate a direct response from the material of the lower planes, the remaining aspects can eventually be evoked. This evocation is the second stage of the process of synthesis.

3. The initial stage begins with the projection of the divine ideal and vibration onto the material of the lower planes. Here that matter is presented in terms of "creatures" or created things, self-sustaining complexes of ordered activity. This is a true picture; at this point in the evolution of the universe, there is no matter on any plane that is not part of such a complex. These "creatures" respond to the incoming Word and Vibration according to their compatibility with the ideal being expressed.

In the original book, two images are used to help expand on this verse. In the first image, grains of sand are poured onto a vibrating metal plate. Those grains whose size and shape are "harmonious" to the plate's vibration tend to gather into specific areas on the plate. Those with inharmonious size and shape are bounced off the edge of the plate by the vibration. And those that are marginally or partially harmonious tend to migrate around the surface of the plate in circular motions.

In the second image, subatomic particles with varying electrical charges pass through a magnetic field. Some are pushed away from the

field all together. Some are diverted into orbits of various sizes, depending on their inherent charge. And others are drawn to the center of the magnetic field and stay there.

Both magnetic-like and vibration-like processes contribute to the linking of forms in the conformation cycle. The Word aspect of the divine ideal has a magnetic or attractive quality, since it is the archetype of the quality of relationship. The Energy or Activity aspect of the ideal provides the vibratory effects. Between them these two effects produce a sorting of the forms remaining after the destruction stage, according to their innate compatibility with the ideal, followed by an attraction and arrangement of these forms into a pattern that is harmonious with the ideal. This pattern constitutes a first approximation of the ideal within the realm of relationship.

4. The pattern is an approximation because many of the forms attracted to it may actually fit into the pattern in several places. The place in the pattern into which the form initially fall may or may not be the most appropriate. As the verse says, the creatures' reactions to the vibration are unconscious; while they exhibit the quality of intelligent activity, that quality does not provide them with the means of distinguishing between several appropriate responses. They have no capacity for interpreting the Word. The first reasonably appropriate place encountered in their motion is the one into which they fall.

The magician must examine this initial pattern in detail, looking at the forms that have become part of the pattern and determining whether each one might not better represent the ideal when placed in another position. Where this is the case, the magician must use the will to relocate the form.

5. This verse cautions that this conscious rearrangement by the magician must be done carefully. The forms must not be forced into an inappropriate location; it will fit into any correct location in the pattern without stress. The magician must constantly compare the elements of the pattern with the divine ideal, and make only those changes that are in conformity with it. Attempting to force a form into the wrong place results in either the destruction of the form or the disruption of the forming pattern. Care is particularly necessary when the forms being brought into the pattern are human souls.

6. Once the remaining forms are set into the pattern, then the divine aspect of activity or energy is brought into play with greater force. The static pattern becomes dynamic; the individual movements of the forms within the pattern begin to become coordinated. Yet this coordination is only apparent from outside the pattern. Each individual form, if we could take its viewpoint, would still feel within itself that it was following the dictates of its own nature, and not some outside force.

7. Increasing the force of the vibrations applied to the pattern causes two things to happen. First, the paths of motion followed by the forms begin to contract about a center, and to become increasingly "circular" within the magickal space the pattern occupies. Along with the contraction, the motions of the forms speed up and become more coordinated.

Second, when each form has absorbed as much of the energy as it can, it begins to re-radiate it as threads or lines of energy expressing its internal composition. As the forms pass close to one another in their motion, threads of similar energies reach out and connect them. These threads of energy are the expression within the realm of relationship of the archetypal pattern of the divine ideal. They are the magickal links it is the adepts task to create.

8. Once these relationships between forms have been established, the pattern begins to expand and to rotate more quickly. The expansion continues until a point is reached where the incoming energy is just sufficient to maintain the current size. The motion settles into a stable but continuously rotating frame. The overall pattern becomes a "vortex", a chakra in the body of the Earth, expressing a particular divine intent. At this point, the first stage of synthesizing the forms is complete, and all existing forms that are relevant have been absorbed into the pattern. The next step is to create forms corresponding to those aspects of the divine intent that are truly new.

9. The magician again applies the vibrations of the divine intent to the created vortex, but this time he deliberately causes them to be at a higher harmonic of the vibrations used previously. As in the physical world, the amount of energy carried by these vibrations is related to the frequency. Since the new vibrations are harmonic to the old, the pattern of the assembled forms is not changed. However, the new vibrations contain more energy than can be held by the forms, and it has to be disposed of somewhere. In this case it passes into the threads of relationship connecting the forms.

The threads respond to this inflow of energy by extending their length, or by splitting off additional threads. The innate patterning of the divine word causes these threads to extend themselves in certain directions, towards points where the new aspects presented by the divine word will lie within the completed pattern of relationships. There they link together into "nexuses" as if the new aspects were already present. Their connections define the context the new aspects are intended to take within the existent world.

10. The magician now must engage in a true act of creation. Combining the three divine aspects of Will (the eye), relationship (the heart), and activity (the mouth), he creates seed-forms or nodes representing in skeleton form those aspects of the divine ideal that have not previously existed within the lower worlds. These nodes form within the plane represented by Tiphereth, and from there are directed by the magician into their proper places within the web of energies in the vortex.

The primary force activating the nodes is the force of attractiveness or manifest relationship; by this force they are intended to pull into form those energies that were previously unknown within the person's awareness of the world, but which are needed to fulfill the intent of the divine ideal.

It should be stressed that even when these unknown energies are truly new to our world (and not simply new to the magician's experience) they do exist in the universe prior to the formation of the nodes; they simply have not previously appeared within the aura of the Earth, which currently defines the overall context within which all human

creators work. On the inner planes, the Earth is occultly "blocked" from direct contact with the rest of the universe. It is a "hothouse" in which certain conditions are artificially maintained in order to accomplish tasks not possible in the context of the changing conditions of the larger universe. Certain types of energies are intercepted and diverted before reaching the Earth; others are distorted or leached of their information content. The Earth has in effect formed a magickal circle around herself, and banished these energies from the area of the circle.

As conditions on Earth evolve under the divine will, it is possible to productively introduce some of these blocked energies into her aura. When this is possible, the need for them is presented through a divine ideal in the process of being manifested. When the magicians working on that manifestation reach the current point in the process, then they create these nodes of attractiveness. Through the power of attractiveness, the nodes pull these needed energies through the barrier of the Earth's magickal circle.

As the energy accumulates around the created node, it first gathers and converts a portion of the matter of the Tiphereth plane so that it responds to the incoming energy. The matter absorbs and holds a larger portion of the energy than the node can hold through its own attractiveness. The node and the matter together continue to gather and hold more energy, forming a core manifestation for the new divine principle. This core is the "Heart of Newness" referred to.

11. Eventually enough energy is gathered that the core begins to re-radiate it and to produce effects on the other matter of the vortex. This event appears suddenly when a "critical mass" of energy has been accumulated. The "Heart" opens up and spreads its energy throughout the web. The new energy requires an adjustment of the balance between the forms linked in the vortex; the vortex expands and the forms move into a new relationship balancing all the powers involved.

The forms expressing new principles from the divine ideal eventually stabilize, and their activity becomes indistinguishable from that of forms left over from the prior cycles of creation. The new principles become fully manifested within the realm of relationship.

12. The pattern expressed by the forms settles into a stable and ordered activity again, and the process of creation is complete.

#### Phase IV. Testing of New Forms

In an ideal world, every creation would be made perfectly on the first attempt. But in our world, such is almost never the case. The vision of the creating being is imperfect; for many reasons, he does not (at a particular moment) see all of the divine intent he is capable of sensing. And his ability to sense the divine intent grows with continued exposure. A form that appears to fulfill the intent at the time of its creation may in a short time begin to show inadequacies and distortions. This happens whether the form is part of his own initiatory work, or part of his conscious participation in the Great Work. Thus there is the necessity for testing the created form against the original divine ideal, and for reiterating the conformation process until it becomes the best representation of the divine ideal that the creating being can make.

The creation must be tested before it is directed towards manifestation in the lower, "material" planes. Once the created form is linked to those planes, it becomes effectively "locked" into its current form. The inertia it acquires in manifestation makes it much more difficult to modify. Even if the created form is destroyed, it will have continuing residual effects. The Earth retains the imprint of all creations manifested within it, and those imprints affect the possibilities for all future manifestations. Creations manifested as part of the magician's own being have a similar inertia, as described under Phase I above.

Testing is a relatively simple matter, compared to the previous stages. The magician takes the "note" or vibrational energy radiated by the solar form and compares it with the note sounded by the divine ideal. The differences between them indicate portions of the form that must be changed, and places in the form where something must be added.

In this work, the magician must stand apart from both the form and the ideal. He must be able to sense the notes sounded by each with perfect clarity; the notes sounded by his own consciousness must be reduced to a level approaching silence. His involvement as creator of the form must be temporarily forgotten. His pleasure in that act of creation must be held in abeyance. For the moment he attempts to become a being with no distinguishable characteristics, save for the subtlest bit of will maintaining his attention on the notes being compared.

Once the magician has understood the differences between the solar form and the divine ideal as he senses it, he can then direct the form back through the previous three phases of the conformation cycle. On these later iterations, complete destruction of the form is rarely required. Usually, only minor portions must be destroyed and rebuilt. Much more often, the testing only reveals areas where the form is incomplete and additional properties must be added. Once these additions are made, he builds in substructures and elaborations, creating harmonies on the basic note sounded by the form. After several iterations he can no longer perceive any difference between the notes of form and ideal, and prepares to effectuate the final link between the form and the material planes.

In the initiatory process, this final link involves an affirmative identification of the awareness with the created form. The initiate says "this is what I now should be". He proceeds to the work of making his thoughts, feelings, and behavior, his activities within the manifest planes, conform to the nature of the solar form. By making his material bodies reflect of the solar form he creates a channel by which the particular part of the divine will that he senses can continue to flow into his being. This flow in turn gradually attracts matter on higher planes and builds it into his being. This matter creates "bodies" on more subtle planes through which he can work. Habitual use of these bodies eventually causes the focus of his consciousness to stabilize at a higher level than previously possible. The initiation is thus completed, and the major cycle of initiation can begin again.

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