



enneagram monthly

September 2018

Issue 242

Counting Meaningful Purpose with the Three Goddess Braid

The organism has reasons that reason must utilize.
—Antonio Damasio in “Descartes’ Error”

“I have no values”

The Silicon valley CEO looked abashed as he awkwardly made a request, “I want you to map my values, but.. I want you to know that I have no values.” I replied, “That remains to be seen,” and we got started.

This CEO had founded a company on technology that made mobile services cheaper. He was deeply concerned that he had no altruistic reason to do this. As mainstream media would have us believe, he felt he was in it “just for business.” As I helped him dig deeper and deeper into the values behind his work, we both realized that his main reason for business which he had assumed was personal profit was actually around removing a pain point of other people that he cared deeply about. His deepest value was around living meaningfully and it had two dimensions—with his company staff, he wanted to hold space for them

Somik Raha



to come alive. With his customers, he wanted to remove a pain point around mobile service affordability. Both were about serving others in a way that felt meaningful to him, a far cry from his initial assumption that he was doing this for selfish reasons. He was very surprised and left that meeting with a big smile on his face and a message for his team. When thinking about this conversation, I recall the story of the virtuous butcher¹ who gave us an important teaching: one cannot judge virtue from what appears only on the surface— one has to dig deeper.

This has happened over and over again. It is the most beautiful thing that I have ever experienced. Without lecturing anyone, and by following a very specific line of inquiry (which will be revealed soon), I had stumbled onto a way to help others express their deepest purpose through their uniqueness. Strangely, even though each individual’s path to purpose was unique, they all seemed to find in it a feeling of wholeness. This feeling is universal in that it is not possible to deconstruct a feeling of wholeness any further—it does not matter how we get to it, ...CONTINUED ON PAGE 17

Towards the Origin of Gurdjieff’s Symbol

Having devoted much of my life for the past twenty-five years on uncovering the Sufi origins or integration of the Enneagram, I had asked myself three questions: What is the Sufi origin of Gurdjieff’s symbol? Are there any historic examples of the actual use of the Sufi Enneagram in previous societies? What is the science behind the use of the Sufi Enneagram as a psychological tool?

What is the science behind the use of the Sufi Enneagram as a psychological tool?

I have been blessed to be able to answer the third question through research in the philosophical writings on moral healing, by mapping various writings of Muslim scholars over the centuries who were specialists in the science of ethics, many of whose Latin translations influenced St. Thomas Aquinas and Moses Maimonides in the West.

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Are there any historic examples of the actual use of the Sufi Enneagram in previous societies?

I continued my search for an example of its actual use. At some point I decided to study all six books of Rumi’s (1207-1273 CE) *Mathnawi* to see if he had a story about how it was used by the people of the 13th century CE. I found it in Book 1. begins line 2252. It describes exactly how the Sufi Enneagram unfolds in our everyday lives including when we have arguments either outwardly, as husband and wife, or inwardly, as our reason against our passions.

What is the Sufi origin of Gurdjieff’s symbol?

I still wanted to find the Sufi origins of Gurdjieff’s symbol. Many of us of the EM Community have spent hundreds of hours searching for an exact replica of Gurdjieff’s symbol—ancient book covers, ...CONTINUED ON PAGE 15

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Since the Enneagram of Personality was made public in the early 1970's a recurrent question about the true nature and scope of the nine types remained open to a variety of speculative answers: "Is it a spiritual archetype indicator of a deep category assigned to us by nature at a level so early or subtle that we have no clear memory or definition of it? Or, is our enneagram type a life long passion that individual circumstances allowed to arise, and we embraced it as our preferred response to life's demands?" In other words, does enneagram type come with our DNA, constitution, environment or karma? Is it simply the "next phase" in the development towards full consciousness, that may last for some or for all of our current life? Is it a particular set of challenges that elicits a response by specializing in one of the nine approaches we call types, like a form of Darwinian adaptation?

Apart from affecting our personality, the enneagram can also have a broader meaning and application. Gurdjieffians used it as a way for understanding the sequence or stages in any process as well as a model for the cycles of nature. Illuminated mathematicians noticed and pondered remarkable characteristics of numbers since the dawn of time. Looking at the enneagram and our decimal system for example, we speak of two distinct categories of numbers, each with its own peculiarities. The mathematical oddity where we can group 3,6,9 as representing a subtler reality and behaving differently under multiplication from the other group (1,2,4,5,7,8) that express more concrete/practical aspects of reality. We learned to regard all 9 numbers and the zero as mere markers for counting finite quantities of things...

But life is operating on two levels, a practical measurable one about definable characteristics in the realm of duality or polarity, and, the mystical abstract level that eludes description and definition. The abstract level is about Unity, without definable characteristics and the larger issues of life such as purpose, meaning or being. If we expect to find true balance it may require awareness and reconciliation of the subtle with the practical.

Awareness and reconciliation happen as we question and ponder the practical and the abstract realms. We can't skip, bypass or ignore either the practical or the abstract without eventually paying a price, a price that at some point in life will force us to backtrack and repair omissions incurred in our rush to "growth." Let's also not forget that there is no particular hierarchy or qualitative difference between the types and we may not know which of them will be our last lesson to learn before final awakening. That's why the stories of saints and awakenings are so unique and not clearly related to their prior activity, state of mind or personality.

It has come to light that the two distinct areas of inquiry, the philosophical and the scientific, may actually be much more tightly interrelated than expected. Some of the best modern research into human nature continues to uncover more correlations than

From the Editor

contradictions with what the ancients knew. Scientists often disregarded tenets in sacred scriptures as they were mostly in verse and thus regarded as literary/poetic utterances. There are good reasons for that as scriptures arose after humans for eons had oral traditions that used verse as a practical aid to memorizing. Writing made memorization less crucial, but most sacred scriptures still carried over the verse style into writing. Over time verse turned into prose commentary, and the written word reached beyond the spoken, limited to whoever was within earshot; tablets and scrolls turned into books.

The electronic age of communication gave us near infinite expansion as well as dilution. A byproduct of dilution is pollution as every Tom, Dick and Mary can chime in to the cacophony of opinions. Countermeasure to sort the valuable from the worthless were needed and we had to devise things like the scientific method, statistics and similar verification tools. Our task and challenge now is to use discernment in the information we choose to accept.

So many choices and so little time... what seems to work well is when ancient wisdom and verse match lab tested research results.

In this Issue:

Somik Raha is "Counting Meaningful Purpose with the *Three Goddess Braid*" that made lights go on in his mind about a fundamental truth of how things really work. But let's have just a tiny preamble for clarity's sake. Somik had the fortune of growing up in a place and with parents steeped in the culture that achieved the apex known to mankind in philosophy and wisdom (Vedanta/Advaita). He then came to the USA to study and graduated with a Ph.D. in Decision & Risk Analysis from the Dept. of *Management Science and Engineering* at Stanford, where he collaborated closely with his brilliant professor Ron A. Howard.

Somik was surprised to see one modern discovery after another that had gone through extensive testing using scientific methods, come to conclusions similar to those described by ancient sages in sacred scriptures. Students of the enneagram will notice how by just changing a word or name we can see the correlation of three centers (head, heart, gut), how they interact, are mutually dependent and in a constant state of cooperation. What's new to enneagram theory is *why and how* the three centers share burdens or take turns when *heavy lifting* is required. We just may have a blueprint here to a likely area of inquiry that can put a more concrete explanation to what still is based on theoretical ones.

It's an article using different language and concepts and will require some flexibility on the reader's

part. But keep in mind that these concepts were developed, researched and tested without the benefit or bias of departing from the assumption of verification of an existing theory.

Laleh Bakhtiar has been moving steadily in her search "Towards the Origins of Gurdjieff's Symbol" our nine pointed enneagram. The origins of the enneagram are still a mystery and conflicting theories have been proposed since the post-Gurdjieff introduction of the symbol as the logo of his school. Gurdjieff himself made vague allusions to where exactly he discovered the symbol. As best we know he claimed that it came from a secret society, the custodians of this wisdom (not well defined either) who passed it on to the Sufis prior to the advent of Islam, who then were the scholars of spiritual wisdom pre-dating the so called Golden Age of Islam.

Laleh went deep into this research and wrote books about it. Given her language advantage, it allowed her to read in Farsi the not yet translated scriptures. Being of a scientific as well as spiritual mindset, she recognized correlations that were overlooked by others. One such particular correlation that stood out to her was the way Nicola Tesla gave credit to the source of his creativity to understanding the deeper nature of mathematics and numbers 3,6,9 in particular.

Here too, we come full circle where spirituality and science show mutual arising...

Jennifer Schneider M.D. and **Ron Corn, M.S.W.** offer chapter and verse of "The Achiever (Type Three) in Relationship" The charming, ambitious, accomplished, energetic and practical Achiever is all of that not for nothing, but rather at the expense of paying not enough attention and energy to their intimate relationship. We can't be in two places at the same time, of course, and intimate partners of Threes may only appreciate this characteristic if they too are engaged actively in something that absorbs a lot of their time and attention.

Threes express their appreciation often by producing achievements that benefit both partners and may need occasional reminders that "man lives not on bread alone" and a little salt here and there is needed to spice it up. Intimacy is hard for Threes and that makes them relate well to other Threes, especially if they pursue similar goals rather than competing. If they can team up it they can become a superb force.

Of course it need not be teaming up with a fellow Three, as long as the goals are agreed upon and it does not devolve into a competition, as competitiveness for Threes can easily take a wrong turn. A warning to a partner who tends to easily feel bereft if ignored during busy periods: Threes tend to be busy more often than not. To demand they drop everything and attend to the needs of their intimate relationship is asking a lot, but if profusely and honestly appreciated it can fill the inner urge of the Three to feel self-worth through accomplishments. After all, to satisfy one they love is also an accomplishment that is praiseworthy. And one of the worst things for a Three is to be taken for granted or ignored.

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The Enneagram Monthly, Inc. was founded by Jack Labanauskas and Andrea Isaacs as a not-for-profit corporation. Its purpose is to gather and disseminate information in the field of the Enneagram, that is most commonly known as a personality typing system.

For subscription and advertising rates see back cover.

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“Conversation with **Hart de Fouw** part 2” continues where we left off -- looking at the forces that shape our character, where they come from and how to not underestimate their importance and resilience. Quoting Hart “...those channels in the psyche that represent those particularly deep thought-grooves that we decide to change will require time and purposeful effort to be remolded. To change extremely habitual patterns, we substitute moral and behavioral restraints, spiritual practices, and psychological modalities, for literal digging, blasting, and landfill. Don't do this but do that, meditate or pray, see your shrink, go to an enneagram seminar, or visit your astrologer, things like that...but if the grooves are deep, it will take time.”

At the same time from a perspective of oneness of life Hart also thinks that “there is something to the type, it is real...and yet the typology ultimately has no life. Type is animated through the formulation and the naming of the type, and of an individual's self-identification with the type. Once that interaction starts to happen, then the phenomena of type gets grander and bigger. Upon being identified and named, the type starts to grow and takes on a life that seemingly is its own.”

Enneagrammers are familiar with this phenomena and it's a good idea to keep that thought in the back of our mind when we tend to attribute too much to type...

Mark Bodnarczuk brings in Jungian concepts to “Know the Depth of Your Personality”

that are effective and offer the language to explore the unconscious. Personality and type of course are not just a surface layer formed by external events, traumas or impressions we responded to according to our temperament and world view.

Mark believes that “In Jungian psychology the vast majority of what constitutes human personality, the causal factors of behavior and emotional life, are largely unconscious. Synthesizing the Enneagram

and Jungian psychology points to the depths of personality, but knowing these depths depends on the specific definition of personality and the foundations upon which that definition rests.

Almost without exception, the deep foundations of traditional Enneagram theory are predicated on spiritual-metaphysical assumptions, where personality is a distortion that prevents us from reconnecting to our true spiritual natures in Being and Essence.” •



Meeting Group with Michael Damian

*Realisation is not acquisition of anything new nor is it a new faculty.
It is only removal of all camouflage. Ramana Maharshi*

This small group led by Michael is for individuals who are devoted to genuine Self-realization (or awakening) and spiritual maturity. The group is an opportunity to receive precise guidance for awakening and to commune in truth. Meetings generally include meditation, talk/discussion, and tea.

The group meets roughly once per month and consists of no more than 10 people at a time. If you would like to attend a meeting, please send an email and Michael will contact you to discuss your interest and relevant details. There is no fee for attending the group meetings. Donations are accepted with gratitude.

**Also, see announcements for the 1/2 Day Retreats:
Please check his website for place and time of the meetings and retreats.**

All of this information is now posted, along with a link to Michael's introduction to the perennial wisdom, which describes the focus of awakening & realization.

<http://www.michaeldamian.org> (click on Events & scroll down)