



Initiation & the Spiritual Path

by Debbie Sellwood

THROUGHOUT HISTORY, INITIATION HAS PLAYED A PART IN MANY traditions and cultures. The word initiation can be described as an induction or admission, most often preceded by a period of training or testing, in order to graduate to a higher level.

According to ancient spiritual teachings, initiation is an important part of our spiritual journey; a natural, normal and inevitable process of our evolution, both during and beyond our earthly incarnations. We may think of ourselves as apprentices who have vowed (usually unconsciously) to undertake certain training in order to meet various advancements or landmarks. Unlike initiations in ancient civilisations, these initiations do not take place in temples or sacred places and are not of a physical nature, but are undertaken by the Soul on inner planes where their subtleness often goes unnoticed, especially in the earlier initiations. The achievement of an initiation is not recognised by a ceremony but by a climax point where the individual's consciousness is heightened.

What is involved?

Ancient wisdom teachings define seven levels of planetary initiations, consisting of incremental steps by which one is admitted into higher levels of awareness. Each initiation offers the opportunity to master different planes of consciousness. It entails a continuous process of purification whereby the chemistry of our physical and subtle bodies becomes less dense. At each initiation, all chakras are to a certain extent enlivened, the object of which being that the energies in the lower chakras are ultimately transferred to higher chakras.

Initiations do not necessarily precede one another at specified times and may have been taken in previous lifetimes. They can be seen as the development of self-mastery which takes place over many incarnations, and after much hard work whilst an individual is learning discipline over their lower nature. In fact, the whole course of spiritual evolution can be seen to be marked with a series of ascensions known as initiations. At each stage, further consciousness of our Soul becomes possible as we learn to lift our lower energies into the light and bring higher energies down into expression.

The Rays and the Initiations

A major conditioning influence in the process of initiations are the Seven Rays. These rays are said to be seven streams of energy which enter our solar system from cosmic sources and pervade and energise our planet and all forms of life within it. Ancient wisdom teaches that each ray is an aspect of the Creator's consciousness.

Rays come in and out of circulation at certain times in history and influence humanity for periods of time. The Seventh Ray of Ceremonial Order and Magic has been growing in strength for the last two hundred years and will continue to do so for approximately the next two thousand years. The function of this ray is to bring together the Soul with the body/personality. It is concerned with the blending of spirit with matter; there is only spiritual substance working on and producing outer tangible forms. The incoming of a ray brings with it an intensified period of activity said to make possible the mass initiation of thousands of people on Earth.

The Seventh Ray, associated with the First Initiation, is bringing in a new world order, and as it comes more into manifestation the greater the likelihood is of large numbers of humanity taking this initiation. The current rapid unfolding of spiritual consciousness seems to provide confirmation that humanity is raising its vibration and undertaking ascension.

Of course, there are many people who have achieved or are working toward a higher initiation than the first one. The following is a very brief and general description of the first five initiations, although it must be noted that this is not an exact procedure, as not every Soul is developing in the same manner and much can depend on which of the Seven Rays are influencing an individual.

The First Initiation

Known as the 'Birth of the Christ within the Heart', this initiation signals the awakening of Christ Consciousness. My interpretation of Christ Consciousness is that it has nothing to do with religion but is a consciousness of love, responsibility and service. The individual becomes more sensitive to those in need, treats others with respect and without judgement. Many of humanity have already taken this initiation, although they may not necessarily register this.

Before attaining the first initiation, the individual would have recognised the existence of a higher aspect of themselves – the Soul in relation to the personality. Further knowledge of such is often pursued through various avenues, such as traditional religions, but in more recent times this has been enabled by embracing a broader spiritual understanding. It also has to do with achieving physical control and in preparation the individual is learning a measure of self-control over their physical appetites and desires.

This initiation brings an intensified focus on the sacral chakra, which amongst other things is associated with sex.

This is consistent with the Seventh Ray's rulership over the sacral chakra of humanity. As has been observed, the last few years has brought forth (this ray's influence) an increasing focus on sex, for the most part in an unhealthy, degrading and perverted fashion. We may be observing the dark side now but ultimately, greater discrimination and a wiser approach in this area, (through this ray's influence) will enable the energies of the sacral chakra to ascend to the throat chakra; the focus will eventually come through a higher form of creativity instead of being just purely sexual.

The Second Initiation

Many incarnations are usually required to develop the necessary detachment and objectivity over one's feelings in order for a Soul to gain mastery over emotions; a prerequisite of the second initiation. Attainment of emotional self-control is usually preceded by a period of crisis, trauma or struggle. Not surprisingly, with its watery connotations, this initiation is known as The Baptism. Eventually the energies of the solar plexus chakra (which deals with our raw emotions) are transferred to the heart chakra.

At this point the individual is certainly not perfect but having achieved some measure over both physical and emotional desires, the tendency is to have higher expectations of oneself and be more aware of one's failures.

An element of disassociation from one's emotions now brings higher feelings of compassion, empathy for others and a growing awareness of group consciousness. Also emerging at this time is the determination to enter some field of service.

The Third Initiation

The third initiation is regarded as the first major initiation and brings a shift from control on the emotional level to control on the intellectual level and mastery on the mental plane. The Soul now dominates the mind and the focus is on learning to build thoughts which are clearly defined, used constructively and not controlled by desire or the lower mind. This stage is likely to involve developing one's reason and logic and some sort of study.

The awakening of spiritual intuition at this stage means an individual becomes more conscious of the spiritual Hierarchy and their connection and position in relation to it. It also marks freedom from the ties of the personality – the Soul has infused, and has authority over the lower self, and the Monad (spark of pure spirit) starts to guide the individual. The energies of the root chakra are raised to the head chakras. After this initiation the physical body is of a totally different quality than previously. Transfiguration, by which this initiation is known, is a fitting description of this transformation.

One's personal point of view now takes second place to that which is of the need of the Whole. The individual now desires what is best for all of humanity and works using their talents and abilities to make a difference rather than focusing on egotistical or selfish desires.

The Fourth Initiation

If we thought that connection with our Soul was our ultimate goal, we must now learn to set our sights on the Monad. This linking comes about through the building of the Antahkarana, the name used to describe a bridge in consciousness spanning

our lower and higher selves. Although this bridge has been in the process of construction throughout our many lifetimes, the process now becomes more conscious as we work on completion of the link between the Soul and the Monad; the extension between the Soul and the personality has already been erected.

The Soul must be transcended, it is no longer needed now and the causal body (container of the Soul) is destroyed. As complete contact with the monad is not yet established and we can feel quite alone, a total reliance on one's inner wisdom and conviction is required. A comparable loss in our physical life is also experienced, explaining why this initiation is referred to as The Renunciation – we let go of attachment to the material world and any dependence on power, money, status family etc. We can see through the illusions in life and are no longer impressed with the glamour enmeshed in society. As one moves past the point when personal desires are dominant, we are able to put our energies into the betterment of society.

Each initiation brings an increase in energy to our subtle and physical bodies; the power of which is increased significantly once connection with one's Monad is commenced.

The Fifth Initiation

This initiation is known as the Revelation, and with it comes the realisation of 'The Ways of Higher Evolution' – seven different spiritual paths that are available to follow, although at this point a decision is not made. Having reached this lofty rank, the individual's work in the world is influential. This is about learning to develop spiritual will and use it with intention to uplift humanity and support the evolution of the planet. Re-incarnation is no longer required and the relationship with our Monad is complete and now takes over.

Reaching this level is a major milestone to achieve and probably lies far ahead for most of us. The following two initiations (sixth and seventh) are not compulsory and beyond the scope of this article. Besides, we already have enough to be getting on with!

An understanding of the initiations provides not only a guide as to the nature of preparation required in meeting the various levels, but also offers a benchmark in what we may have already achieved. In addition to individuals, humanity and planets also move through initiations and this seems especially applicable now when we consider what is happening currently in the world. These initiations prepare the student for admission into a far greater field of a manifestation where we will welcome yet another set of initiations!

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Debbie will be expanding further on this theme by giving a talk at the Hamblin Trust next year on March 7th, 2-4pm.

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