

**Roberto Assagioli, Psychosynthesis,
and the Esoteric Roots of Transpersonal Psychology**
by Al Mankoff

The controversial Madame Blavatsky lamented for many years before her death in 1891 that her greatest failure was the disclosure of the existence of “The Masters of the Wisdom,” a shadowy coterie of men possessing supernormal powers and said to have evolved beyond the human condition.

The very idea that such beings existed at all, much less the fact that they were in contact with a select group of advanced members of the human race, guiding and directing them to bring about conditions of well being for all humankind, raised a furor in the late 19th century.

Attempts to prove the existence of the Masters birthed uncounted lectures, articles and books, few of them taken seriously by the predominant intellectuals and newspapers of the time. Two books, *The Mahatma Letters*, by A.P. Sinnett and *The Masters and the Path*, by C.W. Leadbeater, both close colleagues of HPB, were at the heart of the turmoil.

Yet, through it all, Blavatsky and her cohorts stoutly maintained the reality of the group of “Adepts,” most directly concerned with human evolution. Identified by such exotic names as Morya, Kuthumi, Serapis, Hilarion, Rakoczy, Djwahl Kuhl and Jesus – the one and the same Jesus of the Christian faith – this inner group worked in the outer world through tightly structured Ashrams of disciples, who in turn trained and supervised the activities of men and women of good will everywhere, of every race and ethnic background, known today as “The New Group of World Servers.”

Only the inner group was aware of the source of this guidance, and they were sworn to secrecy.

Ludicrous as this appeared to the intellectuals and academics of the time, the idea nevertheless took firm root among many true believers who idealized The Masters and even undertook long and expensive journeys to the mountains of Tibet or Peru, searching vainly for the members of “The Great White Brotherhood.” Until her death, Blavatsky was wracked by the controversy and the glamour surrounding the legends to which she gave birth.

With all of this, a hundred years were to pass before new and compelling evidence of the existence of the Masters was to emerge. That evidence comes not from the rumors of a mysterious compound said to exist in the heart of the Gobi Desert, known as “Shamballa,” or from the actual appearance among mankind of Blavatsky’s supermen – but rather from the credible personalities whom The Masters gathered within their Ashrams, and the works that these men and women gave to a troubled and threatened world.

Now, when the Earth is said by some to be dying, when genocide uproots whole nations and new and bizarre events are each day a part of the morning news, what evidence do we have that, perhaps, Blavatsky was not a humbug but, rather, an unrecognized and uncelebrated disciple of the Masters she so revered? The answer seems to be “by their works you shall know them.”

There is a body of occult knowledge traditionally handed down by word of mouth in the most dangerous and repressive times or through secret societies such as the Alchemists, the Templars,

the Rosicrucians, Freemasons, and other less public groups that endure today, openly available through books and other more direct sources. Commonly known as “The Ancient Wisdom,” “The Ageless Wisdom,” or “The Perennial Wisdom,” the knowledge has to do with the evolving betterment of the world through the freeing of humankind to enter consciously into practices and disciplines designed to co-create a new world in cooperation with the eternal Divine Forces (God), which have existed since beginning of time.

As Blavatsky’s claims – and her works – faded in time, enduring only in her published works and in the Theosophical Society, the twentieth century saw a new development. While still in her teens, a young British woman named Alice Bailey was contacted by a strangely powerful, intense Asian man who appeared at her doorway, unbidden and unannounced, and who told her in no uncertain terms what her life’s work was to be. His name, it’s said, was The Master Kuthumi.

Rejected out of hand, the man disappeared, only to reappear later in time to announce the beginning of a series of channeled books to the by then more receptive A.A.B., as Bailey was later known. Over a period of thirty years, Bailey produced twenty-four books representing an astonishing range of occult information channeled from Kuthumi’s colleague, the Tibetan Master, Djwahl Kuhl, said to have achieved Mastership in the year 1875.

Two of these books reveal to us the validity of Blavatsky’s original claims as to the reality of a secret “governing board,” or Hierarchy, overseeing humanity’s progress. They also define the modus operandi of The Masters as they present the human race with the thought forms of a benevolent future through their immediate human discipleship Ashrams, who then promulgate the concepts through The New Group of World Servers, operating in every institution of our modern world.

The books are entitled *Discipleship in The New Age*, Volumes 1 and 2. They represent the instructions and the guidance received from the Tibetan Master, Djwahl Kuhl, by some 42 of his living contemporary disciples.

The disciples are anonymously presented by means of coded three-letter identities, each letter the first letter of a quality most needed by the disciple for his or her further development. Thus, Alice A. Bailey, shown in the book as “DRS,” was instructed to nurture the qualities of “Detachment, Rest and Skill in Action.”

Vera Stanley Alder, author of long-selling popular volumes of occult teachings, is shown as “LDO,” for “Light, Detachment and Organization.” Eugene Cosgrove, also the author of several profound esoteric volumes, and who was significant in the founding of The Center for World Servers in Asheville, North Carolina, bore the pseudonym, “ISG-L,” for “Illumination, Stability, and Group Love.” Perhaps the disciple of greatest world-wide fame of all 42 disciples was Doctor Roberto Assagioli, Italian psychotherapist, said to be the father of the Psychology of the Soul, Psychosynthesis. He is shown in the volume as “FCD,” or “Freedom from Ties, Chelaship, and Detachment.”

Foster Bailey, Alice’s husband, co-founder of the Arcane School of New York and a life-long Mason, is shown as “JWK-P,” for “Joy, Wisdom and Knowledge of The Plan.”

Other disciples addressed in the books may have achieved equal or greater results in the outer world, but if so, worked within less public domains. Still others failed in their missions or were

not equal to the task of disciple and fell by the wayside, as shown in the instructions presented by D.K. in his channeled books.

Assagioli, with works most public in terms of identifiable world-wide results, was born of a Jewish mother. He was imprisoned by the Italian dictator of World War II, Benito Mussolini, but was later freed through the intervention of powerful friends. The period in jail was a blessing in disguise. Solitary confinement led Assagioli to a self-examination of inner freedom. When he was released, he wrote, “My dedication is to the task of helping men and women free themselves from inner prisons.”

Assagioli’s known work with the Tibetan Master Djwahl Kuhl began in January 1933, when he was told that by the time he would reach his fiftieth year, he would have achieved “the difficult undertaking of becoming the sannyasin in the western world” – that is, one who has fulfilled his obligation to family and surroundings and is now able to devote his life to things of the spirit. Of earlier contacts, there appears to be no public record.

In his instructions of June 1934, DK states: “I would like you to write an article upon the Power of the dedicated Will” – the first step in a life-long study of Will by Assagioli. With a subtle hint of work to come, DK also triggered the beginnings of what, almost 40 years later, was to become The Meditation Group for the New Age and the beautiful, isolated center known as Meditation Mount, located in Ojai, California. DK wrote, “Your suggestion, secondly, that there should be a center at X of international usefulness is of real value and can be materialized if you work without haste and keep the conditioning of it in your hands and in the hands of no one else.” His instructions to Assagioli were to “Meditate much upon it, but take no steps until after . . .”

A communication hinting at the methodology of the Masters appears in a July 1935 note to Assagioli from The Master DK:

“I am dealing with ‘building groups’ – those groups which are coming forth along the teaching line and which are constructing thoughtforms which will embody the new techniques and ideas. These – during the next two centuries – will change the face of our civilization and inaugurate a period in human history in which methods will be tried and principles established which remain as yet totally unknown to the majority. This period will lead the race into a civilization and a mutual, cooperative interplay which will bring to an end the present era of selfishness and competition.”

In the same instruction, DK tells Assagioli,

“You could write a book (The Act of Will) which would be a synthesis of these new psychological ideas, subordinated to a central theme which would dominate them as the head dominates the activities of the body . . . opportunity will come to you to reach the world with ideas that are relatively new . . . you must work for a year at the organization of your thought and material so that you can reach the thinkers of the world with the new ideas in the field of that oncoming major science, that newer field of service – the field of psychology.”

Here, then, was the spark that lit the flame of Psychosynthesis and Transpersonal Psychology.

Later, in *A Treatise on the Seven Rays*, (1936) DK provides yet another clue to the coming changes which Assagioli will influence in the field, writing,

“Psychology is only just come into its own, and only now is its function beginning to be understood; in one hundred years time, however, it will be the dominating science; and the newer educational systems, based on scientific psychology, will have completely superseded our modern methods. The emphasis in the future will be laid upon the determining of a man’s life purpose.”

And Assagioli would be the disciple who would take on the massive task of instituting this great sea-change in the thinking of humankind.

Alice Bailey, writing in a booklet dated 1933 entitled “The Next Three Years,” predicted:

“The outstanding achievement of the coming cycle will be the growth of psychology and the emergence of a new understanding as to the nature of man as a result of its work. The mechanistic school of psychologists has served a valuable purpose; its findings are sound even if, from the standpoint of reality, its conclusions are temporarily erroneous. Its exponents serve as a needed brake upon the speculative and mystical school. From the adjustment of relationship between these two school . . . a third school will emerge. This will lay emphasis upon the soul and the mechanism it uses . . . “

Here we find the basis for Assagioli’s so-called “Wall of Silence,” addressed later in this article.

The success of Assagioli’s work in the field of Psychosynthesis, the foundation of the Transpersonal Psychology movement, was best expressed by Martha Crampton, Director of the Canadian Institute of Psychosynthesis:

“Assagioli had the vision and the courage to put forward in psychiatry an approach that did justice to all the dimensions of man – physical, emotional, mental and spiritual, even though the view ran counter to the prevailing mechanistic conceptions of the time.”

While Assagioli’s public work is well-established and a matter of historical record, his association with the Tibetan Master, Djwahl Kuhl, is shrouded in the mists of time. Except for a diminishing circle of people who were close to Assagioli and were aware of the connection, and who studied with him and are still alive today, nothing would be known of the esoteric background of his work.

Previous writers have only hinted at the depth of Assagioli’s involvement with the esoteric tradition, just as few today know of the roots of women’s suffrage that lie in the Spiritualist movement of the 19th century.

Peter Roche de Coppens, one of the few to so much as hint at the Assagioli-Tibetan connection, wrote in *Quest Magazine* in August, 1994:

“Assagioli developed a friendship with Alice A. Bailey, who connected him with spiritual traditions, the esoteric mysteries, and the teachings that she had articulated in numerous books” – read, “The Tibetan!”

Perhaps the most mysterious assignment Assagioli received from the Tibetan Master was an instruction to

“... establish a world-wide group to simultaneously and continually meditate upon the Laws and Principles of the New Age: The Law of Right Human Relations and the Principle of Goodwill; The Law of Group Endeavor and the Principle of Unanimity; The Law of Spiritual Approach and the Principle of Essential Divinity.”

In the 1960s, Assagioli assembled a group of devoted friends who could be called his own “disciples” from several European countries and from the United States. He called this group “the committee.” They met with him in Italy and began drafting a series of leaflets defining the Laws and the Principles together with appropriate meditative techniques. These were in turn refined and fleshed out by Assagioli himself. When the core group of disciples returned to their home lands, the booklets were published under the name of the Meditation Group for the New Age. Each booklet carried Assagioli’s byline.

In the United States, the booklets evolved into a three year basic study now known as The Meditation Group for the New Age, and a ten-year continuation study of the Laws and Principles, known as The Group for Creative Meditation. The studies are distributed world-wide at no cost to participants by a non-profit corporation known as Meditation Groups, Inc. The group distributes Assagioli’s materials to more than 7500 workers in 85 countries around the world, thus fulfilling the Tibetan Master’s instructions to Roberto Assagioli. This world-wide group meditates every day on the Laws and Principles, as one.

Because the practice of meditation during the early years was looked upon as an Eastern aberration and because Assagioli’s pioneering work with professional therapists was highly sensitive in its earliest years, no hint of the esoteric underpinnings could be made public. Had this happened at the time, Assagioli and his breakthrough ideas would have been subject to ridicule by his academic colleagues and he would have been denounced and ostracized from the exclusive fraternity of psychologists and psychotherapists. The work, of course, would have failed or at least been severely diminished.

Well aware of this threat, Assagioli wisely instituted what became known to his disciples as “The Wall of Silence.” Only those closest to him in the esoteric aspects of his work were aware of the true roots of Psychosynthesis and they in turn were pledged to absolute silence. The “Wall” stood for all these many years, until now, in a more enlightened time, the true esoteric nature of Assagioli’s pioneering work may be revealed.

That he was an active disciple of the Tibetan Master, that his work had a definite beginning on the inner side of life and was Divinely Inspired, can no longer be contested and must remain henceforth as a matter of public record.

More importantly, his work and the work of his fellow disciples, stand as solid evidence in this world of the presence among us of advanced beings, men who have managed to break the bonds of earth and who walk with the Angels, having learned the secret of immortality, so aptly described in Harold Waldwin Percival’s remarkable book, *Thinking and Destiny*.

These are men – and women – who have bridged the seen and unseen worlds and who live in perfected human bodies beyond the wheel of life and death.

Assagioli's work has vindicated the validity of all who have come before. As each new revelation appears – and they are coming with startling rapidity, today – our respect and admiration for those who, like Assagioli, had the faith and the daring to take on the role of sannyasin in the age of cyberworld.

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Disciples Participating in Djwahl Kuhl's Group Work Experiment:

Caps in parenthesis represent identities as shown in the volumes, *Discipleship in the New Age*, Lucis Publishing Company, New York City. Second parenthesis indicate the volume and page numbers on which The Master's instructions to the disciple may be found.

Telepathic Group:

Herbert Adams (BSD)(1: 105)
Roberto Assagioli (FCD)(1: 138; 2: 459)
Alice A. Bailey (DRS)
Foster Bailey (JWK-P)
Victor Fox (RVB)
Betty Harris (SCP)
Regina Keller (RSU)
Alice Ortiz (CDP)
John Tassin (BSW)

Glamour Group:

Ann Dixon (IBS)
Helen Freeman (DAO)
Dorothy Grenside (WDB)
Charles Hill (DLR)
Edna Kruse (DPR)
William Miller (DHB)
Lillian Morris (DU)
Bernard Morrow (LUT)
E. Suffern (LTS-K)
Tomira Zori (JSP)

Healing Group:

Eugene Cosgrove (ISG-L)
H. Carnagey (SSP)
Frank Hirsch (PGC)
Elsa Miller (GSS)
Harriet Case (RLU)
H. Richards (HSD)
Elaine Prouty (O-LRD)
Grace Ranney (SRD)
Marian Walter (RSW)
Mabel Watts (EES)

Education Group:

Vera S. Alder (LDO)
Frances Browne (RAJ)
Margaret Cobb (CAC)
William Cummings (LFU)
David King (WDS)
Monchart (PDW)
Junia Morse (WOI)
Allen Murray (DEI)
F. Wilson (RRR)
William Park (KES)

Politics Group:

Francis Anderson (JAC)
F. Brualla (IAP)
Madeleine Doty (LDN-C)