

# 'Multiple Personality Disorder: an alternative theory'

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## Introduction

Multiple Personality Disorder (MPD) remains a poorly understood phenomenon. With the fourth edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual or DSM-IV, there has been a name change to Dissociative Identity Disorder (DID). Both terms will be used in the following paper though, according to the information that will be presented, the former name may be more clearly descriptive of the true nature of this disorder.

The purpose of this paper is to suggest a decidedly unconventional explanation for DID which, if seriously considered and put to the test, has great implications for the future of psychological thought and understanding. Let us therefore begin with a review of the current thinking regarding this affliction, so that the reader may more easily assess the differences between the two hypotheses.

The DSM- IV-TR (2001) lists the following diagnostic criteria for this disorder:

- A. The presence of two or more distinct identities or personality states (each with its own relatively enduring pattern of perceiving, relating to, and thinking about the environment and self).
- B. At least two of these identities or personality states recurrently take control of the person's behaviour.
- C. Inability to recall important personal information that is too extensive to be explained by ordinary forgetfulness.
- D. The disturbance is not due to the direct physiological effects of a substance (e.g., Blackouts or chaotic behaviour during alcohol intoxication) or a general medical condition (e.g., complex partial seizures). **Note:** In children, the symptoms are not attributable to imaginary playmates or other fantasy play.<sup>1</sup>

A number of those who view Dissociative Identity Disorder as a valid diagnosis (and there are many who don't) regard it as a 'splitting' of the core personality into 'distinct identities', as a creative, useful way of coping with severe ongoing trauma, whether physical, emotional, and/or sexual. However, James L. Spira (1996) warns us that 'although a history of ongoing sexual or physical violence by a family member is frequently present, the therapist must not assume a priori that family members were involved in the abuse or that direct sexual or physical violence is always the case. Some patients with clear Dissociative

Identity Disorder do not report or exhibit any evidence for ongoing abuse of any kind' (p. xxxii).<sup>2</sup>

Our present understanding of this phenomenon is thus reflected in its newer name - Dissociative Identity Disorder. I refer to this present thinking as the fragmentation theory as it proposes that trauma produces a 'fragmenting' of a core personality into a number of personalities as a creative response to severe distress. I think we have it partially right. Trauma very likely is a significant factor, but it does not account for all cases of DID.

Another factor to be considered is the relationship between epilepsy and the development of Dissociative Identity Disorder, which has not gone unnoticed by the scientific community. Theodore P. Zahn, et al. (1996, p. 281) wrote that:

An important neurological question is the relationship between dissociative processes and temporal lobe epilepsy. There are actually two questions being asked. First, can individuals with temporal lobe epilepsy show dissociative symptoms? And second, does the presence of dissociative symptoms suggest temporal lobe epilepsy? The answer to the first question appears to be yes. The appearance of dissociative phenomenon among individuals with temporal lobe epilepsy has been well documented (Devinsky, Putnam, Grafman, Bromfield & Theodore, 1989; Mesulam, 1981; Schenk & Bear, 1981).<sup>3</sup>

In the same article, Zahn and company remark that Schenk and Bear describe these findings as 'suggestive of a causal relationship between temporal lobe epilepsy and dissociative experiences, including multiple personality disorder.'

In summary, current thinking simultaneously conceives of Dissociative Identity Disorder as a response to trauma, a frequent companion of temporal lobe epilepsy and a phenomenon that also occurs independent of the presence of either trauma or epilepsy.

An especially interesting study was recently done by neuropsychologist Joseph Ciociari at Swinburne University of Technology in Australia. The study took five patients with DID and five age matched professional actors and asked them to do simple cognitive tests while using EEG to monitor their brainwaves. In the course of this monitoring, the actors performed the tasks as themselves and then as a series of pretended personalities. The brain waves of the DID patients' host personalities (the core personalities) were monitored and then the alternate personalities, or 'alters' were invited to 'come out' and participate in the tasks and were also monitored. The Swinburne Media release stated that:

Swinburne has shown clearly different brain patterns between the Dissociative Identity Disorder host and each personality or alter, a finding that could not be reproduced by professional actors emulating the child alters. Previous EEG studies into the disorder observed the results at individual brain locations. This latest study

used and compared the EEG signal parameters between different areas; i.e. it applied EEG coherence analysis.<sup>4</sup>

In *The Psychotherapy Networker*, Gary Cooper explains that EEG coherence analysis 'simultaneously measures different parts of the brain to assess how they work in synchrony. Ciociari's study is the first Dissociative Identity Disorder study to use EEG coherence analysis.<sup>5</sup> The Swinburne media report goes on to state that there were significant differences observed in the EEG coherence analysis between the core personalities and their alters, but not between the actor's true personalities and their pretended personalities. Ciociari of Swinburne states that this lends credibility to the existence of this disorder and militates against the belief that it is fabricated in all cases. It was suggested in the media release that EEG coherence analysis could be used in the future as a diagnostic tool. Though this particular study indicates a significant difference in the brain activity of the core personality and the alters of the individual with DID, it does not offer an explanation for this difference.

In response to this and the other many unanswered questions regarding this disorder, I will now present a hypothesis which could account for the differences in brain activity and a number of other unexplained, or poorly explained, DID phenomena. It also throws light upon the link between DID and temporal lobe epilepsy and gives a plausible explanation for multiple causes of DID. As previously stated, it is an unconventional hypothesis and it is hoped that the reader will proceed with an open mind.

### **An Alternative Approach**

This hypothesis was proposed in a book written in 1942 by Alice A. Bailey called *Esoteric Psychology, Vol. II*. Alice Bailey was the amanuensis or scribe of a Tibetan teacher or Master named Djwhal Khul. Esoteric psychology can be defined as the study of the subjective phenomena that underlie our objective world. It might be more accurately defined as the study of the interaction between the intangible and the tangible. It is sometimes referred to as the new psychology, spiritual psychology, or the psychology of the future. It is a discipline in which an understanding of our subjective selves and world - the metaphysical - can be merged with current objective science to produce a rich new synthesis. Although the Tibetan Master that is the source of this new, esoteric psychology has a very unique and advanced insight into these matters, it is left, of course, to the reader to determine its value and relevance.

Alice Bailey gives us the Tibetan teacher's explanation of epilepsy and DID. The following passage will be quoted at length and succeeded by interpretation:

I cannot here deal at length with the problems of obsession, due to the withdrawal of the self-conscious aspect of the dweller in the body. This process of abstraction leaves only a living shell, an empty house. Too much would have to be considered for a treatise

such as this. It is not easy for the scientific psychological investigator to accept the premise of the substitution of the consciousness of another entity in the place of the consciousness of the one that has been unable to hold the link within the brain with adequate positiveness. But...such cases frequently occur, leading to many of the problems of so-called 'split personality' which is in reality the ownership of a particular physical body by the two persons - one providing the life stream (anchored in the heart) and the other providing the stream of consciousness (anchored in the brain) and thus controlling the body, directing its activities and expressing itself through the organs of speech. Sometimes this possession alternates between the two individuals concerned. Sometimes more than two are concerned, and several persons upon the inner side of life use the same physical body. Then you have multiple personalities. This is however due to a definite weakness in the etheric connection of the original dweller; or again it may be due to that dweller's great dislike for physical incarnation; again it may be caused by some shock or disaster which suddenly severs the link of consciousness, and in this latter case there is no hope of restoration. Each case has to be diagnosed and dealt with on its individual merits and preferably by dealing directly with the real dweller when he is 'at home in his own dwelling'. Furthermore, the consciousness of this dweller is sometimes so strongly orientated in directions other than those of physical existence that a process of abstraction has taken place, with the focus of the conscious interest elsewhere. This is the undesirable side or expression of the same power of abstraction which enables the mystic to see his visions and to participate in heavenly happenings, and which enables the advanced adept to enter into the state of Samadhi. In the one case, the vehicle is left unguarded and the prey of any passing visitor; and in the other it is left duly guarded and positively attentive to the call...of its owner (Bailey, 1942).<sup>6</sup>

In the above passage, an explanation is provided for the kernel of truth contained in the fragmentation theory. The 'vacating' of the physical body by the indwelling consciousness as a result of 'that dweller's great dislike for physical incarnation' or due to a 'shock or disaster' suggests that it is possible for individuals who experience severe physical and/or sexual trauma to develop such a dislike, or have a response to the shock and disaster of trauma, as to effect a disconnection in consciousness. Perhaps it is also potentially possible for a 'dweller' that experiences no trauma, to evidence such a dislike for reasons that are currently unknown to us. The implication is that extreme, extended physical and emotional calamity could precipitate a protective response in the form of the withdrawal of consciousness.

Spira (1996) tells us that common factors in the development of Dissociative Identity Disorder include:

- Severe ongoing abuse
- Natural dissociative tendencies (the ability to easily absorb into abstract imagery)
- Having no other persons to count on for support, comfort and protection
- Being a female child (p. xxxii).<sup>7</sup>

The perception of continuous suffering with no way out seems to be highly significant in the development of Dissociative Identity Disorder and thus it appears plausible that under such extreme conditions a withdrawal of consciousness could take place.

This is an unusual hypothesis indeed, suggesting as it does that true DID is not the result of one personality fragmenting or splitting into many separate ones but a series of entities sharing a body. This may initially sound far-fetched, but a closer examination reveals that it has a logical basis and can actually account for a lot of phenomena that current theory cannot. It requires that the open-minded investigator consider two related hypotheses. The first is the suggestion that consciousness can exist apart from the physical body (as in the case of the 'true owner' of the body) and that secondly, it can persist after the death of the physical body (as in the case of those entities attempting to share the body).

One might be tempted to immediately reject such suggestions concluding that the multiple 'possession' of one body by conscious but discarnate beings is non-rational and preposterous, and has no place in serious, scientific inquiry. Yet, the truth is that none of the sciences know very much about this elusive thing we term consciousness and there exists no working model of it within mainstream science. Such a model does exist within esoteric psychology and it provides a basis for a dialogue concerning consciousness, which *is* rational, practical and illuminating. In order to participate fully in such a dialogue, it is helpful to understand a few basic esoteric principles.

According to esotericism, human beings are comprised of five components or 'bodies' - the physical body, the etheric body, the emotional body, the mental body and the soul. The physical body is, of course, dense and tangible. The other bodies are intangible and formed of subtler matter or material, which is not visible to the eye. The etheric body is of particular interest in the study of DID and it is important that definite attempts to eventually substantiate its existence be made. The etheric body, sometimes called the vital body 'is a material body, though composed of subtler material than that of the dense physical body. It is essentially a transmitter of energies and not a generator; it is a clearing house for all the forces reaching the physical body...' (Jurriaanse, 1978, p. 78).<sup>8</sup> The etheric body is the energy 'double' of the physical body - a vast energy network that underlies the physical body and vitalizes it. The term 'ether' is one that has been recognized by Western science for centuries and the eventual scientific

investigation of the etheric body will serve to synthesize traditional Eastern wisdom, which has long recognized the underlying energy system of the centres or chakras and the Western mechanistic view into one coherent whole, eventually revolutionizing both medicine and psychology.

In order to further understand this energy system and the link between epilepsy and Dissociative Identity Disorder, it is necessary to know that esoteric teaching asserts that the soul is connected to the physical body by two streams of energy. One is called the life thread and is attached at the heart:

The stream of life-energy finds its way to the heart, the physical heart, and there...it energises coherently the entire physical body...This...is the factor which gathers together and holds in form all the living atoms and cells of the body. When that life thread is withdrawn by the soul at death, the living atoms separate, the body falls apart and disintegration ensues...(Bailey, 1953, pp. 331-32).<sup>9</sup>

There is also a second point of connection between the soul and the physical body called the consciousness thread:

The stream of energy...which constitutes what which we understand as the consciousness...only penetrates as far as the physical brain. There this second aspect concentrates itself or anchors itself in the region of the pineal gland...(Bailey, 1953, p. 332).<sup>10</sup>

Bearing this in mind, we are told by Alice Bailey that:

Certain forms of epilepsy are due to what we might call 'a loose connection,' the consciousness stream or thread of energy is subject at times to withdrawal or abstraction, and this produces the familiar epileptoid symptoms and the distressing conditions seen in the usual fit. In a lesser degree, and producing no permanent, dangerous results, the same basic cause produces the so-called 'petit mal' and certain types of fainting fits; these are caused by the brief and temporary withdrawal of the thread of consciousness energy. It should be remembered that when this withdrawal takes place and there is a separation of the consciousness from the vehicle of conscious contact, all that we understand by the term consciousness, such as self-consciousness, desire and intelligence, is abstracted and only life and the consciousness inherent in the physical body cells remain (Bailey, 1942, p. 418).<sup>11</sup>

This passage raises the possibility that temporal lobe epilepsy or TLE is simply the result of an inability of the individual involved 'to hold the [consciousness] link within the brain with adequate positiveness' as quoted in an earlier passage. This suggestion that TLE is the result of brief withdrawals of

consciousness provides an explanation for the link between DID and temporal lobe epilepsy. It follows that MPD occurs in those with TLE when the consciousness thread of the owner of the physical body is disconnected from that body for longer periods of time. Into this extended *void of consciousness*, steps another conscious, discarnate being, with a separate emotional body, mental body and soul. This explains the emergence of the 'distinct identities' referred to by the DSM-IV. These discarnate identities are 'in between lives' (or incarnations) on the physical plane. An outside entity 'discarnate and most anxious for physical plane expression' attaches its own consciousness thread to the brain of the body, in which the life thread in the heart remains attached to the original owner (Bailey, 1942, p. 458).<sup>12</sup> In summary, Bailey's writings, therefore, suggest that in some cases of epilepsy a 'loose connection' causes gaps in consciousness, which have the potential to permit the entrance of other identities producing Multiple Personality Disorder.

I noted, in the course of my reading on MPD, the case of a woman whose core personality had seizures and needed to be on medication. Yet a number of her alters did not have this problem and did not require medication while in possession of the body. According to the esoteric theory of epilepsy, it would appear that her alters may have had a better ability to 'hold the [consciousness] link with the brain with adequate positiveness', thus eliminating the seizures. As all of the different entities would be utilizing the same physical and etheric body, it can be argued that the difference in epileptic symptomatology lay in the *source* of the link.

According to Bailey (1934), the consciousness thread is withdrawn from the brain each night in sleep.

People are apt to forget that every night in the hours of sleep we die to the physical plane and are alive and functioning elsewhere. They forget that they have already achieved facility in leaving the physical body; because they cannot as yet bring back into the physical brain consciousness the recollection of that passing out, and of the subsequent interval of active living, they fail to relate death and sleep. Death is, after all, only a longer interval in the life of physical plane functioning; one has only 'gone abroad' for a longer period. But the process of daily sleep and the process of occasional dying are identical, with the one difference that in sleep the magnetic thread or current of energy along which the life force streams is preserved intact, and constitutes the path of return to the body. In death, this life thread is broken or snapped. When this has happened, the conscious entity cannot return to the dense physical body, and that body, lacking the principle of coherence, then disintegrates (pp. 494-95).<sup>13</sup>

Sleep would then seem to constitute a planned withdrawal of consciousness in which the body appears to be guarded from discarnate 'squatters.'

It is important to remember that this 'loose connection' explanation of temporal lobe epilepsy and the suggestion that TLE and Multiple Personality Disorder both result following a withdrawal of consciousness by the true owner of the body was first published by Bailey in 1942, well before researchers observed any connection between the two conditions.

These most unusual hypotheses will surely meet with resistance from mainstream psychology, psychiatry, science and medicine. Yet, it cannot be denied that, despite its initial strangeness, the esoteric hypothesis does account for many of the more poorly understood aspects of the problem. In the case of differing EEG's, it can be argued that differing brain activity is produced when each of the alters is using the brain because each alter is actually a different unit of consciousness possessing a different mental and emotional body, which in turn produce a different effect upon the brain. If another entity is using the body, the amnesia and loss of large blocks of time experienced by the core personality can be attributed to the fact that the core personality is not 'connected' to the brain and therefore is not aware of the body or its activities during those periods. In many cases, the core personality does not know about the alters, but the alters frequently know about one another. My own thinking is that discarnate entities do not have the same limitations as those that are incarnate and thus have some ability to hear and see on planes that we do not. The core personality, with its life thread continuously linked to a physical body is somehow more limited. Alice Bailey (1953, p. 494) writes that 'a man on the inner planes [discarnate] is not only conscious of himself as an individual - with his own plans, life and affairs - as he was on the physical plane, but he is also conscious in the same manner of surrounding states of consciousness.... His experience is far richer and fuller than he ever knew when in incarnation.'

The esoteric theory can also account for the fact that many of those individuals with MPD have personalities or alters which exhibit different genders, ages, levels of education, skills and talents. These alters represent themselves as separate, as unrelated and differing greatly in physical appearance from the core personalities. The 'sharing' of a physical body by multiple entities could explain why the most famous case of MPD, Sybil, had a male personality that knew how to install sheetrock, another that played the piano and two with English accents (Acocella, 1999).<sup>14</sup> Multiple personality literature and case studies abound with examples of alters that speak foreign languages and display other skills that the core personality never received exposure to and never possessed. I would venture that many women don't even know what sheetrock is - let alone how to install it! The current theory of a personality that fragments into a number of personalities as a coping mechanism just does not adequately account for all of this, while the esoteric explanation, which proposes the involvement of separate entities, *does* appear to account for the different levels of intelligence, varying (perceived) physical attributes, and differing genders, as well as the multiplicity of skills, talents, desires, ages, styles of handwriting, tastes, voices, vocabularies, allergies, and illnesses expressed by different alters.

I have heard it said that various alters have even been found to have a different blood type from the core personality. I have not substantiated this and I do not offer it as fact. But if true, it would seem to indicate that there is an energetic component that influences blood type, i.e. that different systems of energy or units of consciousness produce different blood types. If this does turn out to be the case, blood testing could be used as another tool, in addition to EEG's, to ensure a correct (and valid) diagnosis.

If discarnate personalities are responsible for all of this behaviour that occurs when the core personality is 'not at home' then why don't we know this? Why don't the alters tell clinicians what is going on? First of all, we are not even looking in this direction because we haven't yet begun to seriously consider the possibility of multiple entities sharing the same physical body. A so-called rational bias against the concept of possession and poorly presented theories as to the persistence of consciousness after death have kept us from going down this road and prevented much work along these lines. As to why little knowledge has been gleaned from the discarnate entities themselves, one possible explanation is that the act of passing through death doesn't automatically make one wiser than one was in life and does not confer expertise in matters of consciousness or psychological disorders. On the contrary, esoteric teaching states that:

For the average good citizen, death is a continuance of the living process in his consciousness and a carrying forward of the interests and tendencies of the life. His consciousness and his sense of awareness are the same and unaltered. He does not sense much difference, is well taken care of, and oft is unaware that he has passed through the episode of death. For the wicked and cruelly selfish, for the criminal and for those few who live for the material side only, there eventuates that condition which we call 'earth-bound'. The links they have forged with earth and the earthward bias of all their desires force them to remain close to the earth and their last setting in the earth environment. They seek desperately and by every possible means to re-contact it and to re-enter (Bailey, 1934, pp. 300-01).<sup>15</sup>

Perhaps the discarnate personalities don't tell us that they are discarnate because they simply don't know. They, and the host personality, may eventually come to know that they are all fighting for control of the same body, but they may not know why, or they may accept the current mainstream theory. If one accepts at least the hypothesis of the esoteric theory, in genuine cases of MPD, clinicians need to actually talk to discarnate entities in clinical settings and ask such questions as:

- 1) What is your full name?
- 2) Where and when were you born?
- 3) What were your parents' names (some alters that do not accept the core personality's family as their own)?

- 4) Who are your brothers and sisters?
- 5) Describe your physical attributes (MPD literature has included self-portraits drawn by alters that are radically different from the appearance of the core personality).
- 6) Describe the physical characteristics of your family?
- 7) Where do you live or have you lived?
- 8) What kind of work do you do or have you done?

It might be then be possible to establish whether any of these alters actually lived (and died) on the physical plane. In some cases, according to the historical circumstances, such questioning might prove futile. However, it would still be a worthwhile enterprise to try to show that alters are actually discarnate entities with their own histories, and thus provide evidence of a previous physical plane life.

Besides constituting an opportunity for the advancement of psychological thought, this unconventional explanation of Multiple Personality Disorder also has the potential to provide afflicted individuals with the opportunity to effect a true resolution of the problem, as this new theory has the potential to drastically change the course of therapy for the disorder. In 1953, Bailey told us that there are cases:

Where there is no real physical difficulty, no lesion or diseased tissues, but simply a loose connection between the etheric body and the dense physical vehicle. Such cases are frequently (I might say, usually) regarded by the orthodox psychiatrist and medical man as forms of insanity; yet they are not truly so. If the afflicted person can be put again 'in possession of himself' by some understanding psychologist, and this is entirely possible, then the trouble is ended. There is a pronounced tendency among the most forward-looking psychologists today, to handle these cases on the hypothesis which I have posited, and that is a definite improvement (p. 316).<sup>16</sup>

While the current desire of the psychiatrist or psychologist is surely to aid the afflicted person to gain 'possession of himself' once again, the present thinking in regard to the disorder has led a number of those lending aid to believe that this entails an *integration* of the various alters which, according to the popular theory of fragmentation, are really parts of the core personality. There seems to be some reluctance as well on the part of patients to give up or banish what they believe to be fragments of themselves that were born, in many cases, out of dire necessity.

From the esoteric perspective, the goal of integration or a true unification of multiple units of consciousness is both undesirable and highly unlikely. It is possible to get multiple personalities sharing a single body to work together more effectively and to appreciate one another's individual characteristics and talents and this has sometimes been achieved by therapeutic means. But if the goal of

each incarnation is to provide opportunity for experience and growth for the owner of the body, which is the soul, then this solution is a poor one. No single entity residing in the core personality has this opportunity for growth when others are 'hijacking' the system and depriving them of extended periods of physical plane experience. Multiple Personality Disorder creates many problems for the original dweller and perhaps is not even beneficial in the long run to discarnate entities either, who, in their struggle for sporadic physical plane existence, may be temporarily passing up opportunities to be the sole dweller in another body.

Bearing this in mind, possible treatment alternatives include strengthening the etheric body and supporting the owner's efforts to sustain the consciousness link, 'dealing directly with the real dweller when he is at home in his own dwelling' (Bailey, 1942, p. 420).<sup>17</sup> Bailey (1942) indicates that the etheric body is both the source and the solution to the problem, suggesting a number of ways to overcome the problem presented by a 'loose connection':

As a rule...the average man today is a closely knit and functioning unit. He is firmly integrated physically, etherically and emotionally. His physical body, his vital [etheric] body and his desire nature [emotional body] are closely knit. At the same time there can be a weakness in the etheric integration, of such a nature that there is a low vitality, a lack of desire impulses, a failure to register adequate dynamic incentives, immaturity and sometimes obsession or possession.

The handling of these difficulties and their right solution is of a definitely material nature, and the trouble is frequently overcome by increasing the vitality of the body, building up the etheric body, through sunshine, vitaminous foods and exercise, plus correct treatment and balancing of the endocrine system. (p. 418-19).<sup>18</sup>

The passage below provides an example of a woman who intuitively and successfully used both a combination of the will and the strengthening of the etheric body to reduce her symptoms. Jane Phillips (1995), a pseudonym for a woman who wrote of her experience with Multiple Personality Disorder, finally tells her therapist that she's decided that 'multiplicity is causing me entirely too many problems. I've just decided that I'm not going to *be* a multiple anymore. I'm going to stop dissociating. I am going to be here from now on. *I* am going to be in charge of my life.' Phillips went on to write:

I can't say it worked completely, but suddenly my new resolution did focus my attention on my own inclination to switch. Sometimes I have wondered at what point multiplicity becomes a habit, switching not because one has to and not even because there is a real reason to switch, but just because that's what one does, what I did. I was more focused on my own presence in my life, and I found that I had a little more time because I was not doing things three, four,

even six times in a row. Because I had to remain consistent, I also grew tired more quickly. Not only was I unaccustomed to being out in the world for any length of time, I was also probably missing the regular fixes of adrenaline that personality switches provided me. I slept long hard nights during these first weeks and months, and I took a lot of naps. I still switched, but over time I grew confident that all my switches were internal or private - taking place where only I could hear them, unless I was with my therapist. And because I had fewer fears that I would be exposed as a multiple, I soon began to feel more resilient (pp. 211-13).<sup>19</sup>

Jane Phillips' experience seems to imply the involvement of the etheric or vital body as she describes her exhaustion, her lack of vitality and the extra sleep required in order to decrease the incidence of switching. It also appears that a patient's attitude toward decreasing incidences of multiplicity can also provide another powerful tool in therapy. The explanation of the condition provided by esoteric psychology may prompt sufferers to take greater initiative if they come to believe that alters are *not* parts of themselves and that, as the true owner of their bodies, they have both the right and the ability to take control. Bailey (1942) calls for 'strengthening the will or the physical condition of the human being when ejecting intruders' (p. 459).<sup>20</sup>

It may also be important to appeal to the discarnate entities themselves; to explain the situation to them and to persuade the more reasonable of them that the sharing of the body is a lose - lose situation, whereby no one gets the opportunity of a full lifetime in incarnation, and that some alters may be passing up opportunities for rebirth and 'sole ownership' by vying for control of a body that does not belong to them.

The exploration of this disorder along the esoteric lines indicated by Alice Bailey and the Tibetan Master could have huge implications for the fields of both psychology and medicine, as well for psychiatry. The foundation principles of esoteric psychology, which posit the existence of a soul, the continuity of consciousness that is rebirth, the existence of intangible mental and emotional 'bodies' and a definite relationship between the intangible and the tangible, would be put to the test. Such investigation could help to demonstrate that death is not the end of life, but only a temporary end to life on the physical plane. A deeper investigation of the nature of the etheric body could lead to the greater understanding and more effective treatment of many medical and psychological problems. But the most important outcome would be the recognition that knowledge and understanding of the subtle world (the metaphysical) can guide and inform objective, empirical exploration, producing a greater resolution of the deepest human problems and questions.

The Master Djwhal Khul tells us, via Alice Bailey, that 'it is not possible for me to do more than hint at these various explanations and so start investigators with open minds and the willingness to accept unusual hypotheses, along a trail which may lead them into the valley of understanding' (Bailey, 1942, p. 421).<sup>21</sup> It will indeed require open-minded, thick-skinned and persistent investigators to

pursue this unconventional theory of Multiple Personality Disorder, but the effort has the potential to both enrich and serve humanity in multiple ways. Any volunteers?

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