

CHARACTEROLOGICAL DISTORTION OF SPIRITUALITY AND ITS RESOLUTION

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Introduction

In his *Varieties of Religious Experience* William James considers the fact that "There are men who seem to have started life with a bottle or two of champagne inscribed to their credit; whilst others seem to have been born close to the pain-threshold, which the slightest irritants fatally send them over. Does it not appear as if one who lived more habitually on the one side of the pain-threshold might need a different sort of religion from one who habitually lived on the other? This question, of the relativity of different types of religion to different types of need, arises naturally..." (pp. 117-118). Later on he posits that:

the original factor in fixing the figure of the gods must always have been psychological. The deity to whom the prophets, seers, and devotees who founded the particular cult bore witness was worth something to them personally.

They could use him. He guided their imagination and warranted their hopes, and controlled their will—or else they required him as a safeguard against the demon or a curber of other people's crimes. In any case, they chose him for the value of the fruits he seemed to them to yield. So soon as the fruits began to seem quite worthless; so soon as they conflicted with indispensable human ideals, or thwarted too extensively other values; so soon as they appeared childish, contemptible or immoral when reflected on, the deity grew discredited and was ere long neglected and forgotten (p. 258).

This article deals with the characterological makeup and defenses what would psychologically draw certain people to a religious life or spiritual community, and what could happen as character

development evolves and these defenses become transcended. In this exploration I will draw upon the characterological structures, defined primarily by John Pierrakos and Alexander Lowen, and Ken Wilber's theory of development and evolution, for it is my contention that as we are able to transcend psychological barriers spiritual awareness increases and, to paraphrase James, the gods of yesterday become inappropriate to present reality. This is not to say that God changes; it is our consciousness of God that changes as we become more cognizant of ourselves. Specifically, my experience is that God moves from "out there" to "in here," becoming an internal reality rather than an external phenomenon. For some, there may be a prior step: from unawareness to awareness of God, for as one of my patients once stated, "Before I joined the church I didn't know there was God."

I realize there are those who prefer to leave God out of the picture altogether when discussing psychological or other evolutionary processes, but I will be dealing here with a group of people—members of the Unification Church with whom I have worked therapeutically over the past 5 years—who have made the choice not only to acknowledge and include the concept of God in their daily life, but who specifically fashion their life around what they deem to be the requirements of that God. As indicated above, when God's requirements mesh with one's psychological reality a partnership is formed which seems to satisfy the needs of both although, as will be discussed, this is not a true union. Consequently, when psychological reality or awareness changes, there may no longer be a perfect blending of needs or goals and a reassessment ensues.

Many Western religions espouse some kind of "sacrifice" or "life of poverty" as a virtuous lifestyle. (I am using the word "poverty" to mean the denial of some basic life need.) The Unification Church is no different. Initiates are expected to spend at least three years living a very simple lifestyle: working together on a team (composed of men and women) which rises early, works long hours, sleeps in a small room with several other team members on the floor (men and women in separate rooms), eats simply and often travels constantly. Members are taught to think primarily about the purpose of the whole (that is, forget about their own needs and problems), serve their leaders and teammates, and never complain.

Physical contact between men and women is discouraged until after marriage; even then, there is often a separation period of several years before the couples actually consummate their marriage. All of these stipulations—and many more—are part of the process of "restoration" outlined in the theological teachings of the church. As such, they are not wanton rules but part of a formula through which God and humankind are to become finally and ultimately reunited. On the other hand, there are also practical and/or economic reasons for some of these "formulas," as they are sometimes called, but that is not the focus of this chapter.

Orality

Many of the character traits implied by the above lifestyle are present in what core energetics describes as the oral defense of the character structure. As the name implies, the person with oral defenses did not receive oral satisfaction as an infant. Johnson refers to this structure as the "abandoned child" (1985, p.164). When its cries for contact were ignored the pain was so great that it suppressed its longing to the point of total denial of the need (Lowen 1958, p. 183), often adopting the attitude that it is wrong to have needs. As a result of this, the oral structure has a tremendous fear of rejection and of losing the object of its love (p. 168). In relation to this there is also a fear of reaching out (p. 172). The oral structure also exhibits little desire or need for physical possessions (p. 171).

To compensate for its own unsatisfied needs the person with an oral structure often seeks to fulfill the needs of others. Stephen Johnson lists the oral's compensations as: "overly nurturing of others; takes on more responsibility and independent action than can be sustained; makes plans which are optimistic to grandiose or unrealistic; charged with ungrounded energy; cares for self poorly - poor diet and sleep habits, overworks..." (1985, p. 180). The person who exhibits oral traits also possesses some wonderful core qualities, such as mental brightness and clarity, receptivity and perception about other people. As an example of a Unification Church member with oral characteristics I present a sketch of a client:

About ten years ago Susan was sitting in the cafeteria eating dinner when two women came, sat opposite her and began talking. She had seen them around but didn't know either of them very well. As they talked, she noticed a habit one of them had of smiling very quickly, almost in a flash. This reminded her of someone else she knew, with whom she had experienced a considerable amount of rejection. And so, seeing this same mannerism in this woman sitting opposite her, Susan thought: "I don't ever want to become close to her."

A short time later Susan met this fellow member on the elevator. She looked very unhappy and even though Susan didn't generally inquire about people she didn't know, she asked the woman how she was. "I'm pretty depressed," Marie said. "You know how it is sometimes."

The elevator was at Susan's floor and she went to her office. She tried to work but couldn't stop thinking about this woman. For one thing, she was amazed that Marie came right out and told her she was depressed, for Susan never would have said that to someone she didn't know pretty well. But mostly Susan felt how unhappy Marie was and that she wanted to do something about it. So she decided to send her a little gift anonymously. Thus began a relationship in which a lot of Susan's orality was expressed.

Basically, she put herself in a position to be constantly giving to Marie, to be there for her and to do whatever she could to ease her pain. This became her major focus in life. She was very serious — and intense — about it. Sometimes the intensity became too much for Marie and she would back away, or even openly reject Susan for a time. Of course, even though Susan was trying to fulfill Marie's needs, something in her was satisfied by doing this. And so every time rejection came some need of Susan's was left unsatisfied and she could repeatedly tell herself: "That's okay. I don't have any needs. As long as her pain is healed, I can do without anything." Of course, this attitude fit in very nicely with the life of "sacrifice" Susan had committed herself to. It made foregoing her own needs not only desirable but also virtuous. It also made it impossible

for her to even think of asking that some need of hers be met.

And it was familiar to Susan to deny her needs since she had been doing it from early childhood. She learned at a very young age that crying out for her needs would get her nowhere. Ultimately, it was less painful to deny them than to allow herself to feel or express them. Even to entertain the idea was to let in a glimmer of hope that, if unfilled, would lead to devastation. There were times, however, when her unconscious betrayed her need.

There was a period in her childhood when she had a recurring dream. She was always in a place where many people were gathered, such as a stadium or theater, walking up and down the aisles looking for someone. The strange part, it seemed to her at the time, was that she didn't know who she was looking for, just that she would recognize whoever it was when she saw him or her. But the dream always ended before she found who she was looking for. Now it strikes her that not knowing who indicated a fear of defining the need too specifically. A need was definitely expressed by the dream but even unconsciously it was too risky to specify what. However, the underlying hopelessness of finding it was apparent in the dream ending with it unfound.

Susan doesn't believe she received any kind of oral satisfaction as a child. She knows that her mother did not nurse or hold her very much. She's not sure exactly how this is related but she has always found it difficult to open her mouth. For most of her life she spoke very softly, and in her youth mostly mumbled. Marie once told her that when they first met Susan didn't open her mouth at all when she talked and Marie thought she was a ventriloquist. That has improved. But after starting therapy Susan found it difficult to do exercises that involved reaching out with her lips or sucking. It was just painful and she couldn't even explain why. She has also never liked kissing because there was something frightening about it to her which, again, she can't exactly explain. She can now suck and is beginning to feel more comfortable about kissing.

Even though Susan could give on certain levels, physical contact and, especially reaching out to someone, was al-

ways difficult for her. The first time Marie visited her in her room one night Susan was already in her sleeping bag.

So Marie just laid across the floor and rested her head on Susan's leg. Susan didn't quite know what to do, and it took a long time for her to finally put her hand on Marie's shoulder. Even now, reaching out to someone is difficult for her. She often has the impulse to do it but putting it into physical action takes concentrated effort.

For most of her life Susan has been so cut off from her sexual feelings that she has experienced longing for intimacy as a desire for affection and holding, rather than for sexual intercourse.

This person has a propensity for self-denial that fits very well into the dictates of the church. Her psychological barriers—specifically her inability to allow herself needs and her lack of sexual feelings or desires—are defined as virtues within the church. How easy it was, then, for her to put them aside in the service of her fellow member, whose suffering she sought to lessen. And since her sexual desires were so latent, she readily accepted living without a sexual partner. Thus, the oral structure is a very good candidate for recruitment by a religious order that demands a life of sacrifice and poverty.

Of course what happens when the oral character structure meets and engages in a religious lifestyle is that the defenses mask as spiritual virtues. This person lives under the illusion of being a giving and loving human being when in fact the giving and loving—which although genuine cannot be complete since the oral character is not enough in possession of itself to freely give—are really cries for acceptance. This is not meant as a statement of judgment or criticism, for the oral person is truly unaware of this, which is what perpetuates the illusion. However, when the basis for these actions begin to come into awareness there can be a crisis of faith because what this person thought to be a very virtuous identity becomes shattered.

It needs to be said that no character defense is pure. People are a combination—to differing degrees-of various character defenses. So when I speak of an oral character structure I am talking about someone who has strong oral defenses but who also has other defenses at work along side them. For example, four years ago 1

worked with a young man who had very prominent oral and schizoid characteristics. His oral defenses were expressed by his ambivalence about whether or not to allow himself to have needs and to express his need for me, his therapist. His schizoid structure traits were revealed when he questioned his right to exist. This combination of oral and schizoid defenses is dynamite for our topic of discussion.

Schizoid

Schizoid structures totally deny their bodies. What in fact happens is that the structure becomes frozen at a very young age (this is a pre-oral structure) because of hostility felt from the parent. "We may surmise that at a very premature level of awareness, and then at increasingly complex levels of understanding, the infant experiences an intense fear, which some have labeled the fear of annihilation" (Johnson 1985, p. 56). The fear and ensuing rage that the infant feels are emotions too strong for this tender organism to bear, and so it controls them by suppressing its very own life force. This results both in the feeling that "there is something wrong with me" and "I have no right to exist" (p. 57). And, since the denial of the physical is so total, there is a natural proclivity toward spiritualization. "The hated child [as Johnson calls the schizoid character) begins to find a safe haven in withdrawal into cognitive and spiritual endeavors. 'If mother doesn't love me, then God will,' and if the world on face appears to be hostile, it is really a beneficent unity in which one's current life is a mere flash in the eternal pan and 'life on this physical plane is really irrelevant.' In these ways life is spiritualized instead of lived" (p. 58). On the positive side, this person has a deep drive to live and exhibits remarkable courage in just living day to day. There is also the propensity to search for wholeness and to attain a cosmic connection.

One of the basic tenets of many religious orders is denial of the self – and who could deny self more than those with schizoid defenses! Of course, in a truly spiritual sense, this is again an illusion for the schizoid character structure does not have a self to deny. If one is not sure of one's existence, there can be no self to even consider. Nevertheless, it is a call to which the schizoid defensive structure can respond because it is its reality. In fact, it

can be described as synonymous with coming home to where you already are.

The feeling that "there is something wrong with me" also fosters involvement in organizations that provide explanations about what is wrong with you, as do most religions. Christians generally term it "original sin," thanks to Augustine. According to Unification theology, we are all responsible for this sin. People who are down on themselves to begin with—such as one of my patients who habitually falls into telling me that he is bad—have little trouble accepting responsibility for sin(s), whether they be their own or someone else's. However, such people do not truly own their sin(s).

Masochism

Masochism also lends itself to religious orders, for, of all the character structures, the masochist has the most difficulty dealing with pleasure. This structure is especially afraid of genital pleasure (Lowen 1958, p. 217). A patient with masochistic tendencies said: "Sexual excitation has always been hard to accept and intense genital feelings impossible to tolerate. But there were times when I felt I had to release something in my body because there was the feeling of withholding something that would become too strong. However, when masturbating I would always stop when the feeling got to be too intense by contracting my muscles and holding—literally my breath and every wave of energy in my body—until the feeling abated. Consequently, I never felt any satisfaction, only frustration from the experience, which just reinforced the feeling that it was wrong anyway." Since masturbation is forbidden in the Unification Church, (a relatively recent declaration) this person's need to curtail the intensity of sexual sensations and the subsequent dissatisfaction that resulted validated, for this individual, the church's proclamation.

The masochist is the child whose aggression, independence and tender feelings were suppressed (Lowen 1958, p. 214), and who was terribly humiliated as a child. "If we look for the common denominator of those early experiences which produce masochism, we will find it in the feeling of humiliation. The masochist is an individual who was deeply humiliated as a child. He was made to feel inadequate and worthless" (p. 222). As a result,

this person often becomes servile (p. 223). When these issues are worked on in therapy, a person with masochistic tendencies can become very loving and nurturing, and demonstrate intelligent persistence and genuine service in relationship to others.

Thus, we see that individuals with schizoid, oral, and/or masochistic defenses are more likely than other structures to become involved with religious organizations that follow a strict and controlled lifestyle. The rigid and psychopathic structures experience themselves as more independent and self-sufficient. Now I would like to look at an element of all of these character structures that I feel is especially relevant to those individuals with these structures who have joined the Unification Church.

Developmental Issues

The origin of these three structures is within the first three years of life and involves the interaction—or the inadequate interaction—between the child and the primary caretaker, which could be the mother, the father, a relative or another. Whatever the direct relationship between the child and the caretaker, the latter is in a parental position to the child but does not adequately fulfill that position for the child. This leaves the child, consciously or unconsciously, longing for parental fulfillment on some very early level. These people will look for—again consciously or unconsciously— and become involved in relationships that in some way recreate the pattern with the parenting figure in an effort to gain the fulfillment denied in childhood (Pierrakos 1985, p. 61).

I propose that the concept of "True Parents" is a very compelling aspect of Unification theology. I think this is especially true for people with the above discussed character structures. The term "True Parents" conjures up for them idealized images of a longed for and unfulfilled relationship. And since the cornerstone of Unificationism is "restoration" of relationships, both historical and personal, this is a magnetic theology for these people.

In *The Atman Project* Ken Wilber discusses psychological and spiritual development from birth through death, or the attainment of Atman/Brahman. For Wilber, "development is evolution; evolution is transcendence" (1980, p. ix). This evolution is toward wholeness or God (p. 100). This, according to Wilber, is what every person

longs for. To achieve it, his thesis is that at each successive level of development/evolution it is necessary to surrender that level (which constitutes a sacrifice and death) and transcend to the next level. Whenever this surrender and transcendence does not occur, the individual remains stuck on that level (p. 102). It is important to note Wilber's contention that along the way the individual utilizes "substitute unities and substitute gratifications" (p. 101).

One of Wilber's egoic levels is called "parental incest/castration." This is not sexual but conceptual incest. What happens here is that the child internalizes the parent(s) so that it becomes the ruling mode within.

In the most general terms, the super-ego is simply part and parcel of the higher-level identification of the mental egoic self. In particular, the super-ego means that the child has identified with the parents—he has mentally internalized the parents to form the Parent—he has "mentally mimicked" the parents to help form a mental self. This is done on a verbal and mental level, not on a bodily and sexual level. Because the child can form ideas and concepts at this stage, he can conceptually and mentally identify with his mentors, the parents. This is not bodily incest, but parental/conceptual incest: a higher level of Eros (p. 135).

Wilber goes on to explain what happens when this level is not surrendered:

Once parental incest has served its function—the creation of a higher-order self via parental incest or parental role modeling—then it must be surrendered via dis-identification and differentiation. The Mother-Parent and Father-Parent must be sacrificed, their death accepted, and their exclusive hold on consciousness broken. If the self refuses to surrender parental incest, then it is open to parental castration: the individual remains in a state of stunted conformity with parental commands. The self remains in parental fusion. The individual cannot stand the separation anxiety of leaving behind the Mother-Parent and Father-Parent, and thus the whole mental-egoic realm is castrated by the opinions of 'mommy and daddy.' The person goes through life never daring to entertain an original idea

**and never daring to 'strike out' on his own. Fusion reigns:
development stops, differentiation stops, transcendence stops (p. 140).**

If we take Wilber's model and apply it to the Unification Church members I have been discussing in this article, it seems to me that they remain on a parental incest/castration level. They came to the church still very much under the control of the internal Parent and were attracted to the church at least in part because the concept of "True Parents" appealed to them. Once in the church, they substituted "True Parents" for the Parent within. Wilber suggests that all are ultimately seeking God and that along the levels on the way to God substitute other things for the ultimate goal. According to Unification Church theology, the "True Parents" are as close to God as one can get on this earth. They are the incarnation of God's original idea of man and woman and, as such, possess God's original love and truth. Thus, they are internalized—a process that is encouraged within the church—and the members, for the most part, remain on that level. And they remain there primarily because the emphasis within the church is placed on inheriting from the Moons.

Wilber delineates three basic levels of evolution: lower levels, egoic levels and higher-order. Parent incest/castration is at the top of the egoic level; the next step, the centaur level, is a higher-order stage. This is interesting because in Unification theology there are three stages of growth: formation, growth and perfection (maturity). The church membership is, for the most part, at the present time on a family level, which is at the top of the growth stage. From this place of connubiality couples are to considerably deepen their relationship with God and reach perfection. In fact, the teachings state that it is impossible to fully know God outside of family relationships because it is there that one most intensely experiences the three aspects of God's love: parental love, conjugal love and children's love.

Therefore, it seems logical that that is the place most members would be presently situated in their life of faith. However, as was made clear to church counselors a few years ago, most couples — having been matched to someone they didn't previously know and having consummated their marriage before growing to love their partner — seem content to just be able to live in the same place

without major conflict. As one counselor put it: "They have forgotten what the goal is. The real problem is that there is no relationship with God."

I personally feel it is a big step from this level on to the following and that one needs to be internally motivated to do it, because it really means taking responsibility within oneself for one's relationship with God. In an organization such as the Unification Church, where a lot of emphasis is put on the power of hierarchical relationships as one's pathway to God, it is not so easy to explore what a direct connection might be like. This is especially true since the church teaches that only those in a state of perfection are under the direct dominion of God. All others are under indirect dominion and must go through the hierarchical ladder. This is not to say that members are discouraged from personally relating to God; they are not. But when it comes down to making decisions affecting one's life, it is expected that members will elicit the guidance of the church leadership.

Identity and Authority

Even without the above principles as one's foundation of faith it is not easy to open the door to intimacy with God. In *Be Here Now* Ram Dass recounts his spiritual pursuits between 1961 and 1967. He tells of his experience with LSD, which taught him that if he takes away all the external trappings, including his physical body, the essence of himself still remains. However, the problem with LSD was that there was no sustaining high; there was always a let down. In 1967 Ram Dass went to India where he met his guru. This was the turning point of his life and he became a practicing Hindu. (This is all covered in the first part of the book; there are no page numbers.)

In 1985 at a workshop on "Truth and Transformation in Psychological and Spiritual Paths" held at the New York Open Center, Ram Dass spoke of his recent two month experience in Burma at a Buddhist meditation center. Now Ram Dass' Hindu training had taught him that everything comes to him through his guru. In Burma he was faced with meditating twelve hours a day every day. The point was to find what was within. Ram Dass had difficulty concentrating on this. There came a point where he

realized he was stuck in a pattern. During his LSD period, he was always waiting for the next trip when "the pill does it for me... But you see, when I transferred to the guru I did the same thing all over again. He was the one who had all the power, he was the one whose grace was going to do it for me. I was again ineffective and impotent and unable to say anything. So it was 'Do it for me, oh great guru'... But here in Burma I was practicing a tradition which is a real warrior tradition, this Theravadin Buddhism, where you do it for yourself. But rather than becoming a warrior I had kept the picture of Maharaji to which I was saying, 'If it be your grace, let me get on with this method.' See, I'm still holding on to my old psychological mechanisms. When I put all the props away, and I just started to do this method, I started to feel this power in myself. That's scary to me, because that's what I've been avoiding, that feeling of that power" (*JTP*, Vol. 2, 1985, p. 198).

This example illustrates how easy it is to transfer one "substitute unity" for another, and how difficult it is to put oneself in the forefront, as it were. It is important to note that it wasn't just being in there with oneself that was so frightening for Ram Dass but the feeling of "power" within; this is what was really being avoided.

John Welwood makes the point that a lot of people on spiritual paths as well as spiritual groups tend to try to substitute spiritual practices for developmental processes.

There is a certain tendency which I observe in myself as well, to try to use spiritual practice to rise above the difficulties of unresolved personal problems and emotions.

Perhaps this is connected with a movement in us, traditionally called "spirit," which seeks a certain release from the structures we feel caught in—the structures of karma, conditioning, body, form, matter, personality. Insofar as we want to get away from difficult personal issues and emotions—all the sticky, messy things that keep us rooted here—we may try to use spiritual practice to do that. I have come to call this tendency to try to avoid or prematurely transcend basic human needs, feelings, and developmental tasks, "spiritual bypassing."

...While struggling with becoming autonomous individuals, many people are introduced to spiritual teachings and practices which come from cultures that assume a

person having already passed through the basic developmental stages. The result is that many people wind up trying to use spiritual practice to meet their personal needs or establish their identity, and this just doesn't work.

Many of the so-called "perils of the path" – such as spiritual materialism, narcissism, inflation, groupthink – result from trying to use spirituality to make up for developmental deficiencies (*JIT*, Vol. 1, 1984, pp. 64-65).

Welwood goes on to say that "...many people today spend a good part of their lives freeing themselves from their parents' influence and establishing their own independent sense of themselves. This is psychological, not spiritual work. It means working with needs, scripts, hunger for love, fear of love, fear of loss of love, fear of receiving love, fear of giving love, and establishing a sense of self-respect which is not overwhelmed or crushed by other people's opinions" (p. 65).

I think Welwood's implication that there needs to be a good deal of emotional liberation before the finer aspects of spiritual tuning can proceed is very appropriate to the present discussion. Right now within the Unification Church there is a lot of resistance to the use of therapeutic processing to help the membership deal with issues that prevent it from fully participating in church endeavors. Everything tends to be viewed as a "spiritual issue" with a "spiritual solution," or, as church leaders are apt to say, "The answer to everything is in the Principle; you don't need anything else."

I think one of the main issues at stake here is one of identity. As Welwood indicates, establishing one's identity is a developmental process. My experience of the Unification Church is that members are encouraged to emulate Rev. and Mrs. Moon. While there is nothing wrong with having a role-model to use for inspiration, people in a state of denial do not know how to use a role-model to foster their own identity. Rather, their tendency is to deny within themselves whatever they perceive to be in opposition to their model, covering it with an acceptable facade instead of looking behind it to find their own true selves.

It is the finding within that is the crucial point. In order to do this some internalized externals need to be let go of, and this letting go cannot happen until one has gone through certain developmental

processes: namely, until one has confronted the Parent within which propagated the creation of one's external "mask" or the self-illusions connected with one's spirituality. As transpersonal psychologist Francis Vaughan says, "Letting go of old constricting self-concepts is a necessary part of the process and healing and wholeness depend on it" (1985, p. 35). Things need to be seen and accepted for what they are. Then they need to be transcended. "Only when one has succeeded in observing thoughts, emotions, and sensations as contents of consciousness and seeing that one has them but is not identical with them, can one begin to know the Self. Transpersonal development is thus initiated through a process of disidentification from egoic self concepts" (Vaughan, p. 41).

Spirituality and Sexuality

Between acceptance and transcendence there are, I think, some very frightening stages in which one feels lost and confused. There is the phase of having let go of a false identity but not yet having found one's own identity. When one is on a spiritual path, this can also mean the loss of one's God.

While exploring issues of morality, one client realized that her parents' sexual hangups had unconsciously become her morality, which she then spiritualized, the result being that her God was a God of a very strict sexual code. She was progressively attracted to and become involved with religions that were more and more sexually strict. Since neither of her parents espoused any religious beliefs, they had sent her as a child to the church across the street which happened to be reformed. By the time she was thirteen, she felt a need for more structure and announced her intention to become a Catholic. Both parents disapproved, so she waited until she was 20 and then converted. This was at the time when the Catholic church was becoming more modernized, so when she met a religious community a few years later where members lived strictly as brothers and sisters, it appealed to her and she joined. Although she remained in this community, she at times felt the need to fill in the gaps in her spiritual life and incorporated into her belief system rituals and theories from other traditions that appealed to her. These groups or individuals always espoused a strict

sexual code. Now it is clear to her that she would not have been drawn to them if they had not.

Thus, her unconscious need for a sexually safe environment not only became an integral part of her relationship with God but also the issue around which she maintained her sense of value. "Purity" before God was what mattered the most. She did not receive that message per se from her parents, but she did receive that sex was wrong, dangerous, undesirable, etc., and this message transformed into a "virtuous" attitude of celibacy that became her code for life and the hallmark of her relationship with God. In her endeavor to escape from a world that, as a child, had given her little comfort or hope, she had endowed God with all the qualities that were lacking in her life and this made the spiritual realm a safe and secure place to want to be. When she became aware that she had been operating under false conclusions all those years (at least the way in which she adopted them was false), she began a process of discovering *her* morality while at the same time sensing God (without projections and concepts) within and allowing both to exist and evolve.

Shortly thereafter, she unconsciously made a decision to put aside all religious rituals for a while. She suddenly knew one day that she had made this decision although she never consciously thought it out. At first she really felt lost. She felt like there was just her—and she was still discovering who that was—and the rest was just a big silence. Then she began to find something inside herself. Her most dramatic experience was looking in a mirror and seeing something in herself that she could not immediately identify but which fascinated and appealed to her so much that she just wanted to keep looking at it. For a person who had never liked and thus for the most part avoided looking at herself in mirrors, this was an amazing experience. She later felt that she had glimpsed her own original core self.

Taking Responsibility

As Ram Dass related, feeling that there is power within can be very frightening, and many people avoid starting the process because they are just too afraid of what they might find. It is similar to patients who are afraid to express their anger because they can sense some power behind it they feel they won't be able to deal

with or control. Or they just do not want to have to make the decisions themselves. One patient told me recently that he wants to be told what to do because then "I don't have to figure it out myself. How do I know what the right thing is?"

Another detriment to letting what is within emerge is the lack of a feeling of self-value. This is a major aspect of religious investment. As James Fowler proposes:

We invest and devote ourselves because the other to which we commit has, for us, an intrinsic excellence or worth and because it promises to confer value on us. We value that which seems of transcendent worth and in relation to which our lives have worth (1981, p. 18).

Thus, one's own internal value goes unrecognized in favor of the value being conferred from without. Of course, such kinds of fears and feelings are present because we have been taught that what is inside is terrible or that we do not have the capacity to make proper decisions ourselves. The truth, I believe, is that the answers, the power, the values, are all inside of us if we allow ourselves the opportunity to experience them there. As Jacquelyn Small states, "Even so noble an act as turning our lives over to a Higher Power will be a meaningless gesture unless we connect this dynamic energy force to something within ourselves" (1982, p. 21) and "Someone once told me that when we are doing the work of the God-self, we will find it to be the place where we are the most comfortable and the most at home. I have found this to be true for me" (p. 105).

Or, in the words of Eva Pierrakos' guide:

Man so often reaches for outside strength, for outer intervention, while he has but to realize that nothing can come to him from life when he does not have the inner equipment to use it and become thereby stronger and wiser. With this attitude, your self-confidence and self-respect will indeed be strengthened. If you are helped outwardly, the help may momentarily be pleasant, but it will not increase your self-confidence, your self-reliance, your independence, your self-respect. So reach inside. Realize that the universal laws are made in such a way that nothing whatsoever could possibly be beyond your strength, beyond your capacities (1963, p. 1).

Conclusion

Having the capacity to face and walk into the "unknown" is a necessary prerequisite to transcendence. To do this, I think there needs to be some basic trust in the life process itself. If there is not, the sense of fear can be overwhelming. "Our relationship to the unknown mirrors our assumptions about reality: to the extent that we embrace it, we are free from fear; to the extent that we run away from it, it pursues us; to the extent that we fight it, we are in conflict" (Vaughan, p. 50). I think of Joseph Campbell as an example of someone who had absolute faith in life to take him where he needed to go. His adage to "follow your bliss" (Toms, 1988, p. 24) is the testament of a man who trusted the unknown.

This level of trust of the unknown requires a trust of oneself and of those with whom one is in close relationship. Within the Unification Church there is abundant reference to unconditional and/or true love. Vaughan posits that "unconditional love is a source of healing in any relationship, but only when one is willing to hide nothing can one open to giving and receiving this love" (p. 181). In any organization where strict conduct is emphasized there are bound to be degrees of "hiding" among the membership, for although the goals of the organization appeal to their "higher selves," their reality often does not match the ideal espoused. Thus, they join because something within them was touched, but find that they cannot trust enough to reveal those aspects of themselves they fear are incongruous with the standard set forth. An extreme example of this is a patient of mine who, prior to having joined the church, engaged in some homosexual practices. Upon being told that "there are no homosexuals in the Unification Church," he redefined homosexual to exclude those practices in which he had participated.

If Vaughan is right in saying that unconditional love can only be experienced where nothing is hidden—and I think she is—there has to be a safe place within such an organization for members to freely reveal themselves. The absence of such a place keeps many members hidden even from themselves. As Vaughan also says, "The spiritual path begins when we attend to what we truly want" (p. 92). It is impossible to know what one truly wants unless one has sufficient knowledge of self.

Core energetics, which I consider a form of transpersonal psychology, presents a workable model for the integration of psychological and spiritual evolution. Here is a place not only to reveal oneself but also to gain knowledge of self, work through ("Not out, but through!" becomes the psyche's wisened cry as it learns it must experience its own dramatic bout with darkness, the negative side of its nature, before it can complete itself " [Small, 1982, p. 30]) the developmental stages that will lead to a sense of self-identity from which one's decisions and actions become more integrated, and reach for higher levels of transcendence and integration.

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