

# THE FOUNDATIONAL ELEMENTS OF A JUNGIAN SPIRITUALITY.<sup>1</sup>

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## **What is Spirituality?**

Spirituality is a term that is currently coming into ever more prominent use. It is also a term that is taking on a wide range of meanings. In its narrower sense it describes the spiritual discipline and practice of a given tradition. One can speak of a Hindu or a Buddhist or a Christian spirituality. In contemporary usage spirituality has taken on another and wider meaning. It has come to describe a religious consciousness and discipline entirely free of a relation to any religious institution. (Wulff, *Psychology and Religion*, 2nd ed., p. 5-7) Analysts of contemporary religiosity now identify a significant number of the religious populace who describe themselves as spiritual but not religious. They mean their spirituality has no relation to an institutional religion. There is a sense in which a Jungian spirituality can encompass both populations because Jung traces the origins of both institutional religion and the now emerging spirituality of the single seeker to their common origins in the archetypal unconscious.

Spirituality in a Jungian context is all-embracing. It would extend to every avenue of conscious access to the energies of the Gods and Spirits whether through an institution or on an individual basis. And what are the spirits which a Jungian spirituality would usher into consciousness? Writes Jung on the topic, "The world of gods and spirits is truly 'nothing but' the collective unconscious inside me." (CW 12, par. 857, p. 525) Jung could hardly be more succinct. However this understanding of spirituality carries with it a

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<sup>1</sup> This paper was originally read at a conference on the Symbolic Way in Spirituality, Analytic Practice and Culture, AGAP Forum, July 16, 2006, Zurich, Switzerland.

much wider world view, a total perspective, which draws close to a metaphysics, cosmology, or newly emerging myth. Like all myths, the myth inherent in Jung's psychology addresses and embraces the totality in its vision. Thus it is worth while examining the full implications behind Jung's suggestion that spirituality of every kind implicates an immediate commerce with the Spirits and Gods within.

### **Jung's Naturalism and Psychic Containment.**

Jung understood the collective unconscious to be nature itself but a nature in need of its greatest creation, the ego and its consciousness, to function on behalf of humanity. (L I, p. 283; L II p. 540; CW 5, par. 95, p. 62). It is often overlooked that in equating nature with the creative unconscious and understanding consciousness as its needed offspring, Jung is effectively containing within a vastly extended psyche both the totality of what is or can be as well as the human cognitive capacity to experience what is or can be. Needless to say this containment would extend to humanity's experience of the divine. All of this is made explicit when he writes, "Not only does the psyche exist, it is existence itself." CW 11, par. 18, p. 12. He denies in this same passage that the psyche has an Archimedean point transcendent to itself which enables it to know itself. Archetypal forces transcend the ego from within the psyche, but nothing transcends the psyche itself. Jung's understanding of Archimedes would strongly suggest God and humanity are in the same bath tub. A move by either effects the other. Jung is explicit in describing the origin of all deity beyond the psyche as projections funded by the archetypal energies of the psyche. Such positions give rise to the obvious question of whether a God or Gods exist beyond the psyche.

Lionel Corbett has identified the only alternatives to this question allowed by Jung's understanding of the psyche (Corbett, p. 6 - 9). In this Corbett has done Jung and Jungians a great favour. Corbett starts from the commonly held conclusion that from a Jungian perspective God manifests most directly through numinous experience generated by the archetypal or collective unconscious. From this point of common agreement only two options about God's existence remain open. Either the unconscious creates the spirits and Gods as projections of its major psychic energies, or God creates the unconscious as the medium through which God makes itself known to humanity. Corbett suggests that a decision between these options is beyond human competence and that Jung, by implication, left them open. No doubt Corbett is here referring to Jung's prolonged waffling in the face of theological criticism. For Jung would frequently take the position that as a scientist he could only show the empirical evidence of humanity's experience of itself as an image of God and refrain from making statements about the reality or nature of a God which this experience imaged. Jung would frequently fortify this position with an appeal to Kant. Humanity's experience of God lay within the field of empirical phenomena, the legitimate field of psychology. Beyond the phenomenal and into the realm of the noumenon Jung, in his cautious Kantian moments, would fear to tread.

Nevertheless at times the waffling broke down especially as he grew older. In fact the caution vanished entirely in his late bald and repeated statements of the end of monotheism in the face of humanity's evolving religious consciousness. He could hardly be more explicit when he writes, "The naive assumption that the creator of the world is a conscious being must be regarded as a disastrous prejudice which later gave rise to the most incredible dislocations of logic." CW 11, p. 383, fn. 13. And again in reference to

the evolution of religious consciousness evident in the book of Job he repeats, "An unusual scandal was blowing up in the realm of metaphysics, with supposedly devastating consequences, and nobody was ready with a saving formula which would rescue the monotheistic conception of God from disaster." CW 11, par. 607, p. 385.

And what precisely was this monotheistic conception of God that the evolution of religious consciousness left defenseless in its wake? In his lengthy discussions with both Martin Buber, a Jewish thinker, and Victor White, a Dominican Roman Catholic theologian, this God would be an objective entity creating humanity from beyond humanity and in no need of humanity and its developing consciousness for its own well being let alone fulfillment. Jung's prolonged discussions with both Buber and White were really one discussion with two representatives of the variants within the monotheistic family of Gods. The discussions clearly reveal that such a divine being and its relation to humanity is simply not compatible with Jung's understanding of the human psyche and the commerce with divinity the psyche sponsors. (Dourley, *Jung and the Monotheisms*) The failure of both dialogues forces the conclusion that, from Jung's perspective, commerce with divinity, removed from the skies, is now to become a wholly intra-psyche reality describing the interior dialectic of the ego with the unconscious under the orchestration of the self. When Jung's total work is weighed and considered the first of Corbett's options prevails. The unconscious creates the Gods and spirits wholly out of its own archetypal resources and the evolution of human religious consciousness and its attendant spirituality is presently coming to realize this fact.

Are we then to conclude that Jung having dissolved the illusion of humanity's relation to a variety of one and only Gods abandoned humanity to a Godless life much as

he accuses Albert Schweitzer of dissolving Europe's faith in a literal historical Jesus before retiring to a life of sanctity in Africa? (L II, p. 40, 85, 125, 140-142, 145) The answer is no. Paul Tillich has much to support his contention that only a symbol replaces a symbol and only a myth a myth. What Jung left the West was a substantial contribution to a new myth and attendant spirituality. Jung's myth revisioned humanity's relation to the divine as the ground movement of the psyche in which both the divine and the human are inescapably implicated from the outset in the conferral of mutual redemption on each other. The dissolution of the distant and perfect Gods foreshadowed in the book of Job evolved into the growing contemporary realization that God and reality at some point coincide. Jung puts it this way, "It was only quite late that we realized (or rather, are beginning to realize) that God is Reality itself and therefore last but not least man. This realization is a millennial process." CW 11, par. 631, p. 402.

Since the substance of Jung's psychology is devoted to the furthering of this millennial process and to the formulation of the myth and spirituality that would now foster it, the cardinal features of that myth are worth spelling out.

### **The Now Evolving Myth.**

The myth latent in Jung's psychology would cap the unconscious in its creation of Gods understood to be other than and totally transcendent to humanity. This capping would end all variants of supernaturalism understood to point to divinities wholly other than the human and addressing the human from beyond the human. In doing this he wholly dissolves the three transcendental gentlemen populating the monotheistic heavens, Yaweh, God the Father with trinitarian associates, and Allah. In their stead he

understands transcendence as the intra-psychic transcendence of the archetypal unconscious to its various incarnations in human consciousness. In thus revisioning the process of incarnation as wholly within the psyche, it is important to note that the fecundity of the archetypal will always outstrip its incarnations in consciousness. There will always be more to become incarnate. This understanding of incarnation denies to any religion or archetypal equivalent the status of unqualified ultimacy or finality. It is to this archetypal dimension of the psyche that Jung refers when he boasts of "...my demonstration of the psychic origin of religious phenomena." (CW 12, par. 9, p. 9) Elsewhere he repeats that his researches have laid bare, "...the empirical foundations of all religious experiences". (CW 12, par. 16, p. 14) It is not only the two theologians Jung refers to in this passage that have missed his demonstration. So have many students of Jung on religion. In demonstrating the psychic origin of all religion Jung grounds each of them on archetypal experience and expression, makes each of them relative and, in the present world context, safer for humanity.

Jung's demonstration of the psychic origin of all religious experience and so of all the religions is the foundation of everything he has to say about religion. With it he can give a succinct and credible statement about the total historical development of humanity's religious consciousness. The many Gods dwelling on mountain tops became one God. The one God became human. And even in the face of the danger of inflation every human is to become God and so complete the process. (CW 11, par. 141, p. 84) The spreading sense of humanity's native divinity is why divinity no longer presides at the centre of the modern mandala and the wholeness of the human does. (CW 11, par. 139) More importantly, once the unconscious is identified as the creator of the Gods,

Jung can go beyond a general history of the evolution of religious consciousness to pinpoint where the ongoing drama of this development currently is being acted out. For Jung, humanity's current religious maturation lies in the conscious recall of the Gods to their origin in the unconscious and to the subsequent unmediated dialogue with them there. Jung writes, "But since the development of consciousness requires the withdrawal of all projections we can lay our hands on, it is not possible to maintain any non-psychological doctrine about the gods. If the historical process of world despiritualization continues as hitherto, then everything of a divine or daemonic character outside us must return to the psyche, to the inside of the unknown man, whence it apparently originated." (CW 11, par 141, p. 85) What does "apparently" mean in this citation? It does not imply any doubt on Jung's part. Rather it means that the origins of the Gods from the "inside" out was all too apparent to Jung.

The return of the Gods to their psychic origins would have great societal and personal value. On the social level it would mean that each community bonded by a totally transcendent divinity would have to come to realize that its allegedly unique and exclusive divinity was a valued variant of the family of monotheistic Gods created by the psyche as humanity now moves through and hopefully beyond its once much needed monotheistic moment. Such a realization would produce a moderating and humanizing relativity in the claims for universal and exhaustive religious validity made by each of the contending one and only Gods and free their constituencies from the need to convert or kill each other. The link between what even a Paul Tillich could call a "final revelation" and the final solution would become much clearer. (ST I, p. 135-137) In the end the tracing of the monotheistic Gods to their psychic origins would question the

moral and social responsibility of an unqualified faith in any variant of monotheistic divinity given the shadow side of their historical performance especially in relation to each other. Such relativizing of the major divine contenders and their conflicting communities combined with the heightened moral sensitivity such relativity would engender would serve as a major resource in helping humanity through its monotheistic phase if it is indeed to survive it. Needless to say the identification of the archetypal basis of political monotheistic faiths would have much the same result. It would force those bonded by any political faith to recognize its relativity and force the political believer to face the common human problem of societal archetypal bonding which lowers the consciousness and so moral responsibility of the individual in favour of a cohesive but unconscious group, nation or tribe. (Dourley, 2003)

At the personal level the recall of the Gods to their common psychic matrix would have equally radical effects. It would destroy what Jung calls the "...systematic blindness..." and "...prejudice that God is *outside* man.". (CW 11, par. 100, p. 58) Rather the restoration of divinity to its natural containment in the psyche would point to "...the identity of God and man." (CW 11, par. 100, p. 101; CW 11, par. 105, p. 61) The revisioning of humanity as naturally divine, and driven by divinity itself to an ever fuller conscious recovery of its native divinity, would be for Jung a universal truth of human nature. And yet it would have a devastating effect on orthodox religious conceptions of figures of the self on which these religions are built. Facing the problem in its Christian variant, Jung confesses that the idea of every individual sharing a native identity with God borders on heresy. CW 11, par. 105, p. 60. Many, including every member of the Inquisition of all eras, would think it was an idea well over the border. Undaunted Jung

goes on to extend the *homoousia*, the unity of divine and human natures in Christ, to everyone and to claim that nature unites in all what Christianity reserves to one in the person of Christ. Jung could hardly be more explicit, "...it would be considered blasphemy or madness to stress Christ's dogmatic humanity to such a degree that man could identify himself with Christ and his *homoousia*." The extension of divinity to humanity universal and the implied extension of the sacred to all that is remains unacceptable to the Church. Writes Jung, "She [the Church] may even have to condemn any approach to these experiences, since she cannot admit that nature unites what she herself has divided." (CW 11, par. 105, p. 61) In this citation "nature" means the unconscious or the self seeking to unite consciousness with its divine depths. What the Church has divided is the divine from the human both in human nature and throughout nature itself.

When Jung reunites the divine and the human universally he is not using, for instance, the substantial categories of the Christological councils who identify two substantial natures united in the uniqueness of the Christ figure's person. Rather he would see divinity as a universal human latency driving to become ever more conscious in human consciousness as the base dynamic in human spirituality now become identical with human maturation. Jung's understanding of alchemical transformation is the best example of this process. What he means by the human recovering a native divinity as the meaning of maturation is explicitly spelled out when he writes, "It looks as if the idea had dawned on the alchemists that the Son who, according to classical (and Christian) tradition, dwells eternally in the Father and reveals himself as God's gift to mankind, was something that man could produce out of his own nature - with God's help of course (Deo

concedente). The heresy of the idea is obvious." (CW 12, par. 133, p. 112) In this passage Jung clearly identifies the alchemical effort as one which surfaced to consciousness that divinity native to humanity. Since alchemy compensated what Christianity had removed from the realm of the sacred, the divinity that alchemy made conscious in humanity was a divinity capable of embracing and resacralizing the totality of creation which Christianity could not do.

The birth of the divine Son in consciousness through the alchemist's role of midwife is effectively the birth of the self in the individual. Here again Jung's myth frees the individual from religious addiction to one or other version of the self. For he makes the point explicitly that the figures in whom the archetypal self concretizes in religious or cultural form are relative expressions of the archetypal self's inexhaustible precedence. Such a position flatly contradicts affirmations made by the various monotheisms and, indeed, by most religions. The religious claim to represent an exhaustive expression of the self continues to have great currency. An outstanding example is to be found in John 14. 4. which reads, "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life. No one can come to the Father except through me." If this proclamation is taken as literal and personal it would mean that the self is exhaustively and exclusively incarnate in the person of Jesus. Only if the statement is elevated to a gnostic level and the I becomes the I of the self as distinguished from the ego can the statement be saved from a literal interpretation that has worked such damage between the Christian and non-Christian worlds through the centuries. Thus reconceived John 14:4 would mean the only way to the maturity of divinity is through the self as it becomes incarnate in consciousness and that this is true of all religions and indeed of every life lived under the suasion of the self. The foundations

for a now much needed tolerance between communities bonded by diverse manifestations of the self and turned against each other by these very manifestations lies in Jung's very clear statement. "Hence in its scientific usage the term 'self' refers neither to Christ not to the Buddha but to the totality of the figures that are its equivalent, and each of these figures is a symbol of the self." (CW 12, par. 20, p. 18)

### **Fundamentalism from a Jungian Perspective.**

The foregoing lays the basis for a Jungian understanding of fundamentalism. The fundamentalist psyche is characterized by three dominant traits: externalism, literalism and historicism. Each is actually an aspect of the other but each is worth looking at individually. All are forms of the objectification of deity beyond the psyche and so the reduction of divinity to a person, entity or object over against the human. Externalism is the dominant trait of the fundamentalist mind and includes the other two. Jung relies on Meister Eckhart to describe externalism when he writes of those "...who put nothing into their own souls and have 'all God outside'." (CW 12, par. 10, p. 9; par. 12, p. 11) The projection of God beyond the soul robs the soul of its life and denies to the individual the fullest experience of the archetypal basis of divinity and of the divine figures now existing beyond the soul but dead to experience within it. Jung depicts this loss of soul as a debilitating kenosis, a depressive emptying out of the life of the soul in the creation of divinities beyond her. He writes with Christianity in mind but with a meaning applicable to all the transcendent Gods, "Too few people have experienced the divine image as the innermost possession of their own soul." (CW 12, par. 12, p. 12) In the kind of critique he

leveled against the theology of the clergy in his immediate family, Jung writes of this religious insensitivity to human interiority in terms of the blind leading the blind. (MDR, 73f) "With a truly tragic delusion these theologians fail to see that it is not a matter of proving the existence of the light, but of blind people who do not know that their eyes could see." (CW 12, par. 14, p. 13) With theologian or not, the consequence of externalism is to empty consciousness of the soul's sense of its natural relationship to God without which no humanizing connection with the divine could eventuate. In short if the soul were not naturally divine it could never seek nor receive the divine. (CW 12, par. 11, p. 11) In the face of charges of psychologism Jung's defense is, "I have been accused of 'deifying the soul...' Not I but God himself deified it." (CW 12, par. 14, p. 13)

The spiritually debilitating consequences of externalism are tragically apparent in the related pathology of historicism. In its Christian variant, historicism reduces the figure of Christ to a past historical figure and not a present psychic force. The imitation of Christ becomes the slavish reproduction in the individual's life of the details of a past life instead of the ongoing rhythm of archetypal death and resurrection in the now of psychic life. As Jung diagnoses it, historicism turns the Christ figure into "...an external object of worship which blocks rather than mediates the internalization of the figure of Christ as the occasion of the experience of the self as an inner spiritual power where true suffering and transformation would take place." (CW 12, par. 7, p. 7)

Finally literalism combines with historical externalism to look upon the life of religious figures as literal accounts of past events and not symbolic expressions of the unconscious which creates these figures and their deeds as triggers to their reenactment in the internal forum of the living psyche. Revelation as the deepest poetry of the soul is

turned into history and its transformative power all but lost. Even when modern biblical scholarship reached an agreement that the historical life of Jesus can never be gained behind the myth that has given it whatever staying power it has, the hankering after personal or biographical details continues. In this thinly disguised literalism biblical scholarship squanders the spiritual substance of what it studies in misguided efforts to find the historical Jesus who never existed except in the myth and symbols that grew around him as the basis of humanity's continuing fascination with him. Jung's indictment of the failure of modern "spokesmen of religion" to address the question of why there is symbolic discourse at all still stands. (CW 5 par. 336, p. 227) If such spokesmen were to address the improbability yet perseverance of symbolic truth the search for the historical Jesus would turn into a deeper appreciation of the symbolic Jesus. The depths of the soul from which such symbols proceed to consciousness would be recovered from their literal religious overlay and the coarsening effect of a blind faith in what Jung calls "...sacrosanct unintelligibility...", and "...preposterous nonsense..." would be greatly alleviated. (CW 11, par. 170, p. 109, 110) And yet even when symbol and myth are stripped of their spiritual vitality, they continue to exercise a truly possessive power over their victims in linking faith with collective unconsciousness. For they provide the instant truth and collective identity so appealing to the human lust for saving certitude to counter the authentic agony of doubt and ambiguity hanging over the human situation. Though it appeals to this baser spiritual instinct, fundamentalism is for that very reason likely to continue its present growth.

Currently we are faced with an even greater threat than religious fundamentalism though this threat is for Jung but a variant of its predecessor. This form of

fundamentalism is political fundamentalism, the fundamentalism that informs the "isms". In Jung's analysis, like religion itself, political fundamentalism is an expression of archetypal power. In so identifying its roots in the psyche Jung has given us the key to its defeat. Sociologically it is helpful to identify the archetypal basis informing the political religions which Jung describes as ranging from paradise regained in socialist utopias to life under a benign father in the fascist alternative. But beyond archetypal sociology or political science Jung also provides what probably is, in the end, the only prophylactic against infection by political fundamentalist faith when he writes, "*Resistance to the organized mass can be effected only by the man who is as well organized in his individuality as the mass itself.*" (CW 10, par. 340, p. 278) It can be asked, "How many were as well organized as the Gestapo in the second world war and how many are as well organized as the coalition in to-day's wars?" The moral demand and level of consciousness Jung imposes on those who are to oppose fundamentalism, religious or political, are so rigorous and so personal that one is forced to wonder if humanity has the time available to save itself from its faiths and especially from that faith in which religious commitment informs a political and economic absolute and so elevates collective unconsciousness to the second degree.

### **The Personal and Collective Implications of Jung's Myth and Spirituality.**

The spirituality attaching to Jung's myth is primarily personal but always with profound collective or societal implications. For Jung challenges the individual to recover one's unique myth through an ongoing dialogue with the unconscious primarily through the continued revelation of the dream. Effectively the recovery of one's personal myth is

the only power that frees one from an unconscious adherence to the myths into which the individual is inevitably born. These myths which usually are layered would include religion, nationality, ethnicity, social class and whatever else would impact on an emerging ego with archetypal force. As and to the extent the true self emerges from this multiple mythical overlay the individual for the first time is enabled to separate from and then face the myths into which one is born and to affirm one's unique truth to them. This affirmation may be one of fuller appreciation of the symbolic validity of inherited myths which only a heightened experience of one's personal symbology can work. This affirmation may be a discerning appreciation in which the self sets the boundaries of a qualified loyalty to one's native myths based on a prior fidelity to the truth of the self. Or this affirmation may be one of a total surpassing, as was the case with Wolfgang Pauli, whose material strongly suggested that he come into the truth of the self without the mediation or support of his previous religious background. (CW 11, par. 71, p. 41; CW 18, par. 671, 673, p. 285) Pauli's situation may currently be much wider as more individuals fail to experience the self in their traditional religions and look elsewhere for it. But whatever the consequences, the incarnation of the self in the individual's consciousness provides the basis for one's personal and liberating relation to whatever archetypal societal powers one has been born into and so becomes the effective basis of one's personal religion even where a relation to a religious tradition continues.

But there is more to a Jungian spirituality than the cultivation of the persuasion of the self in one's personal consciousness. This is so because the accessing of the self implicates a relation to the archetypal powers which also create history and its epochs. And Jung thought the psyche in his time and ours was ushering in a new religious epoch.

This is evident when he compares himself and his psychology to the mind of Joachim di Fiore, a late twelfth century monk, who anticipated the new religious spirit which did indeed come to inform so much of the thirteenth century. (L II, p. 138) Something of so radical a new spirit is afoot to-day. Cultural commentators will make the point that the Thirty Years War, 1618-1648, was a major contributing factor to the Enlightenment and to contemporary ideas of the secular state as the European mind realized it could no longer entrust the peace to religious forces and so placed reason beyond and above them all. (Tillich, 19th Century, p. 49; J.C. Livingston, vol. 1, p. 10) Something similar is happening currently. The monotheisms, religious and political, threaten the future of the species and Enlightenment reason has itself become problematic. In Jung's view the Enlightenment mind, whose historical moment was no doubt necessary and valuable, nevertheless uprooted current humanity from its divine depths by reducing the total human cognitive capacity to reason. In the face of the dual threat of warring religious and political absolutes and a humanity truncated through its entrapment in the wasteland of intellectual and technological rationality, Jung proposed a new myth which would reconnect the mind with its roots in the unconscious. Such a myth would breed a religious sense of wider compassion than can any of the extant communities of political or religious absolutisms. In this sense the individual's surfacing of one's individual myth from the power that gives birth to them all is the greatest contribution the individual can make to a now emerging religious sensibility of wider universal sympathy and inclusion. If this universal sentiment of sympathy for all that is, even across archetypal divides, is the defining characteristic of the myth the unconscious is currently creating, it cannot be worked by reason, always the servant of myth and not its origin, nor by the extant

religions whose limited sensibilities the new myth seeks to supersede. Only the unconscious can breed the sense of the one world, the sense that the source of the totality can be seen through all of its expressions by the mind resonating with that source. And this is the perception that gives life to Jung's myth.

### **Jung's Move to a Quaternitarian Future.**

When Jung moves to a quaternitarian paradigm he sacralizes entire realms of reality whose sacred nature is denied or diminished by the reigning Western myths. The deepest reason he is able to do this is because he realized so clearly that the advent of all religious experience is through the unconscious and that the unconscious is driven to express its full inventory in human consciousness and history. To translate this statement into religious terms would mean that God as the creator of all that is is reflected in all that is and all that is lies as potential within its source. No existent reality is less sacred than another. Some have called this the principle of plenitude and mean by it that everything that is is an expression of and so points to its origin which in turn seeks the total expression of its potential in creation. But on closer examination of creation Jung found that only the spirit, the male and figures such as the Christ figure were good. And so he asked where is the missing fourth, so evident in creation and strangely absent in creation's alleged source, namely, matter, the feminine and Satan. (CW 11, pars. 243, 258, 259, p. 164, 174, 175) Traditional spirituality could only divinize and so honor half of reality. It was only half there. The missing fourth, the reality of evil, of the feminine, and of material creation, were united but only in their joint exclusion from the Spirit of Christianity's presiding symbol, the Trinity. This exclusion meant that their native

divinity was denied to them. Jung's emerging myth would restore to them their innate sacredness and then challenge a spirituality which excluded them with the question of whether it could include them and remain itself? The question is particularly powerful when asked of monotheistic consciousness. Could it remain itself were it to grow into an awareness of the divinity of the feminine, of nature, and of the demonic? If the answer were yes a further question would follow immediately. If it did recognize and integrate these elements would its spiritual recovery entail the recovery of what it had excluded as heresy in the process of the creation of its now pathologically one-sided corporate self and spirituality? Would it have to recover a gnostic, alchemical, mystical sense and drink once more from the grail? Jung would seem to think it would have to.

The need to recover spiritual health through the recovery of healing heresy is but one side of a larger picture Jung draws of the development of religious consciousness historically and presently. He limns this wider portrait in black and white in his work on Job. Here he draws out the consequences of his understanding of divinity and humanity as "functions" of each other from the outset, now engaged in a joint project of mutual redemption in human history. (CW 6, par. 12, p. 243) Obviously Jung is here playing with an extended metaphor in which the unconscious is to consciousness as the divine is to humanity. Effectively he is arguing that divinity was forced by its own unconsciousness to create human consciousness as the only theatre in which divinity could become conscious of its own conflicted proclivities. This is the process he describes as the "relativity of God" meaning that only in the human does God become self-conscious. (CW 6, par. 411, p. 242) In this process divinity and humanity sacrifice themselves to each other. A distant God must give up all remove and become real in

human suffering as the divine self-contradiction is perceived and resolved in the human agony of unifying divine opposites in itself. Humanity and the individual human, on their part, must undergo cyclical death into their origin if the drive of their conflicted origin to become conscious in humanity is to be realized. When he gives his answer to Job, Jung depicts a crucified Christ figure, a symbol of humanity suffering between the yes and a no of divinely grounded opposites, dying in despair as the precondition to a resurrected consciousness in which these lethal opposites would grow closer together in a humanity enriched by their synthesis.

This is the psychodynamic of what Jung calls the transcendent function. The process is wholly contained within the historical psyche and is the only legitimate sense of transcendence as transformative in Jung's work. This dynamic describes the base movement of the psyche both individually and collectively. It grounds the individual's spirituality on suffering whatever aspect of the divine self-contradiction is most prominent in that individual's life. Collectively it also describes the ground movement and meaning of history itself as the reconciliation of the eternally unresolved conflict of divine opposites in human consciousness. Such reconciliation becomes the redemption of God in the history of human consciousness. In Jung's words the death of Christ between divinely based opposites is as "...'eschatological' as it is 'psychological'..." (CW 11, par. 647, p. 408) Jung's meaning here entrusts and burdens humanity with the mutual redemption of the divine and human in a single self-contained historical process. When this sweeping vision is taken to the personal level it means that the most intense suffering in an individual's life is an incarnation in that life of some aspect of the divinity's self-contradiction seeking relief in that suffering. To the extent such suffering is well born

and issues into a higher consciousness it redeems both the divine who suffers in it and the human who suffers through it. In this Jung joins another twentieth century spiritual innovator, Teilhard de Chardin, when the latter encourages his readers to bring to God "...a little fulfillment." ( *Le Milieu Divin*, p. 62)

### **How the Mystics Did It.**

These foundational themes in a Jungian spirituality are dramatically evident in his appreciation of certain Western mystics and might well point to a dimension of the psyche beyond the archetypal hinted at but not explicitly charted throughout the *Collected Works*. As argued previously, for Jung, the referent of all religious experience and expression are the deeper movements of the psyche. This is true all the more of mystics. In Jung's view, "Mystics are people who have a particularly vivid experience of the processes of the collective unconscious. Mystical experience is experience of archetypes." (CW 18, par. 218, p. 98) Ironically since Jung obviously underwent such vivid experience personally his own description of a mystic would have to include himself. Historically the mystics to whom he is most drawn are mystics whose experience was characterized by an apophatic moment, that is, an immersion in divinity in which all distinction between themselves and the divine was annihilated in a moment of all consuming nothingness.

Jung picks up the apophatic tradition with the thirteenth century Beguines and Mechthilde of Magdeburg in particular. She and her contemporary, Hadjewich of Antwerp, describe a sexual union with a youthful Christ figure culminating in an identity beyond all difference. Marguerite Porete, burnt by the Inquisition, in Paris in 1310, talks

of the annihilated soul who became the all through attaining the nothing. Contemporary scholarship has now demonstrated the influence of these women mystics on a towering mystical figure in the history of the Christian West and in Jung's work, Meister Eckhart, who died during his trial for heresy around 1328. Eckhart's paradoxical prayer, "I pray to God to rid me of God", is a prayer to the Godhead beyond the trinitarian God of creation. It is a prayer to remove all distance between himself and his origin, between the creator and creature, so that he might reclaim his native divinity through a total immersion in the nothingness that precedes all creation and definition. For Jung this experience of identity with the Godhead would describe a movement of the psyche in which, "...God disappears as an object and dwindles into a subject which is no longer distinguishable from the ego." (CW 6, par. 430, p. 255) In this psychic situation continues Jung, "...the original state of identity with God is re-established and a new potential is produced." (CW 6, par. 421, p. 255) What Eckhart and the mystics of the apophatic moment are describing as an immersion in the divine nothingness is a moment of the ego's dissolution in what Jung terms the "Great Mother" or "Goddess", who precedes all form and creation and from whom all form and creation are born. In so doing they would seem to go to a moment of total rest or resignation in the source of their being ever present to them in the personal depths of the universal psyche. Here again the question of the quaternity arises now in relation to divinity and humanity as contributing to each other's wealth. These mystic travelers would seem to go beyond the compulsive creativity of the archetypal to a moment of rest in a fourth, the God beyond the God of Trinity and beyond the Gods of biblical theism, namely, in the Goddess herself.

Eckhart's journey is completed by the only mystic who appears more frequently in Jung's pages, Jacob Boehme, a self educated shoemaker, cloth merchant and family man who lived in Silesia from 1575-1624. He too went to the nothing, in his idiom, the One or the *ungrund*. But his return prompted a major revision of the divine human relation in much of subsequent religious and philosophical thought. For he came to realize that contrary to traditional Trinitarian thought, God had not resolved the opposites in the turbulence of divine life from eternity. Rather only in human history could the divine self-contradiction be perceived and redeemed. When Jung referred to, "...a thought and premonition that have long been present in humanity: the idea of the creature that surpasses its creator by a small but decisive factor.", he probably had the image of Job in mind. (MDR p. 220.) The premonition could equally apply to Boehme and explain his frequent appearances throughout the *Collected Works*. For Boehme's experience surfaces a second quaternity. Humanity completes the Trinity, as creator, in time by working in itself a synthesis that evaded divinity in eternity. In effect the individual and humanity itself become the place of the uniting Spirit where alone the dark fire of the Father and the more feminine light of the Son realize their union. When the quaternitarian implications of Eckhart and Boehme are combined the conclusion can only be that the movement into the psyche to the point where divinity and humanity coincide within is the necessary precondition to the resolution of divine conflict without. The wisdom gained from the moment of identity with the ground of all within is the only basis for compassion for the all beyond. In his alchemical work Jung affirms that the individual's interior resonance with "...the eternal Ground of all empirical being..." enables the experience of the one world, of all that is as transparent to the divine in a universal

sacramental sensitivity that alone prevents particular sacraments from degenerating into magic, formalism or attempted manipulation of the divine. (CW 14, par. 760, p. 534) In this Jung again echoes Teilhard de Chardin's claim that , "...nothing here below is profane to those who know how to see." (Le Milieu Divin, p. 66)

Yet this culminating religious consciousness is for Jung a wholly natural process though it unfolds in time and space in a diversity of religious and cultural expressions and too often in patterns of conflict between the communities it creates in its concretions. For Jung the evolution of religious consciousness is always toward the individual but to an individual who lives, like the mystics, out of the energies of the ever present originating and maternal nothingness. Such an individual may be a solitary individual but such solitude is rooted in the source of the totality. The rootedness is all important. Its access through institution or individual quest or combinations of both is secondary and is authentic only when it serves the rootedness. Jung could give no better summary of the spirituality informing his psychology than when he writes of the fully conscious religion of the modern, "Indeed, he is completely modern only when he has come to the very edge of the world, leaving behind him all that has been discarded and outgrown, and acknowledging that he stands before the Nothing out of which All may grow." (CW 10, par. 150, p. 75) This is a stark but richly rewarding spirituality and one which the mystics of the maternal Nothingness would recognize as their own. They would join in the applause for the continuity and formulation Jung gave to their experience for his contemporaries and for us.

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