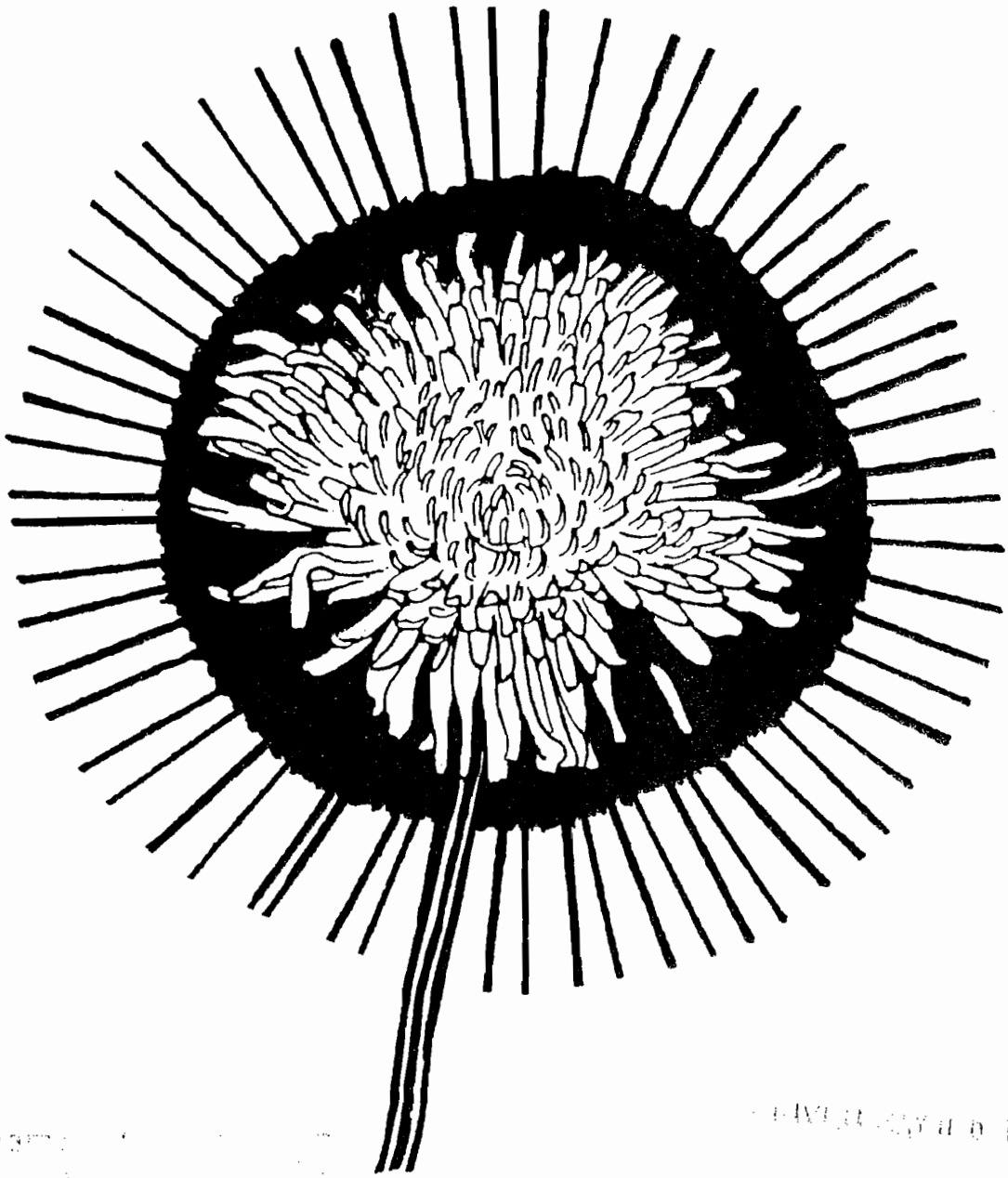
PRESENCE

THE JOURNAL OF SPIRITUAL DIRECTORS INTERNATIONAL

Volume 3, Number 3 Single Copy Price: $8.00 September, 1997



Institute of Transpersonal Psychology
ITP Library
744 San Antonio Road
Palo Alto, CA 94303

Reprinted under Publisher Permit Policy.

Pathways of the Soul:

A Helical Model of Psychospiritual Development

Hillevi Ruumet

OFTEN, WHEN PSYCHOLOGICAL issues come up in spiritual direction, they are seen as barriers to the directee's relationship with the Divine, to be removed (through psychotherapy or counseling if necessary) so that the essential spiritual journey can continue. They are seldom seen as an integral part of our psychospiritual development as whole persons. This view is a natural outgrowth of the split in our Western Christian tradition between the spiritual and the temporal, mind and body, God and matter. However, we are becoming more aware of the unity and interdependence of the psychological, physical and spiritual dimensions of our existence. It is a time in which:

- The neglected "feminine" elements are being restored to our human wholeness, in both women and men;
- more and more of us rooted in the Christian tradition are reclaiming a God who is both Mother and Father; and
- the vision of a "body which has been wholly penetrated by the divine Spirit" (Bede Griffiths, *A New Vision of Reality*, p. 225) is bringing poignant awareness of the need to tend a Creation (starting with the Earth itself) which is not "merely" matter (and therefore not as important as spirit), but which in fact, is Spirit.

Sophia – the living Divine Wisdom in the manifest world – is back, with much to teach us.

HILLEVI RUUMET is currently a member of the core faculty at the Institute of Transpersonal Psychology in Palo Alto, CA, USA. She has a PhD in clinical psychology from Columbia University and recently completed a spiritual direction internship at Mercy Center, Burlingame, CA. She has been a Jungian psychotherapist for 25 years and has led many dream groups and other groups facilitating conscious development and wholeness.

This article presents a model of psychospiritual development that describes the psyche/spirit connection as an ongoing relationship in which both have to grow in tandem to accommodate the unique life tasks that each soul faces. Every model is a myth (in Joseph Campbell's sense of the word), a living, personal myth of the storyteller, but also reflective of common truths, a story of the human soul writ large. We might say that we are all individual drops or waves in the same ocean of consciousness, or that we are all part of the One – Jung called it the "Collective Unconscious." While archetypes are universal, their specific representations in a person's life are culturally determined, as is this model, which is mainly derived from a Western cultural context.

I have worked with many people dealing with issues of life and death: suicide attempters, the terminally ill, hospitalized medical patients whose mortality had been driven home to them through illness, and the deeply depressed. Within these contexts, spirituality came up naturally through conversations and dreams. Much of our work occurred at the psychospiritual interface, not because I or the clients deliberately intended it, but because we had been "invited" there by something deep in their psyche.

"Birth" of the Helix

This model was a surprise to me – like a sudden birth when I didn't even know I was pregnant. At this point, I am calling it the Helix Model. It is, so to speak, a "voice from the trenches" rather than an intellectually formulated theory. Spirit em-bodies; all the rest derives from that. Because our journey is not uniform and there is no one "right" way, nothing is "set" about this model. It as a window through which I see my own and others' inner and outer process more clearly. Represented two-dimensionally, the model looks like a spiral although, in the walking of it, it seems more like a multidimensional labyrinth with a distinctive optimal path for each individual. The recent revival of interest in the labyrinth as a symbol for the spiritual journey seems very timely in this context. And ultimately, of course, the mystical traditions tell us there is no growth, no journey, no path; we are already "Home." But we have to do the journey to realize that.

The story of this model begins with Ken Wilber. In the late seventies, his chakra-based "spectrum psychology" model of psycho-spiritual development was an epiphany for me, and I gratefully acknowledge my debt to him. Although Wilber has amplified his model considerably since then, it began to seem too neat and linear to easily apply to the "messiness" of real life human experience. My own experience of development felt much more like a spiral – a symbol which had acquired deep meaning for me through my Jungian work. A casual conversation with Joseph Campbell serendipitously provided the seed for my own psychospiritual "growth map."

I spoke of my frustration in practice with the linearity of Wilber's model while in theory being intellectually stimulated by it. I told him that I experienced development more as a series of cycles and runs around a spiral than an orderly march up the chakras. "Oh, yes," he said, "it is more like this," and asked for a pen. He drew the diagram in Figure 1(I think on a napkin) to which I had an immediate visceral sense of "YES." [Figure 1 is on the following page.]

This rudimentary diagram worked pretty well, especially with respect to the interplay of the spiritual and the psychological, but also proved to be too "neat." Nourished by intuition and a variety of experiences, it eventually grew into the Helix Model.

The "Map" Itself

Figure 2 is a two-dimensional diagram that depicts the essential pathways of the living model. It is a "superhighway" map only; its many roads form a living web of connections among and across all the centers. The pictorial symbols are meant to be suggestive and I invite you to replace them with personal images as they emerge from your own and your directees' experience.

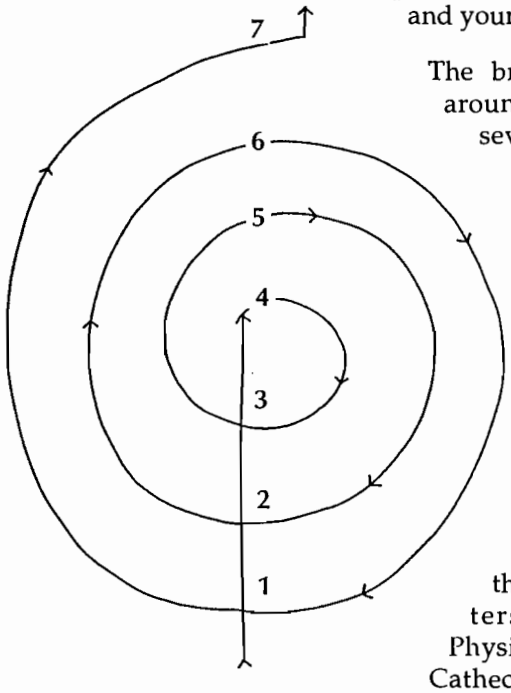


Figure 1

The broad growth pathways are oriented around seven "centers" (analogous to the seven chakras of Eastern symbology), and the most common challenges and achievements associated with them. These centers each have their own gifts, tasks, and "personified complexes" or "cast of characters." Different archetypal manifestations evolve as we move up (and down) the helical path through these centers. At Journey's end, our essential center moves again to the heart (IV) – this time, in its highest spiritual form, which could be called the Fully Empowered Heart of the Risen Christ. I will refer to these centers by name or Roman numeral: Physical/Survival Center (I), Emotional/Cathectic Center (II), Egoic/Power Center (III), Aloha Center (IV), Creative/Star Center (V), Sophia Center (VI), and Divine Union/Unity (VII).

Once the essence and the tasks of each center are clear, we can translate them into personal symbols and meanings, derived from our own spiritual tradition and life experience. In exploring these centers, we might well ask,

- Which inner figures live at each center?
- Which centers have been well developed and fully lived?
- Which have been difficult, slid through with little development, or bypassed and relegated to someone else to live out for us?
- Where are our major obstacles and hang-ups, and which parts of us are fostering or obstructing our growth?

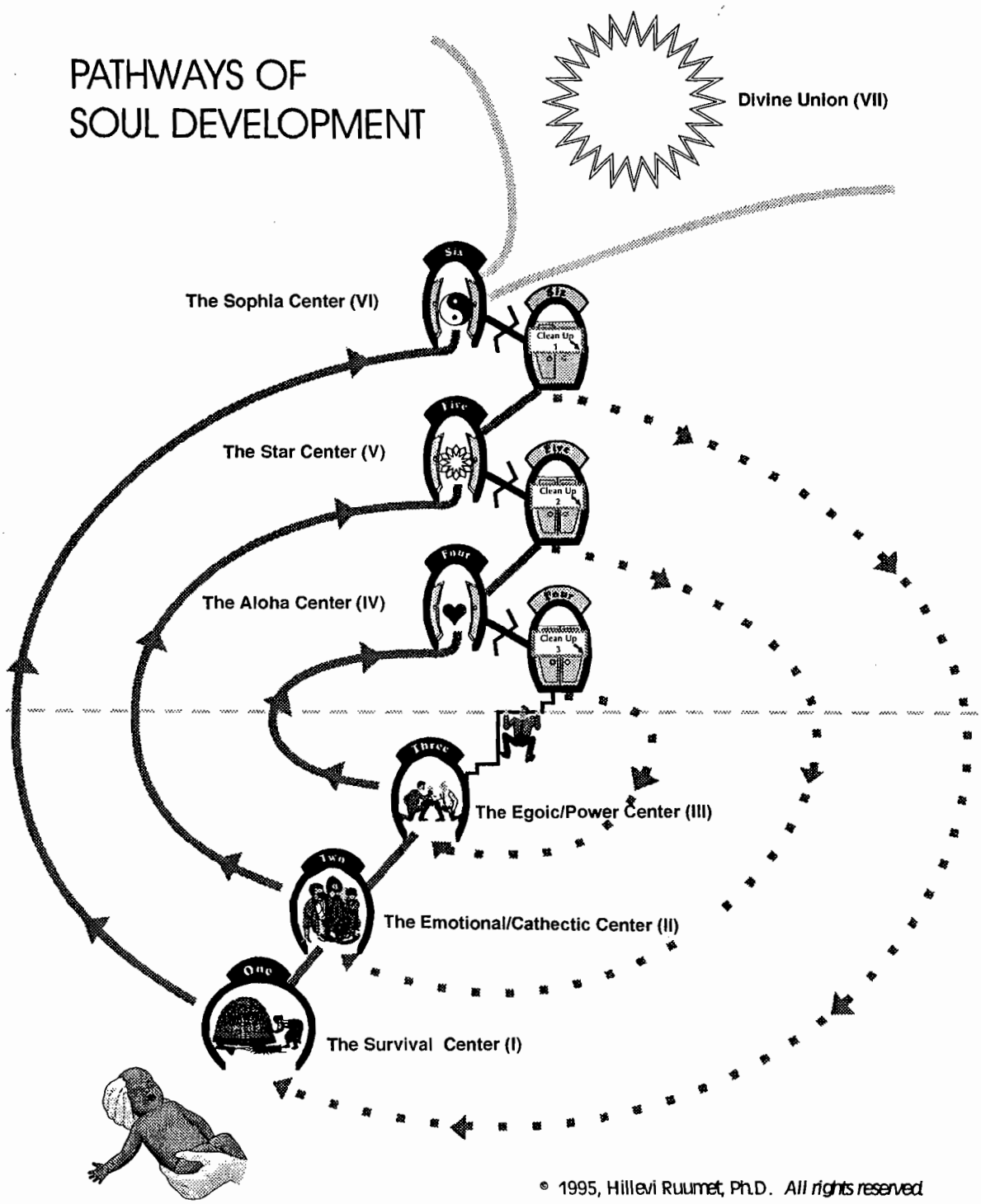

PATHWAYS OF
SOUL DEVELOPMENT
Divine Union (VII)
The Sophia Center (VI)
The Star Center (V)
The Aloha Center (IV)
The Egoic/Power Center (III)
The Emotional/Cathectic Center (II)
The Survival Center (I)
Six
Five
Four
Three
Two
One
Clean Up 1
Clean Up 2
Clean Up 3
© 1995, Hillevi Ruumet, Ph.D. All rights reserved

Figure 2

- Can the "obstructionists" be persuaded to cooperate with the purposes of Spirit as best we understand them and thereby integrated rather than disowned?
- What are we called to do with our lives?

Answers to these questions will help us find the optimal path through our personal life labyrinth.

It would be wise not to look at these centers competitively, with "milestones" marking "progress," or label them as "better than/less than," "spiritual/mundane," "evolved/unevolved," etc. Regardless of where we are or whether we are aware of it, we remain embedded in the Divine and have the potential to touch it at any time. It is always moving in our lives. While our pivotal growth tasks seem to cluster around one or two centers, our focus may be in different places at different times, in different aspects of our lives, or in different parts of our self. Parts of ourselves are wiser than others, so our inner "cast of characters" or "subpersonalities" may be dealing with a variety of issues all over the psychospiritual "map."

This map has two major "territories": the range from (I) to (III) and partially into (IV), inhabited by the "in-laws;" and from actualized (IV) to (VI), inhabited by the "out-laws" (VII includes but is beyond both). Joseph Campbell used these terms in a workshop that he gave in Hawaii in 1983. He described the "in-laws" as those whose world is defined by the consensus reality of their culture, and who live comfortably within the "laws" of their cultural conditioning without any strong impetus to question or move beyond them. Like fish in water, they take their culture for granted as *the* reality. The "out-laws" are those whose reality and experience spill over the boundaries of these collective "laws" into a larger view of reality, and who feel pushed to question the assumptions and beliefs of their culture.

Living the "In-Law" Life: The First Two Centers

From the original security of oneness with mother, we acquire the ability to live comfortably in our bodies, relate to other people, and take care of our physical and material needs. As we develop, we acquire a sense of separate identity as well as a sense of relatedness to the rest of humanity, or at least to those who share membership in the groups with which we identify. Healthy development through the first three centers gifts us with a solid sense of self – a healthy ego. We see the world in terms of "I" and "Other," "we" and "they."

THE PHYSICAL/SURVIVAL CENTER. Center (I) concerns the satisfaction of basic physical needs in the service of safety and survival. In talking about the hierarchy of needs, Abraham Maslow affirmed that "man's higher nature rests upon man's lower nature, needing it as a foundation and collapsing without this foundation. That is, man's higher nature is inconceivable without a satisfied lower nature as a base" (*Toward a Psychology of Being*, p. 163). This center may later become one of the primary ways we use power to get others to secure this foundation for us (often whether they like it or not). The fruits of success in this center are the mastery of basic survival skills and a trust in our body and its capacities, i.e. basic physical competence. Once these needs are fulfilled, this center provides the capacity for pleasure and joy in our senses and

our bodies. It is a place of play and delight in our physical abilities, in games and sports, and in creating things with our hands. The "characters" who live at each center do not disappear as we move to subsequent centers; rather, we are invited to transform and integrate them into our lives.

I have a "bag lady" who lives in my Survival Center. Whether I call her a "personified complex," a "subpersonality," or simply a neurotic hangup, the fact remains that I have a bag lady living there and she surfaces whenever my basic security is threatened. So what do I do with her? Wishing her away doesn't work (I came by her honestly, given my childhood history); neither does banishing her nor denying her. Then she simply hides in the unconscious and surfaces at awkward moments via irrational fears. For the sake of inner peace, then, I have to embrace her as part of my wholeness and reassure her that I will keep her from ending up destitute. Several years ago, I bought her a station wagon, and made sure that with the back seat down there is enough room to sleep comfortably. Friends tease me about it, but it keeps the bag lady happy. Whoever lives at (I) in your psyche is likely to be a leading player in your life drama, too, and that of your directees.

At this stage of our development, and in those cultures which are centered at (I) – almost extinct in our era in their pure form – we relate to God or, more commonly, the "gods" and/or "spirits" as all-powerful, objective entities to be feared and propitiated lest they show their displeasure by harming us. We learn to do what seems to bring good fortune and "divine" blessings, or at least to avoid misfortune. These conciliatory rituals, of course, were the origins of "superstitions." As we "mature" culturally and personally, we may find more sophisticated or scientific-sounding terms for them, devoid of magical connotations (except at those primitive layers of our psyche which we may prefer to think we have outgrown). Motivation based on the pleasure/pain principle is basic to this stage.

THE EMOTIONAL/CATHECTIC CENTER. Center (II) is basically focused on need, greed, and attachment. Babies need nurturing or they die. In responsive families babies learn to manipulate the environment to bring this about by being adorable, needy and helpless (some people attempt to carry this strategy into adulthood, which is less adorable). If needs are not adequately met, greed later develops as a desperate effort to grasp and hoard scarce supplies, creating a fear of lack and a diffuse insecurity which makes learning to share with others later a real challenge. Control issues originate at (II) as we try to satisfy our greeds by making the environment serve our needs. Central to our development through this center is also the need to feel loved, to belong to and be accepted by our family (and, by extension, our kinship group or "tribe"), and eventually to grow up and meet social expectations: to mate (within parameters considered proper by the elders), to procreate, and to carry on the family within our traditional social structures and values.

The "characters" who live at each center do not disappear as we move to subsequent centers...

The Cathectic Center comes into play automatically at birth, in conjunction with the Survival Center, by virtue of our need for a "mother," whether biological or a substitute. Our social matrix receives us at birth or we perish, so at a primitive level (II) also deals with self-preservation, and threat of loss of a significant other can feel emotion-

ally like threat of physical annihilation. This blending of (I) and (II) is important to remember when we are dealing with early trauma and family-of-origin issues in adulthood. Though we do have choices about whom to include in our "tribe" and which groups we wish to belong to as we mature, we never really lose our psychological embeddedness in the social matrix into which we were born. This is also the center of our emotional relationships with others and to our own bodies, and of sensuality from its most basic oral expression in infancy and childhood to full adult sexuality, though here again the line between (I) and (II) is quite fluid.

Our social containers mirror who we are to be and what we are to believe, and delineate the negative consequences if we do not meet the behavioral expectations of our family and culture. This center molds our life, setting basic, life-long patterns. It is here that our "wings are clipped" to the size our environment considers proper, lest we try to fly higher than the collective vision allows. How often do people unconsciously place limits on their inner development or level of outer achievement in order to not violate (too much) the suitable family "ceiling" to what is "possible" or what the family can tolerate without consigning the deviating member into psychological exile?

Here we also develop the fruits of healthy emotional development: basic emotional security (the sense of "I'm OK, you're OK"), social relationship skills, and a solid sense of place in the social order. As a result, we feel lovable and we learn a "need-and-greed" love: "I love you because you will do something for me." We are dependent and conditional in our loving, though we may not always recognize this.

The Divine at this center is usually seen as an all-powerful Parent (a "father" in most contemporary cultures), who expects us to be "good" (as defined by our culture's religious authorities). "I am the child. God will reward me if I'm good and punish me if I'm bad," is the basic stance toward Divinity. Depending on the culture, the emphasis varies on the Father's loving vs. punitive balance, but "He" is seen as "The Boss," and we are here to do His will. The one-sidedness of patriarchal religions leaves a vacuum in the human psyche. Failure to find an adequate feminine complement to the masculine Deity impoverishes us spiritually, for it dismantles the balance and wholeness of the Divine. As children turn to their mother for support when Dad is too stern (or vice versa), we usually find some substitute feminine form of the Divine to relate to even if she is not officially recognized by religious authorities.

...we never really lose our psychological embeddedness in the social matrix into which we were born.

In the Christian tradition, the Virgin Mary is an excellent example of a quasi-divine figure toward whom devotion has often exceeded that toward the paternal God or Jesus, especially since she personifies the "Great Mother" in her positive aspects: one who never punishes, always on our side, ever compassionate even if the Father is angry at us. Perhaps the materialism of our time is a form of this longing for the security of the Mother, literally a Mater-ialism. Little wonder that we cling to "transitional objects" in the form of things and power symbols which buffer our ego-importance and allow us to create the illusion of a spurious security, the fragility of which may be one of the factors driving us to overdevelop the Ego and overvalue the next center (III), the Egoic/Power Center.

Many societies remain in the Cathectic Center (II), supported by well-developed and socially honored Survival (I) skills. During the last several decades, however, there have been successive eruptions of (rather immature, in most cases) Egoic/Power Center (III) energy within these formerly stable societies. The result is violence, social disorientation, displacement of people from rural areas to cities, loss of ritual and meaning in traditional religious structures, and a general restlessness which has the feel of adolescent turmoil. Where there is no suprapersonal vision or cohesive social structure to channel it, the turbulence of the (II)-(III) transition often takes the form of inter-tribal power struggles and wars, of which "ethnic cleansing" is a particularly ugly manifestation.

Apotheosis of the Ego: The Power Center

As we move to the Egoic/Power Center (III), our goal becomes whatever our culture defines as "success." The social skills learned through relationships (II) are now placed in the service of power (III) goals. We learn to compete and measure our worth by our win/lose balance sheet. I think of this stage as the "apotheosis" of the Ego in all its manifestations, and as the drive to seek self-perpetuation in symbolic and material form.

Increasing control is important now so that we can create what our ego/mind envisions. To meet our needs at (II), we try to control significant others. At (III) we seek power to get other people to support our goals and give us what we want; feelings of competence and self-esteem grow through mastery of important skills. The fruits of successful Egoic (III) living are good ego strength, worldly competence, and socially defined "success." On the negative side, we may become arrogant, grandiose, persona-driven, egotistical, or worse, actively destructive to those people who challenge our power. Western civilization, with its flaws and its achievements, collectively reflects this developmental center, while other societies around the world are rushing to catch up. It is not surprising that many schools of psychology and much of our psychological research today are concerned with Egoic functioning.

With science and material "progress" as the dominant "religion," the two most common ways we relate to the Divine here are either not at all – after all, Ego is God and so we become atheists or agnostics – or we continue to identify with the parental deity of Center (II), except that we now see Him (in our culture, definitely "him") as reflecting our ego aspirations, so that we can confidently have wars where both sides are convinced that "God is with us." If we see our conscious values and desires as the "right" ones, and our technological successes as a mark of our superiority, it becomes easy to assume that our values and desires are supported by "God." Having narrowed the world to the parameters of their Ego, even regular church-goers at this stage often fail to integrate the teachings of their religion into their daily lives. Self-righteousness, "image," and "success" are the name of this game. The Divine is related to as an ego projection rather than something truly transcendent.

The human potential movement, with its humanistic and transpersonal thrust, is not immune to this. The "power of positive thinking" in its many forms (reduced to techniques to be mastered in a weekend) becomes a power play of the conquering ego, which appropriates any positive results for its own aggrandizement. The personal "Shadow" is disowned, co-opted as something "I have dealt with," or seen as something merely unknown but benign and creative (exactly the kind of half truth which

can be more corrupting than a lie). The consequent inflationary effect on the Ego becomes a further obstacle to genuine growth.

Spiritual directors may not often have the opportunity to work with people immersed in this Egoic identification and experience. Until something "wakes up" people like this (and God certainly finds ingenious ways to do this), they are unlikely to seek spiritual direction. It becomes more likely to happen as the limits of Ego and its version of power are reached, for example, through mid-life disillusionment with the things that were supposed to guarantee happiness. Then the director can gently and compassionately help the person look at the effects of ego inflation at the expense of soul values, distill out the achievements of this center that are needed in the service of Center (IV), and set a new life course grounded in spirit rather than ego-self. Spiritual direction might also now evoke a new relationship to God as the love we seek rather than a parental figure to be related to as a child, especially if that relationship has been experienced in terms of power and judgment rather than love and acceptance.

These first three centers develop in a more or less predictable way from birth to adulthood. While (I) and (II) kick in immediately after birth, (III) develops in childhood and matures in adulthood. Psychological theorists Erikson, Piaget, Loevinger, Kegan and others have much to contribute to our understanding of this process, and I would highly recommend their work. Development of all three centers leads us to what traditional psychology defines as "healthy adjustment." Living in a world that values the Egoic, we have adjusted enough to "get by"; adequate success, ego strength, basic self-esteem, and enough control over our environment create an acceptably ordered and predictable life. Because the great majority of people in Western culture live here, our ego gets good positive strokes for "fitting in." This relatively linear paradigm works well with people who are dealing with the issues and the developmental tasks of these three centers, although there may still be "unfinished business" and unlived parts of us trailing behind.

The limitations on our collective vision which result from this Egoic/Power-bound myopia are potentially devastating to the future of humanity and the planet, and to our psychological and spiritual development. Movement to a larger view of ourselves is crucial to our survival through the 21st century. What this means developmentally is that there has to be a critical mass of people with sufficient Aloha (IV) consciousness to turn things around. The good news is that there do seem to be more and more people who, having accomplished what the culture told them would make them happy, find a growing emptiness inside and are looking for "something more" to fill that emptiness.

Ambivalence at the Transpersonal Passage: The (IV-III) Waltz

My use of "Aloha" here rather than "love" is based on the extremely loose way "love" is used (and misused) today to describe anything from addictive possessiveness to divine compassion. According to the late and much respected Hawaiian elder Nana Veary, "'Alo' means the bosom, the center of the universe. 'Ha' is the breath of God....Aloha is a feeling, a recognition of the divine. It is not just a word or greeting. When you say 'aloha' to someone, you are conveying or bestowing this feeling" (*Change We Must: My Spiritual Journey*, p. 23). A fully actualized (IV) is about the heart energy of the Divine, and seeing our common divine essence in every human being.

Imagine our world and its social institutions if this attitude became the foundation and guiding principle of our social and political actions.

In the move from the Egoic (III) to the Aloha Center (IV) "the fish leaves the water." When we approach the transition to a trans-personal world view and self-identification, which I call the "Transpersonal Passage," traditional models start to break down and we experience a fundamental metanoia. Moving through this passage, the ego must yield to Self, personal power to the capacity to serve a higher purpose, and judgmental self-righteousness to tolerance and compassion. To reach the clarity and ego-detachment necessary to function from a transpersonal base, a cycling back to finish the "unfinished business" of earlier centers becomes necessary. In our Western societies, the infamous "midlife crisis" is often an invitation to what I call the "(IV-III) Waltz": an ongoing dance in which Love and Power try to move in harmony while both struggle to lead. In moving to (IV), we yield to the greater Self, leaving the "in-law" world and entering the "out-law" realm where life is now lived from a base of love (Aloha) rather than power.

Spiritual direction might also now evoke a new relationship to God as the love we seek...

We can now grow into the ability to compassionately witness our own behavior and inner process, as well as that of others. Ideally, all spiritual directors would have attained this stage. For the first time, we can see what the ego is doing and decondition negative patterns with which we identified before. We are able to be generous toward others and take care of ourselves. A basic cognitive shift occurs, from seeing the world from an "either/or" perspective to seeing it as "both/and." Opposites can be held in the spirit of Aloha, giving each its due, even if they cannot be reconciled at the moment. We respect our own and others' traditions and beliefs as valid paths to God.

This complex and abundant center has many layers, and deepens as wholeness on all levels develops, but is likely to first manifest through a sense of community and an impulse toward service which does not arise from ego values or personal needs alone. Self-aggrandizement is no longer a primary goal. Some may join civic-minded people who form the backbone of community service all over the world. Others may extend feelings of kinship to all people and/or all of life, so that the perception of "we/they" yields to the "we" of our common humanity (and for many, to all forms of creation). At this point, we are pushing the boundaries of the "in-law" world view, but have not yet become full "out-laws."

We tend to experience the Divine here in a somewhat less personified form than Father/Mother – most often as a loving Being or Beings, or simply Love. At this center, God is Love. Spiritual expression can then evolve into the practice of compassion, arising out of a sense of connectedness and empathy with all of humanity and eventually encompassing all sentient beings. The Dalai Lama is a respected public figure who for many personifies the essence of this center, as is Mother Teresa. Most Aloha-based people live more anonymous lives. Those who have substantially actualized Aloha can be quite tough in their compassion, but underneath what we sense in them is a profound respect for the Divine in the other person.

Realizing how easily Aloha is contaminated by ego strivings and power drives, we may need to consciously re-visit the Egoic Center (III) and deal with left-over issues. Sincere generosity can easily and imperceptibly slip into self-serving expectations and subtle self-congratulation, and our power drive can easily co-opt our best inclinations toward compassionate service. The original missionaries who went to Hawaii to do good fell into this trap and ended up with most of the land and wealth of the Islands.

So many (III-IV) passages fail, tripped up by ego attachments or loss of courage, that the nature, demands, and dangers of this passage must not be underestimated. More often than not, the Self arranges a "wake-up call" in the form of a personal trauma and/or a humbling experience (losing a job or an important relationship) to nudge us into the transpersonal passage. At this point, people often perceive their problems as caused by this external event. I have not yet had anyone come into therapy saying, "I have just realized that my ego is too big and standing in the way of my psychospiritual development. Please help me shrink it." I doubt that many spiritual directors have had this experience, either. The realization that what happened to them is indeed a "wake-up call" from a higher source and that they themselves at some soul level collaborated in bringing it about comes later as they develop some of the self-witnessing capacity characteristic of (IV). If someone is still relating to God as child to parent, they are likely to still be invested in justifying themselves. The positive potential of this seemingly negative "wake-up call" can be framed as a loving parent's choice not to intervene during an unpleasant or difficult learning experience for a resistant child.

In practice, (III)-(IV) is the hardest of the transitions even though we can live (IV)'s humanistic aspects more easily. However, psychological development in (IV) without corresponding spiritual development tends to leave a person at the typical mid-life crisis point: many accomplishments but a life that feels empty of meaning and purpose even if one is engaged in community service or other worthwhile activities. The final spiritual passage through, where the ego is decisively de-throned in our psyche feels experientially, like a real death, with all the fears and inner chaos this brings up. I believe this "ego death" is somewhat like the "night of the senses" spoken of by saints and mystics, progressing through several phases and levels of experience, and marked, in some traditions, by rituals and symbols of initiation.

We may regress to (II) to avoid the tasks of (IV). How many people at midlife, feeling a vague call to something deeper or greater, have unconsciously sought in a new personal love relationship the connection with divine Love, often betraying commitments and breaking up families in the process? But if in this waltz where both are struggling to lead, the Ego manages to see that the Self knows the dance better and consents to follow, their struggle can lead to the birth of a capacity for love as Aloha, embedded in the Divine and grounded in well-developed Egoic skills that will help to implement the person's newly realized values in the world.

...."ego death" is somewhat like the "night of the senses" spoken of by saints and mystics...

Much of what we decry as deterioration in today's Western cultures, particularly in the United States, is the result of a widespread flight from the call to negotiate this passage. In the more developed Egoic societies, such as our own, there is a tragic spiritual vacuum resulting in pathological ego-centeredness and its fallout in brutal competition,

"win-at-all-cost" attitudes, violence, suicide, homicide, hopelessness, and an epidemic of addictions. Moving to Aloha would solve many of these collective problems.

Finding Your Own True Voice: The (V-II) Tango

When Aloha becomes our new "home base," we start hearing the call to the Star Center (V). Moving toward this call is like finding and following our unique "Star of Destiny" so that we can live our life as an expression of and a gift to the Divine. This movement toward Self-expression that flows from the truth of our Being (as opposed to ego-expression) is fueled by divine energy. Its goal is to manifest, in our life and in our creative work, that embodiment of spirit which we call "I" and create our unique, personal soul expression in the world, as a conscious act of devotion to the Divine. The primary characteristics of this new level of creativity are that it is not conventional, not competitive, and not based on external standards. It is creativity for its own sake, in its own form, out of its own lifestream, and may not bring social rewards during a person's lifetime because the culture has not caught up with it. Many artists and visionaries have experienced this.

Personal authenticity and a creative response to all that life presents are the fruits of Center (V). In finding our own true "Voice," we are now singing in tune with the universal chorus. Before we can really express our authentic self in this way, however, or walk our authentic spiritual path, we must re-visit and integrate what has happened in our relationships, both painful and pleasant, and all the "never was/never will be's" of that part of our life: naming them, mourning them, and letting them go. Grief is a major theme of this return (often buried under all our angers and resentments); and depression is a frequent symptom of the need for this emotional work to be done. At this point, we have to tell (at least ourselves) the truth about our life history, and to own it all in the presence of the Divine: "Yes, this, too, belongs to my life." It is also a time, though, to appreciate anew our achievements, the moments of grace and communion, and to celebrate these with gratitude.

We are also called at this time to fill in gaps, which may mean going back and developing social and relationship skills, owning and expressing our need for emotional intimacy, re-activating our parental/nurturing capacities, or lending a hand in new community activities. It means owning our embodiment and resolving any unfinished issues related to our sexuality and its expression, as well as physical and emotional sustenance issues and our dysfunctional reactions to their insufficiency or lack, such as eating disorders, irrational fears connected with money, etc. Early wounds from abuse can also come up again if they had not been dealt with earlier. There is a lot of resistance to this return in most of us, especially those who have spent a lot of time in inner work, and perhaps years in therapy, explicitly dealing with family-of-origin and relationship issues. "Been there, done that" pretty much expresses how we would like to dismiss this "re-call," but there is no way "up" but "down." This is also difficult to reconcile with the desire to focus on our spiritual development, especially if we have spent many years in spiritual practices and have had some powerful experiences.

Spiritual directors must have an awareness of the paradoxical nature of the task at hand. In the best of possible arrangements, a person caught up in the (V-II) Tango would have a therapist who provides a safe container in which to do the needed emo-

tional work as well as a spiritual director who can keep reminding them of the fact that this work is in the service of true spiritual growth as a whole person. It would be detrimental to both a person's psychological and spiritual progress for the spiritual director to collude with the directee's attempt at "spiritual bypass," which is the refusal in our hubris to deal with what we see as "lower" issues or the illusion that these issues can simply be skipped. We use "bypass" to avoid the need to re-visit "old stuff," especially painful "old stuff." Those issues then become "shadow" and often manifest unconsciously, in dysfunctional and potentially destructive ways. Denial of our shadow elements deprives us of our "bright shadow" – our unacknowledged and unlived potential which can become a source of renewal when we get stuck or stagnant. Focusing on the spiritual to the detriment of the psychological can be a powerful escape mechanism, and discernment here requires some psychological astuteness on the part of the director.

Denial of our shadow elements deprives us of our "bright shadow" – our unacknowledged and unlived potential...

The paradox is that the Star Center (V) often calls to us through mystical or paranormal experiences. Unusual or "psychic" experiences may not fit into our past notions of "reality" and may frighten some people into flight back to "in-law" reality unless we have some understanding of what they mean (and don't mean). There is some danger that these experiences and capacities may be co-opted by the Ego for its own aggrandizement if we have not made a sufficiently stable transition from Power to Aloha, and even then, vestiges of the temptation remain.

However, these experiences can serve as a powerful validation of and inspiration for the journey, as long as we realize that "regression in the service of transcendence" is still necessary for our soul to mature. It is important that a spiritual director encourage directees to look for the meaning of the experiences and gently help them mobilize the courage to go on. Once committed to the work of the descent, we can engage with a healthy ego at (III) and a dependable "Compassionate Witness" at (IV). We will discover satisfaction, pleasure, and joy in the clarity with which we can now see and understand things from the past which, at the time we were identified with that center, were too obscure for us to see or more painful or distasteful than we could bear.

Five is the center of "Seekers." Unless we have found a home in a specific spiritual tradition, this stage is likely to bring both an intensification of yearning for Divine connection, and confusion and frustration over the form of its realization. Ultimately the Divine is non-dual and all personifications are our way of relating to something beyond concepts and images, but this is not yet experiential knowledge (except perhaps for occasional "visits" to transcendent states of unity during mystical experiences). Because we cannot yet identify experientially with non-duality, there is often a longing for an "I-Thou" relationship with the Divine, which requires a divine "Other" in some form.

The call to (V) may lead many to wander through the spiritual marketplace in search of the "right" Path and the right "Other," which may surprise us because we had felt

more settled earlier. We may be attracted to spiritual forms that are grounded in human community and nature as Mother (remember the (V-II) connection). Because we had felt more spiritually settled earlier, our search maybe co-opted by the ego in the service of resistance. When this happens, no path is the "right" one because the unseen, unresolved, unintegrated shadow issues will always color our perceptions and undermine our commitment to any path.

Those in traditional religions may need time to restructure their relationship to the forms of their tradition, perhaps extending these forms to incorporate beliefs and practices from other traditions. Dogma becomes de-emphasized in favor of the living mystical core of the teachings. Whatever our chosen path, a relationship to the Transpersonal is clearly part of the Star experience. This is an optimal time to check in regularly with a spiritual director for help in both discernment and honest self-reflection. The director's task here is to avoid tangling with the person's resurging Ego (which will only provoke it) and to ally with the person's more developed Star-level consciousness so that the ego maintains its proper role as Soul's helper in outer world tasks.

This "(V-II) Tango" may take a very long time to complete, and requires the development of a will aligned with Divine Will to carry it through. With each "sweep" over past obscurations with the "broom" of Aloha and/or Star consciousness, things get a little clearer, so that from "through the glass darkly," we move toward a clearer and clearer seeing. This allows us to live and act in our lives with greater discernment, clarity, and focused energy. In this sweep, we also reactivate the "(IV-III) Waltz," so that Ego returns as a major force, but usually in more insidious forms than when it was blatantly King of the psyche. This is something for which spiritual director should look.

The Sophia Task

What we know about the Sophia Center (VI) – that of the Sage – has come from spiritual traditions which have focused on vertical development for centuries, such as Buddhism, Hinduism, and the contemplative mystical traditions within Christianity. Development along the two axes (letting the vertical stand for the spiritual and the horizontal for the psychological) may or may not be in sync. Although the Divine at this point is still related to consciously in a dualistic way, in symbolic form(s), there is full awareness of its essential non-duality. The dichotomy of body and spirit, mind and matter, sacred and profane disappears, and all polarities are reconciled into Oneness even as they still also manifest in duality. Paradox is the language of this center.

(VI) is obviously not heavily inhabited, though we may all get previews of it in dreams and mystical experiences. The ones who do live here are revered as spiritual teachers and mentors. Being here requires an arduous "descent," back to Center (I), to redeem Sophia, the divine Wisdom in matter, which Western androcentric theology has effectively excluded and which our era desperately needs. Marion Woodman puts it thus:

> *If we dare to travel down the bridge from head to body, we may find our soul in the darkness and we may find the questions which will quicken her, opening every cell as we bring her into consciousness. Body becomes embodiment, sight becomes insight. Sophia, wisdom in the body, begins to move through soul. Soul experiences herself as part of Shekinah, the light in creation, the Bride of God.*

> *Matter, instead of being a dark cave, becomes the revelation of God's beauty. The heart becomes the bridal chamber where soul that lives in time and space opens to spirit that is detached from life and death. There Bride and Bridegroom love.*
>
> — *The Ravaged Bridegroom*, p. 177.

The leftover issues in this center relate to our physical incarnation, including sickness, death, physicality, possessions, and the fact of impermanence in general, and the paradoxical emptiness and fullness of Being in particular. It means learning to "die" long before we actually die physically, learning to maintain our equanimity through all the losses and changes of life (the "little deaths"). It means honoring and fully inhabiting our mortal body even as we also live in Spirit, and overcoming our arrogant superiority toward the Earth and the feminine that we inherit from our Western patriarchal culture.

The task now becomes to recognize matter as spiritual, too, and to honor and serve Sophia as Divine Wisdom. We must learn to see Her in all that is manifest – as matter, Mater, Mother Earth, the Embodied Divine. I believe this redemption and honoring of Sophia to be the next great task of our age. In Sophia, we come to embody in ourselves a full life wisdom which integrates all our aspects – body, mind, emotions, and spirit – without egoic attachment to any of them, or even to the wisdom itself. This return encompasses all the centers and reactivates "unfinished business" at any of them, including replay of the (IV-III) Waltz and the (V-II) Tango. It focuses on the task of bringing about an inner union of all opposites: spirit and matter, masculine and feminine, up and down, inner and outer, etc.

It is often difficult to recognize people doing the (VI-I) return, because they tend to live simply and are most often engaged in tasks that do not call attention to themselves. We may in fact see external circumstances and behavior that would suggest the Survival Center (I), but the quality of being and wisdom of (VI) becomes apparent on closer observation. They emanate a quiet light and serve the world through their everyday presence, without fanfare.

Most spiritual directors (and therapists) will see few Sages in their work, but rather people dealing with phenomena of this level as "coming attractions," or who are attempting "spiritual bypass." The latter pose a special challenge because, to the extent that they have not really transcended the cathecting ego, they will have excellent defenses against the multi-level return work that is needed for authentic integration. We may also see people reporting various transpersonal experiences which to them sometimes feel alien, awesome, or scary. Discriminating among genuine mystical experiences, simple imagination, and psychotic-like or truly psychotic states is challenging because the boundaries are not clear, and the categories may be mixed. Because few therapists nor spiritual directors are trained to deal with these kinds of situations, referral to or consultation with experienced transpersonal therapists and/or authentic spiritual teachers with whom the directee feels comfortable may be wise.

Discriminating among genuine mystical experiences, simple imagination, and psychotic-like or truly psychotic states is challenging...

As an immediate response to the person sitting in front of you, however, you can be honest about the degree of your "not knowing" and your willingness nevertheless to join them in praying for guidance through this unknown territory. Meanwhile, you continue to provide a safe, accepting environment. Expertise in dreamwork is most useful in a situation like this, for dreams provide the most direct access to transpersonal inner guidance that you will have available. Unless you have this background it is best to simply listen to dreams and ask clarifying questions only, without trying to interpret. Sometimes, the mere sharing of a dream can be helpful to the dreamer. Other ways of working with imagery and symbols, such as artistic expression, may also be helpful.

Fulfillment of the Sophia Center tasks creates a synchronized energy web that connects the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual. This brings security on earth and within your body, without identification with either. Here, a person is without fear, has total trust in the Divine, loves and acts spontaneously, freely and compassionately in relationships. A person expresses inherent talents in a way that echoes the "Voice" of the Creative Source and resonates with the needs of others. We might image this person as a bright sphere of light within the universal Light, with all the centers lit up and energy moving freely across the intricate web of interconnections in a full spectrum of colors.

Moving from this pregnant fullness into Christ Consciousness, Enlightenment, Buddhahood, or simply Divine Union at (VII) happens infrequently as, for the vast majority of us, there is always something more to learn or revisit, some old or freshly created obscurations to clear away, and always an inner light beckoning us toward this ultimate "Home." About this center nothing can be said in words: "The Tao that can be told is not the eternal Tao. The name that can be named is not the eternal Name" (*Tao Te Ching*, Verse 1). Final transcendence takes us into the ultimate non-duality: the Ground of Being, the Great Mystery beyond all things, the Void encompassing all manifestations, which is inherently "neti, neti," ("not this, not that"). And yet it is everything. In *A New Vision of Reality*, Bede Griffiths states,

> *The importance of integration is often misunderstood, and it is frequently thought that, on reaching the level of non-dual awareness, everything disappears and there is simply pure identity of being...without any differentiation. But the truth is that all the lower levels of consciousness have to be taken up into the Supreme and that is what constitutes total realization, that is, realization of the total reality...When we enter...a higher, more subtle level of consciousness, ...we discover the eternal realities behind the forms. But now we can go beyond the ideas into the Godhead itself, the Ultimate, and there all is gathered together in the One. And for this One, there are no words"* — p. 55

It is All That Is; it is what we in our Essence are. Jesus put it very simply: "I and the Father are one" (Jn 10:30).

The Spiral Dance

The way we conceive of and relate to the Divine as we grow and develop into adulthood is likely to mirror our psychological pattern of object relations, especially through the first three stages. I also believe we may recapitulate these patterns in different

forms as we relate to the Divine at different centers. Some will "visit" Aloha, fewer will evolve into "living" there; fewer still will fully actualize their Star, and the Sophia Center is sparsely inhabited indeed; we have few visible Sages in today's world, and they often reveal a shadow side which speaks of their own psychological "unfinished business." The genuine ones who do live among us, doing their work quietly and unobtrusively, will probably live and die anonymously except for those beneficiaries of their light with whom they have direct contact and who recognize them.

Practically speaking, the growing number of psychospiritually maturing people at less actualized levels hold the key to the necessary shift of consciousness that will ensure our survival. Conventional psychology is of little help once the issues of the higher centers emerge, and those on the Journey need validation that, however circuitous, there are viable pathways that will lead us into that shift. The dance of the opposites – the human polarities we call "masculine" and "feminine" – is an important characteristic that permeates these centers, now pulling more toward one, now toward the other, sometimes hovering in balance. Several observations and distinctions are important here.

GENDER PATTERNS. First, gender differences and the "masculine/feminine" symbolic "energies" which describe complementary tendencies within both men and women are not equivalent. The "feminine" is *not* the same as female, nor is "masculine" male. "Masculine" energy is associated with a more active, externally focused, analytical, goal-directed, "phallic" orientation, and "feminine" with more organic, internal processes, nurturing, feeling-based human relatedness in all its forms, and wisdom.

Second, the Survival, Egoic, and Star Centers (I, III, and V) seem to lean toward the "masculine," and the Cathectic, Aloha, and Sophia (II, IV, and VI) toward the "feminine." The predominant energy alternates as we travel the pathways, and, whether due to personality and temperamental factors, gender, or social conditioning, we each tend to move more easily through some developmental centers than others. Generally, we embrace or disown gender-related tasks based on whether we perceive them as culturally appropriate for our gender or not. We often do the absolute minimum in our least favorite centers so we can move on to or stay where we feel most comfortable – which may not effectively support our growth toward wholeness.

Third, the way men and women typically travel these pathways also seems to show some predictable culturally determined differences. For many men, developing Center (I), especially in its aspects of physical strength and skill, seems to be essential to their basic sense of masculine competence. Men who don't do this may have later problems with self-esteem, which they may then try to compensate for at subsequent centers, especially (III) and (V). Women, on the other hand, may not develop adequate Survival skills, moving instead to (II), which is consistent with the nurturing, relationship-oriented role society assigns them. They will often stay there and do only those Egoic tasks which serve their Cathectic orientation. Without adequate Egoic (III) development, they may start to resonate with Aloha (IV) values, but without the self-confidence and practical skills to implement them in the world. Conversely, more men than women tend to bypass or do the minimum required at (II)

We must keep growing or, as Jung suggested, we risk becoming caricatures of ourselves.

so that they can get to (III) as fast as possible, where our culture rewards money, power, and outer-achievement. This lack will cause difficulty with Aloha (IV), because of the need to surrender power in favor of love and trust, but it may be an even greater obstruction to moving into the Star Center (V).

Fourth, a resonance occurs across all these centers so that, whenever one of them is energized, the others with the same energy (the masculine of I, III, and V; and the feminine of II, IV, and VI) also vibrate, much as playing a musical note on the piano will cause a synchronous vibration of the strings of the same note at other octaves. Additionally, the patterns of return invite deeper integration of these energies: at the feminine (IV), the return is to the masculine (III); at the masculine (V), the return is to the feminine (II); and at the feminine (VI), the return is to the masculine (I). In an integrated system any movement in any part will resonate through the whole system and all its parts.

Sometimes we just plain "chicken out" of the effort and risks of growth, because confronting shadow stuff is hard...

THE WORK OF "RETURN." The overall goal of return is psychospiritual integration and involves maintaining vertical and horizontal balance as much as possible, so that with each step we take toward the Divine, we take with us the fullest human development of which we are capable at that time. The idea is to leave as little "unfinished business" behind as possible, which will also make the inevitable return cycles less of a "clean-up operation" and more of a positive integrative experience. This process may be slow, but it is solid.

There can be no happiness in staying at a stage we have outgrown, because a part of us always remembers what we were really called to, and failed transitions can be tragic, even lethal. The depression that often accompanies such a failure in someone who has clearly heard the inner call to the next stage but refuses it (often for "sensible" reasons) can manifest across a whole range of psychopathology, have personal and career consequences, and cause "soul loss." We must keep growing or, as Jung suggested, we risk becoming caricatures of ourselves.

In guiding a person through their returns, it is important to not just focus on letting go of old conditionings but also to pay attention to the "roads not taken" and the emotional skills not fully mastered at the center with which it is connected: (IV—>III, V—>II, VI—>I). A synergy between therapy and spiritual direction would be an ideal way to support people going through this process. Bypass (the illusion that we can "skip" certain issues) is common in every return, invites shadow contamination, and increases the danger of getting stuck in a center. Avoiding the work of the Egoic Center, a person at Aloha (IV), risks turning altruistic motives toward the service of vanity and power needs, a particular trap for women. At the Star Center, we may get stuck at (II) if we yield to the temptation to choose the comfort of familiar relationships (even problematic ones) over the risks of stepping into the unknown. This is all the more so because the Star Center (V) requires good boundaries, a focused will, standing by one's own soul needs even in the face of disapproval from significant others, and the willingness to let go of the outgrown cathexes of (II).

We may become stuck for several reasons. The undertow of old emotions may entrap us – which is why psychological readiness, a well-functioning "Compassionate

Witness," and a safe container (whether therapeutic or spiritual) for the descent are so important. Sometimes we just plain "chicken out" of the effort and risks of growth, because confronting shadow stuff is hard, as is developing undeveloped skills from an earlier stage, which may be embarrassing to the Ego. Dealing with this can feel like a comedown: we thought we had outgrown all of it, and here it is again. We need more transpersonally trained therapists and spiritual directors who understand this complex and often confusing process, for their invaluable task then becomes to walk with their directees in their descent and carry the light of Star consciousness for them at times when they may lose it.

Inflation can also be common because Ego is eager to appropriate any spiritual experience to aggrandize itself. Some kind of objective mirroring is necessary to keep us in balance. It is very difficult to mirror oneself in this way, although consistent dreamwork can help, because the "Dreammaker" as inner Sage can do this if we are able to listen, and certainly does not spare our ego in the process. Dialogue with someone experienced in this work is desirable, and this kind of mirroring is, as I see it, a core task of the spiritual director.

That said, no matter how conscientiously we try to be aware of and handle everything along the way, leaving "trailers" behind is inevitable, because there is much that we cannot see until we have acquired the capacity to see it. Ultimately, we are all invited to live what is asked of us in all the centers, so that we can be whole across both our "horizontal" and "vertical" dimensions: the vertical reaches "upward" toward spirit at first assuming that it is on "high," but then recognizing that Spirit knows no "high" or "low" and is infused throughout existence, like the breath that enlivens us. This recognition leads us to circle back and embrace everything as a unity, at the center of which is the fully empowered Heart of Christ Consciousness, the highest essence of Aloha.

To grow into our fullness, to become the unique multifaceted human beings we were meant to be, and then to take that exquisite jewel back "Home" as our gift to the Divine, is our life's challenge, its problem, and its glory. To borrow from T. S. Eliot, may we all, with Divine guidance, "arrive where we started, and know the place for the first time" (*The Four Quartets*, p. 59). Aloha.

Bibliography

Eliot, T. S. *Four Quartets*. New York: Harcourt Brace & Company, 1983.

Griffiths, Bede. *A New Vision of Reality*. Springfield, IL: Templegate, 1989.

Rinpoche, Patrul. *The Heart Treasure of the Enlightened Ones*. Introduction by Dilgo Khyentse. Boston: Shambhala, 1992.

Maslow, Abraham. *Toward a Psychology of Being*. Princeton: Van Nostrand, 1962.

Mitchell, S. (trans.) *TaoTe Ching*. New York: Harper & Row, 1988.

Veary, Nana. *Change We Must: My Spiritual Journey*. Honolulu: Water Margin Press, 1989.

Woodman, Marion. *The Ravaged Bridegroom*. Toronto: Inner City Books, 1989.

© 2004

PATHWAYS OF THE SOUL: A Helical Model of Psychospiritual Development

by Hillevi Ruumet

Addendum to "Ambivalence at the Transpersonal Passage: The (IV-III) Waltz"

(for educational use only by the Institute of Transpersonal Psychology)

The perennial human search for "more" and "deeper" is, at its core, driven by our spiritual Essence (our Buddha nature, in the Buddhist tradition). We might think of it as a sort of spiritual homing instinct. Somewhere inside us we feel connected to the greater stream of life that flows through us, but as long as we are confined to identifying with only the "me and mine"—or the collectively extended ego of "us and ours," we remain separate and psychologically encapsulated. In a broader context, we are seeing such an encapsulation process in our own country today in the grossly oversimplified identification of ourselves as American, as an "us" vs. the "they" out to get us, or more locally, as "red states" and "blue states,." Is this supposed to describe this incredibly diverse nation? Even in cases where we have awakened to a broader kinship with those different from us, as long as we are not awake to the true nature of this drive toward "more" and "deeper," it works through the ego and is easily co-opted by the ego, even in its positive forms. This, too, is evident in the broader social canvas we are a part of.

It is interesting that the ego itself plays a crucial role in our movement between Center III and Center IV. Without its raw energy in quest of "more," we might have never embarked on a psycho-spiritual journey in the first place, nor had the energy to arrive where we are now. This does give credence to the well-known axiom in transpersonal psychology that you have to become somebody before you can be nobody, that is, you have to have a developed ego to surrender to something greater than the ego. Though it doesn't mean that you have to be a big success, a big "somebody" in the outer world, you have to have experienced enough hunger for "more" and enough experiences of "mores" that did not quench the thirst to realize that you have to look elsewhere for what you really seek. The search is still for personal gratification, but the span of the search has widened, both inwardly and outwardly, and may now begin to expand toward transpersonal realms.

The time of life we get to this point—if we ever do—varies greatly, which is perhaps why the midlife crisis has been placed anywhere from the 30s through the 50s. Some of us seem to be born with a capacity to see the limits of ego gratification sooner than others, or to learn our lessons through fewer disappointments. Being a fast learner will bring us to the trans-egoic threshold sooner, but it does not necessarily shorten the path itself. Nor does it necessarily make spiritual (or, for that matter, psychological) development easier. What it may in fact do is make the obstacles more subtle, and leave openings for the ego to return to power that are more devious and therefore harder to notice. So a "gift" for transcendence of this kind can be a mixed blessing if we do not have solidly developed foundational centers (I, II, and III).

When we consider the total human family, few get to the trans-egoic threshold in any conscious way. Even fewer actually negotiate the transition from the love of power (Center III) to the power of Love (a well developed Center IV). This passage is a very significant turning point in our psycho-spiritual development when we get there, but it is not yet the "Transpersonal Gate" as suggested in my original article, only the first recognition and aspiration in that direction. A peek through the gate at the garden beyond, if you will. The fish jumping out of the water and realizing there is water, *and* there is something more that water is only a part of.

What does happen is that we open to a whole new possibility in recognizing that there are limits to our ability to control not just others but ourselves, and that what lies beyond the separate self is so much

more and wiser than our precious "I". So there is an aspiration toward personal and often also spiritual growth: we aspire to develop aloha, we aspire toward unity and love of our fellow beings, we aspire to personal goodness. But, except in rare and dramatic cases of sudden full-on spiritual awakening, this is still basically grounded in the ego's wish for the "I" to become better. So this can more accurately be seen as an aspirational entry into the Aloha center, encompassing more than simply an "I, me, mine" value system. It is humanistic, but not yet transpersonal. That will require the ego's acceptance of its own dethronement, as it puts itself in the service of the greater Self, however timidly and conditionally at first.

A friend heavily engaged in the Descent Tango told me recently that she feels she could not have authentically done this Power/Love dance to any extent had she not been swept into the Descent Tango and the joys and shocks of wading through old emotional "stuff" at a deeper level than she had ever imagined before. She also feels that the crucial element in the very deep work she has done recently was finding firm inner spiritual ground to stand on during the psychic earthquakes—and a guide to support her through the descent process. I mention this because it might help you understand your own weavings through this "map," and to illustrate that the model is not fixed in any sense and therefore cannot be used as a method or program, only a rough outline.

So where is the "Transpersonal Gate"? Where does the "Transpersonal Passage" end? I would prefer to not use these terms any longer. The first implies a sudden shift—now you are on this side and now on that. Such sudden shifts in our perception of ourselves and reality can happen, even to the point of genuine enlightenment, but this is very, very rare, and has nothing to do with walking through a gate. The second is a better term perhaps, implying a process over time, but still implies a definite passage and an exit from that passage to—what? Another non-existent *thing* or *place*? The living process is the point, and these terms imply some *thing* out there. That whole notion can lead us astray. As above, I am now trying out the term "trans-egoic threshold" for when we stretch beyond egoically-based in-law values toward something more encompassing and inclusive, and will wait to see how well it wears over time.

What does happen, though, probably somewhere in the liminal spaces of actualizing the Star Center and finding ourselves embroiled in the Sophia Task, is that our view of ourselves and reality does undergo a radical change, and does become transpersonal. A little like the butterfly which, if you stop chasing it, comes and sits gently on your shoulder and you simply recognize it. No bells and whistles. Quite ordinary. Completely natural as far as the Self is concerned. But how extraordinary on the personal level when it happens!

* * *

I hope this addendum to the article has clarified more than it has confused you. I felt a need to amplify the above points because the article was somewhat misleading on these, through nobody's fault. It had to be cut for publication to half its original length, and therefore reads in a choppy way in many places, using as few words as possible and often attempting to say in a sentence what should have taken a paragraph. The editor of *Presence* at that time did her very best to cut words without cutting meaning, as did I, but this is a fairly complex model, and needs more explanation than was possible within the given editorial limitations. As it was, I was told it was the longest article they had published up to that time.

Feel free to send me comments if you like. I am working on a book manuscript, and your reactions and questions could guide me to do a better job.