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One's first step in wisdom
is to question everything --
and one's last
is to come to terms with everything."

-- Georg Christoph Lichtenberg, 1742-1799

German physicist, philosopher

Editor's Musings

(Version for lay readers)

DEVELOPING FAITH IN THE TRANSCENDENT: Approaches and Stages of Development*

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Abstract

Most of us acquire our faith in the transcendent through our family traditions and through religious teachings. This faith helps us to find our way through life, providing a code of personal and community conduct. Our faith in the rightness of these teachings creates community through common beliefs. These generate collective traditions, with ritual acknowledgments of major life events, such as births, marriages and deaths. Our faith invites us and binds us to communal celebration of seasons and holy days, and to a higher authority for moral and ethical behaviors. It offers us rituals and practices for prayer and for healing of personal, interpersonal, and societal ills.

While faith can help us to develop and deepen our sense of spirituality, it may also hinder us from finding our own, personal beliefs and spirituality. At its worst, it may also lead to conflicts between people of differing faiths. Therefore, understanding how faith develops is of vital importance at this time when there are major conflicts between peoples of differing faiths in various geographic, cultural and religious communities – conflicts that threaten the continuation and perhaps even the survival of life as we know it on this planet.

Faith is based in logical truths and faith is based in the heart – known directly rather than deduced through reason. Our personal and collective challenge is to seek the healing balance between the two ways of experiencing and practicing our faith.

How do we develop our faith? For many, this is simply an automatic part of growing up, one which we accept without question – just like we accept that we learn to crawl, to walk and to speak. For others, it is process of deliberate study, both intellectual and experiential.

Numerous components of can be identified within the broad contexts of faith:

A. There are three broad approaches for developing faith:

1. Accepting what we are told
2. Logical reasoning
3. Intuitive, experiential knowing

B. James Fowler identifies six stages in developing faith:

1. Basic faith (Fowler: “Intuitive-Projective Faith”)
2. Mythic-Literal Faith
3. Faith based on popular idols (Fowler: “Synthetic-Conventional Faith”)
4. Faith by personal choice (Fowler: “Individuative-Reflective Faith”)
5. Faith through inner knowing (Fowler: “Conjunctive Faith”)
6. Faith anchored in transcendent awareness (Fowler: Universalizing Faith)

C. Personality types and stages of faith

D. Societal stages of awareness parallel the stages of faith

Each approach and stage has its advantages and drawbacks. None can be proven as valid beyond question without prior assumptions or. Each of these five stages can be experienced through any or all of the three broad approaches to experiencing faith. Each will be colored by our personality styles.

Our challenge, both personal and collective, is to choose wisely between these alternatives. Our choices will certainly influence, and may even be crucial in determining the future of life on this planet.

Terminology is a challenge in discussing spiritual issues. The IJHC is grateful to Rev. Cay Randall May, PhD, for providing many of the elements in the glossary appended at the end of this editorial.

A. There are three broad approaches to faith in our perception of the transcendent.

1. Accepting what we are told

Many of us grow up in families where we are taught spiritual beliefs. These may be presented as absolute and unquestionable truths, as revelations from God through His prophets and

luminaries (often from many centuries ago, codified in holy traditions and writings, and reinterpreted by religious authorities through the ages), or as cultural traditions that enrich our existence and provide moral and ethical codes of conduct for our lives. I call these *codified, traditional, revealed religious beliefs*.

Many will read the above paragraph without pause or reflection. Our language tends to bind us to certain articles of faith, such as the use of masculine pronouns to identify the Divine presence. God as a masculine energy is associated with logic, structures and confining boundaries. On the one hand this helps us to abide by society's rules, with a sense of the disciplining father keeping us in line. On the other hand, creativity, tolerance and love are diminished through our investment in *doing* rather than *being*.

When we accept these beliefs as absolute truths, any questioning of these traditions becomes heretical. We are discouraged from even considering the possibility of questioning these truths.

Such unconditional acceptance of social "truths" becomes a "cultural hypnosis". We are so immersed in these worldviews that they appear to many to represent an absolute picture of reality, "the way it is" and/or "the way it is supposed to be."

Where codified revealed beliefs are exclusive, we are bound to a system that is defensive. Our beliefs are right, and therefore all other beliefs are wrong. It is our mission and privilege to bring our revealed light to the darkness of a world in which others have not seen THE light. We may do this by our living example, though more commonly we preach and teach the codified truths in our efforts to convert non-believers.

There is a wide spectrum of approaches for relating to non-believers, both within and between various religious communities. In Christian tradition, proselytizing and actively seeking to convert non-believers is a highly valued mission. Where Church and State are separated, members of other religions are tolerated and are extended equal rights under the law. In Muslim tradition (in many predominantly Muslim countries), non-believers are infidels, and they are not equal under the law to believers. Westernized Muslims are more tolerant of other religions. In Jewish tradition, proselytizing is not practiced, because being Jewish is considered a privilege of the Chosen People. Traditionally, anyone wanting to convert should be discouraged from doing so. In Hindu and other polytheistic religions, beliefs in many gods promote tolerance for other religions. Buddhists teach practices that help to overcome self-defeating beliefs and habits, recommending that personal experience and exploration should be the basis for faith.

Life is the only game in which the object of the game is to learn the rules.

- Ashleigh Brilliant

Advantage of accepting what we are told

Holding to unshakable religious beliefs can be a comfort to the believer. Life is simple and straightforward. Right is right and wrong is wrong. The world is the way it is because it was created thus by God in His omniscient wisdom. Our course in life is clear because there is no question about how it is all meant to be. If we live by the letter of the law, we will be rewarded by God, ultimately with an afterlife that is blissful.

Within some religious systems, if we have faith in our health, we expect to remain healthy and will be able to recover from all illness. Faith in our religious leaders and in prayer workers within our religious frameworks empowers them with the ability to extend healing for our ailments and absolution for our sins. This faith that we have in their power may facilitate our self-healing responses to their treatments.

Disadvantages of accepting what we are told

If we stray from the prescribed paths of our religious teachings, we can anticipate Divine retribution, up to and including eternal damnation in Hell. Life may become focused on avoiding sins and penalties rather than on the good deeds and healings we can bring into the world. Fear of Hell or other punishments after death can be powerful motivation for behavior.

Particularly relevant to the IJHC, illness may be interpreted as a lack of faith or the result of negative thinking – adding spiritual guilt to our suffering rather than providing hope, nurturance and relief.

From the perspective of logical reasoning, accepting what we are told appears to be unscientific. There is no room here to explore whether the Word as given by God, explained and interpreted by His ministers and priests, passes any tests of reason or explorations through methods of objective research outside of the canon of religious laws and traditions.

God gave us a curiosity to understand his creation. I don't think we need to worry that we will move into an exploration that will embarrass him.

– Francis Collins, Geneticist (p. 38)

From the perspective of intuitive faith, accepting what we are told is based on the original inspired intuitive knowing of luminaries who lived long ago. However, we now rely on various interpretations and reinterpretations of their words over many centuries. This approach allows no room for personal intuitive awarenesses, particularly when these might deviate from or even contradict the established interpretations of teachings.

Accepting what we are told is based on faith in the intuitive perceptions of luminary people many centuries ago, and in the interpretations of their inspirations as they are taught by religious authorities today.

2. Logical reasoning

Science tells us that there are fundamental laws in nature that determine how the physical world functions (including our bodies). With methodical, step-by-step research, we are discovering how the particles and energies of the universe behave. Ultimately, we are told we will at least *comprehend* everything there is to know about the visible, physical universe. Based on this knowledge, we will probably be able to control our existence to an ever-enhanced degree through manipulations of our environment and our physical world. Science has become the religion of much of the Western world.

Science has focused largely on the physical world and on developing mastery over the material aspects of nature. Darwinian selection has been demonstrated as a mechanism for evolution and is assumed by mainstream science to be the only natural mechanism for development of species – now supplemented by genetic engineering.

When the spirit in which you live is more important than the results of your living, you are spiritual. When the results are more important than the how you go about getting them,

you are material.

– W. Starcke

Aspects of the world that do not lend themselves to assessments by means of our five senses, nor to measurement through scientific instruments used to analyze the physical world are presumed to be non-existent – products of our wishful thinking or imagination. (Our language prejudices us in this regard, with many labeling these aspects of life as *immaterial* or as non-sense.)

There is no way to prove – as one would measure something in the physical world to prove its existence and nature – that God exists or that intuitive spiritual awarenesses are valid perceptions of any aspect of reality. Faith in a transcendent reality is therefore discounted by mainstream science – by analyses and logic that require a physical basis to reality and deny any validity to that which is unmeasurable and unquantifiable.

Others argue through logic that the universe as we know it is so harmonious and conducive to the development of life on this planet that it is impossible life could have developed merely by chance. *Intelligent design* is suggested as an underlying organizing principle in creation.

Here are just a few of the many examples of apparent intelligent design:

- Our planet maintains constant ranges of temperature and gasses in the atmosphere - precisely those that are required to sustain life. If these varied by even a small margin from their current values, life as we know it could not be maintained (Sahtouris and Lovelock).
- To propose that the chemicals which comprise our enormously complex genes, cell, organs and organisms could have organized themselves by random sorting into even the simplest first forms of life is stretching our credulity. This would be like suggesting that if you shook up the contents of a junk yard sufficiently in a giant container, they could at some point come together to create a printing press or an x-ray machine.

The intervention of a Supreme Intelligence seems to be a logical deduction to explain how life was created.

To pursue science is not to disparage the things of the spirit. In fact, to pursue science rightly is to furnish the framework on which the spirit may rise.

– Vannevar Bush

From the vantage of totally accepting what we are told, intelligent design is both obvious and its scientific proof unnecessary. In fact, the very seeking of scientific proof may be viewed as a questioning of God's omnipotence. If we hold to our faith in what we are told in our religious teachings, there is no reason to seek proof of God's hand in the creation of the world.

*Our scientific power has outrun our spiritual power.
We have guided missiles and misguided men.*

– Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

From the point of view of intuitive awareness, logic ignores the most basic, real perceptions of reality. By insisting that faith must be based on measurable data, we invalidate *the immediate perceptions* that are a true knowing of its essence – not simply observations *about* its nature, from which logical theories about its nature are hypothesized.

Science does not have appropriate tools for the dissection of the spirit. How sad it would be, I thought, if we humans ultimately were to lose all sense of mystery, all sense of awe, if our left brains were utterly to dominate the right so that logic and reason triumphed over intuition and alienated us absolutely from our innermost being, from our heart, from our souls.

– Jane Goodall and Phillip Berman

Science teaches us to see in order to believe.

Spirit says believe and you will see. . .

– Bernard and Barbara Siegel (p210)

Advantages of logical reasoning as a basis for faith

Logic suggests that it is possible to explore the universe and to understand it. Science has made our lives much more predictable, physically healthier, safer from the vicissitudes of nature, and has introduced many conveniences to make life more enjoyable and stimulating. There is reason to believe that this process can unfold further, with ever more advances that will enhance our lives. We are promised that further advances will improve our health as well.

Logic has rules for determining the validity of our observations. It is reassuring to know that when we examine our universe in carefully specified ways, our measurements and deductions are likely to have accurate predictive results. This appears to give them a stamp of truth – the scientific approach of hypothesis building.

Disadvantages of logical reasoning as a basis for faith

There remain questions about life that seem to elude scientific explanation. While intelligent design is a plausible explanation for the development of life, there is no way to prove the existence of the hand of God crafting the inordinate complexity of the world through Divine logic. Science and spirituality are truly different categories and one cannot use the same tools of examination in both categories.

Science deals with the five senses. Spirituality is beyond the five senses

– Sathya Sai Baba.

In fact, there is no logical way to prove anything, other than that a system of reasoning is internally coherent and produces consistent results when we perform certain manipulations within that system's rules. The limitation of logical reasoning lies in the need to base logic on primary assumptions. There is no way to prove that primary assumptions are valid as explanations for how the universe works. Time and again we have had advances in science that completely disproved earlier basic assumptions which had been held to be articles of faith about the nature of the world. The complexities of quantum physics, which are completely counter-intuitive to the world of Newtonian physics, are known examples of such transcendences over earlier firmly-held faith.

Logical reasoning, then, is based on faith in the validity of our current assumptions about the world.

Going to a meta-level, we find issues of confidence in our perceptions, or of faith in the validity of our faith. More on this at the end of the next option in developing faith.

3. Intuitive, experiential, gnostic knowing

Faith, for me, is based on my experience. I have a lot of faith that the sun will come up, that my car will start, that it will snow again one of these days. And I have a lot of faith that I will experience the beauty of the divine. It is simply there and I know it. Faith comes into play when I have forgotten and have become lost in some sort of fear and confusion. Then faith is crucial and for me it is simply remembering. In the memory I become confident. I think of the divine and it appears. I can feel it. Just the thought does that. I am miraculously suggestible. But there is a huge laboratory of life all around me, giving me wide ranges of experiences, things to deal with, things that knock me out of my spiritual awareness, and things that pull me back into it. Faith, confidence, memory, each is the same in a sense as they lead me back into awareness of the divine
 – John MacEnulty (2002)

Inner knowing

We may have an inner sense of knowing many things about our world. There are several varieties of inner knowing.

This may be a vague but definite felt perception of rightness and wrongness, of harmony and disharmony, of good and evil in our own thoughts, perceptions and behaviors, as well as in those of others. Examined through the lens of logic, this could be explained as our pattern perception of whether things are as we have learned to expect they should be – whether they fit the model that is familiar or that we believe is “right,” “just” and “good.” We may have telepathic or clairsentient perceptions of the world, which are similar to sensory perceptions but do not rely on the five ordinary senses of sight, sound, smell, taste or touch. They are direct awarenesses of other people, animals or inanimate objects.

Faith is the bird that feels the light when the dawn is still dark.
 – Rabindranath Tagore

This inner knowing may be more clear and specific, but difficult to convey in words. Those who experience transcendent inner knowings are clear that they are beyond linear reason. They may be perceived as a direct knowing, a *gnosis* of being a part of something more than ourselves. This is a sense of a higher consciousness within as well as beyond our selves. This may be a vague sense or a rock-solid inner knowing of the presence of a higher or Divine presence, palpably perceptible though difficult to describe in linear concepts and words. Many say “Please God...!” and “Thank you, Lord!” - with an inner knowing that there is some force, being, or intelligence there, a consciousness that is aware of and responsive to our communications. The inner experience of the validity of the love of God feels more real than any external reality. Such perceptions may occur spontaneously through communing with nature or in peak sports experiences, as well as during prayer or meditation, and in near-death experiences, angelic encounters, and pre-death experiences – as well as in ordinary, everyday existence in which we are aware of being a part of something greater than ourselves.

Sensitives and healers who have explored these realms distinguish between several categories of this sort of inner knowing. My own impression is that one appears based on psychic perceptions of telepathy and clairsentience, a scanning of the available information; another is a deeper tuning in to transpersonal dimensions; and a third is channeled information – from spirits, angels, and other, higher beings.

Some would classify the flash of intuitive, inventive, *eureka* inspirations – the leaps of logic and perception that scientists, inventors and artists describe – as a separate category. My impression is that they are a combination of all of the above, often built upon considerable

foundations of hard work in their fields of endeavor over many months and years. They may, however, arrive in the consciousness of the perceiver in an instantaneous flash, often perceived as being like a bolt of inspirational lightning. Mozart, for instance, described such lightning bolts – in which he perceived entire musical compositions in an instant, and then spent long hours transcribing them, note for note, as they had arrived in their entirety in the initial flash.

Religions of the East and of traditional societies around the world encourage intuitive knowing as a way of reaching not only a state of awareness of transcendent reality, but of becoming aware of one's own unity with that reality.

Highly developed intuitives report that they regularly communicate with spirits of those who have passed over from their sojourn on earth. They channel messages from spirits to the living, which provides another source of confirmation for beliefs in the Transcendent.

Intuitive perceptions of the transcendent have generally been classed by researchers as a psychic experience, an expansion of consciousness into transpersonal dimensions.

Subjectively, intuition can be experienced through the mind and through the heart; through images, body sensations and emotions. It is usually the feeling component that conveys a sense of unquestionable truth about the transcendent experience.

I make a distinction between spirituality and religion. Religion is for people who are afraid of going to hell; spirituality is for people who have been there.

– Timothy J. Mordaunt

From the vantage of accepting what we are told (within Western religions), intuition is a claim to abilities that are classically attributed to Christ, the apostles, prophets and saints. Often, intuitive awareness and explorations in psychic and spiritual dimensions are not encouraged. There is no certainty that intuitive perceptions come from a higher source. The Devil may plant ideas in people's minds, so we are better off relying on the tried and true teachings of scriptures and religious authorities.

This is not to say that faith in religious contexts is devoid of immediate perceptions of immanent realities.

Faith, then, is like the soul of an experience. It is an inner acknowledgement of the relationship between God and man. Religion, on the other hand, is like the body. It is an outer expression of that inner acknowledgement.

– John Powell (p. 140)

Outsiders to religious groups may suggest that intuitive perceptions are discouraged for another reason: they may lead the flock to question the validity of scriptures and the currently accepted doctrinal teachings and their interpretations by religious authorities.

Logic suggests that intuitive perception may be no more than a projection of our internalized beliefs as taught by religion or generated by our imagination. It is essentially a form of self-delusion, or perhaps the result of self-stimulation of parts of the brain that have been found to be more active during deep meditative states.

Alternatively, if our faith allows for our awareness of transpersonal dimensions, important questions to consider here include whether the subjectively perceived information is truly

transpersonal or whether it is delusional. While relevant and crucially important, this is beyond the scope of the present discussion.

Combinations of modes for experiencing spirituality

While we discuss these approaches to faith separately, they are often intermingled and intertwined in our minds and hearts.

I think my faith adds to the experience of being a scientist in the way that discovering something has more meaning, sort of glimpsing the mind of God.

– Francis Collins, Geneticist

When a faithful thinker, resolute to detach every object from personal relations and see it in the light of thought, shall, at the same time, kindle science with the fire of the holiest affections, then will God go forth anew into the creation.

– Ralph Waldo Emerson

Religions have structured and formalized societies' approaches to spiritual learning and practice. On the one side, this provides a way for people to acquire learning and practices that engage them with the spiritual. Spiritual teachings, gathered through the ages, are available to young and old, usually presented for acceptance as Gospel. Formalized prayer, along with other spiritual rites and rituals provide avenues for experiencing a connection with the transcendent, through personal experiences. Rites and rituals formalize and solemnize religious expression, bringing people together for group worship that can affirm religious affiliation while enhancing personal spiritual awareness. On the other side, religions (particularly when monotheistic) tend to be exclusive. To a great extent, like secular organizations, religious bodies take on a life of their own, seeking to grow and perpetuate themselves. They often discourage individuals from personal explorations that might lead them away from the fold of accepted beliefs. They discourage logical questioning of the basic tenets of the religion. They require a faith in their teachings and in the integrity of their teachers.

Experiential explorations of intuitive knowing are growing in Western society. Substantial numbers are drawn to lectures, workshops, courses, and degree programs in spiritual awareness and healing. Such teachings, in the form of shamanism (Krippner and Welch 1992) and divination (von Franz 1980), have been pursued throughout recorded history. Today, such courses include uncounted variations on the themes of transpersonal development, spiritual awareness and healing.

No matter how we experience our spirituality, it is evident that we have to have faith in our beliefs and experiences. So, how do we develop our faith?

B. Stages of development of faith

Specific stages of life or specific stages of spiritual conceptualization may account for part of the prevalent differences in beliefs and views on spiritual awarenesses. Successive stages of cognitive development, each with their increasing degrees of abstracting abilities, are well known to students of cognitive (Piaget), emotional/social (Erikson) and moral (Kohlberg) development. It may be that there are successive stages of development of inner awarenesses, or of learning to relate to them.

James Fowler describes six stages in the development of *faith*. He has validated these stages through research based on numerous interviews, using a standard series of questions that are extended to open-ended questions. The discussion below is based on Fowler's analysis of these stages. (Quotes are from Fowler unless otherwise stated.)

Fowler restricts himself to a definition of faith as *belief in the transcendent*. I speculatively add some observations, extending Fowler's discussion to consider how faith may develop when it includes *the experiences of transcendent worlds as gnostic realities* – to which we have access through inner, intuitive perceptions and experiences such as the out-of-body, near-death, pre-death experiences, spiritual healing, etc. (discussed in detail in Benor, in press). This is faith based on personal awareness and mystical experiences, rather than just faith in religious teachings. Within religious traditions this may be described as a *calling*.

If God did not exist, it would be necessary to invent him.
– Voltaire

Stage 1. Basic faith (Fowler's "Intuitive-Projective Faith")

Generally found in children between the ages of 2-6 years. Children at these ages are still developing their awarenesses of themselves and their relationships to the outside world. Fantasy and inner world perceptions may not be differentiated from perceptions of the outer world. In this stage the parents and other teachers introduce cultural explanations for ultimate questions about existence. Children parrot the views they have learned but have little operational sense of their meanings.

Observations

Fowler does not point this out, but it is commonly accepted that doctrinal templates are most readily implanted before the age of seven. Many religions state: "Give me the child from 4-8 years of age and he or she will be mine thereafter. "

In modern society, some parents raise their children without religious indoctrinations, with the intention of allowing them to choose their religious affiliations when they grow up. Adults from such backgrounds often end up seeking religious experiences intellectually, having difficulty in connecting with an emotionally satisfying affiliation to a faith. Those who persist in their searches may come into a richness unknown to them within their families of origin, satisfying inner needs that appear instinctive.

Young children may have direct perceptions of energies surrounding the body. (Peterson found this in 20 percent of children he questioned.) They may also perceive spirits and other-world entities that appear to be aspects of a reality outside their imaginations. Children who have near-death experiences are transformed by these. Children may also be taught to perceive bioenergies with their hands or eyes. Adults have varying tolerance for children claiming to perceive aspects of the world that most adults cannot perceive or explain, and that the adults may even fear. In turn, this can be confusing and distressing to the children, whose perceptions are denied and dismissed. Children's reports of imaginary playmates and fantasy worlds may further confuse the children and the adults interacting with them. These playmates may be perceptions of spirit entities and dimensions beyond the physical – but might alternatively be vivid projections of the children's imaginations.

A few children spontaneously report memories of previous lives, including a select few who recall languages they never learned in their current lives.

Some children will quietly maintain their awarenesses of other worlds and other lives but learn not to speak about them. These children are extremely grateful when they find adults who are accepting and understanding. Others are so frustrated at adults' denials of their perceptions that they end up denying them to themselves, repressing these awarenesses and often forgetting they even had them. Such latent awarenesses may remain simply as 'intuitive' impressions or may manifest in dreams. Sometimes, in the maturity and greater self-confidence of their adult years, they will again remember or perceive these awarenesses afresh.

A belief may be larger than a fact.

– Vannevar Bush

Stage 2. Mythic-Literal Faith

Transition to this stage is brought about by the development of concrete operational thinking, whereby children stabilize their perceptions and conceptualizations of the physical and social worlds and learn to distinguish these from their internal worlds of fantasy. A well-known milestone of this sort is children's relinquishing of the fantasy that they will marry mommy or daddy when they grow up, shifting to the understanding that they will marry someone *like* mommy or daddy.

Children in these latency years of seven to puberty learn the beliefs, stories, observances, moral rules and attitudes of their society. These are taken very literally, with no abstractions *about* what they are taught. Moral behavior tends to be interpreted concretely, with rewards and retributions anticipated in the forms of “going to heaven if one behaves well,” “an eye for an eye,” and other such precepts.

Many people remain comfortable with literal levels of explanations and with reliance on scriptural and other religious authorities to instruct and guide their faith and do not move to other levels of faith.

Going beyond Fowler's discussion, this level offers a richness of tradition and draws from cultural wisdom that extends through many centuries. The teachings of Yahweh, Christ, Allah, Buddha and other religious luminaries, enriched by the teachings of disciples through the ages can offer guidance and inspiration for a moral and spiritual life. This can be a comfortable stage for a lifetime of spiritual development.

Observations

In Western society the processes of socialization into school – with the expectations of parents, peers and teachers that fantasy worlds will be relinquished as one learns about the material, “real” world – provide strong discouragements to children against trusting their perceptions of inner, intuitive awarenesses. For example, the numbers of children reporting that they see “the colors around people” and other such phenomena rapidly diminish with increasing age. Children who have personally “seen the light” in near-death experiences may learn to mute their sharing of these deeply meaningful and transformative awarenesses when family, peers and teachers call them weird.

It is sad that Western educational systems are systematically and rigidly designed to emphasize the linear, rational, reductionist (left brain hemisphere) aspects of cognition and to minimize the intuitive, feeling, and creative (right brain) inner worlds. Frequent injunctions like “stop daydreaming” are potently effective. In adult life, many seek workshops on spiritual

awareness and healing, psychic development courses, imagery, and other avenues to re-awaken and restore these enriching aspects of being, but not everyone succeeds in this.

A man should use that spiritual heritage which he has received from the wise and holy people of the past, but he should test everything with his intellect, accepting certain things and rejecting others.

– Leo Tolstoy (1997)

Stage 3. Faith based on popular idols (Fowler: Synthetic-Conventional Faith)

Transition to this stage is stimulated by expanding horizons that extend beyond the family. There is also a cognitive development in the teen years that enables people to reason more abstractly. Contradictions become evident between explanations for some of the deeper questions in life. There may be disillusionment with previously accepted literal explanations that are contradicted by scientific evidence or by explanations in other cultures that may appear equally valid. Faith must help to integrate one's diverse spheres of interaction with family, peers, school, employment, the media and religion.

Teens are strongly oriented to peer opinions and values, focused and expressed through individuals of their personal acquaintance, of culturally valued traditional leaders or of personalities of media-mythic proportions. Faith is perceived in relationship to these individuals rather than as an abstract value system.

Observations

Teens are often faced with conflicting values of home and of society at large. This is a test of faith, a decision point for remaining loyal to family teachings or relying on their own judgment.

People with spiritual or psychic awarenesses often have great difficulties during this stage, as they find themselves alienated from conventional "crowd mentality." They may come to question their inner perceptions of intuitively known realities under pressures to conform to the usual adolescent peer culture. On the other hand, rebellions in their various forms may reinforce some teens in asserting their rights to maintain their own views of reality. This could occur when they are supported by others who may use such counter-cultural vehicles as adventures into psychedelic use or the occult in their explorations of growth into greater independence.

Even when strong intuitive gifts and spiritual awarenesses are present, some people dismiss these as fantasies, or, worse, question their own sanity. The linear explanations that are stressed in Western thought are so powerfully reinforced in our educational system that they may be difficult to resist. Some completely repress their intuitive sides. Others retreat into reasoned agnostic positions that do not alienate them from their family and friends, and provide a measure of inner peace in the face of conflicts between their own perceptions and what most of their world tells them they ought to perceive or not perceive.

I do not pretend to know where many ignorant men are sure – that is all that agnosticism means.

– Clarence Darrow

More frequently, however, those open to awareness of other realities – when they are unwilling or unable to rationalize them away – find themselves isolated and lonesome. They have to keep their intuitive awarenesses strictly to themselves in order to avoid ostracism or even

persecution. On the positive side – sensitive people develop a reliance upon their inner knowing. On the negative side – they may question their abilities or even their sanity and dampen or even shut down their sensitivities. They may also miss the opportunities for developing social skills or peer reflection that could help them sort out the many questions that are raised through awarenesses of other dimensions. They also miss opportunities to discover the wonderful diversity in the ways spirit can manifest through different individuals and cultural traditions. In later years this can lead some individuals to intolerance for others' opinions and practices relating to psi and healing. In my experience, it is not rare to have psychics and healers claiming that their particular perceptions, inner guidance or cosmologies are THE best or the only correct ones.

The easy confidence with which I know another man's religion is folly teaches me to suspect that my own is also.

– Mark Twain

Stage 4. Faith by personal choice (Fowler: Individuative-Reflective Faith)

"In this shift a person begins "to take seriously the burden of responsibility for his or her own commitments, lifestyle, beliefs and attitudes. " (p182)

Movement into this stage in late adolescence or at some point in adulthood is often stimulated by contradictions between authorities or by shifts in practices or policies that were previously construed as sacred and immutable. Shifts may be stimulated through encountering new belief systems as one enters different educational, work or geographic environments. Leaving home may bring about profound reassessments about values and practices, as people assume personal responsibility for their own decisions. Stimuli to shift into this stage may come when ". . . the person must face certain unavoidable tensions: individuality versus being defined by a group or group membership; subjectivity and the power of one's strongly felt but unexamined feelings versus objectivity and the requirement of critical reflection; self-fulfillment or self-actualization as a primary concern versus service to and being for others; the question of being committed to the relative versus struggle with the possibility of an absolute.

The faith that stands on authority is not faith.

– Ralph Waldo Emerson

This stage represents a substantial shift – from defining our roles through our relationships to others, to defining ourselves through a *world view*. A "*capacity for critical reflection on identity (self) and outlook (ideology)*" (p182) is developed. A more individualized, personal system is synthesized. At this stage the worldview is cognitive and critical and may tend to be exclusive and intolerant of contradictory views.

There is a strong craving for permanence, for certainty in a chaotic world, and many people prefer to look for it within a mathematical or scientific rather than a religious context. They are, perhaps, not aware that underlying both mathematics and religion there must be a foundation of faith which the individual must himself supply. "

– Mathematicians Philip Davis and Reuben Hersh

Observations

People gifted with parapsychological abilities (including healing) may focus positively upon

their powers at this stage, applying and exploring the personal benefits of their intuitive gifts, as well as the benefits that may be offered to others – as in psychic counseling and healing (Karagulla). On the negative side, some become inflated with their gifts, seeking personal aggrandizement through monetary gain and public recognition. Healers may seek to satisfy their need for adulation by pushing healees to be healed rather than inviting them to change by their choice, at a pace that is comfortable and in harmony with their psychological, developmental and social processes.

People struggling with these issues may find psychological and social support in discussion groups and health awareness circles, various professional societies that study psychic and healing phenomena, or any of myriads of popular workshops or lectures on these subjects.

After lectures and workshops people often tell me how much they appreciate learning that their intuitive, psychic, healing abilities and spiritual awarenesses are not mere imagination, and how helpful they find the discussions about these experiences. They are grateful for the validation they feel when they participate in experiential demonstrations which confirm that these are natural phenomena, available to most people who are open to exploring inner dimensions.

In religious contexts, validation may be found for such gifts within the beliefs and practices of particular sects. Healing services, spiritualist churches and psychic development circles have been helpful in these regards. On the negative side, some religious groups may discourage, belittle, disparage or even persecute those who listen to inner awarenesses rather than adhering to established credos. I know of several sensitive and highly gifted healers who were distressed and put off from participation in religious observances by the reactions of fundamentalists – following simple healings which they gave for the relief of pains and other symptoms. Others have made similar observations. It takes a good measure of self confidence and maturity to not be put off by confrontations with people who hold beliefs at the levels of stages 1-2 and who insist that their way is THE ONLY ACCEPTABLE WAY.

Stage 5. Faith through inner knowing (Fowler: Conjunctive Faith)

Inner voices start to speak to those who are open to developing further. At first this may be perceived as a feeling or cognitive dissatisfaction with limitations, contradictions and paradoxes in their world-views. These views were individually established but are not sufficiently comprehensive to encompass the broader whole of reality as it unfolds in their lives. Intuitive awakening may extend to psychic and channeled awarenesses. This maturation begins to tolerate a multiplicity of views that may cross several levels of abstraction, and indeed, several levels of realities. Symbols, stories and myths from various traditions resonate within people and invite them to explore more deeply the mysteries and paradoxes of inner worlds.

Stage 5 is difficult to define. It is a state in which “*both and*” feels more appropriate than “*either or*.” It acknowledges the rightness of inner knowings that are impossible to define adequately in linear terminology. Accommodations of cognitive paradigms are required in the process of exploring these inner realms. Inner knowing may transcend linear logic and reason. Its rightness is self evident and convincingly apparent, despite the fact that it does not derive from reasoned hypotheses based on sensory data. A multidimensional approach to exploring reality develops. Earlier modes of analysis and reasoning are acknowledged as appropriate for particular stages of development and specific types of communication about the world. At the

same time, an initiative is granted to the inner knowing, that informs and instructs its knowers rather than being deduced, built or structured by them.

This is a new level of creativity. It is a relearning of the openness of the child in stage 1 to awarenesses of other worlds in which images inner voices have their own life and may inform us constructively – just as outer sensory inputs may do. It is a “second naiveté.” This is echoed in Matthew 18:4 as, “Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven.” At stage 5, however, this creativity has a maturity that acknowledges the equal validity of other people's interpretations of their perceptions of these inner realities, from within their own cultural and experiential vantage points. “. . . [T]his stage's commitment to justice is freed from the confines of tribe, class, religious community or nation” (p198).

In its positive aspects, this opens people to creativity and to ecumenism on a global level. In the negative, it can be overwhelming and paralyzing in its immensity and paradoxicality, and may lead to passivity, complacency or withdrawal.

Observations

Those who open to the awareness of stage 5 join the gifted and persistent minority in Western society who have not relinquished the awarenesses of other worlds that are present from stage 1 – but were discounted and submerged under the pressures to learn the standardized descriptions and analyses of the outer sensory world.

Direct experiences of other realities – especially mystical, near-death and pre-death experiences, out-of-body experiences, bereavement apparitions, meditative, kundalini, spiritual healing and psychic experiences – may stimulate people to move into stage 5.

While stage 5 brings perceptions of other realities, it alternates between the inner and outer worlds. While the head and heart may be open to other planes of reality, the feet are still attracted to and maintain at least intermittent attachment with the ground. People at this stage may have a sense of being part of a vast, real-life play, guided through their inner awarenesses by intelligence from other dimensions.

On the other hand, staying “grounded” may be a challenge. The most important aspect is a working through of one's “little ego” or “little self,” letting go of old patterns of beliefs and social conformities, and learning to rely upon one's inner knowing – while not becoming over-inflated with oneself. One learns to re-map reality in the light of awarenesses from other dimensions. Through relinquishing old biases, beliefs and emotional scars, one allows the ego to become reconstituted within vastly broader and deeper awarenesses.

There is a real danger of becoming ungrounded and losing touch with reality, and also the possibility that what appear to be transcendent awarenesses are psychotic projections of a deranged mind.

Stage 6. Faith anchored in transcendent awareness (Fowler: Universalizing Faith)

This stage “becomes a disciplined, activist *incarnation* – a making real and tangible – of the imperatives of absolute love and justice of which Stage 5 has partial apprehensions. The self at Stage 6 engages in spending and being spent for the transformation of present reality in the direction of a transcendent actuality.” (p200) People at this stage inspire others through their living of their ideals of universal love, that transcend the accepted patterns of their society. Examples of people at this stage include Ghandi, Mother Theresa, and Martin Luther King, Jr.

in his later years. This is not to say that people at stage 6 are perfect, but that they embody the striving towards the perfection of particular ideals.

Observations

Children often have a personal spiritual awareness, as well as a sense of moral values.

At a certain stage of development, healers and psychics become directly aware of a collective consciousness, a "higher awareness" or of God. This higher awareness provides moral and practical guidance towards bettering the world in which we live. It may include awareness of *Gaia*, the geobiological system that comprises our planet. It may extend to include the material and spiritual universe in its entirety. People open to these levels of awareness are awakened brain cells in the mind of a higher consciousness. They are as individual waves upon the ocean – both having their own identities but also being a part of the vastness of the oceanic wholeness.

The same stars, the sky covers us all, the same universe encompasses us. What does it matter what practical system we adopt in our search for the truth? Not by one avenue only can we arrive at so tremendous a secret.

– Symmachus (384bce)

C. Personality types and stages of faith

In addition to developmental, logical, and social influences on the shaping of faith, there are factors of personality that must certainly contribute to how you choose to play the game of life. The Jungian polarities (formalized in the Myers-Briggs personality assessment) points out that people tend to favor one end of each of two polarities: Thinking \leftrightarrow Feeling, and Outer Senses \leftrightarrow Intuition. That is, you may be comfortable with thinking your way through situations, while not being comfortable feeling your way through them (or vice versa). Similarly, you may be more comfortable sorting out your relationship with the world through inner, intuitive readings of what is going on, rather than checking on your outer senses to determine how you should interact with the world (or vice versa).

Another polarity is that of introversion \leftrightarrow extroversion; inner-directedness vs outer-directedness. You may be more inclined to attend to your personal perceptions, feelings, and assessments of the world, or you may rely more on interactions with the outer world to provide a sense of where you are in any given situation.

Other spiritual personality typologies have been suggested. Danah Zohar and Ian Marshall have a marvelous discussion on J. L. Holland's six personality types and how they relate to religious beliefs and practices. While these have overlaps with Jungian types, they are distinctly different. They are not mutually exclusive, and some people are found to score high on several of these, even when they are conceptualized as being polar to each other. These have been validated and widely used in the Holland vocational guidance test:

People with *conventional* personality type are precise, conforming and methodical. While devoted to detail and reliable, they may be rigid and defensive. About fifteen percent of people tested score highest within this category. Their opposite is the artistic type.

People with *social* personality type enjoy being with other people, are gregarious, kind, helpful, cooperative and empathetic, found more in females. They are good teachers and therapists, responsible and idealistic. About thirty percent of people test highest on this category. Their opposite is the realistic type.

People with *investigative* personality type are devoted to investigating ideas, rational, analytical, and precise. They are wary of emotionality. They are introspective, independent, and prefer their own company. They make good researchers. About ten to fifteen percent of people tested fit in this category. Their opposite is the enterprising type.

People with *artistic* personality type are emotional, impulsive, and uninterested in dealing with routine, practical tasks. They are independent, imaginative, non-conformist, and attracted to the arts. About ten to fifteen percent of people test high in this category. Their opposite is the conventional type.

People with *realistic* personality type are practical, materialistic, frank, direct, reliable and thrifty, represented more in males. They are uncomfortable with social situations and intimate

relationships. While they speak their own minds, they tend to conformity and can be rigid. About twenty percent test high on this type. Their opposite is the social personality.

People with *enterprising* personality type are ambitious, adventurous, optimistic, energetic and outgoing. They make good salespersons, supervisors, and businesspersons. They comprise ten to fifteen percent of those tested and their opposite is the social type.

Zohar and Marshall have devised a diagram in the form of a lotus flower, integrating the Holland and Jungian typologies, and pointing out how people with each of these personality characteristics may experience and express their spirituality differently.

Such innate preferences must certainly shape our choices of where we settle in our relationship to faith in transcendent realities. If you are extroverted and more comfortable with thinking and your outer senses, you are more likely to favor a reasoned choice of faith and less likely to trust inner, intuitive knowing of a transcendent reality. Conversely, if you live through your inner world more strongly than through the outer world, you may choose to trust your personal, inner knowing of spiritual realms.

Huston Smith proposes a somewhat different cosmology of spiritual personality types.

...In every sizable community one finds atheists who think that there is no God, polytheists who acknowledge many gods, monotheists who believe in a single God, and mystics who say that there is only God.

These four ways of slicing the religious pie. . . are not explicitly articulated in the way theologies are. For the most part they pass unnoticed, for they leave no footprints in history and do not create headlines, as religions do when they collide. Yet the differences between the four spiritual personality types (as I am calling them) run deeper than theological differences, for they are grounded in human nature, whereas theological differences, being historical, come and go.

Smith pictures a stack of worlds inhabited by people who hold various views of the world. The atheists inhabit the bottom level, where only physical reality exists. Above them are other levels, but each is separated from those above it by a one-way mirror. The atheists can see only their own level, reflected in the mirror of their beliefs that separates them from other awarenesses. Those who live in other belief worlds can see the atheists' world and the other worlds below theirs, as well as their own. Each type argues that there is nothing beyond what they can see. Each believes that anything beyond their mirror is simply the creation of fantasy.

The atheist's world consists of physical matter. Mind is the product of the brain, and rational reasoning is the way one analyzes the world.

The polytheist's world includes gods, spirits of humans and other discarnate entities. Western culture has converted these into channeled entities and a collective unconscious. Within organized religion there are angels and patron saints. These are experienced as much more real than the more abstract and distant holy trinity.

The "Great Traditions" of the most recent millennia are monotheistic. God is "richly endowed with the finest qualities that human beings exemplify: wisdom, tenderness, mercy, compassion, creativity, love, and the like, which, elevated in degree, add up to glory. Love figures especially among these qualities..."

For the mystic, everything is a manifestation of God.

To appreciate the differences between these groups, Smith considers their attitudes towards values. For the atheist, value derives from experiences in the outer world. The polytheist has many more levels of values, including particularly good and evil, which are in conflict and either of which could gain the upper hand. The monotheist views evil as a schism with good, which is the original and stronger value. The polytheist sees all as good, all as being only a manifestation of God.

Logic is inadequate to comprehend and encompass the higher levels. These must be appreciated intuitively, through “tacit knowing.”

Huston Smith has a marvelous gift of pattern recognition, a breadth and depth of familiarity with literature and the arts, a lifetime of experiences in investigating religions around the world, and a wonderful ability to explain and illustrate his points with an apt turn of phrase and lovely imagery. By his own admission, he places himself outside the levels where direct knowing informs the world. Despite this handicap, his writings are among the clearest in explaining some of the prevalent differences in spiritual awarenesses.

While there is no right or best way to parse these worlds that are beyond words, discussions and achieving of greater understanding of spiritual awareness are vital to our personal lives, and may be essential to our collective survival as a species – in view of the cultural and religious clashes that are fueling global conflicts. I return to Fowler’s cosmology as a helpful way of viewing our world.

D. Societal stages of awareness parallel the stages of faith

I believe that the stages of faith that Fowler describes in individuals may be observed in stages of societies' development of awareness and understanding about the world.

Stage 1. Basic faith (Fowler’s “Intuitive-Projective Faith”)

Inner and outer worlds are not experienced as differentiated.

Nature is alive and animate, and people seek to find their proper places as an integral part of nature. The outer world includes nature deities and angels, spirits of ancestors, and one or more deities. All of these have a vital interest in the outer and inner worlds of living things and may interact with them. Conversely, each individual is intimately linked with these entities and may turn to them for help or may be required to respond to their wishes or even to their moods and whims.

The outer world reflects the inner. Omens and portents are seen in outer events. Divination helps in the interpretation of these reflections. Patterns or cracks that appear in bones thrown in the fire may portend the fates of men. Numerous other divination systems, such as the I Ching, Tarot, etc. survive and flourish today, derived from such traditions.

In stage 1 societal development, the inner world reflects the outer. Dreams provide direction for people's relationships with the outer world. Visions are sought for guidance in important decisions. Mystical visions of respected shamans and seers are accepted uncritically in explanations of questions about health, interpersonal relationships and the relationships of people to their environment.

Stage 2. Mythic-Literal Faith

The world is seen as having been created and defined by divine inspiration and interventions.

The words of scriptural and personal authorities who claim to have received divine awakenings and messages are taken as literal truths, codified into religious teachings. Adherence to these religious truths is mandatory and any questioning of these truths is heresy, although mechanisms for altering these immutable truths may be allowed through the hierarchy of religious leaders (as in changing the Catholic proscription against eating of fish on Fridays). This is the level of faith healing. People outside the chosen group are considered to be ignorant of the true ways, misguided, or as agents of the dark side. Polytheistic religions such as Hinduism are less intolerant of differing views of the realms of the spirits and Deity than are monotheistic religions such as Christianity, Judaism and Islam.

Beliefs at this fundamental level create conflicts between religions, and have been the cause of religious persecutions, pogroms and wars.

Stage 3. Faith based on popular idols (Fowler: Synthetic-Conventional Faith)

Scientific methodology introduces an awareness of deductive investigation and reasoning about the outer world. Scientific approaches provide pragmatic and predictive methodologies and instruments for analyzing and manipulating the material world. These methods are applied towards reducing the unpredictabilities of life (such as illnesses and crop infestations) and conquering nature. We are led to believe that we will conquer the world through science. Our cultural idol is one of control over nature. We pursue eternal youth and invest heavily in avoidance of awareness of our mortality, denying that death is a natural part of life. This is the level of conventional medical practice.

Science rejects stages 1 and 2 as unreasonable. They are seen as lacking in sound bases for analysis by experimentation, as they rely upon inner experiences (of religious luminaries or of current day individuals) that cannot be objectively assessed. Science states that authorities are to be respected only insofar as they base their teachings on experimentally verifiable observations.

Paradoxically, by focusing totally on material benefits and by pursuing the idol of control over nature for our immediate creature comforts, we are threatening the continuation of life as we know it on our planet – ending up completely out of control.

In gross intuitive contrast, the elders of some Native American tribes will meditate on the consequences of their decisions upon the seventh generation down the line, prior to taking action.

Stage 4. Faith by personal choice (Fowler: Individuative-Reflective Faith)

An awareness is growing that science is not being true to its principles of reasoning objectively from evidence. Avenues of study that lie outside currently accepted paradigms are systematically denied research funds. Scientists who pursue such research are actively discouraged from doing so through peer pressure, publication biases, limitations on their funding and threats to their professional advancement and continued employment. Evidence that contradicts prevalent worldviews is not only rejected on the basis that it contradicts accepted theories but also is suppressed from publication. It would appear that much of modern science has slipped backward into stage 2, with a reliance on prevalent authorities and theories. Modern science has become largely a scientific religion, hypocritically advocating methodical research but in fact accepting only that evidence which fits currently accepted theories and beliefs.

Those who remain true to stage 4 principles do not reject evidence that contradicts prevalent world views. These scientists, philosophers and other independent thinkers seek to

comprehend the world in the light of evidence that contradicts reductionistic, matter-bound observations and reasoning. Evidence from such areas as modern physics and parapsychology is included in considerations of how the world functions. The analysis is still deductive and linear, based upon observations that are experimentally studied and statistically verifiable. The massive body of research in parapsychology is a good example of this stage, as is Rupert Sheldrake's theory of morphogenetic fields.

Stage 5. Faith through inner knowing (Fowler: Conjunctive Faith)

Evidence from introspective, personal experiences is considered valid to understanding the world. Meditative, psychic and spiritual truths are sought as sources for comprehending the cosmos. Acknowledgement is given to truths in all religions, so long as they do not advocate harm to any living beings or restrict exploration of all knowledge – even that which is outside their own teachings.

At the same time, analytical considerations are raised about whether subjective evidence might be colored by individual and cultural beliefs, or even by mental derangement. Both left and right brain hemispheric modes of experience and analysis are welcomed. This is the level of modern spiritual and bioenergetic healing and of medical intuition.

Stage 6. Faith anchored in transcendent awareness (Fowler: Universalizing Faith)

We are told by seers and mystics that we stand at the dawn of a new age of awareness. Primary, immediate perceptions of transcendent realities will be an essential part of everyday life. Individuals will sense themselves to be an integral part of Gaia, our geobiological planetary awareness. People will work for the common good, which they will perceive to be their own good, as they are a part of the All.

It seems we are coming full circle in Western society in moving from stages 1 through 6. One may well question whether the excursion into linear reasoning has been a positive or necessary contribution to societal development of awareness and to expressions of faith. Some might feel it has been like being lost and wandering in a desert. My own impression is that we know the light only through its contrast with the darkness. Having explored the wonders of the reductionist, linear world and the mysteries of forgetfulness regarding spiritual dimensions, we can appreciate the transcendent dimensions all the more through these contrasts.

Educators may bring upon themselves unnecessary travail by taking a tactless and unjustifiable position about the difference between scientific and religious narratives. We see this, of course, in the conflict concerning creation science. Some representing, as they think, the conscience of science act much like those legislators who in 1925 prohibited by law the teaching of evolution in Tennessee. In that case, anti-evolutionists were fearful that a scientific idea would undermine religious belief. Today, pro-evolutionists are fearful that religious idea will undermine scientific belief. The former had insufficient confidence in religion; the latter insufficient confidence in science. The point is that profound but contradictory ideas may exist side by side, if they are constructed from different materials and methods and have different purposes. Each tells us something important about where we stand in the universe, and it is foolish to insist that they must despise each other.

– Neil Postman

In conclusion

To some readers, this discussion may seem highly theoretical, much like those of past

centuries in which questions were raised about "How many angels can dance on the head of a pin?" This is far from the present case.

If you have any questions about whether these issues are real or relevant, you have only to consider the current conflicts between Islam and the fundamentalist Baptist US government. Not content with invading Iraq, President Bush and his cohorts appear to be dedicated to the Baptist fundamentalists' vision of the second coming of Christ – which they know will definitely happen when all of the land of Israel is united again. This belief is fueling the support of aggressive Israeli policies against the Palestinians. Fundamentalist Muslims, for their part, are seeking to impose their beliefs on Iraq and much of the rest of the Arab world. Gunter Grass summarizes these conflicts well: "Religious fundamentalism leads both sides to abuse what belongs to all religions, taking the notion of "God" hostage in accordance with their own fanatical understanding."

To what ideals are President Bush and his cohorts faithful? Whatever they really are – and it is difficult to know, in the atmosphere of repeated, deliberate bald lies of this administration – they are being pursued with a fervency of Stage 1 faith. Even more frightening are the steps being taken by this administration to stifle dissent and to subvert the freedoms guaranteed in the Bill of Rights, accusing all who question their actions of being "unpatriotic."

In more abstract terms, the pursuit of money, oil and unilateral US domination over the world are rampantly obvious in the words and actions of the Bush administration. These are the products of worshiping the ideals of power and control rather than spiritual ideals of "Love thy brother as thyself."

The following apocryphal story pointedly puts into focus how materialism can miss the whole point of life.

A Full and Busy Life

An American businessman was at a pier in a small coastal Mexican village when a small boat with just one fisherman docked. Inside the small boat were several large yellow-fin tuna. The American complimented the Mexican on the quality of his fish and asked, "How long did it take to catch them?"

The Mexican replied, "Only a little while."

The American asked, "Why didn't you stay out longer and catch more fish?"

"I have enough to support my family's needs."

The American asked, "How do you spend the rest of your time?"

The fisherman replied, "I sleep late, fish a little, play with my children, take siesta with my wife, Maria, stroll into the village each evening where I sip wine and play guitar with my amigos. I have a full and busy life, señor."

The American scoffed, "I am a Harvard MBA and could help you. You should spend more time fishing and, with the proceeds, buy a bigger boat. With the proceeds from the bigger boat, you could buy several boats. Eventually, you would have a fleet of fishing boats. Instead of selling your catch to a middleman you would sell directly to the processor, eventually opening your own cannery. You would control the product, processing and distribution.

"You would need to leave this small coastal fishing village and move to Mexico City, then New York, where you will run your expanding enterprise."

The fisherman asked, "But señor, how long will this all take?"

The American replied, "15-20 years."

"But what then, señor?" asked the Mexican.

The American laughed, and said, "That's the best part! When the time is right, you would announce an IPO and sell your company stock to the public. You'll become very rich, you would make millions!"

"Millions, señor?" replied the Mexican. "Then what?"

The American said, "Then you would retire. Move to a small coastal fishing village where you would sleep late, fish a little, play with your kids, take siestas with your wife, and stroll to the village in the evenings where you could sip wine and play your guitar with your amigos."

Mother Teresa said it more succinctly: "I'm not here to be successful, I'm here to be faithful." In Mother Teresa's case, it was faith to her inner calling to serve humanity with love and acceptance.

Intuitive awareness and personal spirituality help us to connect with nature and with every living creature, to know that we are an integral part of the cosmos. Anything we do that harms nature or other living beings is immediately perceived as hurting ourselves.

In these times of war and questions about the legitimacy of war, we also face questions of how to develop productive, peaceful dialogue – rather than conflicts and wars – between people who are based in different stages of faith, and between groups who come from a belief that their faith is valid and everyone else's faith is not. These are challenges that will have the most serious consequences.

The Art of Peace is medicine for a sick world. There is evil and disorder in the world because people have forgotten that all things emanate from one source. Return to that source and leave behind all self-centered thoughts, petty desires, and anger. Those who are possessed by nothing possess everything.

The Art of Peace functions everywhere on earth, in realms ranging from the vastness of space down to the tiniest plants and animal. The life force is all-pervasive and its strength boundless. The Art of Peace allows us to perceive and tap into that tremendous serves of universal energy.

– Morihei Ueshiba

How to resolve the differences between levels of faith remains a challenge.

I hope and pray that a return to greater personal intuitive and spiritual awareness may help us shift our course towards more spiritual relationships to ourselves, to each other, and to our planet.

What counts in making a happy relationship is not so much how compatible you are, but how you deal with incompatibility.

– Daniel Goleman

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GLOSSARY OF TERMS RELATING TO FAITH

Faith - Belief without preliminary factual basis in the material world; also a meta-belief in the validity of another belief.

Confidence - Belief based on experience of previous experiences, events and results

Deductive reasoning - Logical thought leading from the general to the more specific

Gnosis – Direct, intuitive knowledge, which often carries with it an inner, numinous sense of certainty about its validity. To those who have experienced gnosis, it may feel even more real than physical reality, which, in comparison, is sometimes described as an illusion.

Inductive reasoning - Logical thought leading from the specific to the more general

Intuition - Thought without underlying logical basis. The use of intuition alone does not imply that facts were gathered with other than the five usual senses. Intuition, of itself, is neutral... not necessarily spiritual. One can think intuitively about science or mathematics, for example. Intuition can have several layers, including:

- pattern recognition based on previous experiences with situations that are similar to the current one;
- psychic (psi) impressions deriving from telepathy, clairsentience, precognition and retrocognition
- bioenergy perceptions acquired through interactions of one person's biological energy field(s) with the field(s) of other living beings and non-living things.
- spiritual awareness, derived from transpersonal consciousness

See Benor (2001) for further discussion on intuition.

Metaphysical thought – Speculations on primary causes and ultimate significance of the world beyond its measurable and testable limits. Metaphysics addresses 'why' things are and makes value assessments of thought and actions. In some cases the reasoning is inductive, that is from personal experience which is positive, intuitive, or first person: *gnosis*. In most cases, the reasoning is deductive, usually based upon assumptions derived from cultural or religious traditions or another person's *gnosis*.

Noetic – Awarenesses beyond description in linear words and concepts, derived from spiritual awareness, gnosis.

Psi (Psychic or or High Sense Perception) - Thought or experience based on information or sensory inputs gathered without the use of the five usual senses, including telepathy, clairvoyance, precognition and retrocognition. Once within the unconscious or conscious mind, this information may be processed in a logical way, or may be handled intuitively. Psi perceptions are not inherently good or bad any more than perceptions based on our physical senses. Psi may represent the most primitive or generalized form of knowing. Indications are that it is often an inherited capacity and can improve with use. It can also be a learned skill, as most people have some measure of psi ability. Examples: auric vision, telepathy, remote viewing, psychometry, psychokinesis (PK).

Religion - Organized religion grows out of spiritual experience as a way of perpetuating and passing on *gnosis* to those who are not primary experiencers. It may or may not foster or encourage or welcome individuals other than the founders of the religion to themselves question basic assumptions, traditions or values. The more distant a religion is from a sense of personal experience with its basic truths, the more likely the religion will be to insist on absolute adherence to its fundamental doctrine(s) and tenets as a way to insure that its followers do not deviate or go astray from its central teachings – or from those who hold offices in the religious hierarchy.

Some religions require their adherents to demonstrate their faith by exhibiting prescribed behaviors (example: speaking in tongues, walking on burning coals, handling poisonous snakes without being harmed); passing tradition-based rituals or tests of knowledge or skill (catechism or Bar Mitzva); or being “born again.” These are types of group-acknowledged and accepted *gnosis* and are usually rigidly adhered to within a particular group. For example, one would not usually speak in tongues in a Catholic Church service or be expected to sit in silent meditation for many hours in a Jewish synagogue observance.

Science as a religion - Atheistic or agnostic views may sometimes be held with religious fervor, and the Scientific Method can be elevated to the status of a religion when it is used to discount observations and theories that are not currently popular, such as psi abilities and transpersonal awarenesses.

Soul – That part of a person which survives death integrates aspects of the person’s most recent personality with their eternal Self. (Some prefer to call this part the *spirit*. See also *spirit* for my explanation of my preference for *soul* here and *spirit* there.)

Spirit – That part of a person which survives death and still retains aspects of the person’s personality. (Some prefer to call this part the *soul*. I prefer *spirit* because of the popular use of this term to denote those who have passed on but return to communicate through channeled messages. See also *soul*.)

Spiritual gifts (Stivas, Charisms) - Extraordinary abilities that may be acquired suddenly or as a result of spiritual practices, such as prolonged meditation or vision quests. For example: healing through touch or at a distance; prophesy; discernment of discarnate spirits; levitation; bilocation.

Spirituality - The first is an individual’s basic quest or alignment with ultimate meaning and value. Spirituality often results from primary experience, *gnosis*, which is often stimulated by traumatic or transformational life occurrences, such as dramatic loss and grief; kundalini phenomena; psychic or even psychotic episodes; and other encounters beyond ordinary experience. These may, but do not always, include healing crises.

Transcendent – Relating to realities that are perceived as being outside of the physical world (but may include the physical), associated with a consciousness that is vastly higher and wiser than that of humanity.

IN THIS ISSUE OF THE IJHC

William Tiller, Professor Emeritus at Stanford University, suggests that there are dimensions that quantum physics can identify within which healing can be understood. His earlier article, in the January, 2003 IJHC, provides the theoretical basis for his theories on healing, along with experiments that demonstrate effects of intent imprinted on electrical devices. These devices *condition* the laboratories in which they are studied, producing effects even when they are no longer present.

Mary Miller, MSW, working with the Gentle Wind Project, reviews clinical experience and research showing that healing intent can be imprinted in various devices. These devices will promote healing when held by a person in need. They will also condition the space within which they are used. (The GWP has developed its instruments several decades ago, independently of, but clearly parallel with, Prof. Tiller's work.) Doris Kovalik reports on how she and many members of her family have been helped by the Healing Instruments. Gloria Hostetler, RN reports on the benefits she observed when using a Healing Instrument on a medical–surgical ward.

Scott Shannon, MD, past President of the American Holistic Medical Association, is a holistic psychiatrist who specializes in supplements and other complementary/alternative approaches to psychiatric care. He discusses holistic views of the healing relationship, emphasizing the role of the therapist in healing.

Jaentra Green Gardener cured herself of Multiple Sclerosis (MS) through a variety of healing approaches. She developed her own spiritual healing gifts and now helps others to deal with serious physical problems. Gardener discusses her approaches and summarizes results of healing work with a series of people with MS. Lori, a nurse healee of Gardener's group of healers, reports on her relief from the symptoms of MS – supported by brain scans that show regression of the typical brain lesions seen in MS.

A trio of articles present Christian views of healing. While the IJHC does not align with any religion or with specific religious organizations, articles that explore religious perspectives on healing – when they are relevant to participants of all religions – are included as an enrichment to wholistic care.

Christina Jackson, RN, PhD, has developed yoga exercises and meditations for Christians who might otherwise feel uncomfortable with practices derived from non-Christian traditions. She has taught these for six years, with excellent responses from students at Eastern University, a small Christian school in Southeastern Pennsylvania. Scott Hackman, a student of Jackson's, shares his enriching experiences in taking this course.

Charles Zeiders, PhD, brings us Part 2 of his explorations of Psychoenergetic Healing of Stephen Vasquez. Here, he details a qualitative study of healers' explanations of healing.

Donald Morse, DDS, PhD, explores spiritual issues, particularly from a Christian perspective, surrounding the experience of pain and its treatment, and observations on altered pain experiences during Near-Death Experiences.

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