

New Ideas About Peaceful Coexistence

*CROSS CULTURAL SPIRITUAL VALUES AND PROSPECTS FOR PEACEFUL
COEXISTANCE*

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DEDICATION

This project is dedicated to those who would dare to think about the possibilities of peace among the people of the world. Seek the light in your own heart and manifest it in your life. Know that there is and has always been, a Sempiternal Harmony.

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Conventions Used In The Work

All references to The Divine Essence, independent of their use in a sentence, or their part of speech, are capitalized when they might be considered a divine attribute. The word *god* is used with lower case when it refers to more than one divine essence.

Foreword

At the ripe age of thirteen years I began to consider the possibility that I had a lot in common, spiritually speaking, with other people. This commonality crossed family, age group, regional and even national boundaries. Now at the age of fifty eight years and well traveled, I am even more convinced that I am just one of many.

The many people I have met, on the journey to now, have deepened my understanding of our world wide family ties. None of us spontaneously appeared on earth. History and genetics have come together for each of us. After all, if one considers the number of generations back to some event, say the establishment of the Raleigh attempt in coastal North Carolina of 1587, it is possible to calculate that there are only 19 generations separating a child born in 2004 and Virginia Dare. But the number of people in the Virginia Dare generation required to lead to today's child is 2^{19} or 524,288 people. If one then looks at all the people from that generation until the birth of the new child, a staggering 1,048,574 individuals had to participate in the new life. As shown in Table 1, only 23 generations ago, at the generation of Columbus' voyage, 8,388,608 people participated in the genetic contribution of today's child. From that generation forward there were

16,777,214 parents in our new child's family tree. It is highly likely that every conceivable motivation for the birth of a child can be found among these parents.

Table 1

People Required to Produce a Child in 2004

Generation Defined:		23	years		
Year of Birth		2004			
Circa	Near Historical Event	Generation	Mating Parents in generation	Total Number of Ancestors	
2004		1	2	2	2
1981		2	4	6	6
1958	Near End of Korean War	3	8	14	14
1935	Near Beginning of WWII	4	16	30	30
1912	Near End of WWI	5	32	62	62
1889		6	64	126	126
1866	End of American Civil War 1865	7	128	254	254
1843		8	256	510	510
1820		9	512	1,022	1,022
1797		10	1,024	2,046	2,046
1774	Declaration of Independence 1776	11	2,048	4,094	4,094
1751		12	4,096	8,190	8,190
1728	Wilmington, NC founded 1736	13	8,192	16,382	16,382
1705		14	16,384	32,766	32,766
1682		15	32,768	65,534	65,534
1659		16	65,536	131,070	131,070
1636		17	131,072	262,142	262,142
1613	Jamestown, Va. 1607	18	262,144	524,286	524,286
1590	Lost Colony 1587	19	524,288	1,048,574	1,048,574
1567		20	1,048,576	2,097,150	2,097,150
1544		21	2,097,152	4,194,302	4,194,302
1521		22	4,194,304	8,388,606	8,388,606
1498	Columbus Voyage 1492	23	8,388,608	16,777,214	16,777,214

This is important to the consideration of the commonality in human spirit because it illustrates the broad reach of our cultural makeup.

One more point should be made before moving on. In each generation only one man was necessary to give the 2004 child his or her last name. That is,

from the time of Columbus until today only 23 men passed their last name on. Considering the millions of men and women required to successfully mate to produce our new toddler the passing of last name seems very trivial. It is the shared genetic makeup of our human family and the shared values that are most meaningful.

Religion and spirituality play a major role in a human value system. These values have passed from generation to generation being modified as its geography, religious understanding, scientific development, political zones of influence, and world climate have changed. Even the perceived east–west cultural divide becomes more fuzzy as modern discoveries of ancient trade routes are made. But, the greatest trade routes of history are with us today in the form of television, radio, telephone, and Internet communication.

The communication links of today stand with modes of transportation that allow unimaginable quantities of goods to move with relative ease all over the world. Yet, the greatest and most fluid of all exports and imports is the flow of ideas.

It is the similarity of ideas that is addressed in this work. More specifically, the work focuses on the common concerns about spiritual ideas and questions that have been asked since the first person asked, “why is he not waking up.”

I don’t claim to know all the answers, yet, I do know some. We all know some of the answers to the questions of spirituality. By looking at some of the

observations of other people and attempting to see similarities in their knowledge, it might be possible to infer something of the “Unknowable” truth. In this project I begin by believing, “they all have knowledge of their spirit,” even if their belief is in no spirit at all.

*"...in our zeal to tell you of the good news of Jesus Christ we were closed to the value of your spirituality. ...As a result you, and we, are poorer and the image of the Creator in us is twisted, blurred and we are not what we are meant by God to be."*¹

Apology to Native Congregations – United Church of Canada

Introduction

The purpose of this project is to suggest multicultural, spiritual and scriptural writings that address age old spiritual questions and present them in a concise way. It is hoped that increased awareness will lead to a greater understanding of our common and unified human spiritual nature. The project will examine scriptural sources from many world religious ideas, to discover the nature of *spirit*. A comparison will be presented that will point to frequently shared thought. Spirit is considered by many to be universal while soul develops as a person progresses through life. Spirit is an element which is without boundaries. It does not define walls between us, but rather, draws us nearer to the Divine Infinite.²

Where possible, fundamental psychological significance (archetypal evidence) of scripture will be presented. In addition, known similarities in cultural myths will be used to imply syncretistic links between groups of people.

A major tool used in this effort is a publication of the International Religious Foundation. Their compilation of scriptures provides an organized topical presentation, in English, of spiritual understandings contributed by scholars who have not only studied the texts in their traditional language, but also

have practiced the religious belief. While this volume of World Scripture will be the starting point for the investigation of commonality, various English language translations will be cross referenced for variations in meaning. When metaphysical, spiritual ideas are expressed in writing, they merge with a world that is driven by physical, scientific, mundane reality. The writing becomes a conscious representation of an unconscious knowledge. Thus, the use of the translations mentioned above should truly represent modern religious understanding.

The life work of one of the world's most open minded scientists / psychiatrists, Carl Gustav Jung, is referred to often in this work because of his recognition of spirit based complexes, psychosis and neuroses. Jung identified a state of the psyche that he named, "the collective unconscious". This phenomena may suggest possibilities for spontaneous synchronicity as it is revealed in dreams, feelings, and intuitions to all people through their unconscious mind. His open minded approach to comparisons of Eastern and Western thought, his commentary on The Secret of the Golden Flower (Taoist), and his Collected Works on Western religion are important resources as this research attempts to understand the natural, common concerns of humankind. Jung's work with dream analysis and identification of the shared symbolism in archetypes, as they may relate to cultural mythology, also gives a clue to a potentially deep unity among all human beings.

By painting a picture of common spirituality, it will be possible to look at old scriptures in new ways. The purpose here is not to find fault with conventional ideas of scripture that have developed over hundreds or even thousands of years, but rather, to suggest how a scriptural idea might also be understood in the light of contemporary settings. The old saying that “God moves (or works) in mysterious ways,” is accepted as true in this project. Whatever is scientifically accepted as true does not negate the experience that God played a role in its occurrence. Thus, there is a place for science in modern religious understanding. This project recognizes the role of knowable religious truth as being subject to personal experience, values, and beliefs. A broad range of religious ideas as diverse as those of people on the African savannas to the scholarly traditions of the Roman Catholic Church will all be accepted as truth, for those who follow their faith.

Included here will be a look at prayers that reveal common concerns of the devout. Specific spiritual questions such as, “what happens to me after I die,” will show a natural curiosity about this most major event in a person’s life. Common concerns about social order will show how religious rules for binding the community together are actually shared by all groups of people. All societies make reference to a rule of reciprocity (“The Golden Rule”). The relationship of these rules show a common concern for worldly order and are a natural beginning point for discussions about peaceful coexistence.

Very little effort is expended in this work that points to differences between the spiritual ideas. The whole existence of human beings is witness to the differences. This effort is an attempt at proofs of commonality. It is hoped that someone will be inspired to expand upon the information contained here in. Some-day, someone will write the proper combination of words that will make sense to the vast majority of the world. Then the people will flock together to bring about the peaceful world we all hope to find. This project simply (easy to say, harder to accomplish) boils down to seeking a greater level of tolerance and respect for other people.

“Without the Word of God no creature has meaning. God’s Word is in all creation, visible and invisible. The Word is living, being, spirit, all verdant greening, all creation. This Word manifests in every creature. Now this is how the spirit is in flesh - the Word is indivisible from God.”³ Hildegard of Bingen

SECTION 1 SCRIPTURAL EVIDENCE OF TOLERANCE AND RESPECT FOR OTHERS

To accept the potential commonality of spirit, it is necessary to think about the scriptural ideas that lead to tolerance and respect for all of us. These thoughts must not only orbit through the sensual world, but should also be open to a mystical state of being centered in the psyche.

A Hindu text states that truth has many aspects. The Srimad Bhagavatam (11.15) makes the point that Infinite Truth has infinite expressions. The idea presented in this scriptural writing is that sages speak in diverse ways, yet they express one and the same Truth.⁴ This awareness is also expressed in a passage from Jainism when one reads, “Those who praise their own doctrines and disparage the doctrines of others do not solve any problem.”⁵ The passive and tolerant belief system of Jains is also the source for another statement of respect and openness which simply says, “Comprehend one philosophical view through comprehensive study of another one.”⁶ At the core of tolerance is the understanding that many self evident truths are subjective while real wisdom considers other points of view.

In discussing things relative to the Most Divine, one is forced to consider that “Infinite Truth” is beyond the ability of a single person to express, yet it grows to completion as many individuals state their points of view. In 1st Corinthians, the knowledge a person has is thought to be puffed up, perhaps delusional. The

passage states that if a person thinks they know anything, they do not yet know it as they should. It is only after truly loving the Divine One (Infinite Truth) that real knowledge of truth, thus true wisdom, comes into a person.⁷ This seems to be saying that the only way to understand real truth is to seek a multifaceted awareness of many believers. This idea is supported by James when in Chapter 3:13 it is written, "Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? Let him shew out of a good conversation his works with meekness."⁸ This is a persona that many of us can control. How grand it would be if we choose to be meek in our dealings with each other. It is in this meekness, not weakness, where tolerance and respect for the spiritual ideas of other people's awareness can grow to its fullest wisdom. The admonition to tolerance is even existent in the Koran (note resource spelling).

Chapter 10 verse 99 through 100 of the most Holy book of Islam says, "If thy Lord had enforced His will, surely all those on the earth would have believed, without exception. Will thou, then, take it upon thyself to force people to become believers?"⁹ The scripture seems to be telling the faithful to trust in God's will and let people believe as they must. Isn't this a basis for tolerance?

The Parable of the Blind Man and the Elephant is well known to many people. In this story Buddha recalls a certain raja that had all the men who were born blind to be gathered into one place. When they had assembled as directed, the raja said to them, "Here is an elephant." One man was placed at the head, another placed at the ear, still another was placed at the foot, while yet another was stationed at the tail. So it went as the blind men were stationed all around

the elephant. When each blind man had explored the elephant with his hands, the raja asked each in his turn for a description of the animal. The man at the head said that the elephant was like a pot, the man at the ear said it was like a winnowing basket, the man at the foot replied that the elephant was like a pillar, and the blind man at the tail said that the beast was like a pestle. An argument broke out among the blind men, each certain that he had the true awareness of the elephant. It is reported that the raja was delighted with the scene.¹⁰ Had they been tolerant of the awareness of the other men, they would have been able to know much more of the elephant than they otherwise were. They were unable to communicate. Supposedly, they understood each other's language, but they were not willing to understand each other's point of view. They had the ability to be tolerant and gain a broader view of the ultimate truth of the elephant, yet they were powerless to make it happen.

Today, we have the ability to make it happen. Language arts, anthropology, awareness of world history, documentation of scriptural resources, television, and transportation, to name a few developments since the blind men felt the elephant, have resulted in a general desire for respect, if not for tolerance among the world population. The prospects of a great world wide community seem ripe for a new ecumenism to bloom. This does not mean that individuals should automatically become something spiritually new. As Carl Jung wrote in his Introduction to The Secret of the Golden Flower, "...what use to us is the wisdom of the Upanishads or the insight of Chinese yoga, if we desert the foundations of our own culture as though they were errors outlived and, like

homeless pirates, settle with thievish intent on foreign shores.”¹¹ Tolerance and respect are necessary in the awareness of differences as well as similarities. Perhaps this tolerance and respect is not so much a desertion of foundations, as Jung wrote, but more a reevaluation of them, in comparison to a newly learned way of looking at spirituality. The great mystic, Meister Eckhart wrote, “Only those who dared to let go can dare to re-enter.”¹² Here the “letting go” is more about not possessing ownership of an idea, and more about re-entering, in the light of new awareness, ideas that are one’s spiritual foundation. What might be the outcome of religious people all over the world letting go of their spiritual boundaries and praying constantly for understanding of the Great Divine Elephant?

Role of Prayers As A Tool For Tolerance

It is safe to state and indeed a certainty that all people aware of their spiritual being, feel comfortable in prayer and meditation. One characteristic of these prayers is that a much greater power is able to intercede on behalf of the prayer. Consider a Nuer Prayer of the Sudan as it not only extols the greatness of God, but also asks for divine interaction for peace within the souls of the people. “Our Father, it is thy universe, it is thy will, let us be at peace, let the souls of the people be cool. Thou art our Father; remove all evil from our path.”¹³ Had the source of this prayer not been revealed might one think that these words came from his or her own spiritual tradition?

Which tradition might be quested to state, “All creatures are God’s children, and those dearest to God are those who treat His children kindly.”¹⁴ These words happen to be of a Muslim source but the idea is found in all faiths. It is the concept of mercy upon which the commonality of spirit can be seen.

At the sermon on the mount, Jesus is reported, by Matthew, to have said, “Blessed are the merciful for they shall obtain mercy.”¹⁵ It seems natural that Jesus would say this in light of his Jewish heritage which sees God as gracious and full of goodness, compassion and mercy for all.¹⁶

A good representation of the reality of “compassion” can be seen in Buddhism. It is the wish that others may be free from suffering and the causes of suffering.¹⁷ We all have the capacity for compassion and mercy. Matthew Fox, writing from his prospective as a former Catholic Priest and presently serving as an Episcopal Priest, has stated that in the beginning there is compassion; compassion births us; compassion is our origin.¹⁸ In deed, the discovery, in the early 1990s, of human mirror neurons located in Broca’s area behind the temples on the left side, as well as other locations in the brain scientifically establishes our ability to empathize with other people and may be a location within us for compassion and mercy.¹⁹

It is this ability to empathize that can be developed to enhance our capacity for compassion and mercy. Consider the reaction of people who do not speak Pali, for example, to be drawn in reverence to the chanting of Theravada Buddhist Monks as they say:

*Namo Tassa Bhagavato
Arahato Sammasambudhassa.*²⁰

(Quietly Repeated three times)

To the non-Pali ear these words said in quiet reverence seem to resonate deep even within a Christian soul. The sounds are mystical and seem to represent a connection to a spirit of the moment. Yet, the translated meaning of the words is rather mundane. This chant is a preamble and is an exaltation with homage to the Arahant or he who is perfectly Enlightened by himself.²¹ Prayers intoned in an unknown language have the power to touch the psyche of people. These chanted prayers, whether in Latin, Greek, Pali, Sanskrit, or any other language have the power to bridge culture and even soften the heart.

Questions that Lead to Faith

It seems natural to assume that there are at least as many questions that need answers based upon belief as there have been people who have ever lived. Because every person potentially has a question that is unique to his or her own spirit, this work will consider only a few of the most common. Some examples of these questions are as follows:

1. Is there more to me than this body and mind? Do I have a soul?
2. What will happen to me after this life?
3. Is there a God or gods?
4. Is there a purpose for my life?

Questions like these have been pondered by some of the greatest religious thinkers resulting in books that touch on each question. Each is attempting to understand the perceived answers to the question. The problem of common curiosity is much simpler. The scope of this work is to look at the various religious philosophies, revealed through their scriptures, in an attempt to see commonality among the people. The nature of belief is a thing that we hold in common. From the earliest religions to the most sophisticated belief system of today, all require faith. Faith is a byproduct of intelligence; it restores self-confidence, which in turn makes a hopeless situation seem attainable.²² The function of faith is to lead to the unknown and perhaps unknowable questions.

Is there more to me than this body and mind? Do I have a soul? This is one of the most basic questions asked by most human beings. This question of soul is one of phenomenological importance. It leads to questions of after life situations.

A wonderful scripture about this belief comes from the Seicho-no-Ie, Nectarean Shower of Holy Doctrines as it reveals, "Man's real nature is primarily spiritual life, which weaves its threads of mind to build a cocoon of flesh, encloses its own soul in the cocoon, and, for the first time, the spirit becomes flesh." "So, too, will man break out of his body-cocoon and ascend to the spiritual world when his time is come."²³ While people might argue over the meaning of the spirit world, an extremely small number of people will deny that the spirit exists.

Those who are dead are never gone: they are there in the thickening shadows.²⁴ This idea represents the certain knowledge that something of the person who lived, but has passed away, is still in the life of the living. A passage from the Adi Granth, Gauri reinforces this idea and also points to the oneness of the family of human kind when it says, "All from one clay are made; in all one Light shines. One breath pervades all, what point is any weeping over another? Man wails over the loss of what he calls his: know, the Self is not perishable."²⁵ The Hindu faith agrees with the Sikh scripture when Sri Krishna in the Bhagavad Gita tells Arjuna the nature of the atman, or self, is shown to be unaffected by weapons, fire, water, or wind. It is said to be everlasting, unmanifested beyond all thought, and beyond all change.²⁶

The concept of spirit separate from the physical body is part of Judaism as well as Christianity. Consider Ecclesiastes which states that the dust (symbol of the body) will return to earth while the spirit will return to God.²⁷ It is not surprising that Islam also agrees with the religions of its root. This knowledge of spirit is found in the Koran at Chapter 17, verse 86, where it is written, "The soul has been created by the command of my Lord: and you have been granted but little knowledge concerning it."²⁸

An excellent example of Native American understanding of the nature of the soul is found in Fools Crow, by Thomas Mails. This lovely biography of Wanbli Mato, Fools Crow's real name, sites example after example of proofs that there is a great spirit that fills our body and lives on after it is finished. Fools Crow, who was at Wounded Knee and played a major role in the peaceful

solution to the ending of the standoff, describes his own emanate passing in the vision of a wagon coming for him. He knows his body will remain with the Teton Sioux, but his spirit will travel to be with Wakan-Tanka, all of the spirit beings.²⁹ &

³⁰ His life, as Fools Crow put it about himself and friend Black Elk, is like little hollow bones through which the power to heal is channeled from Wakan-Tanka.³¹ The spirit flows through all people until it is returned to the Great One.

What will happen to me after this life?

All religious ideas have an explanation about the progress of a person when the body is finished. Whether the faith is in a spiritually geographical destination, a new body, or a new state of being unknown in this life, is not as important as realizing that all human beings think about this question at some point in their life. A wonderfully promising Shinto poem paints a picture of pleasant spirit travels to its destination.

*"It comes from the origin,
It returns to the original land
In the plain of High Heaven –
That spirit is one and the same,
Not two. (presumably not more either)*

*...The road of the returning soul
Is not dark....To the world beyond.*

*...In all things
Maintaining godly uprightness...
All dark clouds cleared away.*

One Hundred Poems on the Way of the Dead³²

Another somewhat uplifting description of the state of being after death can be found in writing by Chuang Tzu, in his Taoist writing, post Tao Te Ching.

Here birth is not a beginning, nor death an ending. Existence is limitless, without a starting point. He states, "Existence without limitation is space. Continuity without a starting point is time. That through which one passes in and out without seeing its form, that is the Portal of God."³³ One might speculate on the nature of this space and time based upon personal knowledge, but it seems virtually impossible to describe the true state of being as death becomes a full reality. The first chapter of the Tao Te Ching of Lao Tzu seems to apply in the case of Chuang Tzu, "The Tao that can be discussed is not the Tao."³⁴ Of course this applies to discussions of death as well.

Some see the body as the sheath of the soul.³⁵ Others see it as dust to return to earth as the spirit returns to God.³⁶ People of faith recognize that they are a duality of body and spirit which is much less than their Divine Object of worship. It is a universal truth that both the saint and the sinner will feel the sting of death. Thus, all religious traditions hold out hope for a more pleasant state of spiritual being, when the time comes, if good deeds are performed in the physical state of being. To this end one might ask, "Why am I here?"

Questions About Existence After Life

Arguably, one of the most common questions asked by people is, "what is waiting for me after I die?" There is prehistoric burial evidence that seems to show primal humans believed in a post life. While there are many estimates of the number of homosapiens who have inhabited the earth, one safe assumption is that, at some point in their life, all of them wondered if his or her present state of being was all there is to life. If the assumptions of prehistoric cave dwelling

burial are correct, most assuredly, a figure approaching 99.99% must represent the population believing in spirit existence and, at least, something like conscious awareness after death. This observation is made in light of evidence that suggests a ritual was performed for the departed one. Questions about life after death and rationalizations of the process are a natural result of intelligence based upon awareness of sensual dichotomy.

Though they might disagree on the details, all religious philosophies accept the continuation of spirit. Some believe that the soul animates another body as in this Hindu scripture from the Upanishad which states, "As a caterpillar, having reached the end of a blade of grass, takes hold of another, newer and more beautiful, so the Self, having given up the body and left it unconscious, takes on a new and better form..."³⁷ We are not told, in this passage, what the form will be. Yet, the simplicity of the caterpillar, perhaps able to become a butterfly, at the end of its blade of grass transforms the idea of physical finality into a state of being that we understand as not only beautiful, but also soft and gentle. Is there any person of spirit who can not appreciate the image presented by this Upanishad example? Might an idea as simple as this be a starting point for agreement that the body, of all human beings, is born with spirit, and it is nurtured throughout life as the body matures. Then, as the bird cage is quiet, lonely and fearful at the loss of the song of the bird, the body fears the loss of that which gave it true beauty, the spirit.

The fear of death is common in us. Yet, there are traditions that, while fearing, may actually welcome it. Consider the tradition of *Sallekhana* found in

Jainism. For a believer in the way of Jain, it is considered the highest act of holiness for one whose body has begun to deteriorate, due to age or terminal illness, to fast in constant meditation and mindfulness, in complete control until death results. The goal for the believer is to achieve, at the end, a moment of purity, free of passion or delusion, which can lead to Nirvana or rebirth in the celestial realms.³⁸

Is there a God or gods?

“God is everywhere and does everything. God is within us and knows everything. God is without us and sees everything. God is beyond us and is everything.” Meher Baba. Sparks.³⁹

The question of God’s existence seems almost too simplistic to be taken into account. Yet, considering the total population of humans who are alive today together with those who have ever lived (a number that staggers the imagination [a very rough estimate might approach 2^{3500} if our ancestors were alive on earth 70,000 years ago]), it is easy to imagine the overwhelming majority possessing some form of spiritual belief. It is tempting to ask, could they be wrong?

Certainly those who deny that gods exist or who are ambivalent regarding the existence of gods, such as atheists and agnostics, would find fault with the idea that large quantities of people believing in some form of theology or spirituality have the right inspiration.⁴⁰ It is not within the scope of this work to prove or disprove the existence of God or gods. Here the questions of common spiritual concerns as they might be addressed in psychic phenomena are proposed that may lead to natural peaceful solutions for world problems. This

connection at the level of the psyche is possible even when one is skeptical of the existence of things spiritual.

Since so many people have believed in a God or gods it seems realistic to accept the concept of the Divine. The most amazing concept of the Divine Nature is that it is part of human nature. This concept is not foreign to anyone who firmly believes in God. For Christians, the idea is summed up in 1 John 4:13 where it is written that we dwell in God and He in us because He has given us His Spirit.⁴¹ The context of this scripture is God's love for his creation. But, Christian's do not have an exclusive claim on this divine nature.

A Sikh scripture reveals, "He lives in all and is yet ever distinct; He abides with you, too, as fragrance dwells in a flower, and reflection in a mirror. So does God dwell inside everything. Seek Him, therefore, in your heart."⁴² Whether one thinks of the Buddha nature, the Tao Te Ching, God, Wakan Tanks, Allah, or any other Divine Name or Description there is scripture, legend or mythology that reveals mankind's dependence on a divine Power. It is our own need to understand that Power, that places us relative to it and brings the question of the purposeful life to consciousness.

Is there a purpose for my life?

The question of a purposeful life, while seemingly not relevant to spiritual discussions, is the byproduct of thinking about the answers to unknown or unknowable questions. It is the natural characteristic of intelligence to explore

and bring to awareness dichotomies that lead a human being to ask the question, “Why am I here”, or “What is my purpose in life.”

Once the question has been raised to consciousness, we, on the whole, attempt to reach for the highest and best ideals represented in art, music, poetry, or anything else that tends to the general side of a dichotomy we call good. It is human nature to want to be the best that we can be at something. Whether it is chipping a flint into an arrowhead on the bank of the Sambo River in southwestern Panama or seeking the perfect note structure for the final chord of a great symphony, homosapiens have always recognized the beauty of a thing done well. This might be one of the many reasons why the majority of us do not live in caves any longer. It is also why we must find rational answers to the questions that are beyond our ability to fully and truly understand. For most “normal” people whatever is good is that which brings happiness and joy. It is transcendental joy that lifts us to a union with the Ultimate Divine Reality and is encouraged by all religions.

“Life is art. The whole life of man is Self-expression. The individual is an expression of God. We suffer if we do not express ourselves.”⁴³ While this philosophy is shared by nearly all of the world religions, it is summed up rather succinctly in the Gleanings from the Writings of Baha’u’llah. He writes that God has given all things a share of his divine attributes, but upon people he has given the unique distinction and capacity to know Him and to love Him.⁴⁴ The significance of this is indicated by Baha’u’llah when he adds, “Upon the reality of man, He has focused the radiance of all of His names and attributes, and made it

a mirror of His own Self.”⁴⁵ It seems that Christians and Jews would see truth in these words as well since nearly the same idea is expressed in Isaiah 57:15, where it is written that God inhabits not only eternity but also him who is contrite and humble in spirit.⁴⁶ The divine purpose of human kind also finds a voice in the Hindu faith where the Mundaka Upanishad tells the faithful:

*“In the golden city of the heart dwells
The Lord of Love, without parts, without stain.
Know him as the radiant light of lights.
There shines not the sun, neither moon nor star,
Nor flash of lightning, nor fire lit on earth.
The Lord is the light reflected by all.
He shining, everything shines after him.”*

Hinduism. Mundaka Upanishad 2.2.10-11⁴⁷

If it is the heart where the divine golden city dwells it is the mind where the golden cities are connected through a great network of psychic highways.



Figure 1. Theravada Buddhist – Wheel of Life

A Symbol Of *The Self*

SECTION 2

SHARED LINKS TO OUR ANCESTORS AND DESCENDANTS

Among the psychologists of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, Carl Gustav Jung stands as a lighthouse of reason shining a realistic, guiding, scientific ray of enlightening curiosity onto the ocean of mental phenomena. Among these phenomena are the psychic influences that draw a person to a particular set of religious beliefs. He recognized that as a doctor, whose duty it is to relieve suffering, he could best fulfill this goal through the views of the great teacher, self realized Enlightenment, Buddha.⁴⁸

Jung recognized great wisdom in Buddha's "chain of suffering, old age, sickness, and death."⁴⁹ The chain of suffering is one more thing that human beings have in common. In figure 1, a chain of twelve links can be seen at the circumference of the wheel of life. This particular symbol is found in the Theravada school of Buddhism (Southeast Asia) and very similar representations can easily be found in the Mahayana school (Tibet) and the Zen tradition of Northern China and Japan. Jung was interested in the chain of suffering as it might apply to the psyche thus affecting mental health.

The links of chain, starting at the one o'clock position of the graphic, progress in a clockwise direction representing an interdependency of elements resulting in the causes of suffering, from the Buddhist prospective..

Table 2
Causes of Suffering
Theravada Buddhism

<u><i>Link in Chain</i></u>	<u><i>Meaning Of Symbol</i></u>
Blind Person	Unknowing – Spiritual Blindness
Pottery Maker	Volition
Monkey Leaping Tree to Tree	Consciousness
Man In A Boat	Mind – body
House with 5 Windows and a Door	Six senses
Man and Woman Embracing	Contact
Man With Arrows In His Eyes	Feeling
Man Drinking Alcohol	Cravings
Man Gathering Fruit	Grasping
New Bride	Becoming
Mother In Labor	Birth
Old Man With Corpse	Suffering

It is not the goal of this work to slip too deeply into a discussion of Buddhist philosophy, however to clarify the fascination that Jung may have had with the chain of suffering one might look to the life of Venerable Acariya Mun (1879 – 1949), a dhmihute monk of Theravada Buddhism. Bhuridatta Thera, the author of the old monk's biography explains the meaning of dukkha (Pali: Suffering, pain, discontent) as a fundamental discontent that is inherent within the very nature of all sentient existence. It is the underlying sense of dissatisfaction that ultimately undermines even the most pleasant experience, for

everything in the phenomenal world is subject to change and therefore unreliable.⁵⁰

The idea of the chain of suffering and its underlying characteristic of dissatisfaction is universal within Buddhism, but it is not limited to this faith. Jung saw the affect of suffering throughout the Christian world and recognized that Buddhist discourses offer Western people a means of disciplining inner psychic life.⁵¹ He explained that because of the Western familiarity and fatigue regarding Christian writing its truisms might be reborn through understanding the writing of Buddha or other great spiritual philosophers.⁵² He believed this to be important where Christian rituals had lost their meaning or authority within the believer, resulting in psychogenic disorders.⁵³

He believed that it is sometimes easier to hear a truth from someone we don't know than it is to hear the same truth from a member of our own family, spiritually speaking. Perhaps it is the familiarity with the speaker that encourages us to nit-pick the verbiage of an idea while the same idea spoken in an unknown voice forces us to look to the content of the statement. The possibilities of this are encouraging as, step by step, we find common ground in religion, faith and belief.

Religion, Faith and Belief As Psychological Functions

It would be helpful to look at the terms, *religion*, *faith* and *belief* in the context of Jungian Psychology as they represent elements of potential motivations for peace. Could religion actually be a source of universal respect

and peace? Historically it has been a divisive influence uniting limited minded people who manifested their understanding of spirituality as it is revealed to his or her consciousness. When the world was only 200 miles in all directions a limited view of religion and spirituality served to establish order within the social structure of the day. Today, the horizon is much farther than can be seen with the natural eye. We recognize spiritual traits found in our selves are also in other people too. We know an individual's faith resides in the psyche, as in the unconscious soul and spirit where the universal collective unconscious interacts with us. The real seed of peace is already within each of us. It is waiting to germinate in the light of awareness, wisdom and respect.

Religion, Spirit, Belief From The Prospective of Jung

“We might say... that the term “religion” designates the attitude peculiar to consciousness, which has been changed by experience of the numinosum.⁵⁴ While Jung seemed to be vague regarding his personal religious position, this statement reveals his prospective on religion as it relates to his work in psychology. This is a good place to look at the natures of religion, soul and spirit as they apply to the psyche. By associating the numinosum with the conscious while placing soul and spirit at the level of the unconscious, he established a synthesis that unites the dichotomy of awareness with supposition.

Numinosum is a term coined by Rudolf Otto in The Idea of the Holly (1917). The root word *numinus* when used as an adjective is descriptive of things that are supernatural or mysterious. When used as a noun it is

synonymous with *spiritual*. (Merriam – Webster) It is likely that Jung used the term in the same context as Otto who apparently meant it to designate any non-rational element of religious experience (e.g. awe, fascination, blissful exultation inspired by the divine.) Otto made the point that religion provided an understanding of the world that was distinct from and beyond scientific observation. (Encyclopedia Britannica – Online)

Most people at some point in life have gazed in awe at something, perhaps a sunset or child birth. It is awareness at the conscious level of a shared psychic experience, which leads to awe, that might be considered a religious experience. When considered in light of an anthropological definition as stated by Alice Beck Kehoe, one might agree that the nature of religion is a congregating of people with common experience.⁵⁵ It may be a shared, real manifestation of a psychic event revealed to their consciousness. Yet, it is the shared experience that leads to their congregating and feeling of religious experience.

In “The Undiscovered Self,” Jung states, “Religion...is an instinctive attitude peculiar to man, and its manifestations can be followed all through human history.”⁵⁶ Yet, it seems that the religious attitude associated with a specific creed is quite different from faith. Religion is the conscious manifestation of the soul, spirit, anima, animus, and shadow components of the psyche. Religion may be as sophisticated as codified and documented scripture. It may also be as simple as a shared set of beliefs that people hold in common as they manifest them in conscious interaction.⁵⁷ Religion is a, more or less, organized

set of spiritual understandings and experiences shared by a group of people. Use of the term does not limit its meaning to main stream popular religions. The functions of religion are found in primal shamanic animism, itinerant fundamentalism as well as a very formal and idealistic congregation of salvation theology meticulously compiled by its clerics throughout history. People who follow a particular religious path probably do not completely share the same understanding of the religious tenets, yet cultural influences and sensory input to consciousness work to bind them to a particular set of doctrines. It is faith that is a manifestation of a person's soul and spirit thus making them unique.

Soul or Spirit

Jung had a very interesting view of the relationship between *soul* and *spirit*. He believed that there was a plurality of souls that indicated a plurality of relatively autonomous complexes that can behave like spirit.⁵⁸ He further explained that the soul complexes seem to belong to the ego, the loss of which appears pathological.⁵⁹ The opposite condition is true for spirit. He hypothesized that when spirit complexes associate with the ego there is established a cause for illness, while dissociation from ego brings recovery.⁶⁰ The point of this is that he recognized *soul* and *spirit* had to distinct relationships to the ego. He related this point to primal pathology that recognized two causes of illness which were the loss of soul and possession by a spirit.⁶¹ In the healthy person the soul complexes and spirit complexes are in relative balance in comparison to the ego.⁶² The problem of spirit possession occurs when a greater or stronger spirit complex associates itself with a persons ego. This is at

the core of belief in shamanism, Satan worship, or any other belief system that accepts possession by spirits. But, the power of the soul is not to be minimized.

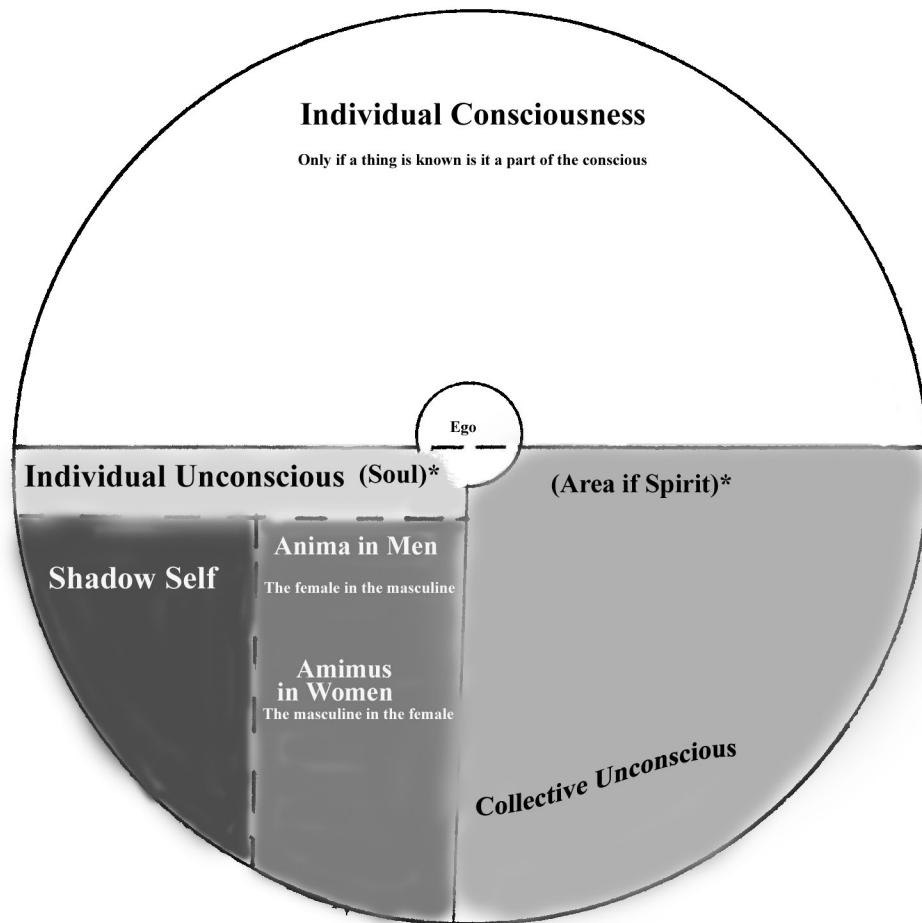


Figure 2. Soul and Spirit Within "The Self"

Note that in figure 2, the words *soul* and *spirit* are noted with an asterisk. There is some confusion as to their meaning relative to the original Greek words *anima* meaning spirit and *animus* meaning soul when they are translated from

the original Greek into German and then into English. Jung himself used anima and animus in several different ways.⁶³ As his work matured he seems to have settled on the gender function of the words animus and anima thus separating them for the words soul and spirit.

The distinction between soul and spirit is important. Jung believed that the soul is the product of the individuation process which reveals the complexes working in an individual's unconscious mind. The existence of complexes, discovered in word association tests early in his career, relate to feeling toned ideas or obsessions which can accumulate through the years. The word association test helps to identify and release activity in the unconscious, bringing to consciousness complexes which may be the cause of a neurosis or psychosis.

Everyone has some form of complex which may affect him or her positively or adversely. These complexes are not necessarily permanent but come and go according to their own laws. They can temporarily obsess consciousness, effecting speech and actions in unconscious ways. It is at the unconscious level that the complexes influence the soul. Jung states that the soul and spirit are, while differing in nature, resident in the unconscious. When the soul of a person, with all its complexes, is made manifest in consciousness it does so in the form of religious associations with like minded people connected at the conscious level through their complexes. The very nature of a congregation is one of inclusion and exclusion. This can be one reason why politics can operate on a group of religious people to breed hatred for people who do not believe in or follow the same religious history or dogma as the group.

Traditionally when united at the soul level, through association of complexes, it becomes ever increasingly difficult to see the unity present in the true human spirit as it is represented by the archetypes of the collective unconscious. But, what might happen to a group of people who are united by the spirit area of their unconscious? Might their congregation be much more encompassing and less divisive? What might happen if they realized the unity of their views regarding sacrifice, for example?

It is the act of sacrifice, understood around the world, that is represented time and again in symbolic form that is revealed to the spirit through the collective unconscious. Perhaps no symbol of sacrifice has more recognition than that of the transformation of the bread and wine into the body of Christ.

“The individual will never find the real justification for his existence and his own spiritual and moral autonomy anywhere except in an extramundane principle capable of relativizing the overpowering influence of external factors. . . . For this he needs the evidence of inner, transcendent experience which alone can protect him from the otherwise inevitable submersion in the mass.”[The Undiscovered Self," CW 10, par. 511.] “*Resistance to the organized mass can be effected only by the man who is as well organized in his individuality as the mass itself.*” [Ibid., par. 540 (italics in original).]

When this act is discussed in the context of exclusiveness, little is revealed of the collective idea of sacrifice. Yet the idea of sacrifice is part of every religious idea known to humankind. For example, one need only look to The Doctrine of the Mean [16], of Confucius, African Traditional Religions, Kikuyu Prayer (Kenya), or Hindu, Satapatha Brahmana [11.5.6.1-3] to understand the importance of sacrifice to people.⁶⁴ Jung’s idea of the collective nature of spirit is supported by a universal awareness of the nature of sacrifice.

These quotes show Jung's understanding of the importance of the separation of conscious, sensuous external influences of religion, as revealed through sacrifice, and the deeper symbolic transformation of the mundane from soul and spirit. For an individual level of religious understanding, a challenge might be a conscious effort to seek the manifestation of spirit and purification of soul without judgmental concerns for religious dogma. This would be an extraordinary attempt at seeking the oneness of spirituality brought to consciousness. It is at the edge of consciousness where feeling, speculation, observation and intelligence results in belief manifested in religious principles.

Faith

One definition of *faith* is belief without evidence. (Merriam – Webster) To distinguish the relationship between faith, soul, and spirit, Jung wrote, "This spirit is an autonomous psychic happening, a hush that follows the storm, a reconciling light in the darkness of man's mind, secretly bringing order into the chaos of his soul."⁶⁵ Here he seems to be uniting the idea of soul, resident in the psyche, with the nature of faith revealed to the conscious mind. It is the turmoil of the archetypal emotions generated by the images of the crucifixion in the unconscious, and the calming, reconciling light of the trinity, or the understanding of the path to Enlightenment, for example, that becomes manifest in the conscious which can soothe the inner nature, the soul, of an individual. This psychology must have been what fascinated Jung and spurred his interest in belief systems.

Belief

Belief⁶⁶, while similar to faith, is not limited to the unconscious. Belief intuitively concludes based upon partial awareness of sensory observations to interpolate unknown realities. Belief can include matters of faith but is not dependent upon it. It can provide a shortcut between proven and unproved elements of the conscious. For example, consider a person who has never been to Murphy, North Carolina. Still, he or she may only know generally where the little town is in relationship to Asheville. The individual has faith that he or she can safely operate a car, decipher the red and blue lines on a road map, read the road signs and understand their meaning. This belief comes from many years of trial and error travel. In other words, there is a component of wisdom in this faith. All of these criteria operate in consciousness, and it is belief in understanding of the process of driving and navigating that gives the traveler hope that he or she will arrive in Murphy as planned. Reconsider the discussion on the nature of faith as it is analogous to this travel scenario. The faith is centered in the unconscious, it is a complex of soul and spirit. But, the belief that the town exists and that the trip to it can be made is an operation of reason and consciousness. Thus it can be concluded in this example that the practical force (belief) for the completion of a journey to Murphy is found in the soul of the traveler, with all its complexes, as well as the spirit connected to the collective unconscious.

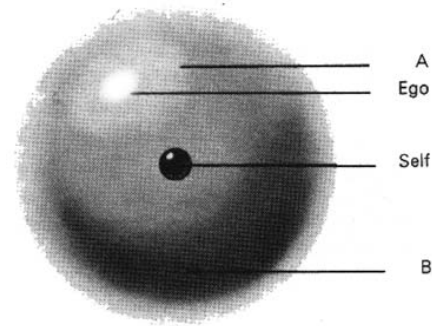
Western and Eastern Spiritual Perception

The purpose of this section is to identify characteristics unique to Eastern and Western concepts of “spirit” as a possible source of peace. The Western model spirit revealed in “the self” will be that discussed by C.G. Jung, while the Eastern ideas of “the self” will be illustrated by various Buddhist and Hindu sources as well as Dr. Jung. In addition, a short classroom experiment conceived to explore a possible meditational mode for self-realization will be presented. All of this is presented from the content of a “Western” mind.

Western Understanding of Self

The collective Western mind of the nineteenth into mid twentieth centuries seems to have been preoccupied with separating spiritual and scientific components into unique spheres of truth. That is to say that scientific knowledge became more important than spiritual awareness. This tended to increase the dualistic nature of Western belief systems. This narrowing view of the natural world may have led to a kind of collective neurosis in Western thought as the trend toward separation, or outright denial, of soul and spirit resulted in an increased preoccupation with the so called, “real world”. In the early nineteenth century individual scholars such as anthropologist, Adolf Bastian, began to observe the importance of a holistic approach to human existence. His work in Guyana together with his illness and healing at the hands of a shaman lead him to consider the psychic and physical unity necessary for good health (*Discovery of the Unconscious*, p4).

Jung, Freud, Adler, Janet and many other psychiatrists developed concepts of the self. For purposes of this paper only the work of Dr. Jung will be considered. His work is more relevant due to his acceptance of the soul and spirit residing in the unconscious. Jung, primarily, believed that most illnesses of the psyche are spiritual illnesses and that these conditions are centered in the nature of the self. In this work Figure 3 represents



The psyche can be compared to a sphere with a bright field (A) on its surface, representing consciousness. The *ego* is the field's center (only if "I" know a thing is it conscious). The *Self* is at once the nucleus and the whole sphere (B); its internal regulating processes produce dreams.

Figure 3. – *The Self* per Von Franz⁶⁷

an official graphic depiction of the Jungian idea of self as drawn by one of his students, Marie-Louise Von Franz.⁶⁷

Regarding the Self Jung wrote:

The self is not only the center, but also the whole circumference which embraces both conscious and unconscious; it is the center of this totality, just as the ego is the center of consciousness. ["Introduction," CW 12, par. 44.]

As an empirical concept, the self designates the whole range of psychic phenomena in man. It expresses the unity of the personality as a whole. But in so far as the total personality, on account of its unconscious component, can be only in part conscious, the concept of the self is, in part, only potentially empirical and is to that extent a postulate. In other words, it encompasses both the experienceable and the inexperienceable (or the not yet experienced). . . . It is a transcendental concept, for it presupposes the existence of unconscious factors on empirical grounds and thus characterizes an entity that can be described only in part. ["Definitions," CW 6, par. 789]

In the following quote he seems to be saying that while there is much that we might know about the self, the essential nature of the self is knowable

through manifestations of the collective unconscious, in myths, legends and religions.

The self appears in dreams, myths, and fairytales in the figure of the "supraordinate personality," such as a king, hero, prophet, saviour, etc., or in the form of a totality symbol, such as the circle, square, quadratura circuli, cross, etc. When it represents a complexio oppositorum, a union of opposites, it can also appear as a united duality, in the form, for instance, of tao as the interplay of yang and yin, or of the hostile brothers, or of the hero and his adversary (arch-enemy, dragon), Faust and Mephistopheles, etc. Empirically, therefore, the self appears as a play of light and shadow, although conceived as a totality and unity in which the opposites are united.[Definitions," CW 6, par. 790.]

The way we react to stories, songs, and poetry is more revealing about ourselves than the central characters in them. Yet, there is a natural empathy within each of us for the characters in these stories. Studies at the University of Parma, conducted by Vittorio Gallese, Giacomo Rizzolatti and others have identified a class of neurons which they have labeled Mirror Neurons. Located in the Broca's area of the brain these neurons reveal themselves to fire in relationship to a viewed stimulus, such as watching someone drum their fingers on a desk, thus resulting in empathetic muscle reactions. Additional studies have indicated that these mirror neurons may play a role in the weeping of an audience as they watch a popularly perceived sad movie. The natural question then becomes, is it possible that there could be a relationship between mirror neurons, the meaning of mythological archetypal images, and the concept of *the self*, to include the soul and spirit, as they are revealed in cultural legends and folklore on a group level or in dreams at the individual level?⁶⁸

The natural ability to empathize could be a key to our desire to answer the question about why our friend in the cave did not awaken this morning. It is on

his now cold stiff body that we project our self doubts and wonderment of our own demise. Just hours ago he was *self* as we are now. It is our awareness ego and intellect that forces an answer to the unknowable questions surrounding his death.

From Dr. Jung's prospective the ego is only a portion of the over all thing that he calls the self. In fact, he seems to be making the argument in the following quote that the ego is at the mercy of an irruption from the unconscious which can lead to neurosis.

The ego cannot help discovering that the afflux of unconscious contents has vitalized the personality, enriched it and created a figure that somehow dwarfs the ego in scope and intensity. . . . Naturally, in these circumstances there is the greatest temptation simply to follow the power-instinct and to identify the ego with the self outright, in order to keep up the illusion of the ego's mastery. . . . [But] the self has a functional meaning only when it can act compensatorily to ego-consciousness. If the ego is dissolved in identification with the self, it gives rise to a sort of nebulous superman with a puffed-up ego.[On the Nature of the Psyche," CW 8, par. 430.]

So, it can be seen that Jung recognized a duality in modern Western thought and sought to reunite the wholeness of self by showing the relationship of conscious and the unconscious mind with its soul and spirit components .

By 1929, Jung's awareness of the self was complete when he published, in collaboration with Richard Wilhelm, his commentary on *The Secret of the Golden Flower*. Here he began the written process of showing a unity in the diversity of Western and Eastern thought that is expressed in his statement, "I know that our unconscious is full of Eastern symbolism"⁶⁹

Eastern Understanding of Self

Francesca Fremantle, in her introduction to the *Tibetan Book of the Dead*, translated in cooperation with Chogyam Trungpa, states that the “self” will become a complete universe of its own through combining the consciousness (vijñana), all the sense-perceptions, and the mind.⁷⁰ Thus, instead of directly perceiving the world as it might actually be, it (the self) projects its own images all around it. In other words the Eastern ideal condition of self would be the synthesis of consciousness and unconsciousness into some awareness, if not vision, of a unity existence. For most individuals this unity is already in place. The unconscious part of mind already affects conscious mind as the heart, mostly unfelt, keeps the rest of the body alive. The real challenge is to find a catalyst for peace in our diversity.

According to Fremantle the concept of sin in the West, conjures thoughts of guilt and punishment and has no such place in Eastern thought. She states that in Buddhism, the western idea of sin and suffering are related to a belief in a self or ego as the center of existence.⁷¹ What she means here is, “the self” or ego is limited in nature to a shallow view of the world. Jung’s would agree with the slight nuance of an eastern and western view of the self. He said that in Eastern texts the self represents a purely spiritual idea, but in Western psychology the self stands for a totality which comprises instincts, physiological and semi-physiological phenomena.⁷² He recognizes that Fremantle’s understanding of the self and ego is accepted by some Eastern philosophers but

he believes it to be a heresy.⁷³ The difference between these views can not be resolved in this undertaking. Here the attempt is to seek common ground.

The fundamental teaching of the *Book of the Dead* is the recognition that one's projections and the dissolution of the sense of self in light of reality are the keys to Enlightenment. Thus the session of the birth–death cycle.⁷⁴ One might conclude that to achieve the Enlightenment of Buddha, one must lose self. Actually, the goal is not to lose self as much as it is to understand that self is not unique but one with the universe, possessing its share of the collective unconscious.

Another Eastern way of looking at this concept is brought to consciousness in Hindu scripture as discussed throughout the Bhagavad Gita as the *atman*. This level of self is extra physical. While it influences the physical, sensual consciousness it is not dependent upon it. Its relationship to consciousness is exemplified in the following scripture:

“... The Self cannot be pierced with weapons or burned with fire; water cannot wet it, nor can the wind dry it. It is everlasting and infinite, standing on the motionless foundation of eternity. The Self is unmanifested, beyond all thought, beyond all change. Knowing this you should not grieve.” Bhagavad Gita 2.19-25

One way of looking at the relationship of the *atman* to the universe is to be aware that *Self* exists as an individual, as in Jung's concept of soul, but it is when *atman* (soul) and *Brahman* (the individual small portion of spirit that is part of the Ultimate, Universal, Divine Power), are combined as one, that the true nature of the self, with its full portion of the unconscious, can be achieved. Here the fullest self as shown in Figure 2 comes into reality.

Another quote on the nature of Self is found in the Upanishad:

“... The Self is everywhere. Bright is the Self, Invisible, untouched by sin, wise, immanent and transcendent. He (atman – self) it is who holds the cosmos together. Isha Upanishad 4-8

Class Room Experiment – Meditation on Self

On November 17th, 2004 , during an oral presentation of similar material, a meditation was presented as a classroom experiment, to explore the possibility that a greater awareness of self might be brought to consciousness. As a Westerner and meditation practitioner for some fifteen years, I regularly experience an awareness of my own dual nature, body and mind, while also mindfully uniting this duality into purposefully experiencing life. The purpose of the experiment was to explore the possibility that non-meditating individuals might achieve this same state of awareness. It should be noted that the class of ten graduate students was comprised of individuals born and raised in Western culture. While a quiet mind meditation had been demonstrated a few weeks earlier, the level of experiences with meditation, subjectively, ranged from slightly more than novice to extremely basic. The room was quiet and comfortable. The students seemed open to the procedure of the experiment. The guided meditation went as follows:

Guided meditation on self

1. Sit in any position that is the most comfortable.
2. Close your eyes for a short while and observe the vision, colors, grayness, blackness, images, etc.
3. Experience the events in your body, pains, heartbeat, travel within to the hands and feet, etc.

4. Now slowly open your eyes and zero in on the person across from you or center on an object in front of you.
5. Know that you are observing this object from the surface of your vision. This is your normal routine way of looking at the world.
6. Now, with your mind, attempt to draw your vision a few inches into your skull.
7. Become aware that you are inside your body looking out onto the world. If you are looking at another individual be aware that there is a unique soul there looking out onto the world.
8. Might this vision be a mindful vision by your soul or spirit? At this point are you aware of your unique nature?
9. Did anyone experience a sense of being inside your body? How many were able to experience a visual depth within themselves?

The result of this small experiment was not very spectacular, yet for a few of the graduate students participating there were observations to be considered. One student reported that the most significant perception occurred during the initial observation of the closed eyes. Another student reported that it was not possible to withdraw into the head. No other observations were reported at that time but at the class break several students commented that the meditation was a relaxing, enjoyable, or refreshing experience. It must be noted that many years of meditation practice, even among Easterners, are generally required for significant perception to result.

From a prejudicial point of view the experiment was a failure. This could be due to a failure to properly set the mood for the meditation. Yet, a Western mind, having practiced various forms of meditation for many years can move into the discernment of mind and body. This notion is not the same as Descartes writing, "I am, I exist, is necessarily true each time that I pronounce it, or that I mentally conceive it."⁷⁵ It is the simplicity of awareness of one's own physical being, with its limitations and abilities, together with the subjective knowledge, as

well as sincere hope and belief that there is more to us than the body that the meditations are meant to produce. Simply put, it is pure awareness. All people are capable of being truly and deeply self aware. It is in this state of awareness that peace can take root. It is in the firmly rooted inner peace that respect can bloom. If peace first comes to the individual it is possible to find a greater level of respect for other people. The growth of respect is far more achievable than the growth of love for all people. Might the Western and Eastern minds be capable of uniting into some modern way of thinking that draws from the Collective Unconscious all of the primal material necessary for a new human race that lives by the love discussed at the sermon on the mount, and the compassion that leads to the true Enlightenment of the Buddha nature?

SECTION 3

COMMON SPIRIT MANIFESTED IN SYMBOL

There is commonality among us in spirit, as it is also represented by the archetypal images present in our dreams. While some of the detailed meanings of the archetypes differ between Western and Eastern value systems, primal experiences still link us together. One example of this can be seen in the significance of the circle as a mystical image of power and strength. When it was necessary to represent an image of *the self* in this paper, Figures 1, 2 and



Figure 4. An embroidered Sacred Heart: Saint Peters, Saint Cornelius and Saint Calepode. Twelfth-century mosaic in the church of Santa Maria on the Transteverine, Rome.⁷⁶

3, all circles, served that purpose. Figure 4 represents one of many circles used in Christianity to draw attention to the divine self.⁷⁶ When a nineteenth century cleric of the Ottoman Empire wished to adorn the hand written Qur'an (typically found spelling) he had so diligently and lovingly copied, he chose to place the name of Allah within the pure and true boundaries of a circle (Figure 5).⁷⁷ The circle is one of first images we notice as a developing person and it must have been a symbol of power and amazement to our earliest ancestors. When ancient

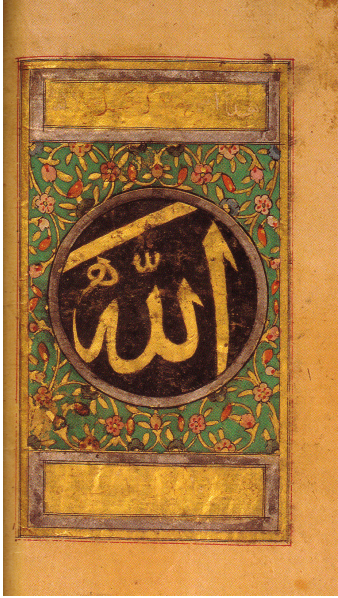


Figure 5. Calligraphy of Allah

fire pits are discovered they are usually round and defined by a circle of stones. Might these early fire pits represent an attempt to bring the circle and light of the moon down to the gathering of kinsman?

Whatever the answer may be, there is little doubt that the image of the circle has held a special significance for both Eastern and Western philosophers. In Figure 6, the head of Buddha is

shown adorned with a halo. This image of the Enlightened One can be routinely found in

sculptured figures dating to two or three hundred BCE, in Theravada figurines.

With the growth in popularity of Mahayana Buddhism in Tibet (cir. 1100 C.E.) the old Tantric traditions of placing a halo on the head of deities became a common practice.

These circular halos are important to Christians as well, and can be seen in typical sacred artwork.

Compare the halos on the image of

Buddha to those on the Holy Family in Figure 7. This



Figure 6. Typical Image of Buddha with Halo

powerful symbol of perfection and strength is more than just a conscious awareness of the divine nature of the holy ones, it is a primal archetype of order and unity that creeps into our dreams and leaves us with a feeling of wholeness.



Figure 7. The Holy Family

The spiral is another figure that occurs naturally in the universe and is also among the most ancient symbols of order and mystical power. The ancient Chinese philosophy of Tao Te Ching is believed to have had its roots in ancient practices of the shamans in the Yellow River area of Northern China, between 3000 and 800 BCE⁷⁸ One of the documented practices is a dance that lifts the shaman on a sky journey to the stars. It begins underground and progresses in a spiral pattern as illustrated in Figure 8 along the path that leads to an ecstasy and sudden revelation. It allows communication with animals and gives the shaman the power to heal. The dance also confers the knowledge of healing plants. The dance is called *the Pace of Yu* and the practitioners were referred to as *wu*.⁷⁹ As an aside and further explanation of the images in figure 8, the pattern of the Big Dipper is shown below the spiral. The steps shown here are similar to some of those present in the Yang Long Form of Tai Chi where the beginning and ending position is called the *wu-chi* which is roughly translated as *the state before the separation of extremes* (yin – yang). Here the state, *wu-chi*

is represented as a clean, empty, perfect circle.⁸⁰

Can one see the connection of the spiral dance of the Pace of Yu with the moon snail shape shown in figure 9?

Note that the moon snail shown not only

displays the mysterious spiral pattern but also contains it in the form of a

circle. To primal humans this small mollusk must have seemed a gift from the gods since it was not only beautiful but also edible. The spiral image can be seen in dreams and is reported to be an image visualized by patients going under anesthesia for a medical procedure. It can be seen through the eye piece of great telescopes capable of focusing on distant galaxies. The point is that the form of the spiral is a naturally occurring image in nature that, like the circle, is part of the psyche of all people. Its value as a spiritual symbol may be different



Figure 9. Moon Snail

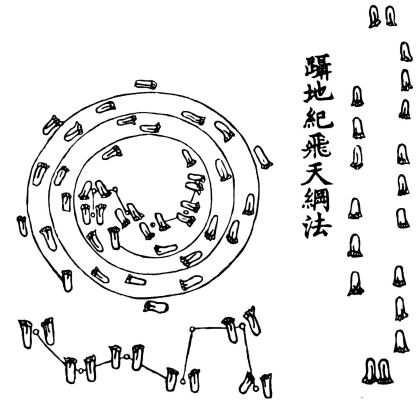


Figure 8. Ancient Taoist Dance to the Sky Believed to be of Shamanic

from person to person, but it is believed that the underlying, primal meaning is the similar for us all. Von Franz, writing in *The Process of Individuation*, a chapter in Jung's, Man and His Symbols, relates the experience of a patient who, using art work, brought to consciousness a mandala containing a spiral. The upward ascending spiral is symbolic of the old order being renewed with new elements as it returns again and again to the same point.

Interviews with his patient convinced Von Franz that the spiral in her painting represented the Holy Ghost, which is usually represented by a fiery wheel or a dove, but here a new thought had emerged in the dreamer.⁸¹

Other dream images that are shared, cross culturally, are images of an old man or old woman, the figure of a hero being, plus many more. Dream feelings such as joy, sadness, love, hate, fear and all other emotional reactions to consciousness are experienced cross culturally, as well.

Many practitioners of Jungian psychology believe that there is a danger when the Western mind attempts to practice Eastern traditions such as *samadhi meditation*, or understand spiritual concepts like *prana*, *ataman* or *chakras*. Jung related the potential problems to the Western lack of mental direction which said bordered on psychic anarchy.⁸² Here the difference in practices between Eastern and Western spiritual ideas, as they are brought to consciousness, is different from the potentially shared meaning of archetypal images of the psyche.

In this work there is an attempt to seek the commonality of meaning, not the differences. The differences are all too easy to see and have been with us for thousands of generations. As stated before herein, today we have the tools that can help us think deeper than ever before, to a level where the common threads weave the potentially strongest and most beautiful universal cloth.

CONCLUSION

It can be inferred by considering the number of ancestors (Table 1) necessary to produce a child born in the year 2004 that the entire human race is

already united genetically. Developments in science and technology have crossed cultural and geographical boundaries to kindle a need to communicate and travel. From about the middle of the twentieth century until today and beyond, communication and transportation have fostered a need for international understanding of cultural values among all people. This is especially true for those engaged in world trade. At the heart of these attempts lay awareness of the need to understand different spiritual values.

As these investigations have proceeded many have realized that we, spiritually, already have much in common with each other. This commonality is quite apparent to the mind that seeks it in compilations such as World Scripture – A Comparative Anthology of Sacred Texts, as well as works like Mircea Eliade's Essential Sacred Writings From Around the World. The so-called Golden Rule, or rule of reciprocity, being found in virtually every religious idea from primal shamanic tribal groups to the most sophisticated belief system is one example of natural human conscious need to develop this most basic spiritual awareness for peace, order, and harmony.

There is a scientific foundation to the possibility of peaceful coexistence on the planet as well. Carl Jung has given us a lifetime of work in the field of psychology that not only reveals the mental dynamics of consciousness and unconsciousness, but also the work speaks to the commonalties as well as differences of all human beings. His work was based upon a belief that many of the mental disorders of today can be traced to a crisis of spirit. This seems a most appropriate statement to many who look to the divine for answers to

unanswerable questions. For the spiritual person, there may be an intuitive answer to questions of faith, but one of the most nagging questions regarding peaceful coexistence seem as unanswerable as ever.

Perhaps by understanding the commonality in scripture the world populations can come to the awareness that we all have the same concerns, fears, need for happiness, love, and respect. Of all these, respect is the key. It might be extremely difficult to love another person, but if we can at least respect his or her ideas, needs, wants and culture, we may live in peace.

May the depth of our souls join the strength of our Spirit.



Figure 10. The Living Mandala

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a : a state or habit of mind in which trust or confidence is placed in some person or thing

b : something believed; *especially* : a tenet or body of tenets held by a group

c : conviction of the truth of some statement or the reality of some being or phenomenon especially when based on examination of evidence.

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