

Psychosynthesis: The Elements and Beyond **Will Parfitt**

extract from:

Chapter 20: COMING OF AGE

By deepening our consciousness of essential divinity – of the Immortal God within – our power to radiate it is increased, and our ability to shed light in our surroundings, transform our environment, and live with spiritual creativity is intensified. (Roberto Assagioli)

SOURCE AND SELF

This Self is not a disembodied spark of some kind but can be conceived as a whole being, the web of creation seen as the body of, or an expression of, the creator. The Qualities in Psychosynthesis are different archetypes affecting the psyche, which in turn creates ‘subpersonalities’ to interact with the world. Subpersonalities in this sense are the most material form of the original archetypal energy or Self. It is through their transformation and alignment that the individual can come into relationship with the divine in its purest sense. At the same time, everyone is also in relationship with the divine in its manifest sense through all the different aspects and interactions of their own subpersonalities, and with those of others, which is itself a manifestation of the self.

The Sanskrit word ‘om’ or ‘aum’ is composed of three phases, the ‘a’ when the breath arises, the ‘u’ where it connects to the emerging life force, and the ‘m’ sound of completion and continuation. The importance of breathing has been central to most spiritual practices throughout the story of humanity. Many psychotherapists recognize, more or less consciously, the relevance of how a client breathes. In relationship, the therapist and client conspire, that is ‘breathe together.’ This is a conspiracy of sound rather than silence, where ‘talking about’ is encouraged rather than taboo. Yet in this breathing together, a radical threat is made to the society of the individuals involved. That they may come to be more themselves in some way is threatening to the status

quo. A good therapist keeps in mind the place of the individual within the society. Who is to decide what is best for the society is a difficult question. Who decides what is best for the client is not so difficult (in theory if not always in practice!)

After the beginning of the breath, the 'a' sound passes through the throat and changes to 'u'. The sound in the throat may start as silence but it inevitably moves to an utterance, a cry: from the first cry of birth (and creation), through all the expressions of suffering and joy that humans may utter. A therapist encouraging clients to make sounds, when appropriate, and to notice when and how they feel blocked in this area of the body, enables the cry to be felt, opening the throat to process.

Next is the 'm' sound as the breath reaches the closed lips. This is the eternal 'hum', the 'am' and 'ma' (mama), the first spoken word. The breath creatively forces the mouth open and rises to the nose. Expelled it creates the 'gn' sound which is the vibration of life, similar to the 'gn' of gnosis, the knowledge of existence and the source of self-reflective possibilities. The four elements of fire, water, air and earth also correspond to force (A), activity (U) pattern (M), and form (N). The force (energy or intent) and activity come together to create the pattern (the blueprint or balance) and the form (or being) of the world. Breath is the source (or force) of life; the pattern comes from mother; these two create within each individual and within society as a whole all activity or doing and all form or being.

A wish to overcome whatever obstacles block our aspirations, whatever stops us reaching our goal, is natural. This is done through rising above the problem either in a positive sense, by realizing letting go can often liberate the intent, or in a negative sense of avoidance and denial. To rise above something is the way of transcendence. As well as rising above the problem, it is possible to become immersed in it, investigating and working within its field of influence, watching for the outcome to emerge, allowing the process of soul to unfold. This is the positive side of immanence. The negative side is to be so immersed in the material to forget who one is and one's inherent divinity.

Sin, in its original conception, did not mean to disobey some law that however useful and meaningful is of necessity partial and transitory. Sin was seen as the making of a mistake. To divert from one's individual path was a sin, primarily because it meant the person had mistaken their way and needed to find some way

to get back on track. This was the meaning of repentance, when applied to sin. Secondly, it was a sin because, if off track, a person almost inevitably interferes with other people on their paths. A vehicle off course is very dangerous and can cause damage to others and their property. This required atonement to match the repentance. You give to God what belongs to God and to Caesar what belongs to Caesar, as was clearly stated by Jesus.

Sex, sensuality, good food, intoxicants, art and beauty, the colours in nature, and so on, are to be appreciated by the adult as his or her tastes become more refined. Society's repression leads to the abuse of these pleasures, which perhaps is necessary for the growth of society but does not always serve the individual. Food itself doesn't create bulimia or anorexia, nor is drinking alcohol a sure road to alcoholism. Sex can be enjoyed for the energy it brings without fear of judgment or blame. These pleasures become distorted when the human is out of touch with the instinctual within, not tame, but also not reactive. The ability to enjoy the good life, with all its hedonistic tendencies, is one of the qualities of the Self to be appreciated, not scorned or judged. When the Self is in touch with herself in that way, she knows when to stop. This is part of the true animal nature within that makes the connection between the individual and the collective self.

Attention and intention are closely allied states. Doing something without attention or intention decreases energy within the individual (or collective). Being with attention or intention, on the other hand, without doing anything with it, increases energy levels. Being with intention is allied to what in shamanism is called dreaming; doing with attention to what is termed stalking. The more the individual contacts silence, the more the state of being is maintained, the stronger is our ability to shamanically dream and stalk our purpose in life.

One of the most striking and persistent questions of human life is where do we come from? Is there existence before birth? To accept that there is a place of origination is enough, however. When speculation ceases, each one of us is left with our own experience. This is to be able to experience unity through diversity. It is the fact that everyone is different, and has a myriad of emotional responses and reactions to others. This is one of the greatest opportunities facing us. As with the revelation of most opportunity, difficult and dark times have to be negotiated. Humanity now stands on the threshold of adult life, and it is time

to recognize the Self walks with us and within us. Everyone and everything is a manifestation of the Self and all the different aspects of personalities, subpersonalities, shadow, ego, repression, denial, insight, intuition, all the dark and light qualities that make up existence are the plays of the divine within an individual, family, society and globally.

There are mysterious aspects to life. There is always more in life - more than 'this', whatever 'this' is being experienced. To learn to respect and enjoy what is unknown is to take the opportunities this offers, instead of making what is unknown into a shadow to be feared and repressed. What is known, the state of the planet, for instance, or the atrocities fostered through ethnic intolerance, has a large enough shadow content. To respect and allow the unknown is to become a better practitioner of the art of life.

The fears and hopes of any individual human are the fears and hopes of all humanity. Each person has tendencies and predilections, and these are all equally aspects of the collective. What is needed is to recognize and accept collective heritage, as the product of the one source of everything, whatever that source is described as, and however diverse it may be in its manifestations. Whether it is named God, Allah, Atum, the big bang or a universal accident, everything known originates here. Instead of arguing over what to name it, or who has a better understanding of what it is, it is timely to grasp its presence and find ways to co-operate with the process of unfolding life. That has value and can be enough meaning in itself.

Our self-reflective capabilities are the link to divinity. Everyone and everything is divine. The difference is we know it, are aware of our predicament, of being alive in this wonderful, mysterious and terrible universe. This awareness brings responsibility and it is time for us to take this responsibility collectively. It is our collective responsibility to be willing to listen to our hearts and follow through the new, clearer connections that are made; and through learning good listening skills, being willing to listen to others and hear their position. To listen to the divinity within self or another requires a particular skill - that of stillness, quietness, and the ability to turn off the inner dialogue to hear the silence within. Being open to another means being open to oneself. Within oneself awaits the other.