

“Never the Twain Shall Meet”: Spirituality or Psychotherapy?

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My thesis for this article speaks to a sort of anti-theme. My direction since 1974 (when I shifted from the practice of conventional medicine and psychiatry to a spiritually-based healthcare direction), has hinged not on spirituality *and* psychotherapy, but on spirituality *or* psychotherapy. From my experience, they are antithetical to each other. The tenets and principles of spirituality are opposed to those of psychotherapy, as they represent two separate domains of thought that are quite distinct from each other: spirituality is an analogical acausal system of inquiry and discovery of relationships and correlations, whereas psychology is a logically-based cause-and-effect system.

For the past 40 years, my practice has been devoted to the healing arts (via the avenue of the mind), beginning with my training as a psychiatrist, then full-scale psychoanalytic training with a year's training in hypnosis during my internship. Following these years of conventional education, the culminating point in my training was my nine-year apprenticeship in Western spiritual medicine with Mme. Colette Aboulker-Muscat of Jerusalem, which began in 1974 and was formally completed in 1983. My practice of Western spiritual medicine has had as its emphasis three major focal points: imagination (including mental imagery), will, and memory (remembering our True Self).

In Jerusalem, I met a young man who had undergone three years of extensive psychoanalysis—five times a week—to rid himself of persistent depression. His analysis had produced little relief. After these fruitless three years, he went to a woman who practiced “visual imagery” or, more precisely, “waking dream therapy.” He had had four sessions with her—once a week, for a period of a month—and considered himself cured. Given my Freudian perspective, I could hardly believe him. However, the fact remained that in one month, with a new and different kind of therapy, his depression had lifted.

My interest deeply aroused, I met with his therapist, Colette. In this meeting that changed my life, I told Colette that I had heard about her remarkable success with the young man, but had never heard of her therapeutic technique. As we exchanged a few remarks about mental

imagery, I shared with Colette a sudden insight that occurred to me: Freud described his technique of free association in terms of mental imagery. I recalled that in his article written in 1912 on beginning analysis, Freud recommended to the young analyst (toward whom the article was directed) to tell the patient to imagine that they were together on a train, and he was to describe everything he saw going by as he looked out the window, without editing his thoughts. Colette responded by asking me, “In what direction does a train go?” I was caught short by this seeming non sequitur. What did this have to do with therapy? I wondered. Worried that I would somehow give the “wrong” answer, as the analytic position often incites, and with the concomitant self-consciousness that sets in amongst analysts and analytic patients, I cautiously said that trains go in a horizontal direction and made a horizontal gesture with my arm and hand. Colette looked at me and responded by making an upward gesture with her arm and said, “And if we change the axis?” At this moment I experienced a spiritual awakening, an epiphany that has been the motive force of my life. Since then, my career has been dedicated to the unfolding of that epiphany into a coherent and cohesive system of healing that continues to this day. The vertical axis Colette indicated by her gesture became the guiding princi-

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ple for establishing a therapeutic/educative approach designed to teach each of us how to be truly free through the spiritual practices of the Western spiritual tradition, unfolded in a clinical context.

Two later experiences of mine highlight the direction I'm delineating: the first was an invitation to attend a Tibetan center in New Jersey, where eight Western-trained clinicians—MDs and psychologists—were to “graduate” from their training in Tibetan approaches to health. The Dalai Lama was invited to oversee the proceedings. The night before the next morning's ceremony, he asked that the graduates present him with a list of questions they wanted answered. The morning of the event, a group of invitees were asked to attend, sit in an outer circle, and keep silent. We did so. The eight students entered, as did the Lama with whom we all greeted and shook hands. When we were all finally seated, the festivities began by the Lama asking the students for their questions. The students seemed bewildered. They murmured that they gave the Lama their questions the preceding evening. He said he received no questions, even though they protested otherwise.

So the students complied anyway. One student asked, “What should I do when a patient with diabetes comes to my office?” The Lama seemed somewhat surprised by the query. After a moment of thought he responded, “Unfold the eightfold Buddhist path to him.” The next student asked: “If a couple having marital troubles comes to see me, how should I best approach them?” The Lama again seemed somewhat dismayed and answered, somewhat quizzically, “Unfold the eightfold Buddhist precepts to them!” And, so it went. As each question was posed about whatever clinical situation, it was answered by “unfold the eightfold Buddhist path/precepts.” In other words, besides showing them their lack of understanding, he was also pointing to the fact that all difficulties come from and are corrected by addressing the realm of Spirit—bring Spirit directly into the clinical arena, and use it as the foundational point for the corrections to be made.

The second experience was my surveying of several serious American Zen Buddhist psychotherapists who were longtime meditators. I asked them about their clinical practices. I assumed out loud that since they each had a consistent meditational practice, they would do the same with their patients. Each of them emphatically said “No.” When I asked why, they said they conducted a conventional talking psychotherapeutic practice where the patients talked about their past, present, future, and the interpretations/analysis applied to that content.

I asked each of them (at different times) how they resolved the contradiction inherent in their practices. After all, they each personally had a meditational practice involving divorcing oneself from the content of consciousness, this content being viewed as a fabrication of the mind, and having no intrinsic value. However, while in

their offices, they were giving credence to the patient's/client's content of consciousness, regarding such content for the patient as having value. How, I thought, could these practitioners be committed to an acausal personal practice, while carrying on a causal clinical practice; how does one hold two contradictory points of view in consciousness? The response from the practitioners was one of obvious discomfort (similar to the discomfort I detected in the students at the Tibetan center when the students were “caught” in their misunderstanding, or lack of understanding). Finally, they each gave the same retort: “I have to make a living.” The fear was that their income would irreparably suffer should they bring Spirit into the office. Did their response, I wondered, betray a lack of faith in their meditational practice? I suspect that they also may not have understood the connection between a personal practice and sharing that with suffering people.

Following in the same direction that the Dalai Lama expounded to his student-followers, in my practice I lay out the Western spiritual path, including its spiritual precepts, to the those suffering who cross my threshold, and I have been doing so for 30 years. The basic thematic elements of this path include: the phenomenological foundation (phenomenology means the experience or study of the moment without subjective interpretation or objective quantification as is the case, both ways, in psychology and science); the therapeutic application of mental imagery—the natural and true language of the mind; the therapeutic application of our conscious will directed toward deconditioning our habitual ways of thinking and behaving; and the spiritual precepts alluded to above. In effect, I lay out the Western or monotheistic path in whatever context the recipient can accept it. For instance, there are many people who do not or cannot accept the reality or existence of an invisible reality as a presence that actively informs and shapes our lives. Nor can many individuals accept a fundamental tenet of all spiritual doctrines: that what is happening in the inner forum of consciousness manifests as, or creates, what we encounter and experience in the outer world or outer forum of consciousness, our everyday life experience; that what we encounter in the immediacy of experience—outer or inner—is a mirror reflection of aspects, qualities, characteristics, or impulses of ourselves. There are many ways that have been stated to describe this premise: the invisible creates the visible; belief creates experience; quality gives rise to quantity; function gives rise to form (the ancient Egyptian Pharaonic wisdom understanding), to state a few.

Psychology has it the other way around. This field is based on a materialistic worldview which starts from the premise that whatever is visible, and is perceived as an experience, is the cause and becomes the starting point for creating our lives; hence the external world becomes the yardstick for determining the validity of our perceptions.

Visible and external are synonymous for material, therefore mind is not material. Experience creates belief; effect creates cause; external circumstances determine our life course; the traumas of our life shape our destiny, and so on in this vein. So it is, for example, that post-traumatic stress disorder (shellshock and war neurosis being earlier designations from experiences during wartime) is viewed as formative of one's life direction. This is a variation of the idea that experience creates belief or that the outside creates the inside. To sum up, psychological therapies are wedded to a cause-and-effect system based on, and giving primacy to, the meaningfulness of conditional thinking. In whatever form of psychotherapeutic method that is conceived, there is a psychological construct at its core.

For spiritual life, what we encounter in our world of action or experience are mirror reflections or analogies of what is going on in our qualitative belief-forming world. The experiences are images reflecting us back to ourselves. They are phenomenological moments that are full of information about us, and need to be read. Images are hieroglyphs of the mind that have, embedded in them, all the knowledge about ourselves that we need. They are a revelatory language calling to us to access the information they hold for us. Consider the story of Joseph in the bible. Joseph was the doyen of dream reading. In the story of his life, we find that he is connected to five dreams. Here, I'll discuss the first two, which Joseph related to his brothers. The other three are dreams he reads while in Egypt, after he is sold into slavery. These latter ones are the Butler's dream, the Baker's dream (when they meet him in prison), and lastly, the Pharaoh's dream (in two parts), which is the most known and quoted. These dreams form the direction for the course of Joseph's life. They are emphasized in the biblical narrative to alert us to the importance that the function of imagery has for us in shaping the circumstances that unfold in our lives, rather than the other way around. He has the first dream as a 17-year-old boy, prior to when he knew that his ten older brothers hated him, except for his younger brother, Benjamin. Part of the dream is as follows: "We were binding sheaves in the field and, lo, my sheaf arose, and also stood upright, and behold, your sheaves came round about, and bowed down to my sheaf." After Joseph told this dream, his brothers hated him even more. Subsequently, he told them yet another dream: "The sun and the moon and eleven stars bowed down to me." He told this dream as well to his father, who rebuked him and said to Joseph: "What is this dream that thou hast dreamed? Shall I and thy mother and thy brethren indeed come to bow down to thee to the earth?" ... "his father kept the saying in mind."

These dreams presage what will eventually come to pass when he becomes the second-most powerful man in Egypt, and his brothers (and eventually, his father) have to come to him and bow before him in supplication for food to feed

themselves and their families, who are suffering from famine in the land of Canaan. The brothers' sheaves bowing down and bent attest to the famine to come later on. Joseph's father reads the second dream—correctly as it comes to pass—and rebukes Joseph (as though Joseph can control the content of his dream. But, I suppose, Jacob chides Joseph for telling the dream since the meaning is so patent).

Yes, at first Joseph is an adolescent when these dreams occur, and in the swirl of adolescent urges and the crosscurrents of impulses and emotions, Joseph blurts out these dreams to his brothers (at once naively, and at the same time boastfully incurring their enmity), which precipitates their plan to kill him. From there, the story unfolds with Joseph finally ending up in Egypt, and then Pharaoh's dream of the seven fat cows, lean cows: (seven ears of good corn, lean corn), finally ending up with his dreams of 22 years before as a raw youth becoming fulfilled. The story ends with the family reuniting, Joseph accepting his brothers back into his bosom without rancor or vengefulness (he certainly grew up and practiced in those intervening 22 years), and his brothers having mastered their jealousy, while his father's prolonged grieving for his long-lost favorite son is resolved and turned to joy.

What I am driving at is that in spiritual training and education, we are not interested in the logical, rational, anecdotal memory content of one's consciousness, nor are we particularly concerned with the traumas or crisis points that we are all subject to (through the errors we commit in our faulty way of thinking, guided by our misguided beliefs). We don't neglect these difficulties, and try to handle these weeds growing in our garden of truth to which we tend and attend. In fact, there are many techniques, including many of mine, that have been developed to create symptom removal, which is where psychotherapy may have some relevance. But we are also interested in the roots that give rise to those weeds. Without eliminating these roots, the weeds are likely to grow again or take some other form.

In modern times, the older psychotherapeutic ideas established by Freud, and embellished by many clinicians in their own ways, have given way to a newer type of psychology that has rejected the idea of unconscious forces at play, and replaced it with events having actually happened that have created the troubles we experience. Such notions as the inner-child, adult children of alcoholics, and molestation to children, serve as explanatory formulas to account for the predicaments we currently face. Those explanations are temporary palliatives because psychology does not look at the need for explanation itself as an obstacle to self-transformation. For spirituality, explanations, interpretations, conclusions, assumptions, as well as a focus on outcomes, results, predictions, reasons, and speculations, are all an internal mental action of making graven images with the mind. In the monotheistic tradi-

tion, to say “this is it” is to create a crystalline structure—a fixed image—that by its very nature is subject to decay and entropy. At the same time, it tricks one into believing that these mentally-created structures are facts. Any fixed object, be it physically or mentally constructed is, by definition, subject to decay and breakdown. All future talk or past talk, both significant priorities of psychological inquiry, are realms that don’t exist. The future is uncreated and therefore doesn’t yet exist, but it’s treated as an object that is created. The personal past is fixed, dead, over, ended, finished, no longer existing, yet it’s constantly resuscitated by investing it with meaning. All of this is making graven images.

Fields such as psychology and medicine tend to maintain their positions, while attempting to graft onto their foundational principles another perspective—joining spirituality and psychotherapy. The conjunction “and” essentially renders the situation moot. To attempt a mixing like this is to create an adultery. Adultery means to mix two things that do not inherently belong together, and this contamination weakens the mixture, adulterates it. In the same vein, the philosophies informing these two practices are as divergent as communism and capitalism. What I meant by my statement in the opening paragraph of this paper is that a causal system and an acausal system don’t mix. It is like putting two different seeds in the same field, or putting an ox and an ass on the same plough. In 1974, I realized that my newfound direction could not be reconciled with the conventional road I had originally chosen. I realized a choice had to be made: not to retain both (or the so-called “best of both”—otherwise known as eclecticism or syncretism), but to discard one to maintain a purity and consistency of direction that is uncontaminated, undiluted, and unadulterated, and to be able to then pursue the depths of that direction. I further realized that a sacrifice had to be made—I had to give something up. I faced enormous practical risk in doing so—loss of income, disapprobation of colleagues, ostracism from my colleagues, possible loss of “friends,” and a general destabilization of my life. I took a step that had been singular in and among others I have met who profess to pursue a spiritual psychotherapy.

It is a basic principal of Western spirituality (as well as all the world’s traditions) to take a vow of chastity. Chastity means to be faithful to one here below and to One above. Adultery is the negation of chastity. Eclecticism is a negation of chastity. Holding onto two opposing points of view in consciousness, and rationalizing such action, is a negation of chastity. I have devoted myself to one path, and one path alone, for the past 30 years; I have been able to synthesize a coherent, comprehensive, phenomenological system of education and healing derived from a doctrine of Spirit that is over 4,000 years old. I truly placed my faith in Spirit, rather than giv-

ing lip service to it and, for myself, inhibited the spiritual materialism that informs this recent urge in psychotherapy to garb itself in a spiritual robe of many colors.

Spiritual life is not a convenience to be adapted to a preconceived set of ideas adopted from the field of psychology. To describe Spirit in terms coming from psychology is again a mixing—using the language of one field to define another. If I had done otherwise, the result would have been a “psychologism” that ultimately degrades and debases the holiness of Spirit, reducing it to a set of abstractions having no substantive reality, as is the case with psychological constructions. As an example, psychology uses the term *unconscious*. For spiritual life, or its framework which we call “phenomenology,” there is no referent called “unconscious.” Everything in life is in consciousness. It is a matter of the degree of light streaming through us. It is a matter of the new spiritual body we are building by our spiritual attunement. The greater the light shed on what we encounter, the more we become aware of, the more we see, the larger and more expanded our field of consciousness. That seeing, when turned inward via a sensory experience called *imagination*, enables the inherent knowledge of our existence and understanding of our true purpose on earth to be revealed. That revelatory place is called “storehouse consciousness.”¹

Storehouse consciousness is a repository of the knowledge of both individual and collective existence accessible to us at all times via the process I noted above—imagination through its functional method called Waking Dream.² I think that meditative practices aim for an inward turning to access truth, except that in mainstream practice they want to exclude storehouse consciousness as a meaningful realm. However, both methods (meditation and waking dream) negate verbal associative and logical linguistic construction as having inherent value or relevance. Practically all verbal constructions are story-making exercises of one sort or another, having no particular relation to truth; or they participate in what may be called “the game of rationalization.”

Spiritual psychotherapy, for me, is to be replaced by spiritual education, which is what I do. Our troubles are not “psychological” in origin. Rather, they stem from errors in living which are disseminated through the miseducation provided by parents, educators, friends, and the media. This incorrect education sets up conditioned patterns of thought, feeling, behavior, and interpersonal relationships that are constructed on false beliefs and man-made standards of what we are supposed to achieve and how we are supposed to be in life. These errors in living are subject to correction. That spiritual teaching, which teaches us to live in accord with divine law, forms the basis of the business of spiritual education. Here we direct the seekers’ attention to their conditioned state, teaching them how to unhook the conditioning to create

an unconditional life. It may be that “unconscious” in psychology is another term for habit or conditioning. So, we have the “unconscious,” as place in psychology, which does not exist in terms of Spirit. What does an unconditional life look like? It looks like the following:

- Unconditional thinking = intuition
- Unconditional feeling = love
- Unconditional action = faith
- Unconditional relationship = acceptance-love (agape)
- Unconditional language = image

In addition to the above, we deliver a moral education, for those who are open to it, based on the divine precepts of Western spirituality known as the Ten Commandments, [Note 1] or the Ten Laws of Balance. Please note that every tradition has precepts that are its particular foundational points. Not all sufferers are open to abiding by nor accepting them, and they can't be forced on anyone. Enormous strides, however, can be made through “unhooking” (going through deconditioning). This process of deconditioning has its own pain, but it is the pain of healing, which is created by turning our attention from the familiar to the unfamiliar. Yes, suffering heals suffering. It is a homeopathic principle of healing: like cures like. The familiar habits keeping us enslaved and in pain appear to most people to be safer and less frightening than stepping into the unfamiliar territory occasioned by the practices of Western spiritual education. The new territory is known as the *sacer*, a Latin term meaning unknown, darkness, the unfamiliar, night, dream, death, mystery, the hidden. From this term is derived our current term, *sacred* (or holy). The absence of holiness is understood, in this system, to be the source of our ills. The spiritual educator (known as the *sacerdote*—educator of the *sacer*/holy/unknown) needs to be conversant with this dimension of reality, comfortable in its environment, and unafraid to share the wisdom discovered there with others. The *sacerdote* must be clear in his or her own life direction in this way that is unwavering and is lived according to whatever calling or career choice that falls to one as a life mission.

An aim of spiritual life is to foster the development of intuition. In this regard, the “technician of Spirit” teaches the one seeking help how to cultivate this quality as a force that gives direction to, and becomes a governing force in one's life. Intuition, by definition, is a mode of experience that bypasses ordinary rational and formal logical thought. It brings knowledge and conscience together, experienced as moral logic. Conscience here means “knowledge with,” and in its positive sense acts as a motivating force toward action. This knowledge is at first located in/as a bodily response. Here the visceral or bodily felt sense of intuition comes into play. Hence, the phraseology usually associated

with this phenomenon: “gut feeling,” “heartfelt sense,” “a light in the head (or brain), etc.” The event is never experienced contextually as good-bad, or right-wrong, which are man-made standards that have no value in light of spiritual understanding. Rather, the event is understood as a moment of truth that occurs to resolve two conflicting elements facing us at essentially every moment of our lives in which we are asked to choose. The human condition is such that we are faced with a choice between two opposing elements, or two contrasting elements, at each moment of our lives. Any serious inspection of one's life flow reveals this essential fact. Our education, or I should say, our mis-education, has informed us that we can “figure out,” that is, come to a conclusion about, what to do by the application of formal logic, which is a useless task. The general thrust of such thinking is to inhibit or paralyze action; such action from the spiritual side—of the Western tradition—being the basic way to resolve the choices facing us. Such action is prompted by resolving the binary through intuition, a non-conclusionary way of thought, in contrast to logic. Hence, in the spiritual domain, we don't seek to solve problems, but rather look for the source out of which the “problem” arose. (Source is not to be confused with cause and effect, but rather refers to relational elements that go into forming the whole picture of the person's life existence.)

The template upon which to consider the action is the set of divine laws mentioned above, which we have called the Ten Commandments (akin to the eight-fold Buddhist precepts that the Dalai Lama was talking about, also stated above). This Western ten-fold path focuses on our everyday behavior to be considered in the moment of encountering the situations we meet in the world. We are constantly pulled to respond otherwise: to cheat, steal, lie, commit adultery, murder, covet, make idols, create graven images, forget our holiness. To the extent that we do all of this is the extent to which we feel our suffering, and is at the same time the source of our suffering. Here it is “conscience” again, but in its negative sense of being the call of guilt or remorse for the injurious behavior we enact toward others or toward ourselves (“that doth make cowards of us all,” said the Bard of Avon). Carrying or living out these precepts is to align ourselves with the Divine, a central purpose for our existence here on earth.

Through carrying out these precepts, we come at first to our senses, literally, actualizing the voice of truth recognized as an inner prompting impelling us toward action. The veracity of this action is validated for us by the fruits that are borne. It is through instinct, wedded to intelligence by mutual affinity, where rational intelligence is working at the service of intuition to take the necessary steps to concretely fulfill the understanding we come to about life. Formal logic, then, serves as the mechanical means of bringing about action; eg, you want to leave your house after reading (or maybe even while reading) this article, and

go to the movies. The necessary action to fulfill that desire requires logical steps to be taken. It is here that formal logic serves us, enables us to navigate in and around this world, fulfilling various mechanical functions we are called on to do. But this type of thinking cannot help us solve our human condition, nor help us solve the particular matters of human relationship(s) existing within our human condition. I submit, at this juncture, that therapeutic systems do not entertain these basic spiritual points within their precincts, certainly not until current times. Yes, recently there has been an effort to bring the two perspectives together. The very attempt to do this speaks to my point; for if a psychotherapeutic system did contain basic spiritual understanding, there would be no need to bridge them. Personally, I don't think it is a matter of one adopting the premises of the other while retaining its own fundamental tenets. That is simply making a stab at improvement without having to sacrifice anything, a general tendency of any materialistic philosophy, which is the foundation upon which psychology and psychiatry are built.

Bearing the above in mind, I mentioned earlier that spiritual practice is involved in educating, such education being closely aligned with becoming an intuitive, self-knowing individual. The education, at least from the Western viewpoint, is fundamentally two-pronged (for purposes of this paper, since there are more). One prong is to clean away the obstructions that obscure truth, the latter always "lying in wait" to reveal itself to us. The basis of spiritual practice, as it applies to "therapy" of one's suffering, is to search for truth. Spiritual technicians serve a dual purpose here: 1) point out the obstructions/deleterious habits/conditioned behavior, and 2) supply the requisite tools to effect change of those harmful habits. These tools are meant for one to clear away the obstructions to truth in the immediacy of the moment of one's life circumstances, facing the errors of one's life and correcting them, since these conditioned errors have been existing over a lifetime. This is an active way that gives direct and immediate responsibility to the student/seeker to take charge of one's life without the need for postulating a notion like transference/countertransference that "has" to be worked through. Rather, what is developed is what we call the spiritual friend-student relationship, one that is *sui generis*, ie, without precedence. This unique relationship fosters the flowering of the seeker, who can reveal himself or herself freely in an atmosphere of acceptance and non-critical judgments. The clinician here acts as a catalyst for change. He lends himself actively to promote such change and growth while he remains unchanged in the process—the true definition of a catalyst.

The second prong concerns our accessing an inner process called *imagination* (of which mental imagery is a specific function), an active method that is the true and natural language of the mind. The following clinical scenario

presents an example of waking-dream therapy, to give a taste of a spiritually-based phenomenological intervention.

CASE ILLUSTRATION

A deep and sensitive young woman was having great difficulty in finding meaning in life, despite an excellent career, marriage, family, and social life. She embarked on waking-dream education because it had none of the trappings of "traditional" psychotherapy. That is, she did not want an analysis purporting to elucidate some meaning underlying her actions, such meaning rooted in her past experiences. In the same vein, she saw no purpose in being concerned with her thought content or the interpretation of it. She was a highly sophisticated woman whose work put her in contact with professionals in the mental health field. She felt there was danger in reinforcing an individual's already fragmented existence by trying to understand current behavior as some product of a long-ago event that was presumed to have caused it. She understood that such efforts only succeeded in making her feel worse because she felt a rejection of the immediacy and genuineness of her being. She wanted it understood that she would be accepted as she was. I gave her that assurance. Her work with me lasted three months, once per week.

During the course of her "education," she experienced a waking dream in which she went back into her night dream [Note 2] to discover herself in a circus, where she transmuted herself into a clown with an umbrella that allowed her to be airborne. On her journey, she discovered a fountain. She sat in the water and cleansed herself. She felt focused, and experienced slow pulsations of light going through her. The light was yellow-green at the center and, in concentric order, she also saw green-purple, red-black, blue, purple, and purplish-pink. The colors merged and became green, pink, and brown. Then there were brighter streaks of white light, and large and smaller lights. There were circles of light of irregular flame; then bright blue leading to purple and green. She was outside the white light, and then she blended into the colors. I asked her to bring the colors together into some form. She did so and her body changed into an alternation of sinking and expanding feelings. There was experienced a sense of airiness around her knees, and she felt that her head was large as she came back to the room after the experience. With her eyes open, she saw the entire room full of color, both the concrete objects and the space as well. She said that her body felt less distorted and less out of shape. This woman had initially indicated at the outset of her work that she wanted to be able to provide for herself the ability to understand how to synthesize and unify the different facets of herself. Along with this, she sought to develop more courage and to experience more pleasure and less internal pressure. These latter aims were embedded in her need to come to unity. Following this waking dream, she dreamt the following during the night:

A next-door neighbor was being influenced by a fish-like, supernatural monster. Unusual events had taken place, and the neighbor experienced great fear. The neighbor was in the process of writing a book about it. I come to you and talk about the happenings. You determine that I am not crazy, except you question if I could have a delusion in one area concerning the monster. But you also realize that you no longer know what truth is and what is possible. Several people came in to examine me, including a psychiatrist. The wife of the psychiatrist asks you if I am crazy. You reply "no." The psychiatrist says it is not unlike the early sea monsters. I have images of early lithographs of Loch Ness-type serpents; those sea monsters that came in the spring through centuries. People used to put a statue of a dragon at the head of a harbor or put a shark in the waters, but then the waters became dangerous.

At our next two meetings, we discussed this dream, in which the possibilities of growth, creativity, maturity, and freedom were all seen. She was then prepared to synthesize those possibilities and thus accomplish the major task she had set for herself in our work. In the waking dream reported, she had done preparatory work regarding courage and pleasure. At the outset of the waking dream she climbed a rope ladder, which had appeared in a previous dream. She came to a platform, found a rope, and swung off the platform in large arc-like swings. She swung to a higher, more precarious platform, but experienced a sense of balance there. The rope vanished and she saw a staircase rising from the platform. I asked her if she wished to climb. She said "yes," and ascended. She climbed five steps. It was very high, and she did not know what was up there. At the fifth step, she found a tightrope going to the ground. She gave herself an umbrella with which to walk the tightrope. She found more platforms and more stairs; her balance was good; she was waving her arms; she felt in control. It became fun. Then she became the clown. Here one can see her courage, manifested in climbing what would ordinarily frighten her, and her feeling pleasure instead of pressure. The preparation and correction of what was lacking, in terms of courage and pleasure, could now be brought to bear on achieving unity.

The discussion of dreams is an excellent way to prepare the self-explorer for entering the waking dream experience. Between the next-to-last and last waking dream experience of her contact with me, we discussed her night dream in terms of carrying out the potentials she came to recognize. We noted how the focus of action moved from the neighbor to her. In the dream, she found growth (spring), creativity (writing a book), maturity (facing the sea monster, becoming the center of action), and freedom (not being crazy). After this careful dream explication, at the third weekly meeting after the clown dream, she reentered the dream to the point of the sea monster (a combination of sea monster and guardian dragon), and had

the following waking dream (my comments and questions appear in brackets):

The serpent is undulating above and below in the water. It is alongside the dragon. The dragon is olive-green and is willowy. It has scales of overlapping pentagonals. The overlap makes them look octagonal. I am in the water alongside the dragon. The water is cool. I am with the dragon and not really separate. I am undulating in the water. I am diving underwater, and I find chunks of gold with light around them in the darkness. They are square. The light comes from the greenness of the water. I am gathering the gold together and I am making a mound. The light now is less diffuse and more condensed.

I am swimming in the light created by the halo around the mound of gold. I look good. I look like a mermaid with gold scales. I move in the water and cover all corners of the bottom of the lake. I dart like a fish and feel a sense of power and quickness. [I ask her to come to the surface—vertical movement.] I burst through the top of the water. I look like a green plant. The gold is reflected on the water and not on me. [I tell her to keep the feelings of power and quickness for herself.] My leaves are spreading out like corn stalk leaves. They are horizontal and are stretching downward. [Describe them.] They have a red flower on top. There is a cluster of flowers. I smell the fragrance of the flowers. They are tucked inside me, within myself. I am walking across the surface of the water, and on my shoulders I am wearing a long swirling cape. [Describe it.] It is white, made of gauze, and very sheer. [Where do you go?] I leave the water and am walking on the beach. I see pine trees. It is very dark at the trees, with light coming through in spots. I have nothing on. I feel alone, as though I am the only one in the forest. [Where do you go?]

I am walking through the forest. There are small pines with pine needles. I meet a squirrel. There are white and lavender and yellow wildflowers with large leaves. [How do they feel?] They feel velvety. I see a mountain beyond the forest. The forest goes up the side of a mountain. [Go up the mountain using the moving platform of last night's dream.] I'll use gold chains to hold me onto the platform. The platform is like a carpet, but of a different texture. [Where do you go and how do you feel?]

I'm leaving the forest floor. I see the tips of pine trees. The mountain is very craggy and full of snow. The "carpet" is going at a great deal of speed and is covering large areas of the mountain. I feel short of breath. [Breathe blue-golden light evenly and regularly.] I'm at the top of the mountain, in the Himalayas. It is very beautiful, and I hear the wind whooshing. There is sun and light on the tips of the mountains, and shadows in the valley. The tips are golden and make the shadows shades of blue. [Note the transforming movement of gold throughout the exploration. It shows up in different ways throughout. She, of course, has "found gold."]

[Look in all four directions.] “North”—I have been facing there all along; “West”—I looked there as well; “South”—I also have looked there; “East”—I’m not sure what is there. I’m not sure I want to look at it. I see stars in the darkness. I feel a sprinkling from them and feel better. I see the whole Milky Way. I feel the whole environment is together again, and all is friendly. [Where are you?] I am in the center of the environment. I want to stay. There is a sense of endless space going out in all directions. I want to know if there is an outer edge. [What do you do?] I send out glances, energy, and attention to the outer limits. I’m not sure there is a “here” out there.

I sense a reversal of energy. It goes out in spokes from me, and returns to me. It hits me and carries upwards, and I am covered with light from top to bottom. It goes around me and has substance. I feel in the vision and detached from it at the same time, like an observer. I feel completed here. At the water’s edge, I see the entire connection between gold, Serpent Mountain, the top, and silver. [Silver was the original substance of the harbor dragon.]

I told her to keep this understanding and inspiration for her, and to return quickly down the mountain and return to the beginning of the dream. She experienced difficulty in opening her eyes and said she would come back gradually. She felt that her fingers were extended, but in actuality they were not. She opened her eyes and saw the last image of the entire connection, and experienced its attendant insight. Her drawings (after each waking dream the explorer writes and draws the journey in an unlined notebook used for the purpose of recording waking dreams) showed the serpent and her moving platform pointing left. At the end, when she saw the entire connection, she was at the center of the drawing looking up with her arms outstretched, with the “connection” radiating out in gold in all directions. She understood at that moment, as did I. There was no need for further talking (which would cut the power of the imagined event). The way was clear.

This recognition of the possibility of wholeness encountered in the imaginal experience of plumbing the depths, scaling the heights, knowing the stages in between, and facing up to her instinctual urges in the form of the dragon, allowed her to translate this experience into her daily life. Whereas she had always been caught in a perennial conflict of mother-domestic-homebody-housekeeper-model wife, as opposed to establishing and maintaining a career, she could now bring a balance of the two into her existence.

She no longer needed to dichotomize between mother and career woman, and could maintain both guiltlessly. She saw the wholeness and, thus, could alter her perception about herself in the world, and her attitude toward the world. She reorganized her life. She had been a dance therapist and now worked with a male colleague, incorporating verbal therapy with dance therapy. She developed

her own style and became her own boss. Her home life became more fulfilling to her when she found that domesticity need not inhibit creativity. A one-year follow-up visit revealed a maintenance of stability and the solidification of what she had attained during her work.

This woman’s course of treatment embodies the natural waking dream progression: a guided exercise [Note 3] was followed by a related night dream that yielded the initiating image for the waking-dream exploration. The waking dream then produced further related night dreams, which led to other waking dreams.

This was accompanied by discussion of potentials and possibilities for fulfillment, and a deep exploration of self. One span of movement at the outset of her treatment began with a guided exercise of her weeding and exploring a garden, burning the trash, and planting a tree. Her subsequent night dream took place on a large green facing a lot of tall buildings that resembled a group of hotels. She entered a waking-dream exploration at that green, followed by a dream about a house with an archway (which she entered to begin a further waking dream).

I believe, in accordance with all spiritual doctrine, that clinicians must make a choice, much like the one I made 30 years ago. All spiritual practices require a purity of direction for everyone embarking on this journey, as the Dalai Lama indicated to his students. It starts with the doctrine, and flows from there. If the spiritual system is in truth, it will take you to truth, and nothing else need be added to it from another source. Along that path to truth, you’ll find all you need to provide a healing environment and education for those seekers who desire your services. To take this step requires an act of faith, that is, unconditional action; an action that immediately follows making up your mind to choose one way or another. Making up one’s mind and choosing can be recognized as another definition of faith. As clinicians, we must be true to ourselves, without hedging our bets by holding onto a system that is contrary to the spirit of Spirit.

Notes

1. The Western form of divine precepts to be unfolded in life, much as the Dalai Lama implored his followers to unfold the Buddha’s precepts.
2. This work is *not* the same as C.G. Jung’s *Active Imagination*.
3. Guided exercise is a shortened version of waking dream, designed to open the inner door to the extended journey that is waking dream. Guided exercises can also be revelatory and transformative in themselves.

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