



# THE SPIRITUAL JOURNEY

Formation in the Christian Contemplative Life

## "Pre-Rational Energy Centers, Part 1" Excerpted from *The Spiritual Journey Part 2, The Human Condition*

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[Evolutionary Model and Existential Model Chart appears on page 2 of transcript.]

This chart or diagram on the left-hand side [Evolutionary Model] is the ideal blueprint for human evolution according to the divine plan as reflected in the evolutionary process and is discovered, at least in the present state of research, by scientists. We saw earlier that this individual human development [Existential Model] follows the same basic blueprint and recapitulates all the states of consciousness through which the human family has passed. But there hasn't been an ideal development according to the blueprint, as is fairly obvious from our own experience and by talking with any other human being. We have the sense of in-completion, of human weakness, and we experience that inability or angst in which we can't go back to a previous innocence, that was like ignorance, the innocence of the unconsciousness of lower forms of animal life, and we can't go forward and give ourselves the experience of divine union.

### **SOMETHING IS MISSING IN OUR LIVES**

The reason why we feel incomplete, afraid, terror stricken, in need of immortality symbols of property and possessions to shore up our fragile self-identity, is precisely because we feel that something is missing in our lives that we have no way of obtaining – and that which we are lacking is the sense of oneness with the Ultimate Mystery of the universe, with reality, with God.

### **THE SYMBOL OF DIVINE INTIMACY**

In the Garden of Eden, there is the charming description of God visiting Adam and Eve in the cool of the evening and conversing with them. This, obviously, is a symbol of intimacy, just as Jesus represents in his time the symbol of divine intimacy as a "supper." He's represented in the Book of Revelation after his Resurrection as standing at the door, knocking. If anybody enters, he will come in and sup with them (this is from the Book of Revelation), and so, it's the sense of not being alone, but rather being at one with the universe, with other people, in harmony with the powers of the universe, and nature, with the earth, with ecology. This is the Garden of Paradise. It's not so much a place, but a state of soul, a state of mind, a state of consciousness.

<b>EVOLUTIONARY MODEL</b> Chain of Being Evolution of the Human Family Soma	<b>EXISTENTIAL MODEL</b> Energy Centers And Individual Human Development Sarx
<b>4. Mental Egoic</b> Rational Person-hood, Full Self-Reflective Self-Consciousness, Industrial/Technological Culture, Nation-Co-operation	<b>4. Age of Reason</b> <i>Co-opted by the energy centers. Hence their programs are:-</i> a) justified, b) rationalized, c) glorified,
<b>3. Mythic Membership</b> Verbal, Socialization, Farming Culture, City-State/Nation/Race,	<b>3. Group Over-identification</b> Uncritical acceptance of :- a) parental, education, b) ethical, training influences, c) religious, cultural conditioning,
<b>2. Typhon</b> Magical, Emotional exchange, Hunting culture - clan, Formation of Body Self,	<i>Hence, preconceived ideas and pre-packaged values.</i> <b>2a. Power Center</b> Power and control, <b>2b. Sensation Center</b> Affection and esteem, Sexual energy/pleasure,
<b>1. Uroboric</b> Immersed in nature, food, shelter, matter Immediate fulfillment of needs.	<b>1. Security Center</b> Survival and security.

### A POTENTIALLY HOSTILE UNIVERSE

The human predicament is precisely that we come to full self-reflective self-consciousness without this experience. We come to full self-consciousness with all the means that we elaborated in early childhood to cope with the gradually increasing level of our consciousness without the reassurance, the conviction, the certitude of being united to the rest of the universe. We are an individual psyche in the face of a potentially hostile universe, and that judgment is constantly reinforced by the positively hostile forces that the child encounters from its first year to the age of reason, especially to the eleventh year, to the age of puberty.

### A NEED FOR SECURITY THAT HAS NO BOUNDS

Biological life, in the development of the triune brain, is constantly growing, but the emotional life of the child is not necessarily growing proportionately. And the tendency for it in the face of opposition, rejection, fear, and other emotional experience that it cannot process, because it does not have reason yet, is precisely to develop coping mechanisms that are given various names in modern psychology, such as "defense mechanisms," "repression," "over-compensation," and the other things that you're probably already familiar with. As the instinctual needs of these earlier levels of consciousness come into focus, which are essential to the organic growth of the developing child, there develops this fixation on that level of consciousness

because the emotions are not able to process some of the experiences inflicted on the child which are overwhelming. Thus, the undigested emotional material of a lifetime is what gets repressed into the unconscious, and, fossilized there, prevents the free flow of energy and the processing and integration that the brain would otherwise naturally be able to produce. Thus, instead of survival being a step on the level of consciousness, and the need for security moving into other more advanced human needs and values, because of a deep privation at that early age, there comes a fixation, an emotional need for security that has no bounds and is fantastic.

#### **PROGRAMS FOR HAPPINESS: SECURITY**

And then, if that appeals as a solution to life's emotional problems for the child, it gradually builds this as the center of its emotional life, and a program of happiness develops around it, and it further develops into a whole constellation of attitudes, motivations, responses, commentaries on life that Ken Keyes, Jr. calls "the energy centers." And we're following here his language. The first one is the security center. It has as its core the instinctual need which is good, but it has developed a whole program for happiness to make security an absolute, and to guarantee as much of it as we possibly can get. "More and better out of life" is the motto of this energy center.

#### **PROGRAMS FOR HAPPINESS: AFFECTION-ESTEEM**

And so, what happens if you have esteem, honor, vanity or whatever word you might call it that is the cultural expression of being accepted, esteemed, approved, honored, etc., praised, in the culture in which you happen to be in? The nature of the energy centers isn't just an emotional reaction of frustration, but along with the emotional frustration and the particular form that it takes because of one's constitution or temperament, there is always a commentary that goes along with the emotion. And that's because our imagination and our emotions at this Typhonic level are in cahoots, so to speak. It's like the wheels, the interlocking wheels, of an old watch, so that, if one moves, the other moves. So, when the imagination starts getting wrought up about some affront, some lack of proper esteem, the emotion of anger begins to move also. Then, as anger gets more intense, more thoughts and more outrage is registered in the imagination, and pretty soon, they're going around faster and faster, one feeding into the other, an accelerating process, and this is what we understand by emotional turmoil or an emotional binge.

One experiences oneself as kind of stirring the pot of human misery, and even though you know it's killing you, you just can't stop. You've built up a certain momentum, and the angrier you get, the heavier your resolutions are. First, you are mildly indignant ... then this affront is unheard of ... then you're quite angry ... now, "I must do something to get revenge" ... now you're furious ... now you think you're going to punch him in the nose ... a little later you're gonna kill him! This is the way this stuff accumulates until you may be a few days, a few weeks, a few months and – for some people – for life, nursing these imaginary or real wounds which clearly point to the fact that one has an enormous emotional investment in the sensation center of affection-esteem, that circles around those subjects.

#### **PROGRAMS FOR HAPPINESS: POWER-CONTROL**

Now the search for power, once they've come to the full use of reason, it starts using the brain power to back up that project for controlling other people. It occurs to some

people, "Well, perhaps the best way to control people is to be a general. I think I'll enter one of the Armed Forces." And, if you're real good, you start climbing to the top. Now, the military mentality begins to develop. One belongs now to the group, the Mythical Membership level of identification with the group. Everybody in the group is trained for the defense of the country. This becomes the supreme value. The next question is "my country right or wrong."

#### **PROGRAMS FOR HAPPINESS: MYTHICAL MEMBERSHIP**

The group has an uncanny, almost a compulsion, to protect itself and to resist constructive change. This is the tendency that goes with an over-identification with one's particular group; and the first group we come into contact with, of course, is with our parents. Now there's nothing wrong with experiencing loyalty to our roots, and to our sources, and to our parents, and to our country; and, in fact, this is a virtue, and it's reasonable. But when one is under the influence of the energy centers, this modifies what is reasonable in one's loyalty and gratitude, and it becomes a peer group pressure that demands a certain conformity of conduct from us, whether or not our conscience fully approves of what is being done. As time proceeds, one gets used to the group mentality; one more easily conforms; one more easily resists those who challenge the group at any point to a greater honesty; and hence, it becomes entrenched and the authority in the group, which may have started out as representative and as serving the needs of the common good in the group, easily becomes authoritarian.

#### **JESUS' MEANING OF AUTHORITY AND FULL PERSONHOOD**

When human authority begins to function on this Mythical Membership level; it easily becomes authoritarian, which is different from authority. Authority is extremely important, but it's primarily in the service of the people it leads. At least this was Jesus' idea of authority, which is a very evolved form of authority and belongs to the Mental Egoic level, in which the authority is exercised to educate – that is to "educate" the potentiality of the members of the group and to enable them to realize their own full potentiality and creativity as human persons and as members of the group. So that authority is in the service of people and their personal growth and to bring them, especially religious authority, out of this swamp of dependency on self-centered motivation into the freedom and responsibility and accountability, of full personhood and full acceptance of one's place in the Mystical Body of Christ, as a living cell responsible for all the other cells, proportionate to the gifts and charisms that God distributes throughout the Body of Christ.

#### **INSTEAD, ENERGY CENTERS CO-OPT**

This false-self system is thoroughly in place when we arrive at the age of reason and so is our group identification. It's at this point, then, that reason begins to come into effect, but it is unable, usually, to re-evaluate what went before, and it tends to be used in the service of or to be co-opted by the energy centers in order to make them work better by using the energy of the brain to rationalize, justify, glorify, and to discover new ways and new skills in getting what we think will make us happy.

### GOD'S AFFIRMATION OF HUMANITY: THE INCARNATION

When John says, "The Word became Flesh," it's the incredible affirmation that God took upon himself, not just the ideal human nature, but human nature in its flesh; that is, in its actual condition of privation, misery, sin, death – taking the whole thing upon himself, Jesus must have experienced the temptation to get fixated at some level of his human growth. He also was an infant, so at some point he must have experienced the Uroboric or reptilian consciousness. And by taking this upon himself, he has experienced the human condition in its depth, in its weakness, in its temptation. And we see this exemplified in the Gospel episode of his desert experience. The desert experience takes place right after his baptism in the Jordan by John the Baptist, in which the Spirit descended upon him visibly, anointing him for a special mission. So, this is probably the time in which he entered fully into the mission of the salvation of the human family. And the first thing the Spirit did was to lead him into the desert for prayer and solitude and to experience the human condition in its raw nakedness.

What are the temptations he had? We celebrate this on the first Sunday of Lent. Lent is all about the desert. And the desert is all about struggling to dismantle these temptations, these fixations, these distortions of human nature. The first one: "Make these stones into bread," that is to say, put your security in your power rather than in God. The next one: "Throw yourself off the temple and you'll be esteemed as a wonder-worker. Everybody will be falling all over you and worshipping you as a god." Jesus adroitly turns the Scriptural quotes that Satan presents to justify this temptation right back at him, manifesting his integrity and his refusal to rely on himself rather than on God. The temptation is to jump off the pinnacle of the temple in order to be identified as a wonder-worker and esteemed. The third one is the greatest power temptation there ever was: The devil invites Christ to fall down and worship him. In exchange for this service, he says, "I will give you the whole world." Well, it doesn't belong to him anyway. This is one of Satan's characteristic pretensions. He thinks everything belongs to him, but that's not true. Notice then that Jesus' experience of human nature in the raw is exactly our experience – what we're confronted with when we begin the spiritual journey. And the desert is the place where – it's not so much sand or stones or rocks – it's the experience of the interior desert, that is to say, the experience of temptation that is really the center of that experience, and the purification that comes through temptation resisted. So, anybody who is resisting or trying to dismantle the false-self system, manifested in these emotional programs for happiness, is in the desert, and is in union with Christ; or, rather, Christ is in union with them, in virtue of the solidarity of the human family and his taking it totally to himself in his Incarnation.

Later, when Jesus was preaching (and he preached right across the board to ordinary people), he was on a mountain and everybody was there, not just his disciples, and he laid out his idea of happiness: The Beatitudes simply mean: "Oh, how happy you would be, if ...." That's what "beatitude" really means. In other words, Jesus is saying, so to speak, "You folks don't know what true happiness is. What you think is happiness is misery. If you'd like to know what it is, let me tell you!" "Oh, how happy you would be, if you are poor in spirit, then you would have the Kingdom of Heaven!" In other words, true happiness is to forget about security, to be free of it, to put your

trust in God. And, "Oh, how happy are the poor who don't have all these symbols, like millstones around their necks, that prevent them from experiencing the joy and the freedom of trusting in God to protect them, to provide for them, to nurture them! They have perfect happiness."

The next one: "Blessed are those who mourn. They shall be comforted." Now whenever we let go of something we love – good, bad, or indifferent – there's a period of mourning. There's a hole in our heart for a while. But if we accept that pain of loss, then it heals in such a way that we either enter into a new relationship with what we lost that is better than the one we had; or we learn how to live without something that was actually harmful, that was really a straitjacket, that was really phony happiness.

The third Beatitude: "Blessed are the meek" that is, those who don't want to have power over other people, who couldn't care less if they are insulted or mistreated because they know that that's not their problem. That's the problem the other guy has who is treating them that way. The meek are those who can put up with insults and find happiness in the freedom from wanting to control or to have power over people.

The other Beatitudes correspond to the higher stages of consciousness, all the way up to divine union and the Beatitude of the peacemakers. The Beatitude of the merciful and the Beatitude of hungering and thirsting for justice are addressed to the Mental Egoic level of consciousness, to full personhood and its corresponding acceptance of our own personal response to Christ, to life, and to the needs of others.

The Gospel, then, is a message that challenges our programs for happiness head on and invites us to change them. If we hear that message and follow it, this is represented as wisdom. If we don't, then we have to rely on the tragedies of life to turn us around and finally convince us, as we wind up on the bar room floor or some other place, that our program for happiness was not so hot after all. Why wait until you have to be clobbered by life before getting this message? It's as obvious as the nose on your face that this can't possibly work. Not only that, it is destroying our relationships with other people. It's making us miserable and hindering the good that we could be doing other people, because as long as we're wrapped up in obtaining the happiness that these emotional energy centers are seeking, you can't even hear what other people are saying, because their melodrama has to be filtered by yours. And so, they tell you something. Your emotions start reacting and pretty soon you're more involved in their melodrama than they are, maybe; I don't know how it goes. But anyway, we don't hear the clear call for help that somebody has when we don't have the freedom from our own emotional selfish programs. To live out of these centers is to opt-out of God's process of human development into higher states of faith, love and consciousness.