

What is the Spiritual Journey?

To fully understand what the spiritual journey is we need to utilise the field of depth psychology. Depth psychology is important to those developing mediumship as mediumship works through the unconscious mind and anything there will affect the development and expression of mediumship. Sigmund Freud (1856-1939) the founder of psychoanalysis perceived his patients to be ill, while he, as the analyst was not. Carl Gustav Jung, the Swiss Psychologist, who had been a student of Freud but took a very different approach to him, Jung related to his patients, realising that he was in a similar mental condition to them and that the psychoanalyst was there to conduct an analysis of the human mind, soul and spirit.

Jung saw that every human being was in some way fragmented and divided, and that everyone knowingly or not, were all searching for their souls. The soul being our true identity which somehow, we are aware of and it seems to exert an influence upon us driving us towards experiencing a truer more complete reality. However, we start out relatively unconscious, mostly asleep to who and what we really are. As life begins, we are part of a collective, our family, friends, school, religion and culture shaping our personalities, sometimes helping us find out this true identity, at others clouding it with doubts, fears and false beliefs. In Taoism the personality which is formed through our environment is called acquired mind.

In the external world this environment is conventional, society giving us a code of rules and guidelines as to what we should believe, what things mean and how we should behave. This conventional, outer world has structure and

order, but within us is an entirely different world. This inner world, for most of us, is as chaotic as ocean waves during a storm. Both Freud and Jung called this undifferentiated chaos the unconscious.

The unconscious is everything within us that falls outside of our conscious awareness—everything we don't know or can't observe within ourselves. Most of what we need for survival, the beating of our hearts, our digestive, respiratory and endocrine systems working without us being consciously aware of them. While we want to believe that we are conscious of most of our thoughts, feelings, actions, and behavior, all evidence suggests otherwise. We are, in truth, mostly unconscious beings. Because of this most of us are unaware of our true selves for at least the first half of our lives. For Jung the storms that we feel in our unconscious are forces that are driving us on to be who and what we were made to be and are part of what he called the Individuation process.

Each person is unique and has a particular and distinct destiny and will be driven towards that destiny which will benefit both the individual and society as a whole. Jung described the individuation process as the path to optimal personal development, leading someone to be who and what they were destined to be from the beginning.

The purpose of this process seems to be to increase an individual's consciousness and with greater consciousness, individuals can heal the splits in their mind between what's conscious and unconscious, bringing them to wholeness in their psyche as well as enabling them to fulfil their life purpose. This process begins at different times for each one of us as it is a personal spiritual journey. Therefore the problems, obstacles and difficulties that are encountered as this process unfolds will be unique and will depend upon all

sorts of factors both internal and external. Before it begins we might have had a solid self-identity and then some crisis sparks the process into action. This spark could be a trauma, a death of a loved one or any other major turning point in someone's life which leads them to begin asking questions about life's ultimate meaning.

When this begins to happen a person's life can seem as if everything is beginning to fall apart, maybe falling into chaos even. Psychologists question now what used to be called breakdown as very often what seems to be one thing becomes something else entirely if the process is allowed to unfold as it should. This is portrayed in the image of the phoenix rising out of the ashes, what appeared to be breakdown actually becomes breakthrough. Jung believed that depth Psychology was a technique that could help guide someone through this process, offering people a guide through these difficulties so that what is truly happening can emerge.

Space does not allow me to detail the individuation process in this article, it is something that can and should be investigated but the purpose of it is to bring balance to an individual, balance which is symbolized in the eastern tradition by the Ying and Yang symbol. A symbol which indicates the balance of an integrated whole brought about by the interaction of two complimentary forces. The bringing about of balance was depicted in many ancient stories, notable through the brother's motif. Many stories in the ancient world centering around two brothers who were often at war with each other, Romulus and Remus in Ancient Rome, Castor and Pollox in Ancient Greece, Odin and Loki in Norse mythology and Cain and Abel in the Bible and many others which come from every race and culture throughout the world.

Eric Neumann (1905-1960) a student of Jung's wrote about the brother's motif *Jacob and Esau*, a book not published until many years after Neumann's death. In this book he picks up the Bible story found in the book of Genesis chapters 27-33. This story is the antithesis, the direct opposite, of the story of Cain and Abel found in Genesis chapter 4. The story of Cain and Abel culminating in Cain murdering Abel, his brother, the reason for doing so is not made clear in the story but we can discern that it is something to do with Cain's jealousy of Abel who finds favour with God and allows this jealousy to turn into anger which he expresses in a violent act.

The story of Esau and Jacob starts out in a similar way, they fight over a birthright, the blessing of their father Isaac. Jacob receives the blessings which leads to them falling out and Jacob runs away to avoid the anger of his brother. Circumstances lead to the two of them needing to meet which Jacob is extremely worried about, fearing for his life and he spends a night wrestling with God by the river Jordan. This struggle which is something like a meditation culminates in him realizing that the evil is not in his brother, it is in him. That the fear he experiences is really a message to him, he must realize that he is capable, like Cain of the most barbaric evil and that he must choose good (or God). This leads him to be given the name Israel or struggles with God.

This is because our natures become so ingrained in us and we take the pathway of least resistance, so we return again and again to old patterns of behavior. We become addicted to those patterns of behavior and like to blame others for them, so and so made me angry, such and such a thing made me depressed or whatever our drama might be. But of course, they are our emotions so no one else can make us angry, sad depressed or whatever

emotion it may be. Of course, this process happens very quickly, going on inside of us and our spiritual journey is about bringing this process into consciousness so that we can do something about it. Realizing this fact starts to bring balance to our lives as it unites the external and the internal parts of us and our task then is to become people of integrity, saying thinking and doing what we believe to be true.

Therefore the spiritual journey begins with a decision, a decision to choose the good and reject evil. The evil that has happened in the world has been perpetrated by ordinary people like you and me. People who were unconsciously aware of where their decisions were leading them and then gave up all personal responsibility for their actions. A conscious decision to choose the good is the first stage of our spiritual journey.

Then our free will comes in to play, many people misunderstand what free will is as free will is not about the present it is about the future. Our conditioned habits of negative thoughts or bad behavior may have taken many years to become established in our consciousness and we need to practice so that we can rewire the neural pathways of our brains so that we can exercise new behavior in a given moment. This is why sportsmen practice again and again so that their whole body remembers what to do in a given moment. Think of a tennis player who serves at over a hundred miles an hour. The tennis ball is moving quicker than the conscious mind can react so to return the serve someone has to be able to do so unconsciously. Maybe even moving before they can register consciously that they have seen the ball. The more they train the better because as the saying goes, practice makes perfect. This practice doesn't just train our muscles but even rewires the brain. The work of Dr Joe Dispenza explains that utilizing meditation and mindfulness to change

ingrained habits we can change our lives, unlock hidden potentials and maybe even heal our bodies of some grave illness or dis-ease.

Added to this is the fact that we cannot change other people, we can only change ourselves so if we wait for someone else to change before we do we will be waiting a very long time. However very often we find that when we change ourselves right down to the very core of our being, our attitudes, beliefs, perceptions etc. that the world begins to change around us, this is reason why manifesting works, the study of quantum physics is proving this. Our lives become a manifestation of what we concentrate our minds on because where the mind goes energy flows. This truth can often feel too fantastic to be true and at times we are inclined to beat ourselves up for all the bad things that have happened in our lives but that too is a misunderstanding because you cannot know until you know and then once you know a whole universe opens up before you. Believing is seeing, this is why cynics struggle so much as they are waiting for proof that does not exist, ultimate proof that is impossible to find. Our spiritual journey starts with a decision to travel upon it and will never end. All of us are on a spiritual Journey, a journey which is not just from the cradle to the grave but for all eternity. Life is a spiritual journey, there is nothing else.

Mediumship is part of that spiritual journey, it seems that as someone grows spiritually that phenomena that we associate with mediumship begins to happen naturally which is the reason why it is called a spiritual gift. Such phenomena has been seen in every religion and also in people who have held no belief at all, it is natural to the human condition. However as mediums we are setting out on the pathway of consciously deciding to develop and express this gift. Mediumship utilises the unconscious mind, bringing forward what is

preconscious so that it can be expressed, the development of mediumship however can be a difficult road. We could liken its development to the ancient search for the Holy Grail. Next week we will look at the work of Joseph Campbell who will help us take our next step.

Leonard Tatt