

Is Intuition The Unconscious God? By Leah Lucas

I have always been fascinated and drawn to trying to apprehend the universe in a deeper way. I have the sense that behind the phenomena of physical form lays energy or force, invisible that yet gives rise to existence. As a teenager I attempted to take a short cut to apprehending universal oneness. Like so many other adolescents in the 1970's I took LSD to find God. I discovered the infinity beyond all form when I watched my hand melt into the wall, as my brain decompensated into a hallucinogenic induced journey where atoms and molecules existed as motion and light. Things went a little awry when the next acid trip produced a vision of hell. In this strange hallucination I found myself witnessing a conveyor belt of Buddhas screaming in pain as they dropped off one by one into an unknown abyss of blackness. Their anguished screams echoed endlessly. The hell was being trapped in one single moment with no escape...ever. I then found myself far out in space looking down upon the jewel of planet earth. Two powerful beings stood beside me sadly shaking their heads in dismay. They telepathically communicated to me their disappointment that I had come to them through my premature death. The purpose had been to become aware of this level of reality while I was still in my physical body. Seeing them while dead spoiled the whole plan and purpose of my spiritual evolution. After all, there is nothing but this level of magnificent light without the imprisoning physical body. But transcending the body while still in its form is raising one's vibration to a far higher level and the struggle to get there is what counts. Even in my extremely stoned state I knew I was walking the line between life and death, madness and sanity. I begged these beings to give me another chance. I was truly remorseful that I had impulsively attempted to cheat my own destiny and avoid the authentic journey. I sincerely swore to them that I would never drop another hit of acid again if I were allowed to live with my awareness intact. I always felt it was an act of Grace that let me return in one piece while retaining the full memory of what I interpreted as an encounter with God. If you want to consider this a professional development crash course to understanding the mind

of a psychotic, that would do it. From my own experience of losing serious touch with reality while knowing it at the same time gave me a glimpse into what being insane really means and I never want to go there again.

There truly are no shortcuts to spiritual enlightenment. It is much like therapy in that one cannot rush emotional development. It took me a lot of false starts and wandering off the path before it finally sunk in that the only way to a larger existence was to travel inward. The soul could be reached through the body, the emotions, the reverberations of the heart. Universal infinity is all inside, the microcosm of a human self as reflective of the macrocosm cosmic order. Divine principles operate throughout every level of existence. The good news in that I could discover the workings of the universe through a serious study of my own being. I used to feel spiritually inadequate and frustrated that I wasn't chanting and meditating with Buddhist monks in a Nepalese monastery while gazing upon the mountains of the Himalayas. But my life path closed all other doors except the one that continued opening in Toronto and embarking on a therapeutic journey in the community of Therafields in 1974 when I was only nineteen years old. I have to admit that for me therapy is a passion which I alternately love and hate in the role of both therapist and client. To engage in the ongoing experience of delving ever deeper into my unconscious, analyzing my dreams, behaviours, interactions and reactions is endlessly interesting. I hope it is a healthy narcissism that holds me in such fascination. Yet I am also aware that this endeavour is born out of a desperate need. Need for what? Do I know? Not really. I have an idea that I long for inner peace, freedom from my yearnings, anguish and conflicts. Unfortunately, the deeper inside I go, the larger my capacity for baring pain, which isn't really what I went into this for.

I think the thing that saves me is practicing the art of psychotherapy, helping other people meet and bare their own pain. This allows me to forget about myself. I feel much better and more useful when I am immersed in another persons struggle. There is something about the deep experience of entering into

the psychic emotional world of another being that takes me back to my quest for universal oneness. I have discovered that this unity cannot just be reached internally with oneself but can be encountered between self and other, and to me this is a very profound place. The reason it strikes me as so profound is because I feel I have to shift into another state of consciousness in order to get there. I certainly can tell when I am not there. It is a dry, uninspired feeling of not being in the flow, image of desert comes to mind, trying too hard or pulling back withdrawn, there is no magic. But then, and how it happens, I'm still trying to comprehend, a sudden shift occurs. It is as if the lens one views the world through click into focus and the vision is altered. But it is not just a vision of seeing; it is a vision of feeling. The vibration is altered. There is a much deeper experience between us, we are moved, our energies co-mingle, suddenly much is meaningful, filled with importance.

It has been twenty years now that I have held myself in this discipline of meditation on the other. Hour after hour, day after day, as the weeks blend into years I practice this form of sitting. I am not chanting, there is no incense. My eyes are not closed and I look outward trying to apprehend this soul before me. The theme I am very interested in exploring with all of you tonight is the question of what happens to a person's awareness from this kind of practice because I am not alone as you are all engaged in the same situation in your various ways. I also want us to explore the idea of Intuition because it seems to me a doorway into God or the source of creation or The Light as the Kabbalists name it. If I was a scientist who spent my days peering through a microscope at the movement of cells or bacteria invisible to the human eye, I think I would find God there also. To look at anything of creation intently, seriously, for a very long time, to really study one thing and stick with it seems to engender an awareness different from everyday distracted thinking.

An interesting moment of synchronicity occurred the morning after I had just completed writing the description of tonight's presentation and sent it off to Anne

to put in the Alumni Schedule. My mind was filled with this question “Is Intuition The Unconscious God?” as I walked into our dining room and saw on the table the Focus section of The Globe and Mail. Right there in front of me on the very first page was a picture of a Carmelite nun in a scientist’s laboratory wearing an electrode-studded EEG (electroencephalographic) cap. The bold caption read “Hard-Wired For God”. Of course this immediately drew my attention.

The Globe and Mail article written in December 2003 by Anne McIlroy talked about a group of Carmelite nuns who live behind the stone walls of a Montreal monastery. They spend their days in silent prayer. The Globe’s science reporter writes how “late last November 2003 they made a strange new pilgrimage. They entered into the neuroscience laboratory of The University of Montreal’s psychology department. They come to take part in a mystical experiment that will probe into a very private part of their lives. It is in this scientific setting they have agreed to come try to relive ‘unio mystica’, a powerfully intense religious experience of an encounter with The Lord sensed as a physical presence. The nuns hope to help Montreal neuroscientist Mario Beauregard uncover just what happens in the brain during an encounter with God.

There is a recent rapprochement opening up between scientific examination and religion developing into the new field of neurotheology. Neurotheology uses the tools of psychology and neuroscience to probe the neural underpinnings of religious experience.

These nuns have agreed to venture out of the cloister and relive the most intimate moments of their lives while researchers watch what happens to their brains. Sister Diane says ‘unio mystica’, the mystical union with God is difficult to put into words. St. Teresa of Jesus, the Spanish nun who established the Carmelite order in 1526, described it as talking lovingly to God as though he were a friend and sharing a divine intimacy. The experience happens only once or twice in a lifetime, typically before a person turns 30. When sister Diane was

29 she recalls praying silently at a religious retreat when suddenly she found herself lost in an altered state experiencing an intense sense of God's physical presence. There was a sense of timelessness and complete and utter fullness. She describes it as "very, very personal, it is like a treasure, an intimacy. It was in the centre of my being, but even deeper." Sister Teresa, 43, also experienced her unio mystica when in her 20's. "It is more than a feeling," she says, "It is more intense than feeling, but you sense God is physically there. It brings intense happiness, even bliss."

The Globe article continues to say, "On order to investigate the biological basis of religious experience, the researchers were hoping the nuns would have a mystical experience right in the lab. But sister Diane told them this would be impossible – God cannot be summoned at will. "You can't search for it. The harder you search the longer you will wait." She said. So the scientists came up with an alternative: would the nuns be able to remember what it felt like? In recalling such intense experiences the brain will operate the same way as when the nuns actually felt God's physical presence.

Levels of the neurotransmitter serotonin is measured in different parts of the brain. Some cultures use hallucinogens to communicate with God. It is believed that serotonin may play a role in unio mystica, but not that it is all in the head. Every human experience occurs in the mind, the experience is real but the manifestation is in the brain. Sister Diane says she is certain that Dr. Beauregard will discover a biological basis for the Carmelites' spiritual experience, one shared by all human beings. She insists that God equipped people with the brains they need for a spiritual life. "Our body has a spiritual component. To be a human being is to be a spiritual being." She is convinced this will show in the research results.

Continuing on with this theme of the neurobiology of belief," In September of 2003, The Dalai Lama, the spiritual leader of Tibetan Buddhism took part in a

meeting at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology held to compare Buddhist and scientific views about how the mind works.

Buddhists believe they can regulate their emotions through meditation. Studies conducted on Buddhist monks have shown intense activity in specific parts of their brains when they meditate. Which part of the brain appears to depend on the type of meditation – whether the person is focusing on compassion or on the details of a mental image of Buddha.

In 1992, the neuroscientist Richard Davidson from the University of Wisconsin who helped to organize the session with the Dalai Lama traveled to northern India equipped with electrical generators, computers and machines that could measure the electrical output of the brain. In the foothills of The Himalayas he wired up monks to learn more about what happens to them during meditation.

They are trying to answer a number of intriguing questions: Are humans hard-wired to have religious or spiritual experiences, which are common to almost every culture on Earth? What happens in the brain when they do have them? Is it something that non – religious people might be able to replicate with the right situation? Is a transcendent Buddhist experience, often described as feeling connected to everyone and everything in the universe, the same as Christian’s unio mystica?

Work with the Buddhist monks shows that meditation results in decreased activity in the parietal lobes, which are located at the top and back of the brain, and help to orient a person in time and space. The theory is that a lack of parietal activity reduces the sense of self making a person feel there is no boundary between their body and the rest of the universe. Also, there appears to be increased activity in the limbic system, which helps to produce emotion. Some researchers have speculated that the human capacity for mystical experiences may have co – evolved with the brain networks involved in sexual pleasure.” 1.

I found this concept of neurotheology, the intersection of neural activity with the mystical sensation of an encounter with God fascinatingly in tune with how I am attempting to understand and articulate my personal fragmentary moments of transcendence. In continuing to explore the mystic theme I found myself turning to the poetry of the Spanish mystic, St. John of the Cross. I have been deeply moved by reading his poetry, The Dark Night of the Soul and Ascent to Mount Carmel. He is in my unconscious somewhere because many years ago I had the following dream: I find myself standing on a plane of green grass. To my left lies the ocean, mysterious and dark. To my right is a hill on top of which is erected a large stone cross. I look up at the cross held high against the backdrop of a darkening sky and immediately think of St. John of the Cross and somehow sense his presence nearby. I then find myself wandering lost along the hallways of a school. I know I am supposed to be the teacher but I cannot find my classroom, I do not know the way. I enter a large room where I see a wise old man sitting in a chair. In my desperation I go and kneel before him with my head on his knee. I am frightened, I feel like a small child, I want him to comfort me and save me from my unknown task. He is loving and warm but gently pushes me away. He communicates without words that the time for comfort and rest has come to an end. I must leave his side, go out to find my classroom and begin to teach. I cannot be the small child any longer but have to take on the responsibility of the next part of my journey. I am filled with pain and grief as I walk away. Somehow I know He is God clothed in human form and I desire nothing more than to remain by his side forever. The timing of this dream was significant in that it came to me just when I was grappling with taking the step to leave behind the profession I was in and take the huge leap to devote myself to working as a psychotherapist.

In the book John Of The Cross, author Wilfred McGreal writes about John's mystical experiences and union with God revealed in a poetic journey and how it is a visceral, painfully emotional yet ecstatic experience. "In that closeness the wound of union takes place. The union is beyond anything the senses can

describe or comprehend. The union also expressed as a wound, as the immensity of love is painful to the human spirit as the finite is overwhelmed by the infinite. So it feels a pain at being unable to take in such love in its entirety. This is a state which Theresa of Avila also experiences and describes in her writings.”

*“The state of union where only God matters is the mystic state, and John maintains that human beings can experience such closeness to God in this life. His poem expresses a journey that is a wonderful risk. If we trust enough in who we are we can be passionately close to God. How radical is the process of reaching real freedom, the freedom to be really open to God. There is a paradox of comfort that comes with pain and the sense of healing as the one searching for God goes beyond a certain stage. John reveals in his poetry *The Living Flame Of Love* how he is looking into a mystery which for him is a reality and yet at the same time, beyond the grasp of reason and intelligence. Language reaches breaking point. Our humanity, because of its origins in God, is apt for union with God when we open ourselves in trust to our Creator.”*

*“Nada – nothing is part of a process that achieves deep personal freedom – the off – loading of baggage that prevents personal growth. The way of nada is part of the journey called the Dark Night.”² Evelyn Underhill in her book *Mysticism* writes of “ The notion of pain, a wound as the other side of love and a gateway into the unseen worlds. Tentacles of emotion touch the suprasensible.”³*

Mc Greal further illuminates St. John’ s poetry as he writes, “The dark night of the soul is a freeing of desires so that the individual is not caught up with lesser Gods. Faith is directed to Christ, who is light. It is in this context then that union with God can happen, because a person becomes open to the possibility of loving knowledge – wisdom being communicated to the core of one’s being. A new way of loving understanding is achieved. The intellect, purified by God, no longer operates under its own vigour but by means of a divine wisdom. The act of

loving, which for John, is rooted in the will, now comes from the action of the Holy Spirit. All this is painful because it goes beyond our normal way of thinking and being in control. The letting go, allowing God to have the initiative, brings a new freedom and a new sense of the presence of God through faith and love. Our human nature working with God can achieve the sublime here and now, like the Zen concept of Being in the Present Moment.”⁴.

Isn't this the very thing we strive to do in a therapy session? Be here now! Perhaps one reason why St. John's poetry about the Christ encounter resonates so powerfully for me is because of a strange experience I had when I was 16 years old. I have no idea why or where this came from but I vividly recall that day when I was still a teenager hanging out in my bedroom of the family home. Quite suddenly I was flooded with a spontaneous vision of Christ held in a living flame embedded right in the center of my heart. So intense was the feeling filled image that I unconsciously found myself struck down on my knees in silent obedience to some unknown force. In my mind's eye I literally witnessed the absolute living image of Jesus Christ burning in a golden flame while I heard an inner voice speak to me and say, "Christ is inside you, He is here for ever and ever, He will never die and neither will you. This flame burns on through infinity." It came as a complete shock to me that I should so suddenly know, an intuitive knowing without reason or form that Christ was a living presence inside of me. It was certainly odd that a Jewish girl with no orthodox roots in Judaism let alone any Christian indoctrination should be visited upon by this Christian image. I consider myself fortunate that my parents never rammed any kind of religion or dogma down my throat. In fact my father was exceedingly liberal in telling me I should explore the religious question for myself to discover what I would come up with on my own absent of any outside pressure.

Returning to this concept of vivid attention to the present moment draws me to some themes represented in the Kabbalah. The word Kabbalah means to receive, to be open. Kabbalah is the esoteric mystical branch of Judaism

developed out of an in – depth study of Torah, the first five books of the Bible. Since the 15th century, Jewish mystics and sages immersed themselves in the study of Torah but not just from an academic standpoint. Akin to the discipline of Zen Buddhist meditation these rabbis entered into a deep contemplation to capture the essence of Torah. In this contemplative receptive state, we could understand it as an altered state of consciousness; they merged with an intuitive knowing of the secret workings of the universe. Born out of this mystical intuitive state was a map of the universe symbolized in form through The Sefirot, The Tree of Life. The Sefirot is presented as a diagram of creation. It is a map of consciousness representing the essential foundation of creation. At the top of the Tree is the realm of Nothingness, called Chochma or Wisdom. It is the void out of which all existence is created. At the bottom of the diagram is the densest vibration – physical form or Yesod, the foundation, also called harmony, then there is Malkhut, this is our reality.

I had an unusual experience of The Sefirot last November when I was writing a paper on The Kabbalah. I was sitting at my desk looking at a diagram of The Tree of Life attempting to grasp its deeper symbolism. Under the power of intense concentration my perception unexpectedly shifted. I became aware of the images expanding, deepening, showing me a multidimensional experience of each symbol. It was like looking at worlds within worlds that had no beginning and no end. This time I did not need a hit of acid to open me up to a vision of oneness. It was there before me on a printed page. But I knew this different kind of seeing could only come out of a letting go of a thinking knowing and opening to a question without expectation of an answer.

The Kabbalists speak of a journey to arrive at a state of Deathlessness. This is really about a state of consciousness inherent in The Coming of the Messiah. The Messiah is an awareness available right here and now in this present moment if one is truly able to be fully awake, seeing with a spiritual sight. Clearly now we are talking about something beyond the physical body. But how can you

live in a body and experience a state of no death? The only way this is possible must be through a perceptual shift in awareness. The oneness would be a merger of Binah and Yesod – the invisible formless nothingness void with the visible physical flesh and bone bodily existence.

As I write this I find myself thinking about St. Paul's conversion experience on the road to Damascus. It occurs to me how frequently the theme of blindness appears throughout the Bible. I understand this to mean a spiritual blindness. This is the opposite of intuition, where mental doors are closed, the power of the unconscious disavowed. We are all familiar with the frustrating experience of a client who presents us with a dream. When we inquire as to their associations we are met with a shrug of the shoulders or a blank stare. Or the response is "I dreamed that because I had pasta carbonara for supper last night and it gave me heartburn." Two summers ago I worked out with a super-macho muscular bound personal trainer named Bob. In between bench press sets and pumping iron he would tell me his latest dream. His thought about the house on fire was that his friend's house actually did burn down. In fact he was convinced of his psychic ability since so much of what he dreamed did actually happen...to someone else. It never had anything to do with him personally. I called this the "Bob Method" of dream interpretation. Whatever you dream invariably happens to someone else. I think Carl Jung would definitely appreciate that synchronicity.

But getting back to St. Paul. The Bible makes many references to people being afflicted by blindness. Jesus was often witnessed, "healing the blind". To be "blind" means not to see the handiwork of God in one's life. A healing of blindness symbolizes a shift of consciousness from an "asleep" state to a "seeing" state. Jesus, as the representation of the Divine Creative Potential makes the call to go beyond ego, beyond attachment. He challenges the constructs of a rational, constricting mind in order to enter into the larger life of spirit.

In the Biblical account of Saul of Tarsus, Saul did not believe in Jesus The Christ as being a true messenger of God. He travelled on the road to Damascus with the intention of persecuting those who were believers. But an incredible thing happened on the way. Saul suddenly encountered a vision of The Lord before he reached the city of Damascus. So powerful in force and energy was this manifestation that he was struck blind by the intensity of The Light. Unable to see he had to be led into the city filled only with the Illumination of The Holy One. In that shattering moment of blindness Saul experienced a powerful conversion where he knew within the very depths of his being that Jesus existed and truly was a messenger of God. It took three days before Saul was able to regain his physical sight. But from that day on he was blessed with a radical new inner sight. He became St. Paul, turning from the persecutor to the believer who devoted the rest of his life to serving and teaching the ultimate truth of the reality of Jesus The Christ. We can understand this Biblical story as an allegorical account of a rational, material mind transcending its boundaries and entering into an encounter with God, much like the 'unio mystica' experience of the Carmelite nuns.

Because God Itself, like Kabbalah's Ayin or Nothingness is unknowable and unnamable it has to be symbolized in the Christ figure. Jesus represents a bridge between the formless and the form. The human mind cannot conceive of the uncreated force that gives rise to the phenomena of existence. A living image is required in order to encounter the energetic force or spark of life we all carry within. One could say that Saul of Tarsus did not comprehend his own Divinity. In his 'unseeing state' he wanted to attack the symbol. But in undertaking his own journey through the desert, the road to Damascus, he came into connection with a much larger life. This inevitably called him into an entirely different way of being in the world. His life ultimately became an expression of service to a deep inner truth he was compelled to honour.

Rabbi Nilton Bonder in his book "The Kabbalah of Money" understands Saul's conversion experience "as one that illustrates intervention beyond mere coincidence, free will, or instinct. Credibility is given to the incomprehensible. Saul's difficulty represents the struggle many of us have in relating to the incomprehensible, a reluctance to accept things that belong to world of belief. There is often a refusal to embrace what is not known, the hope is to find security in a stance of rationalism. But in truth, that is a very shaky ground. There is too much about existence like illness, old age and death that is both inexplicable and unavoidable."5.

To exist in the physical world requires access to both the rational logical realm and the intuitive realm. The question is, how does one balance these psychic forces? Looking again at the deathless state, Kabbalah expresses how we do not require the return of The Messiah to save us. That would be externalizing an internal struggle for freedom. In the expansion of consciousness available right here and now only we can be open to receive. We do receive when we consciously realize the power of our own internal commandments. That "still small voice" deep within can only be heard in silence. Relentless busyness will drown out the intuitive call.

I see a significant analogy between the therapeutic journey undertaken to gain emotional freedom and the Biblical account of Exodus. I think spiritual awakening and emotional opening go hand in hand. Bonds of limitation are broken in each dimension. The account of Exodus illustrates the Israelites journey out of Egypt as they travel through the barren desert in order to reach the Holy Land of Israel. Egypt is a representation of the bonds of rational, material constructs. The enslavement of the Hebrews is being caught in a world not connected to one's inner spirit along with a larger awareness of the mysterious creator. The journey through the desert symbolizes facing the Nothingness, the Great Unknown. It is the inevitable journey each person must take to discover their innate holiness. Reaching Israel, the Promised Land, means attaining an expanded awareness. It

is a paradigm shift of consciousness where only through touching the depths of one's innermost soul can eternal life be apprehended – another way of understanding deathlessness.

If we regard this from an emotional perspective it takes us deep into an encounter with pain as the other side of love. People enter therapy because of an inability to love, to work, or to live a fulfilled life. Most often the inhibition is due to a suffering that is unconscious, forgotten, unknown. Pain is frozen into the musculature or character armour, or rigid thinking. Wherever concealed it invisibly limits a persons unique flow, disconnecting them from an ongoing listening to their own true wishes and desires. Along with this goes isolation from others or distorted experiences of connection leading to further wounding.

There is something about the expression of unlocked, deep emotional pain that can draw one into a meeting with the Absolute, a sense of universal oneness born out of the breaking open an enclosed heart. It requires enormous amounts of psychic energy to keep unbearable pain repressed. We all understand how shocks and trauma inflicted upon the underdeveloped ego of the child causes a person to split off from the true self in order to hide what is unmanageable. Psychoanalyst Otto Rank wrote a book called "The Trauma of Birth" where he considers our entrance into the world the central trauma. It is one we spend the rest of our lives recovering from. Looking at this from a spiritual perspective one could consider the descent from a non – physical existence as a spiritual being down into a physical body, entering the world of dense matter as a huge trauma. People who have had out – of- body travels describe the return to physicality akin to imprisonment. They all much preferred the out of body state, free of material constraints, lending to a far vaster view of reality.

Let us consider the idea that delving into one's deepest emotional pain holds the possibility of facilitating spiritual awakening leading to a new kind of freedom. Evelyn Underhill in her book "Mysticism" has this to say on the subject: "Pain and

anguish press the self towards another world. Watching life one sees in pain the complement of Love, and is inclined to call these the wings on which man's spirit can best take flight towards the Absolute. Pain plunges like a sword through creation leaving on the one side cringing and degraded animals and on the other side heroes and saints. A certain type of mind has always discerned three straight and narrow ways going out to the Absolute. In religion, in pain and in beauty these persons recognize at least the fringe of the real. Down these paths news comes to the self concerning levels of reality to apprehend about the connection between contemplation and an intuition of God: "The value of contemplation is that it tends to produce the state where God speaks to man in the unconscious. The task of the mystic is to transmute his total personality in the interest of his spiritual self; to bring it out of the hiddenness, and unify himself about it a centre. It is engaging in a divine nucleus, the point of contact between man's inner life and the divine life in which it is immersed and sustained. The mystic way must be a life of discipline, which will so alter the constituents of his mental life as to induce this spark within the conscious field; bring it out of the hiddenness, from those deep levels where it sustains and guides his normal existence, and make it the dominant element round which his personality is arranged.

In all creative arts, the larger share of the work is done subconsciously. Its emergence is automatic. It owes its inception to some unseen uprush of intuitions or ideas for which the superficial self cannot account. The great teacher, poet, artist, or inventor never aims deliberately at his effects. He obtains them from unconscious contact with that great creative Plane of Being which the Kabbalists named "Yesod" and the Sufis call "Constructive Spirit."

To let oneself be quiet, receptive, appears to be the condition under which such contact with the Cosmic Life may be obtained. The superficial self must become the humble servant of a more profound consciousness. St. Theresa says "Let the will quietly and wisely understand that it is not by dint of labour on our part that

we can converse to any good purpose with God.” Meister Eckhart, the German mystic says, “It is by keeping silence and letting God work and speak, where all powers are withdrawn from their work and images, there is the word spoken.”⁷

All of these mystics, contemplatives, and spiritual seekers indicate how one cannot force of control an encounter with a larger existence. But they transcend everyday awareness through a discipline of silence, listening and meditation. The message here is that God emerges out of one’s personal unconscious that is also linked to The Divine. Here is where the daily, hourly discipline of attending to the unconscious mental life of self and other holds the possibility of touching what Evelyn Underhill terms the “Absolute”. Returning to her description of “humans as having an innate craving for and Intuition of a final Unity”⁸. blends the state of infantile symbiotic union with the spiritual state of Oneness with the Universe. Do we seek this merger to replicate the long lost separation from our mother’s body, the very first ground of our being? Is the ensuing rift akin to a tearing away of the spiritual self from a state of union down into a shattering imprisonment within physical form? No human is spared the agony of material existence, beset by insatiable needs, voracious instincts, unredeemable desires. The power of Eros coursing through a nervous system cannot be contained or fully expressed through the sex organs alone. This limitless life force, far more than sensual it too complex for merely physical release. Here is where culture and art arise out of the human necessity to manage and transform vast forces of spiritual and physical energies inextricably entwined and linked together.

Rainer Maria Rilke, the German poet of mystic sensibilities expresses beautifully the agony and ecstasy of existence in the Duino Elegies. Here is what he writes in The First Elegy:

*“Who, if I cried would hear me among the angelic orders?
And even if one of them suddenly pressed me against his heart,
I should fade in the strength of his stronger existence.
For Beauty’s nothing but the beginning of Terror*

*We're still just able to bear.
And why we adore it so is because it serenely disdains to destroy us.
Each single angel is terrible.
And so I keep down my heart,
And swallow the call – note of depth – dark sobbing.
Alas, who is there, we can make use of?
Not angels, not men: And already the knowing brutes are aware,
That we don't feel very securely at home within our interpreted world.”9.*

Here Rilke speaks to the emotional pain inherent in existence and the realization that there is little security ‘within our interpreted world’ or the life of the ego. He goes on to write about a different kind of hearing:

*“Voices, voices. Hear, O my heart, as only Saints have heard:
Heard till the giant – call
Lifted them off the ground; yet they went impossibly
On with their kneeling, in undistracted attention:
So inherently hearers. Not that you could endure
The voice of God – far from it.
But hark the suspiration.
The uninterrupted news that grows out of silence.”10.*

In Rilke's Ninth Elegy he beautifully articulates his own personal sense of meaning in existence along with the anguish in this temporal endeavor. About the utterly human longing for Destiny he writes:

*“Not because happiness really exists,
That premature profit in immanent loss.
Not out of curiosity, not just to practise the heart,
But because being here amounts to so much.
Because all This Here and Now, so fleeting,*

*Seems to require us and strangely concern us.
Us the most fleeting of all. Just once
Everything, only for once, once and no more. And we too.
Once. And never again. But this
Having been once, though only once.
Having been on earth – can it ever be cancelled? 11.*

*I would like to finish with a verse by William Blake from his poetry *Auguries of Innocence*. In *An Introduction to the Study of Blake*, Max Plowman describes Blake as a poet who “strove to portray the soul of man. But the soul has depths and heights, which are beyond the range of purely intellectual concepts. The body can be seen, measured, anatomized, analysed; but despite the painful efforts of psychoanalysis, the soul is beyond survey: it must be spiritually sensed; and he who intends faithfully to portray that which has only infinite bounds, must be prepared to see his lines extending beyond the range of human knowledge into those realms where apprehension supplants intelligence.” 12.*

Here is a small sample of how William Blake blends his spiritual apprehension into creative poetic expression:

*“Joy and woe are woven fine,
A clothing for the soul divine;
Under every grief and pine
Runs a joy with silken twine.*

*We are led to believe a Lie
When we see not Thro’ the Eye
Which was Born in a Night to Perish in a Night
When the Soul slept in Beams of Light.
God appears and God is Light
To those poor Souls who dwell in Night,*

*But does a Human Form Display
To those who Dwell in Realms of day.” 13.*

Notes

1. *Mcllroy, Anne, The Globe and Mail, Hard – Wired For God, November 2003.*
2. *Wilfred McGreal, John Of The Cross, pg.31, pg.38*
3. *Evelyn Underhill, Mysticism, pg.51*
4. *John Of The Cross, pg.31,38,42*
5. *Rabbi Nilton Bonder, The Kabbalah Of Money, pg.47,41*
6. *Evelyn Underhill, Mysticism, pg.50*
7. *Ibid, pg.50*
8. *Ibid. pg.51*
9. *Rainer Maria Rilke, Duino Elegies, pg.21*
10. *Ibid. pg.21*
11. *Ibid.pg.73*
12. *Plowman Max, Introduction To The Study Of Blake, pg.18*
13. *Blake, William, Auguries Of Innocence, pg.4,6*

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IS INTUITION THE UNCONSCIOUS GOD?

Questions for Discussion

- 1. Have you ever had personal experience of a state of 'Cosmic Oneness'? Do you consider this a mystical experience?*
- 2. How has this type of experience informed your personal philosophy of life?*
- 3. Are you aware of synchronicity at work in your daily life? If so, how do you interpret it?*
- 4. Have you ever personally heard any type of 'inner call' to action?*
- 5. Do you place any larger meaning upon your emotional suffering? If so, how would you describe it?*
- 6. How do you understand 'Creative Inspiration'?*
- 7. Have you ever had a 'Big Dream' that influenced a major life decision?*
- 8. Do you consider that there are developmental stages to one's spiritual life akin to developmental stages of the child's emotional life?*