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THE SPIRITUALITY OF CARL G. JUNG

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Abstract: "It is the prime task of all education (of adults) to convey the archetype of the God-image, or its emanations and effects, to the conscious mind." (Jung, 1969, Collected Works, Vol. 9, p. 58, as cited in Fordham, 1953, p. 73).

"We need not only the work of medical psychologists, but also that of linguists, historians, archaeologists, mythologists, folklore students, ethnologists, philosophers, theologians, pedagogues and biologists, which should throw some light upon the comparative anatomy of the mind..." (Jung, 1913, Letters 1, 29-30, as cited in Shamdasani, 2003, p. 19). For Carl Jung, psychology was the discipline to unite the circle of the sciences with that of religion and spirituality. Therefore, it would seem that members of the ASPSI need to understand some of the basics of his work and his beliefs. This author's would like to help provide this for you with the following article and presentation.

The Unconscious Mind

Both Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung believed that the unconscious was made up of complexes. The first two complexes came from repressed issues regarding the mother and the father. Any other repressed material integrates into other complexes such as an inferiority *complex*, an incest *complex*, a religious *complex*, etc. (A *complex* is made up and represented by a habitual attitude.) Freud stated that the unconscious came into existence with the consciousness of the individual. Jung believed that the unconscious was always there – "a system of inherited psychic functioning handed down from primeval times" (Jung, 1969, Collected Works, Vol. 8, p. 350, para 676) and that it contained a mind of its own (Charet, 1993, p. 118).

Jung also considered psychic suffering to be "the symptom of a wrong attitude assumed by the total personality" (Jung, 1969, Collected Works, Vol. 8, p. 355, para. 684). He, therefore, concluded that a therapist treated the whole personality in helping a client recover. Jung sometimes used the word soul and personality interchangeably. He was also known to say that the soul was intelligence independent of space and time which would mean it was immortal.

He further concluded that a person would change their personality as they changed situations. Socially, they would have one personality and, at home, another. The at-home personality was governed by emotions and the social personality would be molded by the expectations and demands of a person's culture and the person's ideal.

The longer a person acted differently in different situations, the more habitual their *persona* or mask would be. The more habitual their *persona* became the more they deceived themselves of their real character as they continued repressing their negative qualities (or *shadow*) into the first layer of their unconscious.

Unlike Freud, Jung divided the unconscious into five layers. The layers are as follows: 1) An individual's repressed material, 2) An individual's family "karma" or stories 3) An individual's ancestral soul or themes (more of a clan idea), 4) An individual's nation that they claimed for their own and 5) "An incomparable prognosticator (forteller of the future) who would have lived countless times over again the life of an individual, the family, the tribe and the nation that possesses a living sense of the rhythm of growth, flowering and decay" (Jung, 1969, *Collected Works*, Vol. 9, p. 350, para. 673).

Analytical Psychology

Carl Jung taught that analysis provided a person with a means of transforming instincts and a person's relation to them, through the friendly intervention with their personal images. Images or symbols help to mediate the opposites in a person. He believed that neurosis caused individuals to have a narrowing of consciousness, which was the therapist's job to help broaden.

Jungian Psychology is based, first, on Jung's own experience with human beings, normal, neurotic and psychotic. Later, he added his own experiences that helped to understand the patterns of psychological development. He believed that usually life is a major projection and that a person finds out more and more about themselves from these projections. Failure to understand would deprive a person of their wholeness.

Jung said that fifty per cent of the population did not possess either the intelligence or sense of morality required for analysis. In the end, he believed it was a moral question as to what people do with what they've learned. If they did change from what they learned, it would be a giving back to society. Therefore, what people needed was psychological knowledge.

Jung's Libido Concept Different from Freud's

Freud's believed a person's libido was tied to sexual energy. Jung saw libido as a vital energy in general that operated in mystical proportions. The mind contained an element of energy from which the life of the universe was made. The libido in connection with one's unconscious could perceive and associate autonomously. He believed new ideas and combinations were premeditated by the unconscious.

The Subliminal or Extra-Marginal Realm of Consciousness

He also taught that the discovery of the unconscious revolutionized psychology. "In support of this, he cited William James' description in 1886 in *The Varieties of Religious Experience* of the significance of the positing of an extra-marginal realm of consciousness in 1886. Jung added that the discovery which James was referring to was F.W.H. Myers' positing of the subliminal consciousness...that is incapable of receiving in any direct fashion... the shape of messages..." (Shamdasani, 2003, pgs. 260-261). Thus one depends on the images one receives in dreams, hypnosis, art, etc. to connect to the images in one's subconscious mind. Jung stated that "whether energy is God or God is energy concerns me very little, for how, in any case, can I know such things? But to give appropriate psychological explanations, this I must be able to do." (Jung, 1969, *Collected Works*, Vol. 8, p. 352, para 678).

"By psyche, I understand the totality of all psychic processes, conscious as well as unconscious." (Jung, 1971, *Collected Works*, Vol. 6, p. 463, para 797). The recent

publication of *The Red Book* (Shamdasani, 2009) shows the tremendous struggle that Jung, the psychologist, had in search for meaning in his life. In 1913, he began this self-experiment that became known as his “confrontation with the unconscious,” which lasted until 1930. He stated that men and women are the gateway to their souls while on the journey to understand their soul. He believed that the unconscious constitutes the foundation of consciousness and the essential ground of the soul.

Mandala Drawings

Mandala is a Sanskrit word meaning magic circle and its symbolism includes all concentrically arranged figures, all radial or spherical arrangements and all circles or squares with a central point. It is one of the oldest religious symbols (the earliest known form being the sun wheel) and is found throughout the world. It is the template for our whole creation and is within our DNA. In the East, the mandala is used ritualistically in yoga as an aid to contemplation.

Jung found the mandala symbolism occurring spontaneously in the dreams and visions of many of his clients. Its appearance was incomprehensible to them, but it was usually accompanied by a strong feeling of harmony or of peace. The round or square enclosures seemed to act like magically protective walls, preventing an outburst and a disintegration and protecting an inward purpose.

Jung’s Mandala Drawings

Jung depicted many mandala drawings in *The Red Book* (Shamdasani, 2009), which was approximately two hundred parchment pages of calligraphy and visionary paintings collected in red leather written using a runic Latin and German calligraphy. *The Red Book* publication was postponed until October, 2009, nearly fifty years after Jung’s death because Jung and his family feared the book’s potential impact on his reputation. This 2009 version consists of three hundred and seventy-one pages that include an English translation of the original text from page 193 to 359 with appendixes following. This translation took the editor Sonu Shamdasani twelve years to complete.

Jung embarked on his period of self-experimentation when it was common to do so and when spiritualism attracted the interest of leading scientists, who explored methods used by mediums, including automatic writing, trance speech and crystal vision as means of accessing the minds of the living rather than the dead. His research regarding his unconscious work draws on, but is not exclusive to, the Bible, Gnostic texts, Greek myths, the Upanishads, the ancient Egyptian “Am-Tuat,” Wagner’s “Ring,” Goethe’s “Faust” and Dante’s “Divine Comedy.”

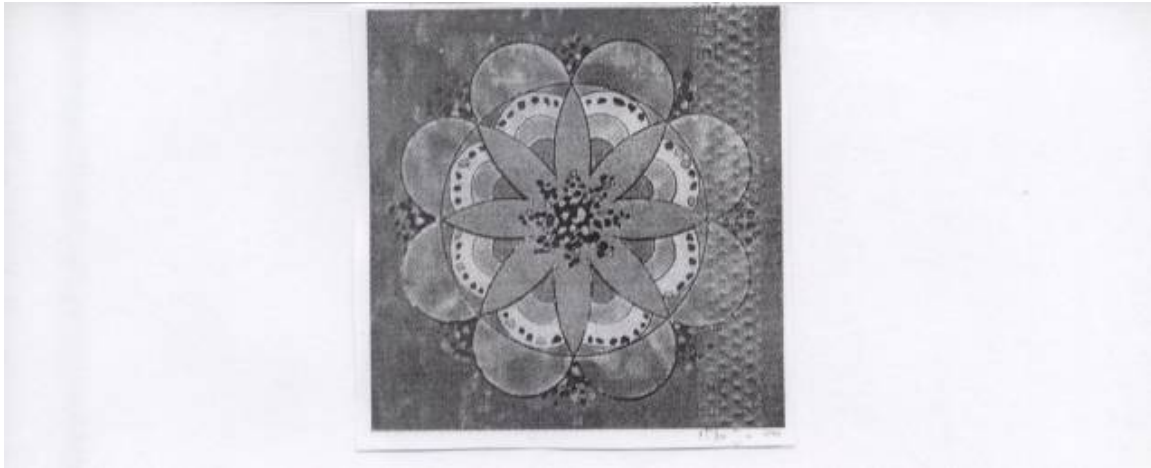
Working with his drawings, Jung attempted to shape his individual cosmology which required solitude, silence and concentrated effort. Again, his images were executed during the years of WWI and the decade after that. They display abstract, symmetrical floral designs that Jung came to identify as mandalas, along with renderings of flames, trees, dragons and snakes, all in striking, bold colors. He meets, among others, Elijah, Salome and a serpent and the Devil.

The person from Jung’s fifth level of his unconscious, his incomparable prognosticator mentioned above in the five layers of the unconscious, was named Philemon, a pagan who carries with him “an Egyptian-Hellenic atmosphere with a Gnostic coloration,” was one of the vision figures with whom he conversed. Jung said Philemon was the soul of Elijah. The theme of *The Red Book* is how Jung regains his

soul and overcomes his illness of spiritual alienation. He found that the mandala was an expression of the Self, which is the totality of the psyche and the imprint of the archetype of wholeness.

In talking with these inner figures, Jung began using his technique of *active imagination*. He would begin by sitting still and meditating, when the figures came to him from his unconscious he would talk to them. In the beginning of his process, he feared he was “crazy”; however, with his family background in theology he knew religious people had visions. This fact helped him to eventually *know* he wasn’t crazy.

The Red Book of C.G. Jung: Creation of a New Cosmology



Jung on Spiritualism

Jung had relatives in his family who had visions and conversed with different spirits. Jung’s mother’s ability to deal with spirits was widely recognized among her relatives. His mother was unhappy, overweight and much of the time was preoccupied with the spirit world. Jung said his father knew nothing about “these things.”

“There was an enormous difference between my mother’s two personalities. That was why as a child I often had anxiety dreams about her. By day she was a loving mother, but at night she seemed uncanny. Then she was like one of those seers who is at the same time a strange animal, like a priestess in a bear’s cave. Ancient and ruthless; ruthless as truth and nature” (Charet, 1992, p. 80).

When Jung’s father died in January, 1896, he found in his father’s library a book on Spiritualism and he realized that the unusual experiences he and his maternal relatives had undergone were described in this book. It was at this time that he began to seriously think about the existence of spirits.

From 1895 until 1900, Jung studied science and medicine at the University of Basel. He was appalled that the scientific position then was to deny the existence of occult phenomena. In fraternity meetings, he gave several lectures on the subject and found friends and relatives who would participate in séances. These séances would help to create material for his PhD thesis. “Spiritualistic phenomena served Jung as the primary source for the data he called on to substantiate his idea of the reality of the soul” (Charet, (1992, p. 138).

Early in his career he believes spirits to be archetypes, which can simply be described as forms of instincts originating from ancient mythology and primitive

behavior. Jung died in 1961 at age 86. During an interview, when he was 82 years of age, an example he gave of a numinous archetypal experience was that of a woman who had the image of being in the arms of the spirit of the wind. It was a living experience of an archetype that made a tremendous impression on her. And, in her archetypal experience she felt the “numinous” which gave it an “incorruptible” value. She knows after an experience such as this that there is “spirit”. This is a completely different experience, this archetypal experience, than actually seeing or conversing with an actual spirit or ghost.

He eventually changes his belief that spirits are only archetypes; and, in 1946, he writes of a woman who is “probably a spirit” (Charet, 1992, p. 296) more than an archetype. He was interpreting some dreams as actual visits from the dead. He once had a dream where a UFO was projecting himself, which he interpreted as the transpersonal world was the real world. Jung stated that spirit came to us through personal experience (like James’ belief), deeds and facts. He stated that electricity upsets the spirits and when he built a stone summer home to which he and his family vacationed for years, it contained no electricity. Electricity was also turned off during the séances that he held.

“Jung arrived home one evening to find his house filled with the spirits of several deceased people. They kept insisting that they were searching for answers to some very important questions and indicated that they would not leave until Dr. Jung had supplied them. For the next several days, therefore, he labored to set down his written reply to them about the nature of God and life. These responses later were published as *Seven Sermons to the Dead*. “This experience was nothing less than a series of actual clairvoyant communications with the minds of these spirits” (Leichtman, 1979, p. 15).

Jung’s Near-Death Experience

Jung had a Near-Death Experience in the beginning of 1944 when he had broken his foot and had a heart attack. He was very ill and in the hospital when he had this “vision” of dying, being out in space and seeing planet earth from approximately one thousand miles from space. He eventually saw a temple where if he entered he would discover what he had been before this life and where he would go after this life was over (Jung believed in reincarnation).

He saw his present doctor in the vision and the doctor told him he had to return to his life; therefore, he was unable to enter the temple. He explains in Chapter X of his autobiography, *Memories Dreams and Reflections* (1961) that it took him at least three weeks to overcome the depression he had because he had to leave this near-death state and return to such an ordinary life.

Jung also saw in this vision that his doctor was going to die. He told the doctor this which seemed unbelievable to him. Three weeks later when Jung first sat up on the edge of his bed and knew he was really recovering, his doctor took to his bed and died soon thereafter. “What happens after death is so unspeakably glorious that our imagination and our feelings do not suffice even having approximate conception of it” (Jung, July 1944, p. 343). This statement was in accordance with James’ belief that we do not have the words to explain a religious, spiritual or paranormal event that happens to us.

Image from Jung's Accounts of His Visions and Dreams



Jung on Religious Experience

Jung believed in religious experience and stated that one who has it possesses a great treasure. He believed that each person had a religious function that needed to be encouraged and understood just as much as the expression of instincts. Jung felt that the recorded life of Jesus was a parable of our spiritual path, a story of God's incarnation in humanity and our struggles to become aware of this reality. Jung identified Christ as a symbol of the goal of the evolution of consciousness.

Jung's Belief that Religious Rituals Protect One from the Full Force of a Religious Experience

He partially defined religion as “understood to be powers, spirits, demons, gods, laws, ideals or whatever name man has given to such factors as he has found in his world, powerful, dangerous, dynamic or helpful enough to be taken into careful consideration or grand, beautiful and meaningful enough to be devoutly adored and loved” (Fordham, 1953, p. 71). “Dogma, creed and ritual are crystallized forms of *original religious experience*, worked over and refined, sometimes for centuries, until they reach the forms in which we know them. In this way, channels are made which control the unruly and arbitrary “supernatural” influences. A living church protects men from the full force of an experience which can be devastating; instead of being gripped by the collective unconscious, they can participate in a ritual which expresses it sufficiently to ‘purge’ by its reflection.” (Fordham, 1953, p.71).

Collective Unconscious

In 1912, Jung published *Transformation and Symbols of the Libido*, a voluminous study of the relation of the fantasies of an American woman, Frank Miller, to motifs in comparative mythology, religion and folklore. He argues that the latter contain primordial (existing from the beginning and primitive) images that reside in a universal, inherited layer of the unconscious, which he terms “collective unconscious”.

The collective unconscious was inherited rather than developed according to Jung. Archetypes are held there until they erupt into one's consciousness. These date at least to the time of Plato who called them “forms.” Jung developed the idea of

archetypes even further. He stated they are a source of age-old knowledge that is lacking in our impoverished present-day consciousness. They are genuine propensities to certain modes of action and reaction ingrained in the species. They become personalized when they become a part of your individual psyche. When you learn to recognize a pattern of an archetype, it becomes your friend and can help you take action in your life.

Purpose of the Red Book

Jung felt his soul had gone astray and he was searching for meaning in his life. He felt his drawings were an appeal to his soul. He thought that other peoples and his own material was connected to other outside events so that we could sometimes receive prophetic information. His drawings and notes on his visions were placed in black books, numbered one to five and six through seven.

He had thirty active imaginations from Nov 1913 until February 1914. From February 1914 to about 1916 he wrote elaborations of his fantasies that he entitled "Scrutinies". He worked on these for sixteen years and drew his mandalas and paintings from the active imaginations up until about 1928. During this time he revised some of his beliefs and made important changes of his various sequence of manuscripts. He placed his worked in an exquisite bound folio of red leather. His biggest question was how much of *The Red Book* was universal?

Validation The Red Book Was Universal

In 1927 Jung received a Taoist-alchemical manuscript entitled *The Secret of the Golden Flower*, asking for his commentary on it. This text validated for him that a mandala was the expression of the Self and he was struck by the parallels between the imagery there and in his own material. "It has taken me virtually forty-five years to distill within the vessel of my scientific work the things I experienced and wrote down at that time...The years when I was pursuing my inner images were the most important in my life and in them everything essential was decided" (Jung, 1961), p. 199).

Jung then stops transcribing *The Red Book* into the calligraphic volume and decides to study medieval alchemy. In 1959, he returns to the transcription of *The Red Book* only to stop mid-sentence. He makes statements that the work should be given to an archive, and eventually made public for serious study. Jung dies on June 6, 1959. In his will, *The Red Book* is left to his family. In 2007, a contract is signed with W.W. Norton for a complete facsimile edition, in the Philemon Series of the Philemon Foundation.

The Red Book in the United States

The original *Red Book* will be on exhibit at the Library of Congress, exhibition titled "*The Red Book* of Carl G. Jung: It's Origins and Influence" from June 17 through September 25, 2010, from 8:30 am to 4:30 pm, Monday through Saturday, in the Thomas Jefferson building, located at 10 First Street S.E., Washington, D. C. The original work, created between 1914 and 1930, has been brought from the Jung Foundation in Zurich to the United States to be displayed in New York, Los Angeles and Washington, D.C., *The Red Book's* last place to visit in the United States.

The exhibition will put *The Red Book* in context by displaying with it selected items from the Library's rich collections that complement the work. They will reveal biographical information about Jung; the influences on him at the time of the book's

creation; and the influence on 20th century culture of the theories Jung began to develop while writing the book. Please see the Library of Congress Internet site (www.loc.gov) for more information.

A Personal Crisis for Jung

In late 1912, Jung sent a copy of his newly published book, *Transformation and Symbols of the Libido*, to Freud with this inscription, “Laid at the feet of a teacher and master by his disobedient but grateful pupil.”

Freud wrote to Jung: January 3, 1913: “Dear Mr. President, Dear Dr.: I propose we abandon personal relationships entirely. I shall lose nothing by it, for my only emotional tie with you has long been a thin thread – the lingering effect of past disappointments. Yours sincerely, Freud.”

Jung to Freud: January 6, 1913: “Dear Professor Freud: I accede to your wish that we abandon our personal friendship, for I never thrust my friendship on anyone. You yourself are the best judge of what this moment means to you. Yours sincerely, Jung.” (Careswell, 2009).

“When I parted from Freud, I knew that I was plunging into the unknown” (Jung, 1961, p. 199). “After the break with Freud, all my friends and acquaintances dropped away. My book was declared to be rubbish; I was a mystic and that settled the matter” (Jung, 1961, p. 167).

Jung’s Crisis Became an Opportunity for Him and For Us

When he was ostracized by Freud, Jung’s crises of losing his identity became an opportunity for him to work on and through his different idea on the concept of libido as containing the energy for a life process that was contained in his unconscious. He developed a psychology that teaches the integration of the mind and the soul of an individual. He was a seeker and researcher throughout his entire life. He wanted people to know the most important tool one has is your consciousness and your willingness to unfold it with focus and commitment.

One of Freud’s contributions to us is that he popularized the concept of a personal unconscious. Freud stated that dreams were the “royal road to the unconscious” a fact that had been known by the Greeks but mostly forgotten until Freud again taught this concept. Jung expanded Freud’s idea of what is contained in the unconscious – both collective and personal and contributed to the fields of transpersonal and parapsychology. He named the principles of introversion and extroversion, the different personality types which determine how each of us perceives the world, through thinking, feeling, sensation or intuition and the universal concept of synchronicity to name a few. Through his *individuation* (growing towards wholeness by unfolding the inner-most *Self*) process he showed that our mind has the capacity to heal itself just as our physical body does.

In 1948, while giving a talk at the opening of the Jungian Institute in Zurich, he joked: “My grandfather, Carl Gustav Jung, once founded a home for retarded children; Now I am founding one for retarded adults...He stated it was an honor to be present at the founding of an institute for complex psychology and further stated, among other areas, that the field of psychology of religion needed attention. He also suggested investigation of pre and post-mortem psychic phenomena. I think he would be pleased with the present goals of ASPSI and its members.

BIOGRAPHY

Rev. Karen E. Herrick, PhD, has shared her clinical expertise for the past twenty-plus years in her private practice by lecturing throughout the United States on dysfunctional homes, grief, loss and dissociation. Karen completed her PhD from Union Institute & University in Cincinnati, Ohio with a specialization in Spiritual Psychology. She is a member of the Board of Directors of the Academy of Spirituality and Paranormal Studies Inc. (www.aspsi.org). She is the author of the book *You're Not Finished Yet* (2006). Please visit Karen's web-site and blog on spiritual experiences at www.karenherrick.com. Karen can be reached by phone, email and on Skype by appointment.

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