

INTRODUCTION

The power of spirituality was ingrained in the human brain since the beginnings of humankind. 1, 2, 3 Modern studies reveal this ageless power lets persons live a longer life with greater mental and physical health. 4, 5 As a counselor and psychologist I've witnessed Christian conversions even in addicts and criminals that changed their lives for the better—and did so in ways secular therapy cannot match. In light of this knowledge, it would be foolish leave religion out of psychotherapy for those with devout faith.

Such knowledge inspired my investigating the methods for tapping into this primordial power to unleash the utmost good it can do. In fact, I was not alone. The American Psychological Association published many books that include spirituality in therapy for those to whom religion is important in their lives. 6, 7, 8, 9 However, the studies are mainly for professionals, so too dry and clinical to directly help the lay reader. This book is therefore written in plain, non-clinical language we all can understand.

But before we go on, we must realize that powerful conversions and healings become possible mainly for those whose religious faith is strong. So, it is pertinent at this point to address those whose faith may be teetering, for in our age of science and postmodern relativism, many find it hard to believe in miracles.

FOR THOSE OF WEAKENED FAITH

Here we must reach an essential understanding: To attain maximum healing and growth, the methods in this book cannot be merely practical, or even psychological, alone. Without strong faith in the greater power we call God, we cannot reach the ultimate self-transcendence the spiritual approach brings us. So, let us start with the most relevant perspective in the gospels: When the two blind men approached Jesus, he touched their eyes and said, "Let it be done according to your faith," and their eyes were opened (Matthew. 9: 28-29). And he said to the sick woman who touched his garment, "Your faith has made you well" (Mark 5:33-34). And to the man who thanked him for being healed he said, "Rise and go. Your faith has healed you" (Luke. 17: 19). [My italics] Hence, the gospels' main emphasis: without strong faith no religious healing can take place.

However, more current reinforcement may be especially needed for those who believe science has discredited biblical teachings. In our postmodern age, how can those of us with critical minds conceive of something as far out as "God"—especially if we picture God as that bearded old man painted in the Sistine Chapel? But, beyond the personified imagery, does the Bible really describe God in this way—or do we ultimately encounter a Mystery indefinable in human terms? Numbers 23:19 states "God is neither a man nor a son of a man." Isaiah 40:18 states "To whom will you liken God, or to what likeness compare...?" Psalms 115: 4-8 states "You cannot have any idols to compare with God." And 1 John 4:12 stated, even when Jesus walked this earth, "No man has ever seen God"; for Jesus walked this earth only in the form of a man.

Well, even atheists can believe there is a lawful and creative power pervading the universe, but they can see nothing personal about it. In a cosmos wherein our entire galaxy is an invisible speck-- how can we conceive of something Infinite coming alive within the virtual infinitesima of our world? St. Augustine presented an appropriate Manichean analogy to describe God's combined immanence and transcendence: He described our world as analogous to a floating sponge nourished by a life-giving sea flowing through it as well as beneath and beyond it. That vast sea represented the lawful and creative power of God, which flows through and infinitely beneath and beyond our limited reality as well. 10 Lest the reader thinks we stray from the

reasoning of science, let us view the thoughts of a scientific genius:

We live in a sea of information, a web of interconnection ---
a dynamic state of interactive, resonant... communion.
There are universal patterns, powers and wisdom at the core of
our being, and the universe vibrates with our every act and thought.

___ Einstein, *The World as I See It*

So, a genius in science can see the cosmos interconnected in a dynamic sea of information and communion. Mysterious cosmic forces such as the Higgs field and dark matter flow through and beyond our system and hold it together like the hand of God. And what further mysteries lurk within the dark, shadowy mysteries far larger than the visible cosmos? But Einstein wrote also of “patterns of power and wisdom at the core of our being vibrating the universe.” How can this be? First of all, astronomers now see no single mid-point in the expanding universe; they claim its midpoint everywhere. 11 And long before modern science, medieval Christian philosopher and mathematician Nicholas of Cusa wrote:

The Godhead is like an infinite sphere whose circumference is nowhere and the midpoint everywhere... 12

If the creative power of God is the source and center of the cosmos, and that source dwells within everything ---then this God-source dwells also in each one of us. Thusly, we then each do count for something significant even on this tiny speck of Earth. Scripture says: “The hairs on each head are counted”—and science confirms such intricate care from DNA down to quantum infinitesima. Moreover, no stranger to the starry skies are we; for cosmological studies tell us we were created not just from the dust of earth— but originally from the very dust of the stars.

Small wonder, this *Mysterium Tremendum* called God can become personal when working in and through persons themselves; and it can do so when we—each of us— tap into this Godly Power through devout reverence and prayer. It is a small step from here to believe a man called Jesus received this divine power, which incarnated in and through him in a magnificent way. And it will be shown this Power can ensue in and through each of us in special ways. In fact, for the most devout Christians, the image and teachings of the Christ alone can trigger rebirth into a better life. (Other religions have their own profound ways.)

Lest we think we ignore Scriptural teachings: The Bible is rife with passages revealing God’s power and Spirit manifesting also within ourselves. The Hebrew Testament tells us God’s Spirit was initially “breathed’ into humankind (Genesis 2:7). And it continues to fill humanity with ability and intelligence, with knowledge and craftsmanship (Exodus 31:3). For it is the Spirit within human beings that makes them understand. (Job 32:8). Luke 17:20-21 tells us not to look aloft for the Kingdom, for it already exists within and among us. Paul tells us we are God’s temple wherein the Spirit resides (1 Corinthians 3:16-17, 6,19). The early Church fathers realized this potential in humanity as well, and therefore saw the Logos also as “Spermatikos”: i.e. the seed of the Logos waiting within humankind.

THE AGONY & THE ECSTASY

However, just as all of nature is resurrection, so too we must follow the way of God’s creation and persistently rise up from our own desolation. Some of us may

face dark nights of the soul before we can resurrect even in this life and become truly reborn again and again to be finally converted into all we can possibly be.

In 2 Corinthians the Apostle Paul tells of his hardships when spreading the word. He was thrown into prison and exposed to death. He received lashes, was pelted with stones, and shipwrecked on stormy seas. He was in danger from bandits, from fellow Jews, from Gentiles and false believers. In his toils, he went without sleep, and knew hunger and thirst, and was left naked and cold. (16-33).

So we are not unique in our own hardships. But we will find: there are ways to rise up even from the depths of despair to finally tap into the Godly power within us all and there find the strength to overcome sickness and privation and follow the way of God's creation—to ever resurrect into constant renewal. In this way we can be finally released to a state of grace that transcends our earthly woes. From here onward, the ensuing chapters will endeavor to help counselors, clergy and laity clear the refuse blocking the spiritual path to a sanctified life. Then we will discover the ways our potentials can be actualized and our weaknesses transcended.

AN OVERVIEW

Part 1 will reveal the methods to extinguish the afflictions blocking our way to a fulfilled and grace-filled life. We cannot grow in God when possessed by fear, depression, negativity, addiction, or debilitating illness. Faith, prayer, Scripture, and therapy are needed here,

Chapter 1. "Prayers that Work" will delve into the silent prayer of meditation, as used in the Bible and by the Christian mystics. Then we will explore the power verbal prayer enlightened by knowledge and given power by acts—using the vital dictum: Act and ye shall receive. Also, we will find when to use blind faith and passive prayer alone, and the limits of such power. We will then explore the potency of personal images acting as catalysts to trigger our religious response and being channels to God.

Chapter 2. "Conquering Our Inner Demons". provides the appropriate religio-therapy for the disorders of anxiety, obsessive compulsions, attention deficits addictions, and post-trauma. Here we neither regress back to psychoanalysis nor indulge today's piecemeal therapies. We will instead utilize tested techniques of broad-spectrum therapy empowered by ageless scriptural teachings and prayer – all induced in a deep, prayerful state in oneness with God's intelligence and power underlying all of creation.

Chapter 3. "Living a Positive Life" follows the dictum: "As one thinks in his heart, so he shall be." (Proverbs 23:7) Beyond drugs alone, the most successful therapy for depression was found in psychological studies to be cognitive restructuring. Therefore, positive cognition and healing self-talk, developed by leading cognitive therapists, will be given maximum power in the form of scriptural teachings in the deepest state of prayer.

Chapter 4. "Rising from Illness & Pain" explores the techniques of guided imagery to help heal illness, suppress or unleash the immune system and more. Also, suppressing pain through altered, prayerful states is explored and utilized – all empowered by timeless biblical wisdom and spiritual images in a deep state of prayer. The methods in this healing chapter should of course be practiced along with the appropriate medical attention as well.

Chapter 5. "Are There Prophetic Dreams?" explores the deeper unconscious of our dreams: including the role of dreams in Scripture, the visions such dreams bring up from the deep, the well of creativity lurking therein,

the prophetic vision-quest in lucid dreaming, along with the retrieval and interpretation of such dreams. Also, a dream-sheet is provided so the reader can more easily pursue all of the above.

Part 2 moves beyond healing into actualization and transcendence through three merging paths: the Personal, the Interpersonal and the Transpersonal as we travel from optimum fulfillment to the invulnerable.

Chapter 6. “The Interpersonal Path: Applied Morality & the Golden Rule” shows the many ways the Golden Rule (known as the power of empathy in psychology) can be put into practice with great benefit to the giver as well as the receiver. Revealed here are the techniques involving sensitivity training, assertiveness training, anger management, motivating others, cultivating intimacy, the ability to give and receive love, and more—all utilizing prayerful techniques derived from Scripture and the Golden Rule.

Chapter 7. “The Personal Path: Tapping Your Full Potential” reminds us the true way of God’s creation consists of constant resurrection—and Scripture urges us out from the bushel, for the Kingdom within us to expand like leaven, and grow like a tiny seed into unbound fruition (Matthew. 13: 31-33; Mark 4:30-32; Luke.) Here is revealed the way to find your true calling in life and give your life the purpose for which you were put on this Earth. Your potentials are God’s gift to you. Actualizing them is your gift back to God.

Chapter 8. “The Transpersonal Path: Toward Self-Transcendence” moves beyond the ego and persons alone, to expand into being part of something much Greater and More. Here the personal Trinity becomes universal, and the first Commandments glorifying God render last six only for sentient beings on a tiny planet. Once the perishable joins with the imperishable, we can then cry out with Paul: “O death where now is your sting? O grave where now is your victory?”

“For Professional Use” is a separate section offering more specialized insights through “Nouthetic Counseling”, “Patterns and Sources”, and “Healing Through Faith: A Scientific Perspective”.