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Religion and Integration of Personality *

The human person is a fascinating and complex phenomenon. So true is this that it would appear that a total comprehension of its complexity will forever elude us. Moreover it is in a condition of constant change. As we progress in life, and learn more about the phenomenon that is the human, that knowledge itself has its effect and brings about further change. The process is unending, as more study brings about more change and more change calls forth more study. Seemingly we are ever running ahead of ourselves in our quest for knowledge and ever running behind ourselves in our quest for understanding of that knowledge. But withal, it constitutes a happy cross—a burden that bodes well, for the growing understanding of ourselves makes the living of our lives a more intelligible and rewarding enterprise.

There is one aspect of our existence that we would focus on, and that has to do with the issue of religion. To be sure, this is not an easy aspect to comprehend: just how and why religion should fit into the human picture as it obviously does. And our focus is further limited since our attention will be given to the matter of personality integration —a complex subject in its own right—and the role that religion plays in its realization. When all is said and done, it will be our contention that religion is essential for the full integration of the human person. In saying this we realize that there are psychologists who would disagree, who would call this position into question, who would even argue against it. Be that as it may, it remains our contention that religion

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does enter into the phenomenon of personality integration, and that it does so in a significant way.

This subject of religion occupied the mind and heart of Sigmund Freud. His own background was Jewish—a fact that history and circumstances never let him forget. And he had his share of misgivings about his Jewishness and about religion in general. That was the topic of his work of 1927: *The Future of an Illusion.* This book was written because, in Freud's thinking, it merited special attention, raising some issues that the human race, he felt, must face. Indeed Freud's book represents one of the most serious efforts made by a scientist in the twentieth century to think through the question of religion and to face up to the disenchantment of the world that it could imply. As two contemporary authors express it,

> The underlying issue in the work is not so much the future of religion or even of civilization, but the question of how to give principle to one's life when nature is no longer a home, when human beings have no more sanctuaries or sacred territories to which to withdraw for communion with the source of their being. Freud found his own sanctuary within the recesses of his ego, but regardless of his protests to the contrary, his solution is an invitation to despair. By failing to acknowledge the limits of science he had to affirm a transcendental rationalism which undermined the very contributions which he had made to self-understanding (Weinstein and Weinstein, 1981, p. 463).

This statement may appear harsh, but it does faithfully depict the resolution that Freud attempted to realize for himself. The illusion of which Freud writes is, of course, religion, but he makes it clear that it, the illusion, is not to be understood as an error. An illusion, he contends, is not the same thing as an error; nor is it necessarily an error. Furthermore, he adds that illusions need not necessarily be false; that is to say, unrealizable or in contradiction to reality. They are at heart the derivative of human wishes. In other words, an illusion occurs whenever a wish-fulfilment looms up as the prominent motive behind the person's action. Thus the relation to reality is inconsequential, just as the illusion itself does not look to reality for its verification. To put it in the words of Freud himself,

> Having thus taken our bearings, let us return once more to the question of religious doctrines. We can now repeat that all of them are illusions and insusceptible of proof. No one can be compelled to think them true, to believe in them. Some of them are so improbable, so incompatible with everything we have laboriously discovered about the reality of the world, that we may compare them—if we pay proper regard to the psychological differences—to delusions. Of the reality value of most of them we cannot judge; just as they cannot be proved, so they cannot be refuted. We still know too little to make a critical approach to them. The riddles of the universe reveal themselves only slowly to our investigation; there are many questions to which science today can give no answer. But scientific work is the only road which can lead us to a knowledge of reality outside ourselves. It is once again merely an illusion to expect anything from intuition and introspection; they can give us nothing but particulars about our own mental life, which are hard to interpret, never any information about the questions which religious doctrine finds it so easy to answer. It would be insolent to let one's own arbitrary will step into the breach and, according to one's personal estimate, declare this or that part of the religious system to be less or more acceptable. Such questions are too momentous for that; they might be called too sacred (p. 31).

It should be noted that in this passage Freud stated that some religious beliefs are actually delusional, or at least comparable to the delusional. Such a statement may itself appear somewhat harsh, but it remains nonetheless consistent with Freud's basic views on the matter. In the opening lines, for example, of the second chapter of his work, *Civilization and its Discontents*, written in 1930, Freud takes up this thesis once again:

> In my *Future of an Illusion* I was concerned much less with the deepest sources of the religious feeling than with what the common man understands by his religion—with the system of doctrines and promises which on the one hand explains to him the riddles of this world with enviable completeness, and, on the other, assures him that a careful Providence will watch over his life and will compensate him in a future existence for any frustrations he suffers here. The common man cannot imagine this

> Providence otherwise than in the figure of an enormously exalted father. Only such a being can understand the needs of the children of men and be softened by their prayers and placated by the signs of their remorse. The whole thing is so patently infantile, so foreign to reality, that to anyone with a friendly attitude to humanity it is painful to think that the great majority of mortals will never be able to rise above this view of life. It is still more humiliating to discover how large a number of people living today, who cannot but see that this religion is not tenable, nevertheless try to defend it piece by piece in a series of pitiful rearguard actions (p. 74).

It is apparent, then, that Freud saw in religion and its beliefs a profound wish fulfilment that seemingly obsessed the human race—an illusion that bordered at least at times on the delusional. And indeed, he states quite clearly that he had found the analogy between religion and obsessional neurosis extremely helpful in his efforts to understand the former. In this respect he was of one mind with Theodor Reik, viewing religion as a neurotic relic of the past whose own time had now passed (1927, p. 44).

To put Freud's position on religion in proper perspective, let us cite a passage or two in which he does bestow upon religion due credit of sorts. We owe that to the man and to the truth. He states quite unequivocally,

> Religion has clearly performed great services for human civilization. It has contributed much towards the taming of the asocial instincts. But not enough. It has ruled human society for many thousands of years and has had time to show what it can achieve. If it had succeeded in making the majority of mankind happy, in comforting them, in reconciling them to life and in making them into vehicles of civilization, no one would dream of attempting to alter the existing conditions. But what do we see instead? We see that an appallingly large number of people are dissatisfied with civilization and unhappy in it, and feel it as a yoke which must be shaken off (1927, p. 37).

Elsewhere Freud draws an analogy between the process of civilization and the path of individual development, both of which owe

much to the evolution of a super-ego that presides over their respective growth. The passage is provocative:

> The super-ego of an epoch of civilization has an origin similar to that of an individual. It is based on the impression left behind by the personalities of great leaders—men of overwhelming force of mind or men in whom one of the human impulsions has found its strongest and purest, and therefore often its most one-sided, expression. In many instances the analogy goes still further, in that during their lifetime these figures were—often enough, even if not always—mocked and maltreated by others and even despatched in a cruel fashion. In the same way, indeed, the primal father did not attain divinity until long after he had met his death by violence. The most arresting example of this fateful conjunction is to be seen in the figure of Jesus Christ—if, indeed, that figure is not a part of mythology, which called it into being from an obscure memory of that primal event (1930, p. 141).

Thus far, then, we have seen that Freud was aware of religion and religious figures and the role that they played in human history. He was conscious of the contribution that religion had made to the human cause, but was equally convinced that its contribution had been inadequate and, by this time in human history, depleted. Realizing at the same time that a wish-fulfilment was at the base of the religious effort, and that it must needs be met in human life, Freud opted to turn to science as the only proper avenue for meeting the human needs, such as they were. In the passage cited above from his *Future of an Illusion*, Freud stated that scientific work was the only road which can lead mankind to a knowledge of reality outside ourselves (p. 31). This was a conviction that he expressed frequently throughout that work, as well as in other writings.

In the debate that he conducts with an imaginary opponent in the *Future of an Illusion*, Freud clearly indicates that he is casting his chips with the realm of science. Despairing of the illusion that was religion and yet realizing the human need for life answers, he opted for science, that clear, rational, inquisitive thought that will have none of the obfuscation of the imaginary wish-fulfilment that religion embraces. The depth of his conviction in regard to the salvific power of science is given eloquent expression near the end of his book. Speaking of

education that is liberated from religious doctrines and contrasting it with one that is religiously based, Freud goes on to say,

> Education freed from the burden of religious doctrines will not, it may be, effect much change in men's psychological nature. Our god *Logos* is perhaps not a very almighty one, and he may only be able to fulfil a small part of what his predecessors have promised. If we have to acknowledge this we shall accept it with resignation. We shall not on that account lose our interest in the world and in life, for we have one sure support which you lack. We believe that it is possible for scientific work to gain some knowledge about the reality of the world, by means of which we can increase our power and in accordance with which we can arrange our life. If this belief is an illusion, then we are in the same position as you. But science has given us evidence by its numerous and important successes that it is no illusion. Science has many open enemies, and many more secret ones, among those who cannot forgive her for having weakened religious faith and for threatening to overthrow it. She is reproached for the smallness of the amount she has taught us and for the incomparably greater field she has left in obscurity. But, in this, people forget how young she is, how difficult her beginnings were and how infinitesimally small is the period of time since the human intellect has been strong enough for the tasks she sets. Are we not all at fault, in hasting our judgments on periods of time that are too short? We should make the geologists our pattern. People complain of the unreliability of science—how she announces as a law today what the next generation recognizes as an error and replaces by a new law whose accepted validity lasts no longer. But this is unjust and in part untrue. The transformations of scientific opinion are developments, advances, not revolutions . . . .
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> No, our science is no illusion. But an illusion it would be to suppose that what science cannot give us we can get elsewhere (p. 54ff).

The power of Freud's conviction shows forth here as in few other passages. There is no mistaking the depth of his convictions—negative in regard to religion and positive in regard to science. Both aspects are important for grasping the vehemence of his feelings on the

matter. Religion in his view had had its chance and had proved inadequate, despite some admitted successes; science, on the other hand, had had relatively little chance to date to prove itself and yet, despite its admitted failures, had established its potential in regard to the human search for meaning and fulfilment. In his view, the human race had no real alternative but to embrace the cause of science and to follow the lead that it was surely setting for us all. The illusion of religion was finished; the illusion of science was an unmerited and unjust misnomer; the real illusion was the supposition that mankind could find any genuine and significant answers for itself outside the domain of science.

Such a faith and trust in science, seen from the perspective of the last quarter of the twentieth century rather than the first, certainly strikes one as naive and simplistic. It would appear from Freud's analysis that science held out solid and sound guarantee for human peace, confidence, reassurance and advancement, while religion ultimately held out nothing but more and more illusions—and illusion at its worst. Near the end of his life Freud, now forced into exile from Germany, undoubtedly had misgivings of sorts about the inevitability of human progress and growth under the aegis of pure science. Today, some fifty years later, we have even greater misgivings than he. The current world concern, manifested in the growing mass protests over nuclear proliferation and annihilation, has many—not the least of whom are many scientists themselves—wondering whether science, after a century of unbridled freedom and almost unlimited financial support, can of and by itself offer mankind anything of permanent value, much less eternal significance. It may well be that the human race can no longer survive without the benefits of its science, but it may also be that the race has even less chances of survival with it. Certainly there are few today who do not welcome every sincere gesture that religious man make to help mankind with the horrible threats to humanity that modern science has now made patently possible and real.

One such person, himself a geochemist and member of the U.S. National Academy of Engineering as well as a foreign member of the Royal Swedish Academy of Engineering Sciences, who has no hesitation in saying that in his opinion religion not only has a place, but is actually a necessity for the human race in its efforts for survival in the modern world, is Rustom Roy. Says Roy,

> In my recent book I have made the case that only religion is a strong enough human force to guide technology (1981 B).

In this particular quotation Roy is making reference to his own book, *Experimenting with Truth: the Fusion of Religion with Technology, Needed for Humanity's Survival.* In this book Roy gives expression to a realization that came upon him during his many labours in the field—a realization that technology and science were not only not eliminating religion, but actually making it an imperative for the survival of the human race. He states quite unequivocally,

> My experience in the world of science policy at the microscopic level of choosing between alternative routes for the disposal of radioactive wastes as well as the level of greatest complexity in dealing with the use of *SbT* (Science-based-Technology) in the development of nations has driven me to an unexpected conclusion. 'Science' policy, I am convinced, must be done in a framework of, or under the hegemony of, a specific 'religious' world view. Since so many national policies are infused with science-policy components, this means that SbT and religion must become extremely interactive to help humankind govern itself. To be able to begin such an interaction, however, requires a degree of mutual knowledge and understanding which simply does not exist. It is to that task that I have been devoting a substantial fraction of my recent activities (p. 2) (1981 A).

Elsewhere in his work Roy speaks of the re-evaluation of science that is occurring in many circles. And he speaks of this as a realization that has come about only in the relatively recent past:

> In less than 15 years the world has radically altered its attitude towards science and technology. From being seen as the hope of humanity, SbT is now seen as an alien force in culture, separating humans from their roots in nature, causing ecological problems, posting threats of total annihilation. What is remarkable is that in the Church, very few, of the sociologists of science have commented on such a significant change (p. 8).

Roy's impatience with the failure of religious thinkers and religion's theologians to understand and study the implications of the new

developing attitude of humans towards the world of science is more than equalled by his optimism of the growing number of significant science thinkers who are beginning to appreciate the meaning of this change. His own views call for the integration of religion, science and technology in a truly meaningful synthesis. As he says,

> The road to personal health and societal salvation begins with the construction of an accurately integrated image of Reality. This action develops a distinctive position on the nature of the complementarity between 'science' and 'religion'. They are presented not as dealing with different realms of Reality, e.g., nature and the person, but rather as differences in focus. Religion deals with the big picture, setting a context, interrelating small units of reality; science deals, by definition, in a reductionist mode by isolating a small area for detailed study without references to its context.
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> The effectiveness of integrating in revealing the hidden meanings, the Beyond, is illustrated by contemporary research on 'cyclopean' vision and stereopsis. Monocular images, which are genuinely random, when focussed conocularly reveal symbols which 'are the unique fruits of' integration.
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> The absolute mandate of the new approach is to abandon 'single vision' or reductionism in religion and SbT, and to adopt a Brahma posture, integrating into a single reality even the many apparent 'opposites.' This calls for a new attitude to reality, scientific and religious—an ability and willingness to alter focus quickly from the focal length of the one to the other (p.58).

The same concept is developed by Roy in a subsequent chapter. In it he speaks of a new complementarity that has developed between religion and science and the need that the two domains have for each other:

> The new complementarity which is at the heart of what I have to say is that good science and good religion are automatically and always totally complementary. Only by using both can I form an accurate and full three-dimensional sculpture of Reality. All my day-to-day existence, my contact with the functioning of

> nature, gadgets, devices, and organization is a means to establish the nature of this reliable responsible micro-structure of Reality. My hypotheses about the relations of Nature to Society and Person, about the just society and 'right' behaviour—i.e., my religious views—require longer to form and test in the fire of experience. But as this, my life-tested 'framework' for the big picture, takes shape, it gives much more meaning to the fragments of the findings of my scientific self, for they find their place in a pattern. And the science improve because the patterns themselves may add insight or detail to the new findings at the detailed level (p. 132).

It goes without saying that such ideas, advanced by one steeped in the findings and spirit of the modern scientific endeavour and yet appreciative of the offering that religion has to make to humankind, are *toto caelo* removed from those of Sigmund Freud. In no way would a Roy, a James Jeans, a Michael Polanyi, a James Conant, a Charles Townes, a Carl Friedrich von Weizsacker and many others of their scientific stature, subscribe to the view of Freud, stated above, that an illusion it would be to 'suppose that what science cannot give us we can get elsewhere.' Nor is it factual to think that at least psychology would uphold Freud's position. The truth is, that many psychologists would subscribe to the spirit and sentiments given expression by Erik H. Erikson. In his work, *Identity, Youth and Crisis*, he addresses the very question Roy has raised and he speaks of its influence in the life of the individual:

> If I name religion as the institution which throughout man's history has striven to verify basic trust, I disavow any intention to call religion as such childish or religious behaviour as such regressive, although it is obvious that large-scale infantilization is not foreign to the practice and the intent of organized religion. As we overcome our universal amnesia for the frightening aspects of childhood, we may well also acknowledge gratefully the fact that, in principle, the glory of childhood also survives in adult life. Trust, then, becomes the capacity for faith—a vital need for which many must find some institutional confirmation. Religion, it seems, is the oldest and has been the most lasting institution to serve the ritual restoration of a sense of trust in the form of faith while offering a tangible formula for a sense of evil against

> which it promises to arm and defend man. Childlike strength as well as a potential for infantilization are suggested in the fact that all religious practice includes periodic, childlike surrender to the Power that creates and recreates, dispensing earthly fortune as well as spiritual well-being; the demonstration of smallness and dependence by reduced posture and humble gesture; the confession in prayer and song of misdeeds, misthoughts, and evil intentions and the fervent appeal for inner reunification by divine guidance. At best, all of this is highly stylized and thus becomes suprapersonal; individual trust becomes a common faith, individual mistrust a commonly formulated evil, while, the individual's plea for restoration becomes part of the ritual practice of many and a sign of trustworthiness in the community (1968, p. 106).

In brief, while it is certainly possible that Freud and others saw in religion only an illusion that will eventually but inevitably fail mankind, it can be said just as convincingly that the same judgment can be made, and today is being made, against science. It too could prove to be an illusion that seemingly offered the human race so very much at a certain stage of its development, but which is now starting to fail the people who believed in it. The truth undoubtedly lies somewhere in between these two extreme positions—for both religion and science. And the apodictic repudation of either religion or science leaves the human being in an impossible and unenviable position, for the human stands in need of the contributions that both science and religion can make to one's life.

Our focus in the present paper is on the question of personal integration and the contribution that religion makes towards that human achievement. We would not subscribe to the Freudian suggestion that religion be treated as an illusion and that it be discarded in the serious human endeavour of integration. Quite the contrary, we would offer considerations that indicate that its contribution is not only weighty but necessary, and that the complementarity of which Roy and others speak is a valuable aspect of the individual's life, and especially relevant for this aspect of human living.

It is in the nature of the human to ponder the meaning of it all: to wonder, to marvel, to guess, to imagine, to move into the great beyond of all that surrounds us, to reach out to touch the intangible, to

speak the ineffable, to embrace the mysteriosum of life. Every human being can affirm the experience of Keats captured so beautifully in his remarkable sonnet:

When I Have Fears

When I have fears that I may cease to be
Before my pen has glean'd my teeming brain,
Before high piled books, in charactery,
Hold like rich garners the full-ripen'd grain;
When I behold, upon the night's starr'd face,
Huge cloudy symbols of a high romance,
And think that I may never live to trace
Their shadows, with the magic hand of chance;
And when I feel, fair creature of an hour
That I shall never look upon thee more,
Never have relish in the faery power
Of unreflective love;—then on the shore
Of the wide world I stand alone, and think
Till Love and Fame to nothingness do sink.

These are the thoughts of every thoughtfilled person, and they call for responses that cannot always, if ever, be made with cold, logical, uninvolved, dispassionate, rational thinking. Indeed they call in a remarkable way for considerable imaginative thinking that enables one to formulate answers that can bring about profound understanding and emotionally satisfying reflections. It is in the nature of the human to look for and to feel meaning at all levels of his existence, and he is ever seeking to do so, beginning with the curious child and ending with the reflecting, reminiscing octogenarian. The human, being a Being-in -the-world-, is caught up in the world by his very nature. Indeed this is so true that one comes to a knowledge and appreciation of just who he, she is through the mediation of that world which is a constituent in our very being. In other words, the human person is thrown out of himself, so to speak, and into the world by his very senses (he sees the world, he hears it, he tastes it, he smells it, he feels it), by his intelligence (he ponders it, studies it), by his imagination (he envisions it). As Heidegger has pointed out at great length in his *opus magnum*, *Being and Time*, one does not first know himself and then move into the

world; on the contrary, one finds himself always, already thrown into the world and has to gather himself up from that world into which he finds himself already thrown. Thus we say that we arrive at a self-understanding by the mediation of the world—the world of things, of people, of our artifacts, of our achievements. And we move towards a unification of it all, so to speak, a making one of it all, a making sense of it all, a making meaning of it all, and in that same process we are engaged in making one, sense, meaning, unity of ourselves. The making sense of ourself is realized through the making sense of our world: the things we perform, endure, accomplish, bring out, participate in, as well as the people and relationships into which we enter. At the same time the making sense of it all is realized through the productive projections that we bring into the picture. While making meaning of it all we are making meaning of ourselves. While making meaning of ourselves we are making meaning of the world. It is much in the manner of a figure 8 laid on its side. Such, in brief, is the task of personality integration: a feat that enables the person to function more and more as an integer, a whole. In mathematics we speak of an integer, a whole number, such as 1, 2, 3, etc. and we contrast it with the fraction, such as 1/2, 3/4, etc. Similarly, the integrated person, or better still, the integrating person, is one who is moving towards such an achievement, living less and less, the fractionated life that he has hitherto been undergoing and more and more a life of unity with himself and the world.

It is in the nature of the human being, we have said, to make sense and to feel that sense at all levels of existence. To be sure, we shall never exhaust the world of meaning, but neither will we settle for gaining no grasp of it. Even the child will have his reading, as will the old patriarch. It is an axiom of psychology and of religion that the human person finds self when one loses self, when one genuinely moves out towards the world, towards creation, towards people, towards relationships. And in the process of losing self in the other one arrives at an appreciation of unsuspected dimensions within his own being. The world is forever illuminating dimensions of the inner person just as the person is ever disclosing dimensions of the world. This is no less true for the person when he or she moves towards God. This entire dimension of life must be accounted for somehow, must be reckoned with, must be assimilated into life with some kind of a synthesis, however small or great, however rich or jejune, however sophisticated or

naive. The human being will not be denied. Thus he will wonder, will ponder, will surmise, will guess, will imagine, will reflect. And somewhere, sometime, somehow in this process he, she will make sense out of it all, positively or negatively. To be sure, in some instances, the human may see no way to synthesize it all except by dismissing creation as a joke and religion as a huge superstition. But even this is an attempt to render it all somewhat intelligible, for to see something as chaotic is to render it less chaotic. It is to make sense out of the seemingly senseless. Thus to dismiss everything—creation and religion—as meaningless is to make it more meaningful. It is to find a meaning of sorts in the phenomenon. How satisfying such a synthesis might prove to be for a person, or now lasting such a dismissal might prove to be, is something else, another question. But it remains nonetheless one way of dealing with the religion issue. The vast majority of mankind, however, has never rested secure with such a grand and grandiose dismissal. People look for meaning on a large scale just as they do for meaning on a small scale. Nor is this search due to their stupidity; on the contrary, it is due to their intelligence.

This point has been made by Roy as well. As he puts it,

> We started this book with a look at the world's situation with respect to both the physical-biological-social milieu so strongly changed by science and technology and the social-political-religious climate dramatically transformed by the same changes. But it has become abundantly clear that these latter changes do not mean that 'religion' is disappearing. The empirical evidence for the opposite is unambiguous. The context that human beings create for themselves always includes the religious, the numinous, the mysterious, the concern for the beyond. The official active attempt to 'stamp out religion' in the Soviet Union, China and other countries for a generation or more seems to have been unsuccessful. It is my observation based on several visits that, in many ways, Soviet society—except in its official language—is behaviourally a more 'religious', even more classically Christian society at the personal level of actions, than any country in the West. At the other end of the spectrum, the worst excesses of Western licentiousness seem also to have been unable to dislodge the innate religious tendencies of humanity. This in spite of the swamping out of fundamental truths by the propa-

> gation of any salable half-truth or even utter nonsense, from astrology to the chariots of the Gods, by the all-powerful machinery of the all-too-free press (p. 183).

The quest for meaning, then, is not self-deceptive (the playing of a game), nor ridiculous (laughable inanity), nor fruitless (devoid of any yield). It is the mark of human intelligence that stands at the origin of our science, our art, our culture, our institutions, our philosophizing, and our religion. To repeat, people look for meaning at all levels of life: on the large scale just as on the small scale, on the macroscopic as well as the microscopic level.

These points are worth pursuing. There are those people in life who find the marvels of nature—animals, fish, plants, minerals, rocks, mountains, clouds, the starry heavens—captivating, if not overwhelming. Even the great German philosopher, Emmanuel Kant, acknowledged that he stood in awe before the phenomenon of conscience within and the starry heavens above. They give themselves to the study of such marvels with a passion and obsession that are truly edifying. They come to reverence the smallest leaf, the tiniest twig, a newly discovered species of animal or plant, the creation of a new chemical element. And their devotion to the subhuman world can, and in some instances has, mesmerized them to the point where they are rendered oblivious to the people with whom they work, with whom they live. Some have been known to regard the world of the human as a taken-for-granted, if not the meaningless. Their heart rests and dwells in the world of matter and basic life, and there they are at home. By the same token other persons in life *have* found the world of the human unbelievably fascinating, and choose to devote themselves to the pursuit of, the study of, the mastery of the human dimensions of life: interpersonal relations in all their forms with the implications that such relationships can have for life and its participants. Among them we sometimes find those who see only the human as significant, while the world of the subhuman or of God is just uninteresting, if not boring. To be sure, the vast majority of mankind, whatever their interest in the world of the subhuman, find their fellow man a source of love, strength and inspiration, and seek to foster relationships with them in some manner or other. Finally, so too do the vast majority of people, whatever their appreciation of the human, find the relationships of which religion speaks equally meaningful and strengthening, and seek to fos-

ter relations in that domain as well. The proof one offers another is not that of argumentation; it is the proof that originates in experience: the experience that religion opens up and renders possible, an experience that may be akin to that of the naturalist or the interpersonalist, but which yet remains distinctive, unmistakable and uniquely divining.

It should be noticed now that the experiences one undergoes on various levels make their respective contributions to the person's life and provide him or her with the means with which to effect a personal integration. Thus, in dealing with things and objects or other entities of the subhuman world, one develops those competencies without which he is unable to negotiate life. Such competencies, as the psychologist Robert White has made so abundantly clear, play a significant role in enabling us to master the intricacies of life and thereby enter into an appreciation of one's own worth. So, too, in dealing with the human world, experiences enable one to understand the give and take of life in the interpersonal sphere and to appreciate the manner in which we as humans enter into each other's making. By the same token, the experiences one has in the spiritual and religious domain of life open up the human being to an understanding of the reality and power of the Holy and Sacred in life. It is through such experiences that one comes to treasure the reality of limits, of Finitude, of Transcendence, of Providence in our earthly existence. And it is such experiences that affect the integrational achievement of the individual and render him or her able to effect significantly his own experience of unity with self and with others, with Nature and with God.

Thus the person whose life story in all its fulness and temporality leads him or her to seek intercourse with God, and to live the life as a vast meaningful love exchange with God and the whole of creation, has indeed significant possibilities at his or her command. Every relationship, as we have pointed out, contributes possibilities to our lives and the spiritual relationships offer beautiful possibilities for those who learn and those who cultivate them. Indeed history has shown that genuine religious living with its metaphors, symbols and inspirational stories can effect wonders in the lives of people. In the lives of some it enables them to attain the stature of saints, among whom we find some of mankind's most heroic people, most inspirational of

persons. But even those who fall short of this stature still find their everyday efforts fruitful and their accomplishments noteworthy.

Religion indeed brings the person to understandings that truly defy description. Taking the Kingdom of God as a serious dimension of life allows for experiences that are otherwise simply unavailable. In the religious appreciation of life, the least impressive of persons merits to be taken reverently, the most hypocritical of humans remains entitled to the benefit of the doubt, the most heinous of persons will not be written off as a human failure or as one beyond salvation. In short, no human being is ever to be considered as beyond redemption. Such are the understandings of people and of life that are the heritage of religion, and such are invaluable for the person who is intent on putting his life and world together in a truly meaningful and comprehensive way. There is no realization in life more devastating to a human being than the fact that he is totally alone in life, unwanted and unloved. Such a conviction, if it possesses the person, renders him impotent in the face of everything, paralyses his efforts at existence brings his sojourn to a screeching halt. By the same token there is no realization quite as important to all of us as the realization that we are not alone and never really ever alone, not unloved and never ever really unloved, not insignificant and never ever really insignificant. It is these truths, and thruths such as these, that make possible a genuine integration of the human life. They are not only at the heart of the religious heritage, they are at the heart of the integrational process. It feeds upon them. No other field of study is comparable to religion in this respect. It holds out hope to all, excluding no one.

We would point out here that religion makes an extraordinary appeal to the magnificent power of the imagination with its creative and productive referentiality. This is a realization about religion that is not really new, but one that is still little understood, even today. A century ago Cardinal Newman had come to such realization and depicted the same in his *Grammer of Assent:* the remarkable way in which it arouses us to act and leads us to practise by the action of its object upon our affections. As he points out, it is when imagination is allied to belief that people of quality rise to the heights of saints, leaders, statesmen, preachers, reformers. Newman's understanding of the

significance of the imaginative in the realization of the religious life led one author, John Coulson, to speak in this fashion:

> Newman's originality is in the weight he attaches to what remains the crucial object—that a belief cannot be held before it is proved to be true and certain. How, he asks are we entitled to hold a belief which we cannot adequately explain? It is in answering this question that Newman finds himself having to appeal to imagination (1981, p. 46).

The issue that we would raise here is not the remarkable role of the imagination in the life of the religious person, but rather the remarkable role of the imagination in the process of effecting a personal integration. For it is in the languaged imagination and the imaginative language of the believer that one finds the key to his living of a devout religious life and in his effecting a meaningful integration of his personality. We noted previously that every relationship contributes possibilities to our lives, and that spiritual relationships offer beautiful possibilities for those who learn and cultivate them. Our principal point was then made, that history has shown that genuine religious living with its metaphors, symbols and inspirational stories can effect wonders in the lives of people. There is no underestimating the power of the imaginative creations that we call metaphors, symbols and myths, stories. These imaginative creations are at the heart of the entire religious enterprise, but they are also at the heart of the person's integrational endeavour.

Every person moves forward in the recognition of his need to comprehend more of life and to remain equal to the task that is his. Every person will metaphorize somehow, making new amalgamations of his life settings, sometimes quite effectively, sometimes ineffectively. Thus, to use an example cited above, to metaphorize the bewildering as chaos is to make it less chaotic and to make possible a search for greater intelligibility. It is no exaggeration to say that in these movements beyond, these metaphorical unifications and leaps of the person, we find the key to his or her ongoing, experiential, phenomenal world; how he is endeavouring to put together areas of his life in various syntheses that another person may deem impressive or, on the contrary, self-defeating, if not irrational. We see how he is uniting the disparate that looms up before him; how he is imaginizing

flooding with lateral thought, the real-for-him; how he/she is attempting to get astride it all. Metaphors for a person's life are not mere aesthetic indulgences. They are one's lifelines, hope for success, embodiments of their anticipation of arriving intact. Indeed, when a person in life, as the client in therapy, is able to genuinely and imaginatively metaphorize his situation, or remetaphorize it anew, it does in fact open up for him a semantic expansion and provide him with a clearing, wherein he can get his bearings, steady himself, rest a while, think some things through differently, sketch in broad strokes his upcoming future, and then launch forth into life's thickets a renewed and stronger person.

The point that we are stressing is the fact that our metaphors, symbols and stories are mind-filled, not mindless creations. They are imaginative unifications that have helped us make sense of life and its problems—and for these we often express a sign of gratitude to our parents, our friends, our clergy, our neighbours, our religion, our God, or maybe even just to ourselves for having had the good sense to set aside a few moments of reflection or prayer somewhere along the path of life, to raise our mind and heart to the better things (to use a phrase of St Paul), to God. The fact is, that thanks to our new imaginative thinking, we have come to see our *marriage*, for example, not as a trap but as a game or a school for learning or a golden opportunity for personal and interpersonal growth; our *job*, not as an impossible drudgery but as a real blessing in disguise that holds far more promise for us than it did when we viewed it in our former light; our *family* not as burdens which weigh impossibly upon us but as our greatest treasures and most solid source of genuine strength and purpose; our *trails*, not as cruel ordeals visited upon us by a heartless fate or a cruel God, but as the darkness of midnight that initiates the beginning of a new day, the ebb of the wave that marks the rise of a new one; our *friends*, our *critics* etc. Such is the power of the metaphors and symbols in our lives —at a given stage—under given circumstances—with our given understandings. To be sure, they too will some day be changed, as they should be, and we will later integrate these respective areas of life anew at another time. For the present, however, these remain the metaphorizations of marriage, job, family, trials, etc., with which we are imaginatively languaging our life. For the present they constitute our claim to strength, to soundness, to sanity, to peace, and we move ahead into life with the buoyance that they provide.

To speak of these as mindless creations is patently inadequate. To say that they are ridiculous is not borne out by the facts. To pretend that they are all thoroughly and flawlessly thought through would be grandiose and untrue. To say, however, that they are highly imaginative creations, metaphorizations, symbolizations of our lives that are helping us reconstruct and reintegrate our life anew is as true as God Himself.

When, then, understanding the power and force of this imaginative languaging and languaged imagining in our personal integration, we turn to the resources that religion places at our disposal, we are stunned by the embarrassment of riches that is ours. The power of prayer, the power of the Word, the power of the liturgy, the power of contemplation, the power of holy abandonment, the power of the Providential Presence in our lives—all become enormous resources for the individual believer who would move into his life and effect a unity of his own self, his world and his Creator. As we have already said, no other field is comparable in its bequeathment. This is not meant as a demeaning of science or philosophy or literature or psychology. It is simply a statement of the fact that the integrational process for the human being can find in religion magnificent resources that it sorely needs, and that these resources are second to none. Religion holds out hope to all, excluding no one. And calling all the while for imaginative thinking, it would bid the person to look far, to see far, to think far into life and beyond. And it would urge the person to imagine even in the darkest of moments that light of hope that makes integral living ever possible.

Early Illusions

Early illusions are beautiful,
Early illusions are wounding
But what does it matter! We are above vanity,
We embrace the highest knowledge,
saved by our happy blindness.

We, who are not afraid of taking a false step—
fools, from the common point of view—
still keep enchantment in our faces
through all the disillusioned crowd.

We are driven towards the distance by a glimmering of
something,
away from the daily grind, the calculations of everyday
living.
from pale skeptics and pink schemers,
transforming the world with our reflections.

But the inevitability of disappointments
makes us see too clearly . . . On all sides
everything suddenly takes shape,
all unknown to us till now.

The world appears before us, unhazed; unmisted,
no longer radiant with something priceless,
but with all this truthfulness unmasked
as deceit. But what is gone—was no deception.

You see, it is not the knowledge of the serpent,
it is not the doubtful honour of experience,
but the ability to be enchanted by the world
that reveals to us the world as it really is.

Suppose someone with illusions in his eyes
flashes past, pursuing some distant gleam,
Then it doesn't seem to us that he is blind—
it seems to us that we ourselves are blind.

Yevtushenko (1967).

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