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FRANCISCAN MEDITATION: THE MIND'S JOURNEY INTO GOD

In comparison with the Orient, the West is far behind in cultivating types and techniques of meditation. Yet there are more meditative riches buried in our cultural past than we Westerners often realize. Awakened by our encounter with Oriental meditation—by wandering gurus with a maze of meditation techniques —we Westerners are being spurred to do some archaeological digging into our own past, to embark on a treasure hunt, as it were, in order to retrieve the spiritual wisdom buried in texts long out of print and in monastic traditions that have been by-passed by the main thrust of Western culture.

Survey of Christian Meditation

A survey of the Christian tradition, for example, reveals considerable variety in forms of prayer. Basic to monastic prayer in the West is the recitation of the Divine Office. The core content of this prayer consists of the Biblical psalms, recited in set numbers each day, interspersed with antiphons and complemented with seasonal readings. Developed within Benedictine monasticism, these prayers are chanted in common by a community of monks at stated hours of the day and night. Within this tradition there evolved the form of sung recitation known as Gregorian chant. In the life of the monastery, the chanting of the Divine Office was integrated into the celebration of the Mass and the commemoration of the feasts of the yearly liturgical cycle. In addition, part of the daily schedule of the monk is devoted to a private meditative reading of scripture called *lectio divina.*

In contrast to the communal chanted prayer and the reading of Scripture, Christians pursue a form of introspective meditation, or soul mysticism, in which one turns within his own mental processes to search the depths of his soul as "image of God." In the West, soul mysticism was given a theoretical foundation by

Augustine, who analysed the soul as image of God in his *De Trinitate.* In the East, Origen linked soul mysticism with the allegorical meditation on the *Canticle of Canticles,* in which the soul is seen as the bride of Christ. This introspective tradition reached a certain culmination in the Carmelite meditation of *The Interior Castle* of Teresa of Avila. Related to this introspective tradition is the speculative mysticism which was developed in the writings of the Greek Fathers and cultivated extensively in the West, inspired largely by the Neo-platonic writings of the pseudo-Dionysius.

In the East, Christ-centred meditation took the form of the Jesus prayer, which is recited like an Oriental *mantra,* accompanied by techniques that resemble certain yoga practices. In the West, during the high Middle Ages, devotion to the humanity of Christ flowered in a meditation that used the imagination to depict in great detail and vividness Gospel scenes of the life of Christ, especially those of his passion and death. This contemplation of the humanity of Christ was enriched by intricate techniques in *The Spiritual Exercises* of Ignatius Loyola, where it was integrated into a process of radical change of heart.

Many other forms of meditative prayer can be identified in the Christian tradition, such as the "prayer of silence" of the Quakers, and intense experiences of charismatic prayer like the Baptism of the Spirit. The above listing does not claim to be comprehensive or systematic; it merely touches certain high points, suggesting that there lies awaiting exploration a much greater variety of types and techniques of Christian meditation.

Franciscan Meditation

From among the many forms of Christian meditation, I have chosen to explore an example from the medieval Franciscan tradition. At first glance, it might seem strange to associate meditation with the Franciscan tradition, since the spontaneity of Francis of Assisi seems far removed from the mental discipline often associated with meditation. As a matter of fact, I will not be concentrating on Francis himself but on the work of one of his followers: *The*

Mind's Journey into God,[1] by Bonaventure, who was successor, to Francis as seventh Minister General of the Friars Minor and one of the leading philosopher-theologians of the thirteenth century.

Bonaventure's small treatise—less than fifty pages in present book form—leads the reader to a meditation on the universe, which is at the same time a spiritual journey. The entire enterprise is presented in the Spirit of Francis, reflecting his love of nature, his devotion to the humanity of Christ and the warm affectivity characteristic of his religious sensibility. However, it integrates these elements into the mainstream of Western speculative mysticism, of the metaphysical, cosmological and introspective types. Consequently, the treatise achieves an extraordinary *coincidentia oppositorum* of diverse strands of meditation; for it unites the speculative cosmological meditation of the Pseudo-Dionysius with Francis' spontaneous love of nature. And it extends Francis' contemplation of creatures into the depths of subjectivity, drawing into the Franciscan universe Augustine's introspective meditation on the soul as image of God. All of this is blended into the Franciscan devotion to the humanity of Christ, with its graphic focus on Christ's suffering and death. It would not be incorrect to call Bonaventure's work a *summa* of medieval Christian mysticism and of major strands of Christian meditation. Although these strands are found authentically within its structure, they are woven into a closely-knit whole which reflects a distinctive form of integral religious consciousness.

Although Bonaventure's treatise contains several forms of meditation on Christ, it does not develop in detail the most characteristic late medieval contemplation of Christ. Bonaventure did, however, develop this latter type abundantly in his treatise entitled *The Tree of Life*[2]; and I will draw from that work to fill out the picture of Franciscan meditation. Finally, I will suggest a correlation between the types of meditation in Bonaventure and the levels of the psyche that have been explored in the research of Jean Houston and Robert Masters.

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1. Bonaventure, *Itinerarium mentis in Deum;* cf. the critical text of Bonaventure's works in *S. Bonaventurae Opera Omnia,* edita studio et cura PP. Collegii a S. Bonaventura (Quaracchi, 1882-1902). X Volumina; the *Itinerarium* appears in Vol. V, 295-325.

2. *Lignum vitae* (VIII, 68-86).

The Mind's Journey into God

The Latin title Bonaventure's treatise is *Itinerarium Mentis in Deum*. The term *itinerarium,* which could be translated by the English 'itinerary', means what pertains to a journey in general, or a plan or description of a journey; in medieval ecclesiastical terminology it also meant a prayer for a safe journey, or a pilgrimage.[3] Bonaventure seems to include all of these meanings in his title. As he uses it, the Latin term *mens (mentis)* means more than our usual English translation 'mind'; for it refers to the entire soul in its three faculties of memory, intelligence and will, which according to Christian theologians constitute the soul as image of God.[4] The treatise sketches the stages or levels of the soul's journey through various types of meditation until it comes not merely 'to God' but 'into God', by entering into mystical union with him in ecstatic contemplation.

In the prologue to the treatise, Bonaventure describes the circumstances that led to its composition.[5] In the fall of 1279, two years after he had been elected Minister General of the Franciscans, he felt the need to retire to a quiet place to seek the spiritual peace that Francis was granted during his life. He made a pilgrimage to one of the most sacred Franciscan shrines, the mountain of Laverna in Tuscany, where thirty-five years before Francis experienced the climactic vision of his life, during which he received in his body the stigmata, or marks of Christ's passion. Bonaventure tells us that he was meditating on that vision, which was of a six-winged Seraph in the form Christ crucified.[6] While considering this vision, he saw in a flash that the six wings of the Seraph symbolize the six stages of contemplation whereby the soul can ascend into God. In the vision, the wings of the Seraph were in pairs, with two covering his body, two extended in flight and two raised above his head. The lower pair of wing symbolize the contemplation of the material world, in which God's reflection can be seen in the universe and in our act of sensation. The

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3. Cf. Philotheus Boehner, *Works of Saint Bonaventure*, Vol. II: *Saint Bonaventure's 'Itinerarium Mentis in Deum'* (Saint Bonaventure, N.Y.: The Franciscan Institute, 1956), 105.

4. *Loc. cit.*

5. *Itinerarium, prol.*, n.2 (V, 225)

6. Cf. Bonaventure's description of the vision in his biography of Francis, *Legenda major*, XIII, 3 (VIII, 542-543).

second pair of wings symbolize meditation on the interior of the soul, where the presence of God can be contemplated first in our natural faculties of memory, intelligence and will, and then in the soul reformed by grace. The third pair of wings symbolize the contemplation of God himself, under the aspects of Being and the Good. Finally, beyond these six stages is the seventh, that of the mystical, ecstatic union with God.[7] Elsewhere I have interpreted this image of the six-winged Seraph as a mandala symbol, in the context of both Francis' life and Bonaventure's treatise.[8]

In typical Franciscan fashion, Bonaventure claims that the only way to enter into this contemplation is through Christ crucified. Although much of the treatise deals with highly speculative material, Bonaventure emphatically states in the prologue that it should be approached with a prayerful attitude and with characteristic Franciscan affectivity. He invites the reader "to the groans of prayer through Christ crucified, through whose blood we are cleansed from the filth of vice." He continues:

> Otherwise he might believe that reading is sufficient without unction, speculation without devotion, investigation without wonder, observation without joy, work without piety, knowledge without love, understanding without humility, endeavour without divine grace, reflection in a mirror without divinely inspired wisdom.[9]

Contemplation of the Material World

With Christ as the road and the door, Bonaventure begins the ascent through the six stages of meditation symbolized by the six wings of the Seraph. He first turns his attention to the material world and contemplates the reflection of God in and through material creatures. Throughout the treatise Bonaventure uses the image of the mirror, playing on the Latin word *speculum* (mirror); he calls each of his forms of meditation a *speculatio,*

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7. *Itinerarium, passim;* cf. prol., no. 3 (V, 225).
8. Ewert H. Cousins, "Mandala Symbolism in the Theology of Bonaventure", *University of Toronto Quarterly,* 40 (1971), 185-201.
9. *Itinerarium,* prol., n. 4 (V. 226). All translations of Bonaventure into English are my own.

which means both a speculation on and a mirroring of God. He bids the reader begin his meditation at the lowest rung of the ladder of creatures: "Let us place our first step in the ascent at the bottom, presenting to ourselves the whole material world as a mirror through which we may pass over to God, the supreme Craftsman."[10] His first meditation reaches its climax in a panoramic view of material creation seen from seven perspectives—origin, magnitude, multitude, beauty, plenitude, activity, and order. For example, he considers "the magnitude of things, in the mass of their length, width and depth, in their great power extending in length, width and depth as appears in the diffusion of light, in the efficiency of their operations which are internal, continuous and diffused, as appears to the operation of fire." Seen in this panoramic sweep, the magnitude of things "clearly manifests the immensity of the power, wisdom and goodness of the triune God, who by his power, presence and essence exists uncircumscribed in all things."[11]

This meditation on nature draws upon the medieval Neo-Platonic tradition of speculative mysticism. It is based on the Christian version of the emanation of all things from the One. In the Christian faith, the One itself is Trinitarian, and self-diffusive within itself. The Father in the Trinity expresses himself in his Son, who is his Image and Word and in the union of the Holy Spirit. When the Father eternally begets the Son, he produces in the Son the archetypes of all he can create. Thus the created universe has an eternal existence in the divine mind. When God freely creates *ad extra*—he externalizes these eternal archetypes or ideas. Thus the world is an expression of God.[12] As Bonaventure says: "creatures are shadows, echoes and pictures of that first, most powerful, most wise and most perfect Principle. They are vestiges, representations, spectacles proposed to us and signs divinely given so that we can see God." He continues: "These creatures, I say, are exemplars or rather exemplifications presented to souls still untrained and immersed in sensible things so that through sensible things which they see they will be carried over to intelligible things which they do not see as through signs to what is signified."[13]

10. *Ibid.*, c.1, n.9 (V, 298).
11. *Ibid.*, n. 14 (V, 299).
12. Cf. Bonaventure, *In Hexaemeron*, I. 13-17 (V, 331-332).
13. *Itinerarium*, c. 2, n. 11 (V, 302).

Although clearly in the spirit of Francis, this type of meditation contains dimensions not found explicitly in the Poverello. Francis' religious feeling towards nature is given classic expression in his *Canticle of Brother Sun.*[14] Instead of a meditation on the reflections of God in creatures, it is a hymn of praise to God through creatures, in the classical Biblical genre of hymns of praise, similar in form to the hymn in the Book of Daniel. Francis' biographers among whom was Bonaventure himself[15]—indicated that Francis saw the reflection of God in nature, but we do not have in Francis' prayers or in the early biographies any testimony that he meditated precisely as Bonaventure did in the speculative, Neo-Platonic fashion through the method called by medieval writers *reductio* or *resolutio,* whereby all creatures lead back to God by way of a metaphysical speculation on their intelligible structure. Furthermore, Bonaventure's use of the method of *reductio* is even more abstract than it might be and is thus closer to the speculation of the Neo-Platonic tradition than to Francis' concrete relatedness to creatures, such as to brother sun and sister moon or to animals and birds.

Closer to Francis' sense of concreteness is the meditation of Robert Grosseteste on a speck of dust. Grosseteste, Chancellor of the University of Oxford and an important figure in the history of science—although not a Franciscan himself—was in the Franciscan current of thought and is considered the founder of the Franciscan school at Oxford. In a brief text entitled *Every Creature is a Mirror*[16], Grosseteste searches in Franciscan fashion, for the lowliest and most insignificant of creatures to meditate upon as a way into God. He decides upon a speck of dust floating in a sunbeam. In a fashion similar to Bonaventure's speculative meditation, he uses the method of *reductio,* moving from the speck of dust to the power of the Father, the wisdom of the Son, and the goodness of the Spirit. For a more comprehensive approach to Franciscan meditation on nature, one would have to combine Francis' spontaneous praise of God through nature, Grosseteste's concreteness, and Bonaventure's more abstract mystical speculation. Although Bonaventure lacks the sponteneity of Francis and the

14. Francis of Assisi, *Il Cantico di Frate Sole, in Speculum perfectionis,* c. 120; cf. Dan. 3:52-89.

15. *Legenda major,* IX, 1 (VIII, 530).

16. Robert Grosseteste, *Dictum* 60: *Omnis creatura speculum est,* edited by Servus Gieben, *Franciscan Studies,* 24 (1964), 153-158.

concrete focus of Grosseteste, his more abstract approach does not weaken the intensity of his feelings about meditating on God's reflection in nature. He concludes the first stage of his journey with this strong statement:

> Whoever, therefore, is not enlightened by such splendour of created things is blind; whoever is not awakened by such outcries is deaf; whoever does not praise God because of all these effects is dumb; whoever does not discover the First Principle from such clear signs is a fool. Therefore, open your eyes, alert the ears of your spirit, open your lips, and apply your heart so that in all creatures you may see, hear, praise, love and worship, glorify and honour your God lest perhaps the whole world rise against you.[17]

Introspective Meditation

In the second stage of his journey, Bonaventure moves from the outer world to the internal act of sensation, which leads to a grasping of the reflection of God in the human experience of sense perception. In the third stage, he plunges more deeply into subjectivity to explore the image of God in the soul. "Enter into yourself",[18] he says, bidding us to follow the path charted by Augustine. We progress by meditating on the rational faculties of the soul where we find in the depths of the memory, intellect and will a reflection of God.[19] This introspective meditation is not found in Francis as such, but is quite compatible with his general perception of the presence of God in creation. Here Bonaventure is extending Francis, general awareness of God in creation by adding to it Augustine's introspective meditation on the soul as image of God.

Bonaventure's starting point here is more concrete than in the previous meditation on nature. He begins with specific objects of our knowledge: for example, the first principle that the whole is greater than any of its parts. We grasp such a principle as if

17. *Itinerarium*, c. 1, n. 15 (V. 299).
18. *Ibid.*, c. 3, n. 1 (V, 303).
19. *Ibid.*, c. 3, (V, 303-306).

we always knew it, as eternally true. In a similar way, he illustrates that when our intellect knows truth, it does so in the light of eternal Truth, and when our will desires or judges something as good, it does so in the light of the absolute Good. Behind this *reductio* stands Augustine's speculative analysis that the objects of our perception and our minds themselves are changeable; yet the truth we grasp is eternal and unchangeable. This means that we grasp truth in God himself, who shines as the light of truth and goodness in our souls. "See, therefore", Bonaventure says, "how close the soul is to God and how the memory leads to Eternity, the understanding to Truth and the power of choice to the highest Good."[20]

This introspective meditation completed in the next or fourth stage, in which Bonaventure contemplates God present in the soul as image reformed by grace.[21] Here he describes the plight of the fallen soul. "It is strange", he observes, "that given the fact that God is so close to the soul, so few are concerned with perceiving God within themselves. Distracted by cares, clouded by sense images, drawn away by concupiscence, the soul cannot reenter into itself as image of God. It lies fallen, immersed in the things of sense, in need of someone to lift it up so that it can see its true self as image of God, with the eternal Truth shining within itself. Christ has come and lifted up the soul, restoring the fallen image. Eternal Truth itself took on human form in Christ and became a ladder restoring the first ladder that had been broken in Adam."[22] Through Christ the spiritual senses are restored in the soul so that like the bride in the Canticle of Canticles, the soul can respond to her beloved.

Meditation on God

In the fifth and sixth stages, Bonaventure turns to God himself and meditates upon him first as "Being" and then as "the Good." This type of meditation is more directly metaphysical and speculative than the preceding types. Beginning with a dialectical speculation on being and non-being, Bonaventure observes that Being itself cannot be rightly thought *not to be,* for the most pure

20. *Ibid.,* n. 4, (V, 305).
21. *Ibid.,* c. 4, (V, 306-308).
22. *Ibid.,* n.2, (V, 306).

being does not enter our minds except in full flight from non-being. Our intellect is strangely blind, for it does not consider in the light of what it knows everything else. Our mind is like the eye of the bat that is so attuned to darkness that it is blinded by the light. "Thus our mind, accustomed to the darkness of beings and images of the things of sense, when it glimpses the light of the supreme Being, seems to itself to see nothing. It does not realize that this very darkness is the supreme illumination of our mind, just as when the eye sees pure light, it seems to itself to see nothing."[23] Bonaventure closes his meditation on God as Being, with a focus on the *coincidentia oppositorum*. God is the beginning and the end, the first and the last, the Alpha and the Omega; "he is an intelligible sphere whose centre is everywhere and whose circumference is nowhere."[24] Because God as Being is most perfect and beyond all measurement, he "is, therefore, within all things, but not enclosed, outside all things, but not excluded, above all things, but not aloof, below all things, but not debased."[25]

From the contemplation of God as Being, Bonaventure turns to the contemplation of the Trinity as self-diffusive Good. This stage consists of a speculative meditation on emanation, not in the Neo-Platonic sense of descending hypostases, but in the consubstantial sense of the Christian Trinity. There must be an eternal emanation on the level of the divinity itself, within the inner life of God; for, according to Bonaventure, "the Good is said to be self-diffusive; therefore the highest Good must be most self-diffusive."[26] This dynamic self-diffusiveness of the Good can be realized only in the Trinitarian processions of the Son and Spirit from the Father. Creation cannot bear the impact of this divine diffusion; for "the diffusion in time in creation is no more than a centre or point in relation to the immensity of the divine goodness."[27] The self-diffusion of the Good lead Bonaventure to a contemplation of the *coincidentia oppositorum* within the Trinity: of

23. *Ibid*, c.5, n.4 (V, 309).
24. *Ibid.*, c.5, n.8 (V, 310); this is a quotation from Alan of Lille, *Theologicae regulae*, 7; on the *coincidentia oppositorum* in Bonaventure cf. Ewert H Cousins, "The Coincidence of Opposites in the Christology of Saint Bonaventure," *Franciscan Studies*, 28 (1968), 27-45; "La 'Coincidentia Oppositorum' dans la theologie de Bonaventure", *Etudes franciscaines*, 18 (Supplement annuel, 1968), 15-31.
25. *Itinerarium*, c. 5, n. 8 (V, 310).
26. *Ibid.*, c. 6, n 2 (V, 210).
27. *Loc. cit.*

unity and difference, of communication and intimacy, of equality and distinction.

At this point Bonaventure turns to Christ and contemplates him as an even greater *coincidentia oppositorum* for "in him is joined the First Principle with the last, God with man, who was formed on the sixth day; the eternal is joined with temporal man ..., the most simple with the most composite, the most actual with the one who suffered supremely and died, the most perfect and immense with the lowly, the superme and all-inclusive one with a composite individual distinct from others, that is, the man Jesus Christ.[28] Gazing thus on Christ one is filled with wonder and is drawn to the seventh stage of the journey, to the heights of mystical ecstacy, like Francis with his vision of the Seraph, where "all intellectual activities must be left behind and the height of our affection must be totally transferred and transformed into God."[29] Bonaventure quotes the *Mystical Theology* of the Pseudo-Dionysius and draws his treatise to a close with the image of God as fire. He tells us to ask for "the fire that totally inflames and carries us into God by estatic unctions and burning affections".[30] This fire according to him is God himself. We must die to ourselves and enter into darkness and silence and with Christ pass out of this world to the Father.

Meditation on the Humanity of Christ

If we were to limit ourselves to *The Mind's Journey Into God,* we would fail to take into account one of the most distinctive forms of Franciscan meditation, which at the same time is one of the most characteristic forms of Christian meditation: that is, meditation on the humanity of Christ, with special emphasis on his suffering and death. It is true that in *The Mind's Journey Into God,* Bonaventure speaks of Christ in the prologue as the doorway into contemplation; in the forth stage, as the Redeemer who restores the image of God; and in the sixth and seventh stages, as the *coincidentia oppositorum,* who leads one to mystical ecstasy. Yet, in these perspectives, he does not meditate in detail

28. *Ibid.*, c. 6, n. 5 (V, 311).
29. *Ibid.*, c. 7, n. 4 (V, 312).
30. *Ibid.*, n. 6 (V, 313); cf. Pseudo-Dionysius, *De mystica theologia* c.1, n.1.

upon Christ's humanity. He did, however, devote an entire treatise to such a meditation under the title *The Tree of Life.*[31] In this treatise Christ is conceived as the tree of life upon which blossom an array of virtues: such as humility, piety, patience, constancy. The reader is presented with a vivid description of scenes from the Gospel; is encouraged to exercise his imagination to see, hear and touch; is moved to admiration, compassion and wonder, as he strives to imitate Christ's virtues, and on a deep level, to identify himself with Christ. I will cite here two examples that illustrate two aspects of Christian sensibility which Francis was instrumental in activating: tender devotion to the infant Jesus and compassion for the suffering Saviour.

After describing the scene of the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem, Bonaventure draws the reader into the midst of the event:

> Now, then, my soul, embrace that divine manger; press your lips upon and kiss the boy's feet. Then keep the shepherds' watch in your mind; marvel at the host of angels assembling; join in the heavenly melody, singing with your voice and heart: 'Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace to men of good will.'[32]

One third of the treatise is devoted Christ's suffering and death, with meditations in vivid detail on the bloody sweat in the garden, the scourging, the crowining with thorns, the piercing of the hands and feet with nails, the bitterness of the gall offered to drink, and the final agony of death. For example, one of the meditations is entitled: "Jesus Dripping with Blood."[33] Bonaventure concludes his meditation on Christ's death with the following address to the human heart:

> O human heart, you are harder than any hardness of rocks, if at the recollection of such great expiation you are not struck with terror, nor moved with compassion, nor shattered with compunction, nor softened with devoted love.[34]

In this type of meditation, one applies the senses to a vividly imagined scene and evokes human emotions ranging from tender

31. Cf. above, note 2.
32. *Lignum vitae,* no. 4 (VIII, 72); Lk. 2:14.
33. *Ibid.,* n. 31 (VIII, 80).
34. *Ibid.,* n. 29 (VIII, 79).

love to anguish. In the history of Christian piety, this form of meditation has been problematic, especially in its focus on the passion of Christ. Since it evokes human emotions, it can easily fall into a superficial sentimentalism. If it avoids this, it might remain exclusively on the moral level, proposing Christ's virtues for imitation in everyday life. It can, however, be a gateway into deeper mystical states of consciousness. I believe that Bonaventrue gives indications how this can be done when in *The Mind's Journey Into God* he speaks of Christ as the doorway into the Franciscan contemplative vision, then later as the bridegroom of the soul and, finally, as the passage to mystical ecstasy. If one were, for example, to link Bonaventure's meditations on the life of Christ in *The Tree of Life* to these three points, I believe that he could integrate these two forms of meditation into an organic fashion.

In this context, it would be interesting to do a comparative study of Boneventure and the *Spiritual Exercises* of Ignatius of Loyola. Bonaventure's *The Tree of Life* is, in many respects, a forerunner of Ignatian meditation, in subject matter as well as techniques. Ignatian meditation also runs the risk of the problems indicated above. From one point of view, the Ignatian *Exercises* can be seen as an initiation into the contemplative vision that Bonaventure proposes in *The Mind's Journey Into God*. And from another point of view, one could follow Bonaventure's suggestions and turn the meditation on the humanity of Christ in the *Exercises* into a more mystical contemplation of Christ.

Correlation with Contemporary Research

I would like to sketch here briefly, a correlation which I have observed between Bonaventure's meditation and the levels of the psyche that have emerged in the research into altered states of consciousness by Jean Houston and Robert E.L. Masters. In their published findings and in later research, they have observed four distinctive levels of consciousness that a subject might enter in the course of experiments.[35] These levels are described by the

35. Cf. R.E.L. Masters and Jean Houston, *The Varieties of Psychedelic Experience* (New York: Holt Rinchart and Winston, 1968), pp. 142-150; cf. also, pp. 151-316; c.f *Mind Games* (New York: The Viking Press, (1972), *passim*.

researchers as (1) the sensory realm, where the subject experiences heightened sensation; (2) the recollective-analytic level, where the subject re-experiences deep emotional states and events from his past life. This level deals with one's own personal subjectivity in its historical unfolding and corresponds, in a general way, to the level of the unconscious explored in Freudian analysis; (3) The next is called the symbolic level, where the subject experiences the great legendary and mythic symbols and rituals of mankind's heritage. This level corresponds, in a general way, to the collective unconscious of Jung, with its archetypal symbols. (4) The last is called the integral level, where the subject experiences intense states of consciousness that resemble the classical experiences of mystics.

One might hypothesize that these four levels constitute one of the foundational structures of the human psyche and hence would be expected to correlate with forms of meditation. This would be especially expected in the case of a form of meditation which aspires to be comprehensive like *The Mind's Journey into God*. I propose that the three major divisions of Bonaventure's journey correspond to the first, second and fourth levels as recorded in the above research, and that Bonaventure's use of symbols—which permeates the entire treatise—corresponds to the third. In the first stage Bonaventure meditates on sense objects and on the act of sensation. In the second sage he turns within the subject. It is true that he does not search personal biographical details, as Augustine did in his *Confessions,* but he does go back through the memory by way of speculative analysis to the religious depths of human subjectivity. In the third stage he turns to God himself as Being and the Good and, finally, to fire, darkness and silence at the climax of the work. One finds in the testimony of those subjects who have reached the fourth level in experiments many striking similarities with Bonaventure's meditation on this phase of his journey. Bonaventure does not accord a separate stage to meditation on archetypal symbols; however throughout his entire treatise such symbols are present and function as vehicles for drawing the reader along the path of the journey. For example, the six-winged Seraph provides the symbolic map of the journey, and as such functions as a mandala symbol. In addition, the symbol of the temple plays a central role in the latter half of the work; and throughout Bonaventure employs such symbols as the mountain, the sea, the ladder connecting heaven and earth, the heavenly Jerusalem, the passage

from Egypt to the promised land. The meditation on the humanity of Christ in *The Tree of Life* can be correlated with the second level; and the integration of this meditation with more mystical contemplation, which I discussed above, can be seen as a way of moving from the second to the third and fourth levels.

What does the correlation suggest for Bonaventure's meditation? It indicates that Bonaventure has developed an approach to meditation which activates the psyche on its major levels. Furthermore, he provides an itinerary for the inner journey, not only mapping the various stages but also supplying techniques for moving from one level to another. Just as in the research the subject is encouraged to move through various levels of altered states of consciousness, so Bonaventure's reader is encouraged to move through the various meditative states of consciousness in his journey into God.