

Roberts Avens

Iona College, N. Rochelle, U.S.A.

C. G. JUNG'S ANALYSIS OF RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE

Introduction

Religion and Psychology.

The amount of creative work produced today in the field of psychology, the eagerness with which an ever larger number of Westerners resort to psychotherapy in order to alleviate their mental discomfort, if not anguish, yes, even the widespread fascination with the so-called esoteric doctrines—whether they are formulated as theosophy, yoga, occultism or in other ways—are all indications that psychology has become the new instrument for understanding and defining the human situation. This no doubt is largely due to the failure of the traditional religious and theological ways to provide man with a key to meaningful life. One could hypothesize almost *ad infinitum* about the reasons for such a momentous breakdown. Since, however, in this paper we propose to explore C.G. Jung's concept of religion, it is only proper to cite at the very outset what he considers as the major cause of the languid state of religion in the West.

Jung, as we well know, has consistently maintained that the Westerner, in his search for the ultimate meaning of things, must cease to be utterly fascinated with the conquests of his conscious mind and try to reestablish the lost connection with the depths of his own psyche, i.e. with the unconscious as the perennial source of transcendent meaning for mankind. In the religious context, what has to be reversed, if we are serious about revivifying the traditional creeds and formulas, is the process of externalization and intellectualization of religious images and symbols. Their numinous value which, as a result of this process has been largely extinct, must be recaptured and made an integral part of man's religious experience. Speaking, for example, of the *imitatio Christi* in Western Christianity, Jung notes that this idea has been turned into an external object of worship, pre-

venting it from reaching down into the depths of the soul. The Western attitude, with its emphasis on the object, tends to view the divine mediator as an external image and thus robe it of its relation to the inner man who remains fragmentary and dis-eased. It is also this attitude that, for instance, leads the Protestant to interpret the Johannine *entos humon* referring to the Kingdom of God—as “among you” instead of “within you.”¹

Jung can be indeed sardonic in castigating the Western man's inclination to do anything, no matter how absurd, in order to avoid facing his own soul. People will practise Indian Yoga, observe a strict regimen of diet, mechanically repeat mystical texts—only because of the lack of faith that anything useful could ever come out of their own souls.²

By fear, repentance, promises, submission, self-abasement good deeds, and praise he propitiates the great power, which is not himself, but *totaliter aliter*, the Wholly Other, altogether perfect and “outside”, the only reality. If you shift the formula a bit and substitute for God some other power for instance, the world of money, you get a complete picture of Western man—assiduous, fearful, devout, self-abasing, enterprising, greedy, and violent in his pursuit of the goods of this world; possessions, health, knowledge, technical mastery, public welfare, political power, conquest and so on. What are the great popular movements of our time? Attempts to grab the money or property of others and to protect our own. The mind is chiefly employed in devising suitable “isms” to hide the real motives or to get more loot.³

To be sure, Jung is not opposed to externalism as such: creeds and rituals, so long as they retain their intrinsic relation to the spirit of religion (the numinous), are indispensable for the maintenance of man's psychic equipoise. It is only when these external aids become more and more formalized and stultified that they turn into weapons against immediate experience. In effect, religion in the broadest sense, according to Jung, does not derive exclusively either from the head or from the heart, but is rather based on man's “dialogal psychic structure.”⁴ In

1. C.G. Jung, C. W., Vol. 12 (N. Y.: Pantheon Books, 1953), par. 7, 8.

2. *Ibid.*, Vol. 12, par. 126.

3. C.G. Jung, “Psychological Commentary on the Tibetan Book of Great Liberation,” *Ibid.*, par. 772.

4. John B. Chethimattam, “Man's Dialogical Nature and the Dialogue of Religions,” *Journal of Dharma*, Vol. I, Nos. 1 & 2 (1975), p. 10.

the following we intend to show, therefore, that religious experience, insofar as it is a manifestation of man's total psyche, likewise possesses a dialogal nature. In this sense a psychological approach to religion is at least as legitimate as, let's say, the phenomenological and historical search for the essentials of religious phenomena or the more traditional philosophical and theological approaches. Indeed, one surmises that a dialogue among world religions, if it is to get truly off the ground, must first and foremost be grounded in some common understanding between these disciplines as to the function of religion in human life.

It is not surprising, however, that, from a strictly theological and religious point of view, a psychological approach to religion often appears sacrilegious in that it portends to expose God—the highest content of religion—as a psychic fact or worse as a mere concomitant of some primary biological instinct or as a sublimation of it. In fact the Freudian school did tend to view religion as a secondary psychic activity, as an ephiphenomenon that is only worthy of study as an instance of the mechanism of repression of infantile sexuality. It is this reductive line of argument, this “nothing but-ness” that made religious thinkers suspicious of any sort of psychological interpretation of religious phenomena.

It is not possible here to detail the reasons and circumstances that led to a disagreement between Freud and Jung about the basic meaning and function of religion. Let us begin by simply stating that religion, as a phenomenon of the human psyche, is open to psychological inquiry. But—and this is crucial in the Jungian approach—psychology does not claim to be in the position of making statements about the objective existence or non-existence of God or about any other reality of religious faith. The concept of God is a psychological fact which has nothing at all to do with the possibility of proving or disproving his existence. In any case, says Jung, such proof is entirely superfluous, for

the idea of an all-powerful divine being is present everywhere, if not consciously, then unconsciously, since it is an archetype. Something or other in our psyche has superior force and if it is not consciously a god, it is at any rate the “belly”, as St. Paul says. I therefore think it wiser to acknowledge the idea of God consciously, otherwise something or other will become God, usually something very inadequate and stupid...⁵

5. C. G. Jung, *Das unbewusste im normalen und kranken Seelenleben*, p. 10.

According to Jung, any psychological phenomenon that appears regularly and generally must have a psychological meaning; it is "psychologically true" or rather significant in as much as it is the manifestation of an inner necessity. "Good", from a psychological point of view, is a psychic image or experience. On this understanding "psychology does not touch the conceptions of religion and theology which are based on faith in the absolute reality of God. It is only concerned with the appearance that this religious reality takes on in the human mind."⁶ Jung therefore accepts religion as an irreducible psychological function that expresses man's most fundamental dispositions. Religious ideas are not contrived or made by the individual; they rather happen or force themselves upon the individual's consciousness. Psychology accepts these ideas and images of God as psychic realities, but must abstain from judgment concerning the question of an absolute reality behind them.

Religion and Consciousness

Jung has defined religion as a careful observation and consideration of what Rudolf Otto (in his *The Idea of the Holy*) termed the "numinosum" i.e. certain dynamic factors in the psyche which are understood to be "powers", spirits, demons, gods, laws, ideas, ideals, etc. These factors are not caused by an arbitrary act of will. On the contrary, they seize and overwhelm the human subject.⁷ In this sense "religion is a relationship to the highest and strongest value, be it positive or negative. The relationship is voluntary as well as involuntary, that is, you can accept, consciously, the value, by which you are possessed unconsciously. That psychological fact which is the greatest power in your system is the god; since it is always the overwhelming psychic factor which is called god"⁸.

We stated earlier that religion, in the Jungian scheme, is based on man's "diagonal psychic nature". It is apparent now that the religious dialogue that takes place in the psyche has to do with a choice: to accept consciously the numinous powers or to be submerged and perhaps victimized by them. In order to

6. Gerhard Adler, *Studies in Analytical Psychology* (New York: Capricorn Books, 1969), pp. 176-77.

7. Cf. C.G. Jung, *Psychology and Religion* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1938), p. 4, 5; 114.

8. *Ibid.*, p. 98.

understand some of the intricacies of this process we must first consider the fundamental problem of consciousness, bound up as it is with religious or for that matter with any spiritual experience. Indeed, the religious phenomenon cannot be comprehended in its psychological dimension at all apart from the phenomenon of consciousness.

What we call consciousness has often been equated with "thought" in Western writings; however, consciousness is now more thought than it is emotion or sensation. It is none of these functions, but rather an awareness of our various activities at the moment when they occur. In this sense, consciousness (as a reflective attitude) is the characteristic faculty which sets man apart from all the rest of the universe. We can only speculate about the origin of consciousness and its focal point, the ego (the gatekeeper of consciousness). In all probability it developed together with the appearance of language, religion and kinship systems in the Middle Paleolithic, i.e. about 100,000 years ago. Whatever the case may be, we can assess the role of consciousness and point out the problems which have arisen and continue to arise as a result of its emergence.

The most salient fact about consciousness is its ambiguous character. Perhaps the best mythological expression of this fact is found in the story of the expulsion of man from the blissful state of Paradise: "But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die". Man is now in a state of duality: instead of a preconscious participation in God he is now aware of both himself and God as separated beings. Thomas Merton has described this condition in terms that closely approximate what seems to be the very essence of religious experience in Jungian psychology: "Man now sees God as an object of desire or of fear, and is no longer lost in Him as a transcendent subject. Furthermore (he) is aware of God as an antagonistic and hostile being. And yet (he) is attracted to Him as to (his) highest good."⁹

The emergence of consciousness (Jung has called it a "second cosmogony"), as portrayed in the story of Paradise, seems to express fear and at the same time enormous attraction of something radically new. Gerhard Adler, one of the ablest Jungian psychologists, has further analysed the symbol of Paradise as it appears

9. Thomas Merton, *Zen and the Birds of Appetite* (A New Directions Book, 1968), p. 127.

in the dreams and phantasies of his patients. Man craves for a blissful state in which he can blindly trust the omniscience of parents without being challenged by the need for one's own discrimination and choice. For consciousness is equivalent to reflection and discrimination and there is nothing that ordinary human being dreads more than the need for discrimination. Consciousness and discrimination is to the "man of the street" the arch-enemy. Whenever we can, we try to escape from the yoke it imposes on us. Nevertheless consciousness, however much we fear it, is our specific human characteristic and the power which drives us.

Experience of Duality—the Basis of Religion

The loss of harmony with the world of nature (or "God") and the resulting state of dubium, of doubt, of two-ness is, psychologically speaking, the basis of religion. It is the beginning of the question "What is the cause?" and the question "What is the purpose?", the "why" and the "wherefore". These are the specifically religious questions about the creative power and about the meaning of man's life.¹⁰ Every religion is an attempt on man's part to adjust himself to his most fundamental and crucial experience—the advent of consciousness and the questions which arise from it.

In a theological framework, religion can be regarded as the result of man's fall from original innocence, his remoteness from divine vision. After all, there is no religion in the beginning of the Bible (cf. Gen. iv. 26)—in Paradise and there is none in the Heavenly City at the end: "I saw no temple therein; for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it" (Apocalypse xx. 22).

Freud was certainly right in sensing that religion is a sign of some incompleteness in man; but he was unduly optimistic in supposing that it could be explained away as a substitute for or sublimation of instinctual urges that cannot be realized. If our analysis of consciousness is correct, far from being a substitute for something else, is coterminous with the very beginning of man's existence as man. Surely it is the sign of his incompleteness and alienation, but also and more importantly—the perennial urge to transcend his own fragmented nature and to achieve fully reconciled existence. As G. Adler sums it up:

Man's fate is indissolubly and essentially bound up with and

10. Adler, *op. cit.*, pp. 185-86.

expressed in consciousness, and consciousness is inextricably bound up with and expressed in religion. Religion is man's adaptation to the fact of consciousness; religion is man's reply to his existence as man—and in religion man therefore finds his fullest and most vital expression.¹¹

The "God" Archetype

As Jung pointed out, religion in the sense of the experience of the numinosum, is not a contrivance of the logical mind; religious answers to the appearance of consciousness arise spontaneously, i.e. in a pre-conscious or symbolic form. This is to say that in the Jungian scheme, religion (just as art) is rooted in man's unconscious, primordial level and that it is from this part of his psyche that the religious images and symbols spring forth.¹² Jung calls these images and symbols—archetypes. The archetypes constitute a "living system of reactions and aptitudes determining the individual—that is conscious—life".¹³ They are not closely circumscribed ideas (as in Plato) or fully developed pictures in the mind like memory images of past experiences in one's life, but unconscious inherited potentialities, i.e. inherited modes of psychic functioning, as, for example, the predetermined way in which birds build their nests or the eels find their way to the Bermudas. This aspect of the archetype is the biological one and it is better to call it instinct. Archetypes in the proper sense are the expression of the spiritual dimension insofar as they prove to be numinous, i.e. an experience of basic significance. Since archetypes exist *in potentia* in the unconscious, it is only through their impact on human consciousness that they become activated and transformed into actually experienced images. The archetypes are an "eternal presence", but their realization depends on whether the individual becomes aware of them or not.

The most powerful archetypal experience of mankind, observ-

11. *Ibid.*, p. 187.

12. According to Jung, human personality consists of two things: first, of consciousness which can be more or less clearly defined and delimited; second, there is an "illimitable and indefinable addition to every personality," the collective unconscious. The existence of the latter is assumed in order to explain certain symbols that emerge in dreams, in religious figures, myths, in fairy tales, etc. Everywhere this collective unconscious displays a similar structure and pattern of behaviour and appears to obey similar laws of its own. (Cf. C.G. Jung, *Psychology and Religion*, pp. 47-48.)

13. C.G. Jung, *Contributions to Analytical Psychology*, p. 117.

ed at every stage in its development and in vastly different circumstances, is that of the image of creative power, the Deity. Or, in view of Jung's definition of religion as a careful observation of certain dynamic powers in the psyche, one should say, from the stand-point of psychology, that man has called his most powerful experience: "God". Following G. Adler's analysis, we shall make a number of observations about this experience.

a. It is an experience of a **supra-individual centre of existence**, of the **creative ground** of life and also of the **goal towards** which our psychic development tends; it gives meaning and purpose to creation and man.

b. In this experience that polarity and tension between the unconscious and the conscious psyche is resolved in a **union of opposites**.

c. This experience is **not made by man**, but arises spontaneously out of the pre-conscious level of his psyche. Hence it possesses an **absolutely convincing character**.

d. Jung has called the transpersonal centre in the psyche "**the Self**"—in order to avoid any dogmatic limitation and because an indefinite term best indicates the primary and unfathomable character of the numinous experience. The Self is **the essence of psychic wholeness** or union (mid-point) of consciousness and the unconscious.

e. Religious experience of the deity (Yahweh, Christ, Buddha, etc.) represents, psychologically speaking, the experience of the **Self as the union of opposites**. It is the "middle" (in the Chinese sense of the term) on the one hand, and the "periphery", which contains all, on the other. Paradoxically, the Self is the quintessence of the individual and at the same time a collectivity. Or, as a philosopher of nature, repeating St. Augustine, put it: *Deus est figura intellectualis, cuius centrum est ubique, circumferentia vero nusquam*.

f. When Jung, as a psychologist, says, "God is an archetype", he means "the type in the psyche" which is derived from **typos** i.e. "imprint" or "impression". Thus an archetype presupposes something which imprints. Psychology, however, as an empirical science, cannot say what, in the last instance, the archetype is derived from the religious point of view naturally understands the imprint as the working of an imprinter; the scientific standpoint, however, regards it as the symbol of a content which is beyond its grasp.

g. Regarded from the psychological standpoint, the Self can be formulated as the experience of "God within us", whereas to the religious mind the Self would be a manifestation of "God in Himself".

In conclusion, all we can say from the empirical and psychological perspective is that

religion is a fundamental activity of the human mind, and that there exists an archetypal image of the Deity deeply and indestructibly engraved in our psyche. Psychology cannot prove or disprove the existence of God; what it can prove, however, is the existence of an archetypal image of God, the "Self". Here, then psychology and religion both part and meet, facing each other from different sides of the frontier. All that psychology can legitimately do is to look across and to accept the possibility that the "God within us" corresponds to a transcendental reality.¹⁴

The Role of Ritual

Religion, we said, is not derived exclusively from the heart or from the head. From the point of view or origin, it is rooted in the polar, dialectical (or dialogal) relationship that exists between consciousness and the unconscious. Let us now pursue this amiable contest into some of its ramifications. Note first of all that the unconscious, according to Jung, is the deposit of all significant human experience—the totality of all archetypes—back to its most remote beginnings. As such it is deeper than, prior to, and more fundamental than the individual consciousness. At the same time, however, the unconscious needs the light of consciousness. Man's task is to become conscious of the contents that press upwards from the unconscious; he cannot evade his destiny which is "to create more and more consciousness...to kindle a light in the darkness of mere being".¹⁵

In this process (which Jung calls individuation) our conscious mind and the unconscious may turn against each other: 1. the conscious mind may cut itself loose from its source, the unconscious; 2. the unconscious which is the mother and maker of consciousness may turn against its child and devour it, uncon-

14. Adler, *op. cit.*, p. 193.

15. C.G. Jung, *Memories, Dreams, Reflections* (New York: Vintage Books, 1963), p. 326.

cerned as it is about the individual, "interested only in blind circle of creation as such". The conscious, in turn, "may become so fascinated by the power of its mother that it sacrifices its *raison d'être*, its faculty of reflection and discrimination, and is sucked back into the dark womb of the unconscious night."¹⁶

In view of the second possibility it is not at all surprising that man has come to regard consciousness—the specifically human achievement—as something to be cherished above everything else, indeed, as the only thing that really matters. Like a child, he is fascinated by this new gift and is inclined to forget the giver. In general, the result of an undivided concentration on consciousness has been hypertrophy of the conscious ego, especially in the Western civilization. Attempts to immerse the individual ego in the larger ego of family, tribe, or ideological communion, have only succeeded in transferring it to a higher and even more dangerous level. "Even submission to the will of God, as practised...by monastics and mendicants of many faiths, can hardly produce a state of overall ego transcendence, since God (at least as understood by the adherents of the three great Hebraic religions) is himself an ego. Indeed, God is the Ego of egos: untrammelled by *id*, unsupervised by any higher will, and unlimited in knowledge, power, and longevity."¹⁷

The overdevelopment of the conscious mind is inherent in its very nature. As we said earlier, to be conscious means above all to be able to discriminate, to dichotomize, to bifurcate. Our ordinary awareness of the world is selective and is restricted by the characteristics of sensory systems; our mind functions as a "reducing valve" (H. Bergson) shutting out most of what we should otherwise perceive or remember.¹⁸

The solution to the problem is of course **not** to cast off the yoke of consciousness. It is man's prerogative to step out of the blind processes of nature and to become for the first time a self-

16. Adler, *op. cit.*, p. 194.

17. Roger W. Wescott, "States of Consciousness", *The Highest State of Consciousness*, ed. by John White (New York: Anchor Book, 1972), p. 26.

18. In this connection A. Huxley has observed: "That which, in the ordinary language of religion, is called 'this world' is the universe of reduced awareness, expressed, and, as it were, petrified by language", "The Doors of Perception", in *The Nature of Human Consciousness*, ed. by Robert E. Ornstein (San Francisco: W.H. Freeman and Co., 1973), p. 168. Cf. John White, *op. cit.*, p. xi-xii.

conscious individual. What is imperative is a reconciliation of the constructive power of the conscious mind and its indispensable partner, the unconscious. The truth lies in the synthesis of the two.

In the field of religion the problem is how to relate the collective religious ritual and the individual religious experience. As we noted earlier, to Jung religion is a careful and scrupulous observation of the *numinosum* which has the tendency to seize and control the human subject. The individual who is overcome by the power of the archetype of the deity, finds himself face to face, without a protective wall, with the blinding light of the symbol of the centre of life. In Jeremiah's words, he is "like a drunken man whom wine has overcome, because of the Lord, and because of the words of His holiness."¹⁹ But, as G. Adler points out,

this centre of life is also the very centre of death to the one who is not fully prepared for it. Every original encounter with that force which man has termed "God", with the archetype of the fateful power that gives and takes life, means potential death...It is the surrender and extinction of the individual ego as nearly as it can be without complete and final extinction.²⁰

In this situation man can only observe the workings of the *numinosum* (for example, through dream analysis or by means of what Jung calls "active imagination") and thus learn to adapt to them. This is precisely the function of ritual. Ritualistic observances are designed to protect man from being overwhelmed by the numinosity of the original experience. Ritual canalizes and, so to speak, domesticates the terrifying energy of the numinous. The ritual act reproduces the original experience of the prophet, the seer and brings the ego (consciousness) into contact with its root, the non-ego, the transpersonal and preconscious power as it manifests itself to the conscious mind in the archetypal images and symbols. In this sense, "the ritual is the mediator between the supra-individual non-ego and the individual ego."²¹

But there is, of course, also the danger that the ritual instead of functioning as a channel, becomes more and more formalized and in the end suffocates the creative energy of the numinous.

19. Adler, *op. cit.*, p. 200.

20. *Ibid.*, p. 200.

21. *Ibid.*, p. 203.

Instead of being an instrument of constant renewal, the ritual may become a "protection" against the energy of the immediate experience is lost behind the protective walls. Instead of being a legitimate protection against disintegration through the immediate experience of the "living God" and at the same time a guarantee of participation in that experience, it turns into a weapon against individual experience. The ritual becomes a function of the collectivity, and every collectivity in the end feels itself menaced by the novelty and unpredictability of individual experience.²²

The ego and the Self

It is a basic tenet of Jung's thought that the unconscious aspect of the psyche is not only different from, but also compensatory to the conscious. The conscious mind "grows out of unconscious psyche which is older than it, and which goes on functioning together with it or even in spite of it."²³ The conscious aspect of the psyche might be compared to an island in the ocean—we only see the part above the water—but an immensely wide and deep realm lies below, and this could be likened to the unconscious.

The island is the ego, the knowing, willing "I", the focal point of consciousness—apparently an ephemeral affair—yet it is the instrument through which the creative power of the unconscious expresses itself and without which it could never be actualized in terms of time and space. The ego, therefore, as expressed in individual consciousness, is the absolutely indispensable counterpart of the eternal ground of creation as expressed in the unconscious.

In a religious context, the polarity between the unconscious and consciousness can be formulated as the problem of why God should have created the world, since He is perfect in Himself and without need of anything outside Himself. Jung's answer is that God in fact does need man in order to become manifest in the human act of reflection. Man is God's necessary partner in creation—his *alter ego* through which he becomes a realized and conscious fact.

In the act of creation the eternal unity is broken, but it is

22. *Ibid.*, p. 207.

23. C.G. Jung, "Conscious, Unconscious, and Individuation," C.W., vol. 9, par. 502; cf. Vol. 12., par. 60.

God (or the Self) who sacrifices his own transcendence. Psychologically speaking, the Self, by becoming conscious, has admitted the factor of time and mortality in order to become an actual individual event. Thus says G. Adler:

the "first sin"...is not only a failure of the first man but at the same time an admission of God's need for completion through man's consciousness—the Self needs ego in order to become manifest. Whereas the relationship between God and man was originally meant to be one of eternal harmony, the first sin revealed an inexplicable flaw in God's creation, and if we may say so, an inexplicable imperfection in the divine personality.²⁴

From the perspective of Jungian psychology it would be, therefore, a spurious extrapolation to say with the traditional theology that God is perfect in that he is omniscient, omnipotent, omnipresent etc. One should rather propose that God is not perfect in himself, but only together with the world. The predicate of "omnitude" applies to the "whole" but not to God apart from the creation.

God and the Devil

To the Westerner, especially to Christian, it is inconceivable that there should be any common ground between God and Satan. To suggest that there is some profound level at which these two principles coincide, seems to be the height of blasphemy. And yet it is significant that in Western literature and folklore the Evil one often parades in all too fascinating guises. Usually the Devil attracts either through overt beauty (notably through the charms of the opposite sex) or through the direct fascination of horror itself. Alan Watts has observed that of the three attributes of God—goodness, truth, and beauty—the latter has largely been annexed by the Devil. The literary and artistic representations of the divine or of the Paradise are rather tedious compared with the display of imagination which has gone into the description of the Inferno. For example, in Gustave Doré's illustrations of the *Divina Comedia*, the engravings for the *Inferno* and the *Purgatorio* are rich with imagination. In contrast, those for the Paradise are "merely insipid—female angels in white nighties tripping through the skies."²⁵

24. Adler, *op. cit.*, p. 206.

25. Alan Watts, *The Two Hands of God; The Myths of Polarity* (Collier Books, 1963), p. 35.

The Christian concept of the Devil is unique in that it marks a "total break with all polarized ideas of light and darkness, life and death, good and evil, as aspects of a single reality that transcends and yet expresses itself through them. Evil from this point of view has no essential place in the universe....It is...the diabolical parody of divine grace, the gift of malice as the latter is the free gift of love."²⁶

In contrast to the traditional morality which wanted to see the evil completely eliminated, Jung regards good and evil as two poles, conditioning one another; they are a pair of opposites in the soul—given to man with the gift of life. Evil can never be completely conquered because it would be an act of violence against psyche's shadow side. Jung, of course, is not suggesting that, like Nietzsche, he stands beyond good and evil. For him it is rather a matter of both the one and the other. The task of religion is to regulate the intercourse between them and to maintain a fruitful tension. As a writer on Jung has observed, the solution is certainly not

for decent people to take on a certain amount of wickedness but rather to set themselves upon the difficult road to the reconciliation of the opposites. Sin and righteousness cannot be made to mix on their own level, except in a dirty compromise. If they are to be brought together, it must be by relating both to a superior value.²⁷

In effect, the reason why man is torn between yes and no, good and evil, lies in the archetype of the transcendental Self—and invisible unity which is dichotomized only with the advent of consciousness. "Originally" the good and evil are contained in the God image (the Self) itself. In religious language, our "counterwill" is also an aspect of God's will. God demands not only obedience of man but also disobedience; it was God himself who gave man the "power to will otherwise."²⁸ For example, rabbinic psychology recognizes that the Lord is the creator of the good and evil inclinations (*yesser*) for it is said in Isaiah 45.7: "I form the light, and create darkness; I make peace, and create evil; I the Lord do all these things." The moral ambivalence of

26. *Ibid.*, p. 134.

27. Eleanor Bertine, *Jung's Contribution to Our Time* (New York: Putnam, 1967), p. 50.

28. C.G. Jung, "A Psychological Approach to the Dogma of the Trinity", C.W., vol. 12, par. 290.

God has also played a role in the history of Christianity. For Jacob Bohme (1573-1624) God's love and God's wrath, his glorious light and burning fire, belong inseparably together. Both are "effluence of God's eternal word" (*Werke*, VI, p. 644).

We observed earlier that the "first sin" symbolizes God's admission of an imperfection in himself, the imperfection in question being lack of consciousness. But once the fall has taken place, i.e. when the conscious mind has cut its links with its unconscious ground, it became personified in mythology as the Devil. The Devil, then could be regarded as "God's dissatisfaction with Himself, a projection of His own doubt" who acts as a "constant remainder of the flaw in creation, and thus as a constant urge towards conscious realization and thereby towards greater perfection." This role of the Devil is illustrated in the book of Job where he functions as God's own doubt concerning the correctness of his creation. The Platonic Eros is also the great instigator of unrest, the urge towards completeness, the striving for wholeness. But just as Eros has its destructive aspect—the obsession with merely sensual lust, so Satan too plays the role of "one who interferes", "who prevents." This, according to G. Adler, is exactly the situation of the conscious mind: whenever "it tries to assume the sole direction and responsibility, it is bound in the long run to act as "Satan", interfering and preventing instead of urging and stimulating."²⁹

It is noteworthy that Jung's thought on this point closely parallels Ch'an Buddhist evaluation of the role that our ordinary consciousness and ego plays in the process of enlightenment. *Tamha*, the second noble truth of Buddhism, expresses the greed of the ego, the thirst for continuation, the desire to exist and to possess. It is indeed the psychological equivalent of Satan (from the old Arabic *Sheitan*, meaning "I resist") symbolizing the force of inertia, "the fixation of the ego to the levels acquired by the personal consciousness and the refusal of inner Awakening."³⁰ For this reason Zen as well as Christian mystics enjoin us to die to ourselves or to divest ourselves of the old man. "The old man" represents the accumulation of our attachments and past memories, of the inertia of the habit force.

Our thought processes and our mind have the tendency to

29. Adler, *op. cit.*, p. 206.

30. Robert Linssen, *Zen, the Art of Life* (Bay Books Pty. Ltd., 1972), p. 105.

stick to everything they touch. The mind has the quality of viscosity which together with *tanha* is responsible for the maintenance of the ego.³¹ And to be ego-ed (just as to be sexed) means being set off in opposition not only to others, but to the "God within us." It is a state of estrangement from the source which at the same time implies a fundamental belongingness, and therefore an inner drive towards reunion.

Individuation and the Self

The reestablishment of union between the ego (consciousness) and its source, the Unconscious or, in religious language, between the guilt ridden man and God, ordinarily has been the function of traditional creeds and rituals within the confines of an organized community (the Church). To many people however, the access to these creeds and rituals is blocked, because they have lost their original numinous energy and fascination. Others find it impossible to accept a solution that is authoritatively ordained and presented from outside as collectively binding. However, it would be rather fatuous to assume that such people are irreligious or the like. On the contrary, as Jung has found, they usually have intense religious experience in the sense of feeling some power behind their lives—a power that vastly transcends their individual egos. They have in common an urge, a desire to understand, to know, to have the first-hand experience for themselves. This in turn may mean, according to a writer on Jung, that "‘private religion’, not collectivized religion, is the way out of lack of religion in our age. The future belongs to the formation of religions of an individual nature."³² Be it as it may, it seems that a man of high moral and intellectual standards who no longer wants to follow a particular faith, must look inside instead of outside for the solution to his psychological problem. He must be ready to set about a daring adventure—an individual inquiry into the foundations of life, without reliance on traditionally guaranteed statements.

In this journey which Jung calls the way of individuation man rediscovers the eternal images (archetypes) of meaning, most intensely expressed in the experience of the Self as the archetype of deity. In summarizing what people tell about such experience, Jung writes:

31. *Ibid.*, p. 112.

32. Joseph Goldbrunner, *Individuation; a Study of the Depth Psychology of Carl Gustav Jung* (Patheon, 1956). p. 169.

They came to themselves, they were able to accept themselves and they were thereby reconciled to unfavourable circumstances and events. This is practically the same thing as used to be expressed in the words: He has made his peace with God, he has sacrificed his own will by subjecting himself to the will of God.³³

The individual life is now felt to be part of a deeper and wider life, one's own purpose in life is incorporated with a greater impersonal purpose. It is nothing less than revelation and redemption when, from the hidden depths of the psyche, something arises that is not the "I" and is therefore beyond the reach of personal caprice. One of G. Adler's patients formulated this experience in the following words: "To me the real discovery of psychology has been that there is a sense which we don't make."³⁴

The goal of individuation, then, is the Self. The experience of finding the Self is connected with a subjective, redeeming sense of luminosity and purposefulness that pervades all the energies of the psyche, concentrated, as they now are, in the centre of personality embracing both conscious and unconscious contents. Moreover, the experience of the Self is absolute and overwhelming, which, as Jung points out, is also the English rendering of the Latin word "*convincere*". "You can only say that you have never had such an experience, and your opponent will say: 'Sorry, I have!' And there your discussion will come to an end. No matter what the world thinks about religious experience, the one who has it possesses the great treasure of a thing that has provided him with a source of life, meaning and beauty and that has given a new splendour to the world and to mankind. He has *pistis* and peace."³⁵ There is, of course, no absolute certainty that such an experience is not illusory; at any rate, says Jung, if it is an illusion "it must be a very real illusion....But what is the difference between a real illusion and a healing religious experience? It is merely a difference in words. Nobody can know what the ultimate things are....If such experience helps to make your life healthier, more beautiful, more complete and more satisfactory to yourself and to those you love, you may safely say: 'This was the grace of God.'"³⁶

The Self as the synthesis between the conscious and the un-

33. C.G. Jung, *Psychology and Religion*, p. 147.

34. Adler, *op. cit.*, p. 213.

35. Jung, *Psychology and Religion*, p. 113.

36. *Ibid.*, p. 114.

conscious psyche is new centre of gravity that represents the highest realization of the individual and at the same time infinitely transcends the individual. We can speak of it only in paradoxical terms, because it is a living experience uniting the external and the internal reality; it is our goal and also the source from which we come. In religious language, individuation can be called realization of the supreme importance of the human individual as a particular instance of the divine. Or, one might say that it is the divine that has become manifest in man. It symbolizes man's significance and responsibility for the fulfilment of the fate of creation, as it is formulated in this answer of a Hasidic rabbi to his pupils: Rabbi Elias was once asked by one of his disciples: "Rabbi, what is the Messiah waiting for?" The rabbi answered: "For you."³⁷

Jung has chosen the psychological term "the Self", because no definite religious figure can fully express the archetypal ground of our being. In its scientific usage the Self refers neither to Christ nor to Buddha but to "the totality of the figures that are its equivalent, and each of these figures is a symbol of the Self."³⁸ Psychologically speaking, all the great religious personages point to the Self whereas for theology the Self points to its own central figure (Christ, Buddha, etc.). Since, however, the Self is not only indefinite, but also includes the quality of definiteness and uniqueness, we can understand why precisely those religions which have been founded by historical personages, have become world religions, such as Christianity, Buddhism, and Islam:

The inclusion in a religion of a unique human personality—especially when conjoined to an indefinable divine nature—is consistent with the absolute individuality of the Self, which combines uniqueness with eternity, and the individual with the universal. The Self is a union of opposites par excellence...The Self is absolutely paradoxical in that it represents in every respect thesis and antithesis, and at the same time synthesis."³⁹

Jung's psychology is based on prospective method; its aim is the construction of a psychic totality in which the spiritual or religious element, instead of being a derivative of another drive, appears as a "true passion" (Jung), a *suigeneris* principle. Jung

37. Cf. Adler, *op. cit.*, p. 215.

38. C.G. Jung, C.W., vol. 12, par. 20.

39. *Ibid.*, par. 22.

has abandoned the unambiguous causal thinking of the old psychology which sought the way to a cure exclusively in the revelation of past causes. As Jolanda Jacobi says, "it is, therefore, as a way to self-knowledge and self-control... by no means limited to sickness or neurosis. Often truly a sickness provides the impulse to take this way (i.e. individuation) but quite as often it is the longing to find a meaning in life, to restore faith in God and in oneself."⁴⁰

Psyche is a purposive agent, oriented towards the future. This purposiveness is founded on an inner law, incomprehensible to consciousness, designed to establish an equilibrium between consciousness and the unconscious. It is essentially a dialectical procedure, aiming at a synthesis in which man is seen as a naturally religious being insofar as he is destined to become an individual, i.e. an undivided whole. Religion, therefore, at its root, is a dialogue that takes place in man's psyche and whose goal is the realization of *homo totus* i.e., man and God.

40. Jolanda Jacobi, *The Psychology of C.G. Jung*, p. 176.