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Spiritual crises as the cause of paranormal phenomena

The Czech-american psychiatrist Stanislav Grof has made a pioneering work mapping different types of spiritual crises, which I below, on the background of my own experiences, present in a slightly reworded version:

The awakening of Kundalini. Described as a snake-like energy, which in spiralform moves itself from the foot of the spiral column up in the head, while it opens a line of psychological centers, called chakras (see my articles **The awakening of kundalini**, and **What are chakras?**). The phenomenon is especially known in connection with the Indian Tantrism.

Para-psychic opening. Visual, auditory or emotive knowledge about a past and a future, which lies outside your own personality. Is especially known in connection with different types of clairvoyance. Also known in connection with astral travel or astral projection (out-of-body experiences).

Spiritual crises as a hero's journey. The experience of yourself as a hero who travels through a mythological and fantastic empire, filled with good and evil forces, as well as a fount of other sharply marked opposites. The crisis takes you farther and farther back into the past – through your own history and the history of humanity, all the way to the creation of the world and the original ideal state of paradise. In this process, you seem to strive for perfection, are trying to correct things that went wrong in the past. It often culminates in the meeting with death and the following rebirth. Such death-rebirth themes are known from ancient schools of mystery, as well as in the transition rites of scriptless peoples' religions.

The shamanic crisis. At the beginning of his career the shaman often goes through heavy ordeals, the so-called initiation crisis. The initiation often includes a journey to the underworld, where the shaman aspirant goes through terrible ordeals with diverse demons and other mythological creatures. As in the hero's journey the initiation often culminates in the experience of death, dismemberment and extinction. Typical the extinction then is followed by resurrection, rebirth and ascension into heavenly regions.

Channeling. The ability to make contact with divine creatures and levels of consciousness, which is thought to possess informations of spiritual value for people, and through the body mediate communication from these levels.

Close encounters with UFOs. Experiences of unusual light phenomena, communication with aliens, or experiences of being abducted by aliens, or of travelling with them to other worlds.

Breakthrough of memories from past lives. Sequences of experiences, which take place in other historical periods and/or other countries/planets – or in connection with karmacial experiences.

Near-death experiences. Experiences, which are connected with death or the death process. This can be experiences of anxiety or existential guilt, but also experiences of a peaceful, harmonic condition after death.

Possession states. An experience of, that your mind and body (it can also be things or places) have become invaded and are controlled by a being, or an alien energy, which can be of divine or, most known, demonic kind. Often with inexplicable bodily manifestations.

Oneness-consciousness. Experiences of oneness between inner and outer, strong positive feelings, transcendence of time and space, feeling of holiness and paradoxical nature. It sounds like a genuine mystical experience, but it is not. It is rather a so-called peak experience - about the problem of peak experiences read my article **A critique of the Indian Oneness movement and its use of Western success coaching**).

Alcohol and drug abuse. The strong longing after alcohol or drugs corresponds on a low level to our own being's spiritual longing after wholeness: the unification with God. The important role of the Ego-death under the above-mentioned types of spiritual crises is a direct parallel to the abuser's experience of "hitting the buttom." Can for example be seen reflected in the "Beat Generation", and the works of the Beat writers. Another aspect of alcohol and drug abuse as spiritual crisis, is that alcohol, and some kind of drugs, can relieve the intense stress from other kind of spiritual crises.

Spiritual crises are not due to mental disease, but are manifestations of time and its more collective images; that is: the collective history of the astral plane. These manifestations are often accompanied by some deep and powerful energies (or forms of energy), which penetrate the whole of your being. And this can, in the meeting with the painbody (the thought's negative energyfield in the body), be heavy filled

with suffering. Therefore such crises often in the psychiatric system are misdiagnosed as mental disease, due to a lack of knowledge about, or rejection of, such forms of energy. This often makes the crisis even worse.

Experiences of the above mentioned phenomena are not a reliable criterion for, that you are in a crisis, though. You can experience them without being in a crisis (though you still can be a victim of thought distortions). When it is a matter of a crisis, the phenomena should be followed by the following symptoms:

- 1) Burning hot or ice-cold streams, which move up through the back.
- 2) Excitation in the abdomen, along the spine, and up in the head.
- 3) Vibrations, restlessness or cramps in legs and other places in the body.
- 4) Pains, tensions or stiffness in the back of the neck, as well as headpains.
- 5) Fast pulse and increased metabolism.
- 6) Sensitivity to sounds, people's presence and other influences.
- 7) Sense of orgasms different places in the body, or total, cosmic orgasms.
- 8) Mystical/religious experiences, revelations and/or cosmic glimpses.
- 9) Para-psychic abilities, light phenomena.
- 10) Problematic balance between sexual impulses and spiritual urge.
- 11) Problematic balance (contradiction) between living a temporal life and a spiritual life.
- 12) Anxiety because of uncertainty about the process.
- 13) Weakened concentrationpower and lapses of memory.
- 14) Sleeplessness, manic exaltation alternate with depression and lack of energy.
- 15) Total isolation because the inner experiences can't be communicated out.

In my article **The devastating New Age turn within Psychotherapy** I describe some physiological persuasion techniques used by psychotherapy cults. It is techniques producing predictable physiological responses; that is: physiological methods of producing various mental and physical feelings taught to members as

group activities. Members' responses to these activities are reinterpreted in desirable ways by group leaders or trainers, so as to convince both neophytes and devotees that the processes are good for them. The process of positive reinterpretation, sometimes called *proof through reframing*, is a persuasion technique commonly used by cults. One of the physiological persuasion techniques is called *Relaxation-Induced Anxiety*, and refers to the use of one-sided meditation-techniques. In the article I give a few examples of symptoms which illustrate former cult members' range of impairments after having done such one-sided meditation-techniques, some of which remain after many years out of the cultic group. The symptoms seem to be symptoms of spiritual crises, though the persons described don't mention this.

The presence of the above-mentioned symptoms is however still not a reliable criterion for, that it is a matter of a spiritual crisis. The criterion is also, among other things, that the physical symptoms can't be explained through medical science, as well as that you, in psychological sense, are able to discriminate between your own inner experiences and the outer surroundings.

The crucial criterion is however, that the experiences are accompanied by one, or more, of the following existential conditions: unreality, division, stagnation, anxiety or meaninglessness.

This means, that your consciousness and personality, when it is a matter of a spiritual crisis, has slipped fundamentally out of balance, but in most cases not so much that you can be diagnosed as having a mental disease.

Spiritual crises often appear as unintended consequences of yoga, one-sided meditationtechniques, bodyoriented- and experiential psychotherapy, healing, energy transmission (for example Deeksha/Shaktipat - about the false, or demonical, use of Deeksha, see my articles **A critique of the Indian Oneness movement and its use of Western success coaching** and **The philosophy of Karen Blixen**), different types of rituals. The problem is - besides using one-sided techniques - that many experiential psychotherapists, meditationteachers, or other spiritual teachers, are completely ignorant about the nature of spiritual crises. There are far too many people today, who teach spiritual techniques without having the necessary experience and philosophical knowledge.

A special problem is in this connection, that many meditationteachers are psychologists or psychotherapists, who, with the best intentions, want to use meditation as a therapy based on a scientific approach; that is: without religious/spiritual/philosophical undertones. In other words, they cut the philosophical aspects of meditation off, and that's of course a problem, because meditation traditionally is meant to open up into the dimensions of the human mind,

which actually are of a philosophical nature (see my articles **The devastating New Age turn within psychotherapy**, and **Humanistic psychology, self-help, and the danger of reducing religion to psychology**).

Among other factors of release can be mentioned: births, unhappy love, celibacy, deep sorrow, high fever and intake of drugs. But a spiritual crisis can also come suddenly without traceable cause. You can suddenly be thrown out in such a crisis.

The wisdomtraditions have always claimed, that the above-mentioned phenomena come from the collective imageworld of the astral plane, which consists of highly abstract form-formations of energy. This imageworld has had many names: it is Plato's world of forms, the Bardoworlds of the Books of the Dead, the Anabasis of the mystery cults, the image galleries of the Alchemists, the collective subconscious, the dreamtime of the aboriginals etc. etc.

This imageworld has a relative validity, because it is lying outside the area of the personality, and seems to have a paranormal, or supernatural, character. The deceitful (relative) about it is, that it works in sequences in past and future, and in fragmentation. If you therefore identify yourself with it (the above-mentioned phenomena), then you relate absolute to the relative, and remove your consciousness from the Now, which is the actual reality and being. The Now is left empty and meaningless, the absolute has vanished. Furthermore you become a helpless victim of the swings of the energy-laws, and then you have the spiritual crisis. As mentioned this can result in deep suffering (often called *The Dark Night of the Soul*), but it can also result in Ego-inflation.

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