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The Hero's Journey

Inspired by the mythologist Joseph Campbell's monomyth of *The Hero's Journey*, the author and pilgrim Phil Cousineau - in his book *The Art of Pilgrimage – The Seeker's Guide to Making Travel Sacred*, divides the art of pilgrimage into seven archetypal steps, which each are divided into subdivisions. I won't go further into them here, but in this article I will let these steps and subdivisions form the dreaming tracks and songlines in the artwork of the pilgrim, and see them in relation with Campbell's monomyth.

The steps and subdivisions are:

1) The longing

- A) The Art of Pilgrimage
- B) The Traveler Who is Taken Seriously
- C) What is Missing Longs to be Filled In
- D) The Roads of Longing
- E) The Traveler's Lamp
- F) That Which You are Looking for May be Calling You to Seek
- G) The Task of Tasks
- H) The End, The Beginning

2) The Call

- A) The Knock
- B) The Calling Forth
- C) The Sacred Call
- D) The Call from the Hill
- E) The Call of Destiny
- F) The Tower
- G) The Pilgrim's Tasks

3) Departure

- A) The Glorious Journey
- B) The Wayfinders
- C) The Wandering Time
- D) The Preparation
- E) The Blessing
- F) Packing the Satchel
- G) The Sacred Circle
- H) The Threshold

4) The Pilgrim's Way

- A) The Way of the Sacred
- B) The Way of Seeing
- C) The Art of Walking
- D) The Way of Faith
- E) The Ways of Soulful Travels
- F) Road Rituals
- G) The Way of Serendipity
- H) The Necessity of Ruins
- I) The Oddyseys
- J) The Secret of Soulful Travel

5) The Labyrinth

- A) The Tortuous Path
- B) The Shadowside
- C) The Reluctant Pilgrim
- D) For Want of Surprises
- E) The Dragons of Dissapointment
- F) The Guiding Force
- G) Following the Thread Back
- H) The Splendid Prism of Love
- I) The Traveler's Well
- J) Crossing the Threshold

6) Arrival

- A) The Heartbeat of the World
- B) The Moment of Truth
- C) Facing the Black Stone
- D) Circling the Sacred Center

- E) A Haiku Journey
- F) The Still Point
- G) The Art of Waking Up
- H) The Presence of Place
- I) The Literary Pilgrim
- J) The Way of the Ancestors
- K) Considering the Marvel
- L) The Traveler's Lamp
- M) The Windy Walls of Troy
- N) The Traveler's Tasks
- O) The Offering

7) Bringing Back the Boon

- A) For the Marvels
- B) Back to the Beginning
- C) Celebrate me Home
- D) Walk on, Walk on
- E) Pilgrims to Angkor, Turn Right

These dreaming tracks and songlines are the steps and subdivisions on the outer pilgrimage. It is necessary though, for the pilgrim, to relate them to a universal inner map of the spiritual journey, which in this way can be a guide on the concrete outer journey. In the following I will investigate this map, and in this also look at the monomyth of The Hero's Journey.

Your thoughts are words and images, which work in this stream. It is Heraklit's River, it is the River of Time.

As the Indian philosophy claims, then this stream not only contains your personal history, it also contains a collective and universal history – together a history, which consists of images. These images are form-formations of energy, creative up-tensions, a kind of matter, though on a highly abstract plane. These images exist in other words in the actual movement of the matter, and therefore not only in your mental activity, but also outside you in nature. So, your thinking rises from an endless deep of images, which flow in the actual movement of nature.

The Indian philosophy claims, that the movement of time in itself is a negationpower. Time is one great negation of the Now's unmoved being, which is the unmanifested, the actual source: the Good, the True and the Beautiful (God, Brahman). The negationpower is in that way the power behind the world's manifestation. This

manifestation, the Indian philosophy claims, has arisen on the background of a mighty universal vision, which originates from past universes. In this way, the future arises, and an outgoing creative movement; a movement, which can be compared with what they within science call The Big Bang. In the outgoing movement, the great vision becomes, because of the negationpower, shattered in many images, which now become a kind of memories about the great vision. In this way, the past arises, and a longing back towards the origin, the unmanifested. And then a destructive backmovement is created.

In that way, the movement of time consists of two universal movements, which we could call the outgoing movement and the backmovement. Future and past, creation and destruction. These two movements are reflected throughout the universe in a multiplicity of different lifecycles; they are Samsara's wheel of up-cycles which are followed by down-cycles and vice versa (for example life and death, success and fiasco, joy and sorrow) – all this which lie behind the law of karma and rebirth. This universe is for example considered to be a reincarnation of a past universe, the same way as a human being is considered to be a reincarnation of a past existence.

So the images in the movement of time is shattered reflections of the great vision of the universe, and are background for the manifestation of the holy scriptures of India, the Vedas, which are claimed to have been "heard" by wise men (the so-called Seers) in the dawn of time, and by word of mouth delivered over oceans of time. They are shadows, dreams, masks, mirrors, fables, fairy-tales, fictions. The Vedas therefore both include the most sublime and difficult available philosophy, as for example in the Upanishads, and good folktales as Ramayana and Mahabharata (with the famous Bhagavadgita), which with its clear ethical messages is told in village temples, to the children as bedtime stories, and which is inspiration for great poets as Rabindranath Tagore.

Because of the negationpower the images in time are coming only to exist in relation to their negation. For example, images of the powerful, the perfect and the good, only exist in relation to the powerlessness, the fiasco and the evil. So, all images contain a structure of opposites. The most universal images include their polar partners, they are a kind of visionary mandala-structures or yantrafields. The more collective and personal images expel their polar partners. However, this is in accordance with the logic of the images not possible, and the result is contradiction and division (suffering).

As the Buddhist philosopher, Nagarjuna, said, then the Now's lawfulness around the function of the negationpower, is due to, that energy works as streams and divisions within a superior wholeness. And because the wholeness is a reality, each part will

always fit into a correspondent part. This means, that each part only can be understood in relation to its negation; that is: what the part *not* is. Firstly, this implies, that each part comes to appear as part of a polarization-pair, or a pair of opposites – like in the teaching of Yin and Yang. Secondly it implies, that each part only can be understood in relation to *everything* else; that is: in relation to the wholeness.

The more you, through the Ego's evaluations, isolate these parts from each other, the more the abandoned parts will work stronger and stronger on their polar partners. Therefore, these polar partners in their extremes will finally switch over in the opposite extreme. Another aspect of this lawfulness, or another way to describe this lawfulness is: energy returns to its starting point. This is also-called compensatory karma, and the lawfulness works as wave movements and pendulum movements.

And since everything in this way only work correlative, yes, then Nagarjuna claimed, that we actually nothing can say about the wholeness, only about the parts. Therefore, he called the wholeness the Emptiness (*śūnyatā* - see my book *Śūnyatā Sūtras*) – a teaching, which had one quite determinate purpose: the neutralization of all the dogmas, theories and viewpoints, which ignorance has created.

So, time and its images consist of energy and energyfields, as well as their lawfulness within the wholeness, which forms so-called karmacially structures.

Experiences of the collective aspects of these areas are experiences, which lie outside the Ego's area, or outside the dimension of the ordinary consciousness. Experiences from here are experiences such as kundalini, clairvoyance, astral travels, mythological visions, miracles, channeling, UFOs, memories from past lives, Near-Death Experiences, possession states.

The task of the pilgrim is to inquire into the nature of these dimensions of consciousness. Wherein consists the structure of these experiences? Does there exist a map over these areas, which can lead you on the right path? Experiences of these areas belong namely to the journey from the sleep of the wholeness, over the dreams of the wholeness, to the awake moments of the wholeness. And these phenomena are out of the horizon of the ordinary Ego-consciousness.

If you continue being identified with your personal time and lifesituation, and therefore use the consciousness in a self-circling way (words, images, feelings, moods, thoughts), then the wholeness remains asleep. If you choose to begin to awake (through the spiritual practice of the negative path; that is to say: meditation and Dream Yoga), then your consciousness, like a flower, will uncover and open up its own divine dimensions. Everybody has this inner pure awareness. It is a quality of

the Now and therefore of life itself. And therefore, it is also love, self-forgetful openness.

To be yourself is determined by the way you relate to everything. Whether you are attentive or inattentive. Being *without* attitude is to drive away the mind in inattention. To *have* attitude is to focus the mind in awareness, in the neutral attitude to the mind's content. Having attitude is therefore the core in being yourself. This core is at the same time the self-forgetfulness in the Now, love. The oneness of awareness and love is the essence in the experience of reality.

To exist from your inner thinker means that you seek to master life from a power you can dispose over. That's the task of the pilgrim of the positive path. This power is the will, and the will is the motivating power in the thoughts. The inner thinker, or the thinking's past and future, the Janus Face, is the instance, which evaluates and chooses. The will is therefore energy, which is taken from the Now and invested in the past and the future. To exist from the past and the future is to be absent and inattentive in the Now. It is the experience of unreality. Here you are *not* yourself, although there is a peculiar tendency in the modern society to acclaim the life style of the will and of the choice.

To exist from your innermost means that you are *liberated* to be yourself. Then you live in an atmosphere of free and unstrained life-unfolding, of fullness and movement. Then you live from a richness in the Now, a power, which you have not produced yourself, a power, which you could call the Source of life. When you live from this power, then you are in the middle of the stream of life.

The powerfulness in the Now *is* life. This power is something carrying, something granted, something, which is greater than yourself. Something, which you can characterize as an absolute Otherness in relation to the created world.

To be yourself, free and unforced, is only possible if you are in contact with the power of the Otherness. The Otherness is the instance, that leads you out to the things in an opening and involving way. This power exists in the Now's relations to everything.

Life itself is the life in the Now, where you are present and active from awareness, the innermost in you, and from heart-fullness, which is the whole of yourself. Life itself is therefore the self-forgetful life.

The self-forgetful life is spiritual because the life-fulfilment, which life itself contains, is so absolute, so complete, that there herein is something eternal and endless.

If you are present in the Now, actively and involved from awareness, the innermost in yourself, and from heartfulness; that is to say: totally, with the whole of yourself, and therefore in self-forgetful openness and world absorption, then you will experience eternity and infinity. You will experience the true essence of nature, which is the Otherness.

When your consciousness is identified with your personal time, then this essence will be hidden by thoughts and images, and then the awareness is sleeping, the innermost in you is sleeping. And therewith the wholeness is sleeping. When the contents of the consciousness fall silent, the consciousness itself begins to light and awake.

In the spiritual development there exist some existential conditions - as well as some growing conditions and growth levels common to all mankind - which indicates a universal map of the inner journey towards awakening, which is known in all wisdomtraditions. The following description of this map is inspired by the Danish spiritual teacher Jes Bertelsen.

In Zen it is for example said about this process of awakening: "In the beginning mountains are mountains, and woods are woods. Then mountains no longer are mountains and woods are no longer woods. Finally, mountains are again mountains, woods are again woods."

This refers to the three forms of states the wholeness can be in: sleep, dream, awake. When the wholeness is sleeping, mountains are mountains and woods are woods. This is the reality of the ordinary consciousness (the Ego-consciousness). The ordinary consciousness can sleep in three ways: 1) the dark sleep which is the Ego's deep nightly sleep; 2) the grey sleep, which is the Ego's nightly dreams and other dreams; 3) the light sleep, where the Ego is awake.

The three forms of states the wholeness can be in, can also be described as the personal time, the collective time and the universal time. These three states can further more - when we talk about going through them in a spiritual development process - be said to reflect the structure of the education novel. The education novel is especially known from Romanticism. With concepts collected from Goldschmidt's "The Homeless" (1853-57) the development process of the education novel can be characterized in this way: *at home – the homeless – home*. Although great parts of the course of the education novel, are about *the homeless* phase, we know, that the person

very probably shall arrive "*home*" again. A more or less pronounced model for all the education novels of Romanticism is Goethe's "*Wilhelm Meister*" (1795-1829) – and which actually, in very symbol satiated form, describes a spiritual development process. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* is another example on a description of the spiritual development process.

When the wholeness begins to dream – and this happens only, if you set yourself existentially into the process of awakening – then the Ego, or the inner thinker, experiences himself as a flower, which begins to open itself towards the collective time: the thoughts will be lit through, whereby their collective components – sound, symbol, color, structure – will be visible and make themselves current in the image of reality. The clearness from your dissolved and evaporated thoughts and content, will expand the consciousness out towards the borders, behind which the collective common human structures exist.

The thoughts become in other words less personal, more common, more collective, deeper, more philosophical. And these, common deep thoughts of mankind, your consciousness can *see*, by force of its increased clarity, as visions (primordial images, religious images, symbols, teachers, higher worlds, other dimensions etc.). Your consciousness then observes a world aspect of vibrant, soundfilled energyfields, which shimmer in symbols and colours. It observes a world of auric colours, archetypical symbols and yantric or other energetical structures. It begins to sense karmacially phenomena.

Reality expands itself, all things seem different than before, people shine as transparent onions; plants and animals vibrates, cosmos is alive: mountains are no longer mountains, woods are no longer woods. This is the opening of the collective time, which lies on a so-called astral plane.

But in a spiritual practice it is the form of the dream-consciousness it is about, not its content.

On the plane of the universal images, and therefore on the Now's plane, the central is the form of the consciousness - the actual consciousness and its clarity and openness. Not the content of the consciousness. In the spiritual practice of the negative path, the spiritual, and spiritual active, is the consciousness' course towards its source (the Now, the Otherness). What the consciousness and the mind and the senses are filled by, is of less crucial importance.

But the collective time is a very dangerous intermediate area. The temptation to here, either to become afraid, or to experiment with various possibilities (astral travels,

clairvoyance, telepathy etc. etc.) is great. It is a very forceful state. Goethe and Dante write about the collective time in "Faust" and in "The Divine Comedy". Tolkien about it in "The Lord of the Rings", Ursula Le Guin in "The Wizard Ged". The shamans had to dare the journey to the underground kingdoms with their shadow-inhabitants, demons and dead. And they had to handle the journey to the heavenly regions, where gods and goddesses, heros and heroines, accomodated. The mystics had to experience the descent to hell with its belonging devils, fire and sulphur and torment and suffering. And they had to handle get off to heavenly hosts of angels and light-creatures, if the temptation was as difficult to resist as the sexual impact of the devil.

The creativity, and the reality-creating ability, is in the collective time set free in fascinating degree. However, you are, in this astral state, still on the plane of the collective images of time, which work in sequences in past and future, and you are in danger ending up in a spiritual crisis. A spiritual crisis is an expression of, that you have followed the positive path out in the collective time, with your Ego, without having done the philosophical preliminary work; that is to say: the realization-work and the ethical training. The Ego will then make you lose your way in the collective time.

A spiritual crisis can be expressed in two ways: 1): as suffering, often called The Dark Night of the Soul, or 2) as Ego-inflation (*inflammatio*).

1) If the borders to the collective time is broken down or being exceeded out of hand, for example through LSD or through one-sided development techniques, or in shock, the consciousness and the personality will slide crucial out of balance and therefore suffer. The Ego will sideways with its personal identity and lifesituation, suddenly experience break in of tremendous astral energies, clairvoyant abilities, visions of mythological beings, good and evil forces, various demons and angels, death and themes of rebirth, unusual light phenomena, messages from supernatural beings, memories from past lifes. These experiences will, because that the Ego's nature has not been realized, be characterized by unreality and division, anxiety of going mad and anxiety of death, or the experience of a total meaningless and dark extinct world.

2) The personality can receive informations through the break in of astral and collective energies, images and symbols: information about, what approaches human beings from outside (from other people, from chance, destiny, life etc.). However, informations through collective images are contradictional and split. Many have therefore been seduced by these colourful experiences and have remained there, with the ability to see the aura, with the ability to create images, to create in reality. When the collective time is used spiritual in genuine sense, then the Ego, in its egoistic

isolating and self-affirmative function, steps aside. That's what happens on the negative path. However, the same forces can be used for other intensions. It can be creative, Ego affirmative, political, demonical and so on. The forces which in spirituality are given to others' disposal in healing, energy transmission and spiritual information exchange, the same forces can themselves be turned in through the Ego-structures and open creative channels, create super Egos, create political leaders and popular seducers. The problem, or the danger, does not consist in using creativity or auric abilities. It is actually a good idea to formulate the experiences creatively; the danger is, whether the Ego grows and becomes swollen on the world's positive responses. And if the Ego gains strength, takes the honour, or blows itself up, the transformation process of consciousness stops, the growth forward towards the goal: illumination and later enlightenment.

The pilgrim manifests the monomyth about the Hero's Journey. In his book *The Hero's Journey* the mythologist, Joseph Campbell, the monomyth, or the hero's journey, is the common template of a broad category of tales that involve a hero who goes on an adventure, and in a decisive crisis wins a victory, and then comes home changed or transformed.

Campbell's concept of monomyth (one myth) refers to the theory that sees all mythic narratives as variations of a single great story. The theory is based on the observation that a common pattern exists beneath the narrative elements of most great myths, regardless of their origin or time of creation.

The central pattern most studied by Campbell is often referred to as the hero's journey and was first described in *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*. An enthusiast of novelist James Joyce, Campbell borrowed the term "monomyth" from Joyce's *Finnegans Wake*. Campbell also made heavy use of Carl Jung's theories on the structure of the human psyche, and he often used terms such as "anima/animus" and "ego consciousness".

As a strong believer in the psychic unity of mankind and its poetic expression through mythology, Campbell made use of the concept to express the idea that the whole of the human race can be seen as engaged in the effort of making the world "transparent to transcendence" by showing that underneath the world of phenomena lies an eternal source which is constantly pouring its energies into this world of time, suffering, and ultimately death. To achieve this task one needs to speak about things that existed before and beyond words, a seemingly impossible task, the solution to which lies in the metaphors found in myths. These metaphors are statements that point beyond themselves into the transcendent. The Hero's Journey was the story of the man or woman who, through great suffering, reached an

experience of the eternal source and returned with gifts powerful enough to set their society free.

As this story spread through space and evolved through time (as we already have investigated as the negationpower with the outgoing movement of time and the backmovement), it was broken down into various local forms (masks), depending on the social structures and environmental pressures that existed for the culture that interpreted it.

The basic structure, however, has remained relatively unchanged and can be classified using the various stages of a hero's adventure through the story, stages such as the Call to Adventure, Receiving Supernatural Aid, Meeting with the Goddess/Atonement with the Father and Return.

These stages, as well as the symbols one encounters throughout the story, provide the necessary metaphors to express the spiritual truths the story is trying to convey. Metaphor for Campbell, in contrast with comparisons which make use of the word like, pretend to a literal interpretation of what they are referring to, as in the sentence "Jesus is the Son of God" rather than "the relationship of man to God is like that of a son to a father". For example, according to Campbell, the Genesis myth from the Bible ought not be taken as a literal description of historical events happening in our current understanding of time and space, but as a metaphor for the rise of man's cognitive consciousness as it evolved from a prior animal state.

In the 2000 documentary *Joseph Campbell: A Hero's Journey*, he explains God in terms of a metaphor:

"God is a metaphor for a mystery that absolutely transcends all human categories of thought, even the categories of being and non-being. Those are categories of thought. I mean it's as simple as that. So it depends on how much you want to think about it. Whether it's doing you any good. Whether it is putting you in touch with the mystery that's the ground of your own being. If it isn't, well, it's a lie. So half the people in the world are religious people who think that their metaphors are facts. Those are what we call theists. The other half are people who know that the metaphors are not facts. And so, they're lies. Those are the atheists."

Campbell describes 17 stages of the monomyth. Not all monomyths necessarily contain all 17 stages explicitly; some myths may focus on only one of the stages, while others may deal with the stages in a somewhat different order. In the

terminology of Claude Lévi-Strauss, the stages are the individual mythemes which are "bundled" or assembled into the structure of the monomyth.

The 17 stages may be organized in a number of ways, including division into three "acts" or sections:

1. Departure (also Separation),
2. Initiation (sometimes subdivided into Descent and Initiation) and
3. Return.

In the Departure part of the narrative, the hero or protagonist lives in the ordinary world and receives a call to go on an adventure. The hero is reluctant to follow the call, but is helped by a mentor figure.

The Initiation section begins with the hero then traversing the threshold to the unknown or "special world", where he faces tasks or trials, either alone or with the assistance of helpers.

The hero eventually reaches "the innermost cave" or the central crisis of his adventure, where he must undergo "the ordeal" where he overcomes the main obstacle or enemy, undergoing "apotheosis" and gaining his reward (a treasure or "elixir").

The hero must then return to the ordinary world with his reward. He may be pursued by the guardians of the special world, or he may be reluctant to return, and may be rescued or forced to return by intervention from the outside.

In the Return section, the hero again traverses the threshold between the worlds, returning to the ordinary world with the treasure or elixir he gained, which he may now use for the benefit of his fellow man. The hero himself is transformed by the adventure and gains wisdom or spiritual power over both worlds.

So, the hero begins in a situation of normality from which some information is received that acts as a call to head off into the unknown.

Campbell said: "... (the call of adventure is to) a forest, a kingdom underground, beneath the waves, or above the sky, a secret island, lofty mountaintop, or profound dream state; but it is always a place of strangely fluid and polymorphous beings, unimaginable torments, super human deeds, and impossible delight. The hero can go

forth of his own volition to accomplish the adventure, as did Theseus when he arrived in his father's city, Athens, and heard the horrible history of the Minotaur; or he may be carried or sent abroad by some benign or malignant agent as was Odysseus, driven about the Mediterranean by the winds of the angered god, Poseidon. The adventure may begin as a mere blunder... or still again, one may be only casually strolling when some passing phenomenon catches the wandering eye and lures one away from the frequented paths of man. Examples might be multiplied, ad infinitum, from every corner of the world."

Often when the call is given, the future hero first refuses to heed it. This may be from a sense of duty or obligation, fear, insecurity, a sense of inadequacy, or any of a range of reasons that work to hold the person in his or her current circumstances.

Campbell said: "Refusal of the summons converts the adventure into its negative. Walled in boredom, hard work, or 'culture,' the subject loses the power of significant affirmative action and becomes a victim to be saved. His flowering world becomes a wasteland of dry stones and his life feels meaningless—even though, like King Minos, he may through titanic effort succeed in building an empire or renown. Whatever house he builds, it will be a house of death: a labyrinth of cyclopean walls to hide from him his minotaur. All he can do is create new problems for himself and await the gradual approach of his disintegration."

Once the hero has committed to the quest, consciously or unconsciously, his guide and magical helper appears or becomes known. More often than not, this supernatural mentor will present the hero with one or more talismans or artifacts that will aid him later in his quest.

Campbell said: "For those who have not refused the call, the first encounter of the hero journey is with a protective figure (often a little old crone or old man) who provides the adventurer with amulets against the dragon forces he is about to pass. What such a figure represents is the benign, protecting power of destiny. The fantasy is a reassurance—promise that the peace of Paradise, which was known first within the mother womb, is not to be lost; that it supports the present and stands in the future as well as in the past (is omega as well as alpha); that though omnipotence may seem to be endangered by the threshold passages and life awakenings, protective power is always and ever present within or just behind the unfamiliar features of the world. One has only to know and trust, and the ageless guardians will appear. Having responded to his own call, and continuing to follow courageously as the consequences unfold, the hero finds all the forces of the unconscious at his side. Mother Nature herself supports the mighty task. And in so far as the hero's act

coincides with that for which his society is ready, he seems to ride on the great rhythm of the historical process."

This is the point where the person actually crosses into the field of adventure, leaving the known limits of his or her world and venturing into an unknown and dangerous realm where the rules and limits are not known.

Campbell said: "With the personifications of his destiny to guide and aid him, the hero goes forward in his adventure until he comes to the 'threshold guardian' at the entrance to the zone of magnified power. Such custodians bound the world in four directions — also up and down — standing for the limits of the hero's present sphere, or life horizon. Beyond them is darkness, the unknown and danger; just as beyond the parental watch is danger to the infant and beyond the protection of his society danger to the members of the tribe. The usual person is more than content, he is even proud, to remain within the indicated bounds, and popular belief gives him every reason to fear so much as the first step into the unexplored. The adventure is always and everywhere a passage beyond the veil of the known into the unknown; the powers that watch at the boundary are dangerous; to deal with them is risky; yet for anyone with competence and courage the danger fades."

The belly of the whale represents the final separation from the hero's known world and self. By entering this stage, the person shows willingness to undergo a metamorphosis. When first entering the stage the hero may encounter a minor danger or set back.

Campbell said: "The idea that the passage of the magical threshold is a transit into a sphere of rebirth is symbolized in the worldwide womb image of the belly of the whale. The hero, instead of conquering or conciliating the power of the threshold, is swallowed into the unknown and would appear to have died. This popular motif gives emphasis to the lesson that the passage of the threshold is a form of self-annihilation. Instead of passing outward, beyond the confines of the visible world, the hero goes inward, to be born again. The disappearance corresponds to the passing of a worshipper into a temple—where he is to be quickened by the recollection of who and what he is, namely dust and ashes unless immortal. The temple interior, the belly of the whale, and the heavenly land beyond, above, and below the confines of the world, are one and the same. That is why the approaches and entrances to temples are flanked and defended by colossal gargoyles: dragons, lions, devil-slayers with drawn swords, resentful dwarfs, winged bulls. The devotee at the moment of entry into a temple undergoes a metamorphosis. Once inside he may be said to have died to time and returned to the World Womb, the World Navel, the Earthly Paradise. Allegorically, then, the passage into a temple and the hero-dive through the jaws of

the whale are identical adventures, both denoting in picture language, the life-centering, life-renewing act."

The road of trials is a series of tests that the person must undergo to begin the transformation. Often the person fails one or more of these tests, which often occur in threes.

Campbell said: "Once having traversed the threshold, the hero moves in a dream landscape of curiously fluid, ambiguous forms, where he must survive a succession of trials. This is a favorite phase of the myth-adventure. It has produced a world literature of miraculous tests and ordeals. The hero is covertly aided by the advice, amulets, and secret agents of the supernatural helper whom he met before his entrance into this region. Or it may be that he here discovers for the first time that there is a benign power everywhere supporting him in his superhuman passage. The original departure into the land of trials represented only the beginning of the long and really perilous path of initiatory conquests and moments of illumination. Dragons have now to be slain and surprising barriers passed — again, again, and again. Meanwhile there will be a multitude of preliminary victories, unretainable ecstasies and momentary glimpses of the wonderful land.

"The ultimate adventure, when all the barriers and ogres have been overcome, is commonly represented as a mystical marriage of the triumphant hero-soul with the Queen Goddess of the World. This is the crisis at the nadir, the zenith, or at the uttermost edge of the earth, at the central point of the cosmos, in the tabernacle of the temple, or within the darkness of the deepest chamber of the heart. The meeting with the goddess (who is incarnate in every woman) is the final test of the talent of the hero to win the boon of love (charity: amor fati), which is life itself enjoyed as the encasement of eternity. And when the adventurer, in this context, is not a youth but a maid, she is the one who, by her qualities, her beauty, or her yearning, is fit to become the consort of an immortal. Then the heavenly husband descends to her and conducts her to his bed—whether she will or not. And if she has shunned him, the scales fall from her eyes; if she has sought him, her desire finds its peace."

In this step, the hero faces those temptations, often of a physical or pleasurable nature, that may lead him or her to abandon or stray from his or her quest, which does not necessarily have to be represented by a woman. Woman is a metaphor for the physical or material temptations of life, since the hero-knight was often tempted by lust from his spiritual journey.

Campbell said: "The crux of the curious difficulty lies in the fact that our conscious views of what life ought to be seldom correspond to what life really is. Generally we

refuse to admit within ourselves, or within our friends, the fullness of that pushing, self-protective, malodorous, carnivorous, lecherous fever which is the very nature of the organic cell. Rather, we tend to perfume, whitewash, and reinterpret; meanwhile imagining that all the flies in the ointment, all the hairs in the soup, are the faults of some unpleasant someone else. But when it suddenly dawns on us, or is forced to our attention that everything we think or do is necessarily tainted with the odor of the flesh, then, not uncommonly, there is experienced a moment of revulsion: life, the acts of life, the organs of life, woman in particular as the great symbol of life, become intolerable to the pure, the pure, pure soul. The seeker of the life beyond life must press beyond (the woman), surpass the temptations of her call, and soar to the immaculate ether beyond."

In this step the person must confront and be initiated by whatever holds the ultimate power in his or her life. In many myths and stories this is the father, or a father figure who has life and death power. This is the center point of the journey. All the previous steps have been moving into this place, all that follow will move out from it. Although this step is most frequently symbolized by an encounter with a male entity, it does not have to be a male; just someone or thing with incredible power.

Campbell said: "Atonement consists in no more than the abandonment of that self-generated double monster—the dragon thought to be God (superego) and the dragon thought to be Sin (repressed id). But this requires an abandonment of the attachment to ego itself, and that is what is difficult. One must have a faith that the father is merciful, and then a reliance on that mercy. Therewith, the center of belief is transferred outside of the bedeviling god's tight scaly ring, and the dreadful ogres dissolve. It is in this ordeal that the hero may derive hope and assurance from the helpful female figure, by whose magic (pollen charms or power of intercession) he is protected through all the frightening experiences of the father's ego-shattering initiation. For if it is impossible to trust the terrifying father-face, then one's faith must be centered elsewhere (Spider Woman, Blessed Mother); and with that reliance for support, one endures the crisis—only to find, in the end, that the father and mother reflect each other, and are in essence the same. The problem of the hero going to meet the father is to open his soul beyond terror to such a degree that he will be ripe to understand how the sickening and insane tragedies of this vast and ruthless cosmos are completely validated in the majesty of Being. The hero transcends life with its peculiar blind spot and for a moment rises to a glimpse of the source. He beholds the face of the father, understands—and the two are atoned."

This is the point of realization in which a greater understanding is achieved. Armed with this new knowledge and perception, the hero is resolved and ready for the more difficult part of the adventure.

Campbell said: "Those who know, not only that the Everlasting lies in them, but that what they, and all things, really are is the Everlasting, dwell in the groves of the wish fulfilling trees, drink the brew of immortality, and listen everywhere to the unheard music of eternal concord."

The ultimate boon is the achievement of the goal of the quest. It is what the person went on the journey to get. All the previous steps serve to prepare and purify the person for this step, since in many myths the boon is something transcendent like the elixir of life itself, or a plant that supplies immortality, or the holy grail.

Campbell said: "The gods and goddesses then are to be understood as embodiments and custodians of the elixir of Imperishable Being but not themselves the Ultimate in its primary state. What the hero seeks through his intercourse with them is therefore not finally themselves, but their grace, i.e., the power of their sustaining substance. This miraculous energy-substance and this alone is the Imperishable; the names and forms of the deities who everywhere embody, dispense, and represent it come and go. This is the miraculous energy of the thunderbolts of Zeus, Yahweh, and the Supreme Buddha, the fertility of the rain of Viracocha, the virtue announced by the bell rung in the Mass at the consecration, and the light of the ultimate illumination of the saint and sage. Its guardians dare release it only to the duly proven."

Having found bliss and enlightenment in the other world, the hero may not want to return to the ordinary world to bestow the boon onto his fellow man.

Campbell said: "When the hero-quest has been accomplished, through penetration to the source, or through the grace of some male or female, human or animal, personification, the adventurer still must return with his life-transmuting trophy. The full round, the norm of the monomyth, requires that the hero shall now begin the labor of bringing the runes of wisdom, the Golden Fleece, or his sleeping princess, back into the kingdom of humanity, where the boon may redound to the renewing of the community, the nation, the planet or the ten thousand worlds. But the responsibility has been frequently refused. Even Gautama Buddha, after his triumph, doubted whether the message of realization could be communicated, and saints are reported to have died while in the supernal ecstasy. Numerous indeed are the heroes fabled to have taken up residence forever in the blessed isle of the unaging Goddess of Immortal Being."

Sometimes the hero must escape with the boon, if it is something that the gods have been jealously guarding. It can be just as adventurous and dangerous returning from the journey as it was to go on it.

Campbell said: "If the hero in his triumph wins the blessing of the goddess or the god and is then explicitly commissioned to return to the world with some elixir for the restoration of society, the final stage of his adventure is supported by all the powers of his supernatural patron. On the other hand, if the trophy has been attained against the opposition of its guardian, or if the hero's wish to return to the world has been resented by the gods or demons, then the last stage of the mythological round becomes a lively, often comical, pursuit. This flight may be complicated by marvels of magical obstruction and evasion."

Just as the hero may need guides and assistants to set out on the quest, often he or she must have powerful guides and rescuers to bring them back to everyday life, especially if the person has been wounded or weakened by the experience.

Campbell said: "The hero may have to be brought back from his supernatural adventure by assistance from without. That is to say, the world may have to come and get him. For the bliss of the deep abode is not lightly abandoned in favor of the self-scattering of the wakened state. 'Who having cast off the world,' we read, 'would desire to return again? He would be only there.' And yet, in so far as one is alive, life will call. Society is jealous of those who remain away from it, and will come knocking at the door. If the hero . . . is unwilling, the disturber suffers an ugly shock; but on the other hand, if the summoned one is only delayed—sealed in by the beatitude of the state of perfect being (which resembles death)—an apparent rescue is effected, and the adventurer returns."

The trick in returning is to retain the wisdom gained on the quest, to integrate that wisdom into a human life, and then maybe figure out how to share the wisdom with the rest of the world.

Campbell said: "The returning hero, to complete his adventure, must survive the impact of the world. Many failures attest to the difficulties of this life-affirmative threshold. The first problem of the returning hero is to accept as real, after an experience of the soul-satisfying vision of fulfillment, the passing joys and sorrows, banalities and noisy obscenities of life. Why re-enter such a world? Why attempt to make plausible, or even interesting, to men and women consumed with passion, the experience of transcendental bliss? As dreams that were momentous by night may seem simply silly in the light of day, so the poet and the prophet can discover themselves playing the idiot before a jury of sober eyes. The easy thing is to commit the whole community to the devil and retire again into the heavenly rock dwelling, close the door, and make it fast. But if some spiritual obstetrician has drawn the shimenawa across the retreat, then the work of representing eternity in time, and

perceiving in time eternity, cannot be avoided" The hero returns to the world of common day and must accept it as real.

This step is usually represented by a transcendental hero like Jesus or Gautama Buddha. For a human hero, it may mean achieving a balance between the material and spiritual. The person has become comfortable and competent in both the inner and outer worlds.

Campbell said: "Freedom to pass back and forth across the world division, from the perspective of the apparitions of time to that of the causal deep and back—not contaminating the principles of the one with those of the other, yet permitting the mind to know the one by virtue of the other—is the talent of the master. The Cosmic Dancer, declares Nietzsche, does not rest heavily in a single spot, but gaily, lightly, turns and leaps from one position to another. It is possible to speak from only one point at a time, but that does not invalidate the insights of the rest. The individual, through prolonged psychological disciplines, gives up completely all attachment to his personal limitations, idiosyncrasies, hopes and fears, no longer resists the self-annihilation that is prerequisite to rebirth in the realization of truth, and so becomes ripe, at last, for the great at-one-ment. His personal ambitions being totally dissolved, he no longer tries to live but willingly relaxes to whatever may come to pass in him; he becomes, that is to say, an anonymity."

Mastery leads to freedom from the fear of death, which in turn is the freedom to live. This is sometimes referred to as living in the moment, neither anticipating the future nor regretting the past.

Campbell said: "The hero is the champion of things becoming, not of things become, because he is. "Before Abraham was, I AM." He does not mistake apparent changelessness in time for the permanence of Being, nor is he fearful of the next moment (or of the 'other thing'), as destroying the permanent with its change. 'Nothing retains its own form; but Nature, the greater renewer, ever makes up forms from forms. Be sure there's nothing perishes in the whole universe; it does but vary and renew its form.' Thus the next moment is permitted to come to pass."

In the book *The Hero's Journey* (introduction by the above-mentioned Phil Cousineau) Campbell has a series of conversations with some of the people he inspired, among them the Czech-American psychiatrist Stanislav Grof who has made a pioneering work mapping different types of spiritual crises (especially in the book *Spiritual Emergency – When Personal Transformation Becomes a Crisis*). He outlines them as the full Hero's Journey but I claim that they in fact shows how it goes wrong. This is also basis for my critique of Grof, because he strangely enough

thinks that provoking spiritual crises in people is good. Except of course alcohol and drug abuse (though before developing the therapeutic method Holotropic Breathwork, Grof advocated LSD psychotherapy). (See my article [A Critique of Stanislav Grof and Holotropic Breathwork](#)).

In the light of my own experiences I outline such types of spiritual crises:

The awakening of Kundalini. Described as a snake-like energy, which in spiral form moves itself from the foot of the spiral column up in the head, while it opens a line of psychological centers, called 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.

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.

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 meditation teachers 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 wisdom traditions 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.

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.

Much simplified you can say, that the spiritual crisis arises because the thoughts, in one way or the other, have built a big volume of energy up in a wave. Whenever the thoughts build energy up, this energy is taken from the Now and led into the past or the future. The past and the future are the time-dimension of the thinking, which physical reflection-spot lies in the head. When the thoughts therefore build energy up, this energy runs up in the head. Said in another way there is formed a spiral-like, creative up-tension of the whole of your being.

When this tension is rising to a certain critical point, it breaks like a wavecrest, and there occurs an experience of one or the other kind. The experience is the breaker of the wavecrest. The built-up energy breaks in the experience's contents and visions, feelings and symbols. And when the built-up volume of energy is big enough, you can create an opening, through which the contents of time and its images can begin to flow in.

As we have seen: time is not just the personal history, but also the collective and the universal history, and therefore the contents of time and its images are unfathomable. An absolute fascinating perspective, and dangerous. With the Argentine author Jorge Luis Borges you could try to illustrate this fascination by comparing it with the fascination the western nations got, when they discovered the Orient. As Borges says, then you, in this connection, can talk about the "the Consciousness of the Orient". And in this way, you can compare the fascination of time and its unfathomableness, with the fascination of a sapphire from the Orient. That is: an oriental sapphire filled up with Thousand and one Night. Something magical, something enchanting. And it is exactly such a kind of fascination many people get over the phenomena in the different types of spiritual crises.

In Italo Calvino's book *Invisible Cities* Marco Polo sits and tells Kublai Khan about all the cities he has visited during his journeys in the Orient. However, the whole thing is one big fantasy-game, one big play with time and its images, which endless content can flow out everywhere, for example in the labyrinths of Venice – because all the invisible cities Marco Polo is telling about, is a description of one only, complete, city: Venice. A description, which, because of the limitation of language, ends in an endless description of the negations of Venice, the invisible cities within Venice.

When Borges uses the concept Thousand and one Night, then he often refers to the circumstance, that the word "thousand" almost is synonymous with "endless many". To say thousand nights is to say endless many nights, the many nights, the countless nights. To say "Thousand and one Night" is to indulge one more to the endless many. The conception about something endless is similar in nature with Thousand and one Night.

To create an opening where time and it's images can begin to flow in through, is like opening an endless book. But the thought's fascination of this can transform itself into something nightmarish, because the thought - which by nature is limited - is seeking to play with the unlimited. The thought, which by nature is expelling, is seeking to understand the all-inclusive.

It ends up in a feeling of endless split. Everything has a negation which itself has another negation, etc. You open up for an endless book - or you can try to think about these Chinese balls within which there are other balls - or of the Russian dolls (the thought distortion *Endless split of the Thought* – see my book [A dictionary of Thought Distortions](#)).

In Thousand and one Night Sheherazade is putting the Sultan off with stories, which never have any ending. With stories, which are inside other stories, she produces a mighty effect, almost of something endless, which gives a kind of dizziness.

Thus, also in Lewis Carroll's books about Alice in Wonderland, or his novel *Sylvia and Bruno*, where there are dreams inside other dreams, which branch and multiply themselves.

As Borges said one evening under a talk, then Thousand and one Night is such a mighty book, that it is not necessary to have read it, because it is a part of our memory, which already exists, and also were a part of that evening, where he said those words. Thousand and one Night's endless time is still going on – it continues to grow, or reproduce itself. It is created of both the personal, collective and universal time, which we all are parts of through our thinking, through our minds.

The most appropriate in spiritual practice is in other words to use the dreaming state of the wholeness, to begin to practice the supporting exercises in my first book [Meditation as an Art of Life – a basic reader](#). Focus on yoga, the Relaxationmeditation and the Hara meditation, and only keep the other exercises in mind. The most important is the development of Hara, which is fundamental to all wisdom traditions and natural healing professions.

If you as a practitioner remember to use such an opening in the wholeness spiritual seen correct, then this can give your total development a considerably lift forward.

It is in other words very important that you do not move accent from awake everyday life (for example a good earth-bound job, ordinary people and family) to dreams and sleep, not use drugs or one-sided development techniques which promise you great experiences and abilities (this is actually what Grof's Holotropic Breathwork does).

You have to have patience. Even for people with a regular and well-ordered practice (2-3 hours every day) there can pass weeks, months or years between the reflections into the awake state of the wholeness. However, if practice is appropriate, the spiritual consciousness will with time automatically penetrate the dreaming wholeness.

And if moments of actual awakening are coming, then everything is simple, intensive, present, in the right place: mountains are again mountains, woods are again woods, but without longings, without wishes and desires, without the past, without the future. The mountains are. The woods are. The consciousness is. The Now is. You are at home again, at home in genuine sense.

So, the Ego's partial consciousness is part of a greater wholeness, which is the Now, life itself. And life itself is the life in the Now, where you are present and active using the pure awareness, the innermost in you, and using the heart-fullness, which is the whole of yourself; what we could call your spiritual essence, because the life-fulfilment, which life itself contains is so absolute, so complete, that there herein is something eternal and endless.

The concept of karma has therefore primarily to do with the development process of your spiritual essence - and only secondary and indirectly with the Ego's process; that is: with your personal time and life-situation. Admittedly it is the Ego's actions out on the scene, which leaves karmic tracks. Karma is the unconscious consequences of the Ego's actions. Each time the Ego acts - and thereby changes the balance in the wholeness - then the structures and power lines in your spiritual essence changes, in the unconscious.

When your spiritual essence is sleeping, karma is automatically. The Ego's pendulum swings in one life out in an extreme. Hereby gathers in the wholeness, in your spiritual essence, momentum to, that the pendulum in a future life will swing out in the opposite compensatory extreme. This is the automatic compensatory karma. In one life ascetic, in the next libertine, then inhibited and expelled, thereupon sybarite etc. with no end, because the Ego has freedom continual to give new momentum and

new course - within the karmic possible; that is to say: heredity and environment - to the Ego's pendulum.

However, when the Ego decides to use its free energy, its existential option to begin to awake, then the karma structures changes. Then you begin to use and work with your spiritual dimension. This dimension is not subject to the karmic structure, it *is* it, or it is over it. The wholeness is over, is transcendent, in relation to the laws and mechanisms, which regulate the infrastructures of the wholeness. The wholeness is not subject to the laws and energy transformations, which rule between the constitutive parts of the wholeness.

When your spiritual essence begins to dream, when the Ego-consciousness begins to bloom, to open itself, you discover the karmic lawfulness and can therefore relate to them. When your consciousness in extended state begins to sense the karmic structures, which after all not only rule between the many life's of your spiritual essence, but all the same are known psychological mirrored from the Ego's dreams and the Ego's life - then you can change attitude.

Instead of swinging with the laws you can choose to observe. Instead of identifying yourself with impulses and incentives, emotions and thought tendencies, you can separate yourself, become a witness, become alert. And hereby you can break the karmic automatism.

Human beings have two aspects: an energy aspect and a consciousness aspect. Seen from the energy aspect lawfulness rules: your body is subject to the physical laws of nature, your psychic system is subject to the lawfulness of the energy fields and of the energy transformations. Seen from the consciousness aspect, then a human being seems to be akin to the wholeness, to be transcendent in relation to these laws.

Human beings are in that way, seen from the point of view of the ordinary ego-consciousness, inserted in two dimensions: a continuum, which streams are subject to laws; a discontinuum, for which leaps laws not seem to be effective. The wholeness, your spiritual essence, is normally the discontinuous aspect; normally, because this is of course seen from the point of view of the ego-continuum. Seen from the point of view of your spiritual essence, then the ego-continuum, with its sleep and awake, life and death, is the discontinuous aspect, and the spiritual essence the continuous aspect. But the parts, the Ego and its evaluations, is normally the continuous aspect.

When your spiritual essence begins to dream and the continuum of the Ego-consciousness breaks and expands in a discontinuum (into the superior continuum of the wholeness – or your spiritual essence), then the cosmic structure-pattern changes.

Instead of mere compensatory karma, a progressive karma will now be effective. That, which you through existential achievement have reached of spiritual contact in one life, will form a progressive karma.

The process of your spiritual essence, your process of awakening, will leave progressive karma along through the various incarnations. What you spiritual have reached to realize in one life, will in the spiritual energy be there in the next life, or in the dimension of your spiritual essence.

If your spiritual essence is sleeping, the spiritual energy is quiet. Without traceable activity. A human being can live a whole life, yes, life after life, in absolute sleep.

If you however existentially begin to seek, to seek the spiritual, the divine, to seek love, if you choose to use your energy and your life in that way, then the spiritual energy will begin to vibrate, to become active. Only the images, which have achieved to imprint themselves in the spiritual energy, will be transferred as progressive karma. Your spiritual essence will remember its dreams from life to life. And your spiritual essence will remember and accumulate the glimpses of being awake, it might have experienced. These, the dreams and awake moments of your spiritual essence, are the progressive karma.

This is what is meant with, that people are born with different levels of spiritual development.

Concerning the progressive karma it applies, that each new life, in a quintessence, repeats the crucial stations on the development path of the spiritual essence. The place, where you can find your own progressive karma, if such is available, is therefore in the life, you have lived, in the history of your present life. It lies as an invisible script underneath the history of your actual life. It is the dreaming tracks and songlines in the artwork of your life.

In the inexplicable events in your life, in the rows of moments of spiritual longing, in the fateful incidents and actions - in them are contained the progressive karma. In your spiritual history, there is a map. This map shows the dreaming tracks and the songlines in your spiritual work of art. This map is a universal image.

There is no doubt about, that Karen Blixen, though not fully conscious, had a sense of this map. All her books are about destiny seen in this way; they are about people who either live in accordance with this map, or in discordance with it.

This map, this universal image was, what she referred to as the "ancient", the "original", and which she always was seeking as authenticity, autonomy, possibility, freedom and adventure. And a universal image is of a holographic nature, therefore it contains all other images, personal, collective and universal, and therefore it contains the dreaming tracks and songlines in the artwork of the pilgrim's life.

You can live a whole life with this key lying in your own actual, spiritual biography. It requires work to find it. If you through development, through training, expand your consciousness to the spiritual dimension, then this invisible script will be made visible, the dreaming tracks and the songlines in the progressive karma will be found.

Alaya-vijnana is a term used within Yogacara Buddhism to indicate the store-house consciousness, or the great vision, which consists of universal images. It is also called the Akashic Records. As mentioned, then these universal images are a kind of energetical mandala-structures or yantra-fields. They have a linguistic nature, but it is of a visionary kind. These images are composite by sound and color, symbol and structure. You could also say, that they are what the philosophers call unmoved matter, a worldaspect of sound-colours and symbol-structures, an ocean of vibrant, soundfilled energyfields, which shimmer in symbols and colours. Altogether filled with information about life. Together the great vision, an information-ocean of holographic nature.

We have historical records about this vision. For example, there exists within Tibetan Buddhism a peculiar doctrine about the so-called Tertöns (tib. Gter-bston - the unearthers of the hidden books), people who are born with a special karmacial connection to a long ago deceased master, and who, because of the connection to this master's oneness-consciousness with the universal vision, now can collect treasures of information in from the vision, or the universal images, which after all work in synchronism with the Now, and which therefore lie in the wholeness, in the continuum of eternity. The master was hiding and storing holy "texts" various places in the universal images with that purpose, that a future "Tertön" would be able to find this knowledge again, decipher and publish it.

The Tibetan Book of the Dead (Bardo Thödol) is in that way one of the Tibetan texts, which is considered for having been hidden in the universal vision by the founder of Tibetan Buddhism, Padma Sambhava, and which was found again by a Tertön with the name Rigzin Karma Ling-pa. Padma Sambhava is considered for having hidden many holy texts, whereafter he gave some of his disciples the yoga ability to become reincarnated in the right time - which were determinated astrologically - for here to find the scriptures again.

After an estimated judgment, the spiritual texts, which already have been taken out by Tertöns in the run of the centuries, would form a cyclopedia on around sixtyfive volumes with average around four hundred pages in each volume.

I can see no reason to deny the doctrine of the Tertöns. You can't just deny people's experiences written down through centuries. This would in itself be unscientific, irrational, and besides, deeply arrogant. It is important though, to remember the philosophical aspects of the spiritual journey; that is: the use of rationality and critical thinking, which actually also is a central part of the training of the Tibetan monks. The problem with the alternative environment within the New Age movement, is namely, that precisely because the above mentioned, normal inaccessible, areas, in principle lie outside the area of the Ego-consciousness, yes, then they are open for all sorts of fantasies. This is the distorted practice of the positive path.

Within the New Age movement there are countless people today, who work egoistic with karmic experiences – that is to say: they earn money as clairvoyants, regression therapists etc. Some of them live on pure make believe, others are direct frauds, but some of them have actually the ability to see into the collective time and its images, and tell about a past and a future which lies outside the area of the personality. But usually they have no philosophical training, no realization training and ethical practice. Therefore, they basically do not know what they are doing. They are pilgrims lost in the area of time where mountains no longer are mountains, and woods no longer are woods. There is in this area of the collective time and its images, with all its experts and clients, the possibility for a lot of waffle, a lot of imprecisely guesses and imagination, fiction and speculation.

There are therefore some philosophical principles you ought to hold on to, on the whole of this enormous, and growing market. The so-called compensatory karma will by these experts and clients normally be misunderstood and abused as a kind of legitimation of, that we are as we are or do, as we do. He or she becomes obliged to do this or that, in order to equalize old karma. This is spiritual seen nonsense. Usually the whole thing is about escaping from reality or excuses. It all origin from the collective time, which work in sequences in past and future, and therefore, in deeper sense, not karmic and not in the least spiritual.

If a human being in genuine sense experiences compensatory karma, then this will precisely cause a separation, a break in relation to the automatic identification with tendencies and circumstances. A human being, who actually realizes its karmic conditions, will precisely, by force of realization, break the automatic process.

Another philosophical principle is to examine, whether the karmic talk and experiences of the experts and clients remove their energy-investments in the actual reality. If focus is displaced backwards, then the collective time has taken over and spiritual seen there therefore happens an escape. Such an escape is seen both in Freud, Rank, Grof, Janov, rebirthing, regression. None of these people and theories can therefore be said to work spiritual. And if they use the karma idea in that way, it is no longer a spiritual help, it is a collective displacement of the focus backwards in time and therewith out of reality and into the unreality of the collective time.

And this area is inexhaustible. Regardless whether you make use of psychotherapy, clairvoyance, healing, body therapy, regression, dream-interpretation, chakras, then there will always be more. You can continue and continue, you almost become dependent of it like drugs or sex, because the actual magnet, which attract the whole of this area with its energy – the Ego - has not been realized. The Ego will with its evaluations create new problems, new content, new longings, new dreams - which again is in need of therapy, consultation etc., indefinitely. The spiritual development stops, it leaves the rails and ends up blind.

The genuine karmic structures do not lie in the collective time, but in the universal time, which work in synchronism with the Now. If the karma idea is used spiritual seen correctly, as on the negative path, then the focus, instead of being projected out in something afar (past lives, a guru, birth, the future), will be present in something very near, namely only in the most intensive experiences of this actual life, and after that: in this actual Now with its possibility of realizing your innermost.

So, the universal images lie as a kind of dreaming tracks and songlines in the pilgrim's actual life here and now. Only here and now they can be discovered. They can manifest themselves in symbols, which contain informations about the development process of the pilgrim's spiritual essence. Informations from the universal images are, contrary to informations from the collective images, not contradiction-filled and split, but healing and synthesizing. They are the map, which shows the path from the pilgrim's Ego to his or hers spiritual essence. When they have been discovered, the Ego knows the way to the pure awareness and love of its spiritual essence – the home of the spiritual essence.

Only Man himself can find the progressive karma. The consciousness has the key in its life. It helps nothing, what clairvoyants may be able to see in the collective time, or fantasize about another person's karmic experiences. Many of these experiences (for example about past lives) – and which have a certain reality for either the clairvoyant or the client – are collective fantasies.

Collective fantasies have two aspects. The one aspect of the fantasies is a kind of archetypical, mythologically symbolizings of more personally, unclarified matter. The second aspect of the fantasies is relatively valid information about incidents, for example in other centuries. The misguiding happens because the two aspects are blended together. The clairvoyant, or the client himself, can remember, that he has lived in a past incarnation (often very romantic, for example as a pharaoh), and he can even travel to the places, where he had been incarnated and find things which "proves" his assertion. There has been made many examinations of things of that kind. But regardless how fascinating it is, then it proofs nothing about past lives. And therefore, it is deceptive and dangerous to occupy oneself with.

Nobody can tell you about your karmic structures. All people - clairvoyants, regression therapists, shamans etc. etc. - who are claiming they can help you karmic, are cognitional and ethical delusional and deceptive.

Only your own realization opens. Whether another person even was able to read the whole of the karmic course and tell the seeker about it, it would not help. On the contrary, it would harm. Only your own inner experience and realization can open the spiritual dimension. Karma in other ways is nonsense. And by the way, that's the same with all spiritual.

In all briefness, you can say, that genuine spiritual practice tries to guide pilgrims, who wish to learn, to go around the states, which have to do with the collective time, or at least, to shorten the passage through these areas. And if they are lost in them, to lead them back on the right track.

Related books on pilgrimage:

[The Hero's Journey](#), by Joseph Campbell

The monomyth, or the hero's journey, is the common template of a broad category of tales that involve a hero who goes on an adventure, and in a decisive crisis wins a victory, and then comes home changed or transformed.

[The Hero with a Thousand Faces](#), by Joseph Campbell

In these pages Campbell outlines the Hero's Journey, a universal motif of adventure and transformation that runs through virtually all of the world's mythic traditions.

[The Songlines](#), by Bruce Chatwin

Bruce Chatwin's ventures into the desolate land of Outback Australia to discover the meaning of the Aboriginals' ancient "Dreaming tracks".

[The Pilgrimage](#), by Paulo Coelho

In this gripping story, Paulo Coelho is on a conquest for the ultimate in self-knowledge, wisdom and spiritual mastery. Guided by his mysterious companion Petrus, he takes the road to Santiago, going through a series of trials and tests along the way – even coming to face to face with someone who might just be the devil himself.

[The Art of Pilgrimage: The Seeker's Guide to Making travel sacred](#), by Phil Cousineau

A well-written guide to finding spiritual resonance in everyday travel.

[Pilgrim at Tinker Creek](#), by Annie Dillard

An eloquent meditation on life, death, and nature, set in the Virginia wilderness. Related to my own photo album *Pilgrim in Rold Forest*, which you can find on my [Facebook profile](#) (read the album description). *Pilgrim at Tinker Creek* is a 1974 nonfiction narrative book. Told from a first-person point of view, the book details an unnamed narrator's explorations near her home, and various contemplations on nature and life. The title of the book suggests a pilgrimage, and yet the narrator does not stray far from her home near the creek: the journey is metaphysical. The same was the case with Henry David Thoreau in his book *Walden*, and the same is the case with my pilgrimage in Rold Forest.

[The Way of the Traveler: Making Every Trip a Journey of Self-Discovery](#), by Joe Dispenza

A book about using travel for spiritual growth and deeper life experience.

[The Snow Leopard](#), by Peter Matthiessen

This account of Matthiessen's 1973 journey into the Himalayas is a Zen-flavored travel classic.

[The Road Within: True Stories of Life on the Road](#), by Sean O'Reilly, James O'Reilly, and Tim O'Reilly

A collection of spiritual travel writing from authors like Annie Dillard, Barry Lopez, and Natalie Goldberg.

[One Thousand roads to Mecca: Ten Centuries of Travelers Writing about the Muslim Pilgrimage](#), edited by Michael Wolfe

An anthology of writings about the biggest spiritual travel event in the world – the Muslim's pilgrimage to Mecca – as seen through the eyes and hearts of the people who've made the hajj over the last thousand years.

Idle travel books:

[The Colossos of Maroussi](#), by Henry Miller

Like the ancient colossus that stood over the harbor of Rhodes, Henry Miller's *The Colossus of Maroussi* stands as a seminal classic in travel literature. The book Miller would later cite as his favorite began with a young woman's seductive description of Greece. Miller headed out with his friend Lawrence Durrell to explore the Grecian countryside: a flock of sheep nearly tramples the two as they lie naked on a beach; the Greek poet Katsmbalis, the "colossus" of Miller's book, stirs every rooster within earshot of the Acropolis with his own loud crowing; cold hard-boiled eggs are warmed in a village's single stove, and they stay in hotels that "have seen better days, but which have an aroma of the past."

Lawrence Durrell is the author of [The Alexandria Quartet](#), at heart a sensuous and brilliant evocation of wartime Egypt. Durrell made Miller discover, that the dream and the reality, the historical and the mythological, were so artfully blended in Greece, and that this confusion is real and not due entirely to the poetic faculty.

[The Air-Conditioned Nightmare](#), by Henry Miller

Miller's stories and essays celebrate those rare individuals (famous and obscure) whose creative resilience and mere existence oppose the mechanization of minds and souls. In 1939, after ten years as an expatriate, Henry Miller returned to the United States with a keen desire to see what his native land was really like—to get to the roots of the American nature and experience. He set out on a journey that was to last three years, visiting many sections of the country and making friends of all

descriptions. Across America, coast to coast by car. *The Air-Conditioned Nightmare* is the result of that odyssey.

[The Great Railway Bazaar](#), by Paul Theroux

First published more than thirty years ago, Paul Theroux's strange, unique, and hugely entertaining railway odyssey has become a modern classic of travel literature. Here Theroux recounts his early adventures on an unusual grand continental tour. Asia's fabled trains -- the Orient Express, the Khyber Pass Local, the Frontier Mail, the Golden Arrow to Kuala Lumpur, the Mandalay Express, the Trans-Siberian Express -- are the stars of a journey that takes him on a loop eastbound from London's Victoria Station to Tokyo Central, then back from Japan on the Trans-Siberian. Brimming with Theroux's signature humor and wry observations, this engrossing chronicle is essential reading for both the ardent adventurer and the armchair traveler. Graham Greene said about the book: "In the fine tradition of purposeless travel for fun and adventure".

[Following the Equator: A Journey Around the World](#), by Mark Twain

Mark Twain toured the British Empire in 1895, during which time he began concocting a travelogue about the experience that was published in 1897. Twain's narrative spans the globe, from Australia to Hawaii. Full of tall-tales and real-life criticisms of imperialist arrogance, "Following the Equator: A Journey Around the World" is written with Twain's characteristic wit and enthusiasm for a good, entertaining story.

Hippy travel books:

[Jack Kerouac: Road Novels 1957-1960: On the Road / The Dharma Bums / The Subterraneans / Tristessa / Lonesome Traveler / Journal Selections \(Library of America\)](#)

The raucous, exuberant, often wildly funny account of a journey through America and Mexico, Jack Kerouac's *On the Road* instantly defined a generation upon its publication in 1957: it was, in the words of a New York Times reviewer, the clearest and most important utterance yet made by the generation Kerouac himself named years ago as 'beat.'

Written in the mode of ecstatic improvisation that Allen Ginsberg described as spontaneous bop prosody, Kerouac's novel remains electrifying in its thirst for experience and its defiant rebuke of American conformity. In his portrayal of the fervent relationship between the writer Sal Paradise and his outrageous, exasperating,

and inimitable friend Dean Moriarty, Kerouac created one of the great friendships in American literature; and his rendering of the cities and highways and wildernesses that his characters restlessly explore are a hallucinatory travelogue of a nation he both mourns and celebrates.

Now, to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of Kerouac's landmark novel, The Library of America collects *On the Road* together with four other autobiographical road books published in the late 1950s and early 1960s.

The Dharma Bums (1958), at once an exploration of Buddhist spirituality and an account of the Bay Area poetry scene, is notable for its thinly veiled portraits of Kerouac's acquaintances, including Ginsberg, Gary Snyder, and Kenneth Rexroth.

The Subterraneans (1958) recounts a love affair set amid the bars and bohemian haunts of San Francisco.

Tristessa (1960) is a melancholy novella describing a relationship with a prostitute in Mexico City.

Lonesome Traveler (1960) collects travel essays that evoke journeys in Mexico and Europe, and concludes with an elegiac lament for the lost world of the American hobo. Also included in Road Novels are selections from Kerouac's journal, which provide a fascinating perspective on his early impressions of material eventually incorporated into *On the Road*.

Related articles on the map of the spiritual journey:

[Paranormal Phenomena Seen in Relation with Spiritual Practice](#)

[Paranormal Phenomena Seen in Relation with Mystical Experiences](#)

[What is Dream Yoga?](#)

[Spiritual Crises as the Cause of Paranormal Phenomena](#)

[The Emotional Painbody and Why Psychotherapy Can't Heal It](#)

[The Ego-inflation in the New Age and Self-help environment](#)

[Paranormal Phenomena Seen in Relation with Clairvoyance](#)

[Paranormal Phenomena Seen in Relation with Channeling](#)

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