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The Art of Pilgrimage

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 I will let these steps and subdivisions form the dreaming tracks and songlines in the artwork of the pilgrim (or *The Philosophical Globetrotter, Life Artist and Idler*), which I'm [blogging](#) about.

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.

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 is 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 dividings 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.

So, 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 Sutras](#)) – 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 karmic 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 lifes, Near-Death Experiences, possession states.

In spiritual respect the task 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 spiritual practice; 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 selfforgetfulness 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. 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 heartfulness, which is the whole of yourself. Life itself is therefore the self-forgetful life.

The self-forgetful life is spiritual because the lifefulment, 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 worldaspect 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 karmic 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 spiritual practice 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 of Earthsea". 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, heroes and heroines, accommodated. 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 gone 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 lives. 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. 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 transformationprocess of consciousness stops, the growth forward towards the goal: illumination and later enlightenment.

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.

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.

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 awakeness 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 heartfulness, which is the whole of yourself; what we could call your spiritual essence, because the lifefulment, 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 lifesituation. Admittedly it is the Ego's actions out on the scene, which leaves karmic tracks. Karma is the subconscious 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 subconscious.

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 karmacial 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 lawfulnesses 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 lawfulnesses.

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 an 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 your 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 storehouse 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 doctrin 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.

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 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 normal 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 karmacial 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 automatical identification with tendencies and circumstances. A human being, who actual 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, dreaminterpretation, 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, then the focus, instead of being projected out in something afar (past lifes, 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 your 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 your 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 Ego to your 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 lifes) – 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 lifes. 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 karmacial, 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 people, who wish to learn, to go round the states, which have to do with the collective time, or at least, to shorten the passage through these areas. And if you are lost in them, to lead you back on the right track.

The extended version of this article:

[The Hero's Journey](#)

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.

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[The Pilgrimage](#), by Paulo Coelho

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[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:

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