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A Table for Four:

My Dinner with C. G. Jung, Martin Buber, and Maharishi Mahesh Yogi

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Abstract

Three men--Jung, Buber, and Maharishi Mahesh Yogi--are invited to dinner with the author in her active imagination. Each devoted their lives to healing the collective psyche, decimated after two world wars, and to preventing worse devastation in the future. Each provided a body of knowledge and a path. And each steadfastly rejected the paths the other two recommended. Meanwhile, the author has not just dabbled but devoted her life to these three paths, simultaneously. The conflict among these men had become an inner struggle demanding resolution.

The conflict between Jung and Buber quickly resurfaces: To Buber, a psychological understanding of God, Jung's view, prohibits a relationship with a true Other. Maharishi's perspective could offer a resolution, but Buber and Jung agree on only one point--an Eastern path is wrong for the author. They demand she acknowledge her guru's shadow. Easily done. But she cannot abide their dismissal of further states of consciousness beyond waking, dreaming, and sleeping, well known in Maharishi's tradition. Certain these are vital to our collective future, she resolutely describes them, meeting Jung and Buber's objections. The problem of self-proclaimed enlightenment remains--how it can exist beside the inevitable human shadow. Seeking grounding, the author considers the lens, created by personal histories, through which the four view the transcendent. She finds further resolution in the shamans' description of the upper world, which would be Maharishi's domain; the middle, Buber's; and the lower, Jung's; but comes to final rest finally in the Axiom of Maria.

The three men I invited to dinner in this active imagination are unique, highly influential individuals who all devoted their lives to healing our souls decimated after two world wars and thereby perhaps preventing worse devastation in the future. Yet Jung, Buber, and Maharishi— each of them—rejected the paths the other two recommended for us. These three also represent broader conflicting views—depth psychology, Abrahamic religions, and Eastern traditions— about the meaning and purpose of life. These are not trivial issues or trivial men, and if one takes seriously their three approaches, they cannot (at least, rationally) be lived simultaneously. Yet I have been in both sides of analytic work for much of my adult life. During the same long period I have been practicing Maharishi's Transcendental Meditation (TM) an average of two hours a day. At the same time, neither deals with a large portion of my emotional life and ideals, which needed Buber's teachings on the full meeting of self and other.

This article is an abridgement of an active imagination that began in December, 2012. It was a significant personal task finally to invite these intimidating men to sit down together and with me. However, I was growing exhausted by the quarrels among us that had been going on for years. I instigated the dinner meeting to focus the conflict in an active imagination. Often I stopped to read or reread the works of Buber and Jung, searching for their own words, and those words are here, with only minor changes. In the case of Maharishi, except where noted, the material was orally transmitted; but as a psychology professor from about 1973 to 1983 at the accredited university he founded, I took careful notes.

As I edit this writing for my fellow Jungians, I ask for your open-mindedness, especially about Maharishi Mahesh Yogi. You may have settled the Jung–Buber debate in your own mind, but Jung may have decided for you about Maharishi: the famous quote that we should not “snatch these things directly from the East,” as if pumping them “into our barren souls” (1954/1969, par. 775). Plus, Maharishi is associated with a collective movement, with all the dangers inherent in *participation mystique*. I do not deny any of this, but hopefully bring forth complexities that deserve further reflection.

The point for Jungians, I believe, is that all three are worth understanding deeply because all three dedicated their lives to the same goal to which we dedicate ours: the avoidance, somehow, of the cataclysms that loom due to human minds lacking breadth and *depth* of consciousness. Just because their viewpoints did differ, and because we need all ideas “at the table,” I contend that anyone sharing their dedication to the goal should be deeply interested in dining with all three.

The Room Appears and Buber Arrives

I see the room, an intimate space enlarged by french doors open to a garden on this warm evening. The light is clear and golden, although the shadows are lengthening. Inside, the walls are dark green, and the oil paintings are landscapes—muted scenes of woods, water, and meadow, the necessities of life, the archetypal preference of our archaic selves. The dinner table is set formally, white linen and gleaming silver. I wish I could have imagined something more casual.

I will sit facing the doors, at the longer side of the table. Maharishi will sit on my right, on the type of divan he prefers so that he can sit cross legged. The other two can choose their seat, across from me or on my left.

Buber arrives first, coming through the door a bit tentatively, wearing a dark suit, his white beard to his chest. Our eyes meet. I nod. “Yes, this is the place.”

His gaze pierces my persona. I look down. I sense he is now looking at the divan. “Others?”

I can’t look up into those eyes again. I wish this were more unreal. My first attempt, a few days ago, went quickly into the left-brain version. Today the psyche seems more truthful.

“Others. Yes, I am afraid so. Although it would be an honor to have an evening alone with you, yes, I have invited others.”

“Who?” It is not asked harshly. Is he ready to facilitate a true dialogue, an I–You encounter? (From here on I will use I–You in keeping with Kaufman’s [1970/1996a] translation, because the familiar in German, when translated into English as *thou*, yields something less intimate, not more.)

I nod towards the divan. “Maharishi Mahesh Yogi.” I rush to explain. “He has done more than anyone else to bring meditation to the West. I know how you view meditation, but . . .”

Buber told me anyway. “As far as I can see, people mean by meditation an absorption in the absolute Self, some ‘inner’ way; this is very far from my interest. There is no encounter in this, but a negation of encounter” (Friedman, 1991/1993, p. 350).

I recall that when T. S. Eliot supported Buber’s nomination for the Nobel Prize, he said, “I only met Buber once, but I felt then that I was in the presence of greatness” (Friedman, 1991/1993, p. 334). I trusted the author of “Four Quartets.” And when asked about their disagreements during the meeting on good and evil, Buber replied, “When I meet a man I am not concerned with opinions but with the man” (Friedman, 1991/1993, p. 334). Can I presume true of meeting a woman as well?

Buber frowned. “Now I am afraid to ask about the other chair.”

“I guess you should be. It is for C. G. Jung.”

“What? If you know so much about me, you know how I feel about this ‘monstrous, dreadful’ [Friedman, 1991/1993, p. 137] phenomenon of psychologizing all experience, placing everything within the *I*. Just because of his brilliance, Jung has done more than any other man to sell this idea to the spiritually starved as their only way to encounter God—as a part of themselves, closing any hope of return [implied by Friedman, 1991/1993, pp. 355–358]. I cannot sit down with him.” I am quiet. I know he cannot hold to this position.

The silence lengthens. I whisper, "Real speech comes out of tension,' you said, in 1923 I believe, and that the genuine spoken word takes its meaning, its dynamism, from one person speaking and the other relating to it in an entirely different way" (Friedman, 1991/1993, p. 126).

Those great white eyebrows rise above the flashing eyes. "You throw my words back at me? You are an intelligent woman." I dare a smile.

"So, why can't you understand my issue with Jung, my dislike of his *ideas*?" Now I hear anger. "Not the man. I can eat dinner with him. But it cannot be a true encounter, not with him. He cannot experience me as anything more than a part of himself. I am his projection, the man of orthodox religion [Jung implied Buber was orthodox in his 1952 response to Buber—an irony in that Buber battled Orthodox Jews much of his life], a dogmatic. If I am only his projection, perhaps it is of his father?"

"So it does seem to have to do with the man, not only his ideas?"

"But there must be some *meeting*, some willingness from *both* sides."

"So far only you are unwilling," I whisper. "He isn't even here, and you have declared it impossible."

He stares at me a long time and then comes around to pull out my chair for me to sit. He goes back to his side and sits down too. "This is love. This is encounter."

"Thank you again," I say softly. "And, I fear that you will be right about Jung, at least at first."

Jung Arrives

"What about Jung?" Jung asks roughly as he enters from the now nearly dark garden. He is a massive man compared to Buber. Knowing how small Maharishi is as well, I have the strange thought that my two other guests would make one of Jung, and as if fearing violence from Jung's large body, I see the smaller ones being smashed together like two bundles of hay.

I stand again, but feeling mannish: In Swiss society in his day, I imagine that only an animus-ridden woman would rise for a man. "Welcome, Dr. Jung."

"With whom do I have the pleasure of dining? Ah, yes, Dr. Buber. My most vehement attacker. Although I have nothing against him personally, I think he sees me as quite evil. If he can bear to break bread with me, I can as well. And your other guest?"

Buber answers for me. "Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, a guru who was just getting started in the sixties, when we were just finishing. Have a seat, but better not on the yogi's sofa."

Jung sits down on my left, sidewise towards me rather than facing the table. His pipe is clenched in his teeth, his eyes fixed on a painting behind me. Introvert that he is, and disapproving of both of the other two, naturally he is irritated that I requested him present.

I try to sound cheerful and welcoming. "Thank you for coming, Dr. Jung. Dr. Buber and I have discussed his views of meditation, which I know well. And then there are yours, which I also know well."

"Good. You understand me. So I am afraid you have also read my thoughts about the disciples of gurus in particular, who enjoy the archaism and infantilism of unconscious fantasies and put all responsibility at the master's door" (1916/1966, par. 263). "Yes," and I add, "and the disciple and guru think they are 'the fortunate possessors of *the* great truth which was only waiting to be discovered'" (1916/1966, par. 260).

Jung says no more. In fact, both of them fall into silence, as if dumbfounded by my having invited them here with the yogi.

Waiting for the Guru

Maharishi is making us wait, of course. It is part of the job, building anticipation. He will be wearing his uniform, as I think of it: white silk draped over a white dhoti and reaching the ground, non-leather sandals, and the traditional necklace of rudraksha seeds, "tears of Shiva," protecting the wearer against sin, with a tiny photo of his own teacher attached. His hair and beard are long, equally gray and white, as they were when I was around him. His dark, glittery eyes will look through me much as Buber's do now. For a time after 1983 I often

dreamed of him in a sea captain's uniform, clean shaven, but I do not know anyone who ever saw seen him in "civvies."

When he arrives, he will also hold a few roses reverently offered to him by followers as he left a comfortable car, which as a celibate ascetic, he does not own but is always provided by those who care about his comfort and well-being. These are intelligent, well-educated people—Maharishi does not tolerate unbalanced personalities around him.

I finally answer Jung. "But suppose this 'great truth' you speak of is not discovered but recovered, revived, to benefit our species? Is that so different from bringing the archetypal world to our awareness—which you said leads to what 'we are entitled to speak of as a new level of consciousness.'? And you say it rarely happens without a technique—yours" (1954/1969, par. 779).

Jung is being patiently superior. "A 'technique,' as you say, but one of individuation, not one that disempowers the ego even more, making it even more the plaything of unconscious forces."

I will also be patient. "My point is that you also began a movement because of a great discovery."

"All right. I will grant that movements tend to form around great men, but . . ."

"Dr. Jung, everyone in youth has a right to a grand movement," Buber said, "although most are disillusioned by the time they reach the age of our hostess here." His voice is a little teasing.

"I *was* very disillusioned by some aspects," I say firmly. "But there is still value there. What about Zionism? You stood by it all your life, in spite of your distress about what happened to the Palestinians in Israel" (Friedman, 1991/1993, pp. 200–202, 268–284).

Defending the Guru

I cannot have them rejecting Maharishi before they meet him. I continue, with some fierceness. "There can be no encounter by any of us if you two hold out with your, shall we say, strong opinions. This man had the same *goals* as you." I see that I need to make Maharishi's credentials clear.

I finally receive from Buber the softened eyes of consent. I don't look at Jung as I explain that Maharishi had an M.A. in physics when he met his teacher, whom he referred to as Guru Dev. The man had a much longer name and title, including Shankaracharya, in that after India's independence he was the unanimous first choice to fill that ancient position, the seat of Shankara in the north. I try to explain what this means, knowing that Jung would already be familiar with it and Buber merely annoyed by it. Shankara, an eighth-century reformer of Hinduism, was the founder of Advaita Vedanta, the general understanding of Indian philosophy in the West, which holds that Atman, the individual, and Brahman, the whole, are one. The lived reality of this unity can be gained personally and alters our relationship to the physical world. Shankara's four disciples established four seats, or *acharyas*. To be a Shankaracharya is something like being a pope, who sits in St. Peter's seat. Maharishi was Guru Dev's personal secretary and was apparently asked to bring meditation to the wider world.

The main point, I explain, is that his education led him to devise, with the Shankaracharya's encouragement, a way to teach meditation by basing it on the physics law of least action. He reasoned that if "pure bliss consciousness" is what we all seek, meditating should be easy. If we intend to settle our mind, we should slide down into deeper and deeper stillness with minimum effort, just as anything else moves in the most efficient way possible to its least active state, if unperturbed. But why then do we ever have thoughts and even agitated feelings while meditating? Maharishi reasoned that these are the natural effects of previous strong impressions or stressful events. When a meditator is engaged in thoughts or feelings while in a quiet state, he or she is releasing some of their hold on the nervous system. Thus thoughts and affects arise as vital aspects of the process.

At the time when Maharishi made this innovation, other systems had their students spending years trying to drive all thoughts from the mind in order to experience pure consciousness. Now, because of Maharishi, many people experience that state in their first meditation. A commonplace meditation instruction is "If your

mind wanders, don't worry about it, just quietly come back." No more disparagement of our "monkey mind." I smiled gamely. "It seems to me to be a stroke of genius."

I rush on with why my husband and I accepted positions in the psychology department at Maharishi's university. TM was obviously helpful. We liked the retreats best, which truly increased our clarity and energy, so it was the educational experiment that drew us: What would happen if, as the university's curriculum laid out, students would be on retreat for six weeks, three times throughout the academic year? Research found that I.Q. and emotional stability increased after these retreats. Part of the innovation was to have open admissions, assuming all would rise to college level ability, as they did.

"So why did you leave this paradise?" Buber asked.

I frown. "Why is it that people especially relish hearing about the shadow of someone whom many people look up to? They did it to you, Jung. Perhaps that is our own shadow, the desire to bring someone down."

"Usually they do it for themselves," Buber remarks.

My mind has moved on. "And perhaps my shadow here is complying with your request for more reports on my disillusionment, hoping you will accept me if you are certain I am not drowning in *participation mystique*."

Buber leans forward. "If I-You matters so much to you, did you find it there?"

He knows where to probe. "Well. No. I felt a subtle pressure to be happy, positive. Everyone else seemed glowing with bliss. I wanted to appear to be just as good and happy. But I had complaints and a dark shadow side I was afraid to show."

"As if the others did not," retorted Jung.

"Yes, I never forgot all you said about our shadow. I felt increasingly uncomfortable, and Maharishi must have sensed it, because he eventually edged us out of the university. It felt terrible, like being banished. Yet I was also glad to go. Whatever happened in the organization or with Maharishi—I've never missed a day of meditating." I look around at Buber. "No doubt we will argue about this all night. I say meditation is healthy, even for the soul. Deeply religious people do it. Were the great mystics without an I-You relationship with God? What about Christian centering prayer? Basically TM."

"And now," Buber asks, "How are you feeling as you speak to us?"

"Right now I am feeling ashamed, being fairly certain that both of you disapprove. That you, in particular, still think I am not just a fool, but contributing to what you call the 'eclipse of God' [1952-1957]. But as you say, an eclipse is still something to be seen. If God has fallen silent, the silence of God itself can be heard [Friedman, 1991/1993, p. 345]. To me, meditating provides that particular silence. As for Maharishi? I think, yes, he made some logistical mistakes. Maybe some big ones."

Maharishi Enters and I Begin Round One, "God or God-Image?"

It was dark beyond the doors now. How long had Maharishi been there? He comes in gracefully, of course; sits and closes his eyes. I feel shut out. Of course, he had heard me.

Buber is watching me with gentle intensity, holding open a place for me to address my grievances with Maharishi. I prefer to take Buber's and Jung's attention off my complex by stirring up theirs.

"Excuse me, Maharishi, but I want to begin with an article by Jungian analyst Barbara Stephens [2001], in which she proposed that Jung provides a vertical path to the sacred, into the depths, and Buber a horizontal path to the sacred, through relationships, and that both are necessary for any spiritual healing and teaching, including teaching within the Jung institutes. I know, Dr. Buber, that you were anything but 'horizontal,' but she said it to make a point I think you do approve of. Almost as an example of your difference in approaches, in her summary of your somewhat violent exchange of ideas, Stephens thought that Jung never seemed to understand your points, becoming defensive instead. It was not a dialogue."

Jung interrupts. "It's difficult to dialogue when the other attacks you in print without first discussing the issues face-to-face."

Buber retorts, "I knew a meeting would not change what you would say, even if it might have resulted in a better relationship. No, my article was for those who do not understand what you are doing."

I have recovered enough to find what is on my mind. "Jung, you claimed to be an objective scientist. You were also a tortured and passionate one, especially as seen in *The Red Book* [2009], the basis for your work the rest of your life [p. vii]. In *The Red Book* you identify logos as poison [p. 282] and Western thought, science, as what is killing God or the gods. You went East in search of God, and found God, or a god, coming to the West and already deathly ill. You said, 'My life would have been broken in half if I had failed to heal my God' [2009, p. 282]. You think and think, and decide that you must take God west, but only if you make him light enough to carry and easy to hide from those who would kill him. The solution? Make God into a fantasy. God finds this a murderous thought, but is finally convinced that even a fantasy is real. As a fantasy—dare I say a god-image?—you find him light as a feather, so you can carry him westward, where you say your friends will help and 'happily accommodate such a large fantasy.' You conclude with this being the solution for all of us—the God carried within is lightweight, God on the outside is heavy and dangerous. You also say, once you are safely in the West, 'I can calmly go about finding a way to restore you completely' [p. 281]. Restore God completely means . . . ?"

Buber interrupts. "So now it is solely up to Jung to save God?"

I continue addressing Jung. "I followed the 'God thread' all the way to the end, to where you say, 'I believe and accept that the God is something different from me . . .' Martin, hear that? But, you say that since you are 'no longer with the God . . . the touchstone is being alone with oneself' [2009, p. 330]. And at the end of 'Scrutinies,' the gift of the knowledge is that 'there is beauty in suffering' [p. 359]."

I turn to Buber. "Can't you see what he was *trying* to do? How *hard* it was for him? You never asked what was behind it. You just wrote this article blasting him."

Jung goes back to his same rant at Buber as if my narration from the *The Red Book* had never happened. "It seems that you never could understand the scientific perspective—that, as a scientist, I can only speak of what I have observed about the human psyche, including its religious function. In every society people had an idea of the sacred. Is there anything sacred apart from what humans call sacred? What would that be? How can it be observed? Science has no answer to that. To answer that, one must turn to metaphysics" (1913/1970, par. 663–670).

Buber shakes his head furiously. "Once again you fail to understand the basics of philosophical discourse, of which science is a part. Over and over you discuss God as a godimage created by the human psyche. You repeat, like a mantra, that this is the only verifiable experience. Yet you are sure of this in a way that a scientist cannot be. That we can know nothing outside of the psyche is as much a metaphysical statement as mine when I say it is otherwise and that I can be sure that there is something apart from my psyche" (1952/1955, pp. 78–92, 133–135).

Jung was also angry now. "Why do I say *god-image*? Because God is already too separate from us, has no effect on us. It is just this nearness that has to be empirically real if it is not to lose significance. Only that which acts upon me do I recognize as real and actual. Don't you see? This is what will revive a faith in God. A verifiable experience, one that makes sense to the scientifically educated modern man" (1952/1969, par. 757).

Buber was equally angry. "A fantasy. An experience of one's own imagination, turned inward on itself, not outward seeking God."

Jung was standing up and pointing at Buber. "Can't you see that your way, your way of faith, has led to true believers and their dogmas saying that they actually know the will of God, a god outside of their own psyches, not a projection but *reality*?"

Buber glares. "I have never supported or promulgated a view of God, much less of ethics, that is universally true. In fact, I have stood firmly against it. Every individual's experience is different. That is the very point of my life and my work. As a Jew I have stood by my own approach to God, but only that part that stands by the possibility of a direct dialogue with God, one that is different for each person [Friedman, 1991/1993, p. 348]. I certainly do not take scripture literally, but as examples of moments when the human

becomes enflamed by contact with God. What comes out is human, human words, but it indicates the contact [1952/1957, p. 135]. I obeyed Jewish law only when I had myself received it from God or it otherwise fit with my personal experience of God's will for me" (1991/1996, p. 337).

I interrupt again. "You both say that the individual's experience is primary. You are agreeing with each other!" I was surprised by the anger in my voice. "You both care so much. Why do you have to hurt each other? *I don't like this arguing.*"

Belated Hospitality

I suddenly see my mistake. In avoiding my own discomfort, I had let my guests suffer. Especially inviting enemies, I should have planned how to make them comfortable.

"Dr. Jung, Dr. Buber, please sit down and allow me to introduce Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, whom I think we have been rudely ignoring. About his bringing meditation to us, I think we all agree that it is good to be quiet at times. As you have said, Dr. Buber, solitude is good, necessary, for purifying the soul before it enters the world [1970/1961, p. 152]. I'm sure he has something to say about your dispute, and I'm sure we all look forward to hearing that."

"Maharishi, this is Dr. C. G. Jung and Dr. Martin Buber. You know Jung's work well and, I think, appreciate it. Indeed you asked me to produce a video about him. I am not certain if you have heard of Dr. Buber, who is a highly respected philosopher and a steadfast upholder of the idea of the direct experience of God, as you also have been, in your way, Dr. Jung."

Maharishi had opened his eyes and is bestowing upon both men one of his most radiant smiles. "It is very beautiful. What you both want to say, it is very beautiful." Always a show stopper, the way he says that. Buber and Jung are finally speechless.

In this pause, I have the first course brought. When our servers are gone, I encourage my three guests to begin eating while I explain why each was invited.

"Maharishi knows what he has given me and why he is here, but the two of you do not. May I call you by your first names?" I do not wait for an answer—it's what a good hostess would do. "Carl, I mean, C. G. I know you prefer C. G.—I remember the hour when I met you, so to speak. I was in the library of Tolman Hall, the psychology department at U.C. Berkeley. I was an undergraduate, browsing in search of an answer to an unnamed question, and I opened one of the *Collected Works*. I read how the same man can idealize a woman, on the one hand, and degrade her, on the other, and recognized my father instantly. "I went on to read much of what you had written. Well, not the alchemy."

He raised his eyebrows. "A large task for a young girl."

"I felt driven. And as a result, I gained an understanding of my dreams and a dignified term, *individuation*, for my youthful agonies. I rely often on your invaluable understanding of complexes. And we completely agreed about sensitiveness (1913/1970, par. 396–403; Aron, 2004, 2006). I think you are highly sensitive, yes? By my criterion? Deep processing of experience, easily overstimulated, emotionally reactive, high empathy, aware of the subtle?" (Aron, 2010).

Jung nods, so I continue. "Sensitivity is different for a large man. You know the moment when you chose to hide your sensitiveness [Bair, 2003, pp. 32–33] and become a man of influence. But perhaps it was your sensitiveness, more than anything, that took you back inside, to the 'spirit of the depths.'"

"But your greatest gift to me has been analysis itself." I explain why I knew in high school that I wanted to be a clinical psychologist—some of it reading Freud, some of it my own issues. "I paused my personal Jungian work while with Maharishi for ten years." I glance at the man in white for his disapproval, knowing he sees TM as "fulfilling" the purpose of psychotherapy, making therapy largely obsolete. That is not my experience. "A dream brought me back. I interviewed eight analysts, but there was never any serious competition once I met the one. And he suggested I that read Buber's *I–Thou*." I smile at Buber. "I guess he was a Jungian who had no fear that I be would be brainwashed into dualism."

Jung actually laughs his famous laugh.

The One Gift from Them Both

I am telling them both my story in order to build a bridge. I will now see if it will carry their weight. I explain how I gradually saw that even after, in some practical sense, I did not need analysis anymore, I had something more to gain, something spiritual: I could try to open my heart, in spite of my fear of the inevitable end of the concrete relationship. "How do you love *anyone* when there is the threat of unbearable grief? My parents, who each lost a beloved parent in childhood, did not risk loving anyone else after that. I realized that love *is* a risk, one I often avoid. How do you dismantle the defenses?"

I am eager to have Jung see where I am going. "C. G., you spoke of the importance of the intersubjective almost as much as Martin. You said that the drive behind the transference and the drive behind the spiritual path can come together in the alchemical container of analysis. Transformation of libido."

I turn to Martin. "Reading *I–Thou* opened my heart and gave me hope. My transference feelings were not simply a runaway complex to get over, not a reason for constant humiliation. I know you don't think a true I-You experience can happen in therapy [1999, pp. 246–270]. I am finding otherwise. The frame, unequal as it is, maintains the structure in which, I swear, equality can emerge in I–You moments, even if my insecurity still returns to heighten the inequality at times. But you help me see that, for me—perhaps not for many, but for me—leaving analysis because I was 'well' was really a defense against opening my heart in this sacred yet human environment. As you say, that opening is always fleeting, but there it is, my third spiritual path, one you *both* created."

I turn back to Jung. "So can't you see how similar you are to Martin? For example, you said therapy that must be a 'dialectical procedure,' a 'dialogue between two persons, a 'comparison of our mutual feelings . . . unhampered by my assumptions' [1935/1982, par. 2]. You spoke of the importance of a true 'rapport,' a 'relationship of mutual confidence' [1951/1982, par. 239]. 'For the patient is suffering precisely from the absence of such relationship.' Above all, you said that once the projections are withdrawn, the transference ends and the true relationship begins [1928/1982, par. 287]. My analyst must have read you carefully."

I turn back to Buber. "I envied those who believe in God, but you taught me that to believe in God is to try to possess the other, so that it becomes an I–It relationship. But if I aim for I–You in my relationships with others, you claim that I will have that with God too, inevitably [1970/1996a]. Maharishi actually says the same." Buber and Jung look at him as if for the first time.

The First Five of Seven States of Consciousness*¹

Maharishi bends towards me and whispers, "Dr. Aron, *you* will tell these doctors of psychology and philosophy the most important thing for a psychologist or philosopher to know."

I will? Now? Okay, I think. Why make Maharishi say what I agree with? To distance myself from him? So I begin by explaining the obvious: that our understanding of reality depends on our state of consciousness. When we are awake, we understand the world differently from when we are dreaming or sleeping. When we are exhausted, afraid, angry, or in a group that is caught up in something, we perceive reality differently. "When we are identified with an archetype," I glance at Jung, "we perceive reality through the lens of that archetype. There are other states, however, unknown or very misunderstood in the West, and these equally determine our understanding of reality."

I know this by heart, having taught it as part of the psychology curriculum at his university. "Besides waking, dreaming, and sleeping, three states, there are four more of great importance according to the Vedic tradition. The fourth is transcendental consciousness. When people meditate using TM—it's different with other

¹ The contents of this section are summarized in Katz (2011).

methods [Travis & Shear, 2010]—the goal is to experience transcendental consciousness immediately, and most people *do* experience it the first time.”

I explain that this state feels like pure silence, or *pure* consciousness, without thoughts or feelings, or at least very few of them, as if the movie screen predominates and the images flashing across it are hardly noticed. There is also a feeling of something like bliss, although not as an emotion so much as a bodily feeling, almost “subtle” body feeling. In studies of brain activity during this state, more and more brain areas are operating coherently, mostly in alpha, which is quite unusual outside of this form of meditation. I glance at Buber. “Yet, of course, we come out of meditation and there is this rightly demanding world. The real purpose of meditation is not the experience but its results.”

I go on to explain that almost everyone has tasted this fourth state—I know that they both have, and finally I can say to Buber what I have always wanted to. “Do you see? You did not have to abandon your inner spiritual experiences. I know you were experiencing these higher states at one time. In *Between Man and Man* [1947/2002a] you say there were hours during which . . . —may I read? ‘The firm crust of everyday was pierced. . . . It could begin with something customary, with the consideration of some familiar object but which then became unexpectedly mysterious and uncanny, finally lighting a way into the lightning-pierced darkness of the mystery itself. . . . Time could be torn apart—first the firm world’s structure then the still firmer self-assurance flew apart and you were delivered to fullness. . . .

“Over there now lay the accustomed existence with its affairs, but here illumination and ecstasy and rapture held, without time or sequence. Thus your own being encompassed a life here and life beyond, and there was no bond but the actual moment of transition”” (pp. 15–16).

“It’s beautiful,” Maharishi whispered. “Beautiful.”

“But I gave that up,” growled Martin.

“Yes. After your ‘conversion’ [1947/2002a, pp. 15–17]. May I explain that to the others? You were visited by a young man needing something from you. Young men often sought you out at this time, perhaps because you were deepened by these inner experiences. You say that on this occasion you were politely attentive, but not really there with him. You blamed that on your inner experience earlier that morning. He had come to you to ask whether life was worth living, basically, and when he did not receive his answer, because you did not really hear his question, he returned to the front. This was during World War I, and he died soon after. In TM you learn that it is important to transition carefully from meditation to activity. I don’t mean to trivialize this, but could that have been the only problem?”

Buber tried to interrupt, but I was going to finish before both of them could tear me apart. I describe how the fifth state of consciousness grows naturally through the alternation of the fourth with the usual first three, like dipping a cloth in dye and then fading it, doing it over and over, until the cloth never fades. “So your experience of being aware during sleep—that is part of it. You described lying awake in a state of complete lucidity at times, saying ‘this is not dream or sleep’” (Friedman, 1991/1993, p. 366).

Buber snorts. “Now you want to say I was enlightened. I don’t care if I am or not. I recognize a unity beneath us, not above us. It is the ground of life, not the goal of it” (Friedman, 1991/1993, p. 51).

I ignore him and continue, explaining that the fifth state brings a sense of the infinite along with the finite, which, according to the “perennial philosophy” (e.g., Huxley, 1945), is an experience common to mystics in most religions. Maharishi calls it *cosmic consciousness*, as have others, such as Richard Bucke (1901/2011), who wrote of his own experiences, those of contemporaries such as Walt Whitman, and various historical figures. They all insist that it is not having two ideas at once—thoughts of whatever one is doing and also remembering one is infinite or here in the moment. The state arrives naturally, as more like a background to experience, or as Maharishi liked to describe it, the child jumps higher when the mother is at home. The child does not think, “Oh, Mother is at home.” His or her knowing is subtler. “There is no need to detach from life in order to have that fullness. It begins to accompany everything.”

Buber is full of protest and I am ready for him. “You said once that ‘I–You involves the whole person. In the I–You meeting one is in a sense passive, because the whole being does away with all partial actions and thus also with all sensations of actions’” (1970/1996a, p. 125).

"All what you call waking state," Buber retorts. "No need for these 'higher' states."

I continue quoting him: "'This is the activity of the human being who has become whole: it has been called not-doing, for nothing particular, nothing partial is at work in man and thus nothing of him intrudes into the world. It is the whole human being, closed in its wholeness, at rest in its wholeness, that is active here, so the human being has become an active whole. When one has achieved steadfastness in this state, one is able to venture forth toward the supreme encounter'" (1970/1996a, p. 125).

Buber is clearly exasperated. "But to achieve this wholeness, one does not have to strip away the world of senses as a world of mere appearance. There is no world of appearance, there is only the world—which, to be sure, appears two fold to us, as I–You and I–It. True, the spell of separation cast by I–It needs to be broken. But 'go beyond sense experience'? No matter how spiritual, that can only yield an it" (1970/1996a, p. 125).

"But, Martin, I don't feel that I have done away with reality. We just don't want our everyday experiences of 'outer' reality to overwhelm us or limit our knowledge of the rest of reality."

Two More States of Consciousness

Buber asks rather coyly, "So, you are in this state, after all these years of meditating?"

"I am sticking to my subject." I proceed to the sixth state, what Maharishi has called *God consciousness*. After one has developed the fifth state, maintenance of the fourth along with the other three, there is a sense of witnessing the world. In the sixth state that witnessing begins to change as perceptual processes are refined. The world one *witnessed* as outside in the fifth state becomes more vivid and appealing, as when we say something is "divine" or feels sacred or numinous. In particular, this is felt as a deeper love, at first for some of the world's precious beauty, for a few people, and then for more and more, at the heart level—through I–You. "Perhaps this is even where you were at the time of your 'conversion,' and hence your shift to the outer world as a place to find the spiritual."

Buber is looking adequately interested. "You said even the person who abhors the word *God*, who 'fancies that he is godless—when he addresses with his whole devoted being the You of his life that cannot be restricted by any other, he addresses God' (1970/1996a, p. 124). The You can be wife, teacher . . ."—I glance at Jung—"perhaps in the West, analyst?" I rush on, explaining that the seventh state comes naturally out of the sixth. "First one part of God's creation is loved, and then every part, until it seems to be no different from one's self—and what is one's self except pure consciousness, the ground of being? So the bottom line is that Maharishi and I would say that you are both right about God. Is God inside or outside? Is all of this celestial beauty of life inside or outside? Maharishi says it is a matter of perception. Even a matter of choice. You can see it as outside and remain devoted to it, or see it all as a manifestation of the same. Both are valid states of consciousness, so that knowledge, or the lens of perception, in each of these states is different and valid. No state is superior to the others. They have a way of growing, one from the other, but the seventh is not better than those preceding it" (p. 50).

Violent Reactions

Buber breaks in angrily. "Let's say I have had these experiences—yes, even this undivided unity. But I would not know, even if I wanted to imagine it, that I had attained a union with the primal being or the godhead. This unity is just my own inner soul reaching its ground" (1947/2002a, p. 28).

Jung is finally alert. "Here Martin and I agree."

Buber stands as if to lecture us. "The person experiencing this supposedly exalted state of unity is not above but beneath dialogue" (1947/2002a, p. 29).

Maharishi is nodding as if he finds Buber completely right. I say what I am guessing Maharishi would say if he knew more about Buber: "You have said, Martin, that the man living the life of dialogue, in contrast to the man living the life of monologue, even when alone on a mountaintop, meets nature in a way that it is not just

an experience, but 'a word apprehended with senses of belonging and feeling' [1947/2002a, p. 24]. This seems to me to be exactly what Maharishi means by this shift from feeling separate from the world to being able to *perceive*, through feeling, that everything one sees is an encounter with the creator."

Buber starts walking up and down. "But he finishes with a doctrine of immersion, and all doctrines of immersion—that I am one with everything, that I contain everything or I do not exist except as part of everything—these are all based on the gigantic delusion of a human spirit bent back into itself—the delusion that spirit occurs *in* man. In truth it occurs *from* man—between man and what he is not" (1970/1996a, p. 141, emphasis added).

I look at Maharishi, then turn to Martin. "What if *you* are talking about being in the world from a perspective of the sixth state, after already having known the fifth, in which you felt separate, a witness. Maybe at your 'conversion' you were pulled by love into the sixth state, into the world, into I–You with others and with God. Then what you just said makes complete sense.

Not everyone is there, Martin."

Buber stops. He is still adamant. "All the preparations, exercises and meditations that have been suggested have nothing to do with the primarily simple fact of encounter [1970/1996a, pp. 125–126]. We must give up all of this striving and bend to a total acceptance of the present [p. 126]. There are these moments of unity, yes. But only moments. I–You is exclusive while it lasts, the world disappears. But once You becomes an It again, that ends" (1970/1996a, p. 127).

I am glad I did my reading. "And you finished that very paragraph, Martin, with this— 'with God, however, that ending of the unity becomes meaningless. For those who enter into the absolute relationship, nothing particular retains any importance—neither things nor being, neither earth nor heaven—but everything is included in the relationship,' which 'does not involve ignoring everything but seeing everything in the You'" (1970/1996a, p. 127).

Maharishi Responds: God Realization

Maharishi has opened his eyes and straightened.² "Dr. Buber, this is beautiful. This expression is so beautiful. As you said a moment ago, 'Only the spell of separation needs to be broken.' For you God is the highest reality. Of course. The almighty has been thought to be the goal of all streams of life, the highest achievement. The minds and hearts of all sensible people have sought Him, Her, or It—well, perhaps not It." He laughs.

Buber sits down, as if the hard urge to fight has been dissolved a little, and Maharishi continues. "But to aspire for such a thing is one thing, to deserve it is another. Deserve it first. We must aim for an unrestricted vision, no limitation of time and place, as you have said. Otherwise there is no way to comprehend God, if the creation is not comprehended. If the painting cannot be grasped, how grasp the artist? But there are stages here. The knower must first know his self, his or her ego, through the fourth state. Otherwise every experience overshadows the knower. As you would say, the I in I–You is not there. The experiencer is lost in the *it* until he or she is self-realized, until he knows his 'I' for what it is, permanently, in the fifth state. Then he can go on to know creation and this relation of self and creation, this I–you. Then the search for the creator is valid. As you say, every I–You ends in the I–You with the Creator. It is so beautiful."

Buber's brows are furrowed in concentration and Maharishi continues. "When I am so weak that looking at a flower, I lose myself, this overflows my validity. It isn't possible to consider communicating with God—we'd be crushed by that experience. He'll avoid us out of kindness." Maharishi laughs heartily, something he does when he knows he has now said something with which his listener might disagree. Even Buber has to smile.

² What follows is from notes, almost verbatim.

Then Maharishi becomes very serious. "Otherwise, to seek God is a waste of time. God can't be realized just emotionally or intellectually. As you have said, God cannot be possessed just because we want to believe in that word. Generations have died in fanciful manipulations of seeking God. Now man has a simple means to realize God."

I wonder if that last sentence angered Buber, but I think he let it go. He looks thoughtful, not yet ready to give in, but reflecting. I say, "You have said God is not dead—what hubris that would be, to think that if we cannot know God, God must be dead. No, the problem is with us" (1952/1957, p. 14).

Maharishi nods. "Yes, this is so brilliant, to understand that." He laughed. "God dead! What an impossible idea. No, the seekers are the ones who have become dead."

Buber cleared his throat. When he spoke, I thought it was more with doubt than disagreement. "The problem with all of this talk of higher states of consciousness is that it makes the rest of life, reality—the problems of others that we must face and help with when we can—it can cause people to flee from the hard things [Friedman, 1991/1993, p. 373], such as this new peril of global warming."

Maharishi laughs. "Along the way they may think they can escape, but once everything is yourself, you cannot flee! The entire creation depends on you and others like you. Thankfully, the more people who meditate—the more who experience these higher states—the more these worrisome things will be solved." He then nods vigorously. "But you are rightly afraid of recommending meditation, Dr. Buber. For generations it has been taught that you must be a recluse to become enlightened. This is not so. Twenty minutes twice a day is sufficient. Although some have additional instructions." He glances at me. "Activity is as essential as meditation. Dr. Aron here is not avoiding reality. Dr. Buber, you are a wise man, wishing everyone to have your direct realization of God, not an idea but a living reality."

I have an inspiration. "Martin, you spent forty years collecting and writing down the stories about those early Hasidic rabbis who were *zaddik*, perfected, the proven of God. Was that nothing but legend? Did it not come from some reality, some higher state? The title you gave: *Tales of the Hasidim: Early Masters* [1947/1975]. They spent many hours in prayer, but also were completely involved in their community, helping everyone, but helping through their greater powers."

Buber looks towards Jung. "I imagine that you find this view of God even a bigger stretch."

Jung Responds

Jung speaks softly but vehemently. "First, to be clear, Maharishi's foundational idea of transcendental consciousness, I would call it an experience of the unconscious. I cannot conceive of a state of *consciousness* that is without a witness, an ego" (1954/1969, par. 774).

I nod patiently, expecting this. "You are right. In transcendental consciousness, those moments when the mind is without thoughts and feelings—we can only think about this state when our ego returns and notices there was a period of deep quiet, apparently without thoughts or feelings. What it is aware of is that it was part of something huge and without content."

Jung doesn't seem to be listening to me. "These thoughts of enlightenment, yes, such an attitude necessarily calls forth the characteristic manifestations of the unconscious, namely, archaic thought-forms imbued with 'ancestral' or 'historic' feeling, and beyond them, the sense of indefiniteness, timelessness, oneness. . . . Your peculiar experience of oneness probably derives from the subliminal awareness of all-contamination—that is, all those vague, unrelated images and thought-forms that arise from the unconscious when ego consciousness is minimized during meditation [1954/1969, par. 783]. An identification of the ego with the unconscious, the larger psyche, if you will, even the psychoid—this is hardly a higher state. This is a lesser one. As Martin says, it is all a lot of chasing around inside the unconscious and nothing more. You cannot establish anything beyond that."

I interrupt this harangue. "The fourth state and what builds on it is way beyond 'vague, unrelated images.' Consider your own discussion in your foreword to *The Secret of the Golden Flower* of Hildegard of Bingen's 'light' in her soul. You quote her as saying that the light is not seen 'with the outer eyes, nor with the

thoughts of my heart, neither do the five outer senses take part in this vision. . . . The light I perceive is not of a local kind . . . I cannot recognize any sort of form in this light' [1931/1967, par. 42]. You say you know of others who have experienced this and it seems to have to do 'an acute state of *consciousness*, as intense as it is abstract' and 'heightening the clarity of consciousness' [part. 43]. You talk there about this state as described by Eastern traditions—consciousness drawn away from objects and from the *participation mystique*—and you say it gives birth to a 'superior personality' (par. 68), undisturbed by emotional reactions. Still, I don't think you really understand it, because then you say it comes in the second half of life, as simply greater awareness and detachment. But I know exactly what Hildegard is talking about. It is both light and yet in a sense a darkening of everything else, as many others have described it—"the brilliant darkness of a hidden silence" (Dionysius of Areopagite, as cited in Harvey, 1998, p. 50; and also Gregory of Nyssa, p. 44; St. Augustine, pp. 52–53; Angela of Foligno, pp. 89–91; Meister Eckhart, pp. 94–96).

I keep my voice firm. "Can I establish that this is more than the unconscious or even the psyche? You did. You spoke of these experiences as purely products of the unconscious around the time of your visit to India. But later you extend the psyche far beyond the unconscious, as you and Pauli [Lindorff, 2004] sought a common ground for psyche and matter, the third from which the two arise. As a physicist, Pauli thoroughly believed in things existing outside the psyche. You still held to the 'psychoid nature of the archetype' [1947/1969, par. 419], but that the far end of the spectrum, 'psychic ultra-violent,' can 'in the last analysis no longer be considered psychoid. . . . Although there is no form of existence that is not mediated to us psychically . . . it would hardly do to say that everything is merely psychic. . . . The ultimate nature of both matter and spirit is transcendental'" (1947/1969, par. 420).

Jung has not interrupted yet, so I continue. "You said, 'Since psyche and matter are contained in one and the same world, and moreover are in continuous contact with one another and ultimately rest on irrepresentable, transcendental factors, it is not only possible but fairly probable, even, that psyche and matter are two different aspects of one and the same thing' and that 'Synchronicity points in this direction' (1947/1969, par. 418). 'Irrepresentable?' Yes, the experience is beyond words, but we can still talk about it through metaphor, as we discuss the idea of archetype. In this case, as light or a screen."

I am not sure if he is being sarcastic when he asks, "So what is your personal revelation?"

I accept this large opening with a small nod. "I know as an empirical observation that when I am well rested, my brain in meditation can produce the type of experience we are talking about, described by a long line of mystics. I wish I could stay that rested, because when I am not rested, my meditating brain feels buzzy, full of thoughts. After the deeper experiences, however, I feel mentally clearer, less vulnerable to complexes, and more autonomous and related simultaneously. I also feel as if I have somehow experienced this that you call the 'ultimate nature of both matter and spirit,' which is 'transcendental.' I feel I know it. Are all of us, through all the ages, just wrong?"

An Honest Look at Enlightenment

Jung is quiet for a time, then responds. "Even if this is a question of some great truth, identification with it would still be a catastrophe, as it arrests all further spiritual development. Instead of knowledge one then has only belief, and sometimes that is more convenient and therefore attractive" (1947/1969, par. 425).

Buber says softly, "No reference to absolute values prevents this catastrophe—only the pain of utter solitude can lead to a rescue of one's personal self from the enslavement of collectivism" (Friedman, 1991/1993, p. 247).

I reflect for a time—in fact, I've been reflecting on this for years. "Yes, I believe you are partly right. Although, I do think there is empirical evidence that something like enlightenment does occur. But to the degree that I can only believe, not know, and my belief comes from Maharishi or anyone else, then there is this danger of 'enslavement,' whether to a group or an archetype. I certainly don't believe any longer in enlightenment as a state of perfection—not Buddha's, not Gurdjieff's, not Eckart Tolle's, nor Maharishi's. I have no idea of what to think of people who achieve some sudden enormous physiological shift into

‘enlightenment.’ I doubt that the psychology has caught up. I joke about ‘premature transcendence’ and the lights being on at the top floors, but it’s all dark on the lower floors.”

C. G. and Martin laugh, but Maharishi does not. I go on. “I can’t entirely dismiss them. But one person [Forman, 2010] described suddenly becoming ‘enlightened’ using TM, by the usual physiological and subjective standards, yet afterwards, for a time, he continued shoplifting. He thought that the enlightenment helped him give it up, but what does it mean to be enlightened and still be a jerk?”

I glance at Maharishi again. “I know you say that right behavior comes automatically in the higher states, not through rules. But when? Or is it the problem of what the Vedas casually refer to as that twenty-five percent of the ego that remains after enlightenment? That quarter slice says to *me* that something more is required beyond meditating: intimately understanding one’s shadow, being constantly humble because of it, and the pursuit of what I can only describe as I–You, something beyond the I–It.”

Jung’s writings on alchemy! I burst out with “The Vedas say twenty-five percent. One quarter. And there’s the Axiom of Maria: The fourth, the last quarter—you say it is shadow or inferior function, maybe our inevitable complexes, that must be known and integrated with the conscious three quarters.”

Jung is nodding at me to continue, so I do. “I understand that acknowledging that enlightenment is not perfection would reduce some of the motivation to pursue higher states in students of meditation. It’s nicer to think that your teacher—or analyst—is always perfectly right and someday you will also be flawless and wise. But maybe we in the West can learn to tolerate, as they do in India, that these glowing gurus and mystics are both special and also all too human.”

I turn to Buber. “You asked if I am enlightened after all these years. I don’t really know if I would know. Or care. If it’s gradual, maybe I would never notice. I do experience, sometimes, some of what Maharishi describes. I witness my sleep increasingly. Or maybe that’s age. I still get upset. I know that I could not maintain equanimity after the loss of certain people. I don’t even want to be that person. So much for Buddha’s ideal of detachment. Do I actually feel a unity with everything? Not often.”

The Lens through Which We See It

I pause. “Increasingly I feel close to a *something* outside of my individuality, maybe that sixth state—they can grow simultaneously. So we are back at that nasty dualism you so abhor in Martin, although yours, C.G., is an inner dualism. Only Maharishi’s seventh state is unity. Does this ‘Something’ intervene in my life, as people claim about God? How would I know? It would certainly *not* do so to satisfy my narrow-minded requests. If I turn to a something in an I–you way, I lack confidence in any response that is not my imagination. Perhaps Martin is right. You have decreased my confidence.” I dig deeper. “It seems as though I don’t *believe* in anything, but I *live* a growing sense of Martin’s I–You with God. Not as a god-image. Just a sense of something, when my meditations are deepest.”

I pause to think. “Maharishi has to be right, that it is a matter of one’s state of consciousness, even a matter of personal preference. I agree with *you*, C. G., that I can never shed the personal lens through which I see these things, or prefer to see things, or claim that I choose to see things. My view is always through a distorting lens, as is the case with every human being. None of us can know. So why do we claim to? Personally, I appreciate the research on religious beliefs and attachment style [Kirkpatrick, 1999]. I think our particular relationships to our own caregivers could be decisive. Not very elegant or metaphysical, but there it is.”

I look to Martin. “You acknowledge the role in your life’s work of the shocking abandonment of you by your mother when you were three. Because she had left, your father fled too. Your thoroughly intellectual grandparents—although your grandmother clearly had a huge heart, too—took you in and raised you to view God as very real. You became interested in the Hasidics, especially the *zaddik*, the perfected man, who is enlightened yet deeply engaged in the community, meeting each person in an I–You way. Later you found Paula Winkler, your ‘thou’ for the rest of your life. It all helped you to seek, desperately, as well as to find, a potential for goodness *between* people.”

Buber nodded his head ever so slightly, so I go on. "Why did your mother abandon you so young? To become an actress. You saw her only once more, as an adult, and when you looked into her eyes, you said you saw the opposite of a meeting, a 'mismatching' or 'misencounter' [1967/2002b, p. 22]. Of course, you would scorn people pursuing purely 'self' improvement" (Friedman, 1991/1993, p. 51).

I turn to Maharishi. "No one knows about your childhood or why Guru Dev captured you so completely. Perhaps that veil over your past says something in itself." I turn back full left to Jung. "But I know that C. G. and I had a very difficult early life. I think he would agree that he was a lonely child, like me, seeking something he could not name that his parents had both revealed to him and given the lie to. You could not rely on your parents, C. G. Only on yourself, as was true for me. You became smart, as I did. You won converts that way, as I have, in my way, with my 'highly sensitive people' or HSPs. These reassured you of your worth, as the many HSPs perhaps reassure me. But that makes these primarily I–It relationships. We have inside a child who surely sought an I–You relationship with at least one loving God/parent and finally had to say none exists except as our projection."

I take a deep breath. "Perhaps accepting that we speak only from our own reality would be the first step in healing the separation from the infinite that people suffer."

Jung nodded. "So what will you do with us now that you have declared us to be narrow minded bastards?"

I laugh a little. "Sometimes I think like a shaman, reminded of the three worlds. Maharishi guides in the upper world of pure spirit; Buber in the real world; and you, C. G., in the lower world, the ancestors, the earth, the archetypes, our miserable complexes, and those archaic instincts that make us cruel, greedy for ourselves and our families, seeking the highest rank, attacking the out group, and willing to do anything to avoid being shamed or exiled."

I stop. "What about the tension of the opposites? Perhaps, yes, everyone's experience differs, the god-images differ, everyone's truth comes through their own lens of perception. Each should have their own experience, not hold beliefs based on another's. We all agree. And yet . . . some experiences seem closer to truth. We sense those who have had such experiences, calling them mystics, spiritual teachers. We listen more to them. Some are real, some not, and maybe all are a mixture. I know that you three teach from a deeper experience, closer to the spirit of the depths, not just the spirit of the times. At that level things merge closer to truth, and I brought you here together to come nearer to that."

The Axiom of Maria Again

Then I recall and speak out the full wording of the Axiom of Maria: "The one becomes two, two become three . . ."

"And out of the third comes the one as the fourth," Jung says softly. "You began alone, individuating and meditating, leading you in analysis to the two of relationship and this God consciousness. That two became three, our conflicting voices; now comes the one, a new you, as fourth."

My eyes are filled with tears as I feel the old hope for a certain kind of father. "Yes. You wrote of it over and over as the 'red thread' [1952/1969, par. 962] running throughout alchemy. From a woman, third century, Coptic and/or Jew" (1950/1969, par. 237).

Jung laughs. "Plato also opened one of his famous dinner-party dialogues with it. Socrates says, 'One, two, three—but where, my dear Timaeus, is the fourth of those guests of yesterday who were to entertain me today?' But Timaeus says the fourth felt unwell. 'He would not have failed to join our company if he could have helped it' [1955/1978, par. 278]. Of course Plato was being symbolic, referring to the part of *himself* that was absent, the part that could never be connivingly realistic enough to be a successful politician [1942/1969, par. 183–185]. Now I shall be symbolic. Where is the fourth, the one who was to entertain us tonight at this dinner party?"

I smile. "You imply that I have been unwell—that I have failed to serve you, to stand my ground, to be myself."

"Of course," Jung replied. "The fourth is the irrational, the unconscious, ruled by our complexes. It is messy nature itself, including the messiness of Greek politics that Plato could not abide. It can also stand for the complete feminine, so unable to stand her ground in our times; and you are the only woman here" (1945/1968, par. 430).

I nod. "But according to alchemy, the fourth always has to use force to integrate itself with the other three [1952/1969, par. 962]. I have hardly been forceful."

Buber shakes his head and laughs. "No? I think so, in nature's often gentle way. You have brought us here, quoted us to ourselves, and forced your way into us like a root cracking a sidewalk."

Jung adds, "The fourth makes a whole that does away with the division and conflict" (1945/1968, par. 430).

"I am not sure I am feeling exactly whole," I say. "But if we three have stopped fighting inside of me, that is good enough for now. Maybe we are more whole—the other progression is from four, to three, to two, to one [1946/1982, par. 404]—and then you are gone, here with me still and not."

But I am only speaking of we *three*. I look towards Maharishi. Who has maintained the division in this relationship? My disillusionment was real, but why can't I allow him his shadow? Do I still have to have him be perfect?

He slowly rises. His feet are softly seeking his wooden sandals.

I find I do not want him to go. I realize that I do love this man deeply, for the centuries-old gift he passed on to me, which is all that matters.

Then I recall a night when I was in the darkened hallway of a Swiss hotel and found myself almost alone with Maharishi. An old Swiss woman approached him; clearly they knew each other well. I saw her do what I knew Indians sometimes do with their guru, and what I now imagine myself doing: In my heart, I fall to my knees, bend forward, and kiss my teacher's feet.

I hear him whisper, "It is very good. It is very, very good."

Biography

Elaine N. Aron earned an M.A. in clinical psychology from York University in Toronto, and a Ph.D. in clinical depth psychology from Pacifica Graduate Institute, as well as interning at the San Francisco Jung Institute. She researches and writes extensively, in academic journals and for the public, on the temperament trait of sensory processing sensitivity (i.e., highly sensitive persons or HSPs), as well as publishing scientific studies on close relationships in conjunction with her husband, social psychologist Arthur Aron. Her writing for the general public includes *The Highly Sensitive Person*, *The Highly Sensitive Child*, and *The Undervalued Self*. She also has written a book for clinicians, *Psychotherapy and the Highly Sensitive Person*. Dr. Aron maintains an active website, www.hsperson.com, a small psychotherapy practice in Mill Valley, California, and occasionally teaches public and professional workshops.

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