

Experience and Insights in Mystical Theology

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Mystical consciousness opens to the awesome experience of God's disclosure. This experience is very rare because the consciousness is still evolving. But, once having the experience it is never forgotten. Thirty-eight years after experiencing God's out flowing light at the very center of myself, I am still joyous, humble, and fascinated by the immanence of God and my powerful mystical consciousness.

In my active life before the central experience of God's disclosure, I was married, raising a large family, studying religion and teaching children religion. Then I became enamoured with the amazing facts of evolution. The power of love seemed to me, God's enabling gift for becoming our creative potential, even evolving. I fell into a pattern of perpetual prayer. Not even trying to continually pray, I just found myself repeating "the power of Love." "The power of love," prayed itself like background music, pleasant and non-invasive of my many other activities. This wisdom melody directed my life through insights and energy for about one year.

My consciousness broke through to the mystical one day when talking with my closely bonded friends in an out door setting. As usual, "the power of love" traced through my mind. Unexpectedly, energy moved from my head to a location in front of me. At this new energy location mystical consciousness, called "the third eye," looked back at myself and saw and heard God's disclosure. I was aware of myself, but more aware of my new mystical consciousness looking toward my translucent appearing body and its center. At this center, darkness with out flowing Trinitarian Light, and the Word opened out. Perpetual light rays emitted from this center of myself while the Words "Jesus, Awe, and God" came in explanation. I was transfigured and United with God in Trinitarian light, then the experience was over.

Afterward, I composed myself to resume quiet conversation, but little by little I allowed the magnitude of the experience into my life. Like Buddha, I took steps back to the experience to comprehend with renewed awe. My life was overwhelmed with joy, humility, and infused prayer. I realize that others had mystical experience and studied their writings. The Ultimate reality of Union with God was stated well in the ancient maxim, Know Thy Self, know God.

Evolved mystical consciousness, the conveyor of God's disclosure is the same for everyone. My experience of God's disclosure came in Christian symbols but imminent God reveals in all cultural symbols. Plotinus, the father of western mysticism and not a Christian speaks of Light in mysticism. "This Light is from the Supreme, and is the Supreme. It is the true end set before the soul, to take that light, to see the Supreme by the Supreme: for that by which the illumination comes is that which is to be seen, just as we do not see the sun by light other than its own." ¹

Twentieth century theologians Rahner and Vorgrimler say of Trinitarian mysticism, "This is the mystical experience, comparable with Christ-mysticism, in which man's [woman's] gratuitous relationship to the three persons in God is explicitly realized." ² Some say mysticism is ineffable and it is no wonder for who could imagine a rich and holy experience of this nature? From my experience, mystical consciousness is complex but it can be understood so it is not ineffable. God's disclosure of Union, Light, and Word is clear but issuing forth out of the womb of creation is ineffable.

Because mysticism is difficult to understand and has a very powerful effect on people, it is feared, envied, and thwarted. History reveals that thousands of mystics have been tortured and killed to protect orthodoxy in what the early church fathers declared the end of revelation. Even today, some priests admonished me not to speak of the experience saying, "We don't talk about that. Stick to the only truth, the Bible." I remember how well mysticism was hidden from me. My own mystical experience came to me unimagined and unexpected in 1967 after years of studying religion with the best teachers.

Being true to myself meant foregoing orthodoxy where I had been a leader. Meanwhile, two priests believed in my experience and my insights. Both encouraged me to write. Over many years, I pondered my experience, studied other mystics' experiences, and their treatment. True mysticism is misunderstood, scarce, and thwarted. But, in the actual experience, I found the operations of mystical consciousness clear, autonomous, complex, intelligent, and timeless. One complexity of the mystical: in order for mystical consciousness to function without an intermediary, my normal consciousness was eclipsed during mystical consciousness. That is, normal consciousness was operating at a level my evolved mystical consciousness was not involved in. This is similar to our cells' consciousness functioning even though we are not aware of it. Complex consciousness activities make mysticism confusing to the inexperienced; however, eclipse of normal consciousness is a key for understanding mystical experience.

What Eckhart called a "breakthrough" to the experience of God, and Teilhard called evolution of consciousness to Omega is here mystical consciousness experiencing God's self-disclosure. I found, mystical consciousness beyond meditation, drug alteration, ecstasy, feelings, dreams, visions, or hallucinations. In fact, the magnitude of evolution to mystical consciousness seems to be as major a leap as from simple animal consciousness to intelligent human consciousness.

Mystical experience gave me several powerful insights into religion. God enabled evolution, within which consciousness has the innate faculty for immediate experience of God's dynamic (not anthropomorphic) disclosure. My life is enriched and enabled in "the power of Love," while released from belief in "original sin" and "debt-payment" religion.

A new paradigm in the twenty-first century would update mystical theology and teach an enabling mystical process something like this: (1.) Pure intent, study, faith in the power of love, openness to Divine mystery, and perpetual prayer. (2.) Breakthrough or evolution of consciousness to mystical experience of God's disclosure/Union with God. (3.) Memory of God's disclosure, joy, infused prayer, and humility. (4.) Query to understanding, evaluation, and integrating the mystical experience into life. (5.) Mystics and theologians work together for development and renewal of mystical theology.

Our new paradigm for the twenty-first century could be the understanding, expectancy, and preparation for evolution to mystical Union with God. Being a mother, I hope youth of the future evolve to receive the confirming and intimate experience of God's disclosure.

1 Plotinus: The Enneads, Tr. Stephen MacKenna, Faber and Faber Ltd., 1969, Cap., V 3:17.

2 "Trinitarian Mysticism," in Theological Dictionary, By Karl Rahner and Herbert Vorgrimler, The Seabury Press, N.Y., 1943, P. 468.