

Nature of Transformation and Growth Work

Introduction to
Facets of Unity – The Enneagram of Holy Ideas
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Most of us believe that spiritual realization is a matter of becoming happier, freer, and more noble, while retaining the basic outlines and categories of experience of our familiar view of reality. This attitude underlies the popular conviction that “growth work,” including psychological work, can lead to spiritual transformation. That conviction reflects a lack of understanding that the basic paradigms of our world view, which determine our everyday experience, are an intrinsic part of the web of ignorance that binds us tightly within egoic experience.

Until we directly experience spiritual transformation, we do not truly understand that this transformation involves such radical changes in our experience of ourselves and our world that it is not a matter of becoming a transformed individual; we recognize, rather, that the reality that is realized is something that cannot be limited by such notions as “individual” and “world.” The very principles and categories of experience that we take to be incontrovertible truths are transformed. What goes through a radical transformation is specifically our view of what truly exists, and the mode of this existence. In other words, spiritual liberation is a matter of one’s experience and perception moving to another dimension of existence that has its own perspective, and further, of this dimension becoming the center and foundation of experience.

Our sense of self is transformed when it attains its essential nature, the ontological presence that is pure Being. No amount of psychological growth work is sufficient to bring this about, because the psychological realm, as it is known in ordinary experience, is a distorted and incomplete experience of our interiority, since it is out of contact with Being. Psychological observation and processing are necessary for the work of transformation, but if this transformation is to become truly spiritual, we need access to the dimension of Being.

Human beings typically live in a state of arrested development in which the psychological domain rules our consciousness. Reaching the fullness of our potential entails resuming our development, which leads beyond the psychological to the realm of Being or spirit. Our experience in traveling this path is that psychological understanding and spiritual experience are so interwoven and interconnected that they can best be viewed as forming a continuum of realms of human experience.

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