

OUR INVOLUTIVE EVOLUTION OR THE INVERTENDO OF OUR GROWTH PROCESS.

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When we have reached the development stage called "Existential" or "Centauric"(1), which implies the full acceptance of being limited and mortal, when suffering is accepted as an integral part of human life, then what is called here "**involutional evolution**" has already started to appear. K. Wilber's (2,3) and P. Weil's (4) studies have given us synthetical and hierarchical descriptions of the stages of human development, which goes far beyond the oedipian organisation of the so-called genital stage, lastingly considered as the unsurpassable standard or the nec plus ultra of our psycho-affective growth. In K. Wilber's description , we can reasonably consider the "existential-dialectic" or "centauric" stage as a "crossroad-stage", from which a transition is possible towards what has been called "transpersonal states" or the spiritual field. In order to situate this stage more precisely, let us say that it follows the stage called "self-actualisation" by Maslow (5). It allows one to envisage a proper spiritual growth in good conditions, as well summarized by J. Engler with his "We shall be somebody before we become nobody" (2).

In order to do that, one has to cross what has been called the "transpersonal band" (1) or the parapsychological or psychic area. Then the candidate continues his way, which may lead him to the further stages of liberation, of divine realisation, even of merger with the Ultimate or *Layavastha*. (6).

In order to describe the numerous spiritual and trans-spiritual intermediate stages that he himself crossed, Shri Ram Chandra utilizes a general principle called **invertendo**, in order to show the inversion of the qualities of a particular "region" in comparison to the next one (6-7-8). This principle will be considered here as more general and more fitting than the similarity principle attributed to the Hermes Trimegist ("As above, so below!"), for showing the reality of the phenomena¹ that one meets when exploring the fields situated beyond the existential stage.

We shall now use this invertendo principle to explain the successive inversions through which we have gone or shall go on our psychological or our spiritual way. Our main points of reference will be the 3 successive phases of our evolution, called **prepersonal**, **personal** and **transpersonal** by K. Wilber (3). In order to be sure to prevent us from stopping too early on our way, as would be the case if we had limited ourselves to merely describe our own experiences, we shall turn to the summerized results of our observations of and interviews with Shri P. Rajagopalachari, (the living representative of Shri Ram Chandra), as well as to some of the descriptions he gave us during

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conferences (9-10-11), about that which has been perhaps improperly called "altered states of consciousness"²) (12).

It is also from the teaching of Shri P. Rajagopalachari that we have introduced the apparently paradoxical concepts of **involutionary evolution**, **impersonalisation** and **pseudo-regression** (13), in order to explain these apparent inversions in our evolutive path, our real-life experiences, our behaviours or these apparently regressive manifestations (according to the criteria of developmental psychology), that the *sadhaka* or even the accomplished Saint may display in a more or less visible manner.

Actually the term "involutionary" is used here mainly for qualifying what happens to the ego, which **involves** during its refining process. This is so because the spiritual seeker has reversed the direction of his life, the nature of his interests, in the sense that he is no longer captivated by himself or by what lies on the outside, which can be grasped through his senses or his intellect, in his objectal—i.e. relational world. Now he makes his way towards the inner world, no longer in a self-centered or egoistic manner, but in the direction of his real Center, of his Essential Being, his Self or the Atman or whatever name we wish to call it. In other words, the spiritual aspirant seems in a certain way to be retracing his steps, since he walks back now towards his divine Source, according to a centripetal absorption.

Now this particular type of evolution, which we called involutive is the best we can wish for our neighbour and for all of humanity. So have in any case the great Masters, Saints or prophets throughout time, trying to draw us along their path, warning us as well of the difficulties, of the narrowness of the spiritual path, of the necessary qualities one has to develop in order to follow this path till to the "end".

Let us now give a few brief examples of this involutive evolution's phenomenon, which we consider helpful to the understanding of the seemingly contradictory or paradoxical nature of our stages of growth:

- As far as the opposite tendencies **dependence/autonomy** are concerned, it is generally admitted that during our first months of life as human beings (prepersonal stage), we don't make a difference between outside and inside. As a result, we are both alone and containing everything, subjectively speaking. But in the point of view of the mother or of an exterior observer our existence is extremely dependant at that stage, since if we are left without care we die.

This tendency reverses itself later on towards more independence or autonomy, with a maximum of poorly realistic independentist claims at the phallic stage, when the child reaches a zone, that can be called now as "personal".³

² For Shri P. Rajagopalachari, "Real consciousness **is** Reality", so that the "levels of consciousness" or the "basic structured of consciousness" or the "altered states of consciousness" don't perfectly convey the real phenomena. From this viewpoint it seems more appropriate to speak of the "degree of opening of the field of consciousness".

This independence becomes more objective during the post-oedipian phase, where the child socialize, becomes integrated and finds his own place in the nuclear family, in the enlarged family, at school, during leisure activities, etc. For an outside observer, the child, then the teenager and the adult indeed acquire more and more autonomy through successive stages: the "identity stage" according to K. Wilber (2), followed by A. Maslow's (5) stage of "self-actualization" Yes at this stage the human being may be considered as an adult, psychologically speaking. He is able to think in an original way, he is able to assert his own opinions, he can endure or even seek for a certain dose of solitude. For a skilled observer, true autonomy has risen considerably from the phallic stage up to the existential stage.

But what happen next, if evolution continues on its way beyond the already mentioned centauric stage, in other words into the "transpersonal" or "cosmic" zone?

Experience shows then that one cannot avoid feeling highly connected, an integrated part of an infinite and imperceptible web, both in and out of time and space. Of course, this opening of one's field of consciousness can take different forms, or rather be formulated in different ways. Either one is nothing more than a limitless consciousness in an infinite space, or one feels oneself to contain everything, having become the whole universe, or he recognizes the essential nature or "his Master" in each and all he encounters, in each particle in the manifestation, from which he is no longer separate.

The result of such a transformation is usually that such a human being attracts his fellow humans as honey attracts insects and that he willingly himself to be consumed . Most of the time we notice him surrounded in company and available day and night. At first glance, the observer could think him to be a dependant, naïve human being, unable to say "no". If he were to have known this person before his successful transformation towards a transpersonal state, he could conclude there to have been a regression to an infantile mode of functioning. But we know that none of these interpretations would be correct, since we are dealing here with a pseudo-regression, an involutive evolution of the separating ego, which permits this spiritualized person to live non-separate, to live the real brotherhood, his "bakhti" making him see the divine or his Master in every neighbour, in each creature in manifestation, towards whom universal love can flow without hindrance.

- Another example is the evolution of the **moral sense**:

We know that the small child has not yet acquired the notion or consciousness of what is moral and not moral, so that we often speak of its **innocence**, whereas, in a complementary way, Freud qualified the child as a **polymorphic pervert**.

During the personal phase, the superegotic interiorization makes the child, then the teenager and the adult more stamped with morality, first a conventional one, later on a "post-conventional" one (15) Now it is well-known in religious and spiritual traditions that a high morality is considered as a pre-requisite or as included in the "preparation" phase. At the transpersonal stages, the observer may be shocked sometimes by some of the behavior of a Saint or a spiritual Master, which may again appear amoral, thus seemingly indicating a psychological regression. But at this stage it is actually **transmorality**, which

³We know that (unfortunately) most human beings will remain hung on this stage, or rather will regress to it and remain fixed at it more or less completely and irreversibly. Jacques Vigne has called "normosis" this stage which is statistically normal for our contemporary civilization(14).

resides of course upon an impeccable morality. The incarnated spiritual Master can be lead to deliberately (and not under the pression of his own drives or emotions) express anger, to do something quite unseemly, impolite or even destructive. These unexpected, apparently aberrant behavior are often only revealed to us to be necessary or wise later on, even much later, as the spiritual literature has abundantly illustrated through thousands of examples concerning the Master-disciple relationship.

- To continue there is the example of our **cognitive development** or the **development of human knowledge**:

We often speak of **ignorance** for qualifying the functioning of the small child (at the pre-personal stage), since its knowledge is apparently almost nil. Later on the child, the teenager and the adult acquire intellectual knowledge, which they consider to be their own, even to the point of sometimes becoming true erudites. But at the transpersonal phase, one may observe a new inversion, because the human being seems to rely less and less upon accumulated knowledge stocked in his memory, and more and more upon an **intuitive type of knowledge**, which is much more immediate, for which he no longer considers himself as deserving of any merit, since he feels this knowledge to be universal and "at the finger tips". This accessibility may grow to the "**direct knowledge**" of the Saint, who is able to register the divine messages ("shruti"). Thus the latter reacquires a state of ignorance or of innocence, in which information is revealed to him solely in proportion to his state of purity and surrender. Apparently he is ignorant, in the sense that he doesn't know anything by himself. Things are accessible to him in a simple way, according to his total opening and to his extreme vigilance at each instant.

Many other examples of this involutive evolution principle could naturally be developed. Let us be content mentioning just a few more in this short article:

- The **affective naïvety** of the young child evolves into a rational **lucidity** at the personal stage, which leads further (at the transpersonal phase) to a "**pseudo-naïvety**" or **innocence**, due to the attitude of total surrender towards the inner Master.

- Along the same line, let us mention the sequence moving from the innocent and **naïve confidence** of the small child, to the **caution** and **circumspection** of the grown-up, and further again to an absolute confidence, which is not a blind faith but an "**enlighted faith**", according to the expression of Shri P. Rajagopalachari⁴.

- The personality itself goes through the same inversions: from the **indifferenciati**on prevailing in the very young, the personality shows a progressive development at the personal phase, leading to the stage of self-actualization (5) or **self-differenciati**on (16) or **individuation**, i.e. the assertion of oneself. Then a re-indifferenciati

on takes place at the transpersonal phase, which I suggest be called "**impersonnalization**", in order to differentiate this evolutive phenomenon from the pathological state of depersonalization. In other words, as Shri P. Rajagopalachari puts it: "In this "un-becoming" process, we become childlike but not childish, Selflike but not selfish, centered to the Self but not selfcentered" (17).

Let us hope that this rapid description will:

⁴Informal conversation, Ittigen (CH), August 1994.

- Help the rational mind to find credence with the possibility of a stage beyond his own intermediate stage;
- Permit the spiritual aspirant to recognize himself in his transpersonal (cosmic or mystic) experience and to some extent describe its framework if not its content.