

Schizophrenia as the Egoless State of Perfection

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Abstract

Schizophrenia, the disease, is discussed as a possible egoless state of perfection. Different religious perspectives are presented. The relationship between the egoless state of perfection and the psychic abilities of the schizophrenic is discussed. A suggestion is made for the raison d'etre of the schizophrenic. Finally, a statement is made about the urgency for the complete recovery of the schizophrenic, regardless.

The schizophrenic experiences a stunning barrage of continuous, horrifying symptoms: auditory hallucinations, delusions, ideas of reference, paranoia, etc. The "indescribable severe torture"¹ is unrelenting and can go on except during sometimes restless sleep, at which time the symptoms are even active when one becomes conscious at all. This experience is so overwhelming it is beyond the imagination. It cannot be conceived of intellectually. By its very nature it in fact necessitates the concept of religion in order to relate to it at all. This continuous experience of psychotic symptoms can be viewed as "spiritual exercises in perfection". The effect on the schizophrenic is similar to that of monks when practicing their rituals in monasteries. When these spirited exercises become a lifestyle for the schizophrenic (lasting 8-10 years) with no real evidence given to the schizophrenic that he will ever recover, a fascinating thing happens to the psyche of that schizophrenic—he loses the perspective of "ego". Ego consists of all his identifying factors in the world: his age, sex, race, religious affiliation or lack thereof, education level, social class, political affiliations, nationality, etc.² He begins to see his environment with the eyes of a newborn, without the bias or prejudices, preconditions of his particular circumstances. It can be seen as a sort of continuous baptism by fire, a kind of purification, enabling him to see reality for what it is in actuality, rather than being viewed through the preconceptions of his individual mental,

emotional, and behavioural repertoire instilled in him from birth. The schizophrenic in this condition is able in his interior to walk around in someone else's moccasins with perfection. This can be seen as loving your neighbour as you love yourself, perfectly. I do not believe it is a condition that can be acquired by a "normal" individual by any method, because the horror of the symptoms of schizophrenia are unduplicable by man. (Religious persons would call this condition repentance for all one's sins, e.g. "perfect repentance".)

This condition of perfection is described in the Bible: in the Book of the Wisdom of Solomon 4:16, "In their old age the wicked will be disgraced by young people who have already achieved perfection", in the Book of Sirach 51:20, "But I was determined to have her (Wisdom) and I found her by keeping myself free from sin".

Simultaneously, the schizophrenic in his personality has not reached such a state of perfection. He may lack courage, lack strength, have an awkward personal style, etc. This is only a condition of the interior.

An explanation of the separation between the schizophrenic's interior state of perfection and his personality is paralleled by the phenomenon of Multiple Personality. When the suffering is too profound for the individual psyche to cope with, a separation occurs in that psyche. I believe this is a normal response in the adult psyche for the adult, as similarly the condition of Multiple Personality is a normal response of the child's psyche to excessive stress for the child. However, I do not believe the condition of the separation in the psyche of the adult schizophrenic is a mental disorder. It is more like the condition of a "medium" who does not have a genuine mental disorder.

This condition—this egoless state—is outwardly, almost unobservable among schizophrenics, because they have often not recovered enough from the biochemical imbalance of their brains to exhibit it, and because their personalities are imperfect and show signs of profound shock—the higher levels of the altered levels of consciousness. The schizophrenic instead is

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experienced by "normal" people as, difficult to relate to, to identify with, and in some cases to respect for his profound accomplishment. He appears to have the same variations of ego that "normal" individuals have.

However, when one gets to know schizophrenics deeply, they are astoundingly accepting in their interior of other people, their behaviour, their feelings, their humanity. This profound acceptance and understanding of others in their interiors is the evidence I have found consistently present among schizophrenics who are still quite ill, which reflects their interior state of perfection.

There is another clue to this condition of the egoless state of perfection. Dr. Abram Hoffer, MD, PhD., has found that some schizophrenics who were not previously psychic, became psychic when they developed their illness. This is not a case of an increase of intuition in the schizophrenic, in the usual sense of the word. Intuition is arrived at with a high degree of utilization of mental processes, as well as an interior impulse. This increased psychic ability in the schizophrenic comes from the depths of his interior with no utilization of his mental processes whatsoever, except to communicate the knowledge gained to others. This is suggestive of an egoless condition in the schizophrenic. The accuracy of the psychic ability of the schizophrenic was related in Mark Vonnegut's *The Eden Express*, in which he astounded friends with his psychic ability, while ill with schizophrenia.

I would like to comment that the psychic experience of the schizophrenic is as if one were in touch with Jung's Collective Unconscious, except instead of the mythology of man symbolically represented, one is in touch with the Word (of the Bible). For example, a schizophrenic who experiences a psychic ability for the first time, is able to exercise psychic ability about human beings and their interiors only, not what they are wearing, what location they are in, if they own a home, car, etc., whereas an ordinary psychic predicts all those things. A schizophrenic then can "predict" whether a person is dead or alive, is guilty of murder, or innocent, etc., but not the "non-human" details of the situation. This is suggestive of the human condition described in the Word. It is fascinating that one schizophrenic I know was able to accurately describe the type of

American Indian chants being played on an American Indian tape, without any previous knowledge whatsoever about American Indian ceremonies, by simply listening to the tapes, e.g. which were war chants, hunting chants, which were strictly religious chants, which were chants identified only with that particular tribe ("national" chants), etc. How was this done? It is my theory that the American Indian, in his ancestral ways, has a culture of perfection not matched by other cultures in their folk traditions. This schizophrenic used his interior state of perfection to match the chants with their spiritual meaning. Specifically, the process is done by using one's mind to offer alternative choices to one's interior and when a condition of perfect peace is arrived at in his interior, he is then assured of the accuracy of that particular choice. This technique has been verified in other circumstances (such as in identifying previously not known music as a mass) with the same astounding accuracy.

One can approach the situation of a schizophrenic from another vantage point. What is his purpose in life personally? (rather than as an inspiration to other people). The schizophrenic when seriously ill, and there are millions of them—is unable to work, marry, have children, buy a home, participate actively in the community, contribute to society, think, and can't even read the Bible or other great works on the philosophy of life. Because the Bible, Koran, etc. are so open-ended, most schizophrenics become increasingly delusional when exposed to this material. Yet they suffer so unendurably. One possible explanation is that they have, in their disease, already reached an egoless state of perfection which these good books admonish all to attempt to do, each in their own way. There is evidence for this in the Bible: Mark 5:18-20; Luke 8:38-39. The schizophrenic is the only sick person who was cured by Christ, whose first request was to beg to follow him. In addition, he was only one of a few to obey Christ when he was told instead to report what God had done for him to his family and his home town. This displays the perfect obedience, which only the Virgin Mary's own words echo, "Be it done unto me as you have said" (Luke 1:38). I know one schizophrenic, during her first psychotic episode who was an agnostic, when

asked to dance "how you feel" (from the schizophrenia) by a hospital dance therapist, danced the Virgin Mary almost unknowingly, until the dance therapist told her "I know who you are dancing, you are dancing the Virgin Mary". Catholics believe that the Virgin Mary is in an interior state of perfection, perfectly. There is also the well known phenomenon of the so-called "religious preoccupation" of the schizophrenic. Typically, the delusional material of the schizophrenic is derived from his personal life and current events. For example, during the Patty Hearst kidnapping, I interviewed several schizophrenics who were delusional about Patty Hearst, each with his own personal perspective derived from details in his personal life. However, most schizophrenics are not particularly religious. They do not watch, typically, the T.V. evangelists, do not have a habit of regular church attendance, nor are they exposed to religion in current events with any frequency. Many are atheists. Yet schizophrenics frequently come up with statements such as "I am Jesus Christ", "I am the Virgin Mary", "I am St. Joseph", and "I am God". The catatonic schizophrenic often postures Christ on the cross. I believe that rather than being delusional per se, these schizophrenics may be expressing the state of profound suffering of their psyches with some accuracy. I have hypothesized that the statement "I am the Virgin Mary" may be derived from the egoless state of perfection of the disease of schizophrenia. "I am St. Joseph" may be a similar interpretation made by the male schizophrenic. The most frequent statement made of "I am Jesus Christ" has interesting possibilities. In the Gospel, the schizophrenic is the only sick person Christ does not ask if he wants to be healed. Instead He just heals him. (Mark 5:8; Luke 8:29). I suggest that the schizophrenic may be carrying a burden too heavy for him to cope with. For example, Catholicism believes that the only individual who is capable of bearing the egoless state of perfection perfectly is the Virgin Mary, herself, in person. Thus, the schizophrenic, in person, has aspects of the crucified Christ. Since Christ does not have to ask Himself whether He wants to be healed, He does not ask the schizophrenic in that aspect of himself. The experience for the schizophrenic is as though the psyche dead from the profound suffering and Christ is

physically present in him. This is the highest level of the altered levels of consciousness.

Also, since the American culture is primarily Protestant, many schizophrenics may tend to identify this egoless state of perfection more with Christ, than with the Virgin Mary. In the schizophrenic's attempt to verbalize his suffering, there is probably not only sex confusion ("I am St. Joseph") but, also dimension confusion ("I am God"). The normal schizophrenic sometimes feels God is gone, as a result of his profound suffering, as Christ did on the cross "My God, my God, why did you abandon me" (Matthew 27:46), but does not normally feel he is God Himself. "I am God" thus, may be the statement of a confused schizophrenic.

It should be noted that only in Western societies is the schizophrenic thought -of as only mentally ill. Other cultures such as that of India feel that mental symptoms have a religious visionary aspect to them, which is more accurate. American Indians may have viewed schizophrenics as medicine men — a religiously esteemed position within their communities.

There is a third vantage point from which to view the schizophrenic. I would like to refer to my previous article regarding the extreme deprivation of the interior of the schizophrenic and the great necessity for external gratification to help him while he is ill—indeed his almost total dependence on the exterior environment to meet all his needs. He needs money, a car, material rewards, speed and efficiency in his lifestyle, in fact just to survive the symptoms of his disease he needs the world laid at his feet. Riches, the latest technology, people serving him (letting him go first in line, etc.). Instead of becoming proud from all this, he just survives, he's simply enabled to live like a "normal" person. However, instead of receiving the attention required by his disease, the schizophrenic is largely ignored (our modern way of rejecting), more so that any other group of people in our society.

What, then, is the disease of schizophrenia? The effect of the disease on the schizophrenic is beyond the imagination. It cannot be conceived of except in religious terms. The disease gives one, not an individual perspective, but a universal one. The disease is psychic (prophetic like Ezekiel?). The disease can make the individual who has experienced it

perfectly obedient to God. The disease requires that those who suffer from it be treated like kings, but the individual schizophrenic will still remain egoless.

Are the schizophrenics our modern House of David? Is schizophrenia, the disease, the egoless state of perfection in man? Is it, as Catholics would say, the Immaculate Heart of Mary?

Should we not try fervently to help schizophrenics get cured anyway? My personal recommendation is niacin.

References

1. Reprint, "A Schizophrenic Illness Described as Indescribable Severe Torture", The Huxley Institute for Biosocial Research Inc., Boca Raton, Florida.
2. "Ego" is to be distinguished from personality traits such as courage, strength, reliability, honesty, personal style, etc., which remain intact.