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STAGES OF CONTEMPLATIVE MYSTICISM: A DESCRIPTION AND TAXONOMY

by

Kenneth Burton Kaisch

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree

of

MASTER OF SCIENCE

in

Psychology

Approved:

UTAH STATE UNIVERSITY
Logan, Utah

1983

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The author wishes to express his heartfelt gratitude to Dr. Elwin Nielsen, advisor and committee chairman, for his support, friendship, and professional advice during the genesis and completion of this thesis. I would also like to thank Dr. Richard Powers for his invaluable help in guiding me to narrow the scope of this study, and to Dr. Richley Crapo to his valuable insights into the nature of mysticism.

The author also would like to acknowledge the special contributions of Melle Washington, who provided valuable criticism regarding the readability of the text, and Suzanne Kaisch, who persevered through the proofreading of all of these pages. My thanks to you all.

Kenneth Burton Kaisch

PREFACE

Consider with me the term, 'ballplayer'. To what or to whom does this term refer? Is a ballplayer anyone who plays any kind of ball game, or is s/he a baseball player? And if a baseball player, are we referring to a sandlot player, a Little League player, a high school player, a college player, or a professional player? Do we refer to a minor or a major leaguer; a National or American Leaguer? Or do we say the term 'ballplayer' in reverent tones, referring to one of the greats of baseball--a Ted Williams or a Mickey Mantle?

We are speaking here of matters of degree: a matter which becomes very important when we try to define the term 'ballplayer' with precision. The term 'mystic' is analogous to the term 'ballplayer' vis-a-vis precise definition. It too is susceptible to analysis by degree. The purpose of this paper is first to examine the concept of contemplative mysticism with a view towards being more precise about the varying degrees of mystical experience which the term may represent. To this end, I will focus on the stages of mystical development across several major world religions, defining clearly the stages of each. Then I will examine these stages across religious lines to determine if a sufficient degree of similarity exists between the sources which we examine to postulate a conceptual model which describes the sequential development of mysticism. The ultimate end to which this study is directed is the development of a conceptual model of contemplative mysticism in order to provide a theoretical basis for empirical experimentation.

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ABSTRACT

Stages of Contemplative Mysticism: A Description and Taxonomy

by

Kenneth Burton Kaisch, Master of Science

Utah State University, 1983

Major Professor: Dr. Elwin Nielsen

Department: Psychology

The purpose of this study was to describe and classify the stages of contemplative mystical development in the major world religions. To accomplish this task, a sample of five major world religions was chosen from the total population. From each religion, a contemplative author who was regarded as an authority by the members of that religion was chosen. The major work of each author was described in order to make explicit his/her conceptualization of the stages of contemplative development. These conceptualizations were then compared together, resulting in two models of contemplative development. The first model was composed of those stages where there was agreement between four of the five authors. This model described the necessary and sufficient conditions of contemplative development and had five stages. The second model was composed of those stages where there was agreement between three of the five authors, and was postulated to address the information loss of the first model. This expanded model had thirteen stages. The implications of this taxonomy for the scientific study of religion were then explored. (208 pages)

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Among modern intellectuals--especially in the universities--the subject of religion seems to have gone into hiding. Is it because the educated portion of mankind is learning to live with less finality and is coming to distrust embracing formulae of all types? Or is it because in their zeal to liquidate pseudo-knowledge and to discover truth in a piecemeal fashion the universities have found it necessary quietly to adopt a thoroughgoing secularism? Whatever the reason may be, the persistence of religion in the modern world appears as an embarrassment to the scholars of today. Even psychologists, to whom presumably nothing of human concern is alien, are likely to retire into themselves when the subject is broached (Allport, 1950, p. 1).

One index of a culture's values is the relative frequency with which various topics are discussed. A number of observers of our culture (Allport, 1950; Stegner, 1971) have noticed a curious shift of values in this century. At the beginning of the century, religion was universally talked about, but talk of sexual matters was taboo. By mid-century, the relative position of these two topics had reversed. At the present time, it is perfectly acceptable to talk about sexual matters, but beyond a few strident exceptions, talk about religious concerns is greeted with embarrassed silence. This cloak of silence over religious matters has extended into the scientific world as well. Allport (1950) comments on the dearth of psychological investigation in the field of religion. This lack of investigation can be contrasted with the extensive researching of human sexuality (Kinsey, Pomeroy & Martin, 1948; Kinsey, Pomeroy, Martin & Gebhard,

1953; Masters & Johnson, 1966, 1979). This lack has continued to the present time. Warren (1977), in a survey of the empirical studies in the psychology of religion from 1960 to 1970 found only three articles using an experimental methodology that were published during that period.

This lack of research into the psychology of religion is in stark contrast to the pervasive religiousness found in our culture. So pervasive is this religiousness that it is not necessary to cite references to verify this fact; one only needs to observe. We find churches in every community; we find religious material in all forms of media. We hear of the Moral Majority, a political coalition of religious conservatives, influencing a national election in this country; and of the "Creationists", a movement to force the teaching of the biblical creation stories in public schools on the grounds that evolution is a theory, not a proven fact. According to an Australian observer of our culture (Woolford, 1982), a concern with God is one of the three dominant themes in the American national consciousness. And yet, psychologists as a whole have refrained from examining this aspect of human behavior. To understand this reluctance, it will be helpful to survey the historical development of the psychology of religion in this country.

In the latter half of the nineteenth century, in both Europe and America, psychology was emerging from the matrix of philosophical studies as a discipline in its own right. In the United States, the emergence of the study of the psychology of religion was contiguous with that of psychology itself. The first article published in the field of the psychology of religion was in 1882 by G. Stanley Hall,

perhaps the most important figure in American psychology at that time (Beit-Hallahmi, 1974; Schultz, 1981). From the 1880's to the 1920's, the study of the psychology of religion was regarded as productive and useful by psychologists. There seemed to be a sense that religion could be analyzed successfully by the positivistic approach of science (Starbuck, cited in Beit-Hallahmi, 1974).

Among the early investigators of religion from the psychological point of view, there was an eagerness to 'prove' that religion could be studied scientifically, by utilizing the experimental approach. This same eagerness contributed to the rapid decline of the study of the psychology of religion, due to an uncritical application of the scientific method. An indicator of this decline is the frequency with which articles dealing with the psychology of religion were published in the Psychological Bulletin, the mouthpiece of the movement.

Since 1904...the Psychological Bulletin had carried reviews of publications in the psychology of religion.... The decline in the area was reflected in the fact that no reviews were published between the years 1928 and 1933. The last review (Cronbach, 1933) contained mostly material taken from French and German sources (Beit-Hallahmi, 1974, p. 87).

Since 1933, the Psychological Bulletin has rarely mentioned the psychology of religion. I perceive six primary reasons for the decline of the study of the psychology of religion at this time:

1. The psychology of religion was too broad and grandiose in its original intent and scope. As one commentator suggests, "Even its designation, the psychology of religion, carried with it a certain intellectual snobbishness based on an obvious reductionistic stance" (Strunk, 1979, p. 156).

2. "The theoretical and ideological basis of the movement showed that the psychology of religion was basically a residue of the philosophical tradition of psychology" (Beit-Hallahmi, 1974, p. 88). At a time when psychology was trying to establish itself as an empirical science, a theoretical basis grounded in philosophy led to the rejection of the study of this field by serious psychologists.
3. As a corollary to # 2 above, data collection methods were inadequate and often incompetent. (Douglas, cited in Beit-Hallahmi, 1974).
4. There was an emphasis by the empiricists of the movement in collecting discrete facts without integrating them into a comprehensive theoretical framework. The lack of testable theories had a negative effect in attracting competent and interested researchers (Douglas, cited in Beit-Hallahmi, 1974).
5. The climate of public opinion in the 20's and 30's was shifting away from a religious world view and towards a positivistic view. The birth of Watson's school of behaviorism within psychology at this time is a reflection of this shift.
6. The rise of the psychoanalytic movement, although increasing interest and controversy in religion, never generated any systematic research, and shifted energy into a line of inquiry which was unproductive for the advancement of the psychology of religion (Strunk, 1957).

With these forces operative, the study of the psychology of religion by psychologists virtually ceased, and this dormant state has continued

to the present day. The field seems to generate new books, usually entitled "The Psychology of Religion", with regularity, but these books are invariably a rehashing of the material generated almost a century ago, and contain little, if any, new research.

A factor which seems to facilitate the persistence of this lack of study is identified by Beit-Hallahmi (1974) as the 'ivory tower effect'. Scientists, and especially psychologists, are generally less religious than most of the American population (Stark, cited in Beit-Hallahmi, 1974). Thus, "social scientists acquire the impression that religion is 'neutralized'....and that there is not much left to study in religion" (Beit-Hallahmi, 1974, p. 89).

The assumption behind the 'ivory tower effect' is that religion is something to be 'neutralized': that it is antithetical to scientific inquiry. This may or may not be the case; I have no intention of arguing this particular point. But in either case, there are several basic and important questions that remain. First, is it impossible to study religion and religious experiences by means of the scientific method? Second, "is religious experience a unique, irreducible dimension of human experience?....[Third], is religious experience continuous with other cognitive and emotional states?" (Bertocci, 1971, p. 6). And finally, is there in truth "not much left to study in religion"? That is, is there a consensual understanding among the scientific community, validated by empirical evidence, regarding the causes and manifestations of religious experience?

Clearly, it is not the case that the scientific community knows much about the psychology of religious experience. There is so little published data in the scientific journals about religious

experience, and so little experimental data within that which has been published, that only the most rash would care to pronounce on the subject. The present situation is one in which the scientific community does not know what causes religious experience or why religious experience follows certain patterns. Within the psychological literature of the last fifty years, there are seldom even descriptions of religious experience, let alone experimental data. The result of this lack of study is that the psychological community cannot describe accurately these experiences--and this task of description is the very first task in applying the scientific method (Englehart, 1972; Simon, 1978). The psychological community as a whole has simply refrained from examining this complex dimension of human experience.

Again, I invite the reader to contrast this situation regarding the scientific study of religious experience with the pervasive religiousness found in our society. While it is easy to understand why psychology abandoned the study of the psychology of religion in the 1930's, it is more difficult to understand why psychologists have not resumed the study of this field. Regarding the study of the psychology of religion by psychologists, no less a figure than Gordon Allport, a respected and distinguished researcher at Harvard and a former president of the American Psychological Association, has stated, "[the psychologist] has no right to retire from the field" (1950, p. 2).

There is currently a great need for psychologists to investigate the psychology of religion. As more becomes known about the psychology of human beings in the areas of learning, motivation, perception and the like, the more glaring is the omission of data from the field

of religion. Specifically, there are three major needs to be filled for the study of the psychology of religion to progress beyond the present point. First, there needs to be an adequate and careful description of religious experiences. This is the sine qua non of scientific procedure (Simon, 1978). Second, coherent theories, based on precise description, need to be developed in order to provide a conceptual basis for testable hypotheses. Theoretical formulations allow the descriptive data to be organized, and from this organization the researcher can develop hypotheses susceptible to empirical testing. Finally, there needs to be empirical testing to determine the validity of the hypotheses so generated. For example, do psychological correlates of religious experience exist, and if so, is there uniformity across religions?

What study there is of religion and its effects upon behavior has developed along two divergent lines: one describing the social effects of religion; and the other, the intrapsychic effects. The first approach, exemplified by Argyle and Beit-Hallahmi (1975) focuses on the outward behaviors of those who call themselves religious, and is basically a sociometric approach. It investigates the characteristics of those who attend church and correlates this data with data from other dimensions of living which can be measured. This approach is widely used in sociological studies of religion and in some anthropological studies.

The intrapsychic approach, on the other hand, focuses on the question of what makes a religious experience "religious". W.H. Clark states:

There must be something unique in the quality of the

experience itself that makes it religious. This quality is the mystical. One may give all his time and energy to the business affairs of a church, but unless this service is not in some way enlightened by a sense of the Beyond, a mystical encounter with God, it is hard to see how it is psychologically different from the handling of a secular business (1965, p. 34).

Clark defines mysticism as "the subjective experience of a person who has what he tells others is a direct apprehension of some cosmic Power or Force greater than himself" (1958, p. 263). It is important for this study that the reader note the inadequacies of this definition. It does not indicate what is meant by a "cosmic Power". Is this God, X-rays, or something else? In addition, this definition does not indicate what is meant by a "Force greater than himself". Is this the force of a moving truck, of gravity? Further, it does not indicate what is meant by a "direct apprehension"; and it does not describe how "subjective experience" can be measured or evaluated. Each of these inadequacies presents serious methodological problems, and, as a whole, this definition of mysticism reflects the vagueness that usually is present before precise scientific description. However, this sort of definition is useful in beginning to indicate and delimit the area of study.

Clark clearly thinks that mysticism is the sine qua non of religious experience. Other authors (Smart, 1969; Capps, 1977) are not as bold as Clark in this regard, but state that the experiential dimension of religion, that contact of the human with a "cosmic Power or Force greater than self", is the dimension which animates and vitalizes the whole of religion. In either case, the consensus of opinion is that mysticism is an important variable to study in order to understand religious psychology. Clark points

out several advantages in using mystical experience as the basic concept in defining the religious dimension of life:

1. It is the best differentiated state of mind available that can be defined psychologically as a religious experience;
2. It is not confined to any one religious tradition, but is a central concept in many;
3. It involves the personality at a deep enough level so that personality changes of a radical nature can be ascribed to it;
4. There is good reason to believe that the potentiality for mysticism is innate (1965, p. 42).

The first three of Clark's advantages are real advantages in that they define a unit of behavior or experience which is susceptible to scientific study. From this basis, the task of the scientist will be to describe mystical experiences to determine if they have enough in common to be considered as the universal unit of study for a psychology of religion.

As one examines reports of mystical experience, there seem to be two ways that these experiences are evoked: by active means such as verbal prayer, dancing, singing, etc.; and by passive means, such as meditation and contemplation. There is growing evidence (Fischer, 1975b, 1976) that these two means of inducing mystical experience lead to two different, though related, kinds of experiences of a "cosmic Power or Force". The focus of this study will be the description of reports of mystical experiences induced by passive means, and their classification.

Thus, this study will focus on an area within the field of religion which has not yet been explored by the social sciences. The first tasks of science, when it focuses on a new field of study, are to describe and classify (Engelhart, 1972; Simon, 1978). Numer-

ous examples are available from the physical sciences which support this methodology, and it has a long history in the social sciences as well. Piaget's studies of child development immediately come to mind (1929, 1932). From a long and careful series of observations, Piaget was able to describe and classify normative development in the early years of human beings. The present study, by following a similar methodology, will focus on the description and classification of contemplative mystical experience in order to address the currently inadequate psychological understanding of this area of human experience.

As one begins to look at the writings of contemplative mystics, the most readily apparent similarity between them is their usage of a stage model to guide their descriptions. This phenomenon seems to be universal: contemplatives of differing belief systems almost invariably describe a series of stages through which one must pass in order to achieve the goal of "a direct apprehension of some cosmic Power or Force". However, the descriptions of these stages are highly variable. Different authors start at different points in the process. Even more confusing, they often begin and end the stages at different points, so that one author's description of the end-point of a stage might be, in another author's description, the mid-point of a stage.

The universality of the stage model mode of description for mystical experience provides the specific focus for the present study. The central question to be asked in this study is: Can a common, invariant sequence of stages of contemplative mystical development be postulated from a comparison of the conceptuali-

zations of these stages by contemplative authors of different world religions?

A question which is prior to the central question of the study is: What are the stages of contemplative mystical development as expressed by contemplative authors of major world religions? I will answer this question by describing the stages of contemplative development as they are expressed by the contemplative authors in my sample. This will provide the descriptive basis from which the central question of the study can be addressed.

The central question of this study can best be approached by breaking it into the two component questions which it implies. First, are there consistent verbal descriptions that practitioners apply to the psychological experience of manipulating consciousness? That is, given that much of mystical development is internal, within the individual, and seems to involve a manipulation of consciousness with no clearly discernable behavioral correlates, what are the descriptions of these inner changes which are said to take place, and do they have cross-cultural parallels? The second component question revolves around the observable behaviors of a contemplative. What are the behavioral correlates of each stage of contemplative development which the contemplative authors describe?

One other study has approached this central question, that of D. P. Brown (Note 1). However, Brown's study was subject to a major limitation--the sample size that he used was too small and thus his results are subject to several interpretations. This leads to the third and final question which this study will address: Is Brown's conceptual model of contemplative mystical development

accurate, or could another model provide a better fit for the data?

If there is a recognizable and empirically verifiable set of developmental stages within contemplative mysticism across religious lines, this finding would be of central importance to the study of the psychology of religion. The study of the psychology of religion has foundered for the last fifty years because, in part, no adequate conceptual base has been developed to explain religious phenomena. Empirical experimentation has been difficult because of this lack of conceptual basis and because of fuzzy and often contradictory definitions. If this study can find adequate grounds to postulate a universal conceptual model of contemplative development, then empirical experimentation will be possible, and hard data can be generated in a field that has so often eluded attempts at data collection. And this data collection is critical if the scientific community is ever to know anything about religion. The present study is an attempt to provide the groundwork necessary for this kind of data collection.

Often clarity can be gained by describing what a study is not about. This study is not about comparative metaphysics or religious philosophy. Metaphysics deals with first causes, and clearly the questions which this study addresses are not dealing with first causes. In this study, any formulation of God or other first cause is irrelevant. Instead, I will focus on people's reports of their experiences of first causes--an important distinction. In the same way, this is not a comparison of religious philosophies: the content of a religious philosophy is irrelevant to this thesis. Rather than talking about philosophies, this study will examine

the verbal reports of the practices of contemplatives from several religious traditions, and the reported results of these practices. From this comparative analysis, I hope to be able to formulate a model of contemplative mystical development which will provide the conceptual basis for empirical testing.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Because of the great variety of methods used in approaching the subject of mysticism, I shall use as an organizing principle for this review of the literature the common denominator of analytical approach; thus treating those who approach mysticism from a phenomenological standpoint together, those who approach it from a physiological standpoint together, and so on. Within this basic framework, I will organize roughly along the chronological dimension: from early research in mysticism to the present day.

The Phenomenological Approach

The phenomenological approach revolves around the description and classification of phenomena. Of the phenomenologists of religion, William James' classic study, Varieties of Religious Experience (1902, 1958), was the first and perhaps the greatest work of its kind. In it, James utilized a wealth of raw data regarding religious experiences, classified the material, and sought to make sense out of the data.

James attempted to define mysticism by defining its characteristic marks. His defining characteristics were:

1. Ineffability: "that it defies expression, that no adequate report of its contents can be given in words. It follows that its quality must be directly experienced; it cannot be imparted or transferred to others" (p. 293).

2. Noetic quality: "states of insight into depths of truth unplumbed by the discursive intellect" (p. 293).
3. Transiency: "except in rare instances, half an hour, or at most an hour or two, seem to be the limit" (p. 293).
4. Passivity: "the mystic feels as if his own will were in abeyance" (p. 293).

These four marks of mystical experience have been the starting point for further discussions and explications of the subject by later phenomenologists (Clark, 1958; Stace, 1960).

James' Varieties was a seminal work in that it began to deal with the psychological basis for religion based on empirical data (Taylor, 1978). He had access to Starbuck's extensive collection of conversion experiences and from this empirical basis, he was able to describe accurately aspects of the mystical experience. From this material, James demonstrated that the core of religious life is to be found primarily within the inner recesses of the individual. This conclusion was based in part on personal experience. From his experiment with nitrous oxide, he reported:

Our normal waking consciousness...is but one special type of consciousness, whilst all about it, parted from it by the filmiest of screens, there lie potential forms of consciousness entirely different. We may go through life without suspecting their existence; but apply the requisite stimulus, and at a touch they are there in all their completeness, definite types of mentality which probably somewhere have their field of application and adaptation (1902/1958, p. 298).

From this auspicious beginning, the investigation of mystical states from the psychological point of view soon fell dormant, due to the factors mentioned above. There were several other works following James' lead (Leuba, 1929; Otto, 1923; Underhill, 1911) but none had the impact of a James, and none seemed to generate

any empirical research which would support their assertions. This was the situation until the publication of The Perennial Philosophy by Aldous Huxley in 1945.

Due in part to Huxley's stature as a writer, and in part to the massive upheaval of World War II, and its consequences for individual belief systems, this work was widely read and discussed. In it, Huxley attempted to demonstrate the underlying unity of the mystical traditions in all of the major world religions. However, his arguments were based as much on emotion as reason, and he made no pretense of being scientific. The beginnings of an empirical demonstration of this thesis were to come later, with the work of D. P. Brown (1977, Note 1, Brown & Engler, 1980). Huxley's importance to the study of the psychology of religion rests in his thesis and its wide appeal.

The next major work in the phenomenology of mysticism came from a philosopher, W. T. Stace (1960). Stace, on the basis of careful description, distinguished between extrovertive and introvertive mysticism. This distinction was picked up later by Roland Fischer in his studies regarding the differences in physiological arousal as a means for classifying mystical experience (1971, 1975a, 1975b, 1976). Stace demonstrated that extrovertive mysticism "looks outward through the senses, [while introvertive mysticism] looks inward into the mind" (1960, p. 61). Both kinds of experience result in a perception of an Ultimate Unity, but the method for attaining this experience is different.

Deikman (1966) was the first from within the psychiatric community to describe the mystical experience with some objectivity.

He stated that the principle features of the experience were:
1) an intense realness; 2) unusual somatic sensations; 3) a feeling of unity; 4) ineffability; and 5) trans-sensate phenomena. Deikman concluded that:

A mystic experience is the production of an unusual state of consciousness. This state is brought about by a de-automatization of hierarchially ordered structures of perception and cognition.... Under special conditions...the pragmatic systems of automatic selection are set aside...in favor of alternate modes of consciousness whose stimulus processing may be less efficient from a biological point of view, but whose very inefficiency may permit the experience of aspects of the real world formerly excluded (1966, pp. 337-338).

This article's importance for the study of the psychology of religion rests primarily in the utilization of psychological language to make a penetrating, non-reductionistic analysis of mystical experience, and the publication of this article in a respectable psychological journal. In my opinion, the contemporary scientific study of the psychology of religion begins with this article.

Since 1966, there have been a variety of phenomenological articles dealing with the psychology of religion (Berg, 1977; Frager & Fadiman, 1975; Kuperstok, 1978; Shultz, 1975). Almost without exception, these articles have been of inferior quality. The strength of a phenomenological study is its insistence on careful description and its reluctance to generalize from its description. The weakness of these articles has been the willingness to generalize from less than careful descriptions.

One recent line of inquiry related to phenomenological study has proved fruitful however. Several national surveys have demonstrated that claims of mystical perception are widespread. Greeley (1974) found that more than three out of ten Americans (35%) reported

having an intense spiritual experience. A similar percentage (36%) was found by Hay and Morisy (1978) with a sample of British respondents. An analysis of the content of the questions used by Greeley, and Hay and Morisy shows that their definition of intense spiritual experience is virtually identical to Clark's "direct apprehension of some cosmic Power" definition for mysticism. This means that mystical experience is not a phenomenon that only a few isolated individuals experience. Rather, it may be more accurately characterized as an experience that many in our culture seem to have, and that the capacity for this kind of experiencing may be able to be cultivated.

As a whole, the phenomenological approach to the study of mysticism has been crucial, but limited. It has been crucial because careful description is the basis upon which scientific knowledge rests. Thus, all else that one might learn about mysticism will ultimately be grounded in a phenomenological description. However, this approach has one serious limitation. In practice, phenomenological studies seem to be limited to a cross-sectional description: i.e. what is happening right now in this particular religious practice. Due to this self-imposed limitation, the perspective of the longitudinal section, i.e. the observation of a religious practice and its results over time, is obscured. This means that another kind of descriptive process needs to be employed to complement the phenomenological process if an accurate description is to be arrived at.

An example of this skew in the descriptive process of phenomenology is found in the notion, common to phenomenologists, that ineffability is a characteristic of mystical experience. Any parti-

cular mystical experience may indeed be ineffable, as the phenomenologists tell us. However, when this cross-sectional approach is compared with the thousands of volumes that mystics have used to record their experiences, the mark of ineffability as a signal characteristic of mystical experience is called into question. This deficiency is not addressed until Brown (1977, Note 1) begins his longitudinal studies.

The Opinionated Approach

No review of the psychological literature on mysticism would be complete without some mention of the vast array of articles purporting to deal with mysticism, and based on the weighty empirical evidence of opinion. This literature is important because it reveals a less than critical mindset vis-a-vis mysticism on the part of those who have written the articles, those editors who print them in respectable journals, and, I suspect, some of those who read these articles. My favorite article of this genre (Maven, 1969) argued that the various descriptions of mystical union are describing an experience analogous to the union of the sperm and the ovum. I find remarkable two things about this article:

1. That the author would have some personal experience regarding the union of sperm and ovum (perhaps he interviewed some little zygote and failed to report this in his article); and
2. That this article would appear in one of the three journals in which psychology of religion articles are regularly reported.

Not all of the articles using the opinionated approach are

hostile to the study of mysticism (Dean, 1974; Schneiderman, 1967, Tisdale, 1975). But rather than advancing the study of this area, these 'favorable' studies only serve as evidence to those scientists who are 'tough-minded' that mysticism is a subject which cannot be studied rigorously or scientifically.

There are also those who write about mysticism who seem to be hostile to its study because mysticism conflicts with a previously conceived world view. One recognizable group that has been prone to this approach are those from the psychoanalytic school. Their characteristic error lies in taking a case history, usually involving severe psychopathology, and generalizing to all mystical experience on this basis (Horton, 1974). This generalizing process seems to be motivated more by opinion than by a dispassionate examination of all of the relevant data. Other variants of this by the psychoanalytic group include generalizing on the basis of faulty descriptions of mystical experience, and an overconcern with defending a preconceived position (Deikman, 1977; Group for the Advancement of Psychiatry, 1976).

The Reductionistic Approach

One of the early observations of clinical psychologists was the strange 'religious' quality found in several clinical populations, especially within the various schizophrenic populations. Several articles report this finding (Aaronson, 1967; Alexander, 1931; Clark, 1946), using a case study methodology. The articles conclude that mystical experiences are capable of being reduced to psychopathology of some form or other. The findings of these articles are clearly

demonstrable in the populations specified; however the conclusions are unwarranted, due to overbroad generalizations from very limited samples. These articles have been damaging to the scientific study of mystical experience because they have focused the attention of researchers on psychopathology rather than on mystical experience per se.

There are several contemporary variants of this approach. Walter (cited in Campbell, 1974) tried to reduce mystical experience to pathological hallucinations. Sacks (1970) utilized a similar approach by connecting mysticism to migraine headaches, as did Dewhurst and Beard (1970) by connecting mystical experience with temporal lobe epilepsy on the basis of a case study methodology. Throughout these articles, the case study approach is utilized, with overbroad generalizations based on samples of clinical psychopathology.

This phenomenon of generalizing beyond the data also occurred with the connection of psychedelic drugs and mysticism in the 1960's. Investigators noticed the similarity between reports of mystical experience and reports of drug induced experiences, and began to explore this. Pahnke (1963), in one of the few experimental studies investigating the connection between mysticism and drugs, found that psilocybin induced mystical experiences in seminarians during Good Friday services.

A multitude of other studies followed (Clark, 1971; Grof, 1975; Leary, 1964; Silverman, 1968), exploring this connection. Because of the social censure surrounding the use of such drugs, the study of mysticism suffered--its connection with drug use was further evidence for many that mysticism was somehow connected with psychopathology,

and competent researchers left this field of study for more respectable pursuits. Not until the work distinguishing between different physiological arousal systems (Fischer, 1971; Gellhorn, 1967) was the study of mysticism clearly distinguishable by objective criteria from the study of psychopathology and drug related phenomena.

The Physiological Approach

One of the most promising approaches to the study of contemplative mysticism is through the measurement of physiological variables in those people claiming mystical experiences. This approach has the great merit of measuring discrete units of behavior in an objective manner--an advantage to be yearned for in a field that has so few operational definitions, let alone units of measurement and objective measurement processes. Further, the format of data collection in physiological studies permits easy comparison with other, similar studies, and allows for replication studies.

Within this broad approach, two separate strands have emerged. The first is concerned with the measurement of physiological variables from subjects in a state of meditation--the question asked in these studies concerns the physiological changes in the meditative state. The second strand is more theoretical in nature, and deals with different states of subcortical arousal. The findings and implications of these latter studies are useful for differentiating between mystical experience and other kinds of experience.

The studies measuring physiological changes during meditation have been diverse, and this makes comparison between studies somewhat difficult. The studies have measured different groups of

meditative practitioners (Hindu yogis of several schools, Transcendental Meditators, and Zen monks); they have measured different physiological variables; and they have had highly variable control procedures. In order to facilitate a comparison of the findings of the best of these studies, I shall utilize the tables prepared by Woolfolk (1975), who adequately summarized the data by grouping together comparable samples.

Table 1
Summary of Studies of Indian Yogic Meditation

References	Experience of Meditators	Changes During Meditation*	Type of Design	Quality of Control Procedures
Das & Gastaut	Highly experienced	Faster EEG, increase in HR	Within-subject	Poor, measurements taken in field under highly variable conditions
Anand et al. ¹	Highly experienced	Faster EEG, decrease in O ₂ consumption, decrease in HR	Within-subject	Excellent, laboratory study
Bagchi & Wegner ²	Highly experienced	No change in EEG, increase in SR level, no change in HR, no change in BP	Within-subject	Poor, measurements taken in field under highly variable conditions
Kasamatsu et al. ³	Highly experienced	Slower EEG	Within-subject	Adequate, laboratory study, meditation period too short
Anand et al.	Highly experienced	Slower EEG	Within-subject	Excellent, laboratory conditions
Wegner & Bagchi ⁴	Moderately experienced	Decrease in SR level, decrease in respiration rate, increase in HR, increase in BP	Within-subject	Poor, initial readings not comparable before meditation & relaxation periods
Karambeikar et al.	Moderately experienced	No change in SR level, increase in O ₂ consumption, no change in HR, no change in BP	Between-subjects	Poor, no control over duration of meditation, sketchy reporting

* Electroencephalogram indicated by EEG; heart rate, HR; oxygen, O₂; skin resistance, SR; and blood pressure, BP.

Table 2
Summary of Studies of Transcendental Meditation

References	Experience of Meditators	Changes During Meditation*	Type of Design	Quality of Control Procedures
Wallace	Moderately experienced	Slower EEG, increase in SR level, decrease in O ₂ consumption, decrease in HR	Within-subject	Excellent, laboratory study, statistical comparisons made
Wallace et al.	Moderately experienced	Slower EEG, increase in SR level, decrease in O ₂ consumption, decrease in BP	Within-subject	Excellent, laboratory study, statistical comparisons made
Schwartz ¹	Moderately experienced	Slower EEG, increase in SR level (these changes not significantly from those found in controls)	Between-subjects	Excellent, laboratory study, statistical comparisons made, appropriate control group
Banquet ²	Moderately experienced	Slower EEG (stages I & II), in some individuals faster EEG observed during third stage	Within-subject	Excellent, laboratory study, statistical comparisons made
Orme-Johnson ³	Moderately experienced	Gaivanic skin response more stable	Between-subjects	Excellent, laboratory study, statistical comparisons made, appropriate control group
Allison ⁴	Not reported	Decrease in rate of respiration	Within-subject	Adequate, laboratory study, sketchy reporting

* See footnote to Table 1.

Table 3
Summary of Studies of Zen Meditation

References	Experience of Meditators	Changes During Meditation*	Type of Design	Quality of Control Procedures
Kasamatsu et al. ¹	Highly experienced	Slower EEG	Within-subject	Adequate, laboratory study, meditation period too short
Kasamatsu & Hirai ¹	Moderately experienced & highly recommended	Slower EEG	Within-subject	Excellent, laboratory conditions
Akishige ²	Highly experienced	Slower EEG, galvanic skin response more stable, decrease in O ₂ consumption, decrease in respiration rate	Within-subject	Excellent, laboratory conditions
Hirai ¹	Highly experienced	Slower EEG, decrease in respiration rate	Within-subject	Adequate, laboratory conditions
Sugi & Akutsu ²	Highly experienced	Decrease in O ₂ consumption	Within-subject	Excellent, laboratory conditions
Goyeche et al.	Minimally experienced	Decrease in respiration rate, decrease in HR	Within-subject	Excellent, laboratory conditions, order of meditation & control periods randomized

* See footnote to Table 1.

Note. From "Psychophysiological Correlates of Meditation" by R. Woolfolk, Archives of General Psychiatry, 1975, 32, 1326-1333.

The autonomic-metabolic effects of meditation are significant decreases in heart rate, respiration rate, oxygen consumption and carbon dioxide consumption, and skin conductivity. As one views these results, the question must be asked: are these results due to the practice of meditation or are they a byproduct of the experimental situation?

In all of the dependent variables measured, there is reason to doubt that the findings are due to the practice of meditation. The decrease in heart rate is not a consistent finding across studies; and when it was found, either the changes were not analyzed statistically (Wallace, cited in Woolfolk, 1975) or the changes were marginally significant (Wallace et al., cited in Woolfolk, 1975). Those studies with poor controls show highly variable results regarding heart rate. The decrease in oxygen consumption may be an

artifact of the practice used. E.g. in Zen, the practice is to count or observe the breathing, and this in itself may alter the oxygen consumption. In other practitioners, a similar effect has been observed with decreased carbon dioxide elimination (Treichel et al. cited in Davidson, 1976). However this finding was present in both the control and experimental groups, and so one must conclude that decreased metabolism was not necessarily related to the technique. In studies of changes in skin conductivity, variable results have been found. Wallace and coworkers (cited in Davidson, 1976) found large increases in skin resistance in meditators. Orme-Johnson (cited in Davidson, 1976), in a study focusing on skin conductivity, found considerably less resistance, and so these findings too are in question. From the collected autonomic-metabolic data, the only conclusion that can be drawn with any certainty is that meditators are in a state of relaxation (Davidson, 1976).

The most common finding in the EEG studies of meditators are changes in the incidence and/or properties of the alpha rhythm. However, there is reason to believe (Lynch et al. cited in Davidson, 1976) that "the commonly reported high alpha densities in meditation may well result from the same process apparently operating in bio-feedback studies: the disinhibition of stimuli which block alpha frequencies" (p. 355). Regarding other changes in alpha rhythms, e.g. the decrease in alpha frequency during meditation and the increases in amplitude,

in no case were the experimental groups statistically compared to controls....[This] weakness must affect our judgement of the other EEG findings which, unlike the above changes in alpha, have not been repeatedly observed (Davidson, 1976, p. 355).

The most important question with regard to EEG findings in meditators is whether the reported EEG changes are significantly different from those one would expect to find in various conditions of sleep and wakefulness. Experimenters have yet to demonstrate that the meditative state has these unique physiological correlates.

Although the data in its present form permits mostly negative conclusions, there are some positive conclusions which can be drawn from these physiological studies. First, it is clear that the meditative exercises have in common a more or less profound sensory detachment from the external environment. This sensory detachment allows an increase in the alpha rhythms of the cortex and a change from ordinary waking consciousness to an altered state of consciousness--a state which has not yet been precisely or differentially defined. Second, there is a change in cognitive awareness in meditation, and active thinking (i.e. such activities as problem solving, imagining, daydreaming, remembering, and other forms of verbal dialog) is passively suppressed. This contributes to the sensory detachment necessary for the altered state of consciousness to occur. A third conclusion is that the lotus posture commonly used for meditation, is utilized in order to achieve maximum postural stability combined with maximum relaxation of skeletal muscles (Akishige, 1973). The relaxation appears to contribute to the achievement and maintenance of the altered state of consciousness, and the postural stability enables the maintenance of that state.

The second strand of physiological research into meditative states is an inquiry into the different states of subcortical arousal.

The established physiologic changes in meditation are

indicative of a level of ...arousal which is low, but not so low as to preclude the maintenance of the waking state. This is manifested: a) in various functions related to sympathetic activity (or the presence of a low sympathetic/parasympathetic activity ration, for example, heart rate, respiration, sweating); b) in function of cerebral cortex (slowing and synchronization of EEG); and c) in skeletal muscle which is maximally relaxed consistent only with maintenance of upright posture. That this triad of cerebral, peripheral-auto-nomic, and skeletal muscle functions is far from a random assembly has been amply demonstrated in the extensive work of the neurophysiologist Gellhorn (1967, 1970) (Davidson, 1976, p. 358).

Gellhorn distinguished between two kinds of subcortical arousal: the ergotrophic and the trophotropic. Ergotrophic arousal is characterized by hyperarousal, the extreme example of which is rage, and by increased activation of the sympathetic nervous system. Trophotropic arousal is the state of hypoarousal characterized by tranquility and by increased activation of the parasympathetic nervous system. Gellhorn worked out the various relationships between these two arousal systems, and attempted to show that behavior and states of consciousness closely follow the balance between the activation of these two systems. Just before his death, Gellhorn and Kiely applied their findings to mystical experiences (1972). Fischer (1971, 1975a, 1975b, 1976) has extended Gellhorn's work by devising an explicit continuum between these two arousal systems. He has graphed the continuum (1975a) as follows:

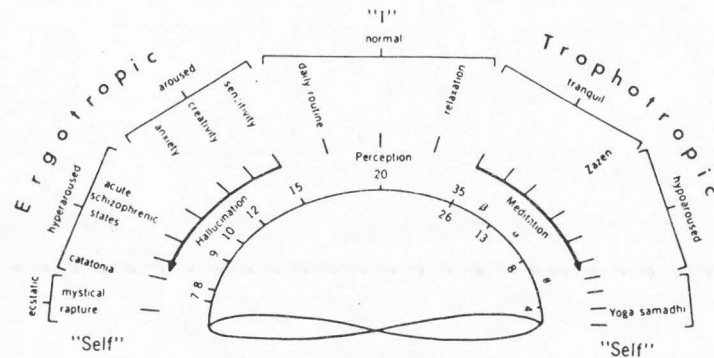


Figure 1. Varieties of conscious states, mapped on a perception-hallucination continuum of increasing ergotropic arousal (left) and a perception-meditation continuum of increasing trophotropic arousal (right). These levels of subcortical hyper- and hypoarousal are cortically or cognitively interpreted by man as normal, creative, hyperphrenic, and ecstatic states (left) and *zazen* and *samādhi* (right). With increasing hyperarousal—from relaxation to catatonia—there is a decrease in variability of the EEG amplitude, measured as the coefficient of variation, which decreases from 35 to 7 (Goldstein et al., 1963). The similarity between horizontally corresponding states of hypo- and hyperarousal from the left to the right may be understood by noting that the coefficient of variation is in the same low range of magnitude during deep meditation (Goldstein and Stoltzfus, 1973) as it is in catatonia (i.e., 7 to 8). With increasing hypoarousal (i.e., from relaxation to *samādhi*), there is a gradual emergence of beta, alpha, and then theta EEG waves with their characteristic hertz frequencies of 26 to 13, 12 to 8, and 7 to 4 Hz. The loop connecting ecstasy and *samādhi* represents the trophotropic rebound, which is observed in response to intense ergotropic hyperarousal.

Note. From "A Cartography of Inner Space" by R. Fischer.

In R. K. Siegel and L. K. West (Eds.) Hallucinations: Behavior, Experience, and Theory. New York: Wiley, 1975.

This continuum provides a conceptual basis for understanding many of the heretofore discrete phenomena which observers of mystical experiences have noted. First, this model utilized the stage model of mystical development, used so extensively by mystics in their descriptions of their experiences. Instead of understanding meditation to be a single discrete state as many of the physiological researchers seem to do, Fischer follows the classical model, that meditation consists of a variety of states whose goal is the perception of a "cosmic Power or Force". This stage model may be one important variable which could explain much of the variability in the data collected on meditation vis-a-vis the physiological indices.

Second, Fischer's continuum makes clear the relationship between mystical experience and the schizophrenic and drug-induced states

which also have a mystical quality. Indeed, this conceptual model provides a basis for distinguishing between these three states, thus freeing the study of mystical experience from some of the onus of public disapproval due to its being inaccurately connected with schizophrenia or drug use.

Third, Fischer's continuum provides an objective means for distinguishing between mysticism induced by passive means, and that induced by active means, thus allowing for the controlled study of both. W. T. Stace (1960) was the first to make this distinction, and he proceeded on the basis of mystics' descriptions of their experiences. In concert with this description is that of Fischer, as he describes ergotropic arousal when extended to include mystical experience. Table 4 compares these two descriptions of actively induced mystical experience.

Table 4
Phenomenological and Physiological Descriptions of
Actively Induced Mystical Experience

Stace (1960)	Fischer (1975b)
1. The Unifying Vision--all things are One (p. 131).	Ecstasies may be conceptualized [as] the individual incorporating the universe into his body image as one indivisible gestalt (p. 240).
2. The more concrete apprehension of the One as an inner subjectivity, or life, in all things (p. 131).	
3. Sense of objectivity or reality (p. 131).	
4. Blessedness, peace, etc. (p. 131).	Voluntary motor [movement] becomes increasingly irrelevant as well as difficult and perceptions are being transformed into intense
5. Feeling of the holy, sacred	

Table 4, continued:

Stace (1960)	Fischer (1975b)
or divine (p. 131).	inner sensation (p. 233).
6. Paradoxicality (p. 131). [I. e.] a disregard for the common laws of logic (p. 68).	A progressive narrowing of the interhemispheric EEG amplitude differences with eventually a reversal of this relationship....Information processing...is preferentially shifted from the speech dominant and motor coordinating brain hemisphere to the nonverbal, visospatial and audio-spatial nondominant hemisphere (p. 236). (This movement may lead to paradoxical perceptions on the part of the subject.)
7. Alleged by mystics to be ineffable (p. 131).	The inexplicable becomes ineffable and ultimately attains numinous significance (p. 232).

The striking parallels between these two different modes of inquiry are continued in their descriptions of passively induced mystical experience, as shown in Table 5.

Table 5

Phenomenological and Physiological Descriptions of
Passively Induced Mystical Experience

Stace (1960)	Fischer (1975b)
1. The Unitary Consciousness; the One; the Void; pure Consciousness (p. 132).	The great climax of satori or Ken-sho... means 'seeing into the essence of things'....[It] represents a lower trophotropic state and expresses a greater inability to function in physical space and time...a lowest metabolic and arousal state is the experience of the Void (pp. 3-4).

Table 5, continued:

Stace (1960)	Fischer (1975b)
2. Nonspatial, nontemporal (p. 132)	[The lowest metabolic and arousal state] empties the Yogi completely, inducing a state which I would describe as pure self-reference without content...in other words, there is no cortical interpretation attached to a subcortical activity which proceeds at the lowest level of arousal and metabolic rate (p. 5).
3. Sence of objectivity or reality (p. 132).	
6. Paradoxicality (p. 132)	
7. Alleged by mystics to be ineffable (p. 132).	

4. Blessedness, peace, etc. (p. 132).	

5. Feeling of the holy, sacred or divine (p. 132).	

There is enough agreement between these two scholars to postulate that they are discussing the same phenomena from different points of view. This in itself can be taken as a validation of the phenomena. However, the important point for this discussion is the careful distinction between these two kinds of mystical experience: the introvertive, which is induced by passive means and results in trophotropic arousal; and the extrovertive, induced by active means and resulting in ergotrophic arousal. This distinction allows more precise focusing for the study of mystical experience.

Both Gellhorn (1967) and Fischer (1971) describe a 'rebound' phenomenon between these two systems of physiological arousal. That is, at any given level of activation, the subject can shift from one arousal system to the other at about the same level of excitation. This may account for some of the conflict in the physiological data gathered from meditators. The one recorded instance of samadhi (Das & Gastaut,

cited in Davidson, 1976), a deep state of trance characterized subjectively by a sense of unity, resulted in data showing an increased heart rate, hyperaroused EEG and a flat EMG. This data shows elements of a strong ergotropic activation, where one would have expected only a trophotropic activation; and an incongruence between the different components of the two systems, reflecting a breakdown in the ergo-trophotropic balance. This breakdown or rebound phenomenon may account for the subjective perceptions of paradox noted above.

This rebound phenomenon is the basis for some interesting speculations by Sargant (1969). He connects mystical experience with Pavlov's findings about the functioning of the nervous system when under stress. Pavlov described four stages of protective inhibition and dysfunctions. The first, the 'equivalent' phase, is characterized by all stimuli getting the same response.

The next phase of induced brain inhibition is the 'paradoxical' phase. Here the patient receives a greater emotional stimulus and experiences far greater emotional feelings from a small stimulus than from a much larger one (Sargant, 1969, p. 508).

The next phase is the 'ultraparadoxical' phase of brain activity, and in it, many of the positive conditioned responses become negative, and negative responses become positive. This may be similar to the ergotropic-trophotropic rebound described by Gellhorn and Fischer. In this stage, Pavlov insists that 'feelings of possession' occur. By this, Pavlov seems to mean some kind of contact with a "cosmic Power or Force". Finally, the last stage of protective inhibition is the 'hypnoidal' state.

The brain stops computing critically all the impressions then being received by it. New impressions, new commands,

new ideas become suddenly imperative in their need of acceptance, and ring absolutely true; and moreover, are often completely immune to all the normal processes whereby the brain examines critically most of the new impressions received, compares them with all its stored impressions and experiences, and decides, on the basis of past knowledge and present balanced judgements, whether the new ideas are likely to be true or false (Sargant, 1969, p. 509).

At the present time, Sargant has not marshalled enough data to support his thesis. Nevertheless, the thesis remains an intriguing one needing further research. Presently there is some evidence both to support and to deny this speculation. The horror of a Jonestown, or the sudden personality change of a youngster converted by the 'Moonies' may be explained by the process which Pavlov and Sargant describe. However, this thesis does not explain the reverence generated by a mystic such as Francis of Assisi. One hypothesis which would account for this difference is that the phenomenon which Pavlov and Sargant are describing is different from the phenomenon of mystical experience.

The Empirical Experimental Approach

Within the empirical, experimental approach, there are two avenues of research at the present time. The first, a series of experiments conducted by Hood and others, has explored the question, 'What set of stimuli elicit mystical experience?' The second approach which has attracted a number of researchers has explored the questions, 'What are the characteristics of mystical experience?' and 'What are the characteristics of those persons who have mystical experience?'

Rosegrant (1976) investigated the impact of set and setting in eliciting religious experiences. He found that stress was the

only variable significantly related to the generation of mystical experience. Further, he found that mystical experiences are not necessarily perceived as meaningful by those who experience them. This suggests that the findings of Greeley (1974) and Hay and Morisy (1978) regarding the incidence of mystical experience may be less than the actual incidence, due to the usual 'forgetting' of unmeaningful material.

Following up on Rosegrant's work, Hood (1977, 1978) found that an incongruence between the anticipated set and setting was more likely to elicit the report of mystical experience than a congruence between set and setting. E.g. the anticipated set of an experience being easy combined with a setting that is difficult is more likely to elicit reports of mystical experience than a congruence between set and setting. Hood also found that stress per se was less likely to elicit reports of mystical experience.

Hood stated that the reasons for this phenomenon are at present unknown. He speculated that "when anticipatory set and setting stress are incongruent, an awareness of limits is likely to be produced that facilitates transcendence or positive mystical experience" (1977, p. 156). This 'awareness of limits' may be similar to the phenomenon that Sargant (1969) explored. Sargant connected mystical experience with Pavlov's findings about four stages of protective inhibition and dysfunction which the nervous system goes through during stress. Hood's findings would suggest a modification of Sargant's thesis: that stress per se is not the precipitating factor in humans, but rather the specific stress which produces an awareness of limits, thus allowing some kind of transcendence to take place. This area

of human experience needs further empirical research in order to explore these questions.

The second focus of empirical research on mystical experience has focused on the questions, 'What are the characteristics of the mystical experience?' and 'What are the characteristics of those who have mystical experience?' To date, there is one published study based on empirical research which tries to answer the question regarding the characteristics of mystical experience. Margolis and Elifson (1979) did a factor analytic study of 69 religious experiences reported by 45 subjects. They found that four factors described the 69 experiences: a) transcendence; b) disorientation; c) a life changing quality; and d) a visionary quality. They described each of these factors as sharing in the characteristics of unity, ineffability, noetic quality, positive affect, and space/time distortions. The findings of this study are intriguing, but they are open to serious question. The intriguing quality derives from the close parallel to Stace's phenomenological description of mystical experience (1960). But these findings are also highly suspect because of the inadequacy of the sample. In order for these findings to be reliable in a factor analysis, at least 200 experiences are necessary, from 200 different subjects of widely varying backgrounds. To attempt to generalize these findings to all religious experiences on the basis of the reports of 45 people is, at the very least, misleading.

The second strand of empirical research on mystical experience has focused on the question, 'What are the characteristics of those who have mystical experience?' Douglas-Smith (1971) found that subjects reporting mystical experience had a mean IQ of 129,

that they tended to come from the higher social classes, and that there was no difference between the sexes in reporting incidences of mystical experience. He also found that his data did not support the hypotheses that mystical experience results from hyper-suggestibility, pathological lying, hysteria, epilepsy, schizophrenia, paranoia, or manic-depressive psychosis.

A variety of studies support Douglas-Smith's findings against a pathological interpretation of mystical experience. Allison (1967) found that people who had intense spiritual experiences were characterized by a greater tolerance for ambiguity, better imaginative productivity, and less tendency towards dogmatism than control subjects. "These findings are at variance with the notion that abrupt, sudden conversion experiences are essentially pathological, destructive and closely akin to psychosis" (Allison, 1967, p. 458).

Hood (1974) found that persons with high ego strength were more likely to report intense religious experiences than people with low ego strength. From this finding, Hood suggests that only "a strong ego can be relinquished non-pathologically" (p. 69). In another study, (Thomas & Cooper, 1980) utilizing over 300 subjects, there was no evidence that psychopathology and reporting spiritual experiences were correlated in a non-clinical population. The findings of the four studies above are directly counter to the findings based on the 'opinion' approach, and due to the empirical methodology used in these studies, their findings must be taken as authoritative.

Other empirical studies have focused on the reported relationship between practice in meditation, attentional focusing, and the reduction in trait anxiety. Tellegren and Atkinson (1974) opera-

tionally defined 'absorption' as a "total attention, involving a full commitment of available perceptual, motoric, imaginative and ideational resources to a unified representation of the attentional object" (p. 274). They found that meditation, a practice that leads to absorption, resulted in a heightened sense of the reality of the attentional object, and an altered sense of reality in general. Davidson, Goleman and Schwartz (1976) reported reliable increases in measures of attentional absorption and decreases in measures of the trait of anxiety to be a function of the length of time spent meditating. They also found that the differences in attentional absorption and anxiety were independent of each other. In a related study, Kelton (1977) found that meditators were able to resist distractions, a dimension of attentional absorption, better than non-meditating control subjects. These studies need to be replicated, but the preliminary evidence indicates a positive relationship between meditation and increases in attentional absorption, and an inverse relationship between meditation and the trait of anxiety.

Another study throws an interesting light on the meditative process. Faber, Saayman, and Touyz (1978) found that meditators' dreams contained significantly more archetypal material, reflecting universal and transpersonal themes, than did the dreams of non-meditators, which seemed to have more personal themes. Also, there was a significantly higher recall rate and a greater amount of content in the dreams of meditators. The findings of this study suggest the hypothesis that meditation facilitates exploration into the unconscious. These findings are congruent

with the expected results predicted by several recent theorists regarding the structure of the mind (Wellwood, 1977; Wilbur, 1977). These results cannot be taken to confirm these theories, but they do indicate the need for further research along these lines.

The Longitudinal Approach

In a recent symposium, Daniel Brown of Harvard presented a paper which defined contemplative mysticism by means of the stage model (Note 1). In his comparison of Hinduism, Theravada Buddhism, and Mahayana Buddhism, he distinguished six stages common to all three religions which were "sufficiently similar to suggest an underlying common, invariant sequence of stages, despite vast cultural and linguistic differences". Brown was also able to distinguish sub-stages for each of the major stages. In all, he distinguished 21 discrete stages or sub-stages of contemplative mystical development.

What I find intriguing about Brown's work is the way in which his description parallels the descriptions of the mystics themselves. Rather than attempting to synthesize or to reduce mystical experience to some common denominator, Brown deals with the reports of mystical experience as they are--in a stage model--and works to determine if a universal model can be postulated across religious lines.

However, there are two weaknesses in Brown's study. First, he does not seem to recognize the full extent of what he has done,

and so he has mislabeled his work. He refers to the stages as 'stages of meditation' when clearly the beginning stages do not involve meditation. A more accurate description of his work would be, 'stages of contemplative mystical development'.

Second, Brown's study is based on a sample whose teachings and practices arose on the Indian subcontinent. Thus, his stage formulation is open to the criticism that it represents the religious mind of India only, and is not the "underlying common (emphasis mine) invariant sequence of stages" that he claims. Widening the range of the sample would provide a more sound basis for this generalization.

There has been one published study which has attempted to validate Brown's stage model. Brown and Engler (1980) were able to clearly distinguish between mystical stages in practitioners of Theravada Buddhism on the basis of Rorschach test results. The objective of the study was to "establish independent empirical measures of the alleged cognitive changes described in the traditional texts and in the subjective reports and questionnaires of contemporary practitioners" (p. 146). The Rorschach was used because it served as a "stage sensitive validation instrument" (p. 147). The weakness of this study revolves around the use of the Rorschach as the test instrument. The Rorschach has not been validated as a stage sensitive measuring instrument, and thus the authors have not met the objective of their study, to "establish independent empirical measures of the alleged cognitive changes" occurring in contemplative mystical practice. The problem lies in the possibility that the measure used may be interacting in some way with the prac-

tices it is measuring. Despite this, the results are promising, and further research needs to be done to explore this approach.

Summary

This completes my review of the rather meager scientific literature surrounding the study of contemplative mystical development. There are several conclusions which can be drawn from this review. First, the characteristics of religious experiences induced by introvertive means as described by phenomenological studies are identical with the results of empirical studies. Thus, phenomenology has served to open the field of mystical experience to scientific study. However, the major weakness of the phenomenological approach is that it is a cross-sectional approach, and does not describe mystical development longitudinally. For this weakness to be corrected, a longitudinal approach is a necessary complement.

Second, the physiological approach has yielded valuable data from which several conclusions may be drawn. The physiological data have provided a means for distinguishing between introvertive and extrovertive mystical experience, and for distinguishing contemplative mysticism from drug use and psychopathology on the basis of arousal systems. However, the physiological approach has not yet found distinct physiological correlates for different stages of mysticism. And only recently have researchers begun to explore why meditative practices consistently utilize a specific triad of cerebral, peripheral-autonomic, and skeletal-muscular functions to achieve the desired goals of an altered state of consciousness in which the 'apprehension of a cosmic Power or Force' becomes possible.

Further research in this area should prove invaluable to a scientific understanding of what takes place during mystical experiences.

One of the results of the empirical investigations of those who report mystical experiences is the confirmation of the physiological data generated by research into arousal systems, further distinguishing mystical experience from psychopathology. The empirical findings are that those who report mystical experiences have a high ego strength, a greater tolerance for ambiguity, and are less dogmatic. The empirical findings of the characteristics of those who meditate include greater attentional concentration and less trait anxiety. These findings are also evidence that mystical experiences are not, ipso facto, pathological.

Finally, this review touched on Sargant's theory which attempts to connect reports of mystical development with Pavlov's learning theory. There is no hard evidence to support this theory at the present time, but the theory itself is notable in that this is the first attempt to connect mystical experiences with the classical learning theory of psychology. That this should even be attempted is evidence of the growing interest in understanding the phenomena of mysticism from a scientific point of view.

The major impression that I would like the reader to gain from this review is a sense of how little research has been done in this important area of human experience, and how few conclusions can be confidently asserted on the basis of the present empirical evidence. With the exception of some of the physiological research done in India and Japan, most of the research in mystical experience has taken place in the last 15 years, and even that work has been spor-

adic. The empirical investigation of the psychology of religion, and the psychology of religious experience is an investigation in its infancy. The present study is an attempt to extend what is known by focusing on the replication and extension of Brown's work (Note 1) to determine if there exists sufficient evidence for postulating a conceptual model of contemplative mystical development across religious lines.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH PROCEDURES

Population and Sample

The population to which this study is addressed consists of all major world religions with a tradition of contemplative mysticism. By 'major world religion', I mean any religion that has been in existence for more than 500 years, has moved beyond the borders of the country and culture in which it originated, is commonly recognized by scholars of comparative religion as a major world religion, and is still in existence today. A further elaboration of this definition is the recognition that different schools within a religion constitute functionally a separate major world religion, provided that they meet the criteria above. For example, Christianity has three major schools: Eastern Orthodox Christianity, Roman Catholicism, and Protestant Christianity. These three are sufficiently different from one another in matters of faith and practice to be considered different religions for the purposes of this study.

The population of this study is limited to major world religions, because these faiths have withstood the tests of time and cultural translation. The assumption which I have made is that they have met some fundamental needs of humanity, needs which transcend cultural limits, in order to have withstood these two tests. The purpose of this study is not to try to understand this need, but to accept the hypothesized need as a component of our humanity, and to study a

facet of its expression as it is found in one of the primary expressions of the religious quest--the struggle to achieve union with God. Further, this study is limited to those world religions that have a well defined mystical tradition. The particular focus of this study is the structure of contemplative mystical development. Thus, it would be pointless to discuss a religion like Confucianism, which is ethical in nature, and has no mystical tradition.

According to R.C. Zaehner (1967), a world recognized scholar in comparative religion, the living world religions include: Judaism, Eastern Orthodox Christianity, Roman Catholic Christianity, Protestant Christianity, Islam, Zoroastrianism, Hinduism, Jainism, Theravada Buddhism, Mahayana Buddhism, Shinto, Confucianism, and Taoism. I have excluded Jainism, Shinto, Confucianism and Taoism from this study on the grounds that they have not transcended the limits of the culture and/or country in which they originated. To include them may unduly bias this study, because the mystical material within these religions may reflect more the cultural constitution of the writers, and thus may not help to isolate the common structure of contemplative development towards which this study is aimed. Zoroastrianism has been excluded on the grounds that not enough is known about its mystical element due to the lack of survival of its mystical writings. I simply cannot compare its mystical writers with others because their works have not survived. In addition, there are only a few hundred thousand adherents of Zoroastrianism at the present time.

Protestant Christianity is excluded from this study for two reasons. First, it has not been in existence for 500 years. Second,

and more importantly, there is a lack of an ongoing mystical tradition within the religion. Mystical writers surface on occasion within this religion, but they seldom generate much of a following. This religion has focused more on ethical development as a way to know God, rather than the development of a contemplative vehicle.

Thus, the population to which this study is limited includes the following major world religions: Judaism, Eastern Orthodox Christianity, Roman Catholic Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Theravada Buddhism, and Mahayana Buddhism. The sampling procedure which I used was guided by four principles. First, I looked for a primary text by a mystical author within each religion in the population, which described the structure of contemplative mystical development to its end point: union with God. I did not follow a random sampling procedure in this study because of the limited availability of material. Very few authors have described the structure of contemplative mystical development to its end point. I suspect that this is due to two reasons: first, very few people reach the end point of contemplative development; and second, only a handful of those who do reach this goal have felt motivated to write about their experiences--the experience itself seems to complete itself, and there is not the motivation to go to the further effort of writing about it.

The second principle that I used in the sampling procedure was that the mystical author had to be accepted as authoritative by his or her religious tradition. This principle has the effect of limiting the sample to authors who are truly representative of the religion. This procedure was followed in all cases except for the Judaic religion. In this instance, I selected a text that is authoritative in the

Chabad school of Hasidism. Judaism is at present so divided that it would be impossible to select a mystical text which could be accepted by the entire religion. Another complicating factor is that much of the mystical material in Judaism appears to be conveyed orally. The text which I selected, although authoritative for one of the mystical sects within Judaism, was also the only Jewish text which I found which described the structure of contemplative mystical development.

The third principle which I followed in the sampling procedure had a limited application. In this study, I want to check Brown's work (Note 1), and thus, I have chosen the same texts which he did where this procedure is applicable.

The fourth principle of selection was that the texts used in this study must be available in English translation. This is primarily a matter of economics, as I have not had funds available for the translation of those texts which are not available in translation. In practice, it has meant the reduction of the sample by two religions whose mystical writings are not available in English. As a result, the methodological rigor of the study has suffered.

I have excluded Mahayana Buddhism on the grounds that the text that Brown used, the Mahamudra Sutras, is available only in the Tibetan language. To some extent, this loss is ameliorated by the fact that the text selected for Theravada Buddhism, the Path of Purification, is also accepted as valid by the Mahayana Buddhists (Conze, 1965). Thus, we may safely assume that most of the results generated from this text can be generalized to the Mahayana. The difficulty with this procedure lies in knowing precisely which results are generalizable--a task that is impossible without a

translation of the Mahayana text.

I have also excluded Islam from the study on the grounds that the necessary text is not available in English translation. This is a more serious loss, as Islam is an important world religion which does not have a convenient equivalent like that of Mahayana Buddhism above. With regard to Islam, there is considerable evidence from secondary sources (Affifi, 1939; Palmer, 1867/1969) of a stage model of contemplative mystical development which is similar to the model described by Brown (Note 1). The text to which these authors refer is the principal work of the primary exponent of the contemplative mystical tradition within Islam, the Al-Futuhat al-makkiyah of Ibn al-Arabi (1911). According to Affifi (1939), Ibn al-Arabi describes the process of contemplative development on p. 675 and following of Volume II of the work cited above. However, as this text is not available in translation, I cannot include it in this study.

Thus, the sample utilized in this study is narrowed by practical considerations to texts from five of the seven major world religions: Hinduism, Theravada Buddhism, Judaism, Eastern Orthodox Christianity, and Roman Catholic Christianity.

The text selected from Hinduism is the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali. This text is regarded as the most authoritative work on mystical development in that religion (Kulkarni, Note 2; Taimni, 1968; Zaehner, 1967). I used the Taimni translation and commentary because of its accuracy in rendering the Sanskrit text into English (Kulkarni, Note 2). This is also the text which Brown used in his study (Note 1), and this enables me to replicate his work on Hinduism.

The text selected from Theravada Buddhism is the Path of Puri-

fication of Buddhaghosa. This text is widely regarded as the most authoritative text of mystical development within Theravada Buddhism (Conze, 1965; Thera, 1975; Horner, 1967). I have used the translation prepared by Bhikkhu Nyanamoli (1964), a Theravadan monk. This text was also used by Brown, and my usage in this study provides for a replication of his work.

The text selected from Judaism is the Tract on Ecstasy, written by Dobh Baer of Lubavitch. This text is viewed as authoritative only within the Chabad school of Hasidic Jewry, and thus is not valid for all of Judaism. The selection of this text is a compromise between excluding Judaism altogether on the grounds that no text that can be accepted by all of Judaism exists, and the position of including some text which is at least representative of the mystical part of Judaism. I have erred towards its inclusion on the grounds that the study is strengthened by this addition. This text is available in only one English translation, that of L. Jacobs (1963), a noted Jewish scholar.

The text selected from Eastern Orthodox Christianity is the Treatises of St. Isaac of Nineveh. Isaac is regarded as the foremost Christian mystic of Syria (Wensinck, 1969), and his works were quickly recognized and translated into Greek, the lingua franca of the Orthodox Churches. Since their translation, he has had a wide influence on the development of Orthodox mysticism, through the use of his ideas by such writers as St. John Climacus (1978) and Theophane the Recluse (1952). There is presently only one translation of Isaac's Treatises in English. This translation is from the critical text of the Syrian.

From the Roman Catholic tradition, I have used the Interior Castle of St. Teresa of Avila. I have used Teresa because she is a woman, and thus is the only female author in this sample, and because she originated a school of contemplation which has had a wide popularity within the Roman Catholic Church and still is in use today. Her works are accepted as authoritative by the entire Roman Church, and she was elevated to the status of Doctor of Theology by Pope Paul VI in 1970. I have used the translation of Kavanaugh and Rodriguez (1979), which is a translation from the critical text.

The sampling procedure that I have followed, although not a random sampling, is sufficient to insure that if an agreement is found between these mystical authors regarding the stages of contemplative mystical development, it is not an artifact of the selection procedure. These five religions are sufficiently different from one another that any agreement between the mystics in the sample will be due to similar experiences: experiences which I hypothesize are common to all people who pursue this path of development. There is enough variability among these five religions in matters of faith and practice to insure that any agreement between their mystical exponents will be on the basis of similar experiences, and not as an artifact of selection or belief. More explicitly, it is not possible to be a 'good' practitioner of any one of these religions and be in agreement with all the rest. The beliefs and many of the practices of these religions are mutually incompatible. Thus, if there is a strong agreement between exponents of these religions regarding mystical progress, and if each exponent is accepted as authoritative by the religion (and thus is incompatible with each of the others on the basis of faith

and practice), then it will be clear that the central question of this study should be answered in the affirmative, and a model of contemplative mystical development postulated in order to make explicit the areas of agreement between these major world religions in contemplative mystical experience.

Procedures

The first question that this study asks is descriptive: What are the stages of contemplative mystical development as expressed by contemplative authors of major world religions? There are at present no systematic descriptions of contemplative mystical development of the major world religions in the scientific literature. Thus, the first task of inquiry in this area must be a careful and accurate description of the phenomena to be studied.

The second question which this study poses is taxonomic: Can a common, invariant sequence of stages of contemplative mystical development be postulated from a comparison of the conceptualizations of these stages by contemplative authors of different major world religions? In order to address this second question of the study, I have compared the summaries of the descriptions of contemplative development with each other. From this comparison, I have developed a taxonomy of contemplative mystical development which can be used to define this branch of mysticism. This definition should provide the basis for more controlled procedures of empirical data collection.

I have then used the taxonomic definition of contemplative mysticism to address the third and final question of this study: Is Brown's conceptual model accurate, or can another model of con-

templative development be postulated which provides a better fit for the data? Brown is the only other author to have attempted such a definition. This comparison will provide a means for evaluating the two models.

In order to collect the data on which this study is based, I have followed a number of procedures. First, I have engaged in a careful survey of the religions comprising the population, and on the basis of recognized scholarly commentaries, have selected a text from each religion which described the course of contemplative mystical development. The selection procedures are described in detail on pages 47 to 49 above.

Second, I read each of the texts carefully, using a scholarly commentator when I had difficulty in understanding the meaning of the text. From this reading, I described the stages of contemplative mystical development as conceptualized by each mystical author. In doing so, I preserved as much of the original language of the author as possible in order to preserve as much information as possible. Of necessity, information was lost in each of my descriptions: e.g. I summarized the Theravadan Buddhist text, a text which was over 800 pages long, in 10 pages. However, preserving the words of the original, with much editing to remove material extraneous to my purposes, has reduced the amount of lost information. Following the description of the mystical stages in the author's own language, I engaged in a further exercise: summarizing in my own language the meaning of the author's descriptions. This involved a series of subjective judgements on my part which the reader can evaluate by comparing my summaries with the descriptions of the texts.

I then compared these summaries with one another, a procedure which involved two operations. First, I divided the material into units which could then be compared with each other. Second, I established a category-set, into which the unitized material could be classified.

The material in this study was unitized by the mystical authors themselves, according to themes. I considered each stage or substage as a separate qualitative unit which the mystical author was using to describe a discrete set of phenomena. Thus, for each author, I developed a set of stages and substages of mystical development, based on the authors' own description of the units of that development.

This operation made it difficult to lay down, a priori, a category-set which provided a good fit for the data. As a result, I developed a category-set by comparing the stage descriptions of the different authors with one another. This comparison was made strictly on the basis of my best judgement of the similarities between the descriptions of the stages. Thus, there is a certain margin for error in this taxonomy, which seems at this stage of inquiry to be unavoidable. Later studies, with controlled empirical data collection methods, will be able to contribute, post hoc, to the accuracy of this taxonomy.

Finally, I compared the category-set which I developed from the data with the category-set which Brown (Note 1) developed. This allowed an evaluation of Brown's model against the model developed from a larger and more representative sample. Brown's category-sets are defined in terms of the stages and substages of mystical development which he found. They are:

I. Preliminary Ethical Practices:

- A. The generation of faith: an attitude change brought about by the acceptance of the faith postulates of the religion.
- B. Formal study: a series of intrapsychic transformations brought about by a formal study of the tenets of the religion.
- C. Sensory and behavioral regulation: the institution of behavioral changes, usually ethical in character, which are described in the doctrines of the religion. Functionally, this can be described as awareness training.

II. Preliminary Mind/Body Training:

- A. Body isolation: training in body postures in order to cause a rearrangement in the way one experiences the body.
- B. Speech isolation: calming mental chatter and associative thinking.
- C. Mind isolation: tuning into the stream of awareness that exists underneath the mental chatter, due to a rearrangement of the mental continuum and the deconstruction of thinking. Functionally, this is the beginning of the 'absorption' states.

III. Concentration with Support:

- A. Concentration training: decategorizing the objects of perception, with an awareness of the attributes of the object of concentration without the usual concomitant of intellectual categorizing.

- B. Concentration inside: the ability to hold an image of the object of concentration within the self space, and the ability to manipulate that image at will.
- C. Collapse of sense material into a central point, so that all one's awareness is concentrated on this one point. At this stage, there is a recognition of the various patterns of the sensory modalities.
- D. Stopping the mind (i.e. gross perception): the gross perceptual world collapses completely, such that there is no perception of seeing, hearing, feeling, etc.

IV. Concentration Without Support:

- A. Tuning in subtle perception: the ability to hold fast to the flow of subtle perception underneath gross mental events. The subtle flow is often perceived as a stream of light.
- B. Recognizing the subtle flow: during this stage, the sense of the observer-self and the sense of agency drop away.
- C. With the collapse of the observer, there is a restructuring of perspective and an internal balancing. At this point, psychic powers become available, but they are very unstable.

V. Insight Practice:

- A. High speed search of the subtle flow with the eradication of the biasing factors, resulting in a sense of the derealization of phenomena, and the perception that nothing is solid.

- B. High speed search of gross mental events, with a shift in the perceived duration and frequency of events in the subtle flow. At this stage, psychic powers stabilize. The preferred line of development, however, is the evolution of raptures, and the perception of 'white light'.
- C. Analysis of mind-moments and their succession, leading to a perception of the interconnectedness of all potential events, and the experience of non-dissolution or unity. At this stage, there is a fundamental change in time/space perception and an altered sense of self which cannot be described.

VI. Advanced Insight:

- A. Perception of the equanimity of interrelated events, and the interaction of specific events and the cosmos. At this stage, the practitioner can make any desired reality come into existence, e.g. talking with God, etc.
- B. Basis enlightenment: the cessation of mental activity and reactivity, the cessation of states of being, and a sense of vast awareness.
- C. Path enlightenment: the recognition of the internal transformation and the return of mental content from a changed locus of awareness.
- D. Fruit enlightenment: the fruition of the practice, with an awareness of the mind as cosmos.
- E. Return to ordinary mind with this changed locus of awareness.

The results of this study are presented in a way that is congruent with the twofold nature of the study. The descriptive material is presented in Chapters 4 through 8. I have presented a chapter on each of the religions included in the sample, each chapter being composed of three parts. First, I prefaced the description of the mystical author with material which puts the author and his/her text in its context. Included is material on the religion's historical development, belief system, the place of the mystical author and text within the context of the religion, and biographical information when available. The body of these descriptive chapters is subheaded, 'Description of Contemplative Mystical Development' and in this section, I have summarized the structure of contemplative development as described by the author. I have used the authors' own wording as much as possible in my descriptions. The third and final section of these chapters is entitled, 'Summary of the Structure', and here I have summarized in my own words the material presented in the 'Description of Contemplative Mystical Development'. This concludes the descriptive work of this study.

The taxonomic part of this study is presented in Chapter 9, entitled 'Taxonomic Results'. In Chapter 9, I have compared the summaries of contemplative mystical development with each other, and then, have compared the results of this procedure with Brown's model.

Like all studies, this study is subject to several strengths and weaknesses. The major strength of this study is the descriptive base from which the taxonomic conclusions are drawn. These descriptions will allow later researchers to evaluate the data

base from which the original research was conducted. This process protects against conclusions which are arrived at from faulty descriptions of the phenomena.

Sources of bias to which this study is subject include judgement errors on my part, and translation errors. Errors of translation have been minimized insofar as it is possible to do so, by carefully choosing the translations used on the basis of other authorities. The possibility of judgement errors is generated by my personal interest in this subject and by my desire to find similarities in the mystical traditions of diverse religions. The major source of this kind of error will rest in my selection of the quotations used to delineate the structure of the authors' mystical experience. This source of error has been controlled by the careful referencing of the units of meaning which make up the stages and substages of mystical development. This allows independent investigators to check the accuracy of my decisions at each stage of decision making.

Another possible source of error stemming from my judgement rests in the development of the taxonomy. This classification was created solely by my judgements of similarities between stage descriptions, and thus was not a tightly controlled procedure. What control there is for this procedure is found in Table 6, where all of the stages of the various religions are compared with each other. This table allows the reader to check my judgements regarding the creation of the taxonomy.

Literary Conventions

For the bulk of this paper, I have utilized the conventions

For the bulk of this paper, I have utilized the conventions described in the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (1981). For Chapters 4 through 8, describing the different religious traditions, I have used a modification of the APA guidelines, in order to preserve clarity and avoid needless redundancy. The modifications included:

- a. The full citation of the reference from which the description of mystical development was taken, on the first citation of that text in the study. Thereafter, I abbreviated the citation to page number only.
- b. The use of extensive quotations when describing the authors' conceptions of contemplative mystical development. The purpose of these chapters is primarily descriptive. My choices in handling these descriptions were to consolidate the material with little direct quotation, or to utilize quotation extensively in order to preserve the flavor of the original author. I opted for the latter on the grounds that more information is preserved and communicated in this way. I consolidated each description of contemplative structure in a more homogenized fashion at the end of the chapter so that the structures were comparable with each other.
- c. In my use of quotations, I made considerable alteration at times, by leaving out material or by adding the referent of an indeterminant pronoun in brackets. The quotations in this study have been fashioned so that the reader can

- read each paragraph containing quotations as a coherent whole without paying attention to the various brackets or other markings.
- d. On occasion, I found it necessary to clarify the meaning of a particular word or phrase in a quotation. All clarifications of this type are set off by parentheses, and begin with 'i.e.'. Material within the parentheses should not be considered part of the quotation.
 - e. In my descriptions of the texts in this study, I have often followed quoted material with my own comment. In every case, the material I have added is without quotation marks, and is identifiable in that way.
 - f. The APA Publication Manual has a series of conventions regarding the insertion of quoted material into the text of a study. For purposes of clarity, I have not followed these conventions in Chapters 4 through 8 in the sections entitled, 'Description of Contemplative Mystical Development'. My purpose in these sections is to describe the text in such a way as to make apparent the structure of mystical development. Thus, I have used the authors' numbering systems for the major stages and substages, following a basic outline format. If I had followed the APA guidelines in this matter, and dealt with quoted material by indenting and single spacing, the material would have been visually confusing.

- g. Some of the religions in this study have developed a specialized language to describe mystical states. In all cases I have preserved this language.

CHAPTER IV

HINDU CONTEMPLATIVE DEVELOPMENT: THE YOGA SUTRASThe Religious Context

Hinduism originated prior to the advent of historical recording. The physical evidence suggests that during the second millennium B.C., a group of related Aryan tribes pushed into India from the northwest, dominating the local cultures. These invading Aryans composed hymns of sacrifice and thanksgiving, which have been preserved as the Rg Veda, and which formed the nucleus around which coalesced the religion known today as Hinduism (Basham, 1968).

Thus, Hinduism is a religious system that is over 3000 years old, and is the oldest religion in this sample. It is a very complex system of beliefs and practices, giving rise to many 'schools of thought' regarding religious matters. However, there are several common strands of belief which run through all of these schools, tying Hinduism together into a recognizable system.

Central to Hindu belief is the notion of karma. Karma is the belief that past actions affect one's present life. Thus, every good act has positive consequences for the individual doing the act, even though those consequences may not be immediately discernable, and every bad act will have adverse consequences in a like manner. This doctrine is expanded by the doctrine of the transmigration of souls, or reincarnation. Hindus have the belief that all living

things have souls, and that these souls move through an endless succession of incarnations. And, although the karma of an action may have no discernable effect on one's present life, that karma is inextricably attached to the soul and will manifest in a future life. Thus, one's present circumstances--health, wealth, status, etc.--are due in large part to the accumulation of karma from previous existences.

These beliefs were expanded by the writings of the Upanishads, a group of religious texts which have a common theme, "the unity of the individual soul (atman) with the impersonal and absolute World-Soul (Brahman), which pervades and underlies the cosmos" (Basham, 1967, p. 228). This basic unity is obscured by samsara, the phenomenal world of everyday reality. Samsara is understood to be a series of illusions with no substantial reality. Samsara 'captures' the soul in a web of illusion and prevents the perception of Reality. The religious journey of the individual is to train one's awareness so that the fundamental unity of Brahman and atman is perceptible, and samsara is seen for the illusion that it is.

Hinduism has developed six schools of salvation, all of which were in existence before the Christian era. Of interest to this study is the school of Yoga. Yoga is a term which can best be translated as 'spiritual discipline'. This school was founded by Patanjali, who wrote the Yoga Sutras, the text which this study will examine as representative of Hinduism's mystical tradition.

The chief distinguishing feature of the Yoga school is its carefully planned and graduated course of spiritual exercises, which, variously adapted, are now a common feature of all the higher manifestations of Hinduism (Basham, 1967, p. 237).

The function of these spiritual exercises is to guide the student through the illusions of samsara to the perception of Reality. The spiritual exercises outlined in the Yoga Sutras are designed to accomplish this end. The text itself consists of 196 sutras, each of which is highly condensed. The experience of the reality to which the words point is accomplished by meditation upon these sutras under the tutelage of a skilled teacher.

One of the difficulties of an English speaking person understanding the Yoga Sutras is that they were originally written in Sanskrit, a language well suited to the expression of philosophical ideas, but one that seems to a Westerner to be open to a variety of interpretations. However, the Yoga Sutras are not considered by knowledgeable Hindus to be open to interpretation; rather they are seen as a description of a precise process of inner transformation. In order for the Westerner to understand this work, s/he must have access to a valid translation with a commentary which can elucidate the sutras so that their meaning is clear. In this study I used the translation and commentary of I. K. Taimni (1968) which, I believe, addresses these problems (Note 2).

No introduction to Hinduism would be complete without an examination of its gods. Hinduism recognizes a multiplicity of gods, but these many gods are generally subsumed under a single main God. Thus, Hindus can be divided into three broad groups, according to the god which is worshipped as the main God: those who worship Vishnu; those who worship Siva; and those who worship Sakti. Members of these groups have generally been able to live together without friction. Their beliefs and doctrines are roughly harmonized, and

each set of worshippers believes the other major gods to be secondary manifestations of the God which they worship. Thus, although Hinduism is generally characterized as polytheistic, it is functionally monotheistic. This is not the result of excluding other gods, but instead results from the assimilation of many local deities into one or another of the main Gods.

Description of Contemplative Mystical Development

The term 'yoga' is derived from the Sanskrit 'yuj', meaning 'to join' (Taimni, 1968). As used in the Yoga Sutras, it refers to the joining together of the human soul and the Divine Reality (Paramatma). "Although in essence the two are the same and indivisible, still, the Jivatma (i.e. the human soul) has become subjectively separated from Paramatma" (Taimni, 1968, p. 7). The method of "yoga is the inhibition of the modifications of the mind" (Taimni, 1968, p. 6). In essence, it is a method of mind controlling mind in such a way as to reveal the true nature of the mind, including the essential unity of the human soul with the Divine.

The Yoga Sutras are organized in order to present a functional exposition of the nature of yoga, rather than a structural exposition. This study will approach the text with a different point of view--that of making explicit the structure of the mystic's development. As a result of these different aims, the reader will notice a departure from the ordering of the original text--a task which is necessary to clearly describe the structure of the mystical development.

For the description of the mystical development which follows,

I have used the Taimni (1968) translation and commentary. In citing quotations, I have included the section and sutra number, along with the page number, in order to facilitate a comparison with other translations of the Yoga Sutras. I structured the description below by numbering each stage as it was described, and quoting it from the original text. Then, when necessary, I elucidated the material so that it was understandable to the reader.

Patanjali summarizes the main stages of contemplative mystical development with sutra II. 29: "Self-restraints, fixed observances, posture, regulation of breath, abstraction, concentration, contemplation, trance are the eight parts (of the self-discipline of Yoga)" (p. 205). These eight stages constitute the main divisions of Hindu contemplative practice.

1. "Vows of self-restraint (yamas) comprise abstention from violence, falsehood, theft, incontinence and acquisitiveness" (p. 206, II. 30). In explicating the yamas, Patanjali describes the benefits accruing from each kind of abstinence.

- a. "On being firmly established in non-violence there is abandonment of hostility (in the presence of others)" (p. 237, II. 35). The purpose of this explication and the others which follow is to provide a device by which the yogi can measure his/her progress.
- b. "On being firmly established in truthfulness, fruit of action rests on action of the yogi only" (p. 239, II. 36). This means that as the practice of truthfulness develops, the mind of the yogi becomes "like a mirror reflecting the Divine Mind" (p. 240), so that what s/he says or

- attempts, being a reflection of Reality, comes to pass.
- c. "On being firmly established in honesty (i.e. abstention from theft), all kinds of gems present themselves before the yogi" (p. 240, II. 37). This is to say that s/he becomes aware of treasure--a sort of metaphorical way of describing the development of intuition or clairvoyance.
 - d. "On being firmly established in sexual continence, vigour is gained" (p. 241, II. 38). This seems to have two meanings. First, it refers to a vitality which makes all of the parts of the yogi vibrant--physical, emotional, and intellectual. Second, it refers to the doctrine of Brahmacharya--that sexual energy is the basis for further spiritual development.
 - e. "Non-possessiveness being confirmed there arises knowledge of the 'how' and 'wherefore' of existence" (p. 243, II. 39). I.e. the yogi will acquire the knowledge of past incarnations, and the spiritual learnings from these previous births.

As Patanjali explains the yamas, it is clear that the complete mastery of them is not necessary for the yogi to progress to another stage. The powers attributable to mastery of the yamas seem more in keeping with the siddhis (i.e. psychic powers) of the higher stages. The yamas seem to be a discipline that is begun at the start of the contemplative journey, and their development seems to continue concurrently with the development of the other stages.

2. "Purity, contentment, austerity, self-study and self-surrender constitute the observances (niyamas)" (p. 220, II. 32). As with the

yamas, Patanjali describes the benefits arising from the practice of each of the niyamas.

- a. "From physical purity arises disgust for one's own body and disinclination to come in physical contact with others" (p. 245, II. 40). This seems to be related to the establishment of sexual continence, and the benefits derived from it.
- b. "From mental purity arises purity of Sattva (i.e. awareness), cheerful-mindedness, one-pointedness (in concentration), control of the senses and fitness for the vision of the Self (the Divine Reality)" (p. 247, II. 41). In this process, the fundamental change is the change of Sattva, for "Sattva...alone can allow the mind to reflect (or be aware of the Divine)" (p. 247). Thus the problem of the yogi will revolve around the purification of Sattva.
- c. "Superlative happiness (arises) from contentment" (p. 248, II. 42). The result of the practice of the second niyama, contentment, results in happiness.
- d. "Perfection of the sense-organs and body (occurs) after (the) destruction of impurity by austerities" (p. 249, II. 43). That is, the practice of austerities makes the body such that it does not hinder the yogi's development.
- e. "By self-study union with the desired deity (is realized)" (p. 250, II. 44). The study which leads to the knowledge of the Self has the functional purpose of opening in the yogi a channel between him/herself and a manifestation of the Divine Reality. In this way, knowledge, power and

guidance flow from the higher consciousness to the lower.

- f. "Accomplishment of Samadhi (comes) from resignation to God (i.e. self-surrender to God)" (p. 250, II. 45).

Samadhi is the Sanskrit word referring to a trance state in which union with the Divine is achieved in varying degrees. Samadhi is the last of the eight parts of yogic development (see II. 29 cited on p. 66 above). Thus, with this statement, it becomes clear that the practice of the yamas and niyamas is a developmental process which progresses concurrently with the development of other stages, but which is also the starting point for the practice of the other stages.

3. "Posture (asana) should be steady and comfortable" (p. 252, II. 46). This is the third of Patanjali's eight divisions, and it is interesting because he says so little about this stage. He is referring to the postures of Hatha-Yoga, and as many Westerners have found, the mastery of these postures is not easy. This sutra is a clear example of Patanjali's condensed style, and the need for a teacher/interpreter to expand the text for the student. In a Western scientific frame of reference, a book should be clearly understandable by itself. In the Hindu frame of reference, current when this text was written, the text was abbreviated in its written form with the understanding that the neophyte would seek out a teacher to elaborate on the structure outlined in the text. Patanjali elaborates on this stage with two other comments.

- a. "By relaxation of effort and meditation on the 'Endless', posture is mastered" (p. 254, II. 47). In this sutra, two

suggestions are offered. First, that mastery is attained by a gradual slackening of effort, with a relinquishing of conscious control to the subconscious. In this way, the conscious mind can be freed from incoming stimuli so that it can proceed with the further training of attention. The second suggestion, meditation on the "Endless", indicates a specific meditation on "Ananta, the great Serpent which according to Hindu mythology, upholds the earth" (p. 255). This meditation has the effect of focusing on equilibrium. It is through the development of this equilibrium that the posture becomes "steady and comfortable" (II. 46).

- b. "From (the mastery of posture, the yogi is no longer troubled by) assaults from the pairs of opposites (i.e. the dualities of existence)" (p. 256, II. 48). This is the only benefit which Patanjali gives regarding the mastery of asana, but the commentator, Taimni, gives several others, including: "1) making the body healthy...2) acquiring fitness for the practice of Pranayama....3) development of will power" (p. 257).

4. "This having been accomplished, Pranayama (i.e. breath control) which is the cessation of inspiration and expiration follows" (p. 258, II. 49). "Pranayama is in external, internal or suppressed modification; is regulated by place, time and number, and becomes progressively prolonged and subtle" (p. 264, II. 50). "That Pranayama which goes beyond the sphere of internal and external is the fourth variety" (p. 265, II. 51). Pranayama means the regulation of a

subtle energy which as yet cannot be measured by scientific instrumentation. This regulation is accomplished by means of breath control, and prepares the yogi for the higher stages of mystical development. "The methods adopted in controlling and manipulating Prana by regulation of the breath are a closely guarded secret which can be obtained only from a competent teacher" (p. 260). There is evidently some danger in practicing pranayama, which may explain why Patanjali is so cryptic in explaining it in the sutras. In the two following sutras however, he does indicate the benefits of this practice.

- a. "From (the practice of Pranayama) is dissolved the covering of light" (p. 266, II. 52). That is, through this practice, that which covers the subtle energies within the person is dissolved, and the practitioner is able to perceive the subtle energies within.
 - b. "And the fitness of the mind for concentration" (p. 267, II. 53). The result of the dissolution of the covering of light includes the ability to visualize in great detail. This visualization process is essential in the stage of concentration. This connection will be expanded below.
5. "Pratyahara or abstraction is, as it were, the imitation (of the senses) by the senses of the mind by withdrawing themselves from their objects" (p. 268, II. 54). The rendering into English of this sutra is somewhat awkward; its meaning is that the mind withdraws from the input of the senses and goes within itself. It is hard for a Westerner to believe that this is possible, however there is scientific data on a yogi in Samadhi indicating no response to sensory stimuli (Das & Gastaut, cited in Davidson, 1976).

- a. "Then follows the greatest mastery over the senses"(p. 272, II. 55). That is, when the practitioner has mastered Pratyahara, the sense-data from the environment no longer have the power to influence the yogi; instead, he has complete control over incoming data and is prepared for the higher stages of Yoga.

"The first five (stages) of Yoga eliminate, step by step, the external causes of mental distraction. Yama and niyama eliminate the disturbances which are caused by uncontrolled emotions and desires. Asana and Pranayama eliminate the disturbances arising from the physical body. Pratyahara, by detaching the sense-organs from the mind, cuts off the external world and the impressions which it produces on the mind. The mind is thus completely isolated from the external world and the yogi is thus in a position to grapple with it without any interference from outside. It is only under these conditions that the successful practice of Dharana, Dhyana and Samadhi (the higher stages of Yoga) is possible" (p. 275).

6. "Concentration (Dharana) is the confining of the mind within a limited mental area (i.e. to the object of concentration)" (p. 275, III. 1). The English 'concentration' is only an approximation of the Sanskrit 'Dharana'. The English meaning of 'concentration' revolves around the focusing of the mind on the object of concentration, with the realization that the mind will wander, at times, away from this focus. The Sanskrit meaning goes beyond this limited conception of 'concentration', and refers to a state where the mind stops wandering and is completely focused on the object of concentration for long periods of time. The attainment of this stoppage

is the next stage, Dhyana.

7. "Uninterrupted flow of the mind towards the object chosen for meditation is contemplation (Dhyana)" (p. 278, III. 2). The importance of this kind of control over awareness often eludes the westerner, yet I think it can be made clear with a simple analogy. A scientist who studies the physical world with instrumentation needs to be absolutely sure of her instruments. She must know their capabilities, their limitations, how they are calibrated, and so forth. For a scientist studying consciousness, and whose only instrument is consciousness, there needs to be a similar knowledge of the instrument. This involves the kind of mental training found in contemplative mystical practices, and it may be understood as a refinement or a calibration of the necessary instrumentation. This refinement is necessary for the practitioner to enter into the Samadhi (trance) state which follows.

8. "The same contemplation when there is consciousness only of the object of meditation and not of itself (i.e. the mind) is Samadhi" (p. 281, III. 3). This definition of Samadhi, awareness of object without awareness of subject, may seem foreign or unreal to the reader because of a lack of referents to which this definition might be tied. However, much of the disposable energy and income of Americans goes to the pursuit of just this state. For example, in coitus, there is often a moment of awareness which does not include awareness of self, and this awareness is highly valued. The same awareness is often found in other intense activities such as auto racing, skiing, and jogging. The vigor with which these and similar activities are pursued testify to the high valuation put on this

state of awareness. Samadhi is the attainment of a similar state through trophotropic arousal, and as such, can be maintained for longer periods of time than can the similar state which is activated by ergotropic arousal.

Within the stage of Samadhi, Patanjali distinguishes numerous substages, beginning with Savitarka Samadhi and concluding with Dharma-Megha-Samadhi.

- a. "Savitarka Samadhi is that in which knowledge based only on words, real knowledge and ordinary knowledge based on sense perception or reasoning are present in a mixed state, and the mind alternates between them" (p. 101, I. 42). In this sutra, Patanjali distinguishes between three kinds of knowledge: sabda, which is knowledge based on words and has no necessary connection with the object; artha, which is true knowledge of the inner essence of the object and which is obtainable only through Samadhi; and jnana, which is knowledge based on sense-data. By means of Savitarka Samadhi, the yogi becomes identified with a gross sensory object in a trance state, and the artha or essential knowledge of that object is gradually clarified.
- b. "On the clarification of memory, when the mind loses its essential nature (which is subjectivity), as it were, and the real knowledge of the object alone shines through the mind, Nirvitarka Samadhi is attained" (p. 109-110, I. 43). That is, when memory is 'clarified' and is seen as the unreliable source of knowledge that it is, the mind learns to cease relying on memory and instead to rely on an

intuitive knowledge of the object.

- c. "The remnant impression left in the mind on the dropping of the Pratyaya (the content of the mind) after previous practice is the other, i.e. Asamprajnata Samadhi" (p. 41, I. 18). Patanjali indicates in this sutra the transition Samadhi which occurs as the yogi progresses from one plane of awareness to the next. Taimni comments that "when the consciousness of the yogi leaves one plane and the Pratyaya of that plane disappears, he finds himself in a void and must remain in that void until his consciousness automatically emerges into the next plane with its new and characteristic Pratyaya" (p. 35-36). This experience takes place several times during the mystical journey, as the yogi moves into higher states of awareness.
- d. "By what has been said in the two previous sutras (i.e. I. 42 & 43), Samadhis of Savicara, Nirvicara and subtler stages have also been explained" (p. 112, I. 44). Ordinary consciousness is able to perceive what Patanjali calls gross objects, i.e. objects which are perceptible by the five senses. As the awareness of the practitioner is refined in Samadhi, s/he is able to perceive 'subtle objects' which do not emit sense-data which the ordinary observer can verify. As Patanjali leaves the realm of ordinary perception, he uses an already established referent on which to hang his exposition. The present sutra means that Savicara Samadhi is that state in which the mind achieves identity with a subtle object of concentration,

mixed with awareness of the three kinds of knowledge; and that Nirvicara Samadhi is the state in which this admixture has clarified to the extent that the mind is united with the subtle object of concentration based solely on the essential knowledge of the object.

- e. "The remnant impression left in the mind on the dropping of the Pratyaya (the content of the mind) after previous practice is the other, i.e. Asamprajnata Samadhi" (p. 41, I. 18). See 8.c on page 75 above.
- f. "The province of Samadhi concerned with subtle objects extends up to the alinga stage of the gunas" (p. 114, I. 45). Because Patanjali is concerned with a functional exposition of Yoga rather than a structural one, we must rely on a commentator to fill in the structure. Taimni does this by utilizing his extensive knowledge of the Hindu belief system. The next two stages of the gunas (universal qualities) have two corresponding states of Samadhi, separated by Asamprajnata Samadhi. These states are called: 1) Sananda Samadhi, where consciousness is perceived as a part of an indivisible whole or universal consciousness, but where each object is itself--the condition of "unity in diversity" (p. 183); and 2) Sasmita Samadhi, where there is universal consciousness "without mark or differentiating characteristic" (p. 184). In Sananda Samadhi, psychic powers become available to the practitioner. In Sasmita Samadhi, the awareness of the objects goes out of focus, and "only awareness of the Divine Consciousness of which they are

modifications remains" (p. 183).

- g. "On the suppression of even that (i.e. awareness of Divine Consciousness) owing to suppression of all modifications of the mind, 'Seedless' (Nirbija) Samadhi is attained" (p. 122, I. 51). The object of Nirbija Samadhi is to remove the last veil of illusion which presents complete Self-realization. "The Light which was up to this stage illumining other objects now illumines Itself, for it has withdrawn beyond the realm of these objects" (p. 123). This Samadhi is called Seedless because it no longer contains any remnant of individual mind content. This Samadhi is qualitatively different than those preceding it, for the yogi passes into an entirely different kind of medium, passing out of Prakrti (the manifested universe) and into Kaivalya (liberation).
- h. "In the case of one who is able to maintain a constant state of Vairagya (i.e. non-attachment) even towards the most exalted state of enlightenment and to exercise the highest kind of discrimination, follows Dharma-Megha-Samadhi" (p. 431, IV. 29). Patanjali then describes the attributes of this final stage of development:
 "Then follows freedom from klesas (i.e. reincarnations) and karmas (i.e. the results of every thought, desire, emotion and action)" (p. 434, IV. 30). "Then, in consequence of the removal of all obscuration and impruities, (there is awareness of an) infinity of knowledge" (p. 435, IV. 31). "In this state (Kaivalya) the Purusa (i.e. the individual unit of Divine Consciousness) is established

in his Real nature which is pure Consciousness. Finis" (p. 443, IV. 34). The commentator, Taimni, is at pains to point out that these descriptions do not describe the content of Kaivalya, but rather point out in a general way certain conditions that are present in Kaivalya and which distinguish it from other states of consciousness.

Summary of the Structure

This description of the Yoga Sutras has noted the following stages and substages:

1. Yamas: the vows of self-restraint comprised of abstention from violence, falsehood, theft, sexual incontinence and acquisitiveness.
2. Niyamas: the observances of mental and physical purity, contentment, austerity, self-study, and self-surrender.
3. Asana: the stabilization of posture.
4. Pranayama: the control of breathing which leads to the control of Prana, a subtle energy, and which prepares the practitioner for concentration.
5. Pratyahara: the withdrawal of the mind from the input of the senses.
6. Dharana: the practice of concentration, confining the mind to a limited mental area.
7. Dhyana: the uninterrupted flow of the mind towards the object chosen for meditation.
8. Samadhi: the state of contemplation in which there is consciousness of the object of meditation without consciousness of self.

Samadhi is broken into the following substages:

- a. Savitarka Samadhi: where the mind achieves identity with a gross object of contemplation such that it alternates between the three kinds of knowledge.
- b. Nirvitarka Samadhi: where the mind achieves identity with the gross object of contemplation on the basis of intuitive knowledge of the object.
- c. Asamprajnata Samadhi: where the mind leaves the former plane of awareness and enters into a void until the emergence of the next plane.
- d. Savicara Samadhi: where the mind achieves identity with a subtle object of contemplation mixed with awareness of the three kinds of knowledge.
- e. Nirvicara Samadhi: where the mind achieves identity with a subtle object of contemplation on the basis of intuitive knowledge.
- f. Asamprajnata Samadhi: where the mind leaves the former plane of awareness and enters into a void until the emergence of the next plane.
- g. Sananda Samadhi: where the mind perceives a universal consciousness in which each object is distinct as itself; psychic powers are available to the practitioner at this stage.
- h. Asamprajnata Samadhi: where the mind leaves the former plane of awareness and enters into a void until the emergence of the next plane.
- i. Sasmita Samadhi: where the mind is aware only of universal consciousness, without any marks or distinguishing charac-

teristics.

- j. Nirbija Samadhi: where the mind suppresses all modifications of mind, including awareness of universal consciousness. Mind no longer has any remnant of individual mind content. This state is qualitatively different from the preceding states.
- k. Dharma-Megha-Samadhi: where the mind remains non-attached to even the most exalted state such that the individual unit of Divine Consciousness is established in his/her real nature which is pure Consciousness.

CHAPTER V

THERAVADAN BUDDHIST CONTEMPLATIVE DEVELOPMENT:

THE VISUDDHIMAGGAThe Religious Context

The founder of Buddhism lived in northeastern India between 560 and 480 B.C. (Horner, 1967). He was born Siddhartha, of the Gautama family, and was a scion of the Indian nobility. He is reported to have lived a life of luxury and ease until his twenty-ninth year. At that time, Siddhartha became aware of death as something which would happen to himself, and those things which previously had been sources of contentment now dissatisfied him. All things seemed impermanent to him, and thoroughly uncomfortable with this state of affairs, Siddhartha resolved to leave his home and familiar surroundings to search for that which was not subject to impermanence--that state which he later called Nirvana.

Siddhartha first tried practicing the austerities which his Hindu contemporaries believed would provide release. After six years of rigorous practice, Siddhartha gave up this method as unfruitful. He concluded that he did not know how to achieve his goal, and that no one else did either. Because there was no known way to achieve his goal, Siddhartha therefore resolved to sit in one posture striving to attain the impermanent until he reached his goal or until he died. After several weeks of intense effort, Siddhartha won full Enlightenment, and the understanding of the basis of im-

permanence.

After a period of uncertainty following his Enlightenment, the new Buddha, meaning the enlightened one, decided to teach others how to achieve Nirvana. He was quite successful. Although the events of those 45 years are not systematically chronicled, it is clear that he spent them traveling India and teaching. During this time, he established religious orders for men and women, left a substantial body of teaching, and aided many to achieve Nirvana. At eighty years of age, the Buddha entered into parinirvana--i.e. he died in such a way that he could never come back to the world of impermanence. From these beginnings, the religion known as Buddhism has developed.

In common with other religious systems of Indian origin, Buddhism has placed great emphasis on the concept of 'karma': the belief that the consequences of one's actions adhere to the person, and follow the person into the next life. By the failure to awaken to and understand the Four Noble Truths which the Buddha proclaimed subsequent to his Enlightenment, a person is bound by karma to an endless succession of births and rebirths. The Buddha's formulation of the Four Noble Truths is:

1. What is the Holy Truth of Ill? Birth is ill, decay is ill, sickness is ill, death is ill. To be conjoined with what one dislikes means suffering. To be disjoined from what one likes means suffering. Not to get what one wants, also that means suffering. In short, all grasping at any of the five skandhas (i.e. the aggregates from which the phenomenal world is formed) involves suffering.

2. What then is the Holy Truth of the Origination of Ill? It is that craving which leads to rebirth, accompanied by delight and greed, seeking its own delight now here, now there, i.e. craving for sensuous experience,

craving to perpetuate oneself, craving for extinction.

3. What then is the Holy Truth of the Stopping of Ill? It is the complete stopping of that craving, the withdrawal from it, the renouncing of it, throwing it back, liberation from it, non-attachment to it.

4. What then is the Holy Truth of the steps which lead to the stopping of Ill? It is this holy eight-fold Path, which consists of: Right views, right intentions, right speech, right conduct, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, right concentration (Conze, 1965, p. 43).

From the right understanding of the Four Noble Truths, the practitioner will discover that there is no self to which karma can adhere. The entrance into the state of consciousness where no-self is reality is called Enlightenment, and the state of consciousness itself is known as Nirvana.

The Visuddhimagga of Buddhaghosa (1964), known in English as the Path of Purification, is a codification of methods that can be used to attain Nirvana. It was written between 400 and 450 A.D. in Sri Lanka. It is the final codification of the Abhidharma (i.e. Supreme Wisdom) books of the Theravadan and Sarvastivadin schools of Buddhims. This text is still in use as a meditation manual by those of the Theravadan school.

In the Visuddhimagga, Buddhaghosa is concerned primarily with the more advanced stages of the holy eight-fold Path. He summarizes right speech, right conduct and right livelihood in his discussion of Virtue, to which he devotes 10% of the Book. Right effort, right mindfulness and right concentration are explored in his section on Consciousness, and it comprises about 50% of the book. Finally, Buddhaghosa explores right views and right intention in his final section on Understanding. It is here that he develops the final

stages of Enlightenment.

Buddhaghosa's main thrust in the Visuddhimagga is not a linear description of the development of stages of contemplative mysticism. Rather, the text is structured around successive purifications which lead to increased understanding of the self. Buddhaghosa seems more interested in the qualitative dimension of the purifications than in a linear description of the stages of contemplative development. However, he does include several sections on the linear development of contemplative mysticism, and so is useful for the purposes of this study.

Description of Contemplative Mystical Development

The question which Buddhaghosa addresses in his treatise is, 'What are the necessary and sufficient conditions for release from the conditioned co-productions of impermanence, and entrance into Nirvana?' His treatise begins with a quotation, which forms the basis for his exposition.

When a wise man, established well in Virtue,
Develops Consciousness and Understanding,
Then as a Bhikkhu (i.e. a monk) ardent and sagacious
He succeeds in disentangling this tangle
(Buddhaghosa, 1964, p. 1).

The three elements--Virtue, Consciousness, and Understanding--provide the means for release. The Visuddhimagga is devoted to the explanation of these elements and showing how their development provides the release to Nirvana. In the text, "the training of higher virtue is shown [by the section on] Virtue; the training of higher consciousness, by Concentration; and the training of higher understanding, by Understanding" (p. 5). I have followed Buddhaghosa's three-fold

division in my description of his text.

1. "[Virtue] is the states beginning with volition present in one who abstains from killing living things, [from lying, from stealing, from sexual intercourse, and from covetousness]....There is virtue as volition, virtue as consciousness-concomitant, virtue as restraint, virtue as non-transgression" (p. 7). These four states of virtuous development differ only slightly from each other, and, unlike other stages described in this study, are somewhat difficult to distinguish between.

- a. "Virtue as volition is the volition present in one who abstains from killing living things, etc." (p. 7). That is, the active refusal to engage in unethical activities is virtue as volition.
- b. "Virtue as consciousness-concomitant is the abstinence in one who abstains from killing living things, and so on" (p. 7). That is, virtue as consciousness-concomitant is the state of having virtue as part of one's conscious awareness, and consists of the states of non-covetousness, non-ill-will, etc.
- c. "Virtue as restraint should be understood here as restraint in five ways: restraint by the Rules of the Community (of Bhikkhus), restraint by mindfulness, restraint by knowledge, restraint by patience, and restraint by energy" (p. 7). That is, virtue is transformed from a set of ethical precepts to an inner awareness and style of life.
- d. "Virtue as non-transgression is the non-transgression by body or speech of precepts of virtue that have been under-

taken" (p. 8). That is, the state of incorporating virtue within the consciousness of the practitioner.

The function of virtue "has a double sense: Action to stop misconduct, then Achievement as the quality of blamelessness in virtuous men" (p. 8). "This virtue is manifested as the kinds of purity stated thus: bodily purity, verbal purity, mental purity" (p. 9). "When [the practitioner's] whole behavior has been purified by the special quality of blameless virtue...he has become established in [Virtue]" (p. 59).

In his exposition of Virtue, Buddhaghosa does not delineate the behavioral stages necessary to the development of virtue. Rather, he deals with virtue in a qualitative way, and talks about the different stages of qualitative development. In the two sections following, Buddhaghosa will develop the qualitative discussion through his emphasis on the purifications. However, in these following sections he also delineates the behavioral stages of mystical development. Thus, the sections which follow are directly comparable to other authors in this study, whereas Buddhaghosa's section on Virtue is not.

2. "[Concentration] is the centering evenly and rightly on a single object....It is the state, in virtue of which consciousness and its concomitants remain evenly and rightly on a single object undistracted and unscattered....Its function is to eliminate distraction" (p. 85). After defining what is meant by concentration and exploring some of the ramifications, Buddhaghosa explains the typical course of its development.

a. "When a bhikkhu has thus severed the lesser impediments,

then, on his return from his alms round after his meal and after he has got rid of drowsiness due to the meal, he should sit down comfortably in a secluded place and apprehend the sign in earth (i.e. a meditation object that is made of earth). He sees to it that the sign is well apprehended, well attended to, well defined....He anchors his mind to that object" (p. 126-127).

- b. "While not ignoring the colour, attention should be given by setting the mind on the name concept as the most outstanding mental datum....It can be developed with the obvious [name] by saying 'Earth, earth'. [The object of concentration] should be adverted to now with eyes open, now with eyes closed. And he should go on developing it in this way a hundred times, a thousand times, and even more than that until the learning sign arises" (p. 129-130). The learning sign is an eidetic picture of the object.
- c. "When...[the object of concentration] comes into focus as he adverts with his eyes shut exactly as it does with his eyes open, then the learning sign is said to have been produced. After its production, he should no longer sit in that place [where the object of concentration is]; he should return to his own quarters and go on developing it sitting there" (p. 130).
- d. "As he does so, the hindrances eventually become suppressed, the defilements subside, the mind becomes concentrated with access concentration and the counterpart sign arises.

The difference between the earlier learning sign and the counterpart sign is this. In the learning sign any fault in the [object of concentration] is apparent. But the counterpart sign appears as if breaking out from the learning sign, and a hundred times, a thousand times more purified....As soon as it arises the hindrances are quite suppressed, the defilements subside and the mind becomes concentrated in access concentration" (p. 130-131).

- e. "At this point, quite secluded from sense desires, secluded from unprofitable things he enters upon and dwells in the first jhana (i.e. trance state), which is accompanied by applied and sustained thought with happiness and bliss born of seclusion" (p. 144). During the development of the first jhana, the practitioner is instructed to extend the counterpart sign developed in the previous stage of concentration. "The way to extend it is this....The meditator should first delimit with his mind successive sizes for the sign...and then extend it by the amount delimited....After that has been done, he can extend it further...making the extreme limit the world-sphere or even beyond" (p. 158).

"When he has emerged from the first jhana, applied and sustained thought appear gross to him as he reviews the jhana factors with mindfulness and full awareness, while happiness and bliss and unification of mind appear peaceful. Then, as he brings that same sign to mind as 'earth, earth' again and again with the purpose of abandoning the gross factors and obtaining the peaceful factors, knowing 'now

the second jhana will arise' there arises in him mind-door adverting with that same earth kasina (i.e. meditation object) as its object, interrupting the life-continuum. After that, either four or five impulses impel on that same object, the last one of which is an impulse of the fine-material sphere belonging to the second jhana" (p. 161).

- f. "At this point, with the stilling of applied and sustained thought he enters upon and dwells in the second jhana, which has internal confidence and singleness of mind without applied thought, without sustained thought, with happiness and bliss born of concentration" (p. 162). This marks the leaving of the gross material sphere and the entering into the fine-material sphere. This movement appears to be contingent upon the complete cessation of thought.

"When he has emerged from the second jhana, happiness appears gross to him as he reviews the jhana factors with mindfulness and full awareness, while bliss and unification appear peaceful. Then as he brings that same sign to mind as 'earth, earth' again and again with the purpose of abandoning the gross factor and obtaining the peaceful factors, knowing 'now the third jhana will arise', there arises in him mind-door adverting with that same earth kasina as its object, interrupting the life-continuum. After that, either four or five impulses impel on that same object, the last one of which is an impulse of the fine-material sphere belonging to the third jhana" (p. 165).

- g. "And at this point, with the fading away of happiness as well, he dwells in equanimity, and mindful and fully aware he feels bliss with his body, he enters upon and dwells in the third jhana, on account of which the Noble Ones [who are already enlightened] announce: 'He dwells in bliss who has equanimity and is mindful' " (p. 165).

"When he has emerged from the third jhana, the bliss, in other words, the mental joy, appears gross to him as he reviews the jhana factors with mindfulness and full awareness, while the equanimity as feeling and the unification of mind appear peaceful. Then as he brings that same sign to mind as 'earth, earth'...there arises in him mind-door adverting with that same earth kasina for its object, interrupting the life continuum. After that either four or five impulsions impel on that same object, the last one of which is an impulsion of the fine-material sphere belonging to the fourth jhana" (p. 171).

- h. "And at this point, with the abandoning of pleasure and pain and with the previous disappearance of joy and grief he enters upon and dwells in the fourth jhana, which has neither-pain-nor-pleasure and has purity of mindfulness due to equanimity" (p. 171).

Following his description of the four jhanas, Buddhaghosa describes the indirect benefits of concentration. Arising from this state attained at the fourth jhana, are the five kinds of mundane direct-knowledge. They are: 1) the ability to appear in many places at the same time. This is described as: "Having been one, he be-

comes many; having been many, he becomes one. He appears and vanishes.

He goes unhindered through walls, through enclosures, through mountains, as through open spaces" (p. 420). 2) The knowledge of the

Divine Ear Element: "with the Divine Ear Element, which is purified and surpasses the human, he hears both kinds of sounds, the divine and the human, those that are far as well as near" (p. 446).

3) The knowledge of Penetration of Minds: i.e. "he penetrates with his mind the minds of other beings, of other persons and understands them" (p. 448). 4) The knowledge of Recollection of Past

Life, i.e. "he inclines his mind to the knowledge of recollection of past [lives]" (p. 451). 5) The knowledge of the Passing Away

and Reappearance of Beings: i.e. "with the divine eye, which is purified and surpasses the human, he sees beings passing away and reappearing, inferior and superior, fair and ugly, happy or unhappy in their destiny" (p. 464). All of these benefits appear to be the

result of direct, intuitive knowledge: the seeing of the essence of a thing which began to be developed with the counterpart sign and which comes into fruition as the practitioner passes through the four jhanas. With the description of these benefits of concentration, Buddhaghosa completes his description of the stage of concentration, and goes on to the third and final stage, Understanding.

3. "Understanding has the characteristic of penetrating the individual essence of states. Its function is to abolish the darkness of delusion, which conceals the individual essence of states. It is manifested as non-delusion....Its proximate cause is concentration" (p. 481). Understanding is distinguished from perception and cognizing. It goes beyond perception and cognizing by bringing about

a penetration of the characteristics of the object of understanding, and through this action, the practice of understanding makes manifest the path to enlightenment (p. 480).

- a. "[After the bhikkhu emerges from the fourth jhana], he attains the base consisting of boundless consciousness, and on emerging he sees the formations in it in a [manner similar to the fourth jhana]" (p. 829). In another place, Buddhaghosa calls this 'conformity knowledge'. This knowledge is cultivated by observing the formations from the base of boundless consciousness (p. 782). The formations are any object of awareness with name and form. During the development of conformity knowledge, they are perceived as impermanent, painful, or not-self, depending upon the preference of the practitioner. The meditator reviews all of the contents of consciousness in this way, and so disengages himself from those objects of awareness. When he emerges from conformity knowledge, he perceives the formations from the perspective of boundless consciousness.
- b. "Likewise he attains the base consisting of nothingness" (p. 829). This is described by Buddhaghosa as 'change-of-lineage knowledge' (p. 785). "As soon as conformity knowledge has arisen in him in this way, and the thick murk that hides the truths has been dispelled...then his consciousness no longer enters into or settles down on or resolves upon any field of formations at all, or clings, cleaves or clutches on to it, but retreats, retracts and

recoils as water does from a lotus leaf, and every sign as object, every occurrence as object, appears as impediment.

"Then, while every sign and occurrence appears to him as an impediment....change-of-lineage knowledge arises in him, which takes as its object the signless, no-occurrence, no-formation, cessation, nibbana (i.e. nirvana), which knowledge passes out of the lineage, the category, the plane of the ordinary man and enters the lineage, the category, the plane of the Noble Ones (i.e. those who are enlightened)" (p. 785). "[The mind enters into, becomes settled, steady and resolute in] non-arising, thus it is change-of-lineage. It enters into non-occurrence, thus it is change-of-lineage. It enters into non-despair, thus it is change-of-lineage. It enters into cessation, nibbana, thus it is change-of-lineage" (p. 786). This is the first of the enlightenment states described by Buddhaghosa.

- c. "Now, when he has thus attained the base consisting of nothingness and emerged...he then attains the base consisting of neither-perception-nor-non-perception" (p. 831). This is called 'path knowledge' by Buddhaghosa, and is described as "piercing and exploding the mass of greed, hate and delusion never pierced and exploded before... And not only does it cause the piercing of this mass of greed etc., but it also dries up the ocean of suffering of the round in the beginningless round of rebirths.

It closes all doors to the states of loss. It provides actual experience of the seven Noble Treasures (i.e. faith, virtue, conscience, shame, learning, generosity, and understanding). It abandons the eightfold wrong path. It allays all enmity and fear" (p. 788).

- d. "Then after one, or two turns of consciousness have passed, he becomes without consciousness, he achieves cessation" (p. 831). This is called fruition consciousness, and the one who attains it is known as an Arahant, or Fully Enlightened One. "He is one of the Great Ones with cankers destroyed, he bears his last body, he has laid down the burden, reached his goal and destroyed the fetter of becoming, he is rightly liberated with final knowledge and worthy of the highest offerings of the world with its deities" (p. 792). This is the final stage of contemplative mystical development described by Buddhaghosa.

Summary of the Structure

This description of the Visuddhimagga has noted the following stages of contemplative mystical development:

1. Virtue: abstaining from the killing of living beings, from lying, from stealing, from sexual intercourse, and from covetousness. The function of virtue is to stop misconduct and to develop the quality of blamelessness which results in purity.
2. Concentration: the centering evenly and rightly on a single object in order to eliminate distraction. There are several substages in the development of concentration:

- a. Anchoring the mind to the object of concentration.
 - b. Focusing on the mental datum of the name of the object of concentration, such that the learning sign, an eidetic image of the object, arises.
 - c. Developing the learning sign in a place apart from the object itself.
 - d. The arising of access concentration, which occurs when the counterpart sign, a purer version of the learning sign, appears to break out of and replace the learning sign.
 - e. First jhana: a trance state characterized by applied and sustained thought, with happiness and bliss, and the unification of the mind. During this state, the counterpart sign is extended.
 - f. Second jhana: a trance state developed from the first jhana and characterized by internal confidence and single-ness of mind without applied and sustained thought. This marks the movement into the fine-material sphere and the cessation of thought.
 - g. Third jhana: a trance state developed from the second jhana and characterized by the unification of mind and equanimity, with the fading away of happiness and bliss.
 - h. Fourth jhana: a trance state developed from the third jhana and characterized by neither-pain-nor-pleasure, and by purity of mindfulness due to equanimity. In this sub-stage psychic powers are available to the practitioner.
3. Understanding: developed from the states achievable through concentration, with the signal characteristic of penetrating

the individual essence of states. Thus, the function of understanding is to abolish delusion. Understanding goes beyond perception and cognition, and makes the path to enlightenment manifest. It consists of the following substages:

- a. Conformity knowledge: the observation of the formations from the base of boundless consciousness. During this substage, the practitioner perceives that all objects of awareness are impermanent, painful and not-self, and so disengages from objects of awareness.
- b. Change-of-lineage knowledge: the state where the object of awareness is the signless, no-occurrence, no-formation, cessation, i.e. nirvana. This is the first enlightenment state.
- c. Path knowledge: the base consisting of neither perception-nor-non-perception, which has the function of exploding all greed, hate and delusion, and extinguishing all suffering.
- d. Fruition consciousness: the state of cessation of consciousness, which is full enlightenment.

CHAPTER VI

JUDAIC CONTEMPLATIVE DEVELOPMENT: THE TRACT ON ECSTASYThe Religious Context

Kuperstok (1978) divides Judaism on the basis of approach to the Torah, the Law of God. On the one hand, there is normative Judaism, which is based on the revealed Torah. The bulk of Jewish practitioners would be classified under this heading. On the other hand, there is the Jewish mystical tradition, which is based on the 'hidden Torah', and which is accessible only to those who penetrate beyond the outward forms into the inner mysteries of the text. Of several mystical traditions within the Judaic religion, the most widely known is that of the Kabbalah, which originated in the thirteenth century. The most recent mystical movement in Judaism, an outgrowth of the Kabbalah, is called Hasidism. This sect was begun in Eastern Europe by Rabbi Israel Baal Shem Tob in the eighteenth century (Werblowsky, 1967).

Within the Hasidic movement, there are a number of divisions or schools. One of the more influential is the school of Chabad, which emphasizes meditation on God. This school was founded by Schneor Zalman, author of the meditation manual Tanya (1965). Zalman's son, Doh Baer, took over the leadership of the community upon the death of his father in 1813. When Baer assumed leadership, there was much confusion within his group regarding the role of ecstasy in religious development. Abraham of Kalisk, the leader of a rival

group, had placed all emphasis on the emotional aspects of religion, whereas Zalman had joined the emotional fervor of worship with an intellectual base, and there was an ongoing dispute between the two. Thus, Dobh Baer wrote the Tract on Ecstasy (1814/1963) in order to resolve the confusion in the minds of his followers caused by this dispute. It is this text that I will examine and describe for the purposes of this study.

Although I am including the Tract on Ecstasy in this sample, it is crucial that the reader understand how this text is different from the other texts that I have used. The Tract on Ecstasy is not universally accepted, either by Judaism as a whole, or by all of Hasidism, the mystical element within Judaism. Thus, the Tract cannot be presumed to have the same kind of authority within the religion as have the other texts examined in this study. Second, this text was written primarily for a political purpose--that of countering a rival's claims. The other texts in the sample were written for didactic purposes. It is difficult to ascertain what effect this has had on the text, but the reader can be certain that it did have an effect. Third, there is some indication from the practices of the Hasidic Jews that they employed active means in order to induce mystical experiences, whereas this study is focused on passively induced mystical experiences. However, within Hasidism, Dobh Baer was noted primarily as a contemplative (Green, 1982). I have included him in this study on the grounds that he was a contemplative mystic, rather than one who utilized an active means of inducing mystical experience. This conclusion, however, may be open to question. Finally, all Hasidic texts are open to

the assertion that they do not contain the most vital teachings of the religion. A.J. Heschel (1972) stated: "this great movement is essentially an oral movement, one that cannot be preserved in written form....It is not contained in any of its books" (p. 16).

Taken together, these criticisms regarding the inclusion of this text in the study should be perceived by the reader as a caveat. However, the inclusion of this text does demonstrate that a pattern of contemplative development exists within Judaism which is similar to the pattern found in other major world religions. Given the exclusiveness of Hasidic Judaism, its occurrence here can safely be presumed to have originated from within the Hasidic tradition or its precursor, the Kabbalistic tradition. The inclusion of the work also has the advantage of extending the geographical and cultural range of the sample, thus controlling for one of the limitations of Brown's study (Note 1), which utilized too narrow a sample for the conclusions that he generated.

The Chabad school of Hasidism teaches that simple faith is not enough for the practitioner to overcome the evil in his nature and to enter into communion with God. "Only that faith acquired through reflection and contemplation has the power of changing the character for the better" (Jacobs, 1963, p. 4). Thus, the development of contemplation was central to Chabad practice. The practitioner was instructed to dwell upon the nature of God, His omnipresence, and His relationship to the world. Chabad utilizes the Kabbalistic notion of two souls to explain how this communion takes place. On the one hand, there is the natural, animal or intellectual soul, which is the seat of the elemental life-force and by which human

beings exist. This "natural soul is clothed by will, thoughts, feelings and actions. It follows that there is a taint of evil in all human will, thinking, emotions and actions. This is the Chabad version of 'original sin'" (Jacobs, 1963, p. 17). On the other hand, each human being also has a divine soul, which is drawn from God at the moment of conception. This is God's gift to Israel, and it means that at the core of every Hebrew there is a portion of God Himself. The 'Limitless' is concealed in the depths of every Israelite soul. The purpose of contemplation is to enter into the divine soul, and so enter into communion with God. As Jacobs puts it:

The true Hasid seeks to peer beyond the appearance to the reality and to see no world at all, only the divine power by and in which it is sustained. This is the meaning of contemplation for Chabad: to gaze beyond the outward form, to sense the light beyond the darkness, to apprehend the divine in its concealment, to strip away the garments and see the spirit within, to observe that 'earth's crammed with heaven' " (1963, p. 7).

Dobh Baer's treatment of ecstasy is a description of the stages of contemplative development as they are marked by ecstatic states. In this text, he is not concerned with describing methodology, or how the states are produced. Rather, he is attempting to outline their progression and end point, in order to dispell the confusion in the minds of his followers. Baer's followers, for the most part, were Jews in White Russia who earned a livelihood as small traders of one kind or another. Thus, whereas the audiences of most of the texts described in this study were monks and nuns removed from the world, Baer's community was a society of non-celibate contemplatives engaged in business, who were embedded in a social matrix which was

hostile and occasionally violent towards them. It is within this context that Baer and his followers tried to listen to 'the words of the living God'.

Description of Contemplative Mystical Development

Dobh Baer prefaces his description of the contemplative stages by stating that the basis for true ecstasy is the lack of self-awareness, even though the Divine is somehow sensed by the fleshly heart. He recognizes that this is an apparent contradiction in terms--in that the lack of self-awareness is generally known as unconsciousness--but he likens the process to listening to music. When the music is truly great, the listener is moved to joy, yet is not aware of him or herself. This basic principle provides the basis for distinguishing between and classifying the stages of ecstasy for Baer.

Another principle which is basic to Baer's classification scheme is the distinction he makes between the natural and the divine soul. Baer postulates the existence of two souls in every human being. The first, the natural soul, is created through natural, physical processes, and is manifested through the intellect. The divine soul, on the other hand, is from God and is the presence of God in the person. Ultimately, it is the divine soul within the person that comes into communion with God. Both the natural soul and the divine soul are divided by Baer into five categories, making ten categories in all. The contemplative journey, as Baer describes it, is the progression through each of the ten categories into an intimate communion with God.

1. "The first stage is the most inferior of all. Here [the practitioner's] chief aim is only that he be moved to ecstasy, from which he hopes to derive vitality. In comparison, this is the most inferior stage of all....His aim and intention is not for the divine to dwell in his soul, or for his soul to be attached to the divine etc.Nonetheless, there is some mixture of good here, in concealment [from the practitioner], in the category of hidden love....For, albeit in concealment, his main desire is to experience ecstasy for the Lord alone and were it not for the Lord he would have no desire whatever for all this" (p. 78-79). At a later point, Baer states that this is a false category and drops it from his numbering. He states that the categories of the natural soul begin with the following.

2. "This is the second stage, higher than the previous one. This is the...'hearing from afar'. He 'hears' and contemplates only on the divine and understands it well, until it becomes true and acceptable to him, at least in the mind....However, the matter is remote from him and he asks what benefit there can be in this for his natural soul" (p. 79-80). This is the stage characterized by the intellectual acceptance of God's call without the necessary concomitant, an emotional experience. The soul longs to draw near to God, "but he exhausts himself without actually achieving ecstasy from contemplation, either in heart or in mind....This is the main beginning for those who seek and inquire for God in truth and sincerity, with an acceptable intention for the divine alone" (p. 80). It should be recognized that this stage, for an Hasidic Jew, would in-

volve study of the Torah, the Law of God, and the commentaries on the Law.

3. "The third stage, higher than the previous one is known as 'the goodly thought joined to deed' " (p. 80). "The act of contemplation (i.e. goodly thought) is 'joined to deed', i.e. it has an effect in the resolve to carry out good deeds. In the second stage, contemplation has no effect on a person's behavior. But in this third stage....it has the power of influencing conduct. The worshipper says, "if this is true then I must behave differently". The 'goodly thought' is now 'joined to deed' " (p. 81, footnote 8). In this stage, the practitioner "has been moved only to ecstasy in thought, not, as yet, to ecstasy of heart" (p. 84). It is important to note that Baer uses the word 'ecstasy' here in a way that will be unfamiliar to most readers. For readers in an English speaking culture, ecstasy means an experience with a strong emotional component, or what Baer describes as 'ecstasy of the heart'. Baer appears to refer to an intellectual excitement without the emotional component when he refers to ecstasies of 'thought'.

4. "The fourth stage is higher than the previous one. Here contemplation on the divine results...in ecstasy of heart. This is in the category of an ecstasy sensed with light and great vitality and is of a far more inward nature than the above-mentioned ecstasy of thought....Concerning this stage it is said: 'And thou shalt love with all thy heart'...This is the chief duty in the service of the heart: to labour hard in thought until the heart...is moved to ecstasy" (p. 85-86).

"There are here very many different stages in the manner of the heart's ecstasy. Some are moved in greater ecstasy of heart than mind. Others are moved to ecstasy with greater joy, etc. Be that as it may, this stage is known as actual fear and love....The category of love and fear, born through the baring of the heart, is the category of inner light and vitality in performing the deed, turning from evil and doing good etc. This means to perform the positive precepts in love and great desire, so that there is inner light and vitality in the deed in which one engages" (p. 86-87). In his description of the following stage, Baer says of this stage that "at the moment when the heart is moved to ecstasy the whole extent of the divine matter which moves him is reduced and all that remains of it is that part which concerns the heart alone" (p. 88). This means that the details of the divine are no longer perceived by the mind, but are reduced to the point of an overpowering and ecstatic feeling.

5. "The fifth stage, higher even than the previous one, is the subject and category of the heart's concentration, which is higher even than the heart's ecstasy" (p. 88). In this stage, the details of the object of contemplation are not lost to overpowering feeling. Here "the mind is lost in contemplation [and] the emotions are transcended" (p. 89, footnote 2). In this stage, the category Baer calls the 'intellectual fear and love' of God are present. This 'fear and love' never leave the practitioner, and he/she begins to perceive God in all things. "No sooner does the idea of God's unity and greatness ascend to thought than the heart is automatically

drawn in ecstasy without man knowing who it is that draws him with the cords of love" (p. 91, footnote 6, quoting from the Tanya).

6. "Higher even than this is the simple will" (p. 92). "The simple will [is defined by the commentator as the simple will] to know God. This is not the result of reflection or contemplation but is a kind of elemental desire to be near God" (p. 92, footnote 1).

At this point in his exposition, Baer reviews the six stages described above and connects them with the metaphysical system of the Kabbalah. Rejecting the first stage as spurious to the actual knowledge of God, he is left with five 'real' stages. These are described as stages of the natural or intellectual soul, and are given the names, in order from stage 2 to 6: nephesh, ruah, neshamah, hayyah, and yehidah. These are terms for the Sephiroth--"a term used to denote the ten emanations of the divine by means of which the world was brought into being" (p. 36, footnote 15). Baer follows the numerology system based on this number 10, asserting that each of these five categories is also present in the divine soul. The divine soul is drawn from God, and is His presence in the person-- a presence that ordinarily is covered up by darkness, but which is revealed through the successive stages of contemplation. Thus, the purpose of contemplation is the experience of God by the divine soul which is in man.

This experience of God is described by Baer as 'communion with God'. This is different from the descriptions of similar phenomena in other religions, which generally speak of the matter as 'union with God'. This difference is due to the belief system of the

Jews: that God is wholly Other, so that the thought of 'union' per se constitutes blasphemy. The closest that man can approach the divine is in communion, and even that is communion of the divine with the divine (soul). Baer then goes on to describe the five stages of ecstasy in the divine soul.

7. "It is necessary to explain the nature of this lowest category of the [divine] soul. This is the general principle....Each one of Israel has, as it were, an actual natural bent...in the practice of turning from evil and doing good. This derives only from the root of his divine soul and is in the category of essence and naturalness and is no way the result of free choice or effort" [p. 113-114]. That is, the doing of good occurs in the individual spontaneously at this stage, with no effort from the practitioner.

As I look at this stage, I am puzzled that Baer should include it. Since every Israelite possesses this capacity, I think that it would more properly be classified under a baseline category. E.g. one could say that eating and breathing are necessary stages in contemplative development. Certainly, without proper eating and breathing, the subject would be unable to contemplate. However, since everyone needs to eat and breath properly, these 'stages' are not mentioned as necessary to contemplative development. In scientific language, they are relegated to the baseline category. This stage could easily be handled in the same way.

I speculate that Baer included this stage in order to preserve his numbering system. The numerology based on 10 is critical to Kabbalistic thought: all phenomena are reducible to the number 10,

which reflects the 10 manifestations of God present in the creation of each phenomenon. Thus, it would be critical for Baer that the stages of mystical development be reducible to 10. It is interesting to note that Baer had difficulty in maintaining this numerology in earlier stages as well. He began his numbering system by including a spurious stage as '1' (p. 78). Then when he reached the fifth stage, he stopped his numbering. This left the final stage of the natural soul unnumbered and mentioned only briefly (p. 92). Later in the text, he goes back and renumbers these early stages. Due to this prior difficulty, I suspect that Baer may have 'invented' a stage in order to maintain the numerology. However, this hypothesis is not verifiable in a strict sense without discussing the matter with an Hasidic scholar.

8. "The second stage [of the divine soul], higher than the previous one, is of a more inward category....This is the category of ruah... the category of ecstasy in goodly thought (i.e. contemplation)" (p. 121). In this stage, the divine acts upon the divine soul in such a way that there comes into being a congruence between the person's inner feelings about following God, and that person's outward actions. This is not caused by the will of the individual, but occurs spontaneously, as 'goodly thought' is 'joined to deed'. The action in this stage is quite similar to that in stage 3 above, except that here the causative factor is God, rather than individual effort, and as a result the practitioner experiences more inwardly, in a contemplative fashion.

9. "The third stage [of the divine soul], higher than the previous

one, is the category of essential ecstasy in the category of neshamah....For the divine soul this is the category of essential ecstasy in the fleshly heart, which results from actual comprehension of the divine by the divine soul clothed in comprehension by the natural soul. As the verse says: 'My heart and my flesh sing for joy unto the living God'. That is to say, the actual fleshly heart sings for joy unto the living God. This is to be compared to the ecstasy produced by melody, which illumines the fleshly heart. Such an ecstasy comes of its own accord, involuntarily, without any choice, will or effort whatsoever. It is caused solely by the essence of the divine soul when she is moved to ecstasy" (p. 126-127). Baer further notes that there are many types of this ecstasy.

Baer spends most of his effort in describing this stage by iterating and reiterating the 'otherness' of this kind of ecstasy. In his view, it seems to have three characteristics. First, this ecstasy of the divine soul is spontaneous. The practitioner does not enter into it; rather, the ecstasy comes over him. Second, the ecstasy is mostly outside of the awareness of the person who experiences it. "The more profound the essential ecstasy...the less one senses it" (p. 128-129). Third, and in conflict with the second point, "this ecstasy causes a great sensation in the heart and the heart feels it exceedingly" (p. 127).

10. "The fourth stage [of the divine soul] is the category of point of concentration of the mind, higher than that of ecstasy still sensed in the heart....[This is] the category of essential ecstasy of inner concentration of the mind, where the point of comprehension

is itself that which is moved to ecstasy, known as 'concentration' " (p. 129-131). In this concentration, "there is penetration to the heart of the subject" (p. 130, footnote 7) in such a way that "ecstasy is not something which follows on intellectual perception but is identical with it" (p. 131, footnote 2). As Baer states, "This concentration is none other than that of the actual divine light in itself and is not derived from the comprehension or understanding of the divine light....Generally, it is called in the Zohar... 'Wisdom' and 'Understanding' " (p. 132-133).

In this stage, "the divine is loved for itself even apart from its effect on the life of the worshipper" (p. 131, footnote 4). Baer speaks of it by expounding upon the verse, 'Then shalt thou delight in the Lord'--that here there is delight, not duty. The purification and cleansing of the natural soul by prayer and contemplation finds fruit here, "when the illumination of the divine soul reaches into the physical heart" (p. 134). "This is the revelation of the divine in its most inward category" (p. 135).

11. "The fifth stage [of the divine soul] is the category of the actual essential yehidah" (p. 136). The comentator explains this by saying that no longer is the divine soul concealed by impurities. Here, "the divine in the soul reaches out for the divine, as like for like" (p. 136). In this stage, "essence is attached to essence" (p. 138). "This is also called one simple, essential will, which is not sensed and does not become divided into many contradictory willsEssential will is only one. It includes all wills and they are secondary to it" (p. 138).

"This is called 'ecstasy of the whole essence'That is to say, his whole being is so absorbed that nothing remains and he has no self-consciousness whatsoever....This is the limitless love of 'with all thy might' (i.e. "Love the Lord thy God with all thy might", etc.), higher than nephesh, ruah, and neshamah, higher even than [hayyah]" (p. 139).

Baer ends his discussion of this stage by saying, "This stage is not found at all among most men and it is consequently superfluous to dwell upon it" (p. 139).

Summary of the Structure

Thus far in this study, I have been rigid about following the stages of mystical development as the authors have developed them. With Baer, I have been rigid in my description, but I will not be so in my summary of his description of contemplative development. Baer stated that his first stage is a spurious stage--that it does not have the same validity as the others. For this reason, I have not included it in my summary. Also, I have not included his stage 7--the stage that I feel would more properly be included in the baseline material. With these omissions, I have decided to renumber the stages, so that the summary is a coherent whole.

1. Nephesh of the natural soul: the intellectual contemplation and acceptance of God, without an emotional acceptance. This stage involves study of the Torah and the commentaries.
2. Ruah of the natural soul: the emotional concomitant to intellectual acceptance of God. In this stage, the practitioner's

behavior changes, in order to live more in accordance with the Law.

3. Neshamah of the natural soul: the heart is moved to ecstasy by contemplation in such a way that the whole extent of the divine matter which moves the practitioner is reduced to the point of an overwhelming and ecstatic feeling, and the details of the divine are no longer perceived. Baer states that this stage has many substages.
4. Hayyah of the natural soul: The mind is lost in contemplation of the divine, but the details of the object of contemplation are not lost to overpowering feeling. Here the practitioner begins to perceive God in all things, and is automatically drawn into ecstasy, without being aware of its occurrence.
5. Yehidah of the natural soul: the elemental desire to be near God.
6. Ruah of the divine soul: the spontaneous doing of good deeds, based on the action of the divine upon the divine soul, and occurring as a result of contemplation.
7. Neshamah of the divine soul: the actual comprehension of the divine by the divine soul. This is an experience of overwhelming emotional ecstasy, and has many substages.
8. Hayyah of the divine soul: an ecstasy where the concentration of mind penetrates to the heart of the object of concentration, which is the divine, such that the object of concentration is known cognitively. Other Jewish writers call this stage 'Wisdom' or 'Understanding'.

9. Yehidah of the divine soul: full and open communion with God in such a way that the essence of the soul is attached to the essence of God. In this final stage, there is only one will--the will of God--and not the many contradictory wills of the ordinary person. Here, the practitioner's whole being is absorbed into God so that nothing remains, and he/she has no self-consciousness. It is the state of limitless love of God.

CHAPTER VII

ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN CONTEMPLATIVE DEVELOPMENT:

THE TREATISES OF ISAACThe Religious Context

In matters of faith and practice, the differences between Eastern Orthodox and Roman Catholic Christianity seem to me to be more differences in emphasis than differences in substance. Both religions come from the same roots, and accept the same set of basic beliefs about Jesus Christ, the trinitarian nature of God, and the function of the Church. Both groups had a common heritage for the first five or six hundred years of their existence: i.e. they shared the same theologians and spiritual writers, and were bound by the same councils. The circumstances which have divided the Christian Church into these two organizations were more political in nature than theological.

However, over the course of time, theological differences have arisen. The Eastern Church, for example, emphasized the image of Christus Rex: Christ appearing in resurrected form on the cross, clothed in Eucharistic vestments, triumphant. The Roman Church on the other hand, favored the image of Christ crucified: the twisted, bloody form of Christ in death. This difference in the preferred image gave rise to, and/or reflected different emphases in spiritual discipline. The Eastern Church talked about the warming of the heart by the divine light. Their view of the higher stages of mysticism

included a continual purgation, with increasing illumination and eventual union with God. The Roman Catholics, on the other hand, placed emphasis on the inner darkness within the individual, and the trials, aridity and alienation from God experienced by those who sought mystical union (Hodges, 1952). The differences between these two organizations have grown over the course of time, so that there is at present a mutually agreed upon division between these two pillars of Christendom.

Among the Orthodox mystics, there seems to be a reticence to put to print any description of the structure of the mystical experience. Indeed, this seems to be the case in all of Christendom. The emphasis in this religion tends to be placed on moral development, which is the basis for the development of contemplation. Of those few who have written about the structure of mystical experience from within the Orthodox faith, only one appears to have reached union with God, and to have written about the full extent of his experiences: Isaac of Nineveh.

There is very little biographical information concerning Isaac. It is clear that he was ordained Bishop of Nineveh sometime during the second half of the seventh century (Wensinck, 1969). However, Isaac was so unhappy with the episcopal office that he resigned just five months after his consecration and retired into the solitude of a monastic community. Isaac gained renown as a holy man among the community of monks in which he resided, and was given the surname Didymus because of his humble demeanor. During the latter part of his long life, Isaac became blind. The Treatises, written at the very end of his life, were dictated to a scribe, and have

the rambling style of someone who was conversing to another.

The worth of the Treatises was quickly realized by the Orthodox Church, and they were soon translated into Greek, the lingua franca of the Church. Isaac's ideas were used extensively by St. John Climacus in his Ladder of Divine Ascent, a text that is read in all Orthodox monasteries during the season of Lent. Isaac is frequently quoted by the Russian fathers of the 18th and 19th centuries, and his thought appears to have profoundly influenced the religious revival in that country during that time. He is widely accepted by the Orthodox Churches as the foremost mystic of Syria.

As one reads Isaac, the first impression is one of confusion, as he seems to jump from one topic to another at random. The second impression, gained as one reads further, is that Isaac had a consistent conceptual model in mind which underlies his work, and which belies the lack of linear continuity. It is this conceptual model that I have tried to make explicit in my description of Isaac's Treatises.

In examining this work, it is important to keep in mind the cultural differences between our society and that of Isaac. We are a society bound by time. Thus, we find it most efficient to write down the thrust of our thinking in a linear fashion. Isaac, on the other hand, was writing for a community of monks who had all of the time necessary for the reading and contemplation of his work. The work itself is divided into short chapters to facilitate contemplation. And in addition to the pace of life in a monastic community, there is the timeless quality which pervades Oriental thinking of this era, and which Isaac appears to reflect. Finally, Isaac was

writing, not an exposition on the structure of mystical experience, but a treatise which would pull together his eighty years of experience in such a way that it might be helpful for the monastic community.

In sum, it is inappropriate to judge Isaac by present cultural standards. And, insofar as his writing style is different from the needs of this study, I have been forced to move from place to place in the text in order to make explicit Isaac's conceptual model of contemplative development.

Description of Contemplative Mystical Development

In order to understand Isaac's treatment of contemplative mysticism, it is important to understand his concept of the nature of mankind.

For, as man's nature is composed of two parts--namely body and soul--so all things regarding him are provided in a double way, in accordance with the double nature of his constitution. As everywhere practice is anterior to contemplation, so it is impossible for man to elevate himself unto that elevated part (i.e. contemplation) unless he has accomplished before, by practice, that which is lower" (p. 382). "For when the outward senses have rest from outward turbulence, then the mind will return from distraction unto its place and the heart will be stirred to examine the inner impulses of the soul; and if it perseveres well it will reach in its course even the purification of the soul" (p. 164).

Given this twofold structure of human nature, Isaac's structure of contemplative development flows naturally. "The scope of the whole course consists in these three: Repentance, purity and perfection" (p. 341). Repentance consists of the purification of the outward person, the body and senses; purity consists in the restructuring of the inward person or soul; and perfection is the resultant.

Isaac does not go beyond these three--repentance, purity and

perfection--in his explicit verbal delineation of stages. However, the first two of these three major stages are referred to by him as consisting of a number of degrees--in the terminology of this study, 'substages'. Unfortunately for the purposes of this study, Isaac does not list the degrees in any explicit order. Much of my work in this chapter has consisted of an ordering of the degrees of which Isaac speaks, basing my ordering on contextual cues.

1. "What is repentance? To desist from former sins and to suffer on account of them" (p. 341). "Repentance is the mother of life. It opens to us its gate when we flee from all things (i.e. the world and bodily nature). The grace which we have lost...by lax behavior is restored in us by repentance, through discrimination of mind" (p. 297). In another place, Isaac defines how to recognize and evaluate repentance, which consists of fleeing the world and drawing near to God. "The overcoming of the world is to be recognized in these two: viz. from the change of behavior and from the alteration of the impulses (i.e. those desires of the mind which draw one from God)" (p. 13). The behaviors and impulses of which Isaac speaks include: "love of riches; gathering of possessions; fatness of the body;...carnal desire; love of honour;...exercising government; pride and haughtiness of magistracy; folly; [and] glory among men" (p. 13).

- a. "Fear places us in the ship of repentance and makes us us cross the foetid (sic.) sea of the world and brings us in the divine port which is love...When we have reached love, we have reached God and our way is ended" (p. 212). Fear then, is the motivation for beginning the mystical

journey.

- b. "The beginning of repentance is humbleness without artifice" (p. 298). Here Isaac begins a theme which he will sustain over the whole course of the Treatises: that the development of humility is the development of a Christ-like nature, and its full development is the endpoint of the contemplative journey. At this stage of the mystic's development, "humility...expiates many sins....It is necessary for the mind to suffer continually by humiliation and by pain bourne with discernment (i.e. seeing the self as God sees it)" (p. 335). Isaac states that this process is necessary because "God demands the alteration of the mind. By the mind we acquire improvement and by the mind we become despicable" (p. 335).

Isaac then describes a series of regulations which will help the practitioner develop repentance. These regulations do not appear to have any internal ordering, so I have enumerated them at my own discretion.

- c. "True contemplation is the mortification of the heart. The heart which is really dead to the world is wholly astir in God" (p. 298). This indicates the extent to which repentance must be developed. "Connected with humility are patience, a concentrated self--which is real humility-- a low voice, little speech, self-contempt, mean clothes, a modest gait, bashful looks, effusion of mercy, easily flowing tears, a lonely soul, a broken heart, not being moved to anger, absence of distraction of the senses,

moderate wishes, moderate wants in every respect, willingness to bear, patience (sic. notice from this repetition of 'patience' the internal evidence of Isaac's blindness and age, the dictated style, and the lack of proofreading), intrepidity, manliness of heart born from hatred of temporal life, endurance of temptations, few emotions that are not swift, extinguished deliberations, keeping of secrets, chastity, bashfulness (sic.), modesty, and above all: continual silence, continual having recourse to ignorance" (p. 347).

- d. "Many show the appearance of repentance; but only he possesses it in truth, that is grieved in heart....Inward grief is a bridle of the senses" (p. 299). Thus, Isaac indicates the importance of sensory regulation. This is developed in a variety of places in the text. E.g. "Hunger greatly helps those who try to acquire a greater concentration of senses" (p. 303).
- e. "Humbleness with discrimination is true knowledge. True knowledge is a fountain of humbleness" (p. 298). By true knowledge, Isaac appears to refer to knowledge from the perspective of the divine. All other kinds of knowledge are relative and limited (e.g. the wisdom behind the statement, 'Beauty is in the eye of the beholder'). Divine knowledge is knowledge which is wholly true. This appears to be a cognitive restructuring, revolving around the new sense of self which is developed by humility.
- f. "If thou lovest truth, thou must love silence....Silence

will...unite thee with God" (p. 299). "Love silence above all things. It brings thee near the fruit which the tongue is too weak to interpret. At first we compel ourselves to be silent. Then from our silence something is born which draws us towards silence" (p. 302). Isaac indicates obliquely that he means both outward silence and the cessation of thinking. In this passage he also refers to the apparent spontaneity of divine things.

- g. Isaac indicates that prayer and contemplation are important in the development of repentance. "Recitation of Psalms is the root of discipline" (p. 300). By this, he means the saying of the daily Offices of the monastic community. Isaac continues, stating: "Let every prayer which thou offerests...be honoured in thy eyes above all labours of the day" (p. 300). That is, prayer is more important to the salvation of the practitioner than are works. However, Isaac points out again and again that prayer will enable works, so that the two go hand in hand.

After a long discourse on the place and character of repentance, Isaac offers this prayer, which I take as the summation of his thoughts on repentance:

Deem me worthy, O my Lord, to taste the delightful gift of repentance by which the soul is made free from the bondage of sin and the whole will of flesh and blood.

Deem me worthy, O Lord, to taste this affection in which reposes the gift of pure prayer. My savior has reached the amazing passage through which the soul leaves the visible world and in which begin new impulses for entry into the spiritual world, and experiences new apperceptions.

He that begins and accomplishes well, places his discipline upon this foundation, entreating God unceasingly

that He may deem him worthy to perceive this apperception in which is sown the knowledge of the future order of things through imperishable hope" (p. 304).

2. "What is the sum of purity? A heart full of mercy unto the whole created nature" (p. 341). In another place, Isaac expands upon this: "This will be to thee a luminous token of the serenity of thy soul: when thou, examining thyself, findest thyself full of mercy for all mankind, and when thy heart is afflicted by pity for them and burns as with fire without personal discrimination. While by these things the image of the Father in heaven is continually seen in thee, thou canst recognize the degree of thy behavior, not by the discrimination of the labours, but by the varying states to which thy intellect is subject" (p. 330).

This, for Isaac, appears to be the end point of the stage of purity: a heart full of mercy without discrimination; varying states of consciousness; and the perception by other of God the Father in the behavior of the practitioner.

In order to address the question, 'What is purified?', Isaac distinguishes between purification of the mind and purification of the heart. For Isaac, the mind is "one of the senses of the soul. The heart [however] is the central organ of the inward senses" (p. 20), and if it is purified, then all of the senses are purified with it. However, "the heart is purified through great trouble and by being deprived of all association with the world, together with a complete mortification in every point. And when it has been purified, its purity is not defiled by the touch of insignificant worldly things" (p. 20).

From this exposition, the process of purification appears to

be continuous with the process of repentance. That is, repentance appeared to focus on the purification of the body, the outward man. The stage of purification focuses on the soul, or inward man, and results in the ability to love all of creation without discrimination. Contemplation is the means to achieve this purification, according to Isaac.

Isaac does not seem to understand the stage of purification as one with specific and identifiable substages as do some of the other authors in this study, but he does appear to perceive a movement within the stage. This movement is summarized by him as:

Contemplation gives birth to fervour; from this fervour sight given by grace is born; and then outbursts of tears begin. At first partial ones; this means that a man's tears will flow several times a day. Then he will come to the state of tears without break. Through the tears the soul receives peaceful deliberations. From peaceful deliberations it rises unto serenity of insight. And by serenity of insight a man reaches the sight of hidden things. For purity is brought about by being free from war (p. 87).

This movement within the stage seems sufficient to me to utilize, for the purposes of this study, the term 'substage'. Each piece of the movement is discretely described, and the progression of movement appears to be identical, in Isaac's thinking, from one person to another. For these reasons, I have utilized the description above as the basis for the delineation of substages within the stage of purification.

- a. "Contemplation gives birth to fervour" (p. 87). The purification of the heart begins with contemplation. In several other places Isaac expands upon this notion. "Thou must perpetually place a token in thy soul, and pay attention

to it. And when thou perceivest that divine care begins to reveal itself to the soul, then understand that thou art near the harbour of purity" (p. 328). By this Isaac refers to the practice known in the Orthodox Church as hesychiastic prayer. "This is the central consideration in the prayer of the desert fathers. On the external level it signifies an individual living as a solitary; on a deeper level it is not merely separation from noise and speaking with other people, but the possession of interior quiet and peace....It means more specifically guarding the mind, constant remembrance of God, and the possession of inner prayer" (Ward, 1975, p. xvi). The token to which Isaac refers is either an image of God (icon), or the hesychiastic prayer: 'Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner'.

Isaac describes this process of hesychiastic prayer by stating: "Man utters his desires unto God, beseeching Him and speaking with Him and his whole emotion and thought are concentrated from all sides upon Him with compulsion... his whole thought is absorbed in discourse with Him and his heart is full of Him. It is in this state...that the Holy Ghost joins with the things which man prays, some unattainable insights, which it stirs in him in accordance with his aptitude of being moved so that by these insights the emotion of prayer ceases, the mind is absorbed in ecstasy and the desired object of prayer is forgotten.

The impulses are drowned in a heavy drunkenness and man is no longer in this world. Then there is no longer discrimination of body or of soul, nor recollection of anything.

"Prayer...is steadfastness of mind, which is terminated only by the light of the holy Trinity through ecstasy.... This gift is not to be called spiritual prayer...The fruit of pure prayer is being engulfed in the spirit. The mind has ascended here above prayer. And, having found what is more excellent, it desists from prayer. And...gazes in ecstasy at the unattainable things which do not belong to the world of mortals, and peace without knowledge of any earthly thing" (p. 117-118).

I have included the exposition above in its entirety, so that the reader can understand the movement of which Isaac speaks. But, for the purposes of this study, let us move to the second substage.

- b. "From this fervour, sight given by grace is born" (p. 87). In this substage the practitioner perceives the deep separation between God and him/herself. Upon this realization, "outbursts of tears begin" (p. 87).
- c. "At first partial [outbursts of tears]; this means that a man's tears will flow several times every day. Then he will come to the state of tears without break" (p. 87). The tears of which Isaac speaks are spontaneous. The practitioner is overcome with emotion and weeps. This appears to be an intensification of the previous stage.

- d. "Through the tears the soul receives peaceful deliberations" (p. 87). This may be the beginning of ecstasy. Isaac does not use the phrase 'peaceful deliberations' except in this one instance. Thus, I cannot with certainty equate it with 'ecstasy', but it does seem to fit here. This state of 'peaceful deliberations' appears similar to Isaac's description in substage 'a' above: "his whole thought is absorbed in discourse with Him and his heart is full of Him. It is in this state...that the Holy Ghost joins with the things which man prays" (p. 117).
- e. "From peaceful deliberations it rises unto serenity of insight" (p. 87). This appears to be what Isaac elsewhere calls the 'purity of affection'. That is, the affections or emotions are purified and made peaceful. "When a man has reached purity from the affections, what no eye has seen and no ear has heard and what has not entered into the heart of man to ask in prayer, is revealed to him by purity" (p. 349). "For divine things present themselves spontaneously, without thy perceiving them, if the place of the heart be pure and undefiled" (p. 11).
- f. "And by serenity of insight a man reaches the sight of hidden things" (p. 87). In this stage, the practitioner perceives those spiritual things which had previously been hidden. These perceptions include visions of angels (p. 110), the foretelling of future events (p. 304), the power of words and the hidden motions within the soul (p. 118), true sight regarding good and evil, and the

path to God (p. 213), and knowledge of God (p. 213). This knowledge is obtained in an ecstatic state (p. 338), and entails the growth of a universal love for all humanity and creation (p. 266).

"When a man has been deemed worthy [by God] to receive [intelligible revelation to his spiritual nature] he abides only in ecstasy and silence and tears which always flow as water, so that he desists from all work" (p. 328). In this state of ecstasy, the senses are at rest, prayer is cut off, and the person is incapable of speech. For this ecstasy to occur, Isaac states that solitude is necessary: both outward and inward solitude. "In consequence of the heart's freedom from external recollections, the mind will receive the gift of ecstatic understanding of things" (p. 37).

3. "And what is perfection? Depth of humility, namely giving up all visible and invisible things. Visible things: all that which is sensible. Invisible things: all thinking about them" (p. 341).

"For humility is the garment of divinity...and every one who puts it on in truth, by humility takes the likeness of Him that has descended from His height (i.e. Jesus Christ)" (p. 384). In his explanation of humility, Isaac states: "The humble approaches the beasts of prey and as soon as their eye rests on him, their wildness is tamed and they come to him and accompany him as their master....And when he approaches the children of man they look upon him as their Lord.... As soon as they meet the humble, [the demons of pride and evil which plague the ordinary man] become as dust: all their hardness becomes weak; their tricks become craftless, their cunning idle" (p. 386).

"Humility is a mysterious power, which the perfect saints receive when they have reached accomplishment of behavior....For humility is all-comprehending excellence" (p. 387). In summary, "all the saints ...when they become perfect...resembled God in effusion of love and compassion for mankind" (p. 343).

The development of humility as Isaac understands it, seems to be similar to the state of non-attachment of which the Hindus and Buddhists speak. It is the 'giving up of all things' which has the resultant of bringing the practitioner into union with God. Things and thought divide the practitioner from God, and the relinquishment of them allows unification to take place. "Spiritual unification is a perpetual recollection [of God]" (p. 6). However, "the man who possesses this gift [of] perfection will not soon be found" (p. 329). In his description of this stage, Isaac does not distinguish substages, but sees perfection as the end point of spiritual development.

Summary of the Structure

This description of the Treatises of Isaac of Nineveh has noted the following stages and substages of contemplative mystical development:

1. Repentance: refraining from sin in order to draw closer to God.
 - a. Fear is the force which motivates the practitioner to begin this journey. This seems to be fear of the world and one's bodily nature.
 - b. The development of humility: the practice of humbleness without artifice. This expiates former sins, and alters

the mind to become more like that of Christ.

- c. Behavioral regulation: through the mortification of the heart by humility. This involves dying to the world to be alive to God, and includes low voice, self-contempt, mean clothes, not being moved to anger, patience, etc.
 - d. Sensory regulation: the development of inward grief to bridle the senses. This has an effect on the regulation of behavior.
 - e. Acquisition of true knowledge through humility. This indicates a process of cognitive restructuring.
 - f. The development of silence: both the cessation of inward and outward verbalizations.
 - g. The practice of community prayer.
2. Purity: the purification of the heart so that the practitioner has a heart full of mercy without personal discrimination, varying states of consciousness, and the perception by others of God the Father in the behavior of the practitioner.
- a. The practice of contemplation: placing an image of God or a prayer in the heart and focusing on that to the exclusion of all other stimuli. All emotion and thought are concentrated on God.
 - b. The perception of the deep separation between the practitioner and God. This is the awareness of sin.
 - c. The development of outbursts of tears, at first partial (several times per day) and then tears without break. This appears to be the connection of the emotional component to the cognitive component developed in the previous sub-

stage.

- d. The reception of peaceful deliberations: the beginning of ecstasy, where the practitioner's whole mind and heart are absorbed with God.
 - e. The arising of serenity of insight: the purification of the emotions such that peace arises and the practitioner perceives divine things spontaneously.
 - f. The sight of hidden things: this includes visions of angels, knowledge of good and evil, and knowledge of God. In this state, the practitioner abides in ecstasy, desisting from everything else. The senses are at rest, prayer is cut off, speech is cut off, and the practitioner is unable to work.
3. Perfection: the final development of humility such that the practitioner attains a Christ-like nature. This entails an effusion of love and compassion for mankind, the practice of non-attachment, and a spiritual unification with God.

CHAPTER VIII

ROMAN CATHOLIC CONTEMPLATIVE DEVELOPMENT:

THE INTERIOR CASTLEThe Religious Context

Teresa of Avila is the only author in this study about which there exists adequate biographical data. She lived in Spain from 1515 to 1582, an extraordinary time in the Roman Catholic Church. After some 1400 years of virtually unquestioned dominance in Western Europe, Luther's 'protests' had rocked the Church at its foundations. Teresa lived her life in a Roman Catholic stronghold--a stronghold noted for such unpleasant institutions as the Inquisition, which, having lately run out of Moslems and Jews, found new fields to conquer with the heretical Protestants.

Teresa lived during a period that is called by historians the Counter-Reformation: that period immediately following the success of Luther's break with the Church. During this time, the Roman Church became more rigid in its doctrine and practice, as if to purify itself from this godless protest movement (Kavanaugh & Rodriguez, 1979). One consequence of this increasing rigidity was an increasing suspicion of those who claimed to have mystical experiences. Mystics claim to see and talk to God, and to receive guidance directly from that source. Hence they were not controllable by the Church hierarchy, and therefore were perceived as a threat to the Church. For someone like Teresa, trying to find her way to God,

sixteenth century Spain must have been among the worst of times and places.

In spite of this unfavorable climate, Teresa was able to carve out the necessary space within which to pursue her goal of mystical union with God. Apparently, she re-invented the wheel, vis-a-vis contemplative mystical development, for in her time and situation there was no one in the Roman Catholic community who could serve as her spiritual guide. Even the few books which mentioned the higher stages of contemplative mystical experience were taken from her by the Spanish Inquisition. Added to these handicaps, Teresa was often plagued by confessors who thought that she was either a liar, a heretic or crazy when she reported her experiences to them. Not only could they not guide her; they served to shake her confidence in herself and to impede her progress. In the face of these handicaps, it is truly remarkable that Teresa found her way to union with God.

Teresa was a nun of the Carmelite order. At that time, the order had degenerated to a considerable extent, and no longer followed its original rule with much enthusiasm. Within this context, Teresa had considerable difficulty with the kind of mental prayer that characterized the Roman contemplative practice of the period. Instead, she reports spending her time in heavy penance, a practice that was socially acceptable to one of her profession. This, however, was not satisfactory. Teresa reported that she kept hearing God calling to her, and neither penance nor the mental prayer of the monastery seemed effective in helping her to answer that call. In the years that followed, Teresa chose to follow the call of God, instead of following the path that was socially acceptable for a

nun. The record of her journey is found in her book, The Interior Castle.

As Teresa experienced increasing closeness with God, there grew in her the desire to found a convent in which this new manner of contemplative life could flourish. She began this work in 1562 with a small group of eleven nuns. The general of the Carmelite order visited them in 1567, and was so impressed with the quality of their spiritual life that Teresa was given permission to found as many of these contemplative monasteries as she was able, for both men and women. Before she died in 1582, Teresa founded fourteen more monasteries.

Teresa entered into spiritual marriage with God on November 18, 1572, the end point of her long spiritual journey. Her final book, The Interior Castle, was begun in 1577. Teresa was ordered to write this account by her superior, Fr. Gratian. Unlike many authors, Teresa had no training in writing; she was a Castillian lady at a time when education was not considered necessary for the training of a lady. Thus, her writing style is the style of her speech: direct, incisive, and colorful. Because she was the kind of person who saw many aspects in a single subject, her writing is often filled with digression. In her writing, there are no paragraphs or punctuation; meaning must be determined from the context. Those contemporaries who observed her in the process of writing said that she never paused to reflect, or correct a word, or to cross one out. The Interior Castle reflects this spontaneity, and the directness of Teresa's writing style.

Jesus once said that the way to judge someone is to look at

the fruits of his/her labor. Under this rubric, Teresa cannot be found wanting. Her work at reforming Carmelite spirituality is still bearing fruit: there are Carmelite monasteries around the world which bear the mark of Teresa's presence. Her books have had wide influence within the Roman Catholic Church, and have had an impact on its current spiritual revival. In 1970, Pope Paul VI proclaimed Teresa a Doctor of the Church--one of only two women in the two thousand year history of that Church to receive such an honor. Teresa was a most remarkable woman.

Description of Contemplative Mystical Development

Teresa uses the metaphor of a castle to explain her understanding of the structure of the soul and the process of the mystical journey. "Our soul [is] like a castle made entirely out of a diamond or of very clear crystal, in which there are many rooms" (p. 35). The structure of this castle is extended when Teresa explains that this castle is not like others, but rather it is a series of concentric circles (p. 42). In the innermost circle or dwelling place, at the center of the interior castle, the inner soul is rooted "in the very living waters of life--that is, God" (p. 39). Teresa then uses the image of light to describe the presence of God in the soul. The soul is illumined by this light of God: it flows outward from the center through the diamond walls of the castle, becoming more and more obscured by the darkness of sin as the light gets closer to the outer wall of the castle of the soul. Teresa conceives of the mystical journey as the soul entering into itself and penetrating to its inmost depths where it will find union with God. "The gate of entry

to this castle is prayer and reflection" (p. 38).

Teresa's description is basically a structural one, and thus I have followed the text quite closely. Teresa conceives of the soul as having seven dwelling places, these being the concentric circles described above. In addition to this, she describes the state of those who have not entered into the dwelling places of the soul, and I will include this in the description. For the description of the mystical development which follows, I will use the Kavanaugh and Rodriguez translation (1979). To preserve the flavor of Teresa, I have utilized her numbering system, with one exception. Teresa notes the existence of those who are outside the gates of the soul, but does not assign them a number. I have assigned this stage the number 0--something Teresa herself might have done.

0. "There are many souls who are in the outer courtyard...and don't care at all about entering the castle, nor do they know what lies within that most precious place, nor who is within, nor even how many rooms it has" (p. 37). And since hardly any of the light of God reaches the outer rooms of the castle, those without the castle are in darkness and lacking in any kind of self-knowledge.

Teresa then describes the transition of entry into the castle.

[Of those souls that finally enter the castle], even though they are very involved in the world, they have good desires and sometimes, though only once in a while, they entrust themselves to our Lord and reflect on who they are, although in a rather hurried fashionThey will sometimes pray, but their minds are then filled with business matters that ordinarily occupy them....Sometimes they do put all these things aside, and the self-knowledge and awareness that they are not proceeding correctly in order to get to the door is important. Finally they enter the first, lower rooms. But so many reptiles get in with them that they are prevented from seeing the beauty of the castle and

from calming down; they have done quite a bit just by having entered (p. 38-39).

Throughout her description of the interior castle, Teresa uses the metaphor of poisonous reptiles to represent noxious and sinful thoughts, fantasies and memories. At this stage, these reptiles keep the person agitated and frightened, but in later stages these reptiles will be prevented from entering and so the soul will be able to collect itself calmly.

1. "In the first rooms, souls are still absorbed in the world and engulfed in their pleasures and vanities, with their honors and pretenses, their vassals (which are these senses and faculties) don't have the strength God gave human nature in the beginning.... Hardly any of the light coming from the King's royal chamber reaches these first dwelling places. Even though they are not dark and black, as when the soul is in sin, they nevertheless are in some way darkened so that the soul cannot see the light. The darkness is not caused by a flaw in the room...but by so many bad things like snakes and vipers and poisonous creatures that enter with the soul and don't allow it to be aware of the light. It's as if a person were to enter a place where the sun is shining but be hardly able to open his eyes because of the mud in them....Even though [the soul] may not be in a bad state, it is so involved in worldly things and so absorbed with its possessions, honor or business affairs...that even though...it would want to see and enjoy its beauty these things do not allow it to....If a person is to enter the second dwelling places (sic), it is important that he strive to give up unnecessary things and business affairs" (p. 44-45).

The first dwelling place is entered by prayer and reflection. Those who enter the castle of the soul still have much of their attention fixed on the external world, and their progress into the interior castle is controlled by their ability to give up "unnecessary things and business affairs". The soul in this first dwelling place has difficulty concentrating the senses and faculties on God due to the sins, "bad things like snakes and vipers and poisonous creatures", which enter with the soul. These unspecified sins don't allow the soul to be aware of the light of God shining in the soul. The development of self-knowledge and humility through prayer will facilitate the perception of God's light.

2. "This stage pertains to those who have already begun to practice prayer and have understood how important it is not to stay in the first dwelling places. But they still don't have the determination to remain in this second stage without turning back, for they don't avoid the occasions of sin....These rooms...involve much more effort than do the first, for now it seems that souls in them recognize the dangers, and there is great hope that they will enter further into the castle" (p. 48).

In this stage, the soul hears the appeals of God as "He calls us to draw near Him" (p. 49). These appeals "come through words spoken by other good people, or through sermons, or through what is read in good books, or through the many things that are heard and by which God calls, or through illnesses and trials, or through a truth that He teaches during the brief moments we spend in prayer" (p. 49).

The struggle with evil seems to be more conscious at this stage,

but the soul is aided in its struggles by the development of various faculties. "Faith teaches [the soul] about where it will find fulfillment. The memory shows it where all these things (i.e. signs) will end....The will is inclined to love after seeing such countless signs of love....Then the intellect helps it to realize that it couldn't find a better friend [than God]" (p. 50).

Finally, Teresa explains the purpose of prayer. "The whole aim of any person who is beginning prayer...should be that he work and prepare himself with determination and every possible effort to bring his will into conformity with God's will...The greatest perfection attainable along the spiritual path lies in this conformity" (p. 52).

3. "Concerning souls that have entered the third dwelling places.... they long not to offend His Majesty, even guarding themselves against venial sins; they are fond of doing penance and setting aside periods for reflection; they spend their time well, practicing works of charity toward their neighbors, and are very balanced in their use of speech and dress and in the governing of their households" (p. 57).

However, these souls are perhaps too well balanced, for in them "love has not yet reached the point of overwhelming reason" (p. 62). These souls are still attached to the world, and to the esteem of others. Teresa advises those in this stage: "let us abandon our reason and our fears into His hands; let's forget this natural weakness that can take up our attention so much" (p. 63). The critical movement in this stage seems to be the shift from reliance on self, to the reliance on God. Teresa described this latter reliance as humility, that awareness of one's limitations which will allow

further growth. "With humility present, this stage is a most excellent one. If humility is lacking, we will remain here our whole life-- and with a thousand afflictions and miseries" (p. 63). Teresa speaks of abandoning the 'self', that part which wants the esteem of others and well-being in the world's eyes; that part which says 'my will be done' and thus cannot say to God, 'your will be done'. "Doing our own will is usually what harms us" (p. 65). That is, the soul that is so convinced of its own power and strength is the soul which has circumscribed its world in such a way that it cannot see reality. And since, in Teresa's view, the purpose of life lies in "surrendering our will to God in everything, in bringing our life into accord with what His Majesty ordains for it, and in desiring that His will not ours be done" (p. 62), it is clear that without humility and increasing obedience to the will of God, the soul is doomed to grow no closer to God.

Thus, this third dwelling place of the soul seems to involve the ordering of one's life in a moral way so as not to offend God, and the gradual abandonment of one's own will as one further aligns the will with God's will. This stage entails the growth of humility and trust in God.

In dealing with the stages above, Teresa spends relatively little time in describing them: in this translation, thirty-one pages are used to describe these first four stages. In contrast to this, Teresa uses 127 pages to describe the next four stages. It is clear, from this disparity, that Teresa is more concerned with the higher stages of mystical development. Her descriptions of these lower stages tend to be unsystematic and casual. The clear recognition of

this cursory treatment will be important when we come to compare Teresa's conceptualization of the stages of mystical development with those of other religions.

4. Teresa differentiates the fourth dwelling place by indicating that "supernatural experiences begin here" (p. 67). That is, the soul begins to have experiences that do not originate from within itself, but are caused by the power of God. Although she is somewhat unclear about the matter, Teresa seems to distinguish two sub-stages within this fourth dwelling place.

- a. "Recollection is a preparation for being able to listen...so that the soul, instead of striving to engage in discourse, strives to remain attentive and aware of what the Lord is working on it" (p. 79). This process of listening has several ramifications. First, "love must already be awakened" within the soul, i.e. love for God (p. 79). Second, "these interior works are all gentle and peaceful" (p. 80). Third, "in being mindful of His honor and glory we forget ourselves and our own profit and comfort and delight" (p. 80). Teresa further describes this recollection: "without any effort or noise the soul should strive to cut down the rambling of the intellect--but not suspend either it or the mind" (p. 81). This description sounds very similar to the Buddhist practice of 'bare awareness' and the Eastern Orthodox practice of 'watchfulness' as described by St. Hesychios (Nikidimos & Makarios, 1979).
- b. The prayer of recollection then develops into the prayer of quiet. "I don't think the experience is something...that

rises from the heart, but from another part still more interior, as from something deep. I think this must be the center of the soul" (p. 74-75). Teresa then states that "it swells and expands our whole interior being producing ineffable blessings; nor does the soul even understand what is given to it there" (p. 75). Teresa states that this experience is more delicate than sensory experience: "the very experience of it makes us realize that it is not of the same metal as we ourselves, but fashioned from the purest gold of the divine wisdom. Here...the faculties are not united but absorbed and looking as though in wonder at what they see" (p. 75). In order for this experience to take place "the will must in some way be united with God's will" (p. 76).

5. Teresa describes the fifth dwelling place as a state of union with God. "All the faculties are asleep in this state--truly asleep--to the things of the world and to ourselves. As a matter of fact, during the time that the union lasts the soul is left as though without its senses, for it has no power to think even if it wants to....In sum, it is like one who in every respect has died to the world so as to live more completely in God. Thus the death is a delightful one because in truth it seems that in order to dwell more perfectly in God the soul is so separated from the body that I don't even know if it has life enough to breathe" (p. 86-87).

Teresa then identifies other characteristics of this stage. First, no 'poisonous creatures' (i.e. evil thoughts and fantasies) can enter here, for in this state "there is neither imagination, nor memory,

nor intellect" (p. 87). Second, the signal characteristic of this stage is the certainty that God is present to the practitioner. "God so places Himself in the interior of that soul that when it returns to itself it can in no way doubt that it was in God and God was in it" (p. 89). Third, this stage is not attained by an effort of the practitioner, but rather by the action of God. The effort of the practitioner must be directed in surrendering one's will to God. Finally, Teresa states that "there are various degrees of intensity" in this dwelling place. "With regard to the nature of union, I don't believe I'd know how to say anything more" (p. 91).

In the last chapter describing this dwelling place, Teresa compares this and the following dwelling places to the act of marriage. This fifth dwelling place, for all its intensity, "does not yet reach the stage of spiritual betrothal" (p. 103). Rather, this stage is more like the very serious discussions between a couple before they decide to marry. The betrothal itself occurs in the sixth dwelling place, and the spiritual marriage between God and the soul occurs in the seventh and last dwelling place.

6. Teresa devotes the most space in her description of contemplative mystical development to the sixth dwelling place; it is here that she deals with many of the more extraordinary phenomena of contemplative mysticism. The sixth dwelling place is the stage of spiritual betrothal to God. This stage begins with the "action of love [that] is so powerful that the soul dissolves with desire; and yet it doesn't know what to ask for since clearly it thinks that its God is with it" (p. 116). The conflict between the certainty of God's presence and the overwhelming desire induced by the action of God's love leads to

considerable pain. In Teresa's words: "what interior and exterior trials the soul suffers before entering the seventh dwelling place" (p. 108). This pain seems to have the effect of drawing the soul closer to God, although Teresa is uncertain how this happens. "I do know that it seems this pain reaches to the soul's very depths and that when He who wounds it draws out the arrow, it indeed seems in accord with the deep love the soul feels that God is drawing these very depths after Him" (p. 116).

Teresa describes a variety of occurrences which facilitate this increasing sense of union between the soul and God: locutions (aural communications from God), raptures, and visions. I find it intriguing the amount of care which Teresa devotes to distinguishing between those communications which are truly from God, from those communications which are reported by those persons who are clinically disturbed. Teresa defines locutions which come from God as:

another way in which the Lord speaks to the soul....
The locution takes place in such intimate depths and a person with the ears of the soul seems to hear those words from the Lord Himself so clearly and so in secret that this very way in which they are heard, together with the acts that the vision itself produces, assures that person and gives him certitude (p. 123-124).

Raptures are defined as that which "draws [the soul] out of its senses" (p. 127).

In a rapture, believe me, God carries off for Himself the entire soul, and, as to someone who is His own and His spouse, He begins showing it some little part of the kingdom that it has gained by being espoused to Him.... He doesn't want any hindrance from anyone, neither from the faculties nor from the senses, but He immediately commands the doors of all these dwelling places to be closed; and only that door to His room remains open so that we can enter (p. 130).

After these experiences, "the will remains so absorbed and the

intellect so withdrawn, for a day or even days, the latter seems incapable of understanding anything that doesn't lead to awakening the will to love; and the will is wide awake to this love and asleep to becoming attached to any creature" (p. 131-132). Another kind of rapture that Teresa describes is the 'flight of the spirit', where the soul leaves the body (p. 133-137). She also catalogues a variety of visions (p. 150-163), in order to assist the practitioner in this stage to understand his/her experiences.

As a result of these wonderful favors, the soul is left so full of longings to enjoy completely the One who grants them that it lives in a great though delightful torment. With the strongest yearnings to die, and thus usually with tears, it begs God to take it from this exile. Everything it sees wearies it. When it is alone it finds some relief, but soon this torment returns; yet when the soul does not experience this pain, something is felt to be missing. In sum, this little butterfly is unable to find a lasting place of rest; rather, since the soul goes about with such tender love, any occasion that enkindles this fire more makes the soul fly aloft. As a result, in this dwelling place the raptures are very common and there is no means to avoid them even though they may take place in public (p. 137-138).

In addition, the person experiences an inability to engage in discursive thinking (p. 146). Replacing discursive thought are "very wonderful apparitions and visions" (p. 150).

7. "[The Lord] brings [the soul]...into His dwelling place, which is the seventh [of the interior castle]. For just as in heaven so in the soul His Majesty must have a room where He dwells alone. Let us call it another Heaven" (p. 173). In her description of the sixth dwelling place, Teresa described the activity of the seventh as 'spiritual marriage'. "In this seventh dwelling place the union comes about in a different way [than the sixth]: Our good God now

desires to remove the scales from the soul's eyes and let it see and understand, although in a strange way, something of the favor He grants it" (p. 175). Thus, while the soul was carried beyond its faculties in the sixth dwelling, in the seventh, these capacities are restored, and there is a greater degree of cognitive understanding of what is happening in the union.

Teresa speaks of the soul experiencing a vision of the Trinity in this stage. "Each day this soul becomes more amazed, for these Persons (i.e. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) never seem to leave it any more, but it clearly beholds...that they are within it. In the extreme interior, in some place very deep within itself, the nature of which it doesn't know how to explain, because of a lack of learning, it perceives this divine company" (p. 175).

Paradoxically, the soul is no longer absorbed in this Presence, as it was in the sixth dwelling. Rather, "the soul is much more occupied than before with everything pertaining to the service of God" (p. 175). Teresa indicates that there is a union between 'doing' and 'being' in this stage: that in order to achieve the stage, the soul has had to learn to 'be', as with the example of Mary in Jesus' story of Martha and Mary. But once this dwelling place is attained, both capacities are united and utilized together.

There are several attributes of this seventh dwelling place which Teresa attempts to describe. The first is the experience of great pleasure: "the delight the soul experiences [is] so extreme-- that I don't know what to compare it to....One can say no more-- insofar as can be understood--than that the soul...is made one with God" (p. 178). From Teresa's manner of description, it appears that

much of what is experienced is state-specific, and it is difficult to communicate to people who are in the state of ordinary awareness (Tart, 1975).

Second, Teresa describes an inner peacefulness which results from this state. "In the soul that enters here there are none of those movements that usually take place in the faculties and the imagination and do harm to the soul, nor do these stirrings take away its peace" (p. 181). Perhaps as a corollary to this, there is a "forgetfulness of self, for truly the soul...no longer is" (p. 183). "There is a great detachment from everything and a desire to be always either alone or occupied in something that will benefit some soul. There are no interior trials or feelings of dryness, but the soul lives with a remembrance and tender love of our Lord" (p. 184).

Finally, in accordance with the more cognitive nature of this stage, "when the soul arrives here all raptures are taken away. Only once in a while are they experienced" (p. 186). Due to the constant awareness of the intimate presence of God, there no longer is any need for these raptures, and so they are seldom experienced.

Summary of the Structure

0. Those souls who are outside of the castle of the soul: they are in darkness and lacking in any kind of self-knowledge.
1. The first dwelling place: the soul is absorbed in the world, i.e. in possessions, honor and business affairs, and engulfed in its pleasures and vanities. Generally the soul is focused on the external world, but sometimes these things are put aside for prayer and reflection on God. By this means, self-knowledge is

acquired, and the soul progresses within itself.

2. The second dwelling place: the soul has understood the misery it is in and begins to draw closer to God by listening to the appeals of God to enter further within itself. The soul hears God through good books, sermons, illnesses, trials and prayer. However, it still does not avoid sin, and this impedes progress.
3. The third dwelling place: the soul begins to live in accordance with moral precepts and to abandon sin so as not to offend God. In this stage, there is the gradual abandonment of one's own will in order to align the will with God's will. The person leads a balanced life, is fond of setting aside periods of time for reflection, and practices charity towards his/her neighbors. However, these souls are still attached to the world and to the esteem of others.
4. The fourth dwelling place: the soul begins to have supernatural experiences that do not originate from within itself, but from within God. Teresa recognizes two substages here:
 - a. The prayer of recollection: the process of remaining attentive and aware of God, instead of striving to engage in discourse with God. At this stage, love for God is awakened in the soul, and the person begins to forget himself in contemplation.
 - b. The prayer of quiet: an experience which arises from deep within the soul, in which the soul is absorbed with God. This experience produces ineffable blessings, and goes beyond sensory perception. In this state, the will is united with God's will in some way.

5. The fifth dwelling place: the soul experiences a union with God; all of the faculties (the senses, will, imagination, and memory) are suspended, so that one has no awareness of the world, but only of God. In this state, there is no sin; there is the certainty that God is present; and there are a variety of degrees of intensity in this union.
6. The sixth dwelling place: the soul dissolves in love, wanting to be even closer to God. During this stage, the soul experiences locutions from God, raptures and visions. The absorptions with God are so intense that when they cease, the person remains in a state of withdrawal from the world. This stage is characterized as very painful, because the soul wants only to be closer to God than it is. Psychic powers are available to the practitioner in this stage.
7. The seventh dwelling place: the soul is fully united with God, and from henceforth experiences in every moment the immediate presence of the Trinity. In this stage, the soul no longer experiences intense raptures, but rather experiences a different kind of pleasure that is so extreme as to be indescribable. From this experience there is a sense of inner peace, and a return to activity in the world.

CHAPTER IX

TAXONOMIC RESULTS

The purpose of this chapter is to order the descriptive results of the previous chapters into a taxonomy of contemplative mystical experience. I have done this by comparing the summarized stages of contemplative development with each other. This ordering has allowed me to address the last two questions of the study.

I have engaged in several procedures in developing this taxonomy. First, I have used the stages which are common to all the religions in the sample as the basic tool to align the stages with each other. In order to do this, I closely examined the stages for descriptions that seemed to point to the same experience. I found that three experiences were present in all of the religions in the sample. The first experience which was common to all was described as a behavior change or as the regulation of behavior. The second was the experience of union with the object of contemplation. The third was the end point of contemplative development: union with God.

I then used these experiences that are common to all of the religions to order the stages. The first step in this ordering was to group together the stages that occurred before the stage that all had in common. I then compared these stages with each other, respecting the ordering that the mystical authors described. From this examination, I was able to find other common features between some of the stages: two instances where four of the five religions

appeared to describe the same phenomenon; and five instances where three of the five religions appeared to describe the same phenomenon. I then charted this material, so that the reader could compare the descriptions and common stages for him/herself.

Table 6

A Comparison of the Structure of Contemplative Development Across Religious Lines

Common Themes	Hinduism	Theravada Buddhism	Judaism	Orthodox Christianity	Roman Catholic Christianity
					1. The First Dwelling: the soul is absorbed in the world (possessions, honor, business affairs, etc.) Is seldom aware of God; focuses on the external world.
				1.a. Fear is the motivating force to begin the mystical journey. Seems to be fear of the world and one's bodily nature.	
Repentance: an attitude change which involves turning from the world to the Divine.				1.b. The beginning of repentance is humbleness without artifice: the alteration of the mind to be like Christ.	2. The Second Dwelling: the soul understands the misery it is in and begins to draw near to God. Hears God thru good books, sermons, illnesses, trials and prayer. The soul still does not avoid sin. (This stage seems to overlap stage 1 of Judaism.)
			1. Nephesh of the natural soul: intellectual contemplation of God without an emotional acceptance. Torah and commentaries are read, but no behavior change.		
Regulation of Behavior: a behavioral consequence of repentance.	1. Yamas: vows of self-restraint with abstention from violence, falsehood, theft, sexual incontinence and acquisitiveness.	1. Virtue: abstention from killing living beings, lying, stealing, sexual intercourse, and covetousness. The function of virtue is to stop misconduct and develop the quality of blamelessness which results from purity of consciousness. (This stage seems to overlap into sensory regulation.)	2. Ruah of the natural soul: behavior changes to conform to the Law, due to development of emotional concomitant of intellectual acceptance of God.	1.c. Behavior regulation thru mortification of the heart by humility. Includes low voice, self-contempt, mean clothes, not being moved to anger, patience, etc.	3. The Third Dwelling: the soul begins to abandon sin so as not to offend God, with the gradual abandonment of one's own will to align with God thru humility. Person lives a balanced life, but is still attached to the world and the esteem of others.
Regulation of the senses and the development of purity.	2. Niyamas: observances of mental and physical purity, contentment, austerity, self-study and self-surrender.			1.d. Sensory regulation thru the development of inward grief.	
				1.e. Acquisition of true knowledge thru humility. This appears to be a cognitive restructuring.	

Table 6, continued:

Common Themes	Hinduism	Theravada Buddhism	Judaism	Orthodox Christianity	Roman Catholic Christianity
	3. Asana: stabilization of posture.				
	4. Pranayama: control of breathing, allowing practitioner to perceive subtle energies and to prepare for concentration.				
				1.f. The development of silence with the cessation of outward and inward verbalizations.	
				1.g. The practice of community prayer.	
	5. Pratyahara: withdrawal of the mind from the input of the senses.				
	6. Dharana: the beginning of concentration, confining the mind to a limited mental area.				
Development of concentration, by means of training awareness.	7. Dhyana: the uninterrupted flow of the mind towards the object of concentration.	2.a. Concentration: the anchoring of the mind to the object of concentration.	[Not explicitly described, but this stage is implied by the practices of the Hasids, such as Keva and Kavannah, which lead to this type of concentration.]	2.a. The practice of contemplation: placing an image of God or a verbal prayer in the heart and focusing on that to the exclusion of other stimuli. All emotion and thought are concentrated on God.	4.a. The Fourth Dwelling (Prayer of Recollection): the process of remaining attentive and aware of God, instead of talking to God. Person tends to forget self.
		2.b. Focusing on the mental datum of the object of concentration (e.g. the name of the object) such that an eidetic image arises. Called the 'learning sign.'			
		2.c. Developing the learning sign apart from the object of concentration.			
		2.d. Arising of access concentration, when the counterpart sign, a purer version of the learning sign, appears to break out of and replace the learning sign.			

Table 6, continued:

Common Themes	Hinduism	Theravada Buddhism	Judaism	Orthodox Christianity	Roman Catholic Christianity
				2.b. Perception of the deep separation between the practitioner and God. This is the awareness of sin.	
				2.c. The development of outbursts of tears, at first partial (several times a day) and then tears without break. Practitioner is overwhelmed with emotion.	
First Trance State: mind achieves identity with the object of concentration.	8.a. Savitarka Samadhi: mind achieves identity with gross object of contemplation and alternates between three kinds of knowledge.	2.e. First Jhana: first trance state, characterized by applied and sustained thought, with happiness and bliss, and the unification of mind. During this stage, the counterpart sign is extended.	3. Neshamah of the natural soul: heart is moved to ecstasy by contemplation such that the whole extent of the divine matter is reduced to a point of overwhelming and ecstatic feeling. Has many substages, and is inwardly directed.	2.d. The reception of peaceful de-liberations: the beginning of ecstasy: occurs when the whole heart and mind are absorbed with God.	4.b. The Fourth Dwelling (the Prayer of Quiet): the soul is absorbed in God, producing ineffable blessings, and going beyond sensory experience. The will is united with God's will.
	8.b. Nirvitarka Samadhi: mind achieves identity with gross object of contemplation on the basis of intuitive knowledge of the object.				
	8.c. Asamprajnata Samadhi: mind leaves former plane of awareness and enters a void, until emergence of the next level of awareness.				
Second Trance State: cessation of thought, and the union of the mind with a 'subtle object of awareness.'	8.d. Savicara Samadhi: mind achieves identity with subtle object of awareness, mixed with awareness of three kinds of knowledge.	2.f. Second Jhana: trance state characterized by internal confidence and singleness of mind, without applied and sustained thought. Marks movement into fine-material sphere and the cessation of thought.			5. The Fifth Dwelling: soul experiences union with God; all faculties (senses, will, imagination, and memory) are suspended. No awareness of anything but God. No sin is possible. Spontaneous, with various degrees of intensity.
	8.e. Nirvicara Samadhi: mind achieves identity with subtle object of awareness, on the basis of intuitive knowledge.				

Table 6, continued:

Common Themes	Hinduism	Theravada Buddhism	Judaism	Orthodox Christianity	Roman Catholic Christianity
	8.f. Asamprajnata Samadhi: mind leaves former plane of awareness and enters a void until the emergence of the next plane of awareness.				
Third Trance State: a unification of mind without the emotional component.		2.g. Third Jhana: trance state characterized by unification of mind and equanimity, with the fading away of bliss and happiness.	4. Hayyah of the natural soul: mind is lost in contemplation of the divine, but details of the contemplation are not lost to overwhelming feeling. Perception of God in all things; automatic, spontaneous ecstasies.	2.e. Arising of serenity of insight and purity of affections. The purification of the emotions such that peace arises and divine things present themselves spontaneously.	
			5. Yehidah of the natural soul: the elemental desire to be near God.		
			6. Ruah of the divine soul: the spontaneous doing of good deeds, based on the action of the divine upon the soul, and occurring as a result of contemplation.		
Fourth Trance State: availability of psychic powers, rapture and visions.	8.g. Sananda Samadhi: mind perceives a universal consciousness in which each object is distinct as itself. Psychic powers available.	2.h. Fourth Jhana: trance state characterized by neither-pain-nor-pleasure, and purity of mindfulness due to equanimity. Psychic powers available.	[Psychic powers are mentioned in other Hasidic texts (Kuperstok 1978), and I infer that they are present in Baer as well, but are not mentioned for some reason.]	2.f. Sight of hidden things, including visions of angels, etc. Practitioner abides in ecstasy and all else is cut off: senses are at rest, prayer and speech are cut off, practitioner is unable to work.	6. The Sixth Dwelling: soul dissolves in love, wanting to be closer to God. Intense absorptions, raptures, visions, and psychic powers.
	8.h. Asamprajnata Samadhi: mind leaves former plane of awareness and enters a void, until the emergence of the next plane of awareness.				
Perception of the end-point of the belief system as objective reality.	8.i. Sasmita Samadhi: mind is aware only of universal consciousness, without any distinguishing marks or characteristics.	3.a. Conformity Knowledge: perception that all objects of awareness are impermanent, painful, and not-self, with subsequent disengagement from objects of awareness.	7. Neshamah of the divine soul: actual comprehension of the divine by the divine soul. An overwhelming experience of emotional ecstasy, with many substages.		

Table 6, continued:

Common Themes	Hinduism	Theravada Buddhism	Judaism	Orthodox Christianity	Roman Catholic Christianity
<p>First Enlightenment State: qualitatively different from the preceding states, with the elimination of individual content from the mind.</p>	<p>8.j. Nirbija Samadhi: suppression of all modifications of the mind, including Divine Consciousness. Mind no longer has any remnant of individual mind content. A state that is qualitatively different from the preceding states.</p>	<p>3.b. Change-of-lineage knowledge: where the object of awareness is signless, no-occurrence, no-formation, cessation. The first enlightenment state.</p>	<p>8. Hayyah of the Divine Soul: a penetration of mind to the heart of the divine, with subsequent cognitive 'knowing' of the divine. The state of 'Wisdom' or 'Understanding.'</p>		
		<p>3.c. Path Knowledge: consists of neither-perception-nor-nonperception, with the functions of exploding all greed, hate and delusion, and the extinction of all suffering.</p>			
<p>Final Enlightenment State: the perfection of non-attachment such that the practitioner attains union, communion or complete cessation.</p>	<p>8.k. Dharma-Megha-Samadhi: mind is not attached to even the most exalted state, such that the individual unit of Divine Consciousness is established in his/her real nature which is pure Consciousness.</p>	<p>3.d. Fruition Knowledge: the cessation of consciousness, with achievement of final knowledge. The final state of enlightenment.</p>	<p>9. Yehidah of the divine soul: full and open communion with God, such that the essence of the soul is attached to the essence of God. One will only, that of God.</p>	<p>3. Perfection: final development of humility, attainment of Christ-like nature, spiritual union with God, and effusion of love for mankind and non-attachment.</p>	<p>7. The Seventh Dwelling: soul is fully united with God and experiences in every moment the presence of the Trinity. Experiences a kind of pleasure that is so extreme as to be indescribable. A sense of peace and return to activity in the world.</p>

Rationale for Classification

My rationale for classifying stages together may not have been immediately obvious to the reader who is unfamiliar with world religions. For this reason, I have taken this opportunity to make explicit my reasons for classifying stages together. I have limited my explanations to those stages where three or more religions seem to refer to the same experience.

1. The regulation of behavior: each of the five authors talked about the regulation of behavior. The Hindu and Buddhist authors were the most explicit about what is regulated, and referred to the same behaviors in the same order: abstention from violence, falsehood, theft, sexual intercourse or incontinence, and acquisitiveness. The Jewish and Christian authors were less explicit, but it can be inferred that they also referred to the same behaviors. The Ten Commandments, accepted by these three religions, regulate the same behaviors described in the Hindu and Buddhist sources above. The Roman Catholic source gives an explanation regarding why these practices are important: the practitioner abandons his/her own will and aligns with God through humility.
2. The regulation of the senses: three of the five authors talk about the regulation of the senses and the development of purity. The Buddhist source presents the previous stage and this one as a single stage, where the other two authors separate the stages. All three appear to refer to the development of an inward purity through sensory regulation. By sensory regulation is meant the practice of regulating attention to those sensory experiences which

facilitate union with God, and by excluding those which do not facilitate union.

3. The development of concentration: four of the five authors talk explicitly about the practice of concentration, and in the fifth, although the practice of concentration is not formulated as a stage, the religion has practices which lead to the development of concentration: namely the practices of keva and kavannah, which is a thrice daily prayer involving the total personality of the one who prays (Strassfeld & Strassfeld, 1976). Thus, even though all five do not explicitly discuss concentration, I have made the assumption that this practice is utilized by all. In all cases, this practice involves the uninterrupted flow of the mind towards the object of contemplation, which usually is an image of God or a short verbal prayer which is constantly repeated.

4. The first trance state: all five of the authors in the sample describe the experience of achieving union with the object of concentration, accompanied by feelings of intensely pleasurable emotion. Another word that is often used to describe this union is 'absorption'. The Roman Catholic author states that this experience goes beyond sensory experience. Perhaps this means that the experience is difficult to communicate. Also, once the practitioner achieves this kind of union, the stages following appear to occur spontaneously. That is, they appear to occur as a function of the time spent in meditation rather than the conscious development of a specific practice in order to attain the next stage.

In order to achieve union with an object of concentration, the practitioner has to let go of his/her own grasping and wanting; that

is to say, he/she must let go of himself or herself. Progress through the contemplative journey is controlled by the facility of letting go of one's self in order to find that self in union with God.

5. The second trance state: three of the five authors speak of achieving union or identity with a 'subtle object of awareness'. They speak of a 'subtle world', or a 'fine material world'. The content of these terms is not made explicit by any of the authors. The closest that I can come in describing this phenomenon is to say that the subtle world becomes apparent to the practitioner when thinking and sensory input cease, and this is not so much a description as a statement of the necessary and sufficient conditions for the phenomenon to occur. I suspect that the difficulty that mystical authors have in describing this state may be related to the cessation of thinking necessary for the occurrence of the state. Thinking implies words and labels; the lack of thinking would imply no words--a condition hardly suitable for verbal description.

6. The third trance state: three of the five authors describe a state where the emotional component of meditation falls away. In this state, there is a profound peacefulness. It may be that the Hindu source also describes this state in referring to Nivicara Samadhi. However, there was insufficient information in the Hindu source to confirm this speculation.

7. The fourth trance state: four of the five authors describe a state where psychic powers are available to the practitioner. It is this common thread in the descriptions that allowed me to classify this stage as a single unit. Much of the rest of the descriptions

of this stage do not appear to be congruent with each other. The Hindu perceives a universal consciousness; the Buddhist, a trance state characterized by neither-pain-nor-pleasure with purity of mindfulness; the Orthodox Christian, the sight of hidden things including visions of angels; and the Roman Catholic, intense raptures, visions and absorptions. I hypothesize that these differences are due to the differential effects of the belief systems on the practitioners' perception. For example, the end result of a Hindu belief system is the perception that all phenomena are an expression of the Divine Consciousness. The end result of the Buddhist belief system is that there is no Divine Consciousness, no self, and no occurrence. Although this hypothesis may account for these differences, I do not have an hypothesis to account for the occurrence of these differences at this particular stage of contemplative development.

8. The perception of the end-point of the belief system: three of the five authors describe a state in which the common experience appears to be the perception of the reality of the end-point of the belief system. For the Hindu, there is universal consciousness without distinguishing marks; for the Buddhist, perception of impermanence and not-self, with subsequent disengagement from all objects of awareness; for the Jew, a comprehension of the Divine by the divine soul.

9. The first enlightenment state: three of the five authors refer to a state that is described as qualitatively different from the preceding states, and in which the practitioner experiences the elimination of individual content from the mind, with the emergence

of divine content; or in the case of Buddhism, the cessation which is Nirvana.

10. The final enlightenment state: all five of the authors describe the end point of the contemplative journey in a similar fashion.

There is a perfection of non-attachment on the part of the practitioner such that s/he achieves union with the Divine, communion with the Divine, or complete cessation. In every case this is caused by non-attachment, is accompanied by feelings of extreme pleasure, and is described as the perfection of cognitive knowledge as well, due to the fact that the practitioner can clearly see the nature of reality.

The major moderating variable that appears to affect these results is the belief system of the contemplative author. Particularly at the end of contemplative development, what is experienced is experienced within the context of the belief system; the system acting to filter out material/experience which conflicts with the belief system.

However, even with this variable acting such that some differential results are obtained, the amount of agreement between these different authors is substantial. First, given that my basic alignment is accurate, the progression of contemplative mystical experience seems to be remarkably similar across religious lines. That is, the structure of mystical experience appears to be similar, despite differences caused by the belief systems. Second, within each stage that can be paralleled with stages of other religions, there is a substantial agreement in the descriptions of the stage. Thus, there appears to be considerable reason for asserting that these themes refer to the same kind of experiences, and that the differences in the

descriptions are due in part to the effect of the belief system on the perceptions of the author, and in part due to different methods of self-expression on the part of the authors. In sum, there appears to be sufficient reason to postulate a conceptual model which can describe and explain the development of contemplative mystical experience. I propose to postulate two models from the data: the first model describing what is necessary and sufficient for the development of a contemplative; and the second model expanding the necessary and sufficient conditions such that the psychological progression of the contemplative's development is made explicit.

The 'Necessary and Sufficient' Model

The criterion for the statement of this model of contemplative mystical development is the agreement of four out of the five authors used in the sample for each stage that is used in this model. This criterion was selected for two reasons. First, this level of agreement indicates that the experience described is perceived as necessary by all of the authors; or in those cases of four agreeing, there is in each case reason to believe that the author omitting the stage has simply not perceived it as a separate stage. Second, the agreement of four authors out of a total population of seven religions means that the majority of the population include this stage as necessary to contemplative development. Thus, the necessary and sufficient model is postulated from the overwhelming majority of the sample and the simple majority of the population. There are five stages in this model:

1. The regulation of behavior, such that the practitioner gradually abandons his/her own will in order to align with God or some other center which does not revolve around the self. This involves, at a minimum: abstention from violence, falsehood, theft, sexual incontinence, and acquisitiveness.
2. The development of concentration, such that the mind is trained to attend to any one particular stimulus to the exclusion of all other stimuli. This stage has no specific behavioral component which serves as a signal characteristic, since this concentration can be developed while sitting, walking, etc. However, the practitioner does have to engage in activities which can be narrowed to specific stimuli.
3. The entrance into the first trance state, which occurs when the mind achieves identity with the object of contemplation. During this first trance state, the practitioner is usually seated and motionless, and not responsive to other stimuli in the immediate environment.
4. The development of psychic powers, which accompanies the cessation of thought, prayer and speech, and the resting of the senses--which is the cessation of sensory input--in a trance state. In this stage, the practitioner is subject to spontaneous trance states, visions and raptures. The Hindu source describes it as the state of perceiving an underlying unity through the diversity of phenomena. The Buddhist source describes the state as purity of mindfulness due to equanimity. During the stage, the practitioner cannot engage

in ordinary activities, such as work, due to the interference in these activities by the spontaneous occurrence of trance states.

5. The end point of contemplative development, due to the culmination of the practice of non-attachment and humility. In this state, the practitioner experiences in one of three modes, according to the belief system of the practitioner: a) union with the Divine; b) communion with the Divine; or c) complete cessation and the achievement of final knowledge. In this state, the practitioner experiences an intense pleasure which does not habituate, a limitless love for humanity, a non-ordinary kind of knowledge which is described as knowledge of things as they really are, and an understanding of self. Following this experience, the practitioner can return to activity in the world.

These five stages constitute the necessary and sufficient stages of contemplative mystical development.

An Expanded Model of Contemplative Development

The major problem with the 'necessary and sufficient' model is that important information is lost. For example, between the first trance state and the development of psychic powers, there are two stages where there is agreement between three of the five religions used in this sample. To address this information loss, I have postulated an expanded model of contemplative development.

As before, the crucial factor in the development of a model of contemplative development is the basis for deciding whether a given experience describes a stage in the process. The criterion

that I have used in developing this expanded model is the agreement regarding an experience among a simple majority of the authors in the sample, which is the agreement of at least three of the five authors. I have violated this criterion three times, in describing the beginning stages of contemplative development. In order to be clearer regarding the difference between mystical development and 'ordinary' life, I have added three stages to the beginning of the progression which were described by one or two authors. The inclusion of these three stages has the benefit of describing what mystical development is not, and delineates the psychological transition from 'ordinary' life to the mystical life. In all other cases, I have adhered to the criterion described above. In my description of the sixth stage, concentration, I have utilized the notion of substages. The Buddhist author was the most explicit in describing this stage, and I have followed his lead here, on the grounds that he gives the most information regarding this stage. I also included material from other authors to flesh out the Buddhist author's descriptions. In all of the other stage descriptions, I have utilized all of the authors in order to get as full a description of the stage as possible.

In developing this expanded model, I have tried to make explicit the psychological progression, as the practitioner moves from one stage to the next. The axis around which contemplative development revolves appears to be the radical non-attachment to objects of awareness. In this model, I have tried to show how this radical non-attachment is manifested in the progression of the stages.

In this expanded model, there are thirteen stages.

1. Before the person enters into contemplative mystical development, s/he is absorbed in the world. Attention is given to things like possessions, fame, one's appearance, business affairs, etc. That is, the person's attention is mainly directed outward. Within the person, there are many divisions which are constantly battling among themselves, e.g. the very human dilemma of arguing with one's self: "Should I do this or should I do that?" The person accepts these divisions and the consequent lack of peace as the normal state of affairs.

2. Before the person begins contemplative development, there must be a reason to do so--a motivating factor. Isaac states that motivation is due to fear, primarily fear of the world. I suspect that this is an unduly limited view. The dissonance within the self could be such that it provides the motivation to begin contemplation.

3. Following the perception of dissonance, the person turns away from the sources of dissonance and searches for some other way of living. This is called repentance by Isaac and Teresa, and appears to be a change of attitude about one's approach to living.

The main thrust of contemplative mystical development is the gradual abandonment of one's attachments to self and to things through the practice of humility or non-attachment. As one systematically abandons those things and activities which separate him/her within, an inner unification takes place. This process of unification proceeds at its own pace, and at the end, results in the

unification of the practitioner with the Divine.

4. The first practice is that of the regulation of the behaviors which can separate one. This regulation includes abstention from violence, falsehood, theft, sexual incontinence and acquisitiveness. As one looks at these behaviors, it is easy to see how their practice could lead to inner division within the practitioner. For example, the practice of violence usually entails the fear of retaliatory violence--a fear which would be counterproductive for the contemplative. Yet, the violation of at least two of these behavioral regulations are used for further contemplative development by different groups. Ch'an and Zen Buddhists have developed the practice of the martial arts as a religious exercise. Tantric yoga uses several variants of coitus to achieve contemplative development. Further, the Jewish practitioners to whom Baer wrote were married, and did not practice sexual continence within their marriages.

I suspect that the content of behavioral regulation is not of vital importance here. Rather, the development of non-attachment and humility through various kinds of behavioral regulation are the ends to which the exercises of this stage are aimed. That is, the process of developing non-attachment rather than the content of what one is not attached to is what is important here.

5. A concomitant to behavioral regulation is the regulation of the senses. Sensory regulation is the governing of the senses, and the bringing under conscious control that which one experiences. One of the means to achieve this end is the practice of austerities, such as fasting, all-night prayer vigils, self-flagellation, etc.

The purpose of sensory regulation is to train awareness to such a degree that it can bring the flow of sensory data under conscious control. In the process, attachments to the sensory world are weakened and finally severed at a later stage.

6. Next is the stage of concentration, which is the uninterrupted flow of the mind to the object of concentration. If concentration practice began prior to this stage in the contemplative's journey, it would meet with failure. Too many interruptions would take place due to behavioral and sensory attachments which had not been addressed.

In practice, concentration training has two modes: visual and auditory. The practitioner places a visual image or an auditory sequence in mind, and learns to attend exclusively to that stimulus. The Buddhist text was the most explicit in developing the meaning of this stage. The author divided the stage into four substages:

- a. Anchoring the mind to the object of concentration. This is the simple attending to the stimulus of choice, and the conscious exclusion of all other stimuli.
- b. The focusing on the mental datum of the object of concentration, e.g. the name of the object, such that an eidetic image of the object arises. This image is called the learning sign. An auditory stimulus, such as a mantram or heschiastic prayer, would not produce an eidetic image. However, practitioners do report that the mantram seems to say itself after intensive practice (Note 3). This, I suspect, is the auditory equivalent of an eidetic image.

- c. The development of the eidetic image or its auditory equivalent away from the object of concentration, so that the practitioner is not attached to the object-stimulus in the practice of concentration.
 - d. The development of access concentration, which occurs when a 'counterpart sign', which is a purer, more abstract version of the eidetic image, arises. One of the consistent reports from experienced practitioners using the mode of heschiastic prayer is that the prayer seems to take on a life of its own, and prays itself constantly, so that the practitioner might wake up out of sleep with its words on his/her lips, or even hear the prayer in a dream (Isaac of Nineveh, 1969).
7. The development of the first trance state, which is the result of concentration practice. In this state, the mind becomes identified with or absorbed in the object of concentration. During this absorption, the practitioner experiences overwhelming positive emotions. When the practitioner first enters into this trance state, there is identity with the object in such a way that the experience of other contents of consciousness also arise. During succeeding trance states, these other contents of awareness will subside.

The achievement of this first trance state is a rare occurrence. Entrance into trance involves the practice of non-attachment to such a degree that the concept of self is no longer essential to the practitioner's sense of well-being. This allows the identification with the object of concentration to occur.

8. The second trance state is characterized by the cessation of thought and the entrance into the fine-material world. The fine-material world, also known as the subtle world, is a set of phenomena described by contemplative mystics in a most vague fashion. Phenomena of this sort appear to go beyond sense data, and thus the mystics report considerable difficulty in describing these phenomena in a language that is bound to sensory experience. However, they report a level of reality which is concealed within sensory reality, and which is apparent to one in the second trance state. In this state, the senses, will, imagination and memory are suspended, and the practitioner has no awareness outside of the subtle object of concentration. This trance state is also characterized by intensely pleasurable feelings.

9. The third trance state is characterized by the fading away of the feelings of pleasure, and with a concomitant unification of the mind. In this stage, the practitioner experiences spontaneous absorptions over which he/she has no conscious control. Also in this stage, the practitioner experiences the object of contemplation in a more cognitive fashion. As the intense emotion subsides, the cognitive features become more apparent.

10. The fourth trance state is characterized by the cessation of all cognitions, and by the development of psychic powers. In this state, there is purity of mindfulness, and the awareness of the underlying unity of creation amid the diversity of its manifestations. In this state, the practitioner experiences spontaneous visions and raptures.

11. Following the fourth trance state, the practitioner comes to a perception of the end-point of the particular belief system as an objective reality. In this state, the Hindu is aware of universal consciousness; the Buddhist, of the impermanance of objects of awareness; and the Jew, of the Divine. Here, the belief system appears to exert a direct influence upon what is perceived by the practitioner.

12. Arising from the fourth trance state is the first enlightenment state. In this state, all objects of awareness and contents of mind are released. This state is qualitatively different from all of the preceding states, since there is no longer any 'individual' content left in the mind of the practitioner.

13. The final enlightenment state is characterized by the non-attachment to the previous state. When this occurs, most accounts say that the Divine comes into the individual unity of consciousness and is established there, thus effecting a spiritual union between the Divine and the individual. This state is the culmination of non-attachment and humility. In this state, the practitioner again experiences intensely pleasurable feelings, a limitless love for humanity, and a non-ordinary knowledge of the 'real' nature of phenomena. This state is a permanent change of awareness, and in this state, the practitioner can again return to activity in the ordinary world.

A Comparison of Brown's Model and Kaisch's Expanded Model

The third and final question of this study revolves around the accuracy of Brown's model (Note 1) in describing the structure of

contemplative mystical development. The sample which Brown used to develop his conception of the structure utilized authors from three major world religions; the sample of the present study is broader and utilizes authors from five of the major world religions. To address this final question of the study, I have compared Brown's stage model with the expanded model generated above.

Table 7

A Comparison of Brown's Model and Kaisch's Expanded Model

Brown's Model	Kaisch's Expanded Model
	1. Before the person enters into contemplative development, s/he is absorbed in the world, and attention is mainly directed outward to business affairs, possessions, etc. The person is characterized inwardly by division, which is accepted as the normal state of affairs.
	2. The person is motivated to begin the contemplative journey, either due to fear or to relieve the inward dissonance.
I. Preliminary Ethical Practices: A. The generation of faith: an attitude change brought about by acceptance of the faith postulates of the religion.	3. Repentance: an attitude change, in which the person turns from his/her former way of life towards the Divine.
B. Formal study: a series of intrapsychic transformations brought about by a formal study of the tenets of the religion.	
C. Sensory and behavioral regulation: the institution of behavioral changes, usually	4. The regulation of behavior: this includes abstention from violence, falsehood, theft,

Table 7, continued:

Brown's Model	Kaisch's Expanded Model
<p>ethical in nature, which are described in the doctrines of the religion. Functionally this can be described as awareness training.</p>	<p>sexual incontinence, and acquisitiveness. The purpose of this regulation is the development of non-attachment and humility.</p>
<p>II. Preliminary Mind/Body Training: A. Body isolation: training in body postures in order to cause a rearrangement in the way one experiences the body.</p>	<p>5. The regulation of the senses: the bringing under conscious control of that which one chooses to experience. This often involves the practice of austerities. The purpose of sensory regulation is to train awareness to such a degree that it can bring the flow of sense data under conscious control. In the process, attachments to the sensory world are weakened.</p>
<p>B. Speech isolation: calming the mental chatter and associative thinking.</p>	
<p>C. Mind isolation: tuning into the stream of awareness that exists underneath the mental chatter.</p>	
<p>III. Concentration with Support: A. Concentration training: decategorizing of perception, with awareness of the attributes of the object of concentration, and without an intellectual categorizing.</p>	<p>6. Concentration: A. The anchoring of the mind to the object of concentration. This is the simple attending to the stimulus of choice, and the conscious exclusion of all other stimuli.</p>
<p>B. Concentration inside: the ability to hold an image of the object of concentration within the self space, and the ability to manipulate that image at will.</p>	<p>B. The focusing on the mental datum of the object of concentration, such that an eidetic image of the object arises.</p>

Table 7, continued:

Brown's Model	Kaisch's Expanded Model
	C. The development of the eidetic image away from the object of concentration.
	D. The development of access concentration, which occurs when the counterpart sign, a purer, more abstract version of the eidetic image, appears.
C. Collapse of sense material into a central point, so that all one's awareness is concentrated on this one point. At this stage, there is a recognition of the various patterns of the sensory modalities.	7. The development of the first trance state, which is the result of concentration practice. In this state, the mind becomes identified with or absorbed in the object of concentration. During this absorption, the practitioner experiences overwhelming positive emotions.
D. Stopping the mind (i.e. gross perception): the gross perceptual world collapses completely, such that there is no perception of seeing, hearing, feeling, etc.	8. The second trance state is characterized by the cessation of thought and the entrance into the fine material world. Phenomena of the fine material or subtle world appear to go beyond sense data, and thus the mystics report difficulty in describing these phenomena. In this state, the senses, will, imagination and memory are suspended, and the practitioner has no awareness outside of the subtle object of concentration. This trance state is intensely pleasurable.
IV. Concentration without Support:	
A. Tuning in subtle perception: the ability to hold fast to the flow of subtle perception underneath gross mental events. The subtle flow is often perceived as a stream of light.	
B. Recognizing the subtle flow: during this stage, the sense of the observer-self drops away.	
C. With the collapse of the observer, there is a restructuring of perspective and an internal balancing.	
V. Insight Practice:	
A. High speed search of the subtle flow with the eradication of the biasing factors, resulting	9. The third trance state is characterized by the fading away of the feelings of pleasure and the concomitant

Table 7, continued:

Brown's Model	Kaisch's Expanded Model
in a sense of the derealization of phenomena, and the perception that nothing is solid.	unification of mind. (The description of this stage and Brown's do not seem equivalent, but I included it here because the stages above and below seem to match.)
B. High speed search of gross mental events, with a shift in the perceived duration and frequency of events in the subtle flow. At this stage, psychic powers stabilize. The preferred line of development however, is the evolution of raptures and the perception of 'white light'.	10. The fourth trance state is characterized by the cessation of all cognitions and by the development of psychic powers. In this stage, the practitioner experiences spontaneous visions and raptures.
C. Analysis of mind-moments and their succession, leading to a perception of the interconnectedness of all potential events, and the experience of non-dissolution or unity. At this stage, there is a fundamental change in time/space perception and an altered sense of self that cannot be described.	
VI. Advanced Insight:	
A. Perception of the equanimity of interrelated events, and the interaction of specific events and the cosmos. At this stage, the practitioner can make any desired reality come into existence, e.g. talking with God.	
	11. Following the fourth trance state, the practitioner comes to a perception of the endpoint of the particular belief system as objective reality.

Table 7, continued:

Brown's Model	Kaisch's Expanded Model
B. Basis enlightenment: the cessation of mental activity and reactivity, the cessation of states of being, a sense of vast awareness.	12. Arising from the fourth trance state is the first enlightenment state. In this state, all objects of awareness and contents of mind are released. This is qualitatively different from all of the preceding states, as there is no longer any 'individual' content left in the mind of the practitioner.

C. Path enlightenment: the recognition of the internal transformation and the return of mental content from a changed locus of awareness.	

D. Fruit enlightenment: the fruition of the practice, with an awareness of the mind as cosmos.	13. The final enlightenment state is characterized by the non-attachment to the previous state. When this occurs, most accounts say that the Divine can come into the individual unit of consciousness and be established there, thus effecting a spiritual union between the Divine and the individual. This state is the culmination of non-attachment and humility. This state is a permanent change of awareness, and in this state, the practitioner can again return to activity in the ordinary world.
E. Return to ordinary mind with this changed locus of awareness.	

In this comparison, there is agreement between the two models in 10 of the 23 possible categories. However, Brown has included 8 stages that are not mentioned in my model, and he has not included 5 stages which are a part of my model. The non-inclusion of stages does not seem to pose much of a problem when the content of those

stages is analyzed. Two of the non-included stages are my beginning stages, which serve to contrast mystical development from non-development; and two others came from the substages which describe the procedures of concentration. However, Brown does not appear to have a clear equivalent to my stage 11. This is peculiar, given that this stage was generated from the Hindu and Theravadan sources which Brown also used.

The inclusion by Brown of 8 stages which are not in my model also poses a problem. Most of these stages of Brown do have parallels in the data base from which my model was generated, but there was insufficient reason to postulate a separate stage for these phenomena because, as a rule, only one of the authors mentioned it. Examples of this sort of pairing would include the parallels between Brown's 'Formal Study' and the 'Nepesh of the natural soul' as described by Baer; and the 'Speech Isolation' of Brown and the 'Development of silence' described by Isaac.

In addition, two of the stages appearing in Brown do not appear to have any parallels in the data base generated by this study, specifically his stages IV.C and VI.A. It is clear that Brown has included stages which have insufficient support from other major world religions to be considered a part of the developmental process of contemplative mystics. He has also omitted a stage which had support from two of the three texts he used. For these reasons, I find it necessary to reject Brown's model.

From examining the data base used in this study and Brown's model, I suspect that Brown drew heavily from the Mahayana Buddhist

source in constructing his model--there are several characteristically Buddhist features in his stages V and VI. As two of the three religions in Brown's sample were Buddhist, this bias, and the subsequent distortion of his model for explaining contemplative mystical development on a broader scale are to be expected.

CHAPTER X

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

This study has focused on three questions. The first question asked: What are the stages of contemplative mystical development as expressed by contemplative authors of major world religions? To address this question, I chose a sample of five major world religions from the total population of major world religions. From each religion, I chose a contemplative author, one who both described the stages of contemplative mystical development and who was regarded as an authority by members of that religion. The major works of these contemplative authors were then described in Chapters IV through VIII, in order to make explicit their conceptualizations of the stage model of contemplative mystical development. Thus, the first question of this study was answered by the descriptions in Chapters IV through VIII.

The second question of this study is based on the first, and asks: Can a common, invariant sequence of stages of contemplative mystical development be postulated from a comparison of the conceptualizations of these stages by contemplative authors of different world religions? This question was a question of taxonomy, and was addressed in Chapter IX. In this chapter, I compared the descriptions of the stages with each other. In so doing, I found that a stage model of contemplative mystical development can be postulated from the data. Two such models were developed: the first, containing

five stages, being the necessary and sufficient conditions for contemplative development; the second, containing thirteen stages, being an expanded model that addressed the information loss of the first model.

The third question of this study is a comparison of the expanded model developed in Chapter 9 with that of Brown, the only other researcher to attempt such a taxonomy. Because of the larger sample size of this study, the expanded model of the study was retained as accounting for the data in a more accurate fashion. Brown's second model seemed biased toward having a number of stages which were found in only one religion of the present sample, and had peculiar descriptions of other stages. This was probably an artifact of the limited size of the sample that Brown used.

Implications for the Scientific Study of Religious Experience

This study is a post hoc analysis of the reports of mystical experience as they are described by contemplative mystics. As such, it is a study that has few controls, and a fair amount of opportunity for the author's biases to be inserted. Nevertheless, it is my contention that this is an important study in the psychology of religious experience. It is important because it provides a definition of the phenomenon of contemplative mystical experience which has some kind of empirical basis. For the first time, it is possible to go beyond this writer's or that writer's opinion of what constitutes contemplative mysticism. This is possible because the taxonomy developed in this study is de facto a definition of contemplative mysticism. This taxonomic definition provides an entry point for

the scientist to begin an empirical investigation of the subject.

The methodology used to develop this definition compared accounts of contemplative mystics across religious and cultural lines, in order to find the common elements of the experience. Thus, there is an implicit control for culturally bound experiences, and for experiences that are artifacts of a particular belief system. In addition, four of the five contemplative authors used in this study are recognized as authoritative for that religion, implying that the experiences recounted by these authors are accepted as normative by the various religions. This means that there is considerable support for accepting the taxonomy developed here as definitive. And although these strengths are somewhat indirect, and not the result of a well controlled scientific methodology, nevertheless they do point to the validity of this taxonomy.

In our culture, mysticism has been discounted by the 'tough-minded' and summarily dismissed as foolishness and nonsense. The results of this study would indicate that this dismissal is the result of an improper generalization; that contemplative mysticism operates in an orderly, predictable fashion, and is susceptible to scientific investigation. The development of a stage model from the different conceptualizations of contemplative development provides the skeleton for understanding the dynamics of this process.

Because this conceptual model provides a definition of contemplative mysticism, it also provides a basis for empirical investigation in this field. One of the major reasons why the psychology of religion has not flourished as a field of scientific inquiry has revolved around the inability of investigators to collect meaningful

data. The development of this model allows the scientist to generate testable hypotheses regarding religious experiences which are verifiable through experimental means. This is the only acceptable way to generate adequate scientific information regarding the necessary and sufficient conditions for religious development. This conceptual model of contemplative development thus contributes to the scientific study of religion as a springboard for empirical investigation.

One of the implications of this study is that there exists a universal dynamic common to all major world religions--the dynamic of contemplative development. This raises a variety of other questions. For example, are there other dynamics that religions have in common? Is it possible, from an understanding of these common dynamics, to understand the purpose of religion in the ecology of human experience? These questions have a marked philosophical tone, but they indicate what further empirical study may bring, in a field which for so long has been unfruitful for scientific study.

In addition, I hope that this paper has aided in establishing the psychology of religious experience as an area of psychological study. The study of the psychology of religion has languished, in part because there is no definition to the field. For example, what constitutes the 'religion' which is to be studied? A denomination? A set of church-going behaviors? An inner experience which is perceived as 'religious'? The present paper has avoided some of these difficulties by focusing on religious experience, and through this focusing, has developed a definition of a particular set of religious experiences by means of the model of contemplative develop-

ment. In addition, the study opens the way for empirical data collection which can be understood within this theoretical framework. These are the basic ingredients for a new field of scientific investigation: a limited field of study; a theoretical orientation; and the possibility of empirical data collection.

I hope that this study will provide a basis for empirical data collection and experimentation. For example, one consequence of this study is that the physiological data gathered on meditation subjects must either be reinterpreted or redone. The stage model of contemplative development, of which meditation is a developmental tool, demonstrates that different stages of meditation have different effects on the meditator. The past studies, on the other hand, have assumed that meditation was a single, unified state, and thus, they had no way of accounting for the differential results recorded in Tables 1, 2, and 3. With the appearance of a stage model, and the subsequent differential descriptions of the various meditative states, at least one reason for the variability in the physiological data becomes apparent. It will be important to the further study of meditation and contemplative development to collect data to determine if the various meditative states have distinct physiological correlates.

One of the findings of this study dealt with the common thread which was found in each of the five religions in the sample--the common element of non-attachment, which appears to be the dynamism underlying contemplative mystical development. The process of non-attachment, though talked about by all of the authors in the sample,

was not well defined by any of them. Yet, an understanding of this concept appears to be vital to an understanding of contemplative development. A study addressing the precise definition of this concept would be useful in furthering an understanding of contemplative mysticism.

Understanding the process of non-attachment may prove fruitful in several directions, some of them quite unexpected directions. First, a deeper understanding of this process is necessary for a psychology of religious experience. This dynamism may also be useful in understanding other forms of religious development. But there is a more exciting possibility. Non-attachment appears to mean non-attachment to the conceptual constructs which we ordinarily utilize to organize our perceptions and for our survival, e.g. constructs like 'space', 'time', and 'reality'. When practitioners talk of the enlightenment states as allowing a perception of what is 'real', they appear to mean, that which 'is', as something apart from a conceptual ordering of what is. Insights gained from this state of mind may be useful in the physical and behavioral sciences. Understanding the nature of our conceptual ordering may only be possible by stepping out of that ordering process--something which is claimed for the enlightenment states. An understanding of how we order reality through our conceptual apparatus may allow insight into how we distort the physical reality when we perceive and measure it. Thus, the state of enlightenment may prove useful to both the physicist, trying to measure the physical reality, and the behavioral scientist, trying to understand the human dimension of how we perceive reality.

From my own vantage point in the behavioral sciences, I can see an application for the practice of psychotherapy. One of the limitations besetting every psychotherapist is his/her ability to perceive the covert manipulations of clients. Knowledge gained from the practice of non-attachment may well provide a means for transcending this limitation. The notion of non-attachment is so different from our ordinary value-systems that it may provide a rich vantage point from which to observe these value-systems.

Another utility of this study is that it expands the notion of altered states of consciousness, and thus, it also expands the understanding of conscious awareness. This study provides, I believe, an accurate map of one continuum of altered states of consciousness, i.e. one complete line of development. This, to my knowledge, has never been done before. The methodology used in this study--comparing accounts of altered states--may prove useful in mapping other continua of altered states.

One of the incidental findings of this study was the commonality of method used in achieving these altered states. This finding was quite unexpected. Although I did expect that all of the religions would engage in some kind of meditation or contemplation, I did not expect them to have developed identical meditations. There are explicit references to a common method in three of the religions in this sample: the vipassana method of the Theravadans; the hes-chiastic prayer of the Eastern Orthodox; and the prayer of recollection of Teresa. In addition, this form of meditation appears to be what the Hindu author means when he refers to Dhyana, the uninterrupted

flow of the mind towards the object of contemplation.

This striking coincidence raises an interesting question of interpretation. Are the stages of contemplative development an artifact of this form of meditation, or is this form of meditation an artifact of the stage progression? To answer this question, future researchers will have to collect empirical data, using an experimental methodology.

Another intriguing, though incidental finding of this study was the mention in the various texts of different ways of coming into union with God. Several of the authors used in the sample seemed to recognize the validity of other ways of knowing God beyond their own preferred method. Three of the authors talked about 'faith' as a way to achieve union with God. Two spoke of 'right deeds' as another way of achieving this union. The Buddhist author spent a paragraph mentioning other ways of achieving union, other than the way of contemplation. The cataloguing of these ways would provide the basis for another study. A further set of studies could then be undertaken to determine whether these ways also have a common, invariant set of stages of development occurring across religious lines. These studies, together with the present one, would form a solid empirical basis for developing a psychology of religious experience. The compilation of studies in this manner would provide an inexhaustible storehouse of hypotheses regarding religious development, and would facilitate empirical experimentation in this area. This process would help scientists to begin to understand the functions and utility of religious practices for human beings.

There presently exists a great need to understand the place of religion in the ecology of human experience. Religion, and religious experience of one kind or another are prevalent throughout all human cultures, and in most cultures, enjoy a high rate of incidence. Why is this the case? What is it about human beings that makes religion useful to us; and how, specifically, do we use it? These are important questions which need to be investigated.

Limitations of Interpretation

While there are many exciting interpretations which can be drawn from the results of this study, there are also several limitations which must be recognized.

First, while I have been successful in demonstrating the existence of a common progression of stages, I have not been successful in accounting for the variability which exists between the formulations of the different religions. The question raised here is: If there exists a common sequence of stages of contemplative development, what accounts for those stages that are described by only one of the religions? There are 23 stages between the five authors where one author describes a stage or substage and the others omit it. Some of this variability can be accounted for by the difference in belief systems and cultural conditioning. Some of the variability can be accounted for by the precision of explanation of a particular author; e.g. the Buddhist author took particular pains to describe the substages which make up concentration--substages which appear to

be a finer discrimination of the components of that stage than those of the other authors, but not a discrimination that is essentially different from their descriptions.

However, there are other stages which are not accounted for. For example, the Asamprajnata Samadhi of the Hindu author is nowhere accounted for by the explanations above. Further, I do not know how to account for the appearance of this stage in this religion and not in the others. Is this a phenomenon which occurs only with the cognitive set of Hindu beliefs and practices? Or is it a phenomenon which is simply not perceived by the other practitioners? Or do the other practitioners notice the stage, but not attach any importance to it as being necessary to the practice? The present study has not generated the data with which to answer these questions.

Another limitation of the interpretations comes from the observation of the occurrence of peculiar and contradictory behaviors by the authors of this study. On the one hand, the authors have achieved the end point of their religious quest, and from this they claim to perceive what 'is', i.e. what is 'real' apart from those cultural filters which distort what is 'real'. However, those authors who utilized an explicit numbering system have utilized a 'magic' numbering system, i.e. a numbering system which appears to be the result of a cultural filter. For example, the Hindus speak of the eight-fold path and Patanjali develops a stage system with precisely eight stages. To obtain this result, he compressed eleven different stages of samadhi into one. I have to ask, why did he

not simply enumerate the stages as he perceived them? The phenomenon of 'magic' numbering also occurs with the Jewish and Roman Catholic authors. If these authors did indeed achieve a perception of reality apart from cultural filtering, one would expect a different kind of numbering system.

Another limitation on interpreting these findings focuses on a similar contradiction. There exists some biographical information on three of the five authors of the study: Dobb Baer, Isaac of Nineveh, and Teresa of Avila. Of these three, two died in their fifties. This is not what one would expect of a person who has developed extraordinary psychic powers and knowledge of the essence of things. Rather, one would expect that these practitioners would live to an extraordinary old age.

On the other hand, this contradiction may be an artifact of my present perspective. That is, from the perspective of being non-attached to all things, which would be the perspective of the advanced practitioner, life and death may not appear to be different. However, from my present perspective, this finding remains peculiar and unexplained.

The final limitation of interpretation comes from the contradiction between what different practitioners experience at the end point of the contemplative journey. Most of the authors in the sample report a similar experience--that of seeing God in all things, and experiencing union with God. The Buddhist author, on the other hand, reports the non-existence of God, and the non-existence of a self with which to perceive God. I can offer several hypotheses on this

matter. First, perhaps 'reality' can be observed from several perspectives--each being accurate to the data and yet exclusive of the others. The physicists' experience of the nature of light--whether it is a particle or a wave--would be an example of this kind of situation. Another hypothesis might be that the two descriptions of enlightenment states are functionally the same, and that the differences are in the description. For example, when one is completely non-attached to self and to the contents of one's awareness, then this is functionally the same as the Buddhist 'no-self'. Still another hypothesis would be that these contemplative authors were deluded, or were generalizing beyond the data that they had available. The data generated by this study does not permit a resolution of these questions.

Questions for Further Research

Throughout this study, I have indicated questions which need further research. I have compiled these questions in this section, and divided them into two groupings: 1) those questions which are susceptible to scholarly research, without comprehensive scientific controls; and 2) those questions which ask for descriptive information of an empirical nature.

Scholarly Research:

1. Can a common, invariant sequence of stages of actively induced mystical development be postulated from a comparison of the conceptualizations of these stages by active mystics of different world religions?

2. Are there other ways of entering into 'union with the Divine', e.g. faith, good works, etc., which can be found cross-culturally? If there are other ways, how are those ways described by practitioners?

Empirical Research:

1. What are the physiological correlates of the different stages of contemplative mystical development? For example, are there changes in amplitude and frequency of brain waves, changes in heart and respiration rate, changes in galvanic skin response, etc. as the practitioner moves from one stage to the next?
2. What are the cognitive correlates of the different stages of contemplative mystical development? For example, as the practitioner moves from stage to stage, are there changes in the magnitude of passive attention, as measured by the WAIS subtest Digit Span; are there changes in verbal ability; in measures of critical thinking such as the Watson-Glaser test, etc.?
3. What are the self-report correlates of the different stages of contemplative mystical development? That is, how do mystics describe what happens as they engage in their contemplative exercises--not as described in a book, written at some time after the actual experience, but immediately following the experience? How do mystics account for their movement from one stage to the next? And what motivates them to engage in these practices?
4. What are the behavioral correlates of the different stages of contemplative mystical development? For example, are there observable changes in the rate of verbalization as the practitioner moves from the beginning stages to the more advanced stages? Are there

changes in the content of verbalizations? In physical activities?
In the frequency and type of interpersonal interactions?

5. What environments are conducive to contemplative mystical development? Of the authors examined in this study, all were speaking from a monastic context except for the Hasidic Jew. Is the monastic environment more conducive than other environments to contemplative development? And if this is so, what elements of the monastic environment are important to contemplative development?

6. Finally, do the data collected from questions 1 through 5 above support the theory of contemplative mystical development as I have defined it in this study? Can each stage of contemplative development be characterized by a specific set of empirical phenomena in a reliable fashion?

The theory of contemplative mystical development presented in this study has been developed by looking at this development across religious lines. Thus, in order to test this theory, a comprehensive sampling procedure must be adopted, such that samples from each of the major world religions are used in testing each of these questions. Such a procedure would result in a comprehensive data base which could then be used to confirm, correct, or replace the theory that I have developed here.

Conclusions

The purpose of this study has been to describe and then to classify the stages of contemplative mystical experience. In so doing, I have been able to arrange the data in such a way as to

create a conceptual model of contemplative mystical experience for the major world religions.

In the last 60 years, the study of the psychology of religion has been almost nonexistent. Part of the reason for this has been the lack of any organizing principle around which to begin experimentation and empirical data collection. The present study addresses this situation in two ways. First, the conceptual model developed here can be utilized to develop operational definitions which can then provide the basis for generating testable hypotheses. This will allow for the collection of empirical data in this field. Second, the methodology used to create this conceptual model can be utilized to develop the study of religious experience along other dimensions of the experience, e.g. in the study of the practice of 'faith' as a vehicle for achieving union with god. If a research program were carried out along these lines, the compilation of these studies would result in a very thorough and empirically based psychology of religious experience. Such a psychology would be useful to both the religious practitioner and to the student of human behavior.

The importance of the methodological principle used in this study must be emphasized. Most studies in comparative religion have compared religions to note differences. This analytical approach reduces the data to thousands of little bits that are unrelated and nonsensical in that form. The methodological principle around which the present study revolved was synthetic. It

allowed the question, What are the common features which are found in all major world religions? This allows the researcher to identify those elements that are common to all religions and to organize them in a meaningful way.

The development of a model of contemplative mysticism permits a better understanding of the entire pattern of this development, and religious development in general. One of the criticisms leveled against present psychological research (Note 4) addresses the lack of conceptual models prior to research. The present study has addressed this criticism by developing a conceptual model for contemplative mystical development from an examination of the self-report data of mystics. This model is thus based on empirical observation, although modified in an unspecified way by the process of self-report, and will allow the further gathering of empirical data to confirm or to refute the model.

The results generated from this study show that major world religions do have in common the major stages of contemplative mystical development. This raises in general the question of other common features that these religions might share. This approach, of identifying and classifying the common features of major world religions should result in new insights regarding the purpose and utility of religious practices for human beings.

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