

What Is a Psychic Change or Spiritual Experience?

It's entering what the Big Book calls "the Fourth Dimension of Existence."

Here are three descriptions of that process:

- **Varieties of Religious Experience by William James.**

(Bill Wilson read this book in detox following his spiritual experience. The book was popular among Oxford Group members. Here James describes the change in consciousness brought about by such an experience.)

"To be converted, to be regenerated, to receive grace, to experience religion, to gain an assurance, are so many phrases which denote the process, gradual or sudden, by which a self / hitherto divided, and consciously wrong inferior and unhappy, becomes unified and consciously right superior and happy, in consequence of its firmer hold upon religious realities."

- **AA Big Book**

(In the 12 Steps Bill Wilson codified many of the Oxford Group principles and practices he wanted as a simpler guide alcoholics could follow to bring about a change in mind sufficiently deep to overcome alcoholism.)

"Almost none of us liked the self-searching, the leveling of our pride, the confession of shortcomings which the process requires for its successful consummation. But we saw that it really worked in others, and we had come to believe in the hopelessness and futility of life as we had been living it. When, therefore, we were approached by those in whom the problem had been solved, there was nothing left for us but to pick up the simple kit of spiritual tools laid at our feet. We have found much of heaven and we have been rocketed into a fourth dimension of experience of which we had not even dreamed."

- **Transformation by Robert A. Johnson**

(Johnson is a Jungian author who gives an excellent description of this change in consciousness using the language of depth psychology. He says it 'feels like death to the ego' and cautions that, of necessity, most of us can expect the process of change to continue over time.)

"For most people, the transition from three dimensional to four-dimensional consciousness is exceedingly painful. Medieval Christianity called it the dark night of the soul; Dante called it the journey through hell; it was forty days and forty nights in the desert for Jesus; it was a journey in the belly of the fish for many a hero.

"For a modern man it is midlife crisis or, worse, a nervous breakdown; or still worse,

physical suicide. The process can be summed up in one sentence: *it is the relocating of the center of the personality from the ego to a center greater than one's self.*

“This super-personal center has been variously called the Self, the Christ nature, the Buddha nature, super-consciousness, cosmic consciousness, satori, and samadhi. This relocation appears to be death when viewed from the perspective of the ego. Zen masters observe that satori (their term for a non-personal center of consciousness) can be viewed by the ego as nothing but total disaster. And death it is! The ego loses its supremacy and goes through a short time of violent suffering.

“When someone threatens suicide at this time, I caution him that he must be very careful to do it without harming his body. The relocation of the center of the personality is a form of suicide, and its best done by the ego. ... a Zen master in Los Angeles, once said (to his client) ‘*Why don't you die now and enjoy the rest of your life?*’

“...When the dark night begins to lift, one morning there is an unaccountable touch of joy in the air....this is the first contact with the four-dimensional consciousness, and one can begin to live from that source of energy. Something of the subtle inner world becomes your center of gravity: poetry, music, a new perceptiveness when you are jogging...

“Less worthy channels for this new energy are fanaticism, dictatorial religious beliefs, and ego inflations of all kinds. If the new energy flows into such channels, you are quickly sent back...for further boiling in the oil of transformation.”