

Chapter 1

Integrality

Psychology is the study of mind and behavior.
—American psychology textbook

Psychology is the science of consciousness.
—Sri Aurobindo, *Essays Divine
and Human*

This book aims to integrate two diverse streams of psychology: Western and Eastern. Each of these streams has made profound discoveries about the psyche, human consciousness, the nature of fragmentation, and the possibilities for wholeness. Yet psychology in the West and psychology in the East have traveled from two different directions and developed very different areas of knowledge. This chapter begins with a broad characterization of these two streams of psychological thought in order to highlight these differences.

Psychology in the West looks from the *outside in*, whereas psychology in the East looks from the *inside out*. These two perspectives give two very different views of psychology. By looking from the outside in, Western psychology has developed very detailed, precise maps of the outer being, the body-heart-mind organism and the self, whereas Eastern psychology's view from the inside out has generated very detailed maps of our inner being and the spiritual foundation of consciousness. Each has essential knowledge about human existence, yet each focuses on only half of this psycho-spiritual totality. Each requires the other to

complete it, and only in bringing them together does an integral view of psychology emerge.

Western psychology ascribes our lack of wholeness and painful fragmentation to the universal experience of psychological wounding. *We do not know the fullness of who we are because our wounding makes us unconscious of it.* While some people are wounded more severely and some less, we all are wounded. To be born into this world is to be emotionally hurt and scarred growing up. Our response to this wounding is to push it down, contract, and develop a defensive structure in which large portions of our very self become unconscious. We become lost, isolated from others, cut off and alienated from our own deeper self. Western psychotherapy is an attempt to understand and repair this fragmented wholeness.

Eastern psychology sees a different cause for our fragmentation and suffering: *We are cut off from the spiritual ground of our being.* We identify with the surface life of our body and ego—our desires, feelings, sensations, thoughts—and so are unconscious of our spiritual source. Eastern psychological practices aim at bringing peace and harmony into our living, so we may go deeply inside to find the true fulfillment intrinsic to our spiritual core.

The human predicament, then, is characterized by a double fragmentation. It is a dual diagnosis from which we suffer—a psycho-spiritual fracture—and dual, therefore, must be the path to wholeness.

THE QUEST FOR WHOLENESS

Every human being seeks a better life. Whether clearly experienced or only vaguely felt, there is a sense that something greater is possible. This search may take a superficial form such as striving to acquire money, position, or power; it may manifest as a yearning for fulfillment through relationships and love; or it may lie in seeking higher values such as meaning, peace, or helping others. But through all of this there is an intuitive feeling that what we seek lies beyond all these first reachings. For once beyond looking outward for this deeper fulfillment in things and people, we realize that it is an inner state we are seeking. This search, at bottom, is a quest for wholeness.

Western psychology seeks for wholeness in both theory and practice: in the search for a comprehensive understanding of human nature and in the search for methods to heal the wounded, divided self. Yet like the human being it attempts to understand, Western psychology itself is a field divided, fragmented into a bewildering array of competing theories and conflicting therapies that makes it seem more like a fractious and unruly mob than a well-ordered, consistent discipline. The current state of Western psychology resembles the biblical story of the Tower of Babel: Cognitive psychologists do not talk to body therapists. Psychoanalysts look down on gestalt therapists. Academic psychologists complain that clinicians are not scientific, and clinicians complain that academic researchers are superficial. Jungians do not send their children to schools run by behaviorists, and for their part, most behaviorists would not be caught dead talking to a Jungian about soul. Psychology as a whole is characterized both by the explosive growth of its many disparate fragments and its lack of an integrating structure that brings together the various factions into a coherent whole.

Further, a postmodern perspective raises the question of what becomes “knowledge” in psychology. Historically, what constitutes psychological knowledge has been narrowly Western and has excluded cultures in which the depth of psychological thought in significant ways surpasses the West. It must be conceded from the outset that while Western psychology has generated a great mass of detailed knowledge of the surface of the psyche, it has failed to penetrate its deeper mysteries, for even depth psychology is but a psychology of the frontal self and its unconscious processes. Western psychology has only explored the surface of consciousness, because its instruments of investigation are fragmentary and limited.

As science so often reminds us, real understanding comes when we look past the surface appearance of things into their deeper nature. Otherwise, for example, we are led to believe the initial view given by our senses, that the sun travels around the earth. Just as we need to look beyond first appearances in astronomy, physics, and other hard sciences, so we need to look deeply in psychology. As more sophisticated instruments have advanced the hard sciences—microscopes, telescopes, particle accelerators—so more sophisticated methods of consciousness

exploration have allowed Eastern psychology to come upon a deeper, wider, more fundamental knowledge of the psyche than Western psychology.

To understand the depths of human consciousness, the instrument of exploration can only be consciousness itself. The West's "outside in" approach of external observations, brain imaging instruments such as MRIs, fMRIs, EEGs, PET scans, and so on, and even the surface introspective methods of depth psychotherapy, helpful as they are, will only take us so far. To bring about a more complete understanding, well-defined methods of inner exploration must be employed, and it is in this area that the Eastern meditative traditions excel, for Eastern spiritual systems are the result of centuries of rigorous, precise applications of methods for examining inner states of consciousness.

Eastern spiritual systems, and India in particular, have made a highly disciplined study of consciousness and the psyche for millennia. Although traditional Western psychology has relegated Eastern psychological thought to philosophy or religion, a current appraisal of psychology must include Eastern cultures' contributions to psychology. As globalization increases, the current Western-centric view of psychology (Cushman, 1995) is being counterbalanced by developments such as India's recent movement of "Indian psychology" (Cornelissen & Joshi, 2004), which seeks to re-own Indian psychological insights and situate them in their proper field of psychology, following Gardiner Murphy's pioneering work (Murphy, 1958.) From a global perspective, a strictly Western definition of psychology that excludes the East's profound discoveries appears to be a rather parochial view of psychology.

THE MEETING OF EAST AND WEST

East and West come together in the melding of Eastern spiritual wisdom with Western scientific knowledge. The East has looked inside to discover the ultimate spiritual truths of existence. The West has looked outside to discover the powerful but relative truths of science. As psychology represents the West's scientific effort to understand the inner psyche, it becomes the common ground where these two great streams of knowing join, the natural meeting place of East and West.

To understand the depths of the human psyche, traditional psychology is necessary but not sufficient. Academic psychology and sci-

entific psychology in the West have made a massive study of the outermost surface of the body, heart, and mind, and the depth psychologies fill out a deeper picture of our frontal organism. For the most part, Western psychology has now moved beyond the mind-body split that characterized much of psychological discourse during the first two-thirds of the 20th century to see this outer identity in holistic terms, that is, as an organismic, body-mind unity.

From an integral perspective, this is true as far as it goes. It does well represent our surface experience. But as we look farther, a more complex picture reveals itself. The self is only the outer edge of consciousness, where many inner strands of experience meet and fuse into a totality of organismic experiencing. But as Eastern psychology insists, a deeper, spiritual core manifests this outer mind, heart, and body. The frontal organism we identify with and call ourselves is an expression of our deeper being, and only in reference to this deeper foundation can there be a more complete psychological understanding.

Integral psychology begins with the ancient Vedantic conception of the *koshas*, or sheaths of consciousness. On the surface, these consist of the body, heart, and mind (*annamayakosha*, *pranayamayakosha*, *manomayakosha*) that form the human organism. Body, heart, and mind are precisely what Western psychology has studied. Indeed, this is *all* that is admitted by conventional psychology. But integral yoga charts three other levels of consciousness: the inner being, the true being, and the central being. These other three levels invisibly provide the foundation for this frontal organism we call our physical, emotional, mental self.

THE FRONTAL ORGANISM: THE MENTAL LEVEL

To understand the frontal body-heart-mind organism, we begin with the level of mind. Integral Vedanta charts three distinct parts of the mind, called the physical mind, the emotional mind, and the mind proper. This tripartite division has now been confirmed by recent developments in neuroscience. These three divisions correspond to what science now calls the triune brain: the reptilian brain stem that runs the body, the mammalian, emotional brain or limbic system, and humans' most recent evolutionary development, the neocortex, which is the seat of abstract thinking and language (Lewis, Amini, & Lannon, 2000).

While we share the lower, reptilian brain with lower animals, and we share the emotional brain or limbic system with mammals, allowing us to feel emotions and to experience an emotional connection to others, only human beings have a developed neocortex capable of abstract thought.

Medical research has generated much knowledge about the body and brain, and the examination of emotional and physical responses to our thinking patterns has led behaviorism and cognitive psychology to make some limited but significant contributions to psychotherapy, especially in the areas of depression and the continuum of stress, anxiety, fear, and panic. Cognitive therapy has shown how our thoughts (cognitions) significantly determine how we feel, and it also has proven effective for certain types of depression (Beck, 1979, 1985, 1987). Additionally, behaviorism's insights into the importance of relaxation in the treatment of stress, anxiety, panic, and phobias have had a major impact in this area of therapy. Behavior therapy is the treatment of choice for phobias and for certain kinds of symptom relief in anxiety and stress. But even though it can provide symptom relief for certain symptoms and even certain personality disorders, its power to bring about deeper change is limited, because it restricts its attempts to change to manipulating the surface components of conscious thinking and muscular tension.

Academic and behavioral approaches to psychology provide an explanation of the visible effects on the surface but not the deeper causes within. For this it is necessary to bring in the different schools of depth psychology. However, the many competing theories initially present a confusing picture. However, in seeing Western psychology within the organizing framework of integral psychology, it becomes clear that the various schools of psychology have each made a specialized study of particular levels of our being. *Different schools of psychology are windows into different levels of human consciousness.* Each major school of psychology is a vision of the whole seen through the level in which it specializes. From the vantage point of integral psychology, all of the conflicts and squabbling among the various schools of psychology are but conflicts between different levels of consciousness. Similarly, different Eastern systems tend to focus only on part of our inmost identity, and the conflicts between traditions stem from this difference in emphasis. Each school of psychology, Western or Eastern, is an important piece of the jigsaw puzzle.

The clinical branch of psychology has made understanding the dynamics of the psyche its field of study. As the depth psychologies have brought to light, *the center of the human psyche lies in the affective core of the self, our heart or emotional nature.*

THE EMOTIONAL LEVEL

What characterizes living beings is the vital principle, a vitality or life force (*prana*) that animates all living creatures. In human beings the vital principle manifests as the emotional level of the heart—our desires, our instincts, our feelings, our aspirations, our zest for living. Much of modern depth psychology can be read as rigorous research into the heart and emotions. Beginning with Freud's revolutionary discoveries about the unconscious, depth psychology has had an enormous impact upon the world and has shattered the view of the human being as the "rational animal" that had been humanity's self-image since Aristotle's time. As Freud plumbed the nonrational realms of the unconscious, a more modern account of psychological life emerged, in which desire, instinct, and strong emotional forces shape psychological life.

Depth psychology began over a century ago with Freud's search for ways to heal the sufferings of the human heart. In the process it uncovered the universal phenomenon of emotional wounding and how the human heart protects itself by developing defenses against this emotional wounding. In our family of origin there are failures to attune to the emotional state of the infant and young child, there are accidents, there are traumas, there is inevitable emotional pain growing up. The parents, who due to their own emotional wounding can only respond empathically to some of the child's emotions and self, tune out what is emotionally threatening. To cope with this and to maintain the vital bond with the parents, the child holds down this pain, represses certain impulses, and disavows certain feelings, and after a period of time, this all becomes automatic and unconscious. The child internalizes the parental prohibitions and develops a coping strategy that adapts to the family system, but in so doing adopts a false self that is alienated from the authentic self buried within. Large portions of the authentic self become unconscious and create deficits or gaps in the structure of the self, large areas of feeling and impulse become unconscious, the child

dissociates from the body in the process, and so portions of physical awareness also fade away.

Integral yoga charts three gradations of the emotional level that range in frequency from greater density to greater refinement. At the lower end lies the lower emotional, our animal inheritance of primitive impulses and instincts. The central emotional level consists of the ordinary emotions and feelings that make up most of daily life. And the refinement of the higher emotional is the level most open to the creativity of our inner being, the light of spiritual experience, and our higher life aspirations.

While all schools of psychotherapy address the emotional level, psychoanalysis has charted this level most thoroughly. The three layers of the emotional correspond to the three major movements within psychoanalysis: classical psychoanalysis maps the lower emotional, contemporary psychoanalysis maps the central emotional, and Carl Jung's analytic psychology maps the higher emotional level.

The lower emotional is the realm of classical psychoanalysis that was popular during the first half of the 20th century. The lower emotional is the most animalistic part of our being, inherited from our long evolutionary past, called by Freud the "id." Freud's image of the id as "a seething cauldron of desire" vividly captures this dimension of the psyche. The lower emotional includes sexuality in all of its many libidinous forms, along with our aggressive impulses (Kahn, 2002).

Freud distilled two poles to our instinctual nature that he named Eros (sex) and Thanatos (aggression). The lower emotional encounters each experience through this lens of our biological urges and desire: "Can I eat it, mate with it, or kill it?" Sometimes we can be absorbed by the pure taste of food, its smells and textures. Other times we feel aggression and rage at the world and those who hurt us. Still other times we want to immerse ourselves in sexual passion, the instinctive yearning for the pleasures of erotic embrace.

This level translates all social interactions into its own terms. At this level we greet every new person with the inner questions: "Is this person friendly or hostile? Am I safe, or do I need to defend myself? Am I attracted to this person or not? Is this person a potential lover or a competitor?"

Freud began his psychoanalytic investigations toward the end of the Victorian era, a time when the repression of sexuality and the body was at its height in Western civilization. The lower emotional dimen-

sion looms large when it is strongly repressed, and naturally this is what emerged most forcefully when the lid of repression was lifted. Though Freud believed this level was the defining element of the psyche, in hindsight we can see that this exaggeration had an important evolutionary purpose—to bring to light our repressed animal nature as a universal dimension of human consciousness. Freud simply did what every major psychological theorist has done since—he took the discovery of one part of our being and viewed all the rest of the psyche through this lens.

Toward the end of his life, Freud shifted his focus from the id to the ego, which presaged the next significant shift in psychoanalytic thinking, namely, the emergence of object relations, self psychology, and intersubjectivity. What psychoanalysts such as Melanie Klein (1975a, 1975b), D. W. Winnicott (1967, 1971), W. R. D. Fairbairn (1954), and Heinz Kohut (1971, 1977, 1984) recognized, particularly as society itself changed and no longer was so repressive of the lower emotional, is that the self is more influenced by relationships than by instincts.

The central emotional level is the focus of study for Kohut's self psychology, the various schools of object relations, the interpersonal schools, family systems theories, the variety of intersubjective approaches, and all of what is generally referred to in contemporary psychoanalysis as the relational model. In the language of integral psychology, *it is not the lower emotional level that best characterizes the psychological world of most people but the central emotional level.*

The central emotional level sees the world through the sense of self and its relational world. The central emotional asks the questions: "Do I feel good, whole, with a healthy glow of self-esteem, or do I feel bad, fragmented, afraid of feeling ashamed or insufficient? Do others see me as effective and worthwhile, or as barely competent or faking it? Do I feel anxious, stressed, threatened in my interactions with others, or at ease, peaceful, secure? Are there people in my life who affirm and love me? Am I seen deeply for who I am? Are there others I respect, look up to, and feel reassured and strengthened by? Do I have loving, supportive, intimate relationships with close friends, partner, family, or am I estranged, afraid to share my true feelings, lonely, or not as intimately connected with others as I would like to be? Am I aligned with my deeper self's ambitions and actual talents, or do I feel alienated from work and career? Do I feel real and solid or somehow unreal, anxious, or

vaguely uneasy? Do I have enough personal space and autonomy, or am I impinged upon, engulfed, my self subsumed by family and society?"

As most people today are centered in the central emotional level of their being, they are preoccupied by their sense of self and their relationships. Contemporary psychoanalysis sees the self as fundamentally relational and takes the central emotional as the defining dimension of human experience. *The self is the central organizing principle of the psyche, not the instincts.* This is the conceptual revolution within psychoanalysis that has occurred in the past several decades. However, from an integral perspective, it remains an incomplete description without reference to a third area, the higher emotional.

Carl Jung, one of Freud's two most gifted students, rebelled against the materialistic and reductionistic trends in Freud's thinking. Acknowledging the spiritual, the intuitive and creative, the validity of higher aspirations that cannot be reduced to thwarted sexual strivings or sublimated libido, Jung pioneered the mapping of the higher emotional level. The higher emotional is more open to the spiritual and operates at a more refined vibration than the lower or central emotional. Though it is not the source of our spiritual, artistic, philosophical, and higher strivings, the higher emotional is the most receptive to their influence.

In addition, the higher emotional takes on a mentalized quality. The higher emotional is the dreamer, the source of our plans and hopes, our visions of what can be, our strivings for beauty and for a better world. The higher emotional asks: "What is possible? What can I do, what can I create, what might I become? What leads toward a higher life?"

The higher emotional accesses the imaginal realm of visualization, imagination, and visionary experience. Being the part most open to the inner vital and its creative inspirations, it is no accident that Jung used active imagination and visualization as key therapeutic techniques in his therapy, for imagination is the coin of this realm.

Freud and classical psychoanalysis chart the lower emotional, contemporary psychoanalysis charts the central emotional level that typifies the average consciousness at this point in evolution, and Jung's analytic psychology charts the higher emotional realm. However, as the depth approaches of humanistic and existential psychology point out, this is still incomplete, because it fails to acknowledge the immense importance of the body.

THE PHYSICAL LEVEL

Our physical body is an extraordinary instrument, unique among all life-forms in its capacity to house the mind and consciousness of the human being. The Aitareya Upanishad relates a myth in which the gods (which in this symbolism represent the functions of the human mind) continued to reject one after another of the various animal bodies that the Divine Self offered to them. It was only when the human body was developed that the gods exclaimed, "This indeed is perfectly made," and consented to enter in.

Integral Vedanta's view that not only mind but our emotional life emerges out of the physical and retains its roots in bodily existence is shared and has been amplified by humanistic and existential schools of psychology. These depth approaches emphasize that *feeling life is embedded in bodily experience*. Wilhelm Reich, who along with Jung was the other of Freud's most gifted students, first recognized that emotional experience emerges from the body, and the humanistic and existential schools that followed developed this insight further.

Reich's theoretical heirs include Fritz Perls (1969; Perls, Hefferline, & Goodman, 1951) and gestalt therapy, Alexander Lowen (1975) and bioenergetics, Eugene Gendlin (1981, 1996) and focusing, John Pierakos (1990) with core energetics, Ron Kurtz (1990) and hakomi, and the many other body-centered approaches, including Charlotte Selver's sensory awareness. Even Carl Rogers' (1961) client-centered therapy was theoretically grounded in the primacy of organismic experiencing. And while existential psychotherapy emerged from a different direction out of European philosophy (Yalom, 1980), its key concepts of actual lived experience and the importance of moving beyond intellect into bodily experiencing align closely with Reich's bodily focus. The explosion of body disciplines during the last decades of the 20th century led to a radical reevaluation of the importance of the body for full self-awareness.

The organism acts as an organized whole to create psychological experience. This is the conceptual revolution that humanistic-existential psychology has brought about, a holistic vision of psychological experience. Humanistic and existential schools confirm that childhood wounding not only brings about a lack of integration but also a dissociation of the self from the body that psychoanalysis overlooks. *Our defenses result in losing awareness of both our emotional and physical being.*

A complete vision of health must include not only integration and self-cohesion but also a more vibrant, sensorily alive state, a state with the joy, beauty, and pleasure that is the glory of embodiment.

At this level of bodily experience we ask, "Do I feel vibrantly alive, sensing and tasting what I do, from showering or walking, to sitting and talking? Or do I feel distracted from my sensory life, lost in my thoughts? Do I see the clouds and sky, or do I barely notice them? Do I experience my feelings as rooted in my body sensing, or am I hardly tuned in to them? Can I sense how my feelings live in me, energize me, course through my body? Am I aware of how verbalizing my feelings deepens my somatic experiencing of them? Do I feel how my breathing supports my excitement and the intensity of my feeling states, or do I find myself holding my breath, constricting my breathing and stifling my feelings? Do I feel grounded in my physical being or lost somewhere in my head?"

How rooted we are in bodily experiencing is difficult to assess, for everyone believes they are "in their body." In one sense everyone is right, because we are embodied beings. But there is a wide continuum of experiencing, ranging from a deep sense of being an embodied being-in-the-world to feeling like a mind "in" a body. Given how much dissociation is considered "normal" in our culture, there are very few people who have healed this split and are deeply rooted in their physical being.

No matter how cohesive the self may be, until the dissociation from the body is healed, the self will always feel some sense of unreality and vagueness. The physical dimension of self-experience gives concreteness to our experience, a quality of aliveness and sensory grounding that makes us realize in a definite way, "I exist now, here, grounded in this bodily form." For the body lives in the present, and when we come more fully into our body, we enter the domain of the eternal now, another area where humanistic and existential therapies converge.

THE LEVELS OF SELFHOOD

Organizing the various schools of psychology into the different levels of consciousness in which they specialize leads to the following simplified chart:

Mental level	The Mental self	Cognitive psychology
Higher emotional	The Imaginal self	Jungian psychology
Central emotional	The Relational self	Contemporary psychoanalysis, self psychology, object relations, intersubjectivity, family systems
Lower emotional	The Instinctual self	Classical psychoanalysis
Physical	The Embodied self	Humanistic and existential schools

Note that this chart is not a value hierarchy, for each level is important, but it is a hierarchy in density of consciousness. Each school of psychology has a unique gift to offer the world, a unique domain of consciousness that it illuminates. It must be emphasized that each school is not restricted to its chosen level. Just because the analytic traditions first charted the emotional level does not mean that the emotional is the exclusive province of psychoanalysis. *It is not that each school only addresses a particular part of our being, but that each school excels by its primary focus on one part, even as it downplays other parts of our being.*

It would be inaccurate, for example, to say that classical or contemporary psychoanalysis disregards the higher emotional or the body. On the contrary, psychoanalysis has made important contributions to the study of creativity and imagery. But psychoanalysis has concentrated its attention on the lower and central emotional, and the higher emotional, with its spiritual strivings, has been considerably deemphasized. Similarly, psychoanalysis does not completely ignore the body, but its map of consciousness so downplays this dimension of psychological experience that we need the discoveries of the somatic and existential therapies to adequately guide us here, while recognizing that they, too, tend to reduce everything to their level.

Due to that universal narcissistic tendency for each new discovery to be enthroned as the highest and best, each school annexes one part of our being, proclaims its centrality for human happiness, and stops there, translating the rest of our being through the lens of that level. The schools of psychology begin by liberating us, but, in the end, the particular level of consciousness in which each school specializes leads to a new cul-de-sac, a new limitation preventing further expansion. Unless there is a greater psychology that encompasses and goes beyond

the conventional schools of psychology, there can be no release into the fullness of deeper being.

THE INNER REALMS OF BEING

This is where conventional psychology stops—a detailed and thorough mapping of our outer being—our body-heart-mind organism.

Only recently has psychology opened the door to the inner being through the transpersonal school. Perhaps now we are ready to admit the spiritual literature for what it is—rich phenomenological reports from thousands of individuals over many centuries. Eastern psychology provides important clinical data that can no longer be ignored or pathologized but must be accounted for by any psychology that tries to be inclusive. Transpersonal writers such as Stan Grof (1975, 1985, 1989), Ken Wilber (1986, 2000), Hameed Ali (Almaas, 1986, 1988, 1996), and Michael Washburn (1988, 1994) have provided provocative glimpses into the deeper realms of our inner being, although this territory has only been partially mapped.

In the West the first sense of something deeper was originally brought to light by Carl Jung. Jung made psychology's initial incursion into the inner being, and the archetypes of the collective unconscious immediately greet us in this domain. The collective unconscious serves as the psychological raw material out of which we construct our personal identity. In itself, it is a zone of transition between the cosmic forces and the human, where universal forces—universal emotional forces, physical forces, mental forces—take psychological shape. But the collective unconscious only exists by reference to what is beyond it, namely, the inner vital, inner mental, and subtle physical worlds.

Integral psychology delineates three inner realms of being that form the foundation for the frontal self: the *inner being*, the *true being*, and the *central being*. The first realm, the *inner being*, consists of an inner or subtle body, an inner heart or vital, and an inner mind. This layer of our inner being is a much enlarged, more powerful dimension of consciousness that is in direct touch with the universal forces of the intermediate plane. While wider, more fluid, and more expansive than our outer being, open to a larger scale and more subtle range of experience, the inner being is still of the same basic substance as the outer

mind, heart, and body and therefore is more open to the cosmic forces of ignorance and darkness as well as to spiritual experiences.

The inner being opens to the intermediate plane, also sometimes called the astral plane, etheric plane, or subtle plane. This is a plane of experience that Eastern psychology has mapped extensively and is acknowledged by every spiritual tradition in the world. Native cultures and shamans view the world through this intermediate plane, and there is a considerable New Age fascination with the subtle energies and powers that can develop here, such as clairvoyance. Eastern traditions warn of the dangers here and advise the seeker not to get detoured by this sideshow, for the true goal lies beyond.

However important the intermediate plane is, it remains a very mixed realm of experience. But a beginning of definite spiritual experience can come by entering into the third realm, the true being. Here lies the true physical, true emotional, and true mental being (physical, emotional, mental *purusha*). This appears to be what Ali (A. H. Almaas) refers to as the world of “essence” and of Jung’s “Self.” The true being is a more essential spiritual plane, where the atman is represented on each of these levels, and it can be a point of entry into our impersonal spiritual nature.

The fourth, inmost level is the central being. What has not been clearly understood by the different Eastern traditions is the twofold nature of our spiritual identity, spirit and soul. Integral yoga elucidates how the central spiritual being is differentiated into the atman and the psychic being (or true soul). High above is the atman or Buddha-nature, the silent Self that is our universal identity with the Divine, eternal and nonevolving. Below, here within the manifestation, is our spiritual individuality, *antaratman* or psychic center, called in the Upanishads the *chaitya purusha*, our immortal, evolving soul. Atman and *antaratman* are the two aspects of our deepest spiritual nature that correspond to the Impersonal and Personal Divine, spirit and soul.

The atman can be experienced in its negative or *nirguna* aspect as Buddha-nature or pure emptiness, a vast space of nothingness, formless yet containing all form, without any qualities or attributes other than pure consciousness. This is the perspective of the Eastern psychologies of Buddhism, Taoism, *kevala advaita*, and certain tantric schools. In other schools of Vedanta, the atman also can be experienced in its positive or *saguna* aspect as the Self, a sea of consciousness, peace, light,

and knowledge that is spread out infinitely. Usually only experienced in Samadhi, there are overhead planes where this divine consciousness ascends into greater light, power, and knowledge, called by Sri Aurobindo higher mind, illumined mind, intuitive mind, overmind, and supermind.¹ Though the atman's native home is above in the overhead planes, it can descend into the manifestation and be experienced on any plane.

Enlightenment is the full realization of the atman or Self (and not just the temporary *experience* of atman). Enlightenment liberates a person from the ego, the separate sense of self. It is this realization that is known in Vedanta and Buddhism as nirvana, or extinction of the self. In place of the separate ego sense there remains the atman or Buddha-nature.

The atman's identity is essentially one with the impersonal Brahman. It is this realization that is at the heart of *kevala advaita vedanta*. "Atman is Brahman, Brahman is atman," in the words of the Upanishads. The atman of one person is in essence the same as the atman of all others. Its characteristic is oneness, an identity of individual consciousness with Brahman. The metaphors of the river flowing into the sea or the drop of water dissolving into the ocean illustrate this loss of the lower individuality of ego in order to gain a higher identity with Brahman.

The atman stands outside the evolution, unaffected by the passing show of this ever-changing world. The realization of atman (or Buddha-nature) is the final goal of spiritual practice in *kevala advaita*, Buddhism and Taoism. Calm, unchanging spirit, the atman or Self is the detached, observing witness of this earthly manifestation, ever abiding in eternal peace and silence.

Integral Vedanta highlights not just the atman but the *antaratman* or soul. While integral psychology holds both aspects of the central being equally, initially there is greater emphasis upon the psychic center, because the soul's growth is the first order of business. Also, because the atman realization or enlightenment is so rare, at best perhaps one in several million, it is only an indirect influence on the lives of most seekers. It contributes a sense of peace and spaciousness, but until enlightenment occurs, it does not fundamentally alter the substance of the consciousness. The awakening of the true soul or psychic center, however, is far more accessible to the ordinary person, and it can

become a palpable influence that fundamentally transforms our ordinary consciousness.

The word “soul” is the cause of much confusion in English. Historically in Europe over the last several hundred years, soul meant the self or ego, and even now it generally refers to our heart or to our heart and mind together. Soul can mean the deeper parts of the personality or even the capacity to feel intensely. Even when soul is used in its spiritual context of “the immortal soul” in Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, or Judaism, it implies an unchanging, eternal substance rather than a growing being, for traditional theistic religions have failed to understand the evolutionary dimension of the soul. To clarify this confusion of meanings, Sri Aurobindo coined the term “psychic being” or “psychic center” to refer to this eternal core of the human psyche, for “psyche” itself originally meant soul.

The psychic being or soul, *antaratman*, is described by the bhakti schools of Vedanta, as well as by the Western traditions of Christianity, Judaism, and Islam.² In integral yoga, the psychic center is the evolutionary element in human beings. Whereas our frontal self and organism are but temporary masks that we wear for this one brief lifetime, our psychic center is our deepest psychological core and most authentic self. As the psychic center slowly develops, its power to influence the frontal self or ego increases, and it begins to turn the person inward, toward the spiritual depths within.

It is an ever-pure flame of the divinity in things and nothing that comes to it, nothing that enters into our experience can pollute its purity or extinguish the flame. This spiritual stuff is immaculate and luminous and, because it is perfectly luminous, it is immediately, intimately, directly aware of truth of being and truth of nature; it is deeply conscious of truth and good and beauty because truth and good and beauty are akin to its own native character, forms of something that is inherent in its own substance. It is aware also of all that contradicts these things, of all that deviates from its own native character, of falsehood and evil and the ugly and the unseemly; but it does not become these things nor is it touched or changed by these opposites of itself which so powerfully affect its outer instrumentation of mind, life and body. (Aurobindo, 1970, pp. 891–892)

The awakening of the psychic being brings an immensity of relief from life's stresses, a source of deep peace and inner joy that ever bubbles forth like an eternal spring, an intrinsic loving presence that nourishes our inner life and the lives of those around us. It is the true pith of the self, what makes our self uniquely *ours*.

Different schools of psychology have been tentatively groping toward this inmost core but have not yet come upon it. Our deepest identity is our psychic center. Our frontal self and organism are an expression of this deeper source, and it must be placed at the very center of any comprehensive vision of psychology. According to integral psychology, as long as Western psychology fails to recognize the psychic center, it will miss the defining essence of the human being. This would be an ironic fate for a field whose entire purpose is to understand human nature.

INTEGRAL PSYCHOLOGY

Eastern psychology studies the inner dimensions of consciousness that are the foundation for the surface levels of the psyche (the frontal self) that Western psychology studies. The inner dimensions of consciousness can best be studied by the most sensitive instrument known to psychology—human consciousness. As more and more people have direct and personal experience with these inner realms of being, it becomes more difficult for psychology to ignore this domain of human experience.

The journey of plunging deep within to discover our true psychic center is hard to manage without some kind of psychological orientation, for so many of the barriers to this inner opening are psychological in nature. Without realizing it, depth psychology's various schools have charted the initial barriers to this inward deepening by bringing to light the heart's hurts and wounds, the unconscious defenses that compensate for this wounding, and the loss of awareness that results. When the schools of depth psychology are synthesized into an integral whole, then the full power of Western psychology's discoveries can be brought to bear on the greater work of awakening our real center.

In integral psychotherapy, every level of the self is healed, integrated, and allowed to unfold—physical, lower emotional, central emotional, higher emotional, mental. But this is not all, for the authentic

self, no matter how fully actualized and fulfilled, still operates in the darkness and obscurity of the superficial consciousness of this outward life. It needs a greater light by which to live, and this means awakening the psychic being (evolving soul) and bringing it forward. Integral authenticity means raising each level of our organism—body, heart, mind—to its highest level, guided and infused by the psychic center.

When all of these levels can be developed, our authentic nature comes forth. And as Eastern psychology reminds us, our *svabhava* (essential or authentic nature) can be a pathway to our inner, spiritual depths. The different Eastern traditions have generally emphasized only half of our core nature, either soul or atman (Buddha-nature), but integral psychology brings together both. Our central being is both personal and impersonal, becoming and being, dynamic and static.

All systems of depth psychology describe a frontal authentic self that is who we most truly are. Even though there is a profound depth dimension to this frontal self, Western psychology does not penetrate to its most inward spiritual core. Rather, Western psychological systems describe this authentic nature in entirely psychological terms—gestalt therapy calls it the wisdom of organismic self-regulation, existential therapies call it authenticity, self psychology uses the phrase nuclear self, object relations uses true self, Jung calls it the Self—but they are all pointing to a deeper, more authentic level of our being that is the key to a fulfilling life.

When we ignore this authentic self, we drift far from our true path and experience alienation, fragmentation, and psychological pain. On the other hand, when we follow our authentic self, we are led along a life path where relationships and career become ever more deeply satisfying and life becomes more coherent and integrated. The problem is that because of our childhood wounding we develop a false self that is cut off from our deeper essence. We do not know our authentic self or know only part of it. The many compromises we make in growing up lead us away from authentic living. The farther away we are from our authentic self, the more false our life becomes. Instead of coherence and integration, we have fragmentation and disorder. Most of our difficulties in life stem from this identification with our false self and inauthentic life.

While Western psychology studies the outer authentic self, Eastern psychology studies the inner roots of our essential nature. Different systems describe different facets of this inner being —soul, *antaratman*,

chaitya purusha, spirit, atman, Buddha-nature. In integral psychology, the psychic center or evolving soul is our most essential individuality. The body-heart-mind is an expression of this deeper soul, an instrument or a vehicle through which our soul manifests in the world. When this psychic center is open, awake, guiding our way, life is a joyous spiritual adventure. When it is closed or covered over, life can be a nightmare of pain, frustration, and perplexity. Finding our center is the key to life's fulfillment.

It is the evolving soul in us, the psychic center that puts forth a new body-heart-mind each new lifetime and is behind the authentic self. As our journey opens into these inner realms of being, we come upon an inner source of peace, self-existent delight, radiant love, and tenderness that is the very fount of wholeness we are seeking. With sincere aspiration, our authentic, essential self can lead to this, for it has its origins in and is a surface expression of this evolutionary center within. Our true soul aspires always for "the good, the true, and the beautiful," as Plato so trenchantly put it, but only as this aspiration turns inward toward the spiritual life does it find its real goal.

Although Eastern and Western psychology both point to a deeper, authentic nature, they often travel in different, even opposite, directions to find it. For example, each of these two traditions relates to desire very differently. Western psychology charts the unfolding of desire as the path to fulfillment. Eastern psychology, on the other hand, speaks of the refinement and transcendence of desire as the path to fulfillment. At first glance these seem to be mutually exclusive paths, but there is a larger unity to which these different traditions are pointing, a hidden harmony in which their seeming divergences converge and their contradictions are reconciled.

In today's world, with access to the riches of the world's psychological traditions, an integral vision of psychology can at last be formulated. Western psychology lacks an integrating framework and meaningful context by which to understand its extraordinary discoveries. Eastern psychology lacks a way to overcome the dense unconsciousness of the self's defensive structures, which pull ever downward. Only by enlarging psychology to include the inmost depths can we construct a true psychology of wholeness. This is the meeting of East and West, a union of the West's outer, empirical science of psychology with the East's inner, spiritual science of consciousness.