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The Sacred Enneagram

Finding Your Unique Path to Spiritual Growth

The Question of Identity

Exploring Who We Are, How We Got Lost, and How We Might Find Our Way Back Home to Our True Identity

For the last decade, I've been meeting with Father Larry Gillick for spiritual direction. He is one of the most perceptive people I've known. He's a scrappy old Irish-American Jesuit priest, and sometimes as I'm leaving his office on Creighton University's campus, he'll affectionately say, "Sometimes you just need a good butt-kicking."

He once told me the story of a visit he made to a local Catholic elementary school. After sharing with a group of the students, a young girl—probably third or fourth grade—approached him and struck up a conversation. A few moments into their discussion, a look of pure astonishment flashed in the student's eyes.

Suddenly, she blurted out, "You're blind!" Which is true. Due to a sickness, he lost his sight when he was just a small child.

Christopher L. Heuertz



With genuine tenderness, Father Gillick responded, "That's not news to me."

But before he could say anything else, she quickly moved from shock to sadness, replying, "You don't know what you look like."

That profound statement from such a young person caught Father Gillick off guard, and before he could comment she softly said, "You're beautiful."

I'm deeply moved every time I think about that little exchange. It's a very *human* story in which many of us can find our *own* story tucked inside. When it comes to recognizing the truth of our own identities, most of us experience a symbolic version of blindness that keeps us from seeing ourselves for who we really are.

We live unawakened lives marked by self-perpetuating lies about who we think we are—or how we wish to be seen. Tragically, we don't know who we are or what we look like. And often, it takes an unlikely "other" to remind us what's true—*you're beautiful*.

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Career Counseling with Enneagram & MBTI

This work introduces career counseling lists to the Enneagram community. Type Occupational Theme (TOT) Codes are developed and occupations organized into nine themes. We will explore one of these themes. Comparison of "AT HOME" MBTI® personalities and "AT WORK" or "Public" Enneagram personalities allows MBTI databases to be used to construct occupational lists. Finally, these lists are checked to see if they embody basic relationships shown by the Enneagram figure.

Larry Gabbard

Based on these Pairs, MBTI-like personality descriptions were constructed for the nine Enneagram personalities.

These personality descriptions compare favorably to Enneagram descriptions and helped students confirm their Enneagram results. The Wagner Enneagram Personality Style Scale (WEPSS, Copyright © 1999 by Western Psychological Services) was used by permission of Jerome P. Wagner. Most of the personality names will be familiar to the Enneagram community:

Point 1, the Perfectionist, "Getting Things Right," seeks a logical and orderly outer world. They feel that this order is based upon objective rules and laws that give them a sense of what is correct and fair. These rules apply to everybody.

Point 2, the Helper, "Caring and Correct," likes to help those who will appreciate the assistance. They genuinely enjoy the

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Twos live somewhat vicariously through others so as to avoid the risk of losing face. With two Givers, one will have to put him- or herself "out there."

Givers may feel bored with the relationship because there is no one to actively "fix."

Givers compete with each other as to who is more important or most needed, who's the best helper.

Twos like to be "the power behind the throne." In a Double Giver relationship, each may wait for the other to take action and to have needs. Both can end up feeling bored. Each may have trouble admitting their needs or even knowing what they want. A man in a Double Giver relationship admitted that he had trouble recognizing his needs, as did his wife; having such a partner is surely frustrating for both! Also, both may be overly concerned with what their partner or other people think, and with projecting the right image. In their focus on the other, Twos may neglect themselves.

Exercises for the Double Giver couple

The following questions highlight the classic issues that challenge the Two-Two pairing:

This pairing is uncommon. Twos naturally want to link with people who need help and it goes against their nature to admit to needing help. A Two may be attracted to a fellow Giver if one or both had been wounded earlier in life and now need some nurturing. Two Givers might also get together if they had different subtypes and possibly different wings as well – making them appear almost as if they were two different Types.

Since the core issue for the Giver is to link with someone to whom they can give – how does helping show up in your relationship with one another? What do you hope the payoff will be from your giving? How do you recognize your importance to one another if it is not through giving and helping?

A Two's relationship may be seen as partially serving a partner's potential and the rest developing their own self. How do you serve your partner without losing yourself? How do you serve your partner and work on yourself as well? How can you support each other in keeping a healthy focus on yourselves?

Being in relationship doesn't mean that you have to deny your own needs. How are each of you able to state your own wants and needs to the other? Without trying to fix one another - talk about a current want and need that you have had trouble talking to your Two partner about.

The Two's core issue or challenge is Pride, relating to their sense of being indispensable to others while having no needs of their own. In relationship with another Two, a Giver may find himself competing with his partner as to who is the better Giver.

How do you handle any competitiveness related to your helping and giving to your partner? •

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Returning to the Absolute:

A Book Review of *Where On Earth Did The Enneagram Come From?*

Carl Marsak, M.A.

"In every world a Triad shineth, of which the monad is the ruling principle."

—Chaldean Oracles, Fragment 36

"All things subsist together in the Intelligible World." —Chaldean Oracles, Fragment 42

"It becomes you to hasten to the light and the rays of the Father, from whence was sent to you a soul endowed with much mind."

—Chaldean Oracles, Fragment 160

In 2016 a Mexican professor of sociology named Fatima Fernandez Christlieb published the first ever full-length book on the origins and history of the Enneagram. I for one was excited to add this text to my already large spiritual library. In fact, within a few months I had read it twice, taking copious notes, and had requested an interview with her for the Enneagram Monthly. She readily agreed, but then we ran into a problem—she was not fluent in English, and I was not fluent in Spanish. So I changed tactics and decided, with Jack's consent, to write a book review/response article. The title for this review comes from something germane to our discussion that she mentions in several places. For example, in speaking about Merkavah mysticism and Hekhalot literature in Chapter 3: "This ascension [to the divine throne] made sense to Gurdieff because the traditions in which he had grown up, as we will see in due course, had the same objective, a return to the absolute" (57). And in speaking about The Desert Fathers and the Christian Churches of the East in Chapter 4 she notes that: "The cultural inheritance of the 4th century goes beyond the study of temperaments and characters, and seeks a return to the absolute via an encounter with our own essence" (75). Finally, an example from Chapter 7 on Ignatian spirituality: "[Athanasius] Kircher ventured into all the traditions he had access to in his quest for a way for humans to return to the Absolute, which he identified with God" (130). If these quotes seem to point us towards a cross-cultural experience of deep mysticism (e. g. Hindu Vedanta, Jewish Kabbalah, Eastern Orthodox practices of heyschasm and theosis, etc.) then one would not be far off-track.

"The Enneagram is arguably the oldest human development system on the planet, and like all authentic maps of consciousness, it finds new life in the conceptual world view of each succeeding generation."

—Helen Palmer (in Lapid-Bogda, 2004)

Before continuing I want to make a few salient points. First, this book is a very important addition to our growing body of literature, if for no other reason than there is material here that you will not find elsewhere. In this regard it reminds me of other recent works such as *Seth Speaks* by Jane Roberts and *Initiation* by Elisabeth Haich, and offerings by Rudolf Steiner, Alice A. Bailey and H. P. Blavatsky. Esoteric literature for the cognoscenti. So, if I could find and

effectively utilize my Harry Potter wand, I would wave

it and make every Enneagram teacher and student engage in a close study of every word, idea, theme and speculation in this unique text (but that would be black magic and Hermione would be quite unhappy!). As important as the actual content may be, the illuminating example of spiritually informed and motivated scholarship should not be overlooked. Let's face it, most professors are not particularly spiritually inclined, and even if they are then they generally corral off their spiritual beliefs, values and practices so as not to contaminate their work in academia and jeopardize tenure (my father and his friends were professors of history, philosophy and science, so I know something about how this plays out). There have been exceptions though. The French Islamicist Henry Corbin comes to mind. The scholar of Kabbalah Gershom Scholem. Frances A. Yates, C. G. Jung and Joseph Campbell of course. Ken Wilber at times. But they are few and far between. We can be thankful to have Fatima in our midst.

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Secondly, our Enneagram studies cry out for contextualization, both horizontally and vertically. In the first instance, we educate ourselves about other systems of personal and collective transformation that exist in other cultures at this point in time. Then we compare and contrast, looking for points of synthetic contact. The danger of course is that we can make facile integrations, and end up with what the Sufis call the 'soup of the soup of the soup of the soup.' Spirituality light. Even worse, we may cobble together bits and pieces of other traditions and end up with something dangerous—a Frankenstein of personal growth (witness many contemporary cults). What is in many ways more useful, but also more difficult because it requires more training, is the vertical move. And it is here that Fatima really shines. In a magisterial effort, she begins the process of answering, or at least asking, questions such as: Why have many if not most in the Enneagram community become focused on the classification of 9 personalities, and not on "other meanings and purposes, such as the practical exploration of human transcendence, the recovery of lost potentialities, the interaction between people who see the world in different ways" (53). Who were the ancient

Chaldeans and what do they have to do with the possible origins of the Enneagram? Was the doctrine of the transmigration of souls part of the Near Eastern and Mediterranean world (Chaldeans, Egyptians, Pythagoreans, Platonists, Neoplatonists and others), and if so, were there early points of intersection with those revealing and promulgating the wisdom of the Enneagram?

As an aside and partial digression, one of my abiding queries is why there is so very little talk about reincarnation, soul age and the great ladder of spiritual evolution in the Enneagram community? All basic esoteric topics. What are we afraid of here? In my experience, even people at IEA Conferences rarely want to have an intelligent discussion about truly metaphysical topics. For example, most would consider the famous Vice to Virtue Conversion or a look at our missing Instinctual Subtype as easy and interesting subjects for public pondering, but not the structure and telos of the Kosmos. Fatima, though, dives head first into various esoteric topics, into what Freud famously called the “black tide of mud... of occultism”. Including theurgy, magical talismans, and other arcane arts. Perhaps it is because my father was a European historian, but I grew up highly valuing vertical contextualization. The technical term for this is *historiography*, which the encyclopedia defines as: “the writing of history based on the critical examination of sources, the selection of particular details from the authentic materials in those sources, and the synthesis of those details into a narrative that stands the test of critical examination.” There is much talk about in the Enneagram world about needing to restore the spiritual or depth dimension of the Enneagram... well, Fatima’s study demonstrates one way to do this.

Why did she research and write this book? In the Introduction she says that she had a “conviction about the antiquity of the Enneagram, which became a driving force” (18). She wanted to decant the sources.” Apparently, what held her back was her inability to isolate a convincing hypothesis. Eventually, her primary hypothesis became that there was “one common thread, not two halves.” That the origin of the Enneagram is not made up of two halves. “If we start with the Babylonian civilization, we can discover only one common thread that includes cultural exchange with Egypt, migrations towards Persia and sources in Classical Greece, without overlooking primitive and Eastern Christianity, up to the 13th century, a time of exchanges with the Muslim world [I would include the medieval Kabbalists here] (19).” Personally, I find this speculative understanding refreshing, especially after recently reading books by British scholar and mystic Peter Kingsley (*Reality, In the Dark Places of Wisdom, A Story Waiting to Pierce You*). One of his major themes is that in our day and age we have a habit of mind that divides the world into East and West, North and South, but throughout much of human history no such divisions existed. Even nation-states were not in evidence.

For my money, one of the book’s greatest virtues is that it dares to begin in the depths of recorded time. It is like she is mining for gold in Mesopotamia. I found that enlightening. Then she includes the Egyptians, Pythagoreans and Hermeticists, Perennialists of vari-

ous stripes, Neoplatonists, early Kabbalists, the Desert Fathers (including Evagrius of Pontus, of whom we have heard so much of late from Helen Palmer, David Burke and others), and then up to the medieval Sufis. In Chapter 5 on The Sufi Theses, I was particularly fascinated by Laleh Bakhtiar’s assertion that “the original Sufi Enneagram is called “*wajhullah*, the presence of God. That is, with the original image, one heals in the Presence of God...” (87). What a beautiful and useful Arabic term. Before continuing, it should be noted that one can usefully divide this book into two parts. The first half encompasses the Introduction and Chapters 1-6. This takes us up to the early 14th century when Raymund Lull died. The second half begins in 1540 with the founding of the Society of Jesus in Spain by Ignatius Loyola. Now we are in better known territory. We can then continue with Athanasius Kircher (1602-1680) and others, on up to Gurdieff and his roots and sources. Then chapters on his followers and their followers. Chapter 10 discusses the important contributions of Ichazo, Chapter 11 those of Naranjo and Palmer, Chapter 12 includes Riso, Almaas and others. Finally, Chapter 13 discusses, not surprisingly as Fatima is a sociologist, how the Enneagram can improve our processes of dialogic communication.

This book is so dense and rich that it would take another book to adequately summarize and explicate its most valuable contributions. And that is beyond me. So for now I would like to list, in no particular order, just a few things that struck me, on my second pass, as grist for the transformational mill.

In several places Fatima proposes and encourages future teams of researchers to continue her pioneering investigations. For example, she says that a team of researchers should be assembled “with a clear direction, reasonable funds, and a research deadline.” In another place: “It would be useful to do more precise research on this subject.” She offers “research challenges” to future spiritually informed and motivated scholars. Hopefully, one or more people will take up the gauntlet and move this project forward.

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Related to this, and if we are brutally honest (without mentioning any names), most statements by Enneagram teachers and writers about the origins of our beloved diagram and system are grounded in little or no actual scholarship and fact. There is no hard evidence, no references, no footnotes. They originate in intuitive speculation and hearsay. But Fatima says: “It is time to turn opinions into hypotheses based on some hard facts” (167). As the Brits say: “Hear, hear!!”

One thing that I love is how hard Fatima is on those who make strong and exclusive claims for *Sufi*

origins. In Chapter 5 she is actually quite tough on Laleh Bakhtiar’s notion of a “Sufi Enneagram”, and concludes that: “There should not be disputes over the origin –it is absurd to say that the Enneagram was born among the Sufis and that there is no more to it...” (20). Bravo! Let’s face it, when it comes to naming and claiming amazing spiritual insights and instruments, the religious and political dimensions always come into play. There are those who are highly invested in Sufi origins. In Christian mystical origins. In Chaldean and Egyptian origins. In... well... fill in the blank. There is nothing wrong with this state of affairs so long as the person in question doesn’t purport to base their truth-claims on actual facts.

On the other hand, she does offer an important quote from Bakhtiar: “We require a spiritual hermeneutic which is the bridge over which one intuitively passes between the quantitative and the qualitative, between form and meaning” (96). Again, another great insight. We know that in our materialistic, consumeristic, literalistic, postmodern culture we often reduce reality to the quantitative and superficial. The Enneagram, however, as a sacred symbol can serve to be such a bridge. But we have to do the hard work of finding and interpreting what is hidden and encoded in it. Note: one thing we can do right away is start referring to the 9-pointed star as a ‘symbol’ not a ‘diagram’.

Note: one thing we can do right away is start referring to the 9-pointed star as a ‘symbol’ not a ‘diagram’.

I don’t know what Instinctual Subtype Fatima is, but there is much talk about community and social life in this book—a dimension dear to my own heart (I’m a Social 7). In the Introduction she says: “I am convinced that if we fully understand how we communicate with others, that is to say, if we can grasp which are the features or characteristics of our way of communicating and that of our interlocutors, it will become easier to build community and also possible to detect areas of irritation before prejudices and labels arise” (23). Related to this, I remember once asking a high Tibetan lama which of the Three Jewels—Buddha (teacher), Dharma (teachings) and Sangha (community)—was most important for Westerners to attend to and work with. He said Sangha, because white Euro-Americans do family and community so poorly, and to progress on the spiritual path we all need much support and clear and loving communication with our fellow practitioners.

At several points she brings up the issue of magic, and even Neoplatonic theurgy. Wow, what a generally taboo subject (except in Harry Potter). Why don’t we speak about the fact that the Enneagram symbol can be seen and used as a magical talisman? After all, as she rightfully notes: “Magic is the art of creating links between different planes of reality” (130). And don’t we all hope that working with the symbol and our Enneatype will alchemically and magically transform our impurities and baseness into psychic gold?

The section having to do with what the new Pope

Francis has to say about the Enneagram (and publicly!) is priceless (146-154).

"The anatomy of our subtle nature has been sadly lacking in the paradigm of contemporary science in the West."

--Fatima (13)

Next, I would like to offer some suggestions for future improvements to the text:

There are so many references to people, places and events that an Index would be quite useful (but she does already have 211 footnotes!)

If a second edition were to be published the entire text needs to be proofed and edited again by a native English speaker (and preferably someone who is fairly familiar with the topic), in order to clean it up and help both flow and comprehension.

As a reader, I would love to have more information about Fatima herself (to the extent that she wants to be that disclosing). What is her background, spiritually, psychologically and vocationally? Why did she become a PhD professor of sociology and what have been her academic emphases? When and where did she encounter the Enneagram, and who have been her most important teachers? What is her own Enneagram Type and Subtype, and how has knowing

this been personally transformative? Can she tell us even more about why she chose to research and write this book? What does she consider to be some of her most significant discoveries and interpretations in her journey back to the days and nights of ancient Chaldea, Egypt and the Mediterranean?

She also says that "the Enneagram has a much greater complexity than is commonly thought" (16). If that is truly the case, why are people missing the missing the complexity, and how can they find it again?

In more than one place she talks about the "game of 9 personalities" she has witnessed in our Enneagram community. She also says that "the Enneagram has a much greater complexity than is commonly thought" (16). If that is truly the case, why are people missing the missing the complexity, and how can they find it again?

Which questions for future spiritually informed and motivated scholars do you feel are the most im-

portant to frame and ask in the near future?

I would include a brief discussion of Gurdieff's term *legominism*, which he defines in *Beelzebub's Tales* as: "one of the means existing there of transmitting from generation to generation information about certain events of long-past ages, through just those three-brained beings who are thought worthy to be and who are called initiates." Elsewhere he speaks of this technique as a way to hide in plain sight something very important, spiritually and philosophically (perhaps Fatima's book can be read as a kind of *legominism*?).

Personally, I would reference *A Different Christianity* (2005), by Robin Amis, the books by Peter Kingsley mentioned above, and texts by Thomas Cheetham, the ones that explore and explicate the profoundly original writings of Henry Corbin. See especially: *The World Turned Inside Out: Henry Corbin and Islamic Mysticism* (2003), and *All the World an Icon: Henry Corbin and the Angelic Function of Beings* (2012).

To conclude, if Gurdieff was correct in saying that knowledge has substance—materiality, density, form and purpose—then this book is meaty, weighty, substantial. We can only hope that Fatima will keep researching and writing in a similar vein. •

From the Editor

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making a distinction between two ways of being in the world. Our personality is better described by the enneagram as how we are "at work;" while how we are "at home," is better described by the MBTI. This may give pause to those of us who assume that personality is baked in no matter the circumstance, it will always be there, either lurking in the background pulling levers, or venting in plain sight. That of course is largely true, but different systems do focus on different aspects of our nature. Research proves that the 'devil is in the details' as we find when research conducted on a large enough scale to be significant brings out unexpected correlations. If enough of them keep pointing at patterns, we are tempted to develop a model.

Such was the case during a Master's Project at Regis University to relate the sixteen MBTI types to the nine personalities of the Enneagram. You would think that correlating 16 to 9 is a mathematical challenge, and it certainly is, but it worked beautifully when considering that each of the nine Enneagram types could be represented by two MBTI types or an MBTI Pair.

This makes perfect sense from the point of view that when diversity is "funneled" towards deeper it approaches more unity. So a pair of MBTI types will alter 'chemistry' when blended and can resemble the qualities that are copacetic to specific Enneagram types.

The use of these Pairs of MBTI-like personality descriptions turned out to be so surprisingly effective at constructing comparisons to Enneagram type descriptions, it even helped students confirm their Enneagram type. The research revealed strong correlations between type/nature and choice of profession.

A certain familiarity with both systems is required in order to make full use of this model. It beats the alternative of risking to spend years on developing a career that's not right for us. Judging from the frequency of how often we hear regrets and discontent about a chosen profession, it's well worth to put in a few days of research to get a better picture of our inclinations and nature, before embarking into an occupation that later turns out incompatible with who we are.

"The Art of Freedom: A Direct Path & Intimacy" comes from **Michael Damian's** book that just came out. A small book be read carefully, I mean mindfully, as each paragraph packs wisdom worthy of contemplating before moving on to the next. His writing reminds me of that found in sacred scriptures of world-class religions, minus the need to weed through and figuring out what the translators and commentators may have meant as they translated scriptures written many centuries before their time...

Michael is thoroughly familiar with today's mindset and language and in plain English makes difficult concepts surprisingly familiar to us. What a treat.

For example: "The only way to begin dissolving our unconsciousness is to look very clearly and intently at it. This process brings our entire life into

question, including everything we think, feel, and believe."

Or, "There is pure knowing beyond the desire to understand everything conceptually. And there is pure awareness beyond any effort to be aware."

"Yet until you realize the effortless nature of consciousness, you will feel a sense of effort and desire—a desire to be conscious. The effort arises from your natural discomfort with suffering, and it will not abate until that suffering is dissolved. I won't tell you to drop your effort, because you cannot. I only tell you how truth works and how to understand what is happening."

Susan Rhodes continues correlating "Tarot, Qabala and the Enneagram," Her research made her realize more and more the necessity of doing it. One reason for that is that the tarot and the qabala have become quite intertwined in the minds of many esoterically-inclined tarotists. A second is that there's a definite relationship through sacred geometry between the enneagram and qabalistic Tree of Life—which means that there is also a relationship waiting to be delineated between the tarot, the enneagram, and the Tree of Life.

Little by little, the pieces are coming together as the discoveries add up. We are amazed at the variety of ways people were able to be aware of the intricacies underlying the structures that give us the rules of nature. The proof of such structure is simply seen by noting that nature is working. And, these universal rules if understood and respected, will allow us to work in harmony with them. What Susan is doing is akin to reverse engineering revealing the deeper structures of life. •