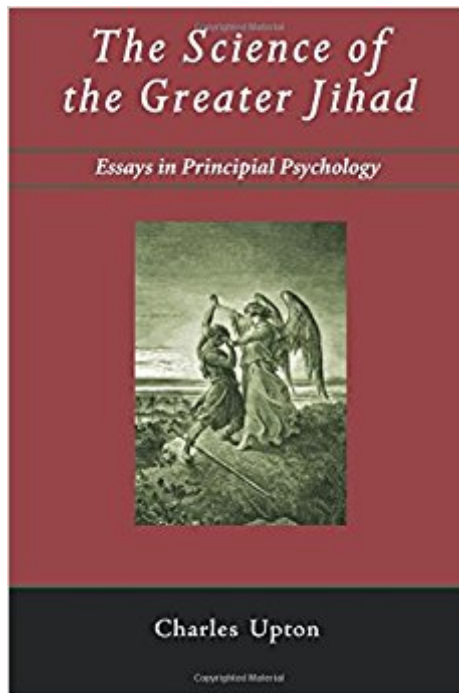




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The Science Of The Greater Jihad: Essays In Principial Psychology



Synopsis

The spiritual life must obviously take psychology into account; if we want to do good and know truth, we will have to understand what in us supports this intent, and what stands in the way of it. But after Jungian Psychology, Humanistic Psychology, Transpersonal Psychology, and Ken Wilber's Integral Psychology, the reader may wonder what remains to be said vis-à-vis psychology and the Spiritual Path. In the author's opinion, what remains is to present a psychology rooted in traditional metaphysics, one that he has termed "Principial Psychology". This psychology is not essentially new; elements of it are to be found in every traditional path; but it has rarely been so explicitly defined. Principial Psychology does have certain affinities with Transpersonal Psychology, and with Integral Psychology as well; all three emphasize the attainment of self-transcendence. The difference is that Transpersonal and Integral Psychology draw various elements from the faith traditions, while Principial Psychology requires that we actually follow one of them. Principial Psychology is based on the premise that the different "faculties" of the psyche that the Scholastic psychologists studied-thought, feeling, will, memory, imagination-as well as the various "archetypes" that Jung discovered but didn't entirely understand, identifiable in some ways with the levels of the human psychospiritual makeup in Sufi doctrine-are psychic reflections of timeless spiritual or metaphysical principles that exist in a world beyond the psychic dimension entirely. In terms of the human microcosm, these principles are the loom upon which the psyche is woven, and the body as well; in terms of the macrocosm, they are the eternal designs that underlie, and guide, the greater universe of which we are a part. From the point-of-view of this science, the whole spectrum of mental illnesses and psychological "complexes" can be seen as based on various wrong or inverted relationships between the faculties of the psyche-imbances that are produced by, and further reinforce, the misperception and veiling of the archetypal Principles by the tyrannical and deluded ego. Principial Psychology recognizes the goal of human development not simply as the healing of mental illness or a balanced adjustment to social norms, but as the attainment of a state of "ideal normalcy" based on a complete conformation of the psyche to the principles from which it springs-in other words, on the "salvation of the soul". Just as mental health is inseparable from moral development, so self-knowledge is impossible without self-transcendence.

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Customer Reviews

This book seems to be an overlooked or neglected gem in today's metaphysical and spiritual scene. In fact I'm surprised this penetrating work by Charles Upton has only received one review. It's a book that deserves to be read far more widely. I found the book a rare pleasure on two fronts; aesthetically, and intellectually. Aesthetically it's simply a lovely book. The book cover design, with its theme of spiritual combat, is marked by an elegant simplicity. The physical finish Sophia Perennis chose was lovely in a tactile sense. The book cover has a matte, satin like finish that simply feels better than standard glossy book finishes. All of this, however, is trite of me. Where Upton's work really shines is in his treatment of ideas. This is, foremost, a book about the notion of a operative Sacred Psychology; a science of knowing the self, and of the path that leads from self-transcendence to self-knowledge. In a sense it covers the idea of an inner and spiritual warfare, but it goes much further. It's informed by Upton's perspective, as long-time seeker on the Sufi path, as well as a past (but increasingly critical) engagement with the Traditionalist branch of the Perennial Philosophers, and is also coloured by his lifelong work as a poet and practitioner - in a sense - of mythopoeia, and an active yet critical engagement with various contemporary schools of metaphysics. The book covers grounds from Psychotherapy and Exorcism, to a deeply informed and compassionate critique of Carl Jung, to the place of acesis and struggle, love, and knowledge, in the spiritual path. He covers the psychological aspects of traditional alchemy, examines the notion of evil itself and moral privation from the perspective of gnosis, and relates all of these themes and more to a lucid discussion of a true Spiritual Psychology, a Science of the psyche, a science of the Self, and of the many traps it faces in seeking out a spiritual path. I think this book it should be necessary reading for anyone whether from a Christian, Muslim, Jewish, or non-Abrahamic Faith background, who is interested in personal struggle to find meaning on the spiritual path. The readers who may feel the most challenged by Upton's discussions may be

adherents of transpersonal or Jungian psychology, or readers coming from the perspective of contemporary new spiritual and metaphysical movements, broadly speaking the New Age. It is these readers whom I would encourage to give the book a fair reading, to at least consider Upton's words. Words have emotional and intellectual resonances, shades of meaning, power. The word "Jihad" simply has immensely negative connotation in contemporary Western Societies. I think the choice of the word for this book was apt, not in spite of, but because of its semantic. But the doctrine of the "Greater Jihad" in traditional Islamic Esotericism and Spirituality, and even in conventional and normative Shia and Sunni Traditional Islam (outside of the 'extremist' non-Salafist/non-Wahhabi streams financed by Gulf Petro-Dollars) concerns inward combat of the self against the inner forces that drag it into the mud of bestial and gross negative tendencies. It has a lot in common with Orthodox Christian (and Catholic to a degree) understandings of Spiritual Warfare. But where Upton goes from that is territory little examined. But where Upton goes from that is territory little examined. The notion of 'Spiritual Warfare' has been covered excessively by many authors of many faith and religious varieties. What Upton tries to do is go beyond the notion of a transpersonal psychology, towards a truly principal psychology, of which Spiritual Warfare, the "Greater Jihad" in Islamic terms, is understood in its place in a wider context. The artwork on the book cover reflects this, because on the surface it calls to mind distinctly Christian notions of wrestling with the passions, married to the title itself, calling to mind a "Science" and the Islamic notion of the "Greater Jihad." I think the book should be read by anyone with an interest in psychology, spirituality, metaphysics, or religion.

Contained within this recently published volume, *The Science of the Greater Jihad: Essays in Principal Psychology* are the very principles that are lacking, yet so needed in contemporary psychology. While humanistic and transpersonal psychology acknowledge the spiritual domain they are unfortunately both afflicted by the scientism of the Enlightenment, being inheritors of this legacy as well as a host of other reductionistic theories that also obstruct its legitimacy and efficacy. Like all sacred psychologies which are derivatives of the sapiential traditions, they cannot be of use unless the individual participates in an orthodox spiritual path; the greatest exemplars of this rule are the saints and sages of the timeless truths themselves. Only the participation in and travelling of the spiritual path offers the possibility of receiving the benefits of a stable psychological health and well-being that is not limited to "adjustment" to the norms of an increasingly toxic society--and far more importantly, the possibility of becoming integrated into That which is truly transpersonal, which is much more than a psychological state. It is principal psychology that will disclose to the human

microcosm a fundamental Reality that is both transcended and immanent: "We will show them Our signs on the horizons and in themselves, till it is clear to them that it is the truth. Suffice it not as to thy Lord, that He is witness over everything?" (Qur`an 41:53)-Sacred Web: A Journal of Tradition and Modernity, Volume 33 (Summer 2014)

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