

[continued from bottom of page] Strange bedfellows this locus has! Eastern and Western meditators [on #545, distinguished as "4E" and "4W"]. In the East, the + and - forms come to about the same thing: Hinduism's the-self-as-all and Protestant Hinduism[Buddhism]'s the-self-is-nothing. [For an idiosyncratic E-W synthesis, see Jung--and, earlier, the New England Transcendentalists.] Self indulgence is #8; hard, #7.

In #559 I distinguished "self" (intensive, qualitative, reflexive pronominal noun, whose natural metier is Hindu-monistic-introversial, god-identical, pro-meditation/anti-prayer) from "individual" (dyadic, antimonistic, biblical) and "person" (social, humanist, utopian, egalitarian). Not that street-lanaguage observes these fine distinctions of denotata-connotata, but that the three terms point, distributively, to three worlds in tension within each of us and within our 1975 American civilization. It's natural for the self to meditate, the individual to struggle, and the person to trust-love. Politically, self and person tend to merge into a mystical movement, and individual and person into a militant movement--the former tending to cultism, the latter to revolution....Given this complex psychosociodynamic context, this thinksheet looks at "self-fulfilment" as a means and mode of integration, i.e. as instrumental to "getting your thing together," "making sense of life," "finding happiness," etc. The quest is enheartened, limited, and perverted by the meaning of "self" one brings to the task. The Christian leader will want to be sensitive to the vibes folks give off when they say "self" (and "individual" and "person"); and will think deeply about the fact that the "self" in "self-fulfilment" is elisable: now, "fulfilment" means "self-fulfilment" and it's what folks are most apt to be after when then come to "church" (for anything: worship, education, counseling, "socializing," even social action).

LOCI OF "FULFILMENT": In the case of the one(s) I'm working with, where is "fulfilment" being looked for? The rest of this thinksheet relates the three words (person-individual-self) to the three areas of attention-concentration where folks put their hopes and energies, and relates the whole to the eight WAYS OF BEING RELIGIOUS (Fred.Streng et al, P-H/72): #1 (personal encounter with the holy), #2 (creation of community through myth and ritual), #3 (living harmoniously through conformity to the cosmic law), #4 (spiritual freedom through discipline--meditation), #5 (attaining an integrated self through creative interaction), #6 (achievement of human rights through political and economic action), #7 (the new life through technocracy), #8 (enjoyment of the full life through sensuous experience). [For a brief description of the eight ways, see my thinksheet #545.]

I look for my fulfilment in...

THE GROUP (altruism): I'm a PERSON.

The center is "the other" meaning society, and it may be viewed politically [as #6, including liberation theologies] or sociologically [as #2]--both of them biblical. The feel of the goal may be harmony [#3], Sinism construed collectivistically (as Maoism) or individualistically (as Moonism, the Unification Church), which preaches yang-yin ontological atruism, each for all for each).

"RELATIONSHIP" ("love," "trust"): I'm an INDIVIDUAL.

Current interpersonalism [#5, Human Potential Movement] leaps to mind. But in addition to this horizontal, indeed I would say as the origin thereof, is the vertical, the divine-human relationship viewed as creational [#1, the beginning of Calvin's Institutes is radically relational, forbidding thinking of God without man, which would lead to profitless speculation, or the reverse, which would lead to (bad sense) humanism], as devotional [#1: Gita, Fourth Gospel, Quran], as vocational [#1, on which see thinksheet #540; Abraham as obedient explorer; signing the cross as integration-through-obedience ritual joining (vertically) the coils and (horizontally) the hemispheres].

MYSELF (egoism): I'm a SELF.