

## The Birth Trauma and Inner Divinity Asha Clinton MSW, PhD

The younger a child, the more intensely people seem drawn to him. He seems to have a magnetism that is not reported in the psychological literature, but that is often commented on by parents. I have heard many say that, just having been born, their infant is still very close to God and the experience of being an unembodied soul. These parents sense a particular spiritual quality in young children, a sacredness that surrounds them and gradually leaves most of them as they grow up and experience the world.

What makes that magnetism disappear? Let's list some of every child's needs, desires, rights, and freedoms that are most often unseen by parents and therefore not bestowed: appropriate physical affection and protection; emotional support, comfort, appreciation, protection, witnessing, approval, praise, affection, and love; a child's special desires that are often not honored when they could be-- a certain Barbie or G. I. Joe, special time just with Dad, baseball camp. Also, parents often don't appreciate the child's value, inner beauty, and positive qualities and gifts, or his natural human rights-- respect, acceptance, honor, and equality. They often don't and can't vouchsafe the child's freedom from of abuse, trauma, negativity, dysfunctional family dynamics, and a traumatic social context. There's more, of course, but this will serve as a start.

As you can see from this list, it is the impact of negative experience, i.e., what I would call developmental trauma, that separates the child from his inborn sacredness. That impact hits most strongly when parents don't see a child's value, itself a primary trauma. To see a child fully means to be clear enough in one's own psyche to see his need for all of the above (and more), and to provide it in good enough fashion, and to an appropriate degree.

I remember growing up around my Cousin Max, who was born 5 years after me. His parents were middle class and provided all his physical needs, but like many of the children in Alice Miller's *Drama of the Gifted Child* (ftnt), he was not seen; his parents saw, instead, his talent and potential. As a result, his emotional needs were not met; his parents defined his value in terms of his intelligence and potential to make money and rise in society, not his being; they respected, accepted, loved, and honored his talent and his future, as they fantasized it, not him. And not knowing they were part of a dysfunctional family, they could hardly protect him from one.

The issue is not just whether the child is seen; it is also whether the child is seen as a whole being rather than the part of the child the parents value. And from my perspective, a whole being is one in which the body, psyche, and spirit are appropriately interconnected, and are all connected to the directing

Center within the unconscious, which is, in turn, connected to the Divine. Anything less than this is dissociation.

In ordinary life, especially in the West, we often tend toward the categorization of things rather than the direct experience of them. It is written into our cultures. We are often more interested in the parts than the whole. Biological taxonomy is, to my mind, an excellent example of this. On the basis of small differences in appearance-- and often few or none in function-- different members of the plant or animal kingdom are assigned different pigeonholes and names. Unconsciously, we divide and categorize almost everything this way, even our children. In other words, our way of dealing with human reality is often through pigeon-holing, splitting, or dissociation.

For example, in our part of the world, God and the devil are split from each other, as are good and evil-- two sides of the SAME coin. White people are good and black people are bad but, except for certain small physical differences and NO functional differences at all, they are exactly the same. People above a certain income are one kind of people; people below that income are another kind. I think you get the point: we react to the world from a dualistic, traumatized perspective by splitting it into its parts.

The original trauma, as far as I can tell, is described in different terms in different mythologies, so I will remind you of the one you may know well-- Exodus. Before Adam and Eve ate of the fruit of the tree of knowledge, they were not separated from the Divine; rather they lived in His own garden. They were not even separate from each other since Eve was made of Adam's rib. The Garden of Eden scenario, then, is one in which there is one being and his interconnected parts, including Adam and Eve.

Then, as the story goes in its many cross-cultural variants, something happens-- what it is varies from culture to culture-- and God and humans are no longer united. The result is duality, the first great dissociative trauma. Many more grow from this one.

Having grown up where we have, it is not surprising that most of us have been dissociated from our own inner Divinity, from the fact that, within us, there remains, despite all attempts to ignore it and despite collective dissociation, a shard of the original Divine spark which, if properly fanned, allows union with the Divine and an end to this most primary of dissociations-- Unity instead of duality. The spark is, in various psychological, healing, and spiritual modalities and traditions, called the Center, the Higher Self, the Self, the Core, the Atman, the Essence, the Divine Within.

The most profound trauma that most human beings suffer is being plucked, as children, from direct experience of the Divine, and they suffer it at birth. For the fetus growing within his mother, she is the Divine, providing, as God did for

Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, for his every possible need. This is the esoteric symbolic meaning of the birth trauma.

Since this level of the birth trauma is unrecognized and untreated (and since the birth trauma is largely untreated on any level), it is not surprising that the most profound lack of mirroring children endure after their split from Divinity is the lack of mirroring of that inner Divinity. Furthermore, what is traumatized in every form of child abuse, neglect, lack of mirroring, etc., is the child's connection with his innate, essential Divinity, as if each trauma is another spadeful of earth thrown on the inner diamond that makes it still harder to find. I believe that this is the reason that wounds from lack of mirroring and from trauma are often so deep.

Think of how you would treat the Christ, a being who is part Divine, if he came to stay at your house: with respect, love, in fact, with every quality in the list in paragraph 2. This is what many of your clients have probably not had themselves or given to their children-- the mirroring of their Divinity so that it is seen, respected, supported, witnessed, honored, accepted and, most of all, loved. And doing all these things may be one of the greatest gifts a therapist (or human being) can convey. \* (\*ftnt: It is important not to worship the Divinity in a child, since this leads inevitably to other types of pathology. Witness Jewish Princes, for example)

How can we, as therapists, take mirroring as deeply as it's needed, even to the depths of the human Core? There is one requirement and two types of work that need to be done. The requirement is the same one that inheres in any excellent psychotherapy: You can't take a client where you haven't been yourself. The therapist will be able successfully to mirror someone else's Center and heal the split he has with their inner Divinity only when she has already reunited with her own. This is certainly necessary for every therapist who wishes to clear the deeper levels of the birth trauma in clients, as well as most developmental traumas which lead to characterological and/or dissociative symptoms.

The first level, then, is to mirror clients' inner Divinity so he can heal from the trauma of not having had it acknowledged and mirrored. This is done by sitting within one's own Center, and, from it, connecting intuitively to the client's Center. Only then, when the therapist can sense what that client's Center is like and what qualities it has, can she begin to mirror it. This level of the work takes a certain intuitive development which tends to occur as the therapist sits in her Center.

The second level is best accomplished with the energy psychotherapies, particularly Seemorg Matrix Work. The latter can be used, first, to discover and clear the Core Traumatic Patterns (give def) which have broken the connection between the conscious mind and Center. Next, it can be used to clear

individual traumas, especially, but not only, the birth trauma. In clearing the birth trauma, the therapist makes sure that she discovers and clears all the aspects of the birth trauma that need clearing on the physical and psychological levels, and then on the spiritual level as well.

Afterward, it is possible to transform the negative Core Belief Matrices related to these Core Traumatic Patterns and traumas into positive ones. Finally, the therapist can stimulate into development and activity the positive qualities which have been crushed by trauma or lain hidden in the Center. In other words, the energy psychotherapy component of working with the Center is a large one, as important, in fact, as mirroring itself.

All the levels of traumatic abreaction can be cleared while the therapist is seeing and mirroring the client's Center. Slowly, the connection between the client's conscious mind and Center reestablishes itself. The client, perhaps while meditating, suddenly hears the strong, peaceful voice of inner guidance within him; or he experiences, without precedent, the deep ocean of sweetness and love that is the Center. He begins to feel a level of peace and contentment he has never before experienced. And sometimes the therapist can see a look of purity on the client's face, an inner beauty and light that bears no relation to his physical features, although they somehow look startlingly improved.