

# THE ENERGY OF THE HEART

## A PATH TOWARDS UNIVERSALITY

During the International Congress of Psychosynthesis, held in Rocca di Papa, near Rome, attendants came from all over the world - and they came in hundreds: five hundred and fifty, to be precise. The great richness and variety of individuals was only matched by the equally large and varied timetable of workshops, so much so that it was difficult to choose one workshop against others that were just as interesting.

Personally, I found the opening work very touching and meaningful. All the participants gathered in the background field, divided in groups and created concentric circles, and everyone looked at each other in the eyes while keeping silence. Different faces and sights met, different geographies, histories, cultures, and ways of looking came together, but in each participant you could feel their presence and acceptance: "I am here, you are here". The other was accepted and recognized in the eyes and in the silence of the heart. Then there was the final OM, sounded simultaneously by hundreds of people after a short meditation. It was a lovely idea to write a phrase of inspiration after the meditation using colored cards that were then hung from the tree branches. During those days, the word interconnection kept sounding inside me like a tangible reality that materialized in that setting, but which was also made, invisibly and subtly, present in the everyday consciousness of an effect that still persists.

It was in this climate of familiarity and naturalness that I had the pleasure of delivering my workshop, and welcome to it the richness of the heart of beautiful people from different backgrounds.

In the ancient Eastern traditions, the heart is considered the seat of wisdom and understanding, the connection between the individual and the universe, between the upper and lower levels, just as the transpersonal Self, embracing the totality and the individuality of a person,

opens at the same time towards the universality.

Going to the heart of a person means going to their center. Socrates said, "Know thyself," and on the pediment of the temple of Apollo at Delphi there was written "Know yourself and you will know the Universe".

The more we, in our evolutionary path, go to the heart of ourselves, to the center, aligning our I or personal self with the transpersonal Self and unveiling our individuality to ourselves, the more we discover our universality. What does it mean to talk about universality? This concept is linked to the relational dimension of the Self; individuals are not isolated from each other but always in relation to others - potential relations or in progress.

Despite the diversity of gender, race, culture, religion, or type, there are universal elements that unite us all, such as the suffering, the wounds, the challenges and joys of life, getting sick or getting old, deaths, births, love.

Also all religions, despite their differences, have in common the sense of compassion, the golden rule of "love thy neighbor", of taking care and willing the good of others. Compassion comes from the heart, it is an energy of the heart, and so is joy, a feeling that powerfully gives us a sense of expansion of consciousness.

But universality is not only the searching out for a commonality of destiny, the unity of the roots and the universal elements within the personality which manifest through the archetypal images that populate our night and daydreams; it is also a sense of belonging to a network of interconnections, of relationships based on reciprocity, to a universe where everything that every human being feels, thinks, or acts, has an effect on other human beings.

Hence the sense of responsibility of our being in the world: we can be originators of wars and conflict, or builders of peace, light and love.

In recent years quantum physics has discovered the scientific basis of this sense of universality (and psychology and medicine are applying it). It's called entanglement, a phenomenon whereby two particles that originally interact with each other will continue to interact even when they are millions of light years away from each other; if a modification is brought upon one of them, then the other particle placed at such a distance will manifest a similar modification.

To cultivate the energy of the heart means to develop the knowledge of our self and of the other, the consciousness, the wisdom, the sense of universality, and compassion-not only the sharing of sufferings, but the will-to-good for the other that arises from a purpose, that of cultivating love, peace, and joy together. The ancient Chinese used to indicate this purpose with an ideogram that depicted a plant that sprouted and grew in the heart. This brings to mind the aspects of will for psychosynthesis: strong, good, and skillful-a will that opens to the transpersonal and universal will.

Through the application of certain techniques, such as meditation, visualization, energy work such as Qi Gong

or the like, and work with the heart chakra, we can cultivate the energy of the heart, caring and developing the qualities that are typical of the upper levels of the unconscious: joy, presence, loving care, compassion, and others. These are qualities that, through the mediation of the transpersonal Self, make us aware of the interconnection or entanglement that exists between ourselves and others, between us and the world. These qualities connect us with the Universe.

Cultivating the energy of the heart promotes in us the sense of belonging to the world where everyone, as we go toward our own heart, may use the personal will in its aspects of skillfulness, love, strength, and align it with the transpersonal and the universal will.

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Maria Teresa Maraffa

## MEETING AT THE WELL SPRING

Another scorching June afternoon in Italy. The bus descends the winding road down from Rocca di Papa onto the autostrada as we head north to Florence. We are thirty pilgrims on our way to Casa Assagioli, the home in Florence where the founder of Psychosynthesis Roberto Assagioli lived, worked, taught, and wrote. The first group to directly encounter Assagioli's archives, we come from all over the world: Canada, Australia, Sweden, Germany, Brazil, Portugal, France, Haiti, Spain, Poland, Ireland, the USA and, of course, Italy.

Our hosts are Alle Fonti della Psicosintesi, translated as "At the Well Spring of Psychosynthesis". Since 2007, this international group has been sifting and sorting through the boxes of material that Assagioli accumulated during his lifetime. Initially gathered and examined after Assagioli's death in 1974, his notes, international correspondence, appointments, articles, books, pamphlets, hand-written reflections, and scholarly assessments were later stored in the "Esoteric Room" of his house. During its recent restoration, the roof of this room was removed and the need to protect and relocate the material became mandatory. And so the archive project and Alle Fonti della Psicosintesi came into being.

As an extension of the June 2012 conference "Psychosynthesis and the World", this group decided to extend a welcome to anyone interested in spending a day visiting Assagioli's house, study, and garden. In addition, we would have the unique opportunity to experience the archives 'hands on.' An afternoon would be devoted to our reading, studying, and perusing the cataloged files including original handwritten material by Assagioli.

Encountering Assagioli's home

We gather the next morning at Assagioli's rose-colored house at 16 via San Domenico. As we sit together in a meditation circle, singular words fly between us,

our shared feelings of Action, Joy, Eagerness, Surrender. Our first task is to stop at a small round table full of wooden blocks. These blocks are stamps especially made by Assagioli to imprint his evocative words. Bang! Bang! We select a block and carry another word into the day. Vitalità is now stamped onto my soul.

We divide ourselves into two groups for the house tour, and soon English, Italian, and French fly up and down the two-story villa. Hung on walls throughout the house, white boards forever carry Assagioli's handwritten words and diagrams. We climb up to his apartment where his portrait as a 20 year old greets us, beckoning all to reflect, know, love.

I enter Assagioli's study to find it dimly lit with the shutters drawn. On the desk is a kitchen timer, a small U.N. flag, model ship, a photo of Assagioli meditating under a tree, and a postcard of Mount Fuji. I sit for a moment on the divan where he would receive guests and try to still my mind, but I am soon drawn to his bookshelves. I run my finger along *The Art of Expression* by Atkinson, *A la découverte du Yoga* by Adams Beck, *Unità Creativa* by Tagore, and *The Structure and Dynamics of the Psyche* by Jung.

Our group then moves outside into the garden where Assagioli would meditate on his roses. A pungent smell of wild ground mint fills our senses, and a tree bares green susine prunes ready to ripen. The trills and swishes of various languages float above me as the frenetic Florentine traffic rushes by. Cicadas vibrate their rhythmic song, a resonance of midday heat.

After lunch we form another circle, only this time we are instructed on how to approach the archives. Take care of the energy his handwritten material evokes. Move slowly. Allow for the paper and words to touch you. Breathe and know this is only a taste.

The archives – accumulators of energy

Thick blue boxes wait for us at various tables throughout the villa. Some of us move to rooms where Assagioli and his wife once slept, ate, received guests. Windows are open and dry hot breezes waif in from the street and neighboring courtyard. At first, we buzz with excitement along with a touch of anxiety, dividing ourselves amongst the boxes like kids at Christmas, in a candy shop, in the school library. Boxes labeled: "The