

Test ye the Spirit

Evaluating our inner sources

J. Schoneberg Setzer

Dr Setzer was one of the founders of the Academy of Religion and Psychological Research (now ASPSI) in the USA in 1956. The present article was written some time before his death in the early 1970s. Part of it has already been printed by Spiritual Frontiers Fellowship International, in their journal Spiritual Frontiers 34:1 (2003). It is published by the CFPSS by permission of its then Editor, the late Frank Tribbe.

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How can I determine when it is God who speaks to me in my inner experiences?

People have credited both glorious and shameful deeds to inner promptings that they have interpreted to be divine revelation. History is filled with examples of people who have helped themselves and others - and of people who have harmed themselves and others - by following inner voices, visions, and feelings that they have understood to be of heavenly origin.

Conversely, many other people have decided, for safety's sake, never to follow interior promptings, and have found themselves stuck in timid, insensitive, monotonous, robot-like existences. Life, it seems, can have a dynamic, adventurous, joyous quality only if it is lived in imitation of, and open to input from, the active Creator whose created image we are.

But if we decide to live in creative contact with our spiritual interior, we should certainly arm ourselves with as much wisdom as possible before attempting to make closer contact with, or before attempting to operate by, inner counsel. To gather this wisdom from many sources, to summarise it in terms understandable to any, and to arrange it for easy practical reference, is the intent of this article. The thirty general guidelines listed below are the yield of a lengthy process in which I investigated the opinions of outstanding mystical theologians, spiritual counsellors and psychotherapists, studied unusual case histories of persons who claimed to have been the recipients of divine revelation, pondered the lessons of my eighteen years of pastoral and clinical experience, and minutely analysed my own spiritual pilgrimage.

I shall be dealing throughout with the basic problem of distinguishing the guidance of a higher interior source from the misguidance of a lower interior source. It will be assumed herein that all the higher sources are consciously in the service of God - who will be understood as the Ordering Principle and Person of the Cosmic Good - and that

all the lower sources are operating against the cosmic order, and serve God only unconsciously and against their will. These lower and higher interior sources will also be referred to as the lower and higher 'unconscious', only because our inner materials come from dimensions of mind usually beyond our conscious awareness. Every kind of phenomenon from the unconscious will be covered under the frequently used term 'inner promptings'. This includes - singly and in every conceivable combination - dreams, visions, hallucinations, voices, touches, feelings, urges, intimations and sudden ideas. 'Revelation' will simply be another term for enlightening guidance from a higher source.

Practical Guidelines

1

We must always stand ready to assess intuition with our critical reason. We are a balanced combination of reason and intuition: which means that we have a dual consciousness. Our reason is 'point consciousness' in which, aware of our individuality, we think intellectually about our experience. Our intuition is 'field consciousness' in which, aware that we are one part of a much larger reality, we are able to share in the consciousness of that larger reality. Both of these types of thinking are essential to full humanity, for they complement, support, enhance and correct each other. Those who close the door to further critical analysis of any particular item of

intuitive input has surrendered themselves to manipulation by forces that can be quite harmful and may be trapped in a misinterpretation that they are no longer free to correct.

2

We should never expect to understand God's revelations completely with our critical reason. Classical Christian mystical theologians, such as Aquinas, have often pointed out that God's presence and communion with humanity is equivocal, rather than univocal. By this they mean that the complexity and richness of God's Being so far exceeds the complexity and richness of our being, that whenever we try to assimilate God's revelation of Godself we can do so only in part. Consequently we have no choice but inadequately to perceive God's outpouring gift. This is why mystical theologians often speak of the 'sinful mind' (literally 'mind that misses the mark') as unable to handle the truths of God. For we are in the same predicament as inhabitants of a flat two-dimensional world of length and breadth who must try to comprehend the realities of a cubic three-dimensional world of length, breadth and height. This predicament confronts us whenever we must extract a single literal answer from a communication that is always a symbolic one composed of many levels of reality. Realisation of our mind's limitations keeps us humble and flexible when considering instances of divine revelation. For we know that, at best, we will both understand and not understand.

If we attempt to evaluate intuition, we should be prepared to make some mistakes. This follows from the difference between God's complex mentality with its spherical logic that thinks in all directions at once, and the relatively simple nature of our critical mind which is limited to thinking in a single straight line. Our evaluation of materials from the unconscious will always be in danger of being incorrect because of the ease with which we can miss the major intent of such rich divine input. Every decision and statement we make about any revelation, therefore, must be understood to be prefaced with the statement, 'I might be wrong'. This fallibility is a condition with which we must make peace, for an obsessive perfectionism will only cause needless anguish.

We should search only for high enough probabilities to warrant commitment to firm action. God surely knows our situation in which, although we are seldom able to know for certain that we have made a correct interpretation of unconscious material, we must still act on apparent divine revelation. It is a situation in which critical reason in its analysis of inner promptings can only weigh probabilities until the

odds seem high enough to bet one's life on. When this point is reached, a commitment to act must be made, courage and trust in God must be summoned up, and vigorous action must be launched in accordance with the accepted guidance. This is what faith is all about! It is, as the author of the letter to the Hebrews explains, the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.

5

We should raise ourselves to the highest level of spirituality of which we are capable whenever we wish to receive and interpret revelation. The more we live in the light and love of God, the less our own spiritual failings can act as obscuring dirt on the windows of our interior perceptions. Our conscious and unconscious weaknesses - such as fears, anxieties, hostilities, lusts, deficiencies and twisted conditional responses - will dim and distort the light of God, and lessen our ability to reason about it. Purity of life - that is, sincere dedication to God that results in a continual effort to live the most just, loving and God-aware life possible - is our best insurance for making proper use of divine guidance. The interior promptings that come to us whenever we are in such a state of grace, and that are assessed by us in such a state, are the ones most likely to be of God, and the ones most likely to be responded to properly by us. For we tune in to what we are. Jesus instructed: 'Ask, and it shall be given you. Seek, and you shall find. Knock, and it shall be opened to you.' This applies also to analysing inner promptings. But

single-minded love for God - which is purity - is the precondition for benefiting from this counsel.

6

Before we act on interior prompting we should assess it in the light of Jesus' two great commandments: to love God with all our being and our neighbour as ourselves. If the prospective revelation is not consistent with these two ultimate commandments, it is surely not of God. However, even if it is consistent, it may, or may not, be the best of such loving options before us.

7

If the prospective revelation from the unconscious qualitatively fills the two great commandments of love, then we should base a choice between it and any other loving options on a quantitative evaluation. Which of the options most fulfils the two great commandments? Here the total picture for everyone and everything concerned must be considered. If the interior prompting weighs out as the best option, then we should act on it. If a number of the options, including the one that has come as possible guidance, seem to be of equal value, then the interior one should probably be followed, unless we have a strong preference for a different one, this preference being itself another inner prompting that needs assessment.

We should evaluate the results after acting in order to be better prepared for assessing apparent guidance in the future. This ability to judge after the fact is expressed in Jesus' principle that: 'You shall know them by their fruits'. If the results prove harmful, then the promptings were not of God, or were misinterpreted, or were poorly acted upon, or others did not wisely use their freedom in responding to our initiatives, so that the fault lies with them rather than with the revelations. The fallibility of critical judgement always makes such after-the-fact reassessment in order.

We should know that genuine divine revelation, whenever followed, produces positive changes, in attitudes and behaviour, that causes others to recognise the recipient of the revelation as more loving, wise, integrated and helpful; while the results of spurious revelation have a disintegrative effect on the soul and its social relations. Whenever critical analysis of the results shows these positive effects, the inner promptings have come from a higher source. But whenever the recipient of the purported revelation appears less loving, more foolish, more confused and more out of contact with other people, then the

inner promptings have come from a lower source. Again, this is a matter of knowing the value of experiences by their fruits.

10

You should be alert for that profound sense of inner calm and certainly that sometimes comes with genuine promptings from the source of truth - that awesome and worship-filled sense of standing outside of our normal earthly orientation in the presence of the One to whom all the universe is oriented majestically. There may be pain for us in such revelations, but somehow it all seems very good. And, if we can rise toward its level of holiness, it brings a resolution of our current problems. These indescribably blessed occasions when the presence of God is so powerful that it leaves us with absolute certainty are exceedingly rare, but very precious. Only on such occasions can our critical reason be thoroughly confident that it has met God. And yet, even then, our interpretation of the meaning of the event is fallible.

11

We should note that genuine divine revelation tends to be of such a transcendent nature that time and space disappear, individual separateness dissolves in cosmic unity, profound joy and peace are felt, and new levels of cosmic complexity are perceived that cannot be put into words, while false revelation is usually immersed totally in space, time and individual separateness, ego inflation, uneasiness,

sorrow and fear and is often easily described in words. The great mystical ecstasies literally lift us outside of ourselves into a greater reality that overwhelms us and yet edifies us. Whenever a person has received such revelation they seem to reflect a greater, nobler contact with this life, that is greater because it goes behind this life to its Source.

12

We should always search our inner promptings for divine symbolic depth. Because God's mind holds everything in itself at once, we should expect that whenever God communicates with us it is done on a number of levels at once. This is precisely what we find. Messages from a higher realm have a symbolic richness that requires careful analysis of various interpenetrating levels of meaning. An image of death, for example, may not refer to the demise of our body at all, but may refer simultaneously to the end of a way of life, the end of a relationship, the end of an attitude, and the end of certain possibilities. In like manner, an image of repairing a church may refer not to a physical structure at all, but may refer simultaneously to rebuilding a religious fellowship and one's own spirituality. Even the most minor divine promptings seem to be pregnant with multiple meanings that beg to be delivered, by our critical reason. By contrast, interior promptings from our lower unconscious tend to be simple and to have only a literal meaning.

We can best evaluate an interior message if we first evaluate the source that is communicating. Is the purported messenger of heaven the kind of entity to whom God would entrust a straight-forward message to us? If so, we may follow the advice rather directly if thorough analysis permits this. The advice of a demonic communicator who lies, cheats, hates, lusts, envies, pretends and threatens should, of course, be rejected for action in the world; and the advice of other, though less obviously unrighteous communicators, should also be rejected for direct action in the world. But we should remain aware that the messages from those unrighteous images will still contain as symbolic divine truth the information that certain poorly developed sub-personalities in us wish to urge us to a certain kind of hurtful action because there are problems we have neglected to solve. These parts of ourselves contain split-off portions of our soul energy that are trapped in darkness, and that need to be dealt with, transformed, and integrated better into our total selves. Therefore, even the monsters and devils that appear to us in the dramas of our dreams and visions serve God by showing us where we are weak. Whenever we correct the situation we can often watch these infernal entities change into blessed ones before our eyes.

We should determine whether the inner prompting manifests primarily in the form of a silent vision with symbolic richness, or whether it manifests as an audible voice with single dimensionality.

When divine Christ-figures appear, they often just look upon us with an ineffable divine love that heals and transforms, giving the impression meanwhile that they are seeing everything in heaven and on earth. The lower forces, however, seldom appear to view, and often communicate with incessant chatter, giving the impression that they see hardly anything but their own thoughts and feelings, and that they live within the minimal twilight of their self-centred aloneness. We should trust those communicators who can deal with us through cosmic vision, above those who can only talk from their isolated smallness.

15

We should determine whether an inner prompting is a negative one that frightens, forces and flatters us, or whether it is a positive one that reproves, respects and realistically stabilises us. Perfect love, the New Testament tells us, casts out fear. Whenever God prompts us, under most circumstances it is with great gentleness. God's warnings tend to cause spiritual distress and sober reflection in which we retain our equilibrium, while neurotic fears from our lower unconscious tend to panic us with dire warnings of disaster. In emergencies, however, God may be more forceful, as the prophets of biblical history are

evidence. Further, God never attempts to overwhelm our free will, but pulls back influence if someone feels that their free will is being endangered. Promptings from the lower unconscious, on the other hand, take every opportunity to use force and to treat us as slaves by obsessing, possessing and compelling us. Especially should we reject messages that contain definite orders, and that command blind obedience. In addition, God does not inflate our egos by prompting us to view ourselves as prophets, messiahs and lords. Such impulses tend to appear whenever our lower unconscious is plagued with deep feelings of inadequacy and depression. The divine element in unconscious materials that contain an angel messenger or a Christ figure may be God's revelation that we need to co-operate in prayer and meditation with a strong spiritual image or sub-personality who can help to save us from our deficiencies by influencing our thoughts toward a higher source of strength and meaning. In addition, the world that the symbolic proclamation is intended for is the world of our whole life. Thus the message with the potentiality for egoistic misinterpretation deals with our own need, and not with our neighbour's need.

We should be alert to any powers of extrasensory perception (ESP) that may accompany the prospective revelation, and should often view these powers as a sign of divine accreditation, but should generally

be suspicious of psycho-kinetic (PK) powers. Forces from the lower unconscious often claim to have ESP powers, but upon testing cannot read the mind of anyone except the person they speak through. However, righteous entities in dreams and hallucinations often demonstrate telepathy, clairvoyance and precognition, thus revealing that they are more joined into the field consciousness of God. Nevertheless, this by itself is not sufficient evidence of divine revelation, even though it may be important.

For many people in biblical days the major test for whether a prophet's message was from God was to wait and see whether the events foretold came to pass. But the problem is that psychics of very unsatisfactory spiritual quality can also occasionally foretell events. To insightful people, therefore, the critical sign that a precognitive message is from God has always been the degree to which the life and words of the messenger manifest an exalted spiritual view of our situation under God that includes strong ethical sensitivity and concern for people. Insightful people are aware that prophecy is not a simple foretelling of events, nor a foretelling of events in order that people may make a physical adjustment in their lives. Rather, true prophecy is a foretelling of events for the purpose of motivating people to change un-spiritual values and actions for spiritual ones. The prophet is always a preacher.

Generally speaking, even though many psychics are not godly souls, people of highly advanced spirituality do have above average ESP abilities. Consistent with this, the higher powers that prompt us from

within are more gifted in ESP abilities than ordinary mortals, while the lower powers are less gifted than mortals. Seldom are they merely on the same level with us. In PK matters, however, disturbing forces from the lower unconscious are often present. In the poltergeist (or 'noisy spirit') phenomena, for example, physical objects may be moved or changed without human beings touching them. These phenomena usually indicate that the person in the locale who is the source of psychic energy for this purpose has deep emotional and spiritual troubles. PK powers can be used for good in situations where demonstrations of the power of mind over matter are needed. But we should be aware that they are often found in less than blessed circumstances.

17

If we have major inner promptings that puzzle us, we should check them out with the communion of saints. Sometimes our subjective involvements pollute our reception of, and skew our analysis of, divine revelation, or cause confusion in our attempts to distinguish the higher from the lower unconscious. In critical matters it is advisable to counter such possibilities by putting delicate personal matters confidentially before a counsellor whose holiness of life and wisdom of judgement seem exemplary to us, and/or, if the matter is not so intimate, to lay it before a group of godly people who, after committing the matter to God in prayer and waiting in silence for a period, will share their responses. Thus in many circumstances there is relative safety in numbers.

However, we must also be alert to the fact that corporate blindness to new revelation has often negated the value of group counsel.

18

We should determine whether a purported revelation is consistent with the history of revelation. God has constantly been creating new things in our history - new social forms, new spiritual goals, new perspectives. But these new revelations always are consistent with the old ones because God is consistent with the Divine loving essence. New revelations tend to appear in history as very natural next steps in the process of human spiritual evolution, just as the stages of growth of an oak tree - from acorn, to shoot, to sapling, to bearer of more acorns - appear to follow naturally. Sharply divergent inner promptings that do not cohere with the core of generally accepted revelation to date, as it is found in sacred scriptures and the religious traditions, are highly questionable. We must not make the mistake, however, of assuming that all established social mores or official interpretations of sacred scripture are necessarily the results of earlier divine revelation.

19

We should recognise that, because all have received divine revelation under the same human limitations as ourselves, consequently, all

sacred writings, creeds, dogmas and religious hierarchies which preserve and interpret past revelations are as subject to error as we are in dealing with divine revelation. The universality of human fallibility means that we must never shirk our responsibility of making the decisions about purported revelations that affect our lives. No person alive, and no body of traditions, has the ability to make infallible decisions, regardless of their claims, and no one is as close to our own interior promptings as we ourselves. We may choose to believe that Jesus of Nazareth was an exception and, therefore, perfect in his understanding of divine things. But even in his case we are limited to indirect second and third hand reports of what Jesus did and said, by evangelists who - the science of biblical literary criticism clearly reveals - were fallible in their memories of words and events.

20

Unless the matter is urgent, we should delay action if after our best efforts at reasoning, we are still in serious doubt. Further understanding on whether to follow the inner prompting, and on the manner of acting, often comes with a waiting period that is, in effect, further incubation of the question. Spontaneous *new* inner promptings or changes in our external affairs may elucidate the matter. Delay also gives opportunity to develop the virtue of patience.

We should seek further guidance from God if after our best efforts at reasoning, we are still in serious doubt. Placing a prayer request for further guidance, and then waiting for it in dreams, or omens, or sudden insights, or by other means, may settle the question for us. If the inner prompting is genuinely divine, any serious doubt that remains after extensive conscientious reasoning will be honoured with further prompting, either from our internal or our external environment. However, inner prompting that gives the impression of being greatly important, and yet that never is touched on again by the intuition or by external signs, is probably not of God, or else the situation for it has passed. Recurrent dreams, which fit into this category of repeated guidance, should be most carefully interpreted because they usually present to us our most serious spiritual hang-ups and their need for resolution, so that both correct and erroneous interpretations in these cases may have serious consequences.

We should remember that a sense of humour is divine, and that it can help us in our efforts to interpret our inner promptings. Laughter is reported to be everywhere in heaven, but nowhere in hell. This is understandable in view of the ability of humour to keep us from taking ourselves too seriously, thus helping to control our tendencies toward

the sin of pride, and helping to keep our critical reason flexible. Humour also keeps us from imagining that we alone must save ourselves by our own perfect reasoning and caution, and strengthens our faith in God's grace and providence. Humour also breaks us away from obsessive concentration on linear logic and its limited world-view by pulling us away from our production of endless two-dimensional syllogisms and projecting our attention through unexpected mental associations to different dimensions of reality.

Humour also is of heaven because it keeps us light-footed and joyful, which is the state of those who live in God's presence fascinated by the amazing and delightful things that Divine Love will do next. Finally, because humour operates by associations that are not linear but spherical, it, too, is an exercise of our intuitive mind. By keeping our humour alive, therefore, we retain an openness in our intuitive consciousness which permits new inner promptings to surface, promptings that often clarify the original inner promptings under consideration.

We should be aware that delicious ecstasies are from the higher unconscious if they manifest complex levels of consciousness and strengthen critical reason afterwards, but are from the lower unconscious if they manifest a simple, sensual field consciousness, and

afterwards tend to diminish our use of critical reason. Ecstatic states are those in which we are seized up out of the body. When the Divine Mind is responsible for such an experience, a fitting complexity of levels of consciousness is experienced. But when we are lifted from our bodies by lower forces, the effect is generally limited to a simple oceanic state of emotional delight in which we lose our sense of individuality. The first kind of experience stimulates the fuller operation of all aspects of our point and field consciousness. It includes emotional delight, but the emphasis is on something greater. The second kind of experience tempts us to ignore our critical reason and disciplined spiritual life goals, and leaves us with the rather aimless desire to repeat again and again the experience of emotional sweetness. Here it is a matter of the part wooing us away from the Whole.

The emotional delights of ecstasy can also be used by the lower unconscious to make us vulnerable to our lust for power and glory, to our disinclination to face our moral depravities and inadequacies, and to our fear of facing our particular forms of ignorance and the inevitable spiritual uncertainties that confront everyone. Thus ecstasy in the service of the lower unconscious can motivate us, both during and after the experience, to overlook our less desirable features, to despise the critical assessments wiser people make of us, to presume that emotional heat can substitute for rational light in interpreting inner promptings, to overlook dangers and difficulties in our total situation, and to act in unwise haste during a manic high. Divine ecstasies, on the other hand, both during and after the experience make

us feel more integrated, more settled, more circumspect, and more aware of our total cosmic situation. All this, and joy too!

24

We should check to be sure that the feelings which prompt us are not masks for other feelings that should be recognised and dealt with. Some of our fears may not be rationally based on the present situation, but may only be connections with early traumatic memories. Clearly these are not divine promptings. Some guilt feelings may spring from the breaking of parental and cultural rules that are no longer of use. Some feelings of social inertia and dislike for a situation may spring from irrational fear and anger. Some feelings of love may be only a repetition of neurotic patterns, such as feelings that cause a someone to marry a series of alcoholics in order to play rescuer for them as they played rescuer for a parent, or feelings that impel someone to instant intimacy with everyone they find attractive because they are suffering from lack of a healthy self-love.

It is important to get in contact with our feelings. But it is also important to bear in mind that they may not be giving us the truth about the other persons or the situation. Some feelings may only be 'psychic gases' bubbling up from putrefying wounds in our unconscious, and as such can be divine revelation only if we accept them as warning symptoms of deep trouble we need to correct.

We should be suspicious of feelings to which we are over-attached. Over-attachment indicates that we are stuck in our feelings someplace, so that the attachment has become an obsession. Divine impulses never cling to us like this. If feelings still seem realistic and beneficial after we have distanced ourselves from them, and examined them objectively, and used them as material to help us analyse our psyches, then they are probably impulses from the higher unconscious.

We should be aware that divine revelation always strengthens rather than destroys spiritual fellowship. Paul informed early charismatic Christians that the greatest evidence of whether a spirit speaking through them was holy lay in its ability to foster the building-up, rather than the tearing-down, of the congregation by its messages and influence. The Spirit of God is always a spirit of unity and, therefore, does not separate those who are genuine in their spirituality. The Spirit causes divisions only between the godly and those who, because they have set themselves against God, become hostile whenever they are confronted with any evidence of godliness. Misguided charismatics, however, have distressingly often jumped to the incorrect conclusion - encouraged by too much pride and too little love - that other religious persons who are not persuaded by them belong to the ungodly. The

Pauline principle that the spirits of prophets are under their control seems to mean in part that spiritually mature charismatics can maintain a gracious 'low profile' in the fellowship in order to preserve unity.

27

We should be aware that genuine divine revelations observe a fit proportion in the style of the spiritual life. Except in the unusual case of special prophets during special seasons, divine revelation does not seek to absorb most of the energy and attention in our spiritual life. Instead, even in the greatest saints, divine revelation normally appears as an occasional sweet sauce on the spiritual meals of life. Prayer, meditation, contemplation, worship, study, steady works of love, sharing in edifying conversations and so forth, continue to take up most of the energies of the spiritual life. As a rule, whenever purported revelation becomes the major focus in life, deep emotional and spiritual troubles are clamouring for attention, and should be dealt with through some form of spiritual therapy.

28

We should expect oppressive over-reactions of conscience, arising from the lower unconscious, to occur for many people who are just awakening to the spiritual life. The newly sensitive soul tends to judge

a sordid past life, and breaking of new resolutions after conversion, in the severe and hateful way that the lower unconscious has habitually judged things disliked. As a consequence, such people may sink so low as to consider suicide. They do not yet view themselves in that light of God which is as loving as it is truthful. For God always urges us to hope and to press on, rather than to give up in despair. This feeling that God is judging us harshly with inner promptings is likely to happen early in our spiritual pilgrimage following a period of emotional ecstasy on a spiritual mountain-top. For such 'highs', in an unrefined nervous system, are usually followed by corresponding 'lows' that have been called by mystics 'the dark night of the soul'. The mature spirit learns to avoid and minimise these experiences of the pit by living on a more constant high plateau to experience the occasional ecstatic peaks that a refined nervous system and a disciplined life can generally take in stride.

In any spiritual crisis we should be alert to the fact that unsettling emotional upheaval indicates that our critical reason is in danger of being overwhelmed, that its ability to evaluate inner promptings is probably already impaired, and that, unless we receive help, harm to us and others is likely. A few spiritual development strategies deliberately use methods that encourage emotional upheaval - and even temporary madness - in order to break through persisting

barriers in the lower unconscious. Some groups handle these strategies wisely, and other groups handle them unwisely. Under any circumstances, uncontrolled, unbalanced, disordered behaviour that manifests in excessive crying, shouting, singing, outbursts of various kinds, hysterical disturbances of bodily functions, confusion of sensual and spiritual desires, and alternations between hostility and remorse, indicates that the current life-pattern is being critically dissolved, that a quite new one might now be constructed, and that it is a dangerous period for the distressed person. Because the individual's critical reason is distracted during this fluid period of confusion, it is imperative that they be in the care of wise, loving souls whose critical reason can protect them from the suicidally depressive influence of despair and guilt, and, oppositely, from manic elation with its inflating thoughts of initiation into sainthood and Deity, and graduation from the restraints of morality. We may all share in Godhood in the sense that we live within the field-consciousness of God, and are created in the image of God. But there seem to be divine realities which no mystic or saint can even imagine, let alone participate in. Emotional instability seriously impairs reality testing.

Prospective revelation that occurs as a consequence of taking psychoactive drugs should not be rejected on account of the influence of the drug - whether from a natural or synthetic source - but should be

analysed comprehensively like any other inner prompting. Every brain/mind state is achieved on its physical side by bio-chemicals that are altered by fatigue, rest, exercise, fasting, food, drink, medicine, thought, feelings, reverie, contemplation, music. Inner promptings often 'wait' until a bio-chemical `opening' - whether drug-assisted or not - permits a state of mind in which the promptings can surface into consciousness. Psycho-active drugs are simply a very effective way of providing such openings. We should bear in mind that sober and responsible spiritual athletes in many cultures and places have utilised psycho-active substances for spiritual purposes. It is also advisable, whenever making critical analysis of drug-assisted inner promptings, to take into consideration the degree of spiritual maturity in the person concerned. For the odds are greater that genuine divine revelation is being given if the person is a disciplined, godly adult who prayerfully uses the psycho-active substance in order to experience more deeply the things of God, than if the person is a confused, drifting, sense-oriented teenager who has become psychologically dependent on drugs and drug-takers for their source of life meaning and well-being. Such an analysis of the spiritual state of the experiencer is equally applicable in non-drug-assisted cases.