

# Jean Gebser

## The Ever-present Origin.

### Part Two

#### Chapter 12

#### The Concretion of the Spiritual

Whatever happens on the earth - man must share the responsibility. But the earth itself is not just something here and now; it is no more the center of the universe than is the sun. Both the heliocentric and the geocentric world-views have become obsolete in favor of the whole which, since it is not spatially localizable, has no center. What happens to the earth - and the earth is nothing but an event which in materialization has become progressively slower - originates in more encompassing and spatio-temporally non-localizable interconnections.

It is also a star among stars, just as humans are only human among other human beings. On its great journey across the millennia it hastens through the changing landscapes of "heaven," transforming its own countenance and man's. In man, who is the consciousness of the earth and its interconnections with distances and proximities, the influences which affect our entire solar system as one system among many have their enduring effect. All efforts to conceive of these factors in spatial and temporal terms are futile, and yet it is certain that they can be realized by us in a space-time free manner.

Of course, nothing that exists exists for its own sake; it exists for the sake of the whole: In origin, the whole is pre-given for man; it takes on for man its conscious character in the time-free present, for consciousness is not restricted to time and space. It cannot be concretized in conceptuality since conceptuality deals only with abstractions and absolutes. It can be fathomed only dimly in vital, magic life, and is realizable through imagination and experience, as in myth and mysticism, only in a twilight of consciousness. It is approached in thought, but thought immediately closes itself off since in its process of deduction discursive thought always excludes any openness in its compulsion to system.

The new mutation of consciousness, on the other hand, as a consequence of a rationality, receives its decisive stamp from the manifest perceptual emergence of the spiritual. (The poets' rejection of the psychic and mental aspects as a "source" of poetic creation, as discussed in chapter 3, section 2 of Part II above, and their turn toward the spiritual are only one indication among many of this circumstance.)

Two apocryphical statements of Christian doctrine clarify in their way what is meant here: "This world is a bridge, cross it but do not make of it your dwelling place," and "I have chosen you before the earth began." They point to the spiritual origin prior to all spatio-temporal materialization. We may regard such materialization as a bridge that makes possible the merging or coalescence, the *concretere* of origin and the present. The great church father Irenaeus presumably had these sayings in mind when he stated: "Blessed is he who was before the coming of man." We have seen him; he revealed himself in space and time. In his departure he was beheld by his disciples in his transparency, a transparency appropriate only to the spiritual origin (if anything can be appropriated to it), the transparency which a time-free and ego-free person can presentiate in the most fortunate certainty of life. The grand and painful path of consciousness emergence, or, more appropriately, the unfolding and intensification of consciousness, manifests itself as an increasingly intense luminescence of the spiritual in man.

Throughout the millennia the traditionalists, the "initiates," have seen man's previous journey as a decline, a departure from the affinity to and a distancing from origin. Painful as this distancing may be, it has served the requisite intensification of consciousness. Only distancing contains the possibility for the awakening of consciousness.

The phenomenon releasing origin is spiritual, and with each consciousness mutation it becomes more realizable by man. With respect to the presently emerging mutation we may speak of a concretion of the spiritual. The word "concretion" here is not to be considered as the antithesis of "abstraction." Quality and quantity, or efficiency and deficiency as we have posited them, are an expression and modes of effectuality of various degrees of intensity. And with this in mind, we specifically speak of the spiritual and not simply of spirit. Our

deliberations in the first part have shown that the concept of "spirit" is replete with such a multitude of aspects inherent in the previous consciousness structures, be they vital, experiential or imagistic-conceptual, that this aspectuation is necessarily unable to impart in truth a clear description of the concerns of heaven and earth, God and man. Concretion, then, does not mean a transformation of the intangible into something tangible or substantial, but rather the completion of *con-crescere*, that is, the coalescence of the spiritual with our consciousness.

Since the spiritual is not bound to the vital, to the psychic, or to the mental, but rather shines through to us in their efficacy - be it vital, experiential, conceptual, or reflective - a new possibility for perceptual consciousness of the spiritual for the whole of mankind one day had to shine forth. Previously the spiritual was realizable only approximately in the emotional darkness of the magical, in the twilight of imagination in the mythical, and in the brightness of abstraction in the mental. The mode of realization now manifesting itself assures that in accordance with its particular nature, the spiritual is not only given emotionally, imaginatively, abstractly, or conceptually. It also ensures that in accordance with our new capacity it is also perceptible concretely as it begins to coalesce with our consciousness. This will have presumably shed some light on our second principle: (the shining through (diaphaneity or transparency) is the form of appearance (epiphany) of the spiritual.

This diaphaneity is all-encompassing: it is a transparency of space and time as well as of light, of matter and soul as well as of life and death. An utterance of Max Picard that "Everything that stems from spirit is transparent" understates, for the transparency of the spiritual pervades the whole and the whole is transparency. Thus the perception and imparting of truth, the "verition" of diaphaneity, supersede the mere mental-rational validity of antitheses and is the realization of the achronon shining forth in it. This time-free present (the achronon) is just as real and efficacious a time-form as those that have preceded it in consciousness, and failure to recognize them would impede its realization. We should note that this syncretic process, which makes the integral consciousness structure accessible, is a new capacity, and not a mere sum of the old. Anyone who understands this syncretic process to be a summation is thinking mentally and synthetically; consequently he fails to perceive arationally and does not attain the basis for the meaningful solution to our task.

It is in this arational sense also that the designation "integral consciousness structure" - of which today's man, in mutation, is the bearer - should be understood. This designation refers to man as a whole to the extent that he can constitute himself as a consequence of the new mutation. It does not contain even the shadow of hubris, and because of its Christian stamp, is protected from all misinterpretations such as those of Nietzsche and the Gnostics, whose superiority doctrines include claims of power and similarity to the divine. This must be clearly understood.

The extrication from the mental-rational, which man is today accomplishing; his increasing capability, not just of viewing the world as a representation but also of perceiving it as transparency; the supersession of the once necessary duality which enabled the detachment requisite for consciousness-intensification: all these processes of restructuration point to a fundamentally new mode of realization, over-determining and mutating from the previous realization.

Once man sought truth; this was achieved over the millennia by philosophy; once man believed truth, and this bond was made possible over the millennia by *relegio* and later through religion. And wherever we think and believe, those attainments endure. But for those capable of "a-waring" the whole, the true, this "verition" is no longer a philosophical search nor a faith beset by doubts but a discovery without that search which throughout the ages was, as it were, merely the preparation.

The undivided, ego-free person who no longer sees parts but realizes the "It-self," the spiritual form of being of man and the world, perceives the whole, the diaphaneity present "before" all origin which suffuses everything. For him there is no longer heaven or hell, this world or the other, ego or world, immanence or transcendence; rather, beyond the magic unity, the mythical complementarity, the mental division and synthesis is the perceptible whole. To this he does not need the retrospective bond (religion). It is *pre-ligious*; its presence is *achronic*, time-free, and corresponds to man's freedom from ego. Magic *pro-ligio*, mythical *relegio*, mental religion become co-supports for *praeligio(n)* which is the intensified and over determined expression of all the others. What is "before" space and time, what has become ever more intensely realizable via the time-lessness, temporicity, time and space (owing to the various consciousness structures), becomes perceptible in conscious achronicity. The

pre-temporal becomes time-free, vacuity becomes plenitude, and in transparency the spiritual comes to perception: origin is present. In truth we ware the whole, and the whole wares us.