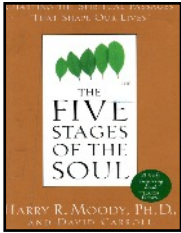


Conscious spirituality in search of truth...



HARRY R MOODY & DAVID I CARROLL: THE FIVE STAGES OF THE SOUL

According to authors Harry R Moody and David I Carroll in their seminal book "The Five Stages of The Soul" there are five conscious-spiritual transition experiences that many of us over sixty-five are likely to experience. These five stages are (1) The Call, (2) The Search, (3) The Struggle, (4) The Breakthrough, (5) The Return.

In human development and conscious spiritual inner work terms, each stage reflects potential pathways or trajectories we might experience. Moody and Carroll suggest that these transition stages represent a conscious spirituality related journey which result in influencing our social, emotional, psychological, consciousness and spiritual related journeys. Our home-based meditation discussion group in 2016 discussed all five stages in the book and were able to relate easily to the literature. An extract from the above book follows.

—Philip Crouch, Tasmania, 2020

HARRY MOODY & DAVID CARROLL: THE FIVE STAGES OF THE SOUL

"The Five Stages of the Soul" is the first book to identify the five specific stages of spiritual awakening most of us go through: the **Call**, when we receive a message that we have lost our way and that something has gone wrong in our lives; the **Search**; the **Struggle**, when we have found the way and begin the climb to spiritual fulfilment; the **Breakthrough**; the **Return**.

Combining psychology, religion, myth, and literature, Harry Moody - in the best selling tradition of Joseph Campbell, Thomas Moore, and Scott Peck - charts the passages of countless individuals across the country who have lived through these five spiritual stages, and recounts their lessons and experiences. Moreover, he explores their confrontation with the question of meaning in their lives and the experiences the five stages offered them - from a return to traditional religion to an embrace of mysticism to the desire simply to do community service." [Cited on Book Depository website].

[P :72] STAGE 1: HEARING THE CALL

'A study of religious and mystical encounters among the American population conducted by the National Data Program for the Social Sciences in 1988 and 1989 shows that almost *a third of Americans* have had a mystical or numinous experience in their lives, while *65 percent* have undergone paranormal experiences.



A majority of these respondents have witnessed unusual encounters —ESP, clairvoyance, numinous experience, spiritualism—at least several times in their lives. Only a small percentage of respondents reported *never* having had a paranormal or mystical experience. What’s more, based on information from previous surveys, the number of people undergoing such experiences has increased appreciably over the past twenty years. There is, it turns out, a vast underground of people who have experienced a **Call and yet are hiding their mystical lights.**’

[P:149] STAGE 2: SEARCHER BEWARE

‘We all know of **gurus and evangelists** who attract flocks of followers by preaching the gospel of light and love. And we all know of the intelligent, dedicated people who follow them; the educated people, the people of repute and discernment who leave their marriages, give up their jobs, sacrifice their families and fortunes to follow a master they believe will lead them to enlightenment. We have also seen how years later many of these same people come slinking back humiliated and in despair. How could I have made such a terrible mistake? they cry. **Why didn’t I see the danger signs?**

But what are the signs? When can the **Search lead us to a wrong** or even destructive way? And what is a wrong spiritual way as compared to a right one? A way is wrong way when it harms us, deceives us, mislead us, or, worst of all, when it diverts us, forcing us to give up a portion of our precious time on earth to **pursue a Search that leads nowhere**. As a sage once remarked, the best method of recognizing the right spiritual way is to learn to recognize all the wrong ones.

[P:196] STAGE 3: STRUGGLE AND ADAPTATION

Adaptation is important of course. We all need a bit of sage counsel to keep us on the right track. But from the perspective of the soul, adaptation is advice given to prisoners locked up in Plato’s cave ¹. It does not offer the wisdom we need to grow spiritually; it simply tells us to how to get more enjoyment out of the sound-and-light show presented to us on the walls of our cave. From the standpoint of of the spiritual **Struggle it makes no difference whether our dreams of accomplishment and success are filled or unfulfilled.**

At a certain point success and failure become equally irrelevant. What *is* necessary to realize—and this is the key—is that we cannot “drop” our dreams at will. Even if it were possible to do this—and, try as we might, it is not—shedding hopes and attachments prematurely can be a blunting experience in our spiritual growth, and even an emotionally dangerous one.



[PP:280-281] STAGE 4: WHAT IS A TRUE BREAKTHROUGH

² A friend of mine [Harry Moody] named Jerry told me the following story. “My aunt Betty was a very devout woman,” he related. “She once told me that she saw God.” I asked her to tell me about it. “Well,” my aunt said, ‘one day I was in a movie theater, watching a particularly sensitive film. In the middle of the film I started to cry. Then I felt this very strong emotion. It filled me up entirely. I felt that I was lifting upwards, that I was very, very elevated. Everything in me felt loving and warm.’

“I asked my aunt how long this experience lasted. She said about five or ten minutes—she wasn’t sure. I asked her what else happened. She said that was all. I asked her how she thought I’d seen God in all this. She said that the emotion was God. I suggested to her that when saints talk to God they go into swoons, sometimes for days at a time. Usually people can’t bear to be in the presence of God for more than a few seconds. When God spoke to Moses directly, Moses went into a faint. But she wouldn’t hear of this. ‘That was God, she insisted. I know it was.’

Peak experiences have an ultimate quality about them that can sweep us away. They can thrill and elevate. But they can also mislead, making us think we have gone further on the spiritual path than we really have. In truth, such moments are still very much of the ordinary world, very much a product of our senses and emotions and minds. **True Breakthrough occasions go beyond sensory experience entirely, partaking of the realm that cannot be easily measured, described, or even imagined.** Peak experiences have their place, in short. But they are a **beginning, not an end**; the light of a candle, not of the sun.’

[P:314] STAGE 5: THE RETURN

‘Devout participation in the world, what’s more, does not belong only to the saints. Dag Hammarskjöld, to take a contemporary figure, was known to millions as the vigorous Secretary General of the United Nations and as a Nobel Peace Prize recipient. Three years after his death in a plane crash, quite another picture of Hammarskjöld emerged. In his book *Markings* readers discovered that this seemingly worldly man was in fact a committed mystic and an intense devotee of the spiritual life.

“Now you have been there,” he writes with the sincerity of the world weary sage, “and it wasn’t much. Throughout life, how many steps must we take, how many hours must we spend in order to have heard, to have seen—what?”

² This particular page, chosen randomly on 21.10.15 initiated an awakening of consciousness as to its literal meaning.



To judge from his writings, **Hammarskjold’s interior journey brought him moments of Breakthrough and Return.** “In the point of rest at the center of our being ,” he writes, “we encounter a world where all things are at rest in the same way. Then a tree becomes a mystery, a cloud of revelation, **each man a cosmos of whose riches we can only catch glimpses.** The life of simplicity is simple, but it opens a book in which we never get beyond the first syllable.”

“One *satori*,” a Zen saying has it, “is all *satoris*. Yet it is still only one *satori*.” As Meister Eckhart explains: “If a person catches just one fleeting glance of the joy and bliss [of God], it will compensate him for everything he has ever had to suffer.”



Suggested resources:

The Five Stages of The Soul, Harry R Moody, and David I Carroll,

2000, Anchor Books, USA, ISBN10: 0-385-48677-4— [Aus.\$27.09, Nov 2019]

<https://www.bookdepository.com/Five-Stages-of-the-Soul-Harry-R-Moody/9780385486774>

<https://www.hrmooddy.com/>

1 Plato Allegory of the Cave - YouTube

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SWIUKJIMge4>

See also:

<https://herosjourneyfoundation.org/>

House of Ideas [assignment] PDF Extract, summary 12 steps

