

# Evolution of Consciousness

Rosemary Wilkie

**M**ANY READERS probably share the experience of trying to introduce the Alice Bailey teachings to friends and family who seem to be ready, but who nonetheless are often suspicious of anything *spiritual*. How then, to help them grow? Ten years ago this writer discovered Spiral Dynamics Integral (SDi); a comprehensive theory based on work begun in 1952 by Professor Clare Graves in New York. He was frustrated by all the conflicting schools of psychology on offer and resolved to get to the root of what differentiates people; why they see the world so differently, why some change and others don't, why they react in such varying ways, and disagree so much.

Through intensive research he found that individuals, organisations, and cultures all evolve in the same way—in a spiral of expanding consciousness. Human nature is not fixed. It is a process. It changes as life conditions change and we have the inbuilt capacity to develop more complex thinking to handle the problems we meet in new life conditions. The old ways of thinking do not disappear; we carry them within us and call on them when needed, for instance, to relate to someone whose consciousness is centred at a lower stage.

Each stage in the spiral of expanding consciousness is called a vMeme (a value meme). It is like a container in which our values and beliefs form and fit, and which attracts or repels others. A bio-psycho-social-spiritual code that underlies every aspect of our lifestyle and culture and holds together our laws, institutions, ethics, values, language, learning systems, literature, religion, economic and political theory and practice, music, fashion, food, amusements, games, and sense of identity—our psychological DNA.

Older behaviour systems are subordinated to newer higher ones as our life conditions change, for each system builds sequentially on the one

below, alternating between focus on the external and internal worlds. It is impossible to leapfrog to a higher vMeme we like the sound of, although we can step back into a preceding level in different areas of our life. There are six vMememes in the First Tier, and then there are two unfolding vMememes in a Second Tier. Each represents a progressive expansion of consciousness, but the leap to the Second Tier is of enormous significance.

SDi explains in detail what is needed for real change to occur and has been successfully applied in businesses around the world for many years. What follows is a brief summary of the life conditions in each vMeme in its peak manifestation. The leaving and entering stages are complex and very interesting, but there is no room in this article to discuss those or other parts of this absorbing theory, such as the nature and management of change, problem solving, and the dynamics of leadership as used in the business world.

## FIRST TIER: THE OLD PARADIGM

(The colours are used for clarity and have no other significance.)

### Beige

This level is all about survival and satisfying the imperative need for food, water, shelter, and warmth. Examples are newborn babies, street people, the elderly with Alzheimer's, and very early food gathering clans. Anyone can regress to this level after an accident or serious illness.

### Purple

As survival needs are met, new brain connections form and we become aware of a distinct self. Toddlers and tribes-people bond with family or tribe, sharing everything and opposing outsiders. This is a magical and superstitious world



where animism is born; there is a spirit in every river, mountain, and tree—inspiring myths, stories, and beliefs that linger to this day in films and children's books. We watch for signs, preserve sacred places, observe rituals, honour our ancestors, attribute magical powers to powerful natural phenomena over which we have no control, and rely on the shaman to intervene for us with the spirits (or shout 'Mama!' when teddy is lost). Approximately 10 percent of the world population is in these life conditions.

### **Red**

When safety and security are assured, we can become conscious of ourselves as separate individuals and become angry, questioning our parents or chieftain, and seeking personal autonomy, such as the "terrible twos". Tough tribesmen emerge, attract followers, and expel losers from the herd. Instant gratification becomes the norm, with no sense of guilt or concern for consequences. We expect attention and demand respect. Anything that goes wrong is someone else's fault, and if we are thwarted we react violently. Our greatest fear is losing face. We aspire to be top, to conquer the world, and fortunately our gods—vengeful, judgmental figures—are always on our side. This is the selfish, macho world of heroes, rock stars, warlords, and James Bond villains. In deprived inner cities, children who have not bonded with their family in Purple—i.e., who have no-one who cares about them and no safe place to be—join together in street gangs. And about 20 percent of the world population lives at this level—not from choice, but because their life conditions require it. However, Red is also very creative. It gives us courage and the strength to defend ourselves and inspires acts of heroism, breaks with limiting tradition, and opens up new pathways.

### **Blue**

The move to Blue occurs when people become desperate for two things: order to replace anarchy and a reason for all the suffering. These conditions are provided by the various movements that arise—political, cultural,

religious, or nationalistic. There is only one God now, or one unquestioned higher authority to whom we are devoted and aspire to please. At this stage there are absolute rules and laws, only one right way to think, severe punishment for transgression, and an allotted place for everyone in a stable hierarchy. Heretics and unbelievers deserve punishment and sinners go to hell. Codes of honour are observed, and the virtuous rewarded in this life or the next. Walled cities and the feudal system are the norm. The five-year old learns from family or school to distinguish right from wrong, that others have rights, and that actions have consequences; authority, parent, or teacher is there to resolve problems. We grow up and create records, build libraries, and start to build an infrastructure of banks, insurance companies, and courts of law reining-in the power of autocrats. Without the healthy Blue institutions that we have added to the spiral, we would have no way of controlling the anarchy of Red. Almost 40 percent of the world population share Blue life conditions.

### **Orange**

We rebel against the constraints of Blue and let go of tradition, embrace technology, and seek new and better ways of doing things. With scorn, we relegate our belief in God to history and place our belief in science and economic progress. The world's resources are there for us to help ourselves, and any problem can be solved with money. With no god or leader to worship, we create a cult of celebrities and aspire to material success, which is highly rewarded. We like to get our own way, but unlike Red we try not to harm others. Our self-image is very important. New brain connections allow us to keep track of multiple interests. Orange supports a culture of competitiveness, achievement, and striving for the good life. It appeared in the 18<sup>th</sup> century and is the predominant vMeme in most of the Western world, prevailing in 30 percent of the world population. Orange adds to the Spiral: freedom from limiting beliefs, acceptance of change, the use of science to solve problems, remarkable developments in medicine, science, engineer-



ing, and technology, and a strong desire to explore new areas of knowledge. Yet, this secular society still hesitates when it hears or reads the word “spiritual”.

## Green

When we observe the disastrous effect of “economic progress” on our planet, and understand that material abundance does not bring happiness, we realise there must be more to life and move up to Green. We develop a social conscience, work to save the rainforests and endangered species, and desire to help all humanity by spreading the world’s resources equally among everyone. This vMeme appeared in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century and is now strong in the academic world, in public education, and increasingly in politics, resulting in social engineering, political correctness, and anti-discrimination legislation, as well as human rights and animal rights movements. Individually, we find our way back to spirituality (non-denominational, non-sectarian), just seeking harmony with the unseen world. This is the world of the probationer, taking ourselves in hand, cultivating the qualities that we lack, and not yet realising how much teaching we are receiving from subtle levels. Consciously, we seek enlightenment from a series of metaphysical teachers and seek to establish an ideal society in place of the Orange divisiveness and inequality. We feel a collective guilt for mistreatment—past or present—of vulnerable groups. Interpersonal relationships and social responsibility are important. Privilege and status are not. We need to belong, but group thinking puts pressure on everyone to fit in, to be accepted, and agree with collective decisions made when all have had their say. Green fosters the conviction that this is *the* way, and if only everyone else would agree, the new world order would be secured. And this, unfortunately, is delaying the realisation that there is another level ahead. Green moving forward would allow all those trapped in the lower vMememes—prisoners of the planet—to grow out of them. Around 10 percent of world population (and increasing) finds itself in this grouping.

We probably all have people in our lives with whom we can never agree. This is because when our consciousness is focused in one of the First Tier vMememes, it is well nigh impossible to understand the thinking of any of the other vMememes. Red thinks Blue is repressive, Blue thinks Orange is selfish and pushy. Orange thinks Green is loopy. Many Greens, who believe themselves highly spiritual, often regress to the pre-rational comfort of Purple. Green, believing it has all the answers, heaps reproach on Orange, which produced the wealth that Green generously wants to distribute, not seeing that the expertise of Orange could be harnessed to resolve problems that Green has identified. The French would call all this a “dialogue des sourds”.

Green marks the top of the First Tier, and leaving it is a momentous step that may possibly equate with the Second Initiation, when the astral nature is largely under control and freedom becomes the keynote. Freedom to live, to think, to know, and plan—which humanity demands at this time (*The Rays and the Initiations*, p. 684).

## Freedom

The desire for freedom is worldwide, and so strong in all of us that it may well reflect the innate desire of the imprisoned soul to free itself from the coils of material life. So it is not surprising that freedom means different things to different people. Many years ago during a psychosynthesis training, forty people studied freedom all morning. After lunch the trainers got up and left, saying they would return after tea. Some students wandered off into the park, others studied their notes, an anxious group formed to discuss freedom, a student was in tears because she had paid for the course and was not being taught, while two men vied for the leader’s chair.

Each time we expand our consciousness and move up into the next vMeme, we gain freedom from the conditions of life that have constrained us with obligations, customs, rules, regulations, and the expectations of other people. And at the same time, depending on the vMeme we are leaving, one of our major fears drops away: the



safety of the tribe, violence, fear of hell, whether we will be saved and get to heaven, what the neighbours will say, failing to be materially successful, or the fear of disagreeing in case the group rejects us.

## SECOND TIER: THE NEW PARADIGM

### Yellow

Professor Graves called the move to Yellow momentous, as it crosses the chasm between similarity to animals and dissimilarity to animals. At the second initiation, when the fire of the mind is lit, and we become aware of increasing unity with all life, the Path of Discipleship deepens. Then our horizons expand as does our creative ability and our determination to help further God's plans for the world.

In Yellow our new brain connections allow us not only to think differently, but also to handle a level of complexity greater than the sum of the previous six stages put together. Blinkers drop from our eyes and we can see the legitimacy of all the vMememes awakened to date. Fear has dropped away. A new level of freedom is ours, and we realise that freedom entails responsibility. We now know we are part of something greater and can see the world from a universal perspective. As we have transcended and included each of the First Tier vMeme stages, we are able to empathise with those who are still there, understand their points of view, and see what each individual, organisation, or country needs to help it evolve into what is the next stage. We see how each level builds on the previous one and how each fits into a huge, never-ending spiral of life.

It becomes very clear that we cannot impose our way of life and thinking on countries that have not lived through the stages of development that we have. It is delusional to offer democracy to a country living in Purple/Red, where tribal loyalty will always take precedence over nationality. As we have seen in Yugoslavia, and may well see in Syria, when the autocratic Red government of what appears to be a stable country fails, the Purple tribes go to war over ancient grudges.

Yellow began to appear after WWI and was energised by the beat generation of the 1950s. Professor Graves said that in Yellow

If it is realistic in the circumstances to be happy, then it is good to be happy. If it is realistic to suffer, then suffering is proper behaviour.

We are inner-directed, flexible, accept the inevitability of change, treasure the magnificence of life above material possessions, value knowledge and competence above power and status, and do more in less time. Yellow can be a lonely time and we may disappear for a while from former friends and organisations as we accustom ourselves to our new life conditions and exert ourselves to foster the evolution of consciousness. Perhaps one percent of the world population finds itself at this level.

### Turquoise

The world we know appears to be collapsing because humans have misused nature, and we realise that the problems are too great to be solved by the millions of well-meaning, yet confusing individual initiatives that aim to help with famine relief, climate change, the persecution of women, and so on; the list is endless. When we are into Turquoise, raising consciousness is our priority, and we devote ourselves to global synthesis and renewal. Our self is no longer separate from the larger whole. We are group oriented again, harmonising, blending, building strong collectives and bridges between diverse worlds, networking globally, and living simply.

Alice Bailey captures the essence of Yellow and Turquoise in her *Beacon* article "Modern Esoteric Movements" (re-printed April-June 2013), when she refers to the distinction between Piscean and Aquarian methods of work within groups. She says,

Groups in the Aquarian Age will surely be associations of free souls, self-reliant and self-centred in the spiritual sense, yet banded together for the general uplift of the race. They will

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not be built up around some dominating personality but will be organisations of illuminated men and women, submerging their personalities in the general good. At present our world is the field for the play of Piscean force plus the growing Aquarian influence. Movements which have grown up along Piscean lines are completing their work, and must necessarily and rightly do so. Movements which are hall-marked as Aquarian, being groups of people, thinking independently and refusing to give unquestioning allegiance to any human being, are beginning to be noted amongst us. Many people with Aquarian inclinations, free souls, tolerant yet standing squarely on their own feet, harmonious yet siding with no group, catholic in their outlook, yet clear in their definition, are everywhere to be found.

Professor Graves said that the Second Tier also consists of six levels of complexity, and that

Coral comes next. After that, we don't really know. But it is worth remembering that understanding SDi intellectually is not the same as *being* at a higher stage that we like the sound of.

Some may wonder why it takes so long to control the lower bodies, with countless lives spent between the first initiation (which marks a significant measure of control over the physical appetites) and the second (which marks significant control over the emotional body). And increasingly painful struggles lie ahead before we attain mental control and the Transfiguration initiation. SDi highlights the very detailed steps that need to be taken in the everyday world, driven by our in-born aspiration that manifests in so many physical, emotional, and mental ways. For people whose beliefs and expectations are filtered through secular Orange, SDi may provide a stepping-stone onto the path of Wisdom. ▲