

Sow the Seeds of My Divine Wisdom in the Pure Soil of Thy Heart

Towards Coordinating Langs' Communicative Approach of Psychoanalysis with the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh

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A letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi in 1949¹ states the following:

It seems what we need now is a more profound and coordinated Bahá'í scholarship in order to attract such men as you are contacting.

The world has—at least the thinking world—caught up by now with all the great and universal principles enunciated by Bahá'u'lláh over 70 years ago, and so of course it does not sound “new” to them. But we know that the deeper teachings, the capacity of His projected World Order to re-create society, are new and dynamic. It is these we must learn to present intelligently and enticingly to such men!

What was true then is even more true today, almost 70 years later.

The Cause needs more Bahá'í scholars, people who not only are devoted to it and believe in it and are anxious to tell

others about it, but also who have a deep grasp of the Teachings and their significance, and who can correlate its beliefs with the current thoughts and problems of the people of the world. [SCHC 4]

The Universal House of Justice, the international governing body of the Bahá'í Faith, stated on 6 February 1973 the following about psychology:

Psychology is still a very young and inexact science, and as the years go by Bahá'í psychologists, who know from the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh the true pattern of human life, will be able to make great strides in the development of this science, and will help profoundly in the alleviation of human suffering. [SCHC 12]

The Guardian stated in a letter written on his behalf:

Shoghi Effendi has for years urged the Bahá'ís (who asked his advice, and in general also) to study history, economics, sociology, etc., in order to be au courant with all the progressive movements and thoughts being put forth today, and so that they could correlate these to the Bahá'í teachings. What he wants the Bahá'ís to do is to study more, not to study less. [SCHC 18]

While psychology is not mentioned here, it certainly is included as one of the areas of study that must be correlated with the Bahá'í teachings. Therefore, it must be seen as an obligation for a psychologist who is a Bahá'í and has studied one of these sciences to make an effort to correlate these areas of human knowledge with the Bahá'í faith.

The purpose of this paper is to show another unexpected finding in this search for correlating between today's "thinking world" and the Bahá'í Revelation. A known psychoanalyst, Robert Langs, who wrote many volumes about his form of psychoanalytic practice, which he calls the Communicative or Adaptive Approach, authored a book late in his life about psychoanalysis and religion. He applied his psychoanalytic technique to religious writings. He came up with surprising ideas. Reading the book *Beyond Yahweh and Jesus*,

*Bringing Death's Wisdom to Faith, Spirituality, and Psychoanalysis*² gave birth to the following thoughts.

Robert Langs talks about divine wisdom and indicates that it is a moral guidance of high quality and is placed in the unconscious mind, only reachable by a specific psychoanalytic technique he calls *trigger decoding*. While obviously having no idea of the Bahá'í Faith, and not understanding Progressive Revelation and the fact that all Manifestation are limited by the capacity of their audiences, he appears to reach conclusions consistent with the Bahá'í Writings about his interpretation of divine wisdom and the placement of it in the deep unconscious mind. Obviously, his understanding of religion was limited by the prevailing Christian faith he was familiar with. The mentioning of the idea of divine wisdom immediately brought to attention the use this term has in the Bahá'í Faith.

Bahá'u'lláh, in His Writings frequently refers to "Divine Wisdom," and clearly places it into the human heart, like in this Hidden Word:

O SON OF MY HANDMAID!

Quaff from the tongue of the merciful the stream of divine mystery, and behold from the dayspring of divine utterance the unveiled splendor of the daystar of wisdom.

Sow the seeds of My divine wisdom in the pure soil of the heart, and water them with the waters of certitude, that the hyacinths of knowledge and wisdom may spring up fresh and green from the holy city of the heart. [HW 78]

He further connects divine wisdom with consultation and compassion, indicating human mutual consultation as an element in this Wisdom.

The heaven of divine wisdom is illumined with the two luminaries of consultation and compassion ... [TB 126]

From this understanding, the bridge can be made to the psychoanalytic therapy, which in Langs' approach is communicative

and brings new truth from the unconscious to the conscious mind when practiced with compassion and understanding.

This presentation makes the daring assumption that the concept of Divine Wisdom in the Bahá'í Writings can be coordinated with the same concept in the writings of Robert Langs. This can help us to not only better understand Langs' writings, but also to understand the Bahá'í Revelation in a new way, as reflected in modern psychology.

It is this author's opinion that the psychoanalytic unconscious can be placed in the heart since in heart transplants dream memories have been transplanted with the physical heart. With this assumption a better understanding of psychology is possible and the findings of the HeartMath Institute about the human heart are supported as well.

The Bahá'í Writings use the word heart frequently and even state that the heart is the seat of the Divine Revelation. Usually, this is understood as a metaphorical use of the term heart. In this paper a different interpretation is presented, which is only the opinion of this author, and is presented to the Bahá'í Community for consultative critique. As has been presented in previous papers the author understands the Bahá'í concept heart not in a metaphorical sense, but rather believes that the physical heart with its nervous system is used by the rational faculty as an instrument, like the brain is used in the same way as Bahá'u'lláh stated when talking about the mind.

Say: Spirit, mind, soul, and the powers of sight and hearing are but one single reality which hath manifold expressions owing to the diversity of its instruments. [SLH 235]

This is understood by this author as meaning that all senses and the brain and the heart are inspired or are used by the human spirit as instruments to express what the spirit or soul of man intends to express in thought, word, or action. It appears to this author that Bahá'u'lláh sees the unity of man in a new way and it is difficult to express this in our present-day way of thinking and many attempts will have to be made to present a better understanding of this truth, as can be done in this paper.

This kind of coordination is valuable, and recommended by Shoghi Effendi. It is leading to a deeper understanding of the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh and assists the teaching efforts of scholars as well.

Langs, who seemed to be unaware of the Bahá'í Writings, recommended something that was already revealed and had been part of the Bahá'í Faith for over a hundred years. He did not know that what he predicted for the future was already expressed and happening in a religious community. What is new about his approach is the fact that he believed that this wisdom lies in the deep unconscious of the human mind.

When the assumption is made that the deep unconscious mind of Langs is in the heart—and we will develop this thought below—both the heart as described in the Bahá'í Writings and the deep unconscious mind as explained by Langs can be correlated for a better understanding of both the heart and the unconscious mind.

Religion must not only add divine psychological wisdom to its belief system, it also must be able to find gentle but firm ways to enforce our deep unconscious moral guidelines....

For the new religion, this much needed moral enforcer should be modeled on our deep unconscious system of morality and ethics....

Showing humankind, the grim reality of such unconsciously orchestrated punishments is likely to be one of the most fearsome messages delivered by the new version of God to which this book is pointing.

This last sentence Langs formulated after he analyzed the story of Cain and Abel in the Bible, where he found that evil deeds have punishment as an internal unconscious consequence.

Bahá'u'lláh stated: *"The heaven of divine wisdom is illumined with the two luminaries of consultation and compassion."* This appears to indicate that the role of communicative therapy, which could be understood as a special form of consultation, is important to the understanding of divine wisdom. Additionally, Bahá'u'lláh stated that *"the canopy of world order is upraised upon the two pillars of reward*

and punishment" [TB 126], the understanding of which does underscore what Langs found in analyzing the biblical stories of the Old and New Testament. Langs described at length the connection between denial of death and violent action, and attributes this to our unconscious mind. What is an unusual occurrence is the fact that Langs was not a religious person most of his life and he mentioned this fact in his book. But what he found in analyzing his patients made him eventually believe in the truth of religion and in the importance of it.

According to Langs, all these processes are in the unconscious mind. The conscious mind ignores these facts, but deep down we know, and psychoanalysis brings these motives into the open. Langs makes a very interesting statement. He connects death anxiety with evil and immorality when talking about the Garden of Eden, stating it this way.

Finally, it is well to notice that while wisdom, sin, and death are at issue, neither evil nor morality are as yet manifest in the picture. This too speaks for failed wisdom and unmastered death anxiety as the fundamentals from which evil and immorality emerge. [Langs, 76]

This coordination of the writings of a psychoanalyst with the Bahá'í Faith is one small step towards a more profound and coordinated Bahá'í scholarship as indicated by the Guardian.

Correlation

Shoghi Effendi uses this word whenever he talks about scholarship and the need to correlate the Bahá'í Writings with modern thought and thinking. What does this mean, and how do we have to understand it? Merriam-Webster, among other dictionaries, defines the word *correlate* this way:

A phenomenon that accompanies another, also paralleling it, and being related in some way to it.

Further, the word *correlation* is defined this way:

The state or relation of being correlated; specifically: a relation existing between phenomena or things or between mathematical or statistical variables which tend to vary, be associated, or occur together in a way not expected on the basis of chance alone.

This seems to be the way Shoghi Effendi understood this word, and this is the way it will be used in this paper. We talk about a relationship between phenomena that is not expected on the basis of chance alone but is based on a real relationship. The relationship between ideas and thoughts that constitutes such a correlation is an internal relationship in this case because we can exclude any physical or external relation, since most of these modern thinkers we quote as being correlated with thoughts expressed in the Bahá'í Writings did not know these writings.

Consequently, we must explain how a correlation can exist without a physical or external relationship.

If there is the possibility that ideas expressed in the Bahá'í Writings are correlated with ideas of today's thinkers, we must consider the following facts.

1. According to Shoghi Effendi, there is a relationship between the Bahá'í Writings and thoughts of modern thinkers, there is a correlation.
2. These ideas and thoughts occur together.
3. This relationship is not accidental or a product of chance alone.
4. Logically, this relationship can be caused either by a dependency of one side on the other or by a mutual third party influencing both sides of the correlation.
5. Considering the case of the Bahá'í Writings and modern thinkers, most of these thinkers had never heard about the Bahá'í Faith or read any of the Writings
6. If there was no direct influence from the Writings to modern thinkers, how can this relationship be explained?

Bahá'u'lláh gives us the explanation.

Erelong shall We bring into being through thee exponents of new and wondrous sciences, of potent and effective crafts, and shall make manifest through them that which the heart of none of Our servants hath yet conceived. Thus, do We bestow upon whom We will whatsoever We desire, and thus do We withdraw from whom We will what We had once bestowed. [SLH 35]

In this statement, it is revealed that the power of the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh creates these modern sciences and new thoughts and gives it to whomever He decides. Here is the talk of a spiritual influence that creates new understanding, knowledge, and sciences and crafts—or we could say technologies—that were unheard of before. When it is proven that there were ideas expressed in the Bahá'í Writings and 50 or 100 years later the same ideas surfaced in modern writers who never heard of the Bahá'í Faith, what must be assumed? Especially when these writers very painstakingly documented every source in their writings and never even mentioned anything about Bahá'í Writings. What must we think?

Sometimes ideas surface in more than one place.

Physical nearness or remoteness is of no importance; the essential fact is the spiritual affinity and ideal nearness. Judas Iscariot was for a long time favored in the holy court of His Holiness Christ, yet he was entirely far and remote; while Paul, the apostle, was in close embrace with His Holiness. [TAB3, 719]

Here we are reminded by 'Abdu'l-Bahá that it is not the physical contact, or the actual physical texts read between writers that makes a correlation of ideas possible, but that there can be a nearness of ideas and spiritual affinity that can be the cause of such a correlation. If these modern writers had never read one sentence of the Bahá'í Revelation, there still can be a spiritual affinity and a nearness of ideas expressed that becomes evident in closer observation and studies. The example of the Apostle Paul explains that fact. He only saw Jesus in a vision, never heard him talk, and he still was so close to his ideas that he is regarded as his apostle. Naturally, he did hear about Jesus when he was introduced into the Christin faith after his

conversion. On the other hand, Judas heard every word of Jesus directly and was not following Him but betrayed his Master.

There is, we must assume, a spiritual transition of ideas possible between people who have never met. This is what Bahá'u'lláh indicates when stating that He brings into the world “*wondrous sciences, potent and effective crafts*” (SLH 35) through any people, scientists, and business people, not necessarily through Bahá'ís who believe in Him and read His words, but through many other people, most of whom have never heard of Him.

In this paper, we are following up this affinity of ideas as observed in the reading of the book of Robert Langs and comparing the ideas expressed in it to the Bahá'í Writings, finding in this process a correlation between them.

In this paper, the following is attempted.

1. To correlate the Bahá'í Revelation with psychoanalysis as presented by Robert Langs in his book *Beyond Yahweh and Jesus, Bringing Death's Wisdom to Faith, Spirituality, and Psychoanalysis*.
2. The points of correlation are:
 - Divine Wisdom
 - Consultation and Compassion
 - The Unconscious and the Heart

When reading Langs, we must realize that he did not know the Bahá'í Faith. Consequently, he could not have known the following Bahá'u'lláh ideas. The Bahá'í reader of his books must make the necessary correction of his findings with these principles in mind.

- Progressive Revelation
- Unknowability of God
- Role of Manifestation

What Langs found, when analyzing his patients, was the idea of divine wisdom, which he places in the deep unconscious mind and connects with profound moral and ethical understanding and other basic ideas that seem to be general human ideas, because he calls them archetypes in the Jungian sense. All human beings have these

archetypes in their deep unconscious mind, or we would say in their heart, but often they are denied and repressed and have no influence in life. It is religion that has in the past explored this fact. Langs found access to it through his kind of analysis. What Langs calls archetypes in the unconscious, which are common to all humans and which are moral principles, is compared in the following by this author with conscience.

Conscience

What is meant by the term *conscience*? Etymologically, the word means “knowing with,” which implies that there is another knowing besides the normal conscious knowing that comes with it. This knowing is not conscious but, as we say today, it is unconscious, yet is somehow known in a derived way. This is explained to children as an inner voice that tells you what is right or wrong. You can ignore it and do something that is wrong. If you do that, you will have a bad conscience, a bad feeling, a feeling of guilt. You can keep ignoring it and eventually the bad feeling will go away, but then you will be a bad person doing bad things. This was the story I learned in my family, which was a good Catholic family going to Mass every Sunday and praying together every day.

In fact, psychologically this makes good sense, especially if we consider that there is, in the deep unconscious, a divine guidance, a divine wisdom, that gives us moral standards. The difference is only the awareness. Langs claims that this deep unconscious can only be found in psychoanalysis, but it is told to children that they can feel it. He found it in analyzing his patients, and he recognized that these patients had little or no awareness of this in their conscious mind, which is given to denial and ignorance.

Freud stated that analysis is after-education, seeming to imply that what went wrong in the childhood of his patients must now be corrected in analysis.

Langs felt that religion was not doing its job, so he tried to invent a new profession, called theological psychoanalysis.

All of this points to the need to establish a new science and profession that can effectively unit psychoanalysis with

religion, and clinical and quantitative scientific data with matters of faith and belief. I would call this profession *theological psychoanalysis*. (Langs, 176, italics in the original)

Langs really expects that these psychoanalysts can develop a “rational secular spirituality,” contrary to this opinion, it is this writer’s idea that the religion providing this connection between psychology and theology exists already in the Bahá’í Faith and this spirituality is already present and needs only to be connected with psychological and psychoanalytical understanding of the human nature.

This is how Langs describes the difference between conscious mind and Divine Wisdom:

The conscious mind ... is too devoted to the denial and ignorance. We must seek answers that come from an understanding that God - or nature - has chosen to locate our greatest mental resource and divine wisdom where it is out of the reach of conscious awareness and thinking in the *Deep Unconscious Mind*, which we can access only through trigger decoding. (Langs, 175, italics added)

What Langs found in his kind of psychoanalysis as a knowledge and what he calls an archetype and what he finds in the deep unconscious mind, which he studied extensively, is known as conscience, a “knowing with knowing” that is a knowing based on feelings and coming from the knowing heart, as will be explained later in this paper.

How can we explain this knowing with knowing? In this writer’s understanding, this is similar with the knowing of dreams. This author assumes that dreamwork is performed in the heart, because heart transplants have proven that dream memory is in the heart and can be transplanted with the heart. Heart experiences are not as much known as primarily felt. They can become known, but only as a knowing with knowing; a knowing that is more felt than known and is organized differently than logical knowing. When we know and talk about our dreams, we know this is not the whole story; this is not the full meaning of what we dreamt. But this is all we can rationally know and tell. The rest is feelings.

If it is a feeling, it does not come from the brain; it must come from the heart. This is what this paper will present; that the divine wisdom is in the heart, where the deep unconsciousness is located, and the heart expresses itself in feelings, not in concepts and words. That is the reason in psychoanalytic dream analysis, dreams are not logically understood but are associated with and developed and interpreted in that way.

Another question is, how is conscience developed? Langs calls it Divine Wisdom, so it must be from God. In the Catholic Church the same is believed, but children must learn it from their parents, from their educators in school, and from the priest in church. As it will be demonstrated, even psychoanalysis today has found that this is true; children have a real understanding of God at an early age, and so attribute this inner voice as coming from God, or of being related to the word of God, or the revelation of God.

Langs calls the Divine Wisdom an archetype, referring to this Jungian term. In my opinion, it is better called something related to and depending on culture, and the question of whether it is inherited or learned is difficult to solve. Most likely it is both; there is an inherited ability to develop conscience, and the actual content of conscience—the moral principles—are learned from the culture a person is growing up in or developed later through life experiences. What is innate is the fact that every human being immediately knows when something bad happens to them, and according to the Golden Rule, this knowledge should then be generalized to all people. During the growing-up process, these learned principles should be developed and changed according to the investigating mind in adulthood. If it is seen that way, it becomes clear why the Bahá'í writings place a high value on education.

By and large, in modern Western society, this knowledge of conscience is getting lost, and no longer used in the education of children. Consequently, children—and then adults—have no inner moral guidance, so their behavior is becoming increasingly destructive, criminal, and evil, a fact that can be observed today.

Divine Wisdom is in the Heart

We must ask how Langs, who was a classical psychoanalyst, came to author a book about the Christian and Hebrew Bible and his version of psychoanalysis. using the term *Divine Wisdom* as a central concept. He explains it as a case of serendipity and not a plan. He describes the fact that he was confronted with Buddhist thinking when he found:

Striking parallels between my new version of psychoanalysis and Buddhist thinking about the design of the human mind. ...

Sensing that there was some kind of broad and meaningful connection between my adaptive version of psychoanalysis and spirituality — as a classically trained Freudian psychoanalyst, spirituality and religion were not on my radar screen — I embarked on a new and unexpected adventure.

(Langs, X)

After authoring over a hundred books about psychoanalysis and his version of it, he discovered this connection and followed it up, applying it later to Islam, Judaism, and Christianity, authoring the book we are here correlating with the Bahá'í Writings six years before his death at age 86.

It has been mentioned that Langs places the divine wisdom in the deep unconscious mind, when he said that this part of the mind is unconscious, so it cannot be reached by normal consciousness, and divine wisdom is deep within this unconsciousness, yet it is still part of the mind. How do we define *mind* in a way that this process is possible and understandable? It seems mind means here all human possible ways of understanding reality: physical reality and spiritual reality. When mind is defined this way, it includes all understanding, all knowledge, even the unconscious knowledge that might be denied and ignored by the conscious mind, as Lang mentions in his description of divine wisdom.

We assume here that this deep unconscious mind is in the heart, like the conscious mind is in the brain. Or we can say, maybe more accurately, the mind uses the brain for the conscious operations and the heart for the unconscious operations. In other words, only when

the mind uses the brain, we are aware of what happens. When the mind uses the heart, we are unaware; these processes are unconscious. But we have feelings and dreams that we eventually become aware of in some way.

To understand that the heart can function like the brain this author uses the findings of the HeartMath Institute, which demonstrates that the heart has a collection of nerves that together make something like a “little brain of the heart”

The heart is a sensory organ and an information encoding and processing center with an extensive, intrinsic nervous system, enabling it to learn, remember and make functional decision independent of the cranial brain.³

In fact, the research into this new knowledge has produced a healing process that can improve the lives of people suffering from diverse illnesses that plague modern man, as is used by this psychologist and author in his clinical practice.

There are two reasons why we assume the unconscious mind is in the heart, or better, that the human mind uses the heart when unconscious processes and contents are involved. All that is in the heart is unconscious. All we know about it are the feelings these processes create in the body. Consequently, the brain—or the mind using the brain—recognizes these feelings, gives them names, and thinks about them.

We all have observed when somebody gets angry; he will show it in his body behavior. And when an observer tells that person he is angry, he will often yell back that he is not angry. This fact demonstrates that he is angry in his heart. His body already shows this, but his brain has not recognized that he is angry, so he wants to say, “I am not angry.” But unknown to his conscious mind, he yells, because in his heart and body, he is already angry.

This is easily observable in anger; but even in loving feelings, the mind often does not know what happens, the fact of which is exploited in many novels and shows where the loving actions are described while the person in question denies being in love.

The other reason we assume the unconscious is in the heart are the Bahá'í Writings. No matter how we understand heart, metaphorically, or as an instrument of the spirit, Bahá'u'lláh states clearly that Divine Wisdom is in the heart and nowhere else.

I swear by God, O esteemed and honoured friend! Shouldst thou ponder these words in thine heart, thou wilt of a certainty find the doors of divine wisdom and infinite knowledge flung open before thy face. [KI 102]

One must ponder the words of Bahá'u'lláh in one's heart, and this will open the doors of Divine Wisdom and fling the knowledge before thy face. This process is certain; but how can we describe it psychologically? In another Word, Bahá'u'lláh uses a similar picture to describe this process, when it happens to somebody who arises to proclaim his cause.

Here Bahá'u'lláh speaks about a flood of Divine Knowledge that will gush out of the heart of the believer.

Arise in the name of Him Who is the Object of all knowledge, and, with absolute detachment from the learning of men, lift up your voices and proclaim His Cause. I swear by the Day Star of Divine Revelation!

The very moment ye arise, ye will witness how a flood of Divine knowledge will gush out of your hearts, and will behold the wonders of His heavenly wisdom manifested in all their glory before you. Were ye to taste of the sweetness of the sayings of the All-Merciful, ye would unhesitatingly forsake your selves, and would lay down your lives for the Well-Beloved. [GWB 83]

What we are told here are two things. The first is the fact that when a believer ponders the Word of the Manifestation in his heart, a door opens in our heart and the Divine Wisdom will open itself up and be seen before our face. How can we describe this in psychological terms? First, it is said the words or writings must be pondered in the heart, which means not only an intellectual or factual understanding is necessary.

This fact indicates that these words are written not only for the intellect, but especially for the heart. The words must move us emotionally not only intellectually. This emotional movement is then experienced in front of our face; it is something we see more than we understand it. This is similar to our understanding of poesy or dreams; we read them intellectually and we remember them like a story, but when we do this, something else happens.

These poems or dreams become an experience, an emotional experience that is perceived in a different way. It is perceived as if the truth of these words stand in front of our face. The same must happen with the words of Revelation; it is like a surprising knowledge or understanding that comes to us like a vision, like an insight of a deeper kind, which then cannot be intellectually or logically analyzed. It must be experienced. It is life-changing, and experienced with total certitude.

In the other verse, Bahá'u'lláh presupposes that the words of the Revelation are in the heart and he describes what happens when the believer arises to teach the cause. Again, this is a happening, it cannot be deliberately produced. Bahá'u'lláh describes it like a flood or fountain erupting from the heart of the speaker. The flood of this emotional truth will gush out from the speaker and Bahá'u'lláh describes this event as life-changing. It appears it is changing not only the speaker, but also the listener—if he is open to this message. Or in other words, if he is a seeker for truth and if his heart is ready to hear the truth of the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh.

This emotional and life-changing event will make anyone who experiences it *“forsake your selves, and would lay down your lives for the Well-Beloved”* (GWB 83). It causes a total life change, a *conversion* as it is usually called, that converts or turns around the life of a person. The condition for this event to happen is the openness of the heart or what is described as having a pure heart and the honest desire to find the truth. Also called independent investigation.

This inner voice, this inner feeling can be communicated from the speaker to the listener as it is described above, and Bahá'u'lláh described this inner meaning of the heart in his mystic book, *The Seven Valleys*.

The tongue faileth in describing these three Valleys, and speech falleth short. The pen steppeth not into this region, the ink leaveth only a blot. In these planes, the nightingale of the heart hath other songs and secrets, which make the heart to stir and the soul to clamor, but this mystery of inner meaning may be whispered only from heart to heart, confided only from breast to breast.

Only heart to heart can speak the bliss of mystic knowers; No messenger can tell it and no missive bear it. [SVFV]⁴

What Langs describes as our “greatest mental resource and divine wisdom” seems to be described by Bahá’u’lláh much better and more profoundly as mystic knowing, which is in the heart and is communicated from heart to heart, while words and writings are called ineffective and falling short because if there is no response of the heart, this Divine Wisdom is not communicated. Langs discovered this, stating that the conscious mind is given to denial and ignorance as far as the Divine Wisdom is concerned.

Consultation and Compassion

The next question that arises is the issue of why Langs, who describes himself during his life as a-religious, authored this book about divine wisdom and religion a few years before his death. Langs himself gives us the answer, describing that he found this truth in his patients when he was analyzing them in his newly developed approach, which he called communicative psychoanalysis. He found religion in analyzing his patients and finding the truth about the deep unconscious, the death anxiety, and what he called divine wisdom. Then he attempted to analyze some books of the Christian Bible, especially the book of Genesis, which he described in his book. This is the basis of this investigation, as well as its correlation to the Bahá’í Writing.

We must ask, how is it possible that a therapist can find religion when treating his patients? What is happening in therapy that can bring the truth of religion into the open, so it can be seen by the therapist? Actually, Bahá’u’lláh gives us an answer that explains this possibility.

The heaven of divine wisdom is illumined with the two luminaries of consultation and compassion and the canopy of world order is upraised upon the two pillars of reward and punishment. [TB 126]

Bahá'u'lláh here states that the light that brings about divine wisdom, the light that *illuminates* it, is *consultation and compassion*. So, if Langs' psychoanalytic approach has both ingredients, consultation, and compassion, it makes sense that one can find divine wisdom by practicing this approach.

This writer has been supervised in this approach and has used this approach in his therapy and when supervising students. The characteristic of this approach is to learn a specific form of listening to the patient, which is systematic and difficult, but it brings out the deepest concern of the patient. Langs wrote a whole book about the listening process, and from this writer's experience, it is a process that deeply and compassionately involves the therapist with the patient and brings out the most profound emotions and most hidden thoughts of the client. When this listening process is used, the talk of the client can be interpreted as the unconscious reasons and motives that move the client during the interview.

Anybody familiar with the consultation process as it is practiced according to the instruction of Bahá'u'lláh and his interpreters, 'Abdu'l-Bahá and Shoghi Effendi, the son and great-great son of Bahá'u'lláh, will admit that it is based on the duty of all members of a group to listening with an open heart to all that is said by any member of the group, disregarding any consideration of education or age or other reasons. It has very much in common with the listening process as described by Langs, even though the latter had developed this process and described it in psychological terms.

It is this writer's personal conviction that Langs had been influenced in a spiritual way by the revelation of Bahá'u'lláh and was guided by him to find religion and divine wisdom at the end of his long life, a life devoted to listening and understanding his patients on the deepest level. Langs developed his listening process on his own and from the psychoanalytic tradition, and he never mentioned knowledge of the Bahá'í writings or religion,

When Bahá'u'lláh talks about consultation and compassion, we can easily find these ideas in Langs' description of psychoanalytic therapy and psychoanalysis. Empathy and compassion are closely related; actually, compassion includes empathy, and is the active part, which is supported by the empathic understanding that leads to helpful action, like in therapy where true understanding leads to interpretation that allows the client to change. Langs stated that empathy is an essential part of therapy. The therapist must have:

a capacity for empathy, which must operate first on a manifest level, so that the therapist experiences along with the patient aspects of his or her manifest struggles. Empathy must also operate on a derivative level and involve unconscious communication. Here the therapist must temporarily share and immediately experience the patient's unconscious fantasy constellations, unconscious perceptions, and unconscious affects and conflicts. Most present-day studies of empathy have been naive, surface-oriented, and lacking in validating methodology.⁵

Again, Langs indicated that this empathy must go beyond the manifest observation and include the unconscious truth that is communicated. When the assumption is made that the unconscious is in the heart, we have a psychological process that includes the heart. It is a heart-to-heart process, and what is communicated is something that is unknown. Coming towards knowledge in this process, it is interpreted in a known way and understood as something unconscious, and is now known and can be used for the healing of the patient.

Bahá'u'lláh described this process as mystic knowing when stating: *"but this mystery of inner meaning may be whispered only from heart to heart, confided only from breast to breast."* One could conclude from this verse that mystic knowing is knowing the unconscious, where the truth, the divine wisdom is located. The psychoanalytic listener reaches into the depth of the heart of his patient and can, when his heart is open for this message, encounter a place where religion in its mystic understanding can be found, as the Bahá'í writings say.

According to Bahá'u'lláh, this understanding is not facilitated by human learning, but only by the “*purity of heart, chastity of soul, and freedom of spirit*” (KI 210). It is dependent on the morality or honesty of the investigator, not on their education. It is a quality of the heart that is crucial in this knowing. It is hoped that every therapist has this quality and this freedom of spirit to understand what is going on in the heart of the patient he/she is treating. Bahá'u'lláh talks here about the understanding of His Revelation, which is given to anyone who has these qualities. We apply this understanding to the understanding of the heart of each other, so this heart-to-heart understanding is possible.

The understanding of His words and the comprehension of the utterances of the Birds of Heaven are in no wise dependent upon human learning. They depend solely upon purity of heart, chastity of soul, and freedom of spirit. This is evidenced by those who, today, though without a single letter of the accepted standards of learning, are occupying the loftiest seats of knowledge; and the garden of their hearts is adorned, through the showers of divine grace, with the roses of wisdom and the tulips of understanding. Well is it with the sincere in heart for their share of the light of a mighty Day! [KI 210]

We are repeating here again the quote of Bahá'u'lláh where he stated:

In these planes, the nightingale of the heart hath other songs and secrets, which make the heart to stir and the soul to clamor, but this mystery of inner meaning may be whispered only from heart to heart, confided only from breast to breast.

It makes sense that this heart-to-heart communication happens between people who sincerely talk to each other. This happens in therapy when the therapist tries to understand the deepest feelings and unconscious thoughts of his patient. What is a mystic knower? one could ask. Originally, the word *mystic* meant secret, a knowledge that is secret until it is revealed. Today the word *mystic* implies something that is spiritual or supernatural, not belonging to the world of the senses, being beyond all physical reality. So, a mystic

knower would be described as a person that can reach into the deep unconscious thoughts of others and can understand the deep meaning of the revelation; someone who speaks to the heart and not only to reason.

Religion and Death Anxiety

In his books written at the end of his life, Langs talked increasingly about death and death anxiety. He claimed that this anxiety is not in the conscious brain, but in the deep unconscious mind. According to our understanding, it is in the heart.

Many of the most hurtful and damaging aspects of emotionally charged incidents fail to register in awareness, but instead, are perceived subliminally or unconsciously and processed by a deep unconscious mental system.

Perception without *conscious awareness* is a basic capacity of the emotion processing mind. [Langs, 12]

What Langs calls here emotion processing mind, we would call the heart. While the mind using the brain does not have any awareness of it, the conscious mind avoids and denies these perceptions.

Once these unconsciously perceived inputs have been registered deep unconsciously, they are silently processed adaptively by the deep unconscious mind.

The results of the entire unconscious experiences are then encoded in dreams and other storied forms. These incidents are always linked to the experience of death.

The conscious mind is intent on avoiding the recognition and impact of these disturbing emotionally charged incidents. [Langs, 13]

Here it is explained what dreams are doing; they deal with unconscious fears and threats and attempt to solve them. If they cannot do this, we experience a nightmare and wake up full of anxiety. The new aspect Langs presented in this book and in others is

the importance of death anxiety and the fact that we all experience it, but deny it consciously, yet try to deal with it unconsciously, in the heart. Langs further claimed that only religion can deal with this anxiety.

Not understanding the meaning of progressive revelation, he blamed the Mosaic religion and the Christian religion for not having solved this problem properly. That is expressed in the title of his book *Beyond Yahweh and Jesus* with the subtitle: *Bringing Death's Wisdom to Faith, Spirituality, and Psychoanalysis*. In the Bahá'í understanding of progressive revelation, the Manifestation can only communicate what the people at the time can understand, so blaming Yahweh and Jesus does not make sense. Additionally, Langs does not understand that *Yahweh* is the word for the unknown God, while it is Moses and Jesus who brought the new Revelation described in the Bible and both are Manifestations, on the same level, but only communicating to the world what can be understood at their time.

Conclusion

What Langs perceived correctly is the fact that the answers of both religions are not satisfactory for our times and the maturational stage the world has achieved today. Not knowing the Bahá'í faith, he hoped that psychoanalysis could be the solution for this lack of understanding, inventing a new profession of "theological psychoanalysis" (Langs, 176). He asked those who would take up this avocation to be versed in theology and in his special approach to psychoanalysis, which he called the adaptive approach, because "the therapy situation is, at present, the arena where expressions of divine wisdom and morality are most accessible and best investigated." [Langs, 176]

Langs found the relationship between religion and psychoanalysis when he stated:

The bottom line is that because the adaptive approach is centered on how we cope with emotionally charged traumatic incident and thus on death related traumas, it bridges over to and joins forces with religion in seeking ways to understand the nature of these traumas and finding the best possible

means of coping with them using divine cognitive insights in one case and divine religious insights in the other. [Langs, 160]

It is this writer's opinion, this is only true in a limited sense, because Langs was not aware that this experience was fully realized in the Bahá'í writings, where it is clearly stated that the divine wisdom is experienced in the heart. The importance of this fact cannot be overestimated. It is rather encouraging for a Bahá'í reader of Langs' book to find what Langs found from treating his patients and that these findings, with the necessary corrections, were expressed in the Bahá'í writing more than a century before Langs found them.

What is added here is the fact that this is divine wisdom, and maybe understood as Langs' deep unconscious is in the heart. This is a new idea that makes the findings about the unconscious mind more real and more understandable, and this understanding is an improvement beyond the thoughts of Freud and Jung and all of their followers, including Langs, about this topic.

This paper demonstrated what Shoghi Effendi stated half a century ago when he said: "The world has—at least the thinking world—caught up by now with all the great and universal principles enunciated by Bahá'u'lláh." One of these universal principles is the idea of divine wisdom, which comes from the revelation of Bahá'u'lláh and is placed in the heart. This is the guide we have for moral behavior, and ultimately depends on the revelation from God, be it manifested in Jesus, or Moses, Bahá'u'lláh, or any other Messenger of God. It appears that what is called conscience, or the inner voice of the heart, is based on the divine wisdom in the heart. When an unreligious psychoanalyst, at the end of his life, finds a similar concept and authors a book about religion and psychoanalysis, that fact demonstrates the power and effectiveness of the revelation of Bahá'u'lláh in our world. Bahá'u'lláh, quoting the Bible, said it this way to everyone who can hear, see, or perceive the divine wisdom of His Truth.

By Him Who is the Desire of the world!

This is the day for eyes to see and for ears to hear, for hearts to perceive and for tongues to speak forth.

Blessed are they that have attained thereunto; blessed are they that have sought after and recognized it!

This is the day whereon every man may accede unto everlasting honour, for whatsoever hath streamed forth from the Pen of Glory in regard to any soul is adorned with the ornament of immortality.

Again, blessed are they that have attained thereunto. [TU ¶18]

NOTES

- ¹ Written on 3 July 1949 on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, *Compilations*, Scholarship, p. 27.
- ² Jason Aronson, New York, 2008.
- ³ Rollin McCraty, Mike Atkinson, and Raymond Trevor Bradley: “Electrophysiological Evidence of Intuition.” Part 1, “The Surprising Role of the Heart” in *Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine*, 10, no. 1, (2004): 140.
- ⁴ This is quoted from the third paragraph of the Valley of Contentment and in the last two lines Bahá’u’lláh quotes from Ḥáfiz: Shamsu’-d-Dín Muḥammad, of Shíráz, died ca. 1389 A.D. One of the greatest of ersian poets.
- ⁵ Robert Langs, MD, *Psychotherapy, a Basic Text*. Jason Aronson Inc, London (1990): 549-560.