

# Section 4 - Religion and Religious Thought as Impacted by the Baby Core of the Personality

## Central Issues Needing Explanation:

- 1 – Why does one believe in God [various types]?
- 2 – Why does one believe in heaven and hell?
- 3 – Why does one believe in an after life?
- 4 – Why are people often so defensive about God, religion, and their beliefs?
- 5 – Why treat the bible, in whichever version, as God’s word rather than a book of ideas handed down over time, some of which have universal value, some of which are dated or no longer acceptable ?
- 6 – How can we reconcile and explain the idea of goodness with recommendations of murder of non-believers?
  - ? an omnipotent part of self fighting for control of the internal family
  - ? narcissistic personality organization fighting for its life
  - ? projection of hated parts and/or destructive parts of self
  - ? rationalization and justification for an envious attack

Axiom #1: Since all religious thought and action is a function of a human personality which is thinking or perceiving it, it is extremely useful to ask whether that particular bit of thought or action is emanating primarily from the adult part of the personality or a baby part of the personality.

Axiom #2: All religious thoughts or actions that emanate from a baby aspect of the personality will display some elements that are the hallmark of baby level thinking. The more primitive the aspect of baby thinking, the greater the potential of it being problematic or destructive. [See 8th section below on Key Characteristics of Baby Core Thinking]

## The King James Bible’s Version of the Ten Commandments:

- 1 – You shall have no other gods before me
- 2 – You shall not make for yourself a graven image
- 3 – You shall not take the name of the God, your lord, in vain
- 4 – Remember to keep the Sabbath day holy
- 5 – Honor your father and your mother
- 6 – You shall not murder
- 7 – You shall not commit adultery
- 8 – You shall not steal
- 9 – You shall not bear false witness against your neighbors
- 10 – You shall not covet your neighbor’s horse, wife, manservant, maid or ox, or ass, or anything that is your neighbor’s

[Note: Items 6 through 10 are commonly thought of as good “moral guideposts”. Items 1 through 5 do not seem essential to ordinary human existence, save for number five, if and when your parents deserve to be respected. Otherwise, the first five seem self-serving if thought of as written by a part of self that is trying to preserve its power or control over others.]

## Some Arbitrary Definitions [CLM]:

- 1 – Faith:
  - A belief in something that is not verifiable.
  - Acceptance of an idea that is not in accordance with accepted scientific laws and principles.
- 2 – Belief:
  - An idea which is held as important or true.
  - It is useful to discriminate “fact” based on rational, scientific discourse versus a “wish” based or “magic” based idea.

– It is useful to discriminate whether its nature is benign versus destructively problematic versus violent.

3 – Spiritual:

– An emotional attitude or aesthetic experience commonly associated with a global, cosmic, or ethereal level or scale of emotional experience when thinking about life, relationships, the order in the universe at any level, etc.

– It may refer to potentially anything linked to aesthetic experience.

– It may refer to a deeply held emotional experience that is difficult to put into words

4 – God:

– A concept related to goodness, order, beauty, meaning, etc.

– A force or power linked in some unknown fashion to the order or meaning of the organization of the universe and its contents.

– An all powerful and all knowing being who created and controls the universe and its contents.

#### Some Experiences That Impacted Me as I Prepared This Lecture:

1 – A ten year old girl still “believed” in Santa Claus and her parents did not have the heart to spoil it for her so, with a “wink”, they actually went along with it each year. It reminded me of how a loving father might wrestle with a young son and always “let him win”.

[These could be thought of as parents not wanting to spoil a wishful “baby” point of view in a child growing up.]

2 – I made an offhand comment one day to a patient that the concrete idea of a place called “heaven” was an example of an idea that is unreasonable in the light of external reality but is nonetheless important to many people. To my surprise she started crying and said: “Don’t say there is not a heaven, I can’t bear that idea because it means I will never see my brother again”.

[I felt this was a poignant example of how humans hold on to a baby wish for magic in the face of overwhelming pain that their adult self cannot modulate adequately for the baby parts of self.]

3 – A woman recounted realizing in the sixth grade that: “My mom did not know me”. The child was to receive a school award for being the highest achieving girl in her class. At the award ceremony the mother commented to the teacher that she had not realized that her daughter was such a good student. A year later, when told that “God knows everything about everyone”, that same girl decided that she wanted to become religious and started attending church on her own.

[I felt she was depicting how powerfully, as children, we want parental figures to whom we can “look up”, and when our own parents limitations are too painful to live with, we go looking elsewhere.]

4 – I asked a very scholarly judge, who I knew had done extensive reading of historical religious texts, if he believed in God? His response was immediate and short: “Not a personal one”.

[This seemed to be an attitude emanating from an adult part of self that did not need to place itself the center of everything. In contrast, babies inevitably seem to place themselves at the center of everything.]

5 – A quite scholarly anthropologist recounted having a very religious upbringing in which, at approximately the age of six, she decided that she did not like God. This occurred after her mother had said of this six years old girl’s best friend Lois, who lived next door, “God will not let Lois into heaven because she is Jewish”.

[This seemed to me to be an example of the inherent sense of fairness and goodness that all children have the potential for, if they have a tolerance for loving, caring relationships. The girl seemed to intuit that there was something inherently wrong or unfair when someone's basic goodness was not the primary guiding principle determining how they were to be treated.]

6 – A very accomplished student at Patrick Henry College was asked if the Dali Lama was going to hell when he finally passed away? The student responded with a story about a Nazi sympathizer who, when he died, was discovered to have a Catholic crucifix under his shirt. He then said that he did not know what was in the Dali Lama's heart.

In a similar vein, a girl from the same college, having lived for several weeks with a couple who did not believe in God, and having gotten emotionally close to them was asked by the couple, do you think we will go to hell when we die? The girl responded, "Yes, but I will not take any pleasure in it".

[I have strong reactions to both stories that involve intense religiosity, and seem to have to do with religious tenants that conflict with innate human reactions to fairness, generosity, and goodness. . In the first vignette, I imagine the interviewer of the student was thinking the Dali Lama was irreproachable in his decency despite not being Christian. The student seemed willing to suspect, perhaps only unconsciously, that a non-Christian is closer to being a Nazi than a "good person", until proven otherwise. Therefore, that person not be allowed into heaven unless he proves that he is secretly a Christian before he dies.

In the second vignette, the female student was struggling to reconcile her religious belief about who gets to go to heaven with her innate sense that the generous couple who had been kind to her were going to get a "bad" result despite being good people. There is also a suggestion that the student does "take pleasure" in other non-believers going to hell and not being the chosen ones. This is essentially the universal attitude that all children are capable of having, at times, about their siblings.]

7 – A couple moved to Alaska with their two teenage sons to build their dream home. The husband had adopted the two boys from the wife's previous marriage and they had commenced in vitro fertilization to have a child of their own together. The husband was sent to Iraq and killed. She waited a year, then had the frozen embryo implanted, and said that the resultant baby boy makes the family feel they "still have a part of him (the dad) with us".

[I think this conveys how intense our human reactions are naturally to great losses and how intensely we long for ways to preserve the lost person or even reverse the loss.]

8 – I asked a friend, who sees herself as a very "spiritual" person to explain to me her conception of God. She said: "...complete and absolute love – but not human and personal; a sense of unity or oneness that connects all human beings; not saying that there is only so much to go around; [in summary] ...an abstract thought of the oneness of everything with the center of it being love".

[This person, who I knew to have had a difficult childhood, seemed to be trying to emphasize the caring aspects of humanity and not get overly caught up in the black and white "judging" aspects of some religious thinking, which could have easily been directed at her parents given her background.]

### Some Comments About This Course and Myself:

1 – I am going to attempt to create an atmosphere of honest, open, non-defensive dialogue about very personal, precious issues. It is the very same atmosphere that I try to engender in an analytic session. However, it is my impression that religion and politics cannot usually be addressed without rancor and defensiveness unless it is within a group of like minded people where each person's thinking supports that of the others. In such groups there is usually considerable satisfaction gained by projecting undesirable human qualities and traits into those people who are seen as holding antagonistic points of view.

2 – I am fairly sure that some elements in this course will offend some people. While I will try to avoid being insensitive, disrespectful, or offensive, I doubt I will succeed completely.

3 – To start, I would like to make some personal disclosures:

– I do not believe in God in any way, shape, or form that I think people usually have in mind when they refer to "God".

– I do see myself as living by "The Golden Rule" in that I am virtually never mean to anyone, I do consider myself to be very ethical in my dealings with my fellow man, and my word is my commitment to the best of my conscious ability.

– I am not masochistically nice and I am no more or less envious than the average person.

– I believe that my internal harmony is my most precious possession and I guard it religiously.

[In summary, these are my ideals and they are a composite of identifications with many different people, but mostly not my parents, who often operated as inverse models.]

4 – I have no intention of addressing or debating the validity of any religious ideas. However, I am sure in our discussions that such questions will come up. It is my consistent impression that any ideas that people feel strongly about in the areas of politics and religion are rarely open for alteration so that discussions about them usually deteriorate into defensive postures and worse.

### Some General Thoughts and Implications Regarding the Baby Core of the Personality:

1 – All human beings start life as infant's and in their first few months of life generate a "baby core" to their personality. It is very usefully to picture this baby core as being made up of rather permanently fixed relationships between "parts of self" and "versions" of mom or dad. [In classical psychoanalysis these versions of the parents are referred to as the "super-ego" and in the Kleinian literature they are referred to as "internal objects".]

– These "internal relationships" remain alive and active throughout the lifespan, form the core of what is referred to as the "unconscious inner world", and become the "templates" for understanding all relationships. The degree to which any of these internalized versions is "problematic" is the degree to which their externalization will be at risk to generate problematic relationships in the outside world.

2 – It is useful to conceptualize the "parts of self" as falling into one of three categories, with the first two types being the ones that compose half of these fixed relationships:

– An "adult" part of self that is the most mature part at any age and models after the good parents.

- A “good” baby part of self that turns toward the good internal and external parents.
  - A “bad” part of self (i.e. an envious, omnipotent, know-it-all, destructive, self-sufficient, part of self) that “turns away” from the good internal and external “family”.
- 3 – The first two of these parts of self would be paired with either a “good” part of mom or dad, or a “bad” part of mom or dad, to form these internal, relatively permanently fixed relationships.
- 4 – The primary thesis of this course is that all religious ideas emanate from the minds of human beings. Even a so-called “miraculous” contact with a deity must be processed and translated by a human mind that perceived the experience before it can be communicated. Consequently, it turns out to be extremely useful to differentiate which ideas, in a person or a writing, are probably coming from the “baby core” of the personality and which have more likely come from the “adult” part of self.
- In turn, it is often also useful to distinguish ideas coming from a “good” baby part of self from ideas emanating from the “bad” part of self.

The punch line:

Virtually all major religious texts such as the bible, Koran, etc. were mostly written more than 1000 years ago. Because of this, they do not have the benefit of modern scientific discoveries, many of which have only come into existence in the last 100 years. Perhaps most importantly, they are not influenced by the discovery of the unconscious inner world, human personality development, and infantile mental functioning. As a result, their writers are perfectly capable of using baby level thinking that is problematic without any awareness of such a problem.

A Reminder of Some of The Key “Pains” of Infancy:

- 1 – Loss of the unity with mom at birth, then feeling lost or even annihilated
- 2 – Feeling in pain, small, helpless, frustrated, hopeless, etc.
- 3 – Feeling confused about what is good and what is bad
- 4 – Feeling guilt about damage done and/or having a fear of one’s own destructiveness
- 5 – Fearing that love is hopelessly lost and one is all bad and thus unlovable
- 6 – Feeling painful envy of mom being the source of everything good that is needed by the infant
- 7 – Feeling painful jealousy at the recognition of mom’s relationship with dad or at the birth of a sibling

Some Key Developmental Tasks and Maneuvers Found in Infancy:

- 1 – Separating the infant’s world into “good” (i.e. pleasurable) and “bad” (i.e. painful), thus bringing order to the infant’s world, so that the good can be retained inside oneself and the bad gotten rid of into the outside world. [Klein’s “splitting-and-idealization” in the Paranoid-Schizoid Position with the good being kept inside through “introjective identification” of the good mom or her breast at a “part-object” level.] [Note: You can’t safely feed from a breast with a load of poop dumped into it!]
- The resultant “ideal object”, generated by this splitting process is difficult to preserve in its “perfectness” and it tends to be experienced as demanding perfection back from the baby (a crucial idea!)
- 2 – It is natural for an infant to try to hold on to that which is imagined to be “good”, while trying to empty out of itself that which is felt to be “bad”, i.e. a source of distress and pain. [Note that infant’s do not seem to distinguish distress that is emotional in origin from distress that is physical in origin (i.e. “psyche” and “soma” are not differentiated or at least poorly differentiated).]

– Because infant’s are so concrete in their experience of distress (emotional or physical), they treat all distress as if it were like bad excrement inside the body that needs to be evacuated out of the body or self into the outside world. [Klein’s process of “splitting-and-projective identification”]

3 – Personality stability hinges on developing a good internalized relationship to a good internal mom and dad. This implies that at the most primitive levels one has internalized a feeling of a good, loving relationship to a good mom in the form of a “good breast” which is the earliest, “part-object” version of mom. The infant relates to this earliest version before all of her parts and functions are integrated into a whole version of her toward whom the infant can direct its needs and love in a more realistic fashion.

4 – Learning to tolerate a mixture of loving and hating feelings toward one and the same person, with mom usually the important prototype, is a key developmental step in the movement toward a more “adult” quality of thinking that has love and caring as its basis rather than more primitive possession and control at its foundation. [Klein’s “depressive position”]

5 – The infant’s original versions of mom and dad are always “harsh” in nature because they are formed at a time when life’s experiences are harsh, and the infant’s projections into those experiences are intense and often violent. Fortunately, under good enough environmental circumstances, the infant can grow these primitive “super-ego” versions of mom and dad into more advanced, reasonable versions that can be elevated to the level of “super-ego ideal” versions. The latter are suitable to be used as models for one’s own development and goals and thus become what might be referred to as one’s own personal “Gods”. Their externalization is probably the primary reason for the ubiquitous need to find “Gods” in the outside world.

Some Key Characteristics of Thought Generated by The Baby Core of the Personality:

[Please note how obvious these ideas are to us but are actually very unavailable without Freud, Klein, et. al.]

1 – Babies are very concrete in their thinking. Everything is black or white. Complexities that lead to shades of grey are not seen or tolerated. Very intense or traumatic experiences in infancy tend to increase the permanence of this concrete thinking and risk impairing the development of more abstract, nuanced, complex views where uncertainty must be accepted and tolerated.

2 – The emotional states of babies are very intense, and in some, they are very violent.

3 – All babies suffer a terrifying, traumatic event (when their tender, immature psyches are very undeveloped) called “birth”. They proceed to further suffer a protracted period of utter helplessness and dependence in which they are prone to overwhelming emotional distress at times. This distress is regulated solely by the goodwill and competence of their caregivers. For some infants, bad luck, poverty, illness, disturbance in the surround, etc. stamp this earliest period with an indelible impression that being born and out in the world is not worth the pain it brings. [ i.e. the “Death Instinct” outweighs the “Life Instinct”]

4 – All babies universally wish that there is “magic” and that they can have it.

– The primary use of “magic” is to eradicate the pains of the smallness and helpless dependence of infancy, a task that is most easily achieved by a feeling/illusion control of the needed mother.

– Later in infancy and childhood, “magic” will be used to cope with any and all other pains of human existence mentioned below.

– When psychoanalysts use the word “omnipotence”, they are usually actually referring to an “unconscious phantasy” of having “magic” in relation to a task at hand at that moment.

5 – All babies universally see themselves at the center of everything, both good and bad. This is partly due to a poverty of awareness of cause and effect relationships, and partly due to a wish to have control over whatever is going on so as to feel less helpless.

e.g. if mom and dad fight, it must be because the baby did something wrong

6 – All babies feel very great pain as a result of three key emotional experiences in a relationship:  
– separation – especially from mother

– envy – especially of mother (who has everything, knows everything, and can do anything)

– jealousy – especially of father and siblings who are seen as interlopers in the infant's original unity with mom. [It is always a shock to discover that dad had to be there first!]

7 – All infants have a potential capacity to love their mother and feel great distress when they fear that they may have injured her in any way. We call this feeling “guilt” and it is perhaps the most painful of all human emotions, when it is intense.

It is a very great developmental achievement when a human being learns to tolerate it. Such a capacity leads to a strong desire to make a proper “repair” of the harm, realistic or imagined, when it is recognized and acknowledged as having occurred. [Klein's “Depressive Position” and “Reparation”]

– This proper repair must be distinguished from “manic repair” whose goal is to make the damage go away so fast that no proper acknowledgement of it has to be made and guilt is avoided.

8 – All children put their mother and father together in every possible way except the right way!  
[Roger Money-Kyrle]

– This is because the pain that we call jealousy is very difficult to bear, especially in early life when mother is needed so absolutely with life or death hanging in the balance. Being mom's main or only “squeeze” is definitely imagined to be desirable. [Freud's Oedipus Complex]

– Kleinian psychoanalyst Albert Mason points out that when a patient can acknowledge and tolerate the pain of jealousy in recognizing the relationships in the therapist's outside life, the patient is well on their way to having completed their analysis. This means that having a properly acknowledged Oedipus Complex is the goal of analysis, not something to be eradicated as is usually taught!

Summary of the baby characteristics:

1 – The universal wish for magic

2 – The tendency to divide life into rigid dichotomies with idealization of one half of the division

3 – Concrete thinking and belief in the omnipotence of thoughts

4 – The natural tendency to split mother and father apart and wish to be in control of mother

5 – The tendency to project anything that is felt to be bad or undesirable into the outside world

6 – A strong tendency to react with violence to emotional pain and frustration

Religious Thought and The Nature of It's Baby Level Underpinnings:

1 – The greater the influence of the baby core in the religious thinking, the more likely the world and life will be seen through a lens colored by divisions of “good” and “bad”, which becomes increasingly problematic as it deteriorates into the “moralistic” absolutes of “good” and “evil”. No human is all good or all evil.

– If one's own parents were not adequate models, then the search for outside models is often more intense.

2 – There is universal human need for hope and that wish easily leads to a wish that magic existed.

– It is also true that proper planning for life's contingencies requires some acknowledgement of external reality so that one is not a victim of the axiom that "life is full of surprises, mostly bad" [attributed to Wilfred Bion]

– Since there is no credible evidence that there is magic, and "miracles" are simply as yet unexplained phenomena, the pursuit of either puts one on a continuum that is increasingly problematic at its extremes. Where there is an excessive reliance on magical thinking, and insufficient recognition of external reality, science, etc., one can invariably find the influence of increasing degrees of baby level thinking predominating. The scientific ignorance of the dark ages, or witchcraft burning at the stake, or faith healing, etc. all represent situations where baby thinking is highly likely to be prominent.

3 – The universal human tendency to attempt to concretely externalize one's internal objects (and object relationships) leads to a potential for the externalization of either very "bad" or highly "idealized" figures from one's unconscious inner world into the external world.

– If one is unconsciously externalizing baby level versions of mom or dad, then the external versions would have qualities reflecting their internal prototypes. If the prototypes were from very early infancy, they would have more fantastic powers and qualities. If they were more mature versions, they would likely have more "adult" reasonable qualities. In either case, the projected/externalized versions would have "good" qualities (e.g. loving, nurturing, etc.) and "bad" qualities (e.g. mean, punitive, envious, rejecting, etc.). Since both mom and dad, in all their aspects, would potentially be reflected in these externalized "gods", it would suggest that "polytheism" is the most natural outcome.

– Since mother is the source of the infant's existence and the infant's primary object for its most formative months of life, it would seem natural that the most important "god" would be a female. Since dad is probably universally seen as being mom's protector and supporter, male gods would probably more naturally tend toward preservative and policing roles in religious thought.

It is my hunch that if women had written biblical documents, it would have been more likely that "God" would be a woman since that would more naturally reflect the dominating importance of mother to the infant.

[As an aside, it is interesting to note that the transference, in the early years of analysis, is almost exclusively maternal in the majority of patients. However, male therapists often have more difficulty seeing their role in the transference as predominately "maternal", and are at risk to miss the early infantile elements that are related to maternal functioning. If this early transference is in fact actually more to a paternal figure, it is invariably a sign that the baby's relationship to the mother broke down in infancy and the baby "turned away" to its father.]

4 – The role of "caring" as an attitude is difficult to preserve when the baby core is assaulted with separation, envy, jealousy, or guilt. Good parental figures who can be relied on and looked up to are therefore universally needed by the "good baby parts of self". These parental figures, or "gods" if you will, would have such qualities as:

– fairness and generosity in spirit and deed

– a properly mediated sense of justice with reasonable and accessible avenues for repair of damage done

– patience and forgiveness

– an ability to listen and reason

– integrity in light of temptation

– encouragement of creativity and experimentation while modulating youthful exuberance or excesses of a potentially dangerous nature

– possession of wisdom that having lived life and retaining history can potentially bring

[Note that all of the above qualities are less likely to be well developed in religious leaders who are themselves the product of limited or distorted life experiences.]

5 – Whenever there is violence of any sort in religious thought, it needs to be evaluated in terms of:

– it's origin in good or bad baby parts of self as distinct from the adult part of self

– whether it is offensive or defensive in nature

– whether it is a reflection of violent internal or external parents

Where Religious Thought Has The Greatest Potential to Become the Most Problematic:

1 – It is always potentially a problem when there is an excessively concrete idealization of one “god” who is overly anthropomorphized and magical. This is due to the feeling that this “all powerful, omnipotent God” is threatened to be “killed off” by the existence of magical omnipotence in any other “god”.

Put in slightly different words, if my God is “perfect” and “all knowing and powerful” and I can have a special relationship with him or her, then any other God cannot exist with the same power without there being the suggestion that my relationship is not as special as I thought.

Furthermore, if my God is partly a container for my idealized projections, any other God risks bringing me back to my separateness, feeling alone, jealousy, envy, etc. and reduces my being special and/or having power over others.

[It is helpful to note that the issues I just mentioned are in exact parallel to the struggles that any human has when threatened with the loss of “omnipotent thoughts and maneuvers” they have been using unconsciously to cope with baby level pains. See the section in Module Two, Part Two on Omnipotence.]

2 – Where envy and jealousy in relation to mother, at an unconscious level, lead to a religious doctrine written by men, that is overly controlling of women, there is a high risk for the abuse of women.

e.g. A young woman in Iran was recently sentenced to 200 lashes and (?) 6 months in jail for riding in a car with a male who was not a relative and then gang raped.

3 – Where good and bad are excessively concretely split apart, there is always a danger that the “bad” will be projected into an outside container who is so absolutely spoiled that it can be treated inhumanely without guilt. This type of “moralistic” attitude leads to “sitting in judgment” of others, as contrasted with evaluating situations from an empathic, realistic, non-judgmental point of view..

e.g. The victims of a war, when the conflict was initiated by someone else, are often perpetrators of the most inhumane atrocities because they feel they can have revenge without human empathy or guilt.

[Note: The section on “Forgiveness, Lessons Learned” in Module Six was written as a result of the Rwandan War where this kind of issue was prominent.]

e.g. Christopher Hitchens said that Buddhist leaders said of those Cambodians that were slaughtered by Pol Pot, “..they must have done something wrong in a previous life”. This is a baby level attitude that denies guilt by using an infantile “where there’s smoke, there’s fire” primitive, concrete logic.

4 – When the morality of the religious thought is more derived from the “paranoid-schizoid position” (with idealization and projection at its core) than it is derived from the “depressive position” (with concern for welfare of the other at its core), then it is at risk to engender intolerance and violence.

When it is then suffused with “omnipotently and omnisciently” stated assertions, it is at very high risk to become so intolerant and destructive as to require “war” as its inevitable byproduct, especially where “unconscious envy” joins the mix, as it inevitably must.

5 – Religious “justification” can be used in the service of unconscious motives that are essentially dominated by envy, greed, paranoid anxiety, the avoidance of guilt, etc. when the thinking of a “religious leader” is excessively infected by destructive baby level feelings toward mom or dad. This is true of any leader who is seen as absolute and the society’s thinking is excessively black and white.

– There is little difference in the thinking of a political leader whose power is close to absolute and who is influenced by the same “baby level” of thought as so currently in evidence in North Korea.

– Emotional and/or physical pain or duress tend to activate baby wishes for an ideal parent who has magic and can save the day (e.g. there are no atheists in a foxhole). This increases the susceptibility of followers of religious or political leaders to go along with the potentially destructive ideas of their leader.

6 – In psychoanalysis, the more omnipotence in the thinking of an individual, the greater potential for distortion of reality and failure in human relationships. All the potential details of this truism apply to religious thought.

That is to say that the degree to which there is a belief in magic, and attribution of omnipotence to a deity, is the degree to which there is potential for distortion of reality or complete denial of it, and then a failure in the realm of social structure and relationships.

– e.g. If an assertion is made omnipotently, such as “you don’t see negroes at the level of Olympic swimming because they lack natural buoyancy”, it is felt to be a truism because “I say it is true”.

Such assertions are on a continuum of destructiveness, but all stem from a human mind asserting the omnipotent correctness of their own thinking. For example, all little boys recognize that daddy’s penis is bigger and make the erroneous wishful assumption that mom only loves daddy and married him because of his bigger penis. Fast forward to adulthood, move to the South, add the omnipotent phantasy that black males have a bigger penis’ than white males, and you have the basis for a baby level projection of hostile possessive motives into black males (i.e. that they want to steal mommy for themselves) that justifies the existence of the Klu Klux Klan and its activities. Similar attitudes have been seen historically toward Jews.

7 – The very self centered view of religion that states “God has a plan for you” has numerous risks as it is taken increasingly to the extreme:

– It runs the risk of tending to engender mindless passivity in relation to planning for reality, taking responsibility for one’s actions, or feeling appropriate guilt.

– Alternately, it can lead to imagining that it is okay to do something because God wants you to do it, when in unconscious reality that is a projection of your own preexisting unconscious urge to do something.

– The assumption that something unfortunate that happens to someone else is their fault because they are “godless” leads to religious smugness and a potential failure to be compassionate

The reverse of this might be a fear of healthy and appropriate aggression in the face of a realistic threat, the fear then engendering passivity or even masochism instead of self-defense.

8 – When religion or a religious organization has as its unconscious underpinnings the externalization of a narcissistic personality organization, then there is a very high risk of it deteriorating into a destructive “cult” with insanity at the deepest unconscious foundation of its thinking (i.e. the influence of the death instinct outweighs that of the life instinct).

– This type of extreme religious group tends to appeal to individuals whose early life started off very painfully.

9 – The nearly universal human tendency to not wish to interfere with someone’s cherished beliefs leaves one at risk to not exercise reasonable judgment about the nature of someone’s statements. Political “liberals” and religious “moderates” seem to be particularly susceptible to this type of reaction.

– This is understandable at the level of someone’s expression about their internal God’s (super-ego ideal), and perhaps represents a projection into the other of our own wish for an ideal parent.

However, where blind acceptance occurs, without discriminatory functions being exerted, just because someone uses the word “god” or “religion”, then there is a danger of promoting the dangerously infantile thinking of immature or disturbed individuals, or accepting statements made by sociopaths, etc.

#### What Psychoanalytic, Developmental Insights and Awareness Can Bring to Religious Thought:

1 – One can see gods as emanating from human minds and valuable in the same manner that tribal elders, unusually gifted members and thinkers in society, leaders, etc. are valuable for their wisdom and guidance, but whose thoughts are not to be treated as absolutes and invariants (i.e. the “Word of God”).

2 – Recognize the complexity of human life and value a natural skepticism about quick, easy, black and white, polemical, extreme thinking or solutions. “Evil” is not a useful concept but “destructive” and “problematic” are useful modifiers of human thought and behavior.

– e.g. Snap judgments tend to be made based on appearance and prejudice rather than through slow, patient, contemplative thought in which uncertainty is tolerated.

– e.g. McMartin pre-school child molestation case, where children were unwittingly talked into ideas that were not true, led to quick judgments made on the emotional horror of the case. They in turn led to greatly erroneous assumptions that, carried to extreme, would have led to a lynching or burning at the stake in past centuries.

3 – Teach children that while there is no magic, there are many possibilities in life that the creative and imaginative mind may be able bring into existence that are not currently available to mankind.

4 – Recognize and research the profound importance of early life experiences in the development of the personality and the resultant “baby core” foundation to human thinking and functioning.

5 – Insist that religious “moderates” stand up to religious extremism that comes from destructive, disturbed or problematic parts of the baby core of the personality.

6 – Encourage world wide availability of thinking about the “unconscious, baby level” elements in human behavior. Such thinking would include the ethical, moral, and humanistic implications of human behavior writ large on the world stage.

It is necessary to make very difficult distinctions regarding destructive and problematic circumstances in the world. These seem to often boil down to differentiating between “playing god” on the world stage, or tolerating injustice for political expediency, versus a constructive activism against man’s inhumanity to man.

**THAT INHUMANITY IS ALWAYS A FUNCTION OF THE BABY CORE OF THE PERSONALITY GONE AWRY!**