



Your Rooms of Diamonds

by Kwami E. Nyamidie

Sarah and Mike, a married American couple, love to clean their house. Together, they clean the kitchen, dining room, the living area, the bedrooms and the bathrooms. They get rid of the clutter in the garage as they allow fresh air fill all their rooms.

For Sarah, Mike and millions of Americans, home can symbolize different things.

Home is where you belong, a haven, and a shelter from the challenges of life. Home is the expression of private space where you have control, a place where you feel safe as if you were back in the warmth of your mother's womb.

But home is more. Gaston Bachelard (1884-1962), a philosopher of science and a leading member of the French Academy in his day, wrote that home is a place that encourages daydreaming, a place that shelters the dreamer and a place that allows the dreamer to dream in peace.

Home is a symbol for life, for wisdom, for the soul and for the landscapes of the mind.

In *The Interior Castle*, St. Teresa of Avila (1515-1582)

described the essence of the individual as "a castle made of a single diamond... in which there are many rooms."

Like Sarah and Mike in their home, we each live in an invisible diamond castle with many rooms.

Mystics, sages, and philosophers throughout the ages have devised typologies to help us understand the nature of these rooms. The Native American medicine wheel represents these mystical rooms within the soul as the four cardinal points: east, west, south and north. Each of these represent a personality type.

In the same way, the signs of the zodiac in Hindu, Chinese, and Western astrology are landscapes within our consciousness. They are rooms that belong to us.

Other personality typologies such as the Enneagram and the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator attempt to describe these symbolic rooms within us at specific points on our spiritual journey.

Spirituality, regardless of our chosen path, then becomes a process of expanding the awareness that helps us discover these rooms. It is the quest to understand our true self.

Mystics from around the world agree that something extraordinary lives within us. Christians call this unknown country within the Kingdom of Heaven. Buddhists call it the Buddha Self.

Thomas Merton spoke for most mystics when he wrote, in *Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander*:

"At the center of our being is a point of nothingness which is untouched by sin and by illusion, a point of pure truth, a point or spark which belongs entirely to God, which is never at our disposal, from which God disposes of our lives, which is inaccessible to the fantasies of our own mind or the brutalities of our own will.

"This little point of nothingness and of absolute poverty is the pure glory of God in us. It is so to speak his name written in us, as our poverty, as our indigence, as our dependence, as our sonship. It is like a pure diamond, blazing with the invisible light of heaven. It is in everybody, and if we could see it we would see these billions of points of light coming together in the face and blaze of a sun that would make all darkness and cruelty of life vanish completely..."

Unaware of these rooms, many of us pass through life rarely suspecting this diamond-like essence that they are. We are living in a big house whose nooks, crannies and treasures are hidden to them. As we clean and beautify our material living spaces like Sarah and Mike do, let us remember that our true self dwells in structures that we must understand, explore and transcend.

The Buddha and the Christ did not have houses of their own. Ultimately, we will have to outgrow our astrological signs, our personality types, and our limiting concepts of who we are. We will transcend our castles and houses so that the entire cosmos will become our home.

How do we apply this met-

aphor of the soul with many rooms in our lives?

First, we will continue the diligent work of self-discovery. It does not matter if we use astrology, the MBTI, the medicine wheel, or the Enneagram. Whatever tool resonates with us and helps us to a greater self understanding will work. The goal is to find different ways to discover who we truly are.

Second, an understanding of the various rooms of the soul leads us to honor the different rooms that others live and function from.

In studying personality types, for example, we learn that some individuals function from their "head." These people think things through logically before they act. There are others who use their "heart." They allow their feelings to guide

their actions. In other words, these two groups of people function from different metaphoric rooms.

This leads us to the third application. To live in harmony with others, we need to meet them in their metaphoric rooms. If you are a feeler and you are communicating with a thinker, validate the speaker's method of relating to the world. In other words, move psychologically to meet them where they are. And finally, we must outgrow our preferred ways of looking at the world. In other words, we must aim at using all the rooms, some of which we rarely use, that are part of the mystery that we call the self.

The poet physician Oliver Wendell Holmes (1809-1894,) in the last stanza of his poem the "Chambered

Nautilus," memorably captured this need to outgrow our old selves and habits of mind:

*Build thee more stately mansions, O my soul,
As the swift seasons roll!
Leave thy low-vaulted past!
Let each new temple,
nobler than the last,
Shut thee from heaven
with a dome more vast,
Till thou at length art free,
Leaving thine outgrown shell
by life's unresting sea!*

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Heaven on Earth

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the very first time. Notice the colors, patterns, textures, and spatial arrangements of things, and the light associated with different times of day or seasons subtly affects their appearance. Open your senses to explore the world around you: see, listen, touch, smell, taste. Be fascinated and you will quickly discover that the world is not what you think.

- Bring love and joy to whatever you experience. You already know how to love,

love everything unconditionally in this moment and see how the world changes before your eyes.

- Finally, silently repeat the following simple phrase, "This is heaven." As you do this, notice how your perception and feelings change further. You are now looking directly into heaven on earth. But don't start thinking about this phrase or you'll lose it again.

- When you feel refreshed, renewed, and happy, resume your life at a slower and more conscious pace. While

you may lose this heavenly state of consciousness when things speed up, you can always come back by repeating these steps. More importantly, this kind of seeing will progressively transform your world until you begin to see heaven everywhere.

John Robinson holds doctorates in clinical psychology and ministry and is an ordained interfaith minister, author, and mystic. Look for his new book, *Finding Heaven Here*, in Jan 2009. Learn more at www.johnrobinson.org or contact him at jcr416@aol.com.



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