

Caroline Myss, the Chakra System and the Spiritual Development Stages

Caroline Myss. (1952 – present) Caroline Myss is a medical intuitive and popular writer. Deeply inspired by Saint Teresa of Avila, she wrote a profound and lyrical explanation of Teresa's Interior Castle using modern day terms: *Entering the Castle: An Inner Path to God and Your Soul*. Here each Mansion is explained and expounded upon in depth. Specific directions are given as to what to do in each mansion as a person works to develop spiritually.

In a 2009 seminar sponsored by Wisdom University entitled "Challenges and Blessings of the Mystical Path," Myss took the spiritual development concept even further, correlating both progress through the Mansions and the general spiritual development journey with moving up the chakras. "Your chakras are to your energy system as our mansions are to your soul."

Where in the First Mansions, Saint Teresa had us learning humility and fighting off the "reptiles" of the world, which are the temptations to sin, Myss has us dealing with tribal issues, physical survival, gaining basic groundedness, and suffering the results of early life humiliations at the level of the first chakra.

In the Second Mansions, Teresa spoke of learning to fight off the attractions of worldly possessions and material success. Myss calls what we have to deal with at the second chakra level "stuffology"—the search for physical power, sexual power and material goods, which we must fight off if we are to progress spiritually. Though we are getting a bit afield of the correlation with Fowler's stages here, this would be equivalent to his Synthetic Conventional stage and our Faithful level.

In Teresa's Third Mansions we struggle between the forces of our own reason and the pull of the spiritual. In this stage we are prone to carrying out acts of charity toward others (like the social activism of the Rational level or Fowler's Individuative Reflective stage.) According to Myss, the third chakra level calls us to face the challenge between the forces of reason and those of the mystical life, again similar to our Rational level or Fowler's Individuative Reflective Stage.

Chakras 1, 2 and 3 are all located "below the waist" on the human body. According to Myss, concerns regarding these issues are typical of an immature spirituality. At these levels, our heart is controlled by the limited focus of these lower level concerns and the word "self" goes with "selfish."

When we get frustrated and tired of the concerns of chakras below the waist, we begin to move up to the chakras above the waist, where we begin to rebirth our very sense of self. In chakras 4, 5, 6 and 7, Myss says, we move beyond concern about physical objects and address issues regarding energetic power. In turn, this corresponds to a more mature spirituality where our heart is shattered open and we surrender to the divine, the universe, or whatever we see as the Ultimate Reality. Teresa's Fourth Mansions form the first mystical level of the castle. Here the person stops trying to achieve, stops striving and lets grace take over in his life. Myss says

in the fourth chakra the light is too bright for the reptiles that tempt you to sin and lower level concerns. God (the Ultimate Reality) comes for you and you surrender. A person may experience a calling to serve others in some way at the spiritual level. This is similar to the beginning of our Mystic level.

In the Fifth Mansions, Teresa describes a period where the soul is "cocooned in divine love" and trusts fully in the will of God. There is a new level of acceptance. Myss says at the fifth chakra there is a dissolving into holiness.

Teresa's Sixth Mansions is a continuation of the Fifth Mansions but they correspond with the "dark night of the soul." Myss says at the level of the sixth chakra, we may be going through a stage where what we want has to fail us before we realize what we need, and we struggle about whether we want to commit. There is a need to sever the connections between head and heart (letting the heart take over.) This is similar to Fowler's Conjunctive Faith, where the person may be caught between his vision of an idealized unitive world and the harsh reality of the actual world.

In Teresa's Seventh Mansions, and per Caroline Myss at the seventh chakra, there is complete union with the Ultimate and Divine Love.