Color - A Link To the Divine
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"I know of nothing that can so easily uplift people - or transform their lives - as color and color-awareness," explains Ms. Ruth Strock to a visitor in her green-carpeted office. She is the founder and director of the Color Research Institute of San Francisco, and a pioneer in the West's very gradual discovery of an ancient Hindu science - the metaphysics of color. At 33, she is already well regarded in the field.

"I must have begun this work in a previous life," she says. "How else to explain that I loved painting as a child, then met my first teacher at the age of 12!" She is referring to Prof. Bhatnagar of the Sri Center, New York City, who introduced her to Hinduism, chakras, yantras, pranas, mantrams, auras. Deities - and the science of color. She at once knew her mission in this life: to uplift humanity through color.

Color is not merely a surface characteristic of objects. Hinduism teaches that colors have their origin in the Divine, and that the universe is permeated with eight rays of color - or shaktis. Each of these shaktis carries and imparts a distinct kind of energy, power and inner knowledge. Through his chakras, subtle nerve system, and glands, man is a receiver and transmitter for these divine energies. When he is disharmonious in himself, the colors are in disarray and his aura reflects the ensuing negative state of consciousness as does the condition of his physical body. But when he channels these colors in their natural harmonious state, then he is creative, perceptive, positive and healthy. Therefore, with a little knowledge and practice, one can learn to harmonize the color patterns surrounding himself, externally or internally, and regain his inherent marvelous qualities. Color is the connecting link between man and the divine potential within himself.

This is the basic teaching underlying the work of Ruth Strock and others in her field. The Institute's classes and workshops range from teaching color sensitivity, to color therapy, color metaphysics or color meditation. "However far one goes with it," Strock says, "it will still be a spiritualizing experience to that extent."

Until the turn of the century, very few in the West knew anything of the esoteric science of colors. Then in 1905, Edwin Babitt published a voluminous work, the Principles of Color, entirely based on traditional Hindu knowledge and organized in a Western scientific manner. This volume is still today the basic textbook of a burgeoning science. Color research is being done in nearly all important universities in the USA, and quite a few discoveries are being made. But, according to Ms. Strock, the emphasis is still almost totally external. Color is being studied for its applications in marketing, medicine, or group psychology. The restaurant chain Denny's recently revamped its decor to emphasize red. Red, it has been found, stimulates appetite and causes one to eat faster, thereby increasing turnover and profits for the house. In medicine, blue light is now shined on patients for the purpose of slowing the heart rate. Even the armed services are studying the psychological impact of color. But the spiritual connection is virtually ignored.

During the past 6 years, the Color Research Institute has served over 1,200 people. Testimonials from students abound, crediting color for a variety of benefits ranging from better health, to success in career, to life-transforming inner experiences.

Typically, the student focuses on one color per week. During blue week, he will dress in blue, sit in a blue classroom, meditate on blue, even have blue foods. The next week, he moves into another color and notes the differences. His thoughts, feelings, responses - perhaps even the character of his experiences - may change.

Color therapy is offered on an individual basis. Ms. Strock or an assistant senses where disharmony or blockage is present in the person observed. Then a light of a certain color is shined on the person, perhaps at repeated intervals. Thus the aura's color is altered. And since the color of the aura is directly connected with the person's mental state, the mental state is also harmonized. The ailment tends to recede or disappear.

This follows the belief in Hinduism that the origin of disease is ultimately not with the physical body, but with the mind, the condition of the body being but a reflection of one's state of mind. Hence, in color therapy or color healing, one works with the inner aspects of man to effect a change in the physical.

This is in contrast with the Western scientific approach. The Institute does not do color healing (only therapy) for the simple reason that it is still illegal in California. Why? Because, according to Ms. Strock, the American Medical Association still does not believe in treatment whose basis is spiritual.

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