Sometimes gut-wrenching, but always inspiring and insightful, Maloney’s *Alchemy of the Soul* applies esoteric wisdom to vivid clinical case examples of severe trauma in the interest of merging depth psychology with the yoga psychology of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. Appearing to address a more general clinical audience, Maloney assumes a well above average level of comfort with transpersonal phenomena and language, giving case examples, but not providing the kind of evidence a newcomer to the material might require. He asks the reader to take the leap that, through spiritually-themed imagery, there is direct contact to external spiritual consciousnesses. To those readers who arrive taking collective consciousness, extrasensory perception, and after death communication as givens, this book yields many fruits in its grounding of abstract mystical teachings in clinical practice and experience.

Aside from the Aurobindo school, Maloney draws heavily from Mindell’s process-oriented psychology, Grof’s Holotropic breathwork, and Aminah Raheem’s acupressure modality. Maloney initially introduces his relationship to mind-body-spirit healing with an honest and personal account of his own journey, through childhood trauma, pilgrimages to Sri Aurobindo’s ashram in India, and mystical experiences including a kundalini opening.

Maloney provides evidence for Mindell’s revelation on the coincidence between childhood dreams and chronic bodily symptoms through the description of student and client experiences, showing how these experiences can open trauma to the spiritual dimension of experience.

In his blending of paths of ascension and descent, Maloney understands the soul as able to be expressed through the personality, rather than the personality being an impediment to spiritual growth. Consciousness is understood as infinite, but self-limiting and self-categorizing, from the cosmic level all the way down to within the individual.

In describing his integrative modalities, Maloney utilizes Aurobindo’s three fields of consciousness, which can be accessed though altered states:

a) The subconscious, from which repressed memories can be recovered.
b) The subliminal, which allows a more direct and universal way of knowing through occult powers, clairvoyance, clairaudience, transfer-ence of thought, telepathy.
c) The Superconscious where all mental or sensory experience ceases- the experience of “God,” “Spirit,” “Oversoul” (p.55).

In this system, expanded consciousness can be accessed through the subliminal, which speaks in terms of visual or auditory mental imagery.

On the level of personal development, there is a need for the development of the ego, but only as a “formative” step towards higher states of consciousness (p. 64). Eventually, witnessing consciousness should lead to disidentificatio
with the ego and progressive identification with the psychic self. This disidentification in part incorporates the depth psychological tactic of exploring relationships patterns incorporated in early childhood. The psychotherapeutic process that integrates spirituality, as Maloney describes it, utilizes death and rebirth to open to the inner healer.

The accessing of trauma often opens up access to transcendent experiences because “trauma prematurely tears the veil between our personal consciousness and the transpersonal forces of our inner world” (p. 81). The person, with the guidance of a therapist, must “learn to relate from a new center,” which was opened by the accessing of stored trauma (p. 82).

In his portrayal of how this type of work can be implemented in a clinical setting, Maloney uses some painfully detailed accounts of horrific abuse to portray the storing of trauma in the body and the clinical use of accessing spiritual guidance.

Chapter 5 is a narrative of a woman whom Arya saw in practice, doing acupressure and psychotherapy with her through her remarkably graceful six year dying process. She was living with and transforming through cancer, not “struggling with” or “fighting” it (p.119). Maloney tells the story of her coming into greater contact with her soul, finding meaning through this process and through the process of sharing this with others.

Chapter 6 follows the therapeutic development of a woman, trapped in a smothering and childless relationship, who finds healing of her psychological and psychosomatic symptoms through the accessing of past lives and the recognition of karmic baggage.

Chapter 7 follows a woman as she uncovers repressed memories of intense trauma, in the form of incestual rape and ritual Satanic abuse. She finds healing through dance, journaling, and connecting with the Goddess, through which she reconnects with her body and severs unhealthy relationships.

Chapter 8 is the transcript of a clinical interview and a post interview discussion of a client who experienced a spiritual emergency through the practice of music and has, at the time of the interview, been coming to terms with greatly expanded consciousness for six years. Maloney interviews him on his challenges in staying grounded in the mundane and counsels him towards noticing and fostering the personal strength that has been demonstrated in teetering on the edge of consensus reality consciousness. He helps the client in finding the benefits of this altered state, that the client is becoming increasingly adept at entering.

Maloney sees an integral approach as the deepest and most efficient path of healing, in its engagement of all levels of personhood. The personal soul is seen as the reflection of the cosmic soul and, through working with others, we heal ourselves, as well as promoting collective, transcendent healing.
The Author

Arya Maloney, M.A. is an experienced psychotherapist and workshop facilitator in integrative modalities. In addition to his book *Alchemy of the Soul: Integral Healing - The Work of Psychology and Spirituality*, he is well published on the Integral Yoga of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, of which he is a long time adherent. He is a co-founder of the Mindbody Centre in Kingston, New York.

The Reviewer

Jacob Kaminker is a doctoral candidate in Clinical Psychology at the Institute of Transpersonal Psychology and also holds an MA in Depth Psychology from Sonoma State University. His areas of research are in imagination, alchemy, Kabbalah, and mysticism. He has worked clinically using integrative modalities with populations ranging from elders to severely mentally ill.