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SOUL AND INTELLECT: A KABBALISTIC DISCOURSE

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What is the soul? What is the intellect?

The soul is the mirror of the transcendent in a human being. In spite of its apparent narrowness, the soul is wiser and more dimensional than the intellect. The concentration of the soul is its passionate genius, out of which arises its vitality and its wisdom. The expansive dimensionality of the soul results from soul's ability to spontaneously, celebratively and empathetically transport its self-identification into the conditions of other creatures, both above and below the level of human reason.

Three aspects of the soul - the empathic/metamorphic, the vital/affirmative and the profound/comprehensive - are manifestations of the (traditional) angelic potential, or (contemporary) circum-ecosophic potency of an integrally dynamic human being. Which is to say that the sacred manifestations of becoming human are distinguished by characteristics of intensity, tropos and mutuality.

Contrariwise, the intellect is the dark mirror, or imitative shadow, of the soul. The intellect is historical man's chief implement and weapon for planetary exploitation, mutilation and the organizational usurpation of the providence of transcendence. Indeed, historical man is definable, vis-à-vis the intellect, as a type of human personality operating through observation, inquiry and overcoming on the objective plane; thus, via the progressive impact of (1) theories of abstraction, (2) systems of artificial extensions (including reduction of experience to information), (3) technologies of species-wide and contextual domination and (4) cumulative convolutions in the means toward effecting intimidation, diminution and extinction.

If the soul is the identifier of sanctification and the practitioner of patience and appropriateness (which may at one time be patient and another time zealous), the intellect is an actor in a play (sometimes tragic, sometimes absurd), that it progressively sees itself as directing. Explicitly, the intellect is a theatrical compensator, aggressively apprehensive before the irregularities, or script surprises, of existence.

The soul's greatest fear is nakedness. The nakedness of the soul is the absence of goodness and beauty (the experience of which constitutes the clear perception of the "all-alive" unity through diversity of what is). The intellect, also, fears nakedness. The nakedness of the intellect is its being stripped of constructed centrality, which exposes the nothingness of the adversarial, self-preserving ego.

Even more, the naked intellect, divested of the homeland of mythology and propelled toward the precipice of extravagance, results in madness - either the psychosis of the naked one in extremity, or the psychosis of a resourceless society of extremes.

At once, mythological man is contained by nature/the universe and is soulful. At once, historical man is alienated from nature/the universe and is distrustful. The soulful human being carries with him (and with her) the realism of a mythosphere, permeated with sacred time and demarcated by sacred space. This person bears within his environmentally enlarged identity an unambiguous sense of participation in the workings of creation. His status as a human being depends on his primal orientation toward light (emergence, comfort, enlightenment and renewal), both from its physical and its spiritual sources. Historical man carries with him an arsenal, a collection chest, a linear chronology and a geography of conquests. His identity is conditionally ambiguous and his orientation is opportunistic. Historical man, self-understood, is a creature marked by destabilizing contradictions and betrayals; the kinds of betrayals that are commonly referred to as compromises and adjustments. Thus deceit and denial have become the hallmarks of successful, historical operation, even as the intellectual will is the vehicle for foisting the modulations of deceit and denial on each ideologically manipulated ambiance where the historical personality dictates the foreground of life.

Inside the configuration of a living mythosphere, the man of faith - naive, whole and righteous - is identical with the ideal of mythological man. Within much of history, the man of faith is a social outcast, a pariah, even a public threat. That this evaluation made by history itself is currently in transition is an indicator of the transitional state of late 20th century Euro-American civilization. Regarding this process of value alteration, it is presently fair to say that in several regions of the planet something as yet undefinable is happening; something imaginary, but simultaneously dialogical: an extra-personal pathetic network of subtle, symbolic associations, or conjunctive configurations (which we can call *parzufim* or numinous, bio-cosmic faces). These various, largely salvific reorientational occurrences are primarily emerging in the time/space of dreams, secondarily in our understanding of dreamscapes and dream empowerment, while mutually in renewed contacts between ordinary and nonordinary modes of consciousness: dreams having a differently rhythmmed ebbing and flowing of time, differently grounded locations, outside the terrain of wakefulness, related to other aspects of identity, memory and transpersonal or threshold-crossing purposes. All these help in our reopening pathways to new touchstones of reality, through revaluations of the primacy of life sanctifying experience. This we will also name as primal, deep and dialogical experience. In short, the eventfulness of experience, as over and against the absurdity of experience, or the banality of experience rippling on the surface of blas\_ participation.

Here we observe that when I speak to you from my soul, you are aware that

it is genuinely *I* addressing you. My soul-voice is unique, distinct, unific and powerful. If you have an affinity for the rhythms and imagistic representations mediumized by this voice, we are related to one another in an event of meeting; an enthusiasm is generated, which might also be the signature of a spiritual reunion. If, on the other hand, I speak to you with my intellect, you can or cannot know me, depending on your opinions, interests, ambitions, or mental habits.

While the intellect frequently intends good in its imitation of the soul, the intellect's goodness is tainted by aspirations for advantages, evasions, machinations and increasingly artificial elaborations of convenience, distraction and trivial gratification. What the intellect seeks most is to be served and to control, even eliminating, response-ability and the sense of the other as authentically distinct, or diverse, and confrontational. Confrontation, we should remember, is a call toward mutual-growth-alteration, issued in the form of a heated, that is, a stimulating and therefore status endangering, challenge. The spiritual core of confrontation expects wide-eyed presence, nude honesty, genuine tropos and a shift in the dynamics of acoustic recognition, visibility and empowerment.

What the soul seeks most is to serve with participatory delight and to reveal the transformational impact of otherness. Therefore, the two most significant categories of soulfulness are the response to awe and the event of meeting.

*The soul is the shaman of humanity; the intellect is the imperialist of the planet.* Both soul and intellect are journeyers. The soul journeys through the plasticity of the creative imagination (an ethereal or pathetic network containing imagistic potencies of actual, as well as virtual, realities). The intellect journeys through associations of discrimination, reducing distinctions to abstractions and systems of objective organization. The main purpose behind the soul's journeying is to witness the sense of wonder and radical experiences of transformational, that is, ascension stimulating, encounters in a living location. This is according to the mystical principle that a physical locus is necessary below for the sake of the spiritual locus above. The main purpose behind the intellect's journeying is to increase the knowledge of good and evil, in order to master the ambiguities of existence and eradicate tensions. This is according to the paradox of material survival, mobilization and inertia. Such contradictions emerge in the intellect then as exploration as a mode of escape and knowing for the sake of hoarding. The soul explores for another purpose; the soul's knowledge serves an intention relational to otherness.

The soul is as artistically proficient with wild flower, bird feather and fish fin; with thunder, lightning and howling wind; as with word, dance and drum; as at home in the world of dreams as in the love bed, the meditative retreat, or the compassionate stations for rehabilitating psychic dismemberment and psychosomatic dissolution. The intellect is lost without the wheel of commerce, the sword of conquest, the science of propaganda and a cynical avoidance of meaning outside of materialistic pleasure displacements. The intellect's exclu-

sive effort to master and limit (literally, reduce and contain within artificial extension systems) planetary conditions is, therefore, a mode of the degrees of death, far more tyrannical and dangerous than the exaggerated suspicions about primitive savagery. Indeed, the objective, organizational obsession of historical man is frequently a deflection away from this type of human being's interior schism and spiritual fragmentation.

Mythological man, when in his native state, is intrinsically stronger than historical man. When mythological man's mythosphere is shattered, however, historical man is stronger. Historical man, motivated by envy, malice and greed, is aggressively more functional in an ambiance of fragmentation. Indeed, a successful, violent assault on the primary, sustaining actions, sacral re\_nactments, holistic sensibilities and symbolic foundations of mythological man frequently awakens an apocalyptic expectation, depriving him of his traditional resourcefulness and immediacy, while at the same time binding him to a negative consciousness of imminent, supernatural affiliation. For mythological man, the collapse of the familiar is an emerging cosmic catastrophe: what mythological man sees is of the same kind as that which prevails throughout. Historical man, on the other hand, sees only what he does and calculates the consequences of his behavior on one level of experience alone. In cumulative effect, therefore, the superior functionability - the functionability of world-ordering fragmentation, which is the "doing better" of historical man - is actually a worsening, an undoing, in terms of the at-one-ment and integrity of the human condition, and the realizations of the interconnectedness or overall, dialogical potencies of the human family and of planetary ecology. In short, this better that is worse enforces, through several centuries, a pathological deterioration of the non-visible truths that, at primordial levels, inform the falsity or truthfulness of visible, existential situations.

So it has come about, and not without bitter irony, that historical man is exclusively accountable for developing the means to initiate a technologically orchestrated apocalyptic execution. Here then is the endgame of the pathological continuum noted above: the more complete and prolonged the mutilation of the instinctual and spiritual life of a people, the crueler and more callous that people's eventual sadistic eruption will be. For inasmuch as the primordial levels of human memory and identity are mythological, then the suppression of the mythopoeic root of human placement in the world will be reasserted from behind the ideologies of history in the most vengeful myth of all, that of the earned punishment of carnal condemnation in the form of cosmic annihilation. The removal of the healing envelope of mythology as immediate sacrality and as transcendence (simultaneously protection and guidance) returns as a mythos that is anti-mythic, insofar as it is anti-human. This is the mythology of gnosticism, and the historical enactment of the ritual of world cannibalism in the omniscidal drama of the twilight of the gods.

Kabbalah, the Jewish mystical tradition, offers a chief, if not singular example

of a long standing series of mythologies - sharing central themes, symbols and specific, central intentions - that not only attempts to integrate the intrusive and disruptive differences of the historical adventure, but actually attempts to openly mythologize history itself. In consequence, Kabbalah stands forth as a unique and fascinating mode of experiencing (1) the course of history as, secretly, a heroic, mythological quest, (2) the historical pariah as, secretly, an agent of cosmic fulfillment and (3) the displacements of historical vicissitudes as esoteric steps toward the promised mythological triumph: a victory of the vanquished, which will manifest itself as the collapse of raw history, the demonic theatre of brutality and betrayal (which Kabbalah, in accordance with its Biblical background, experiences as fracturing or shattering degrees of exile), and in the restitution of the primordial mythosphere.

Through its mystical dialectic - fructified by the heritage of prophetic mission and intended to conclude in the implosive subversion of protracted historical exile and in the beatific restoration of primal, dialogic, meta-history - Kabbalah also incorporates the apocalyptic convictions of traumatized mythological man. Here the apocalyptic anticipation is at the root of the prolonged labors of supernaturally empowered adepts and is prepared for by exercising certain laws of the *coincidentia oppositorum*, specifically: *That which is above is like that which is below; that which is below sets in motion that which is above.* There is not only a particular consciousness here, but a sustained tension between pragmatic, piecemeal mending and transcendent liberation, active through righteousness and a holistic return to the ways of holiness as twin categories of contending and trust for the sake of the given and the possible, in which we are required to understand that righteousness in the first instance is a binary potency viewed as follows: God's ground for justice and mercy has been to give to each in its kind its portion, its way, cut distinctly from the fabric of creation, while the human ground for justice and mercy is not to cause suffering gratuitously - not to diminish the texture of this fabric of the procreative life force of burgeoning goodness as regards man, beast, or heavenly being.

The periodic domination of historical man's suspicion, and his technological progress, does not, in a face-off, disprove the reality of the soul/community, any more than it proves the exclusivity and permanence of the reductionary/competitive psychopolitical armor and machinery. There is actually no question involved pertaining to real versus unreal. This dishonestly phrased question is part of the spurious argument historical man puts forward in his own favor. The honest question or questions of direction are about balance replacing extravagance, meaningfulness penetrating denial, and dialogic sanctification extending the dynamics of mutuality and reversing the trek toward global extinction, which today lurks behind all forms of politicized isolation, aggression, and exploitative identification.

In this light, it has grown to vital importance for those of us moving from our "thrownness" in collectives of depredation, apathy, and destruction, and mov-

ing toward intentional associations of ecological responsibility and mythological reenchantment, to remember that the soul (one of the earliest strata witnessed for from the most ancient recesses of memory) is a steward in love, while the intellect is the titan of envy.

When the soul is responsible for decision making, it activates the extended-self as experiencer of wonder. The soul is respectful, reverential, reconciliatory. When the intellect assumes charge of reality, it tries to promote its artificial extension systems and monopolize regulation over a world of enmassed and massified sameness.

Here then, in the foregoing aphorisms and reflections, is fertile soil for a philosophy of culture. What a philosophy is includes its ontic premises and intentions, and reveals its attitude toward otherness (wilderness, God, bio- and cultural diversity, dimensionality, etc.). What a culture is shows us the psychological structure of its adherents and expresses the kind and quality of human being it values and rewards. Without reservation, historical culture is no friend of intense and organic, experience formulated memory and is no friend of the imagination in the service of such a memory. Forgetting, or being smoothly "played out" of significant remembering is necessary for the security of the repetition of the ideological patterns of an historical civilization.

In expose, Kabbalah, the main vehicle of Jewish shamanic transportation, contains the following myth. At the beginning of the beginning, when *Ein Sof*, the Unending, was ready to lay the foundations of the four levels of reality and create all the rich and powerful diversity that is creation, *Ein Sof*, the Unending, first emanated a cosmic anthropos, *Adam Kadmon*, prototypical, universal man. Adam of the Garden of Eden was this same aboriginal creature, only incredibly diminished in stature. Yet in both the guise of *Adam Kadmon* and the Adam of Paradise, primordial man had a form composed entirely of light. Indeed, it is only in the hour before the first exile of history that Adam and Eve were shrunk down further into physical bodies. As it is written: "And the Lord God made garments of skins for Adam and his wife..." (Genesis 3.21).

The separated forces of darkness, also called degrees of death, mimicked the work of the Creator and fashioned a gigantic, shadow-clone, *Adam Beliyya'al*, patriarch of lies, a handler of trick mirrors. The serpent in the Garden was this same *Adam Beliyya'al*, whose jealousy possessed the thoughts of Cain and whose malicious will produced Lamech, father of the blacksmith, Tubal-Cain. Of Lamech it is written: "If Cain is avenged sevenfold/Then Lamech seventy-sevenfold." (Genesis 4.24).

This is the language of metaphor, and it is epic. But metaphor is of the oldest methods of human learning. It is, indeed, the prolific articulation of how and why we belong, giving expression, through sight and sight stimulated intuition, to the imagination of motion, the verbal weaving of the tapestry of earth habitation and the deep wisdom of the interlacement and intercourse of identity,

otherness and action.

Thus: What is the soul? What is the intellect?

The soul is each person's temple of concord, joy and integrity. Whoever resides in this human holy of holies and is guided by the soul's vivacity becomes a look of light to their generation, a tongue of flame and a hand of healing in the midst of affliction. Because it is by the power of the eyes, the power of speech and the power of touch that the soul is primarily revealed and shared.

The intellect, which should be a pliant servant of receptivity for the infusion of the noble soul (even as ordinary consciousness is but an archipelago in the vast ocean of virtual psyche) has, instead, become the master of trepidation and the foundry within which strategies and means of war are conceived. As the champions of subjugation and monologic ambition have told us, "All things are in strife and man is the measure of all things."

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