

"Dream Tending: Behind Today's Visible World"

There is much disturbance in the world today, there is also disorder in the world behind the world, in the realm of the dream time. We find ourselves in a world filled with difficult contradictions. Torn between helplessness and outrage, despair and hope, we each struggle to make sense out of what, at times, seems senseless. We feel the impotence created by the isolation and separation that results from being caught between vastly polarized perspectives and interests. Bridges are hard to find, meaning difficult to establish. Perhaps the one remaining unifying experience is our empathy for those who are suffering so much at this moment. In our grief, we join with others in a way that transcends time, place, and identity. And extraordinary things happen when we experience the commonality of heartfelt sorrow -- a portal opens, and we gain access to the deeper sources of our humanity. In these intimate pools of sadness and loss we open to the realm of consciousness that is informed by the dream.

In the dream world behind the visible world, the figures of soul are also in a state of upheaval. These images, too, suffer the injury of irreconcilable contradiction. They are also touched by the intolerable and are in pain. Be it the dream entity of sage, angel, wise teacher or the presence of tyrant, terrorist, intruder; for each, a wound has opened, conflict is present. These constituents (makers) of the world behind the world are in need of us, as we are of them.

Perhaps now, more than ever, we are asked to remember the eternal wound of the mythic Centaur Chiron, the divine physician, or Asklepios, his student, the Wounded Healer and practitioner who is conveyer between the two worlds. Both are patrons to those who follow the healing ways of the dream. It is from their pathos, their suffering, that they recover that which is required for healing. Deep in the wound comes the knowledge that the medicines of the soul are found in the complexity of the eternal moment, not in the salvation or redemption of the one-sided and virtuous. In the province of soul, healing is not found in the inflation of the heroic at the expense of the dispossessed; it is not as simple as good conquering evil.

As tenders of dream, we too, are asked to work out of the experience of our wound. In our rawness is an uncertainty which forces our reconnection to the deeper resources of healing. We rediscover the innate knowledge of valuing the dance of opposites. We are asked to hold the many aspects alive in each image, to listen to the anguish of the horrific and the promise of the generative. We are asked to suspend judgment and take

time with each dream figure, angelic or demonic, and to see and listen into the complexity at play in its diverse nature. In our wounds (our experience of the inferior or inadequate) dwell the buds of desire, and in the generative (our experience of the inspirational or transcendent) live the seeds of depth and descent.

We, who are tenders of the dream, are called to sustain the teachings rooted in the lineage of the Wounded Healer Asklepios and to work the intersection between the outer and inner worlds. Our responsibility is to the metaphoric language of the psyche. For, in the symbolic and animated, we hear the ingenuity of the poetic as it weaves betwixt and between the many aspects of the fixed and singular position. We offer back to the world the many perspectives and subtleties abundant in each image. That the true "intelligence" of the dream, the tremendous value of images is in their limitless possibility.

When split off from imagination, from the life of soul, our tendency is to objectify, literalize, and to take a position of "certainty." Of course, as we calcify around a singular imperative of the "right" (vs. "wrong") we close down to diverse points of view, adopt a "position of conscience," and displace the demonic. We do so by either projecting the intolerable out into the world or, at times, by falling into a possession state of identification where we become its embodiment. The logical extension of these life positions is either to get sick and/or to wage war.

To live a life sourced in dream, however, is different. It is a way of living that is shaped by the presence of image. When companioned by the immediacy of the dream we sustain connection to the ground of Being itself. A compassion of the heart opens and a way of knowing is revealed that makes possible a voice and a place for the intolerable. In the way of dream, we know suffering not as a vehicle for revenge or domination but as a portal to the depths and promise of the life of psyche. When experienced as a psychic reality, rather than manifested as a literal enactment, the horrific has a purpose in the life of the soul. The "dreaded one" is viewed as he/she who brings the "fall from grace," or "monstrous proportions," or the "heat of battle" -- all useful stirrings in the activity of soul. When animated as a figure of psyche there is appropriate intent for the quickening of imagination and the activation of the creative/destructive juices so vital to the life force. When images are tended in the way of the dream, we do not rush so quickly into the literal and into the terrible thirst for war, making the image into the external "other," the enemy.

In the field of dream, we take the time to listen, to be present, to deepen. We allow our curiosity to become active, our intuition engaged,

and we entertain the multiplicity of possibilities. Our eyes turn from focused to soft, and we see broader landscapes -- wider vistas in which the beauty of diverse peoples, creatures, and things can thrive and be appreciated. With relationship to the soul comes bemusement, and we enjoy the presence of that which is strange or unfamiliar. In tending the dream, we pause, become patient, and host the visitation of the guest. Who is visiting now? What is happening here? We get curious, deepen relationship, and engage in dialog. At the end of the day, and into the night, our long standing disposition of fear gives way to an instinct of care and we experience the presence, the intent, and the tenderness of the eternal images, the figures of the soul.

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