

SYMBOLIC LITERACY



If thou wilt know the invisible open wide thine eyes on the visible – Kabalistic Adage

Humans are destined to rise to the level of cosmic consciousness. Each one is destined to actualize the level of the “Meta-Human.” This ascent from the present “embryonic” state cannot, however, be activated by will, desire, or any other conscious force. It comes as a necessary predicate to human organic existence and is circumscribed by the inviolate laws of nature. Its impulse lies seed-like within the deepest strata of the Being. We cannot force the lotus to grow against its true nature nor force human consciousness to develop in one specific direction, at one particular rate. Attempted intervention and control of this kind results only in confusion, calamity, and ruin.

If we find our natural organic development being stunted, impeded, or in a static state, it follows that there is a reason for the predicament. Man’s retrograde spiritual development is, in the mind of this author, not occurring due to the lack of desire for attaining it or because of Man's failure to comprehend his ontology intellectually. It is, in fact, due to subtle impediments occluding its dynamic movement. Until these impediments are removed all the secondary incentives, strategies, or preoccupations in the world are not going to avail it. During the sixties, for instance, the prevailing mood among the sensitive was that western man was approaching the denouement of his moral and spiritual evolution. Drugs and drug-taking were, at that time, even considered a means to this end. Yet, in spite of such diversions into pseudo-shamanism, despite the good intentions, the healthy mass rebellion, fine catch-phrases, and the “do or die” conviction of so many intellectuals and counter-cultural pundits, mankind still finds itself in a worse state, morally and spiritually, than it was just thirty or so years ago. Today, we find that the reactive excursion into the fields and philosophy of technology may be for the most part, as predicted, yet another escape, yet another dead-end. Technology as we see it today, for all its utilitarian benefits, is hardly bringing people together, hardly fostering social cohesion. Amongst the youth the digital “revolution” merely reinforces estrangement and the “masculine” modes of expression and cognition. This does not mean that it has to go, for the technology behind the internet, for instance, is a valuable "flaming sword" to be used by the forces of "Light" in the meta-battle that is taking place on this planet and whose end-game is definitely in sight.

Since the nineteenth century scientists have spent a great amount of time and energy delving into the paleological and anthropological records, questing after the origins of peoples and races. Many important discoveries have been made. Ethnologists know

something of the manner in which forbearers lived and loved on a day-to-day basis, while biologists and archaeologists can even tell us what they ate and wore. However, little do we still know about the *thinking* of the ancients. We know very little about the way they *communicated* amongst themselves and hoped to communicate to others that they knew would be coming after. We know that the ancients did have so much to communicate to their descendents. The testimony in stone, as well as in painting, music, folklore, etc., is all there to see and inspire. But the twentieth century is possibly the worst vantage point for regarding the past. The intellectual vanity of our times distorts rather than clarifies the vision of the past. We must not forget that the ancestors were technologically advanced and obviously considerably more-so than we are today. Obviously, it took a sublime technology to construct the Giza Pyramid and to map the heavens. Along with the technology of the ancients was the reliance on, and understanding of, great metaphysical principles. In the ancient world magic and science were never separate. The great megalithic sites were designed and constructed by theologically advanced races, by semi-enlightened priests and priestesses, not by rich technocrats and atomistic scientists. These great cyclopean treasures of marble, granite and sandstone are temples and shrines to human beings who intuited no separation between macrocosmic and microcosmic phenomena.

When it came to communication we do know that the ancients were not so interested in words and speech. They were more concerned with symbols, colors, rhythms, numbers, geometry, and with dance and music. In Egypt, for instance, the highest priestesses were court musicians. The greatness of the ancestors lay in the ability to convey the most abstract philosophical concepts via composite symbols. As this writer has detailed elsewhere, no modern form of constructive intellection could even have come into being without these bequeathments. The success and skill of the ancestors in figurative and iconic communication alone lays to rest the idea that they were superstitious primitives. Now today it is unacceptable that throughout western society where all manner of symbols proliferate, there is massive symbolic *illiteracy*. Everything else, it seems, is prioritized. So, in light of this we do not feel redundant in asking how the edifice of the personal intellect may be established and oriented correctly when the very foundations are weak or mis-aligned? If we do not own our own thoughts we cannot own our own actions. It follows that someone else will.

This is the secret of propaganda. Those who are to be persuaded by it should be completely immersed in the ideas of the propaganda, without ever noticing that they are being immersed in it – Joseph Goebbels (Nazi Minister of Propaganda)

Children, as “tomorrow’s consumers...represent a huge market today” and therefore are “fair game” for corporations, says Lucy Hughes or, as another advertising executive puts it, “They aren’t children so much as what we like to call ‘evolving consumers’ - Joel Bakan (*The Corporation*)

Without inheriting and absorbing the Gnosis of symbolism the individual intellectual apparatus can never move toward the prehension of wisdom. As J. Krishnamurti, Carl Gustav Jung, Joseph Campbell, and others have warned, it is simply not possible. And as Wilson Brian Key, Vance Packard, Jane Kilbourne, Marshall McLuhan, Douglas Rushkoff, and others have detailed, the psyche of entire generations can be contaminated by the subversive use of symbols. Some have asked why there are no “Beethoven’s” or “Blakes”

today. The reason is obviously because we are not, for the most part, involved in cultivating the kind of holistic mentation that brings the conscious mind into harmonious dialogue with the other parts of Being. As Wilhelm Reich has pointed out we are not even experiencing integration of the somatic level let alone the noetic. The authority structures of the day are doing everything possible to make sure that the psychic scission is augmented. A look at the preoccupations and mores of today's teen-culture is enough evidence of this tragedy for those with the eyes to see. Today, the youth consider it chic to dress from head to foot in corporate logos with no idea what they really mean with most parents having no clue as to why the delinquency and deterioration is occurring. Teen delinquency began as Madison Avenue publicists and advertising agents gained control over the subconscious of the western child, over the strata of awareness that has long ceased to be nurtured by the sacred.

...our children are growing up in a toxic cultural environment, one made more toxic by advertising. No one can escape it, just as no one can escape air pollution or pesticides in our food...the world is fast becoming a global marketplace controlled not by individual governments but by transnational conglomerates interested only in profit. As we Americans export our economic system and our lifestyle, we also export the addictions, diseases, and psychological problems associated with it - our hazardous cultural environment - Jean Kilbourne (Can't Buy My Love)

Thanks to our social and educational institutions symbol illiteracy has been created and reinforced, for we repeat, it does not occur naturally and this most dangerous development in our personal and collective evolution, the lack of both telestic ritual and symbol literacy is met with by a frightening indifference from those in the position to do something about it. We almost seem programmed to move from exclusively private aspirations and it is, for the most part, unthinkable to us that the mediocre activities and escapes of our lives can be laid completely aside in favor of the revivification of the long lost symbol literacy that really bestows lucidity and meaning to the biographical and collective or biological life. This incredible mediocrity of all we do, though cleverly disguised by the media's barrage of fantasy and the millions of dollars that are thrown into passé distractions, is the symptom of each person living in forgetfulness of their own *inner* being. Centuries of religion, philosophy, psychology and psychoanalysis, of scientific and medical "cures" have done little to truly enrich mankind. They have, for the most part, served only to maintain the semblance of abnormality that passes for normality in societies that are rapidly heading for their own cultural and perhaps even physical immolation. As Alfred North Whitehead lamented: *The major advances in civilization are processes that wreck the societies in which they occur.*

If one values human life, one cannot value its destroyers - Ayn Rand

In individuals, insanity is rare, but in groups, parties, nations and epochs it is the rule - Fredrick Nietzsche

We inhabit a Universe that no amount of scientific exploration is ever going to fully comprehend. This much has been scientifically and mathematically proven. As the knowledge of left-hemisphere cognition increases so does the amount of human ignorance. Mathematical equations have even been found which delineate this. And need we add that the very means of gaining scientific knowledge is often profoundly uneconomical and

destructive. The physical and applied sciences that are meant to be, and pose as being, impartial and objective are constantly found to be subservient to the control of power monopolies, corporations, and even secretive governmental "think-tanks" which make sure that the research follows their often perfidious agendas. Luckily, the metaphysical sciences and arts are, comparatively, not yet so underwritten. It is obvious that if we are really to apprehend the great underlying truths, the metaphysical and occult sciences are the most attractive means to do so. It is for this reason that the "New Age" movement, though retarded by its initial fallacies and fantasies, came into being. Once it becomes proactive and disciplined, instead of reactive and chaotic, as it is succeeding to become, discoveries of real importance to all on the planet will be forthcoming and transmittable. These truths will be universal and not reserved to one's class or financial and intellectual status.

Man seeks ever to increase his knowledge but tends to overlook the fact that his mind must forget as it learns. Knowledge comes to us but it is a knowledge gained through narrow left-brain cognitive abilities, though exclusion, partiality, and fragmentation, and not from seeing the world as it actually is. Dream is the closest most of us come to the reservoir of ancestral knowledge and knowing, to that "Akashic Record" which lies within the unconscious and on a biologically cellular level. When we finally manage to consciously utilize our Right-Brain capacities we will, like the ancients, be able to see reality as it is and end the "subject versus object" dichotomy which holds us from a true and direct rapport with life.

As we do discover more and more about the way of the ancients we also understand how foolish it was to imagine that our present customs, religious notions and ideals have anything in common with the ancients, the makers of civilization. We are descended from them but we have not emulated them or benefited from the wisdom they have left for us. Their ideas of deity and of the mysteries of being and universe would not find comparison in today's "Age of Entertainment" or as Gore Vidal terms it "The Age of Amnesia." However, one thing that can still be gleaned and embraced from the days of the high cultures is the symbolic iconic dimension of expression which ultimately leads us individually and collectively back to psychic integration. The western world's collective psychic profile is patently autistic and narcissistic as any with the psychological background can see. We are technologically advanced and spend much time congratulating ourselves because of it. Nowadays there is even talk of "man created man" as the genetic sciences and approach become vogue. Science prides itself on its incessant search for perfection, the implication being that man is not *already* perfect. However, the contrary is true. Man *is* perfect just as he is until he becomes *programmed* to believe otherwise. We cannot hear the voice within that tells us of our own perfection due to the clamor of the world which violates and numbs the senses, and which grows ever more obnoxious and all-pervasive as time goes by. We cannot see perfection in anything or in anyone while our own thoughts and intelligence is poisoned with doubt and self-abnegation. We no longer recognize the utter perfection of nature while we exist in a state of *inner* disorder. The man riddled with inner anxiety, envy, and sadism is in no position to heal the world. The man estranged from his own selfhood, living on the periphery of being cannot be strong. He may cleave to the "hand rails" provided by society and may vote for those who promise him a nation of greater strength and security, but he will always be inherently impotent and vulnerable, mentally, morally, and spiritually.

Advertising is designed to generate an inner sense of conflict with the self - Bernard
McGrave PhD

*Never before have so few been in a position to make fools, maniacs, or criminals of so
many* - Aldous Huxley (*The Devils of Loudan*)

As the numerology of the Tarot's Major Arcana reveals, the Twenty-First Century is the time when the human race comes full circle. And endings invite new beginnings. In this new century the teachers will be those who have understood the mystery of themselves as well as the mysteries of science and nature. They will be revealers rather than deceivers and inner-directed individuals rather than controlled, regimented, and repressed role-players. They will be those who can provide healthy functional solutions to the problems that have beset their brothers and sisters. These solutions will be rooted in the wisdom of the ancients and will afford us the ability to make those necessary quantum leaps toward authenticity of life and performance. The Twenty-First Century may also be a time when history, as we know and knew it, comes to an end. Indeed, the world around us is changing faster than ever. Some even think that time is "speeding up." As existentialist psychiatrist R. D. Laing wrote: *We live in a moment of history where change is so speeded up that we begin to see the present only when it is already disappearing.*

It is, lamentably, somewhat naive to expect the sciences to be governed by Gnostic visionaries, rather than anti-human technocracies of power. It is also unwise to expect those still addicted to, and hungering for, power, and wealth to be concerned with the planet's overall welfare, or for psychotic corporations to cater to the spiritual needs of the under-classes they seek to enslave and dehumanize. However, it is still a good policy to expect positive changes ahead especially on the grass-roots level and to expect man to discover within himself powers and abilities that have long been dormant. Mankind can always be certain to surprise itself. In any case, the door to social justice is *always* unlocked and each person holds the key. The door to self-realization is, likewise, always ajar for all the heedless passers-by. Some willingly enter in from the chaotic and odorous "market-place" of the world. Others become their own "Pharisees." They fear to enter themselves and use all manner of guile to prevent others from entering therein.

Man may cease in his insane desire to peer into the future when he understands the magnitude of what he has already been given by his forebearers and when he fully and deeply grasps the vital importance of the present moment in which he lives and breathes. The man who understands the sanctity and value of the NOW wastes no time, not even a moment, worrying about tomorrow's world or the quest for "perfection." For the authentic self, tomorrow does not exist, and man is *already* perfect. It is the ignorance that prevents awareness of this fact that concerns the rational man. The higher guides of such a man are continuously teaching and caring for his welfare. They teach quietly by symbol and intimation, by dream and vision. The man who listens and heeds his numinous guides is instructed in the Art of Life and not merely the mechanics of it. His life becomes a *living* mandala of many petals and colors, one that cannot be erased by time or death.

*We shall not cease from exploration,
And the end of all our exploring,
Will be to arrive where we started*

And know the place for the first time.
T. S. Eliot (*Quartets*)

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