

9. Things at their Depth

“One day the religion of Christ will take another step forward on earth. It will embrace the whole man, all of him, not just half as it does now in embracing only the soul.” Nikos Kazantzakis

What I need to remind myself of every Sunday, when I take the Eucharist, is that by so doing “I am become the living moving tabernacle, just like the Ark of the Covenant; my heart drives the laws into actuality.”

- That is if I have come to the table descending, letting go, and unlearning, and making space for the Holy (Nethgadash Shmakh)
- Knowing and loving Jesus is largely about becoming fully human, wounds and all, instead of ascending Spiritually or thinking I can remain unwounded (not experiencing disorder?) or climbing out of the worldview of the soul, Incarnation.
 - Throughout his life, Jesus himself spent no time climbing, but a lot of times descending . . . “emptying himself and becoming as all humans are” (Philippians) “tempted in every way that we are” (Hebrews 4:15) and “living in the limitation of weakness” (Hebrews 5:2)

The Divine Map

- God hides in the depth and is not seen as long as we stay on the surface of anything . . . even the depths of our sins.
- The story of Thomas and the Risen Jesus is about believing that someone could be wounded and also resurrected at the same time! We are also wounded and also resurrected at the same time!
- As a human being, Christ has something in common with all creatures..
 - With the rocks he shares existence,
 - With plants he shares life,
 - With animals he shares sensation,
 - And with angels he shares intelligence.”
- St Francis saw all things in the visible world as endless dynamic and operative symbols of the Real, a theater and training ground for heaven that is already available (d’bwashmaya off b’arha)
 - What you have now you will have later
 - A living experience of right now.
 - We must love God through, in, with, and even because of this world. We were made to love and trust this world to cultivate it and to take care of it. (Geneses 2: 15)

God empties himself into creation (Philippians 2:3), and then we humans spent most of history creating systems to control and subdue that creation for our own purpose and profitability, ravaging the divine pattern.

- The necessary starting place for any healthy spirituality and any true development, observe, touch, love the physical, the material, the inspired universe – in all of its suffering state.
- To stay on the surface of anything is invariably to miss its message – even the surface meaning of our sinfulness.
- God wants all humans to represent the very **Sympathy** and **Empathy of God**. And it is okay if it takes a while to get there.
- The central message: “God loves things by becoming them. We love God by continuing the same pattern.”

Always and Only the Incarnation

(or our paradigm shift thereto?)

We tend to “Condemn it over there instead of own it over here.”

- Heresies = deny Incarnation – under mining it with heady spiritualism or pious romanticism over there (Gnosticism)
- A literal belief in the virgin birth translates into a spirituality of interior poverty, readiness to conceive, and human vulnerability. Otherwise there is no salvation or transformation.
- Jesus resurrection from the dead is a human story, otherwise there is no salvation

In today’s technology we are acquiring and accessing more of the skies, we need to go into the depth of things – and to find God’s Spirit there. i.e.

Psychology, trained spiritual directors, The Enneagram, Myers Briggs typology, grief and bereavement work, or other models such as integral Theory or wilderness training are examples of depth exercises.

- These tools help us to examine and to trust interiority and depth as never before

We have freedom and permission and the tools to move toward depth as few people ever had in human history. What a shame it would be if we did not use them. The best way out is if we have first gone in.

- The only way we can trust up is as if we have gone down.

- That had been the underlining assumption of the male initiation rites since ancient times, but today, such inner journey's basic initiation experiences are often considered peripheral to true religion.

Paul and Jesus trusted their own experience of God against the status quo of their own Jewish religion. That faith in and of itself was their authenticity.

- The New Testament faith was, in effect, written by two men who relied on their inner experience of God.
- You can only reform things long term by unlocking them from inside – by their own chosen authoritative sources.
- The full mystery of incarnation points to the depth of things, the fullness of things, the soul of things, and what some have called the “angels of things.” Totems and rituals are only early sign-post.
- An “angel” is the inner spirit or soul of a thing. Through this notion we see the elements, animals, the earth, water, and skies.
- We need to reconstruct, and not just continue to deconstruct, Then you will see angels everywhere.

Permission to Go “In” and “Down”

There must be a way because Jesus is the here and Christ is the depth of here.

- The essence of incarnation, and the gift of contemplation.
- We must learn to love things as they are, with their soul, and in their fullness. You know it by the joy of it gives.
- Once it is known that the miracle of “word made flesh” has become the very nature of the universe, one cannot help but be both happy and holy. What we, first of all, need is here!

It really ends up being all or nothing, here and then everywhere.

Respect, Wonder, Reverence

Any object that calls forth respect or reverence is the “Christ” or the anointed One for us at that moment.

- Respect is to see a second time . . . we all know it when we see it.
- We all know reverence because it softens our gaze.
 - All people who see with that second kind of contemplative gaze, all who look at the world with respect are en-Cristo, whether they consider themselves religious or not.
 - Because for them the gate of heaven is everywhere – all the time.