

PATHWAYS TO BLISS

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Book Notes
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Chapter Five – Personal Myths

What Myth Do I Live By?

Finding it, learning what it is, riding on it....

“It struck me what it means to live with a myth, and what it means to live without one....so, in the most natural way, I took it upon myself to get to know my myth, and this I regarded as my task of tasks.”

- Carl Jung

Each of us has an individual myth that is driving us, which we may or may not know.

Mythological images or stories are that by which consciousness is put in touch with the unconscious – the soul. That’s what they do. When you don’t have your own mythological images, or when your consciousness rejects them for some reason or another, you are out of touch with your own deepest part of yourself.

Mythic images come from the psyche and speak to the psyche – not from historical events.

You might ask yourself this question: *If I were confronted with a situation of total disaster, if everything I loved and thought I lived for were devastated, what would I live for?*

What is the great thing for which you would give your life? What makes you do what you do? What is the call of your life to you? Do you know it?

We have to find that particular thing which, in truth, works for us as individuals. Now, how does one do this?

Survival, security, personal relationships, prestige, self-development – these are exactly the values that a mythically inspired person doesn’t live for.

A person who is truly gripped by a calling, by a dedication, by a belief, by a zeal, will sacrifice his personal security, his personal relationships, prestige, and will think nothing of personal development – he will give himself entirely to his myth.

The awakening of awe is key here, being seized by something so that you are pulled out of where you've been.

It is not always easy or possible to know by what it is that you are seized. You will find yourself doing silly things, and you have been seized but you don't know what the dynamics are.

You have to be struck by that awakening of awe, of fascination, of that experience of the mystery – the awareness of your bliss.

If you want to find out what the myth is by which you are living, what you want to find out is what that unconscious or subliminal thing is that makes you do those peculiar, irrational things and giving you problems that your consciousness has to resolve.



With communication, the mystical experience begins.

The beginning of a mythic world or a mythic tradition is a *seizure* – something that pulls you out of yourself, beyond yourself, beyond all rational patterns. It is out of such seizures that civilizations are built. Look at our monuments. Look at the Pyramids, the great Cathedrals.

That awakening of awe, the awakening of zeal, is the beginning, and, curiously enough, that's what pulls people together.

Two things pull people together: aspiration and terror. These are what glue a society together.

What has happened to our community zeal?

How do we find this thing in ourselves, that which truly moves us? The primary reference for a myth is the psyche, to the spirit. They come from that and speak to that.

When the awe and the zeal and the human mind yearning to know are awakened, a new sense of what it is to be human is born.

Contemplating a particular symbol or image places the mind in a certain plane of consciousness, which activates deeper spiritual powers in the individual. Everybody is ready for an experience unlike that of anyone else.

The symbol which you are ready for evokes a particular response in you.

In our tradition, however, these images and symbols have been applied to historical events. Mystery does not refer to something that might or might not have happened at a certain time in a certain place.

When we lose our mythic symbols, we have lost the vehicle for communication between our waking consciousness and our deepest spiritual life. We then have to re-discover and re-activate the symbols, to bring them back to our lives, to find out what it means to us, to relate it to ourselves in one way or another.

The big thing is to activate your imagination somehow. You have to find out what your own unconscious wants to meditate on. We each need to find a way to explore those places within the psyche from which the mysteries of our lives come.

Your ego consciousness is forced to be confronted by and wrestle with these overwhelming mysteries – the cosmos, death, and your own depths. These themes are universal.



For every mythological symbol, there are two aspects to be distinguished: the universal and the local.

A mythologically grounded culture presents you with symbols that immediately evoke your participation.

The Dogma of Mutual Arising – that which you think happened to you, you brought about. That which you did to others, happened to you.

The whole function of mythic imagery is to propel people into the realm of mystery, fascination, wonder and awe. Viewing them in a purely physical or biological way pulls us down again; it punctures and deflates the image.

We bear within us the potential for an utterly different level of experience, a level that can come to us in a moment.

A symbol or image that is alive for us is at the end of a beam of mystery that comes from the depths of the universe.

So first you must find in yourself that which moves you. And it should move you in a way appropriate for your stage of life.

When the world around you fails to invoke your mythic participation, you must either turn inward, or to a wilderness setting, spaces that support the revelation of your own depths to you.

Something begins to burn to find out about your own zeal, to find your own destiny, and to live it. Something wants to identify with the consciousness of that which you truly are. Something will want to come forth.

We have to find the zeal within ourselves and bring that forth. That is what has been given to us, and our one life with which to live it.

THE FOUR FUNCTIONS OF MYTH IN TRADITION AND TODAY

- 1) To awaken in the individual a sense of awe and mystery and gratitude for the ultimate mystery of being,

In the old traditions, it was about saying 'yes' to the world as it is. Life as a terrible ordeal in which we must bear suffering.

- 2) To present to us a universe within which a sense of mystery and wonder is present, so that everywhere you look is a holy picture, opening up to the backdrop of the great mystery of creation.
- 3) To provide a sociological way of living among the people and culture of your current time.
- 4) To provide a pedagogy that gives an individual a way to connect the inner psychological world to the external world of phenomena, throughout one's life time.

The way to find your personal myth is:

- *To find and know your zeal,*
- *To find your vehicle and your support for that zeal,*
- *To know what stage of life you are in.*

Don't try to live your life too soon. Wisdom has to come gradually.

What is it that we are questing for? It is the fulfillment of that which is potential in each of us. Questing for it is not an ego trip; it is an adventure to bring into fulfillment your gift to the world, which is yourself.

"There is nothing you can do that's more important than being fulfilled. You become a sign, you become a signal, transparent to transcendence; in this way, you will find, live and become a realization of your own personal myth."

