

On the Hard Fate of the Gentle in Mind

PART 2

A. THE SOUL

IN PART 1, WE SAW how easy it is for the gentle in mind to collapse in the face of the difficulties they meet in life.

Society, however, definitely gives us the superficial impression that it protects the disabled, the physically ill, the mentally ill, the elderly and the like. There is an army of social workers, nurses, doctors, psychiatrists, physiotherapists, and psychologists taking care of those who are in need. What about the highly sensitive? Well, they are cared for by psychotherapists who are trained for that.

But what kind of treatment do they give? Is it empathy, support, and human warmth? Or do they, in fact, try to bring their clients back to full function in society, despite their high sensitivity?

Meanwhile, those special individuals carry on in their lives, where almost everything, from the facial expression of people in the street, to how other people greet them, to their effort to find a parking place – almost everything injures the soul of these highly sensitive people.

The part of them which is highly vulnerable and to which hardly anyone pays attention, is the soul.

What is this soul? Well, it is difficult to define. We could say that it is the part of the human which is denied by all that is loud, superficial, and mediocre in our everyday life. Almost everything ignores the soul, is irrelevant to it. To put it more affirmatively, most of what the soul encounters is several degrees below its level of refinement.

It is difficult to talk about the soul, for it is not definable. But perhaps by analogy: it is like a dew drop, transparent and small, but in encounters with normal reality, the dew drop is cast under a steamroller ...

And the soul of gentle, fine people is not only finer than average, but also pervades them more. They are less able to deny the soul, since it populates a larger part of their being.

In the physical, technical world, big and pervasive means strong and influential; in the world of the soul, big and pervasive means weak and vulnerable.

If the princess in the story “The Princess and the Pea” cannot sleep when the pea is under a hundred mattresses, then the highly sensitive sleep on hundreds of peas, with nothing but a single thin mattress to protect them.

Almost everything they meet in life shakes them, penetrates them, and imbalances the relationship between their soul and reality. And the soul, that is, their whole existence and being, remains constricted, because of the brutality and coarseness of what it finds in reality.

So much for the big soul of the gentle and refined.

B. TO BECOME A WARRIOR

Now, many readers would like to know: what can be done? If they are wondering this, they may themselves be highly sensitive people, or they may have a relative who fits this description, and therefore is heading towards a difficult life.

Well, what highly sensitive people need, is an individual savior and redeemer, but for that they can only lean on themselves, which means that they have no choice but to become a warrior who goes out into the world to defend the soul. They must do this to put a barrier between them and the coarseness and rudeness which threaten to penetrate them. But this should not come at the expense of loyalty to their fineness. It does, however, mean that they

have to live in duality: on the one hand to embrace their soul and to draw from it rejuvenation and identity, but on the other, to cultivate in them a medieval knight who goes out to defend the captive princess, or to use another analogy, to become a samurai warrior defending his shogun. But how is it possible to live in duality? Well, the duality reminds us of a Roman figure: the double-faced Janus.

One face turns inward, towards the soul. The other face is turned outward, towards society, towards the world. This means living in one world inside but acting in another world outside. And only if highly sensitive people succeed in doing that, can they survive, and thus allow their fragile soul an inner space.

And here we find a paradox: exactly the gentle and the highly sensitive, those who fall apart with almost every heavy load of coarseness or rudeness that falls on them, those whose whole being shakes with every hostility – these highly sensitive people are the ones who should become a race of noble warriors. Exactly them, especially them!

If they don't want to become wrecks, they must become warriors.

Warriors who defend the holy of holies: the sacred soul.

For them, the soul is more real than what they perceive on the outside.

But: before they can be warriors, they must first know who they really are and be at peace with this knowledge.

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PART 3

IN THE TWO PREVIOUS PARTS OF THIS SERIES, we considered the great power of society's norms and conventions to affect everyone's lives, but especially the lives of the gentle and fine (the highly sensitive), just *because* they are gentle and fine, and therefore different.

This idea is confirmed in the writings of the famous sociologist Emile Durkheim. He claimed that the study of people and their behavior should not only be concerned with elements which stem from the subject's personality structure and genetics, but also with society's influence.

In fact, Durkheim said that a person's behavior can be explained less by biological and psychological elements than sociologically. One of the explanations he gives for this is that general human behavior remains the same, while all the time specific human beings (with very specific biological and psychological characteristics) die and are replaced by other individuals. What does not change is the great power of the social structure, public opinion, and social norms; this great influence upon human beings remains. It is true that the social structure and the norms themselves can change, but not their incredible influence on the life of the individual. They have a correcting power, they impose themselves upon us, and thus they bypass our willpower.

There are very powerful social limitations and demands on everyone, but they remain hidden. They come to the surface only when these social demands are violated in one way or another. And then sanctions are put upon the individual, and in this way social priorities are channeled towards him or her. According to Durk-

heim's claim, these demands come in the name of very solid social facts, even if they are not evident in an outward clear way. These facts are defined, he said, as "every way of action, fixed or not, that has the ability to impose upon the individual external limitations."

Durkheim understood that it is not so much that individuals design the nature of the society in which they want to live, but more that society designs people's individual lives.

He saw society as an entity that has an existence and power of its own, beyond the private life of every individual. It is a kind of eternal entity that continues to exist even after the death of the individuals whose life it is designing.

Durkheim believed that even the motive to lead a religious life is not necessarily an affinity between the individual and God, but the affinity between the individual and society.

It is interesting to ponder how it is that society manages to influence us in such a way. There is nothing external (no one is putting anyone in prison), and yet it is so effective. How does it work? How does the social machinery work? How does it draw people in and "kick out" those who do not conform? What is the mechanism?

Well, the answer is intriguing: one of the ancient ways to control the behavior and consciousness state of people is through rhythm. Tribes would put dancers into very powerful states of mind by movement according to a certain rhythm for hours. It is said that the heart rhythm of the mother calms the baby in the womb. Research shows that even the heart rhythms of a loving couple are synchronized and become identical. Indeed, if we look at a loving couple, we can notice clearly that they move in synchronization to the same rhythm. The rhythm of traffic on roads increases blood pressure. Rhythm affects us unconsciously, goes straight into the brainstem. Rhythms also influence the speed of the flow of blood and our emotional and mental state. If we have not met a friend for a long time then, usually, we don't get along easily, and a video will show that we are not moving in harmony, our rhythms create a dissonance.

And now back to the gentle and fine. Well, beyond the reasons

already examined, the main reason for their difficult life is that they dance to a rhythm of a different drum, while, at the same time the majority is dancing to the rhythms of the social norm, or at least they have no problem adjusting to that rhythm. And there is a dissonance between the two rhythms: you cannot dance according to both. The majority adjusts, whereas for the highly sensitive it is very difficult; they hear, subconsciously, the social rhythm again and again but it is not absorbed. Their feet are moving to a very different rhythm. And the two rhythms clash, and this disturbs the movement of both. The gentle in mind are especially disturbed: they behave like a bull in a china shop. They drop things, bump into people, get lost, do not find an address, for they fail to apply the instructions for how to get to the destination. In short, they don't cope. And this shows itself in their relationships, their work, and generally in their lives.

And they don't understand: what are they doing wrong? Well, they are out of sync.

The rhythm of social life is graceless, mechanical, cold, monotonous, and flat. The rhythm is short and fast, it is the rhythm of organization, of a machine. Whereas the rhythm of the gentle and the fine is soft, deep, slow, and long. The wavelength here is long: the distance between the top of the wave and its bottom is not large. Everything happens in moderation, gradually.

And these people can live a whole life of crises and downfalls, not knowing they have these problems because they are special, that inside them there is a huge magnet disrupting the social rhythms and signals, that creates a kind of magnetic field of its own, in which they move differently.

And what is it like? It is like the flight of an airplane that has a very powerful magnet in it, which disrupts the signals sent to the pilot by the plane's instruments. The pilot is convinced that the plane is flying towards its destination, but instead it is far off course.

So much for the problem, but what can be done?

It is the view of this writer that the gentle in mind should be completely faithful to their original rhythm. They could not and

should not dance according to both rhythms, for this will make their life torture.

It is said that one cannot serve two masters. You need to make a choice, and if you cannot depart from the rhythm of your inner life, you should make the choice which is true to your nature, to be true to who you really are.

Of course, giving up the rhythms of the norms of society has a heavy price tag on it, but, in return, the gentle in mind will find at last their true home and sense of belonging, the place in which they can at last find peace.

But nevertheless, this will not really be possible without fulfilling another need: like a delicate plant or flower that needs the protected ecology of the greenhouse, the highly sensitive need to find the ecology of a group of people of their own kind.

It will by no means be easy to find or create such a group, but for them it is vital.

This kind of group could be called a “ring of strength” and it is created by men and women unified around the soul’s axis, motivated by soul principles. The soul is their governing queen.

And why is this group called “the ring of strength”? Because the power of a united group will be much stronger than the power or strength which each individual can manufacture alone.

This (quite rare and idealistic) group has no games or masks. Its members are authentic, motivated by the soul and moving to its rhythm. And because of that they are synchronized with the rhythms of the other members, and if one goes out of rhythm – the rhythm of the rest will synchronize him or her back.

They are comrades in the effort to fight against social sleep, and for the awakening of the soul.

They do not make too much “noise” so as not to attract social attention. They need humility, if not secretiveness. Too much exposure could harm their delicate fabric.

They need to take the advice of Mao Zedong: “Be shy as virgins and quick as rabbits.”

The group should conceal (at least in the beginning) its goals,

not talk (at least not in the beginning) about it. They should not talk about changing their state of consciousness or waking from sleep, and most definitely not about the fact that people, generally, live in a sleep state.

They know that when they talk about their goals, what they say should be easy to digest by the general mode of thinking.

In other words, they should be like the ancient alchemists, who under the guise of turning metal into gold, concealed their true goal, which was metamorphosis of consciousness.

They know they should not challenge the normal way of life, for it will not be allowed. A challenge will create objections.

It is easy for popular spiritual groups which do not challenge the existing norms to be accepted, to flourish.

And two more things:

One: this kind of a group needs a central figure, a leader or at least a member who is more advanced, until the group can live out their principles.

Two: the idea of this kind of group is utopia, for on the way to becoming such an idealistic group, they will experience numerous difficulties. The chief ones are power struggles, taking things personally, identifying with personal ups and downs, comparing themselves to others, competition and much more.

But still, the longing for such a “greenhouse” must never cease.