

Jung on the Shadow

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RUNNING HEAD: Jung on the Shadow

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Jung deliberately avoided metaphysical speculation as he preferred to stick to the empirical facts and establish his brand of psychology on a scientific basis. He was, in fact, successful in this endeavor, although his science fits more the paradigm of relativity theory and quantum physics than the outdated Newtonian cause and effect model. With regard to the Shadow, from one point of view, the totality of the unconscious can be considered to be the shadow; it is the ignorance, where every act of ignorance or human unconsciousness adds to evil in the world. This suggests that it is the specifically human task for individuals to become more aware of their portion of ignorance that is pressing upwards into consciousness. In terms of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, it is interesting to note how this relates to the fact that the Mother as Shakti is Consciousness-Force, which is opposed by the Asura of Ignorance, one of the two Asura's that was converted to the Divine.

According to Jung, "It is not by looking into the light that we become luminous, but by plunging into the darkness." "However," he went on to relate, this is often unpleasant work, and therefore not very popular (as reported in J. Monbourquette, 2001. p. 11)." He, likewise, noted that it is not the worship of beings of light, but by lighting up the darkness of mere being that is essential for the growth in consciousness. This is nothing other than a practical psychological application of Deshpande's (2009) eloquent observation regarding Sri Aurobindo's dictum that "it is that greater truth which must enter into the greater

darkness of the divine unawareness.” In fact, in support of his psychological findings, Jung often quoted John 1: 3-5 of the New Testament, which states: “*All that came to be had life in him/and that life was the light of men, /a light that shines in the dark, a light that darkness could not overpower (The Jerusalem Bible, 1966).*”

Jung’s approach was empirical, but involved an empiricism that includes not only conscious understandings and beliefs, but also the unconscious through dreams, true fantasy, and unconscious impulses and intuitions. For humans to participate in the divine task of becoming more conscious, they need to enter into the unconscious for the sake of consciousness, along with an ethical perspective that is capable of bringing conscious discernment and self-discipline to bear. The psychological work begins with a conscious scrutiny of one’s life to determine the appropriateness of one’s behavior vis à vis conscious values and beliefs. The next step requires becoming conscious of the personal shadow, which Jung defined as belonging to the personal unconscious, the home of repressed attitudes and values related to the individual’s personal history that might as well be conscious.

In terms of dream symbolism, the personal shadow is often depicted by figures of the same gender that dreamers were close to in their youth, such as a brother or a male friend for a man, and a sister or female friend for a woman. They typically represent disparaged, devalued or other aspects not considered relevant for one

reason or another, either as inferior or superior to the individual's identity. Integration of these aspects of the personal shadow is usually a positive act that widens one's consciousness and behavioral repertoire, whereas their remaining unconsciousness means impulsive and otherwise defensive and perverse behavior and functional one-sidedness. In other cases, there are negative shadow values that need to be dealt with consciously and deliberately, without denying their reality and influence in one's personal thoughts and activities, for example, as observed in personality and mood disorders and psychotic behavior or simply psychological one-sidedness. Without an effort at assimilation or becoming consciously aware of one's personal shadow, one projects "the beam in one's own eye" onto others and blames them or sees all the wrong in them... without doing anything about one's own misdoings or unassimilated shadow. With these brief comments, the reflective individual can readily understand the value of coming to terms with the personal shadow.

In addition to the personal unconscious, Jung posited the existence of a collective unconscious that includes a cultural unconscious and beyond any specific cultural horizon. Here there is the repository of both the cultural shadow or perhaps, better said, cultural shadows and the archetypal collective shadow. Cultural shadows include ethnic, national, racial, community, religious and institutional shadows. The importance of becoming conscious of one's personal participation in the cultural shadow is very evident today, with our history of feelings of racial superiority, tyranny, wars, terrorism, genocide and projecting evil

onto others of a different national, ethnic, religious or other viewpoint than that the one held by the perpetrator. From the point of view of the individual, participation in the projection of the cultural shadow is perpetuated through the inferior side of the psyche, the shadow in relationship with the inferior function. Thus, individuals with an inferior feeling function will be caught by inferior feeling and the inability to feelingly evaluate others and their quality of being. People with an inferior thinking function, on the other hand, will be caught by inferior thinking and be susceptible to irrational arguments as to their culture's or religion's superiority and the inferiority of the other's. And so on. Individuals support the cultural shadow by personal ambition, desire for power and general concupiscence.

Finally, there is the archetypal Shadow that is contained in the collective unconscious along with other archetypes of the objective psyche. Archetypes are great formative powers that make real things happen; they are formal factors that determine the way we apprehend the world and are blueprints for action. The archetype of the Shadow is the archetype of negation of all that is True, Good and Beautiful. In terms of Integral Yoga, this includes Falsehood that negates Truth, Death, that negates Being, Ignorance that negates Consciousness-Force, and Suffering that negates Bliss.

According to Jung, the further stages of the individuation process involve coming to terms with the Shadow side of God, about which, his book *Answer to Job*, is a

striking and invaluable tribute. In the Book of Job, he observed, the passionate dialogue between God and Job, leads to man being divinized and God humanized. Here, it is no longer a question of the individual coming to terms with God as Other, but of coming to terms with the Shadow side of God. In the final analysis, Jung (1975, p. 781) surmised, "Man's suffering does not derive from his sins but from the maker of his imperfections, the paradoxical God." In order to fully come to terms with the galling imperfection in the world, directly, that is, in each individual's immediate portion of the world, assimilating an individual relationship with the backside of the God-Image, without being overwhelmed or losing one's individual centre of being and connection with the light of consciousness, is essential. In terms of the manifest world, God is Light and Dark, Good and Evil, Love and Hate, Life and Death, all the opposites. The individual Self is the center and source of both creative and destructive forces. According to Jung, then, without including the Shadow side of God in one's quest for wholeness, one is both depriving God of half of His Being and there can be no humanization of God or divinization of human kind.

That God has a Shadow, although little acknowledged and less understood, represents a major breakthrough for the modern and postmodern minds. It is a notion that is especially difficult for the Western psyche, which, through Christianity, for some two thousand plus years, has been educated to believe that God is only Good. In the extreme, this has led to widespread religious

fundamentalism, on the one hand, and, on the other, a naïve liberal relativism, where everything goes, very prevalent in contemporary Pop culture. Thus, it is evident that Jung arrived at an important metaphysical position with practical value, always concerned with individual psychology and the need for the individual to assimilate the shadow at different levels of being.

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