

## David Myatt - A Desire To Know

*How would you sum up your life?*

A quest for knowledge, understanding and wisdom. A desire to know through direct, personal, experience. A learning from my errors, my mistakes, my experiences.

However, my life - until a few years ago - has also been subsumed with a certain arrogance, a certain hubris. For I have striven, for decades, to implement, to propagate, what I now understand are suffering-causing, un-empathic, causal abstractions.

Thus, in some ways, one could with some justification describe my life until recently as a kind of dialectic, between that quest - ἔνωσις - and my desire to change the world for the better, or what, at the time, I mistakenly considered was better.

*Many people - perhaps the majority - who have commented on your life seem to think that you have flitted from one ideology, from one religion, to another, and that therefore whatever you write is rubbish because you will have some new opinion tomorrow. How do you respond to this?*

What other people may think or believe or assume about me is irrelevant. Since early 2002 CE - when, following the ending of my third marriage, I went to live again, for many months, as a vagabond, a gentleman of the road - I have simply been trying to document as honestly as I can my experiences, my learning, my feelings, evident as these experiences, these feelings, are in the many private letters, the poems, and the personal writings, I have written since then.

Thus, the term *πάθει μάθος* in many ways describes what I have been doing for almost ten years: learning from experience; learning from the suffering I realized I have inflicted upon others; learning from the suffering I have inflicted upon myself because of my acceptance of my mistakes, my errors -

especially my error of having, for most of my adult life, been in thrall to abstractions, to idealism. Learning to forgo idealism, and learning instead to accept, to be, the empathy I have known, felt, for most of my adult life but which I suppressed or ignored because I stupidly, foolishly, accepted that some ideal, some goal, some idealized duty, was more important than love, and more important than someone, somewhere, suffering.

Now I know, I understand - I feel - that nothing whatsoever, no ideal, no goal, no perceived duty, no ideology, no dogma, no oath of loyalty, no chain of command, justifies inflicting suffering on any sentient being, on any human being, and that what is most important is empathy, compassion, honour, and a personal, a human, love. That it is our desire to cease to cause suffering, to not inflict any suffering, to love, that makes us human - and which is the essence of our humanity, the essence of culture, the essence of true civilization, and that there are not, there never can be, any excuses whatsoever for placing some ideal, some goal, some duty, some cause, some ideology, some dogma, before such love, before such empathy, before such compassion; that our duty to be human, to express our humanity through empathy, compassion, love and honour, comes before everything and anything else.

The results of my thinking, my learning from experience, are evident in my own, personal, and only recently completed *weltanschauung* which I have called The Numinous Way, with this Way being based on the virtues of empathy, compassion, personal honour and personal love.

Hence, in many ways, The Numinous Way represents what I have learnt from my own life-long quest for knowledge, understanding, and wisdom.

*Would you say then that The Numinous Way is a new philosophy?*

It is more a philosophy of life - a way of living - than a philosophy in the academic sense. As for being new - it just represents my own conclusions, and I shall let others decide just how "new" it is, since it seems to me to simply re-present certain truths which others have expressed in various ways throughout our human history.

*You mentioned direct, personal, experience. Would it therefore be correct to say that you deliberately became involved with certain ideologies, and religions, in order to gain personal experience of them?*

Yes - in respect of some such Ways, some such experiences. For I have always,

since a quite early age, felt that practical experience was the better way to know, to understand things.

Or, expressed another way, my personal nature, my character, was such that I preferred, I enjoyed, I sought, practical experience over and above theoretical study, as I mentioned in an earlier dialogue, *A Question of Empathy*, quod vide.

*Would you care to say anything particular concerning your learning from your practical experience of Islam, National Socialism, Christianity, and Buddhism?*

In respect of the Nazarene Way (the Nazarene faith) - and I am being somewhat pedantic here, in using the term Nazarene in preference to Christianity - I concluded that, while it is a powerful allegory, and while it could, especially in Catholicism in pre-Vatican II days, presence something of the numinous, it had also become over time a type of causal abstraction, where dogma, and especially reverence for scripture, came before empathy and before one's own personal and direct experience of ἔνωσις.

Furthermore, there is the belief of being saved - of being judged by a supra-personal, perfect, creator-being - so that the impetus for good deeds is often or mostly to do with one's own desire to be rewarded by this supra-personal, perfect, creator-being. That is, the motivation is often, or mainly, still personal, tied in with notions of, with the abstraction, of the self.

There is thus, for me, in this personal motivation, something lacking - and what is lacking is what I have described as the Cosmic perspective: that knowing of ourselves as but one nexion, one connexion, to Nature, to Life, to the Cosmos itself. There is thus, by knowing ourselves as a nexion, a moving-beyond the self; an appreciation, through empathy, of how we affect and can affect other Life, human and otherwise. There is also an appreciation of how we can and should further develop our empathy. However, and in particular, in such a Way as that of the Nazarene, there is little or no awareness of the *immediacy of the moment*, and thus a lack of knowing how all abstractions are or can be the cause of or contribute to suffering. A lack of knowing, in brief, of how empathy, honour, compassion - and thus ethics and law - cannot be abstracted out from the *immediacy of the moment*, from a personal interaction between human beings.

Furthermore, in The Numinous Way, there is a certain, a particular, solution to what has been termed *the problem of evil* - a solution that I, personally, am happy with, over and above the solution offered by both the Nazarene Way and

Islam.

For what applies to the Nazarene Way also applies to Islam. In respect of such matters as dogma, ethics, empathy, and so on.

Furthermore, in both Islam and in the Nazarene Way one has a reliance upon certain texts, which are open to interpretation and mis-interpretation, and thus there develops, and has developed, various schisms, and various conflicts, where certain individuals, and even particular groups, are considered to be heretics, or apostates, or wrong, and where certain very un-empathic things, and much suffering, human and otherwise, comes to be considered "justified".

In both of these Ways of Living - for both are, correctly understood and correctly appreciated and correctly implemented, Ways of Living rather than just a personal faith - there is thus a certain lack of personal empathy, a particular lack of the Cosmic dimension, for both Ways are Earth-centric, concentrating on human beings as having been created, and capable of being saved by, a supra-personal, perfect, creator-being.

Thus, and for example, I had a problem with the notion of Jesus of Nazareth being born and crucified on Earth in order to redeem us and show us the Way, for what of other planets, in the causal Cosmos, where sentient life most probably exists? Would there be, for them, a Saviour, a similar crucifixion and resurrection? In the same way, would other sentient life in the Cosmos receive a revelation similar to the Quran, from Allah? Would there thus be the equivalent of Catholics, Protestants, Sunni and Shia Muslims, on other worlds?

All of this is not to say or even suggest that these two Ways have not presented something of the numen, and have not contributed to positive change, among human beings. That they certainly have done, through the actions of many of their adherents, over centuries, and through - for example - the Tridentine Mass, the plainchant Latin office of certain religious orders, and the Namaz of the Muslims. But they have also and indisputably contributed to suffering, to conflict, personal and otherwise, and will, in my view, continue to do so, given, for instance, their ontology, their basal reliance on certain texts, their lack of the Cosmic perspective, and their lack of cultivation of empathy.

In respect of National-Socialism, I concluded that race - ethnicity - was fundamentally irrelevant, an unethical causal abstraction, the pursuit of which caused suffering. I also concluded, among other things, that the concept of a folkish State, or nation, was also an unethical causal abstraction, the pursuit of which caused also caused or contributed to suffering.

Thus, I moved far away from any and all supra-personal authority - to conclude that small, local, communities are the only social structures compatible with the virtues of empathy, compassion and personal honour, and that nations and States, and all governments, contribute to or cause, or can cause and can contribute to, suffering and, in particular, negate by their very abstract, supra-personal, nature both empathy and personal honour.

I further concluded that - in respect of both Islam, and National-Socialism - that honour could only and ever be individual, personal, and relate to the immediacy of the moment. That is, that one's duty, one's loyalty, can only be to those known personally - and cannot be abstracted out from the immediacy of the moment, from a direct, personal, interaction between other human beings; that honour thus cannot be abstracted into some impersonal State or some national or some government or some Shariah law. Thus, personal honour, in the personal immediacy of the moment, is for The Numinous Way, the source of all law, just as honourable, empathic, individuals are the only source of human justice - not some abstract, impersonal, Court of Law or some judge (or Qadi) or some jury sitting in some Court.

In respect of Buddhism, I concluded that while it was a noble Way, it also did not, for me, provide sufficient answers to particular questions. In particular, and as I sought to explain in my essay *Buddhism and The Numinous Way*, there is the matter of personal honour, the matter of re-birth, the question of empathy and its cultivation, and the matter of letting-be, of there being no specific way, such as meditation, for us as individuals to achieve enlightenment, to presence the numen.

*How do you react when people call you a mage, or a mad mage?*

I suppose it depends on whether they use, and understand, the words in its exoteric or its esoteric sense.

*Which are what?*

Exoterically - that is, in common usage - a mage means a practitioner of the Occult arts. Esoterically - as used by those of discernment, and culture - a mage is a synonym for a Sage, for someone seeking wisdom, ἔνωσις. Which ἔνωσις is for me the knowledge, the awareness, of the unity beyond our causal selves; of how we are a nexion to other Life, to Nature, to the Cosmos, and thus not separate from them.

If those who use the term mage mean, and/or imply, the latter, then it is pleasing, if perhaps undeserved if having found wisdom is additionally meant or implied. For, as I mentioned, all I have expressed, in *The Numinous Way*, in various letters, in some poems, and in my personal writings, are my own conclusions, deriving from my own learning from experience.

As for mad, well perhaps *wild* might be apt, for some of my life, at least!

*Given all your experiences, your learning from such diverse experiences, is there one thing in particular that you have come to value?*

Yes, and it is empathy - our human, our undeveloped, faculty of empathy. For it is empathy which, as I said, I have come to understand is the essence of our humanity, and it is by and through and because of empathy that we can express and develop that humanity in our personal and social relationships, and which humanity is especially evident in a mutual, honourable, personal love.

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