

Suicide and the Soul

By Michael Irvine

Can we embrace the call to descend?

Camus would say that suicide, depression, this impulse to end it all, this feeling of being overcome, lies there living, breathing, right next to the soul. That suicide and the soul itself are bedfellows of potential. One choice quick, concrete; the other an undulating spiral downwards into the deep self. One a one way ticket to the next life, the other a difficult negotiation that is in effect a gradual and complete dying, yet includes rebirth within this life. In one choice we are eaten by the anaconda of yet unconscious chaos. In the other we enter the snake and the wisdom of skinning ourselves alive as a natural course in life and death.

Now, for most of the collective culture this is relatively meaningless. They are, by and large, trapped in a collective and preprogrammed mindset, and if their inner self, if their soul's intent is aligned with this collectively accepted way of being (house, family, career, retirement, family, mindaholism and a myriad of addictions to keep it all going), then the callings of suicide and the soul will simply read the paper and see these things as somehow separate from their perfect world and continue on.

Deepak Chopra tells this story. "If you put flies in a glass and cover the glass and leave it there for a while. Then when you remove the lid some time later, the flies tend to remain in the glass. The odd fly will make its way to the top." This is the calling of suicide and the soul - does he jump off in some blind desperation, or can he begin to recognize and negotiate the vast ocean of consciousness that surrounds and informs the glass itself.

Our culture is anti-soul-cial. It's whole orientation is getting it up - doing, an addiction to mind. A kind of mindaholism that is an accepted way of being. There's a certain evangelism that permeates our culture - I know, I do, I am, I will, I believe. Whenever I have come to this place of suicide in my own life, it is always a calling to shed a skin that is no longer useful. To the degree that I am aligned with the dying skin, the inner script turns to depression and suicide's invitation.

Our whole social structure is, of course, invested in keeping itself going. There is no space for the soul's calling, no language for its intent, no time for its undulating murkiness, its needy stickiness. The soul is wet, deep, unformed, below the mind. It is an invitation to commit suicide slowly and over time so that instead of running over the snake in your rushabout way, you actually enter its wisdom.

The psychologist would say that suicide is a calling into therapy, into a period of letting oneself down gently into everything we have been running from. A period to gather resources (much like a mountain climber would in preparing to ascend). Suicide is a calling to gather supplies

that will nurture and support a good descent. Yes we can jump, or cut our heads off, or drug ourselves into the afterlife. In a way, from birth we move towards death, each day dying. Is suicide just the ego's way of trying to 'control' an event that is already underway?

Psychology, especially soul-oriented psychologies, will encourage a conscious descent, a downloading of patterns and ways the mind has collected to distract itself, and an entering of the many sufferings that make up this shedding of old skins. And particularly, a connecting with the self that emerges in this recollection. In this process the mind, - that was the one and only - is gradually introduced to this community within, a seven-year-old ashamed, a three-year-old screaming in his crib, an old woman dying in some watery sanctuary. Relatives appear, long lost friends, conflicting beliefs and desires, needs and wants. An immersion into all of the polarities which await us en route. The mind gradually becomes a servant to this inner orchestra, such that the cacophony that calls as depression and leads to suicide might be joined into some form of internal harmony. The many voices within are heard, accepted, nurtured, each finds its place so that we begin to feel a certain inner harmony and a sense of self, where the mind has become a servant to the many aspects that make up your soul. The long and winding road, combined with a certain vertical attentiveness, this balancing of yin and yang, healthy masculine and feminine energies within, where everything becomes food for your re-integration and remembering, This is a lifelong process and requires a mature and realistic outlook; time over endurance divided by ordeal, plus receptive patience and humble abiding minus a pile of old skins.

And this is why suicide and depression are so important, They are calling cards into the possible you. They indicate that you are at a great doorway, the opportunity to dismantle yourself, slowly, in ever developing compassion and diligence. When the baby is not thrown out with the bath water. Depression's calling is almost always a call from a doing to a being, from a persona to a more real being, from projection to recollection, from out there to in here, from noise, distraction, speaking - yacking - to silence, reflective silence and authentic sharing.

Depression and suicide are callings into the 'humbling grounds.' These forces are great levellers. We are taken down; gently or consciously, or we jump in defiant "fuck it, told you so" victim fear and panic. In alignment with depression's calling, we must begin to make peace with ourselves, to have a great burning of all the ideas, visions, beliefs we carry around unmanifest, that keep us from getting real with ourselves. Jung would say this; depression, suicide comes when people have difficulty making contact with the other, with the opposite. That we have each created a being out of our predispositions and certain strengths. Yet at a certain point, somewhere in midlife, we are called to make the bridge to the opposite pole, the other side of the circle. Our circle of self is incomplete, it has a gaping (w)hole called discipline, or artistic freedom, or whatever it is that you push away as inferior. We can stab ourselves or we can begin to connect with this whole, this unknown other that might have appeared in our lives as a mother-in-law or former partner or paedophile teacher or absent abusive father. Yet hidden there is a gift, down in the valley of despair.

Enough

Love yourself; there is no one who is not redeemable. It is better to live one day as a tiger than a

lifetime as a sheep. Nurture a witnessing consciousness. Look at the persons you push away for clues. Develop a support network for your deconstruction. Ask for help. Ask for help from people who are able to assist. Get ready to let go, to not be for a while. Embrace ordinariness. Enter your dreams. Feel the course as a deepening, from this place notice how you get high. Begin a list of all the ways you get high, avoid, deny, etc. Connect with the inner collective. Begin to work with the many voices inside without forcing a particular outcome, yet with intent for harmony. Accept cacophony with harmony in mind. Make a home sanctuary for yourself and guard it. Cleanse the body of toxins especially the colon, liver, and shift towards vegan diet including cleansing herbs, etc. Find someone you can collapse into. Make your own list - the guru, the Yogi, the meditation master. They would say suicide, depression, these are mind states, attachments to a mind that is causing distortions and illusions. The mind fancying itself out of control in all directions, unfocused, too active. The mind believing itself. "Who are you to think you are you?" And they would offer a myriad of meditation practices to assist you to download your mindaholism. They would suggest developing a witnessing consciousness, that someone is committing suicide because he is committed; to his mind's belief structures. He does not know that he can simply step back and begin to witness his compulsiveness.

In this way suicide is a calling out for another perspective. We cannot see clearly, and by some twisted and unfortunate state we feel we must make a great appeal, even if it takes us to the afterlife. The guru would say, "still your mind and still your life, all of your difficulties come from your attachment to yourself". But where does your mind begin, where do your thoughts come from? What is the nature of the presence that is before mind, before consciousness; Learn to rest there and you will undo yourself from the madness of your suffering. The cost is everything you think you should be doing or being, all of the thoughts that separate you from this moment and the awareness that awaits in the silence of simply being.

Our culture is so entrenched in its way. It seems an impossible task to turn around this great river of manifold addictions and patterns and ways we call life. We live in a dying time. Our very culture is coming to an end. The vocara of this age is grief, a deep healing of generations unhealed past, generations of war and injury. Know that each time you make one movement in the direction of your soul's intent you are impacting the whole of mankind. Each time you step back from the edge you are helping a despairing mother from suffocating her child. Each time you engage your witnessing consciousness and embrace a wiser way, there a young man finds his grief point and finally collapses into himself.

Depression is a calling. It is an art that does not want to be drugged. Suicide and the soul reside within the same breath: one jumps, the other descends.

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