

The Heroic Journey

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Saleem Rana

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**IF YOUR LIFE IS DIFFICULT AT THIS MOMENT--
THIS MAY VERY WELL BE WHAT IS
HAPPENING...**

When you leave the known, the safe, the conventional, and the trusted path, you embark on a heroic journey.

This journey is an archetypal one.

It has been celebrated and illustrated in the world's mythology.

A time comes when every person feels that they must depart from consensual reality.

Something within them makes them restless, and it makes them feel that they have a greatness within that needs to be expressed.

While this theme seems utterly unique to the person who has this yearning, it is, in fact, the very warp and woof of myth and legend—the journey of the hero or heroine. It has been portrayed throughout recorded time in the mythologies of the world.

The journey begins with departure from the established practices of the person. It is always done with great fear and reluctance—and there is seldom any support at all from family and friends.

The potential hero or heroine finds themselves quite alone.

THE RELUCTANT DEPARTURE

During the departure stage, there is a call to adventure, a sudden understanding that things are going to change. This call disrupts a comfortable routine and the person often feels inadequate and unprepared for the journey.

However, once a decision is made to take the leap into the unknown, supernatural aid appears.

This is usually in the form of meeting the right people or stumbling upon some necessary new information or resources that will initiate the journey.

Once the first threshold is crossed, the journey begins in earnest.

And it is now when the hero or heroine finds themselves in the belly of the whale, which is a time of metamorphosis, an entry into a dark place where the skills learned before the journey no longer work.

THE UNSETTLING INITIATION

Before the transformation can occur, trials, tests, and heavy ordeals must be borne.

Failure is now the norm because the new has to be explored through trial and error.

As the trials proceeds, the Goddess is met.

This is a symbol for unconditional love and acceptance of self, a renewal of self-unification, an amplification of intention.

The Goddess takes many forms, from an insightful book, a new companion, or even a new intuition arising from some unknown inner depths.

Then, something unexpected happens...the temptress is met. This in world mythology has been personified to be a woman. It comes to symbolize the desire to be seduced by the lure of what once existed, the comfort of returning to the known.

Again, the form can vary. Often enough it is someone from the past who scorns your ideals and portrays the world you left behind more glamorous than you may

have imagined. It can even be a memory of a time when none of your present troubles existed.

This is by far the most dangerous part of the heroic journey, and many people at this time go back to the old way, until they hear the call to adventure again, which they may not listen to anymore.

If this temptation is resisted, then something else has to be confronted in its place: atonement with the Father.

This means that one has to die to the old in order to fully assume the powers of the new. An incredible power is met and surrendered too.

Only in this way can the old self die so that the new self, the transformed one, can live.

Once this condition is met, there is an apotheosis, deification. A heavenly state is attained; the person becomes divine in some way.

With this transformation, the ultimate boon is granted, the Holy Grail is found, the journey is successfully completed and what the person came to get has been secured.

The Holy Grail is the cherished reward. If you are starting your own business, it may be the time when you can pay all your bills from the income of your new business. It is a symbolic moment, when you know that you have secured the position that once seemed impossible.

THE RELUCTANT RETURN

This is the difficult, bewildering, and finally liberating stage.

The return is when we come back to tell others about the lessons of our adventures, and hopefully to provide a map to those who may want to follow.

After his enlightenment, for example, the Buddha decided to forego his perfect contentment and return to the troubled world of confused people to tell them about his discovery of a higher consciousness and free others of all worldly desires.

The return, too, is difficult.

Again, as in the very beginning, there is a deep reluctance.

There is an initial refusal to return.

Sometimes, too, once one has secured the goal, one must escape from the jealous guardians of the secret that has been won.

Now, with the journey in its descent, after reaching a lofty ascent, the hero or heroine once again is in need of guides and assistants on how to return.

Again, too, a threshold has to be crossed, this time back to where the person came from.

Now the person has become master of two worlds, the new and the old, or the inner and the outer. A new freedom to live has been experienced.

HOW ALL OF THIS RELATES TO YOU

All of us travel through these three stages, with their numerous substrates, when we begin and complete the heroic journey.

When a new mother has her first child, when a young person secures their first job, when a traditionally employed person leaps to become an entrepreneur, when a writer sets to create a new book, or when somebody goes to a specialist to seek healing for a wounded psyche...the heroic journey begins.

Mythology speaks of this journey and gives us all a map on what the stages of it are.

Understanding the symbols behind the myths help us complete our own particular journey.

Without truly grasping the import of the heroic journey, as told throughout time and transmitted via the language and traditions of diverse people, we may not recognize that we are all heroes and heroines, and we may either get lost along the way or shirk the completion of our unique quest.

People can be obvious outer heroes, whose name and accomplishment are made

known as significant points in history; and they can also be inner heroes, spiritual adventurers seeking a refinement of sensibility that leads to deep spiritual understanding; and they can be you and I, as we step into a new phase in our lives where we must transform ourselves because vital structures of our lives have collapsed and something new has to be grasped.

If you are going through any challenges or difficulties at this time, it could very well be because you are in the midst of such a heroic journey.