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The Mystical Mouse; the roaring of the still small voice

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There is no dearth of mystics in our time. There are only fewer eyes filled with the love of beholding them, less talk, less teaching about mystery and mystical matters and outcomes, more blinders so that fewer can easily recognize, straight from the soul, the roar of the wind we call the sensory presence of the Holy Ghost ... the Creative Fire.

When we were little, we?d walk to church

with our Grandmother.

As the church?s clapboard walls came into sight,

we had a ritual. We?d say, ?There?s our church.?

But our grandmother would say, ?No, that?s not our church.?

?Yes it is, Grandmother,? we?d say. ?That?s our church.?

?No,? she?d say. ?Our church is underneath that church.

That?s the real church we belong to.?

?The church beneath the church,? is the one where the roar of the Holy Spirit can be heard, the roar that still belongs to all us old believers, all us modern ?catacomb Catholics.? I always liked what Thomas Merton said about how he ran about for quite some time trying to find his ?true? religious home, one of depth and mystery.

Not here. Not there. He went on sampling various religious groups. Finally, he wound up reading one particular gentleman writer about whom everyone raved. But, young Merton who was often as droll and sarcastic as he was intent on the serious mystical quest, noted about the works of this illustrious writer:

?... [I] found them to be about as supernatural as a Montgomery Ward catalog ...?

Merton was, God bless him, alluding to something many of us note also: whether in ourselves or others, words and writing done in ?Flattish,? and/or hammering the overly cautionary, or with finger-shaking and lapel-poking in the main... none of this can carry enough ignition to blast doors open in the soul, psyche, mind or heart. There

has to be something deeper. A roaring; the kind that causes longing.

Sources of the Roaring Inside Us

The mystical and supernatural, that is, extero-influences on our lives, environs and night dreams of more than just our free wills alone... if and when one follows these drives to their Source, human beings who hear the roaring in these gifts, can deeply experience and -- not believe -- but gradually or suddenly *know* and *understand*

--*eros*, relatedness of and to the whole of all living beings;

--*humanitas*, unambiguous love of humanity;

--*veritas*, courageous love of Truth;

--*caritas*, esteem for the intricate human condition despite all foibles;

--*adoronis*, prayerful adoration of Source, as not only Superior, but also intimately, as beloved kin;

--*agape*, selfless love that ventures far from ego?s comfort zone;

--*communitas*, the gathering of souls with intent; and

--*furoris*, passionate love for Source, the kind that has no vapidity nor tentativeness to it, for the ego is no longer the lead dog, but is rather, subservient now to the soul.

There are many more, love of learning; love of music, love for healing; love for peacemaking; love for justice. But one can be assured if the roaring is followed, one will come to understand all of these in one?s own way, soulfully. More so, one will be able to free these loves into the world in one new way or another... where people are often starving for genuine... and truthful... soul-making.

In the world of Charisms, Angels are not amazing; They are ordinary.

Words like ?mystic,? and ?super-natural,? have immediate resonances to the non-ego self we are all born with, an uncanny second self, a ?listening and registering the invisible but palpable? self that is inherent...

This second self is separate from the rather dulled down ego alone. It is a soul-self that has creative depth, a self to which vision, visitation, infusion of spirit from outside our little carapace, is not extra-ordinary, but rather, just usual.

Angels: amazing to ego, but just ?usual? to soul. Fortuitous insight: Seeing meaningful matters that are not visible to people not paying attention. Astonishing to ego. Ordinary to the soul. If God is three Persons in One, then humans are at least two full personalities in one, and these two are not at odds, but rather, complementary. Both ego and soul are needed for a complete view of all that is, all that can be.

Thus, people see signs, hear guidance, see sudden truths ?out of the corners of their eyes,? hear entire movements of music they record on paper, hear poems all of a piece and write them down, know when loved ones are coming to visit unannounced, can read the error or pain in another by simply looking, or touching.... are visited by souls departed, and by guardian angels and by ?sudden angels? which I?d term an actual human being who all of sudden acts for a few moments in notably merciful or helpful ways far beyond their usual capacity.

While it is true that some who want ultimate say-so over who ought be licensed or not as a mystical being, this natal religiosity cannot be shorn from any human being like Samson was denuded of his strength by cutting his

long hair.

In reality, all these inborn strengths, no matter who orders them, downplays, forbids, warrants them, or wants to ?authorize? or exploit ...charisms have a Godly gifted intelligence of their own. Unwanted, improperly cared for, ignored or reviled, they only go underground then, into the world of night dreams and day dreams... where they jump up anyway, seeing, telling deepening us if we pay attention.

A developed mystic is often eccentric, that is, not often cut from the mediocre middle, but rather from the frontiers where courage is required. There are many stories, both in every holy book existent, and in the oral tradition of tales... that explicate the journey to developing mystical charisms....

remembering perhaps especially that some of the most potent and perceptive traits are not particularly found in the too well behaved, nor in only the block and tackle legends of warriors who began with all advantages intact... but rather often found in just the tiniest, most muddled --and invisible to the ruling culture -- bravehearts imaginable...

The journey often begins with the pilgrim not adequately outfitted, often in the midst of protest, sometimes opprobrium, certainly self-doubt. The hero?s or heroine?s life may have been injured, or lies in a shambles. But for certain when one hears the roaring, one is compelled to try to leave the comfort of what is known... and though often enough looking awfully unpromising and even more unlikely as a force of any substance whatsoever, the pilgrim sets out.... They hear the roaring and they long to follow it.

Most often in the stories of soul-growing, there are constant close calls with those who would impede, imprison, punish, put to sleep, devour, destroy the mystical drive. But it is also these testings that cause the seeming tiniest heroic impulse inside us to take on significant and holy magnitude.... if we can just keep following what we hear.

Listen...

Jumping Mouse

Once there was a mouse, like every other mouse except for one thing: unlike all other mice, this particular mouse could hear a special sound.

She inquired of the other mice, ?Brothers, sisters, do you hear a roaring off in the distance?? They all listened hard, but then shook their heads. No one heard a thing.

No matter how she tried to busy herself, distract herself, she continued to hear a great roaring sound. So, one day, with her tiny cane and her little pouch filled with food, she left her village to seek the source of the great sound.

Her people warned, ?Oh no, don?t go; we have no idea what is out there. We have heard terrible stories and you may never come back alive.?

But the tiny mouse had heard the great roaring and could not rest.

In time, she came across a kindly old raccoon and told him what she was about. The raccoon smiled an ancient smile, ?Oh, little mouse, the roaring you hear is from a great river. Let me take you there.?

The little mouse had seen rain, knew little thimblefuls of water in hollows of rocks. But, she had never heard of a river.

Raccoon Old Man kept urging her down pathways she had never seen before. The tiny mouse pulled her shawl closer around her head. She was frightened and thought many times of turning back. ?Maybe my people were right, maybe I shall never be able to find my way back to where I began.?

But, the roaring became increasingly louder, until they finally came over the crest of a hill, and the little mouse in all wonder beheld the river at last.

And more, she saw how huge, how never-ending, how so very deep and filled with life the river was. It rang out; it roared; it thundered.

?It is so awesome,? whispered the mouse.

?It is a Godly sight,? nodded Raccoon. ?Come, meet an old and loyal friend of mine who will take you farther.?

A big green frog with beautiful black circles on its back was striding in place at the water?s edge. Frog croaked, ?Would you like to find out more about the true world, not the veiled one, but the real one??

?Me? a tiny creature like me, know true Truth?? asked the mouse.

?Yes,? said Frog. ?Here is how to know more than just the roaring: Crouch down as low as you can -- and then jump up as high as you can! You will see then. You will see the true world.?

The little mouse hesitated. Maybe the mice where she came from were right; this would all turn out all wrong, and there would be no return to where she began.

?You can do it,? encouraged Frog and Raccoon. ?You have come so far. Do not turn back now.?

So, the mouse tightened her little belt and hiked up her tiny boots, and crouched down as far as she could. She wavered there, shaking from the strain.

Then suddenly, she sprang up into the sky as high as she could jump. And when she did, just for a moment, she saw the sacred mountains far off.

She hit the ground all a-jumble. Sprained this and bruised that, but it mattered little for she could hardly believe her eyes. It was true! There was something beyond the roaring.

An entire range of blue and white mountains that were painfully pretty to behold, and which, in some mysterious way, suddenly set up a terrible longing in the mouse.

?Ay, what did you see little mouse?? asked Frog.

Mouse shook her head in all solemnity, ?I saw a sight that will never leave my heart.?

Croaked Frog, ?Let you have a spirit name then. From now on you shall be known as Jumping Mouse.?

After all this trek of hardship and glory, Jumping Mouse had a choice. She could go toward the shining mountains which she?d fallen so deeply in love with, or she could return to the world of mice where she had once begun.

She thought and thought on it and decided to go back, to go back to tell the others, so that they might have the chance to finally hear the roaring too, to find the source, so they could jump up themselves and see the very

thing that brings such immaculate love to heart and soul immediately.

But finding her way back home, no one there would listen about the roaring she?d found, nor about her great vision that came from leaping up higher than she ever thought she could.

Try as she might to explain it all, no one really wanted to listen. Many had mundane mouse things to attend to. Others thought it all only a nice but silly story. Some only wanted to argue that she had not seen, heard, or learned anything radiant and different for they were envious that they could hear no roaring. The head mice especially wanted to reduce what she?d actually witnessed to something far more tidy, more mouse-minded.

Perhaps it was as much this exile while still in her own home place, as much as her longing for the beauty she could not forget, but after a time, she felt called to make her way out into the unknown world again.

Thus, with her little cane and little pouch freshly provisioned, she slipped away from her home village and set out. It did not appear that anyone noticed, that is, until after much arduous running and climbing, she came upon a decrepit village where lived an entire enclave of very elderly mice.

One of the mice with long white hair, hobbled up to the little mouse saying, ?Welcome, for you are one of our own kind, we can tell. Stay here with us here where it is peaceful by our rules, and nothing ever happens.?

?Can you see the river and the great blue and white mountains from here?? asked Jumping Mouse.

?Not really,? said the old mouse, ?and why would anyone want to? Here, it is comfortable. Plenty of seeds. Nice clothes of lace and velvet. An enclosed enclave, safe from disturbances from uncivilized animals, and hidden from eagles who are wont to carry us off. Forget your passion to see those mountains. Stay here with us. Forget your wild notions.?

But Jumping Mouse had heard the roaring. Jumping Mouse had seen the vision of the mountains, and once these had been heart fastened, she could not stay with the old mice, no matter how they wished to dress her, feed her, save her, have her be one of them. She had to go onward.

Thus, she thanked all the old mice and blessed them. Then, gathering all her strength, she ran down the roads in the desert that only mice can see. The eagles overhead made huge darting shadows on the land as she ran, and she had to hide many times to keep from being carried off.

And so she zigzagged across the vast terrain, until at last, before her in the distance stood the shining sacred mountains. She no longer had to jump to see them. She was home ... the home that was just the right fit, just the right nourishment, just the right kind of love for, of, toward the little mouse?s true soul.

And, so it is sometimes said by we who hold this story dear and tell it when the time is right, that there was a sacred lake in the cleft of the mountains in which many ideas, hopes and dreams could be seen...if one were to go at least one journey further... that if one were to climb up to the precipice, one could both see and hear the roaring river far off as well.

It is also often said by the old tellers, that at different times of night and day, different understandings came to light to those who climbed this mountain, to those who might find this reflecting lake.

And it is there, it is said, that Jumping Mouse still lives... knowing what can be known, not knowing what can never be known, even by mice who are great and good.

She lives there as the tiny soul of huge magnitude; the one who followed the Roaring she heard, while others claimed they heard nothing -- nothing at all.

One may think this just a tale about an insignificant mouse, but then I?d have to recommend brushing up on the character of Reepicheep. In his book series on the battle for the true soul, *The Narnia Chronicles*, C.S. Lewis chose to portray the immense Spirit in the form of a mouse.

That is the archetypal symbolism for the image of the mouse... the one who has the ability to slip through narrow places, to jump up and see Truth; to hear keenly, like Reepicheep and Jumping Mouse, to be brave in the extreme, and to ever be thrusting forward, to not take the easy ?wrong way,? nor the safest ?right way? always, to resist being put to sleep by those who value mediocrity over meaning.

On the other hand, some will have come late to their charisms. They may not have realized, or had opportunity to develop. This is the encouragement I?d offer to a soul who inquires... I?d recommend starting by sitting with a trusted and experienced soul sister or soul brother, and then pray oneself back to a time when the membranes between the worlds thinned for a time... Focus on what is goodness; what is supportive of soul.

Keep a journal, note what was seen, heard, suddenly known, noticed then... and now. Choices made or not, insights gained in contemplation, guidance received, soul nourishment, hopes, happinesses, fears. Listen to one?s fellow traveler who?s sitting with. They can often be immensely helpful with translations, amplifications, interpretive notions.

Little by little, this constitutes following the roaring. The roaring is ever present in one?s charisms. Seldom topside. Almost always, like the gold ore human beings are made of... beneath.

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