

My Unificationist Memoirs Chapter 84

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The Only Begotten Daughter, Part XIII

"From that time Jesus began to preach, saying, 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.'" --Matthew 4:17

In her novel, "A Wizard of Earthsea," Ursula Le Guin's protagonist, Ged, embarks on a heroic journey to slay "a shadow monster." His course does not conclude until he realizes that the "shadow" is his very own self and he embraces it. Le Guin's short work is widely recognized as an allegorical masterpiece, one that captures a psychological and spiritual reality: we cannot mature and grow until we come to terms with our dark side. However, most of us repress, deny, and hide our personal flaws out of shame and guilt, stunting our spiritual growth and creating psychological distortions which cause us to externalize and project the evil we fear outside of ourselves onto others. We react reflexively out of a profound anxiety that our flaws and sin make us uniquely unloveable.

Historically, our profound psychological and spiritual inability to bear the reality of evil gave rise to religious rituals to separate from sin and expunge guilt. One of the most noteworthy is found in the biblical "scapegoat":

21 He is to lay both hands on the head of the live goat and confess over it all the wickedness and rebellion of the Israelites - all their sins - and put them on the goat's head. He shall send the goat away into the wilderness in the care of someone appointed for the task. 22 The goat will carry on itself all their sins to a remote place; and the man shall release it in the wilderness. (Leviticus 16:21-22, NIV)

Unable to escape our fallen lineage or to resolve the conflict between our minds and bodies, our ancestors sought symbolic and conditional means to address their spiritual and ethical suffering. Resort to cleansing rituals was necessarily frequent because the potency of these cathartic acts could never endure beyond the next slip into overwhelming desire and sin. The sacramental rituals were passed from generation to generation and matured into religious traditions which became the very basis of human civilization.

Just as individuals escaped an oppressive sense of guilt through projecting sin and evil onto the other, the French anthropologist and philosopher, Rene Girard, identified this dynamic of "scapegoating" as a cultural and ritual practice by which all societies throughout human history achieved temporary unity. Modern, secular societies are no exception: we seek stability and social cohesion, a transient rest from internal conflict, through identifying and opposing a common enemy. Entire philosophies, political ideologies, and social agendas have been built upon this dynamic. The tragic course of the 20th Century was set when destructive ideologies embodied and deployed this cathartic dynamic: Russian communism

identified the rich Kulaks and capitalist class as the enemy; Nazis, the Jews; Pol Pot, the intellectuals; Mao, the landowners and later, all of the social remnant representing traditional culture. The need to purge class and race enemies became so intense during certain periods, it erupted into frenzied and apocalyptic violence. Sadly, this phenomenon continues into our own 21st Century. We need only look to the Uighurs in China, the Rohingya in Myanmar--or closer to home, the rise in extremism and "cancel culture."



American extremism shares many traits with Mao's Cultural Revolution--revisionist history, vandalizing public spaces, zero tolerance for dissent from the favored narrative, public shaming and ostracism. The newly minted sin of "whiteness" coined by the critical race theorists has become a convenient replacement for class, occupying a similar unforgivable status. Extremism feeds on the same political and social dynamic as Marxist predecessors: identify common enemies, inflame passions in opposition to perceived sins, and expunge the scapegoat from the community to achieve and refresh social cohesion.

As fallen human beings, we will always slip into this dynamic unless we consciously and intentionally reject it. Jesus opened his public ministry by calling Israel to repentance, an action which requires us to first accept the reality of our "shadow" self and our personal complicity in evil, in order to reverse the habitual and instinctive course of our lives. The dynamic of repentance and conversion is the exact opposite of "scapegoating," in that it requires the admittance of personal responsibility for evil and sin. While both "scapegoating" and repentance seek the same resolution, an escape from the burden of guilt, only the latter can actually liberate an individual soul from that suffering. Only repentance can open the way to true spiritual growth and freedom.

And this brings us round to True Mother's public ministry in her second seven year course. We cannot grow and accept True Mother's role as the Only Begotten Daughter of God without prayer and repentance. We cannot authentically inaugurate the Era of Cheon Il Guk without first acknowledging our complicity with fallen history, the sinful world, and the continuing sorrow of God. It does us no good to externalize our personal sense of evil and guilt by accusing the "other." This does not mean we must ignore evil or not take issue with wrongheaded thinking. It does mean that our disputations must be carried out with humility, tempered by the recognition of our own capacity for evil. It does mean that we must love those who would persecute us, ostracize us, and dismiss us... or worse. For us to be the "cloud of witnesses" upon which the Mother of Peace can be elevated above these violent seas, these roiling waters, for her to be seen, recognized and accepted, we ourselves must be resurrected through the heat and light of repentance, conversion of heart, and the practice of True Love. There is no faking it, no quick fix, and no easy way. The first step on this path requires us to reject the dynamics of accusation and admit our personal responsibility for sin, undoubtedly with an abundance of tears. So brothers and sisters, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!"