

A New Year's "Jubilee" Message from The Other Side

I am looking at the Autonomedia Calendar of Jubilee Saints for 2014, about to go up on the wall of the Café Domenico following a tradition Orin and I have observed for at least 10 years. On each of its 365 days, a different "saint" is honored, including well-knowns like Thoreau, John Brown, Bob Marley and Jesus, as well as lesser-knowns like Edward Said, B. Traven, Emma Goldman, Charles Fourier, and real unknowns (to most of us in America) like Ali Sariati, Zo d'Axa, or Antonio Maceo. I forget how Orin and I discovered the calendar, but it must have had to do with one of the writers whose books are sold through the Autonomedia website, Peter Lamborn Wilson. Peter, a sort of brilliant mystic-poet-anarchist-thinker whom we met at the Abode of the Message, the Sufi center in New Lebanon, NY, a few years ago, is someone whose ideas we refer to often. He suggests the establishment of Temporary Autonomous Zones (TAZ), spaces free from the "work-diseased world," where the *Jubilee* (based upon an actual Old Testament tradition) can be celebrated that frees all the prisoners, smashes all the time clocks, ends all soul death in the social factory, steals back lives from the "forces of greed and immiseration," etc.

Anyhoo...the idea of the TAZ is one of the source streams that feeds the vision of The Other Side, as well as James Hillman's Institute for Culture and the Humanities in Dallas, TX. But back to the calendar of saints, filled with striking, admirable people who share a quality in common, to me at least. That is, they are all people who stood by opinions that for the most part never became acceptable in their own time. Though some did achieve spots in history's mainstream pantheon of greatness, i.e., Nelson Mandela, Walt Whitman, Woody Guthrie, often their public image had to be quite scrubbed up and sanitized, as well as drastically "dumbed down" to have that spot.

All on the calendar did/do their work, in my view, in light of the "archetype for greatness," also the archetype of wholeness, a real existing psychological pattern, if you will, that functions in the individual, and also the city, the nation and the planetary levels of consciousness. This archetype as embedded in the human psyche, I emphasize, is given and not made. It provides a guidepost toward which individuals can transform in its likeness, via the journey of self-knowledge, advocated so long ago by Socrates. You'd think, he being one of the foundations of western democratic tradition, that more people would take up the injunction to "know thyself." In fact, most of us draw back when we reach the gate of our own interior depth. As Dr. Jung wrote, "The dread and resistance which every natural human being experiences when it comes to delving too deeply into himself, is at bottom the fear of the journey to Hades."

Nevertheless, Hades or no, this is the direction, the journey which when undertaken on the individual level works to transform the larger world in the pattern of that same archetype of wholeness, of the unity within the multitudinous reality that has been the best dream of human kind throughout history.

I have no idea how many on the Calendar of Jubilee Saints are “self-knowers” in the way I mean. But they all allowed themselves to serve some larger reality inclusive of all of human kind, a vision fed by a source coming from within themselves, what I and others would call their *daimon* or *genius*. I’d be foolish not to acknowledge that there’s a risk involved in following one’s inner genius; things can go terribly wrong. But there may be less danger of things getting out of hand, say, as in the case of a Hitler, a Stalin or a Joseph McCarthy, in a social context made up of artists, poets and idealists, people dedicated to their expression of the inner, imaginal world, than in a society following a repressive pattern that selects some to be the artists, creative lights, go-getters and entrepreneurs while the rest are expected to be soul-dead, passive and obedient employees and consumers.

But such a society will never, ever be promoted from the top down. It can only come from the bottom up, with each individual determining herself or himself to be humbly faithful to that creative light indicated to her or him through insight, intuition, instinct, even “common sense,” and most definitely through longing. It can be *supported* by reason, as the imaginative vision is worked out in the real world, but it cannot originate in the reason; reason’s need for irrefutable proof is simply death to this fragile but mighty motivation to create works of the imagination.

In any case, when I look at the calendar of Jubilee Saints, as I invite everyone to do who comes to the Café this year, I see individuals who are lights, having “left the vivid air signed with their honour” (Stephen Spender). As with stars in the night sky, one has to move a little away from the glare of electrified civilization to discern them and appreciate their beauty and majesty, to be inspired by them. In our modern context of increasing catastrophe, we need a new system of valuation, in general one not obliterated by the glare of electrified, high-speed, high-voltage, technology and profit-driven civilization. I propose The Other Side to be used as a space that removes one from that glare and allows you and me, then, to discern that inner light and the direction it points in. I hope and I trust that The Other Side has an effect, however small, perhaps barely noticeable, on the consciousness in and around us that will draw us all towards the archetype of unity & diversity (known as wholeness), as individuals, as towns and cities, as nations and as global brothers and sisters. I know I’m a dreamer, but I’m not the only one....