



The Judgment Day (I)

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What is Reality

Reality appears in different forms for different minds and as long as the authority of the mind is perceived as being real, Reality takes a form or another. But Reality in Itself is absolutely inconceivable for the mind, because It resides absolutely beyond form. In terms of reasonable conveyance, It is apophatical, that is, It cannot be spoken¹. Moreover, since It lies beyond duality², it means that the beatific contemplation is still a form of ignorance. Logically³ and metaphysically, there is no exclusion, because *all is Reality*, but in different degrees of manifestation or occultation.⁴ It is a form of ignorance to *wait* for Reality. Reality is *now* and *here*. There is nothing *more* and nothing *less* to be realized. There is no *beyond* which is not *here* and *now*. God, understood as separate

¹ The form's incapacity to capture the Real has been translated by the sentimentalist inclined mentality into prohibition. For the cultures based on such mentality, Reality is a taboo. Guénon made the clear distinction between East and West on the basis of the westerner's lack of metaphysical comprehension, because of his sentimentalist psychic profile. Rudolf Otto, for example, in his *The Idea of the Holy* (*Das Heilige - Über das Irrationale in der Idee des Göttlichen und sein Verhältnis zum Rationalen*), states that the *numinous* (the term he coined with the express intention of transcending the moralistic apprehension of the sacred) is a "state of mind" and, more precisely, an "irrational" one. This error is symptomatic for the modern westerner and, in another form, we will also find it in psychoanalysis. Being a "state of mind", the numinous, in Otto's opinion, is also a "feeling" that is "felt as objective and outside the self". Of course that for Otto the sacred is "outside the self", since the only self he knows is the individual one. The psychoanalysis makes only a step forward: it takes the ("obscure", "irrational") "object" of this "feeling" and places it in the unconscious, that is, in that domain of the individual self, painted in shades of inaccessibility and obscurity. Otto had quite a considerable influence both in the history of religion and philosophy.

But to return to our topic, it should be said that *That* which on the level of reason is an *aporime*, on the level of sensor becomes a *prohibition*. In the first case, the *limit* of transcendence is the *natural* law of the individual, whereas in the second case, the *limit* is given not by nature, that is, by *the complete individual consciousness*, but by the *artificial* law of the individual, that is, by *the obscured individual consciousness*. This comes to say that not all individuals are capable of natural freedom. The freedom of the individual is to live by natural law. This is the highest quality of the individual human life and the individual human life in its highest quality.

² *Form* is a particular manifestation of duality.

³ As we will see below, the mind is able to comprehend Reality in a negative (apophatic) way, but it cannot be It.

⁴ When the Realization is complete, no negation or exclusion subsists. However, the manifestations of Reality are in different degrees, which are hierarchically ordered. Reality can show Itself less or more, but there is no *other* to whom Reality shows Itself. *All* is Reality in its different degrees of occultation from Itself. When *one* perceives itself in a state of separation, that *one* is a manifestation of Reality in a lesser degree. That is to say this: one must unveil itself more, to perceive more Reality.

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from what is *here* and *now*, is a form of ignorance. Metaphysical realization requires the simple understanding of what is already present. There is nothing to postpone, there is nothing to wait for, there is no God waiting for *you*, there is no God waiting, there is *nothing* to attain. All these are forms of ignorance and, psychologically speaking, the perverse attraction for pain and the need to justify this desire⁵. Reality is a continuous *now*, which we ignore because we mentally perceive the *now* as discontinuity in the shape of past and future. But *the now* is the real and the only source of past and future, just as Reality manifests in forms. Past and future are both form and they are both absence. Misery is present only as long as we *believe* Reality is absent⁶. Absence is not a

⁵ The Presence is not conditioned by the individual ignorance or by any condition whatsoever. This is why, there is *nothing* to attain and there is *nothing* to strive for. The only thing that the *seer* must do is to understand the *now*, but not by gathering something, but by losing everything. *Everything* and *something* are obstacles in seeing Reality. The seer must realize that he is *nothing*, that Reality is *nothing*, that *nothing* unites them, that *nothing* divides them.

(...) sache que tu es imagination et que tout ce que tu perçois, et que tu désignes comme « non-moi » est imagination ; car toute l'existence est imagination en imagination [c'est-à-dire une imagination « subjective » ou microcosmique dans une imagination « objective », collective ou macrocosmique] ; (...) Il n'y a dans l'existence que ce que désigne l'Unité ; et il n'y a dans l'imagination que ce que désigne la multiplicité. (Ibn'Arabi, *La Sagesse des Prophètes*, chp. *Le Verbe de Joseph*, translation by Titus Burckhardt).

Then He (the Real) said to me, "Are you a Muslim by mere tradition or do you have your own standard of judgment?" I answered, "I am not a [blind] imitator nor do I follow my own [rational] opinion." He said to me, "Then you are no thing."

I said to Him (to the Real), "I am the thing without likeness and You are the thing with likeness." He said, "What you say is true." Then He told me, "You are not a thing, nor have you been a thing, nor are you according to a thing."

(Ibn'Arabi, *Contemplations of the Holy Mysteries*, translation by C. Twinch, P. Beneito, chp.1).

"I am not a [blind] imitator nor do I follow my own [rational] opinion." This is the statement of the one who has transcended the mind. *The imitator* refers to the sentimental mind and the *follower of rational opinion* to the reasonable mind. These two are hierarchically ordered. The former is mind's lower aspect, and the latter its higher one.

⁶ *The Book of Revelation* (17; 4) presents the cup of the Whore as being *full*. But this is a fullness of misery, a fullness of absence. It is a fullness that takes place as reaction against the metaphysical nothingness, which must be welcomed in a complete emptiness. It is the fullness of the stuffed individual. It is the full belly, the full heart, the full mind, the fully insured individual, etc. The *Prajñāpāramitā Hṛdaya* (The *Heart Sutra*) says: *Form does not differ from Emptiness (śūnyatā)*. This means that Emptiness does not deny form, but includes it. And the reality of form will be fully perceived once its true *Śūnya* nature will be realized. *Emptiness* does not mean *absence*. Emptiness is not negation but acceptance, reception. Form is no different from absence, or to better accentuate what we mean, absence is no different from form, which means that the fullness of existence (the filled cup of the Whore) is both *form* and *absence*, and both of them are Form and both of them are Absence. That is why the Void of which Eckhart speaks, for example, is not misery, absence or fullness; It is not *the fullness of absence*, nor *the absence of fullness*. Eckhart's *Void* is the Buddha's *Nirvana* and the Sufi state of *Fanā*. This Void is the realization of *that which is here and now* and the transcendence of *the flux of form and absence*. In other words, *that* which is here and now will not cease to be, but it will show itself to be in its Real nature. In metaphysical realization, indeed, *Form does not differ from Emptiness*. *Śūnyatā* is not negation, but realization. The realization of the complete ego includes each step of this process; the realization of *I* includes each level of universal manifestation. The realization of Nothingness includes, the subjective imagination (the ego), the objective imagination (the I) and *That* beyond manifestation. Each stage in the process of realization is inclusive and not exclusive.

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matter of knowledge (*gnosis*, *veda*, *ma'rifa*, *satori*, *nirvāna*, *tao*), but a matter of *belief*, that is, of something that is in itself not present⁷. Existence is not *here* and not *now*. Existence resides only in past and future, that is, in form. Existence is in our head⁸.



The significance of Nothingness

Nothingness is a negative determination. It refers to *that* which is *not a thing* or which is *no thing*. *That*, which is *not something*, *neither everything*, is unqualifiable or unclassifiable from the present standpoint. A thing is *a thing* because it is definable from the present standpoint. But that which escapes any definition is *nothing*. In Sanskrit, the term for *nothingness* is *śūnyatā*. The word means also *emptiness*. *Śūnya* means *empty*, *void*, *deserted* and *śūnya* means *blank* and *zero*. There are two aspects we wish to discuss concerning the concept of nothingness: the modern misconception of it and some similarities that one may see between it and the unconscious of the psychoanalysis.

Because of its strong sentimentalist inclination, the modern mentality has a distorted understanding of nothingness. Basically, this concept cannot be reasonably explained,

⁷ Belief, as any other form, has a double aspect: one is supernal, the other infernal. On the one hand, it provides, for a sentimental mentality, the promise of a future *presence*, but on the other hand (and this is the infernal aspect) it offers to the same mentality the certitude of *absence*. Properly speaking, belief (as such), being a form, is never present, but always absent, and it is no different from existence, wherein it resides, and of which it properly speaks and to which it properly addresses. If one understands that all that is now is Reality, and that all that is not now is existence, one understands that belief does not promise Reality, but existence. That is to say, existence promises existence. There is no use for belief other than that of occulting Reality. If belief is tender and mending for the broken heart, it is simultaneously keeping the same broken heart from realizing its true identity. By putting stitches to that wound, it only reveals existence. It puts another veil on its own true nature: flux of form and absence.

⁸ *Metanoia* is to be reached when, symbolically speaking, the mind descends into the heart. See the pictures above.

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because *that*, which is symbolized by it, is of a super-rational “nature”, being properly supernatural and metaphysical. Any talk of it would fail in redundancy. Therefore, if we would wish to describe how the sentimental mentality misconceives it, we would start producing pleonastic explanations: nothingness is perceived as void, nothingness is perceived as emptiness, etc. The truth is that this is how nothingness manifests. But the modern misunderstanding comes from the fact that *void*, *emptiness*, etc., are no longer understood as categories of existence (as manifestations of transcendence). Or better said, they are no longer *accepted* as such. Instead, they are rejected and denied, because they bring along the trial.

Now, this brings us to the concept of the unconscious, upon which the whole psychoanalytical perspective resides. First, let us see how nothingness may appear to be similar with the unconscious. They are both hidden; they are both meaningful (in the sense that they are both the source of signs, of manifestations), they both play a central role in self-inquiry. The differences are these and they are essential: nothingness is transcendental; the unconscious resides on the psychic level. The unconscious is the seat of the prosecutor, nothingness is the seat of the Judge. Prosecutor (the unconscious mind) and defendant (the ego) are related horizontally, so they thus intertwine. Nothingness is beyond any relation. This is why It is incorruptible and free. Nothingness does not come forth, nor draws back, for It is immutable. The flux is specific to manifestation and to manifestation only. *Everything* is mountain and valley, *nothing* is neither mountain, nor valley. The unconscious is exhaustible and its end and revelation (the dissolution of all unconscious state and the complete revelation and definition of the individual self) comes at the resolution of the trial, when it proves itself to be *everything*, claiming thus authority, omnipresence, eternity. *Nothingness* is infinite, It is beyond *everything*, It claims *nothing*.

If there are, indeed, some who see the unconscious as being much more than just its modalities of reflection on the psychic level, if there are some who approach it in a more or less metaphysical manner, then why do they still call it “unconscious”? If the expression “unconscious mind” is considered by the same people to be absurd (we have also noted this incongruence in a previous article)⁹, then how it is that the very negation of intelligence (suggested by the very term) is not considered to be as absurd as that (having in mind the metaphysical approach)? What is the individual mind if not consciousness? And if this is understood (by dismissing the expression “unconscious mind”), why isn’t it also perceived that, in the same way in which mind is consciousness, the consciousness is the reflection of Intellect? How is the Intellect “unconscious”? If the unconscious is approached metaphysically, why is it still ... “unconscious”?

Self determination and the hierarchy of existence

⁹ See *The Holy Land* IV (footnote), in *Oriens*, volume VI, Numbers 7-12, Fall 2009.

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The two types of imagination of which Ibn'Arabi speaks of (the objective imagination and the subjective one) represent the *manifestation* or the *Self determination* of the Real. But this Self determination is an occultation of the Real Identity and it manifests in a double aspect: as macrocosmic and as microcosmic. The process of Self determination could be described symbolically as follows: *Nobody occults into Everybody, which occults into Somebody*. In French, the description is more suggestive: *Personne se cache dans Tout le Monde, qui à Son tour, Se cache dans quelqu'un*. This basically means that Reality occults Itself within objective imagination (the macrocosm), which in its turn, occults itself more within subjective imagination (the microcosm).

How Reality appears to the reasonable mind

By *reasonable mind* we understand the *pure individual mind* (both sentient and reasonable, and properly governed by its higher aspect). It is the organ of individual knowledge. This “instrument” is the reflection or the manifestation of Reality on the individual plane. With this instrument, one sees Reality veiled by form and understands itself as form. Form and reason are basically the same.

Reason's very own nature makes it question itself. Because reason functions in a dialectical manner, when reason questions itself, reason is able and is obliged to acknowledge *something* that escapes it. In other words, reasonably speaking, there is *something* beyond reason that allows reason to perform this self inquiry. This authority is the *transcendental third*.¹⁰ When the self inquiry takes place, reason acknowledges a necessary *otherness* to which it subdues. When mind questions itself it cannot do this but within a relation. And this relation is between the inquirer and the inquired. The third party functions as arbiter, as judge, and it properly is *the free agent*, whose will is unconditioned. *It* is transcendental. If reason acknowledges *It*, it does so not directly, but through the self inquiry. When the trial of the self inquiry reaches the end, the *third* expresses itself, becoming thus present through its sentence.

If one argues that this *otherness* is fictitiously made up by reason, in order to question itself in a reasonable manner, this argument is valid. But by placing the *transcendental otherness* under the umbrella of mind-constructed fiction, it is not the *transcendental* that is killed, but the *otherness*. All *otherness* is a construction of the mind. This is how the mind works, this is how form exists, which comes to say that this is how *I exist*.¹¹ The Transcendental cannot be essentially denied by attaching *It* the “mind-construction” label. All individual reality is mind-constructed, just as, analogously, universal manifestation is the construction, the artifact (*māyā*) of the Artificer or the play (*lila*) of the Person behind the mask. Logically, it is impossible to deny the reality of Transcendence. Also, logically, it is futile to demonstrate the reality of Transcendence, since no evidence needs expression. The logical demonstration of Transcendence would be a tautology. Reason itself is the evidence of Transcendence. An evidence is exactly this: the visible trace of the invisible.

¹⁰ Because the object of reason's inquiry is no different than the subject that performs it, a third party is needed by reason (therefore, reasonably). This third party will perform as the Judge, while the subject as the prosecutor and the object as the defendant.

¹¹ *Existence* and *Being* designate two different levels of Reality.

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How Reality appears to the sentimental mind

The sentimental consciousness is dominated by *belief*. Etymologically, this word means *to be within desire*¹². Such a mind is incapable of seeing the *Now*, because it confuses It with the *form*¹³. And a *form* is never a question of *Presence*, but always a question of *absence*. The sentimental mind is *enchanted* by form, and it expects the *Now* to come forth from form and to reside in such forms as past or future. The sentimental mind is the one that takes the play seriously and the mask as Reality. The sentimental mind laughs if the *display* (from the Latin *displacare*; the *explicatio* of Cusanus) appears as comedy, and weeps if it appears as tragedy. This mind never questions its role within the play and neither the nature of the play. And thus the play becomes *the artificial law*, the artificial script. In Ibn'Arabi's words, it is *the subjective or microcosmic imagination*. The artificial law of the sentimental mentality brings forth another fallacy: that which inoculates that Reality must be revered. And this is a complete hoax, if it comes from no innocent mind, and an error if it comes from an artless one. Reality is the most *present* and *intimate* and *here* "It" that there is. It is represented by the symbolical self determination *I*, or in theological terms, by the personalized God. The first determination of Reality is *I*. It is the closest possible, so close that, on the level of First Determination, it is absolutely no different than *I*. How, then, could I revere myself? With what kind of twisted megalomaniac understanding of myself should I be inflicted to believe honestly in the reverence of myself? The Sufis are symbolizing Reality by calling It *the Friend*. What true friendship can be that which is based on reverence? In reverence there is no intimacy. Reverence only strengthens the illusion of separateness.¹⁴

The fallacy of revering Reality resides in considering the individual mind the true identity. Using theological terms, it means to confuse God with *satan*. Using the symbolism of theater, it means to confuse the Person capable of wearing indefinite individual masks (or in other words, capable of dividing itself in individual forms, without diminishing itself) with an individual mask.¹⁵ The mask receives reality from the

¹² It is composed by the prefix *be*, which in Germanic languages means to situate *at* or *near* something, and the Indo-European radical *leubh*, that gave the Latin *libido*, the English *lief*, *love*, etc.

¹³ This is the error of *modernity*. The *present* understood as relating in any way with *past* and *future* is also form, and being thus it is only fictitiously and illicitly a designation of *Now*.

¹⁴ What we revere we fear. What we fear we respect. What we respect we respite. And what we respite is not Reality, is not God. It is the prosecution. It is *our* only *relation* (complaint, story and kin) in *the court of law*. It is the only one we meet until the sentence is expressed. Etymologically, *to revere* means *to re fear* (from the Latin *re vereri*). *Re specere* is the Latin for *looking back at something*. The Indo-European root is *spe*, which in English gives the word *spy*. So, *to respect* (Lat. *respicere*) means to look back with suspicion; to be possessed by fear and, implicitly, by guilt, and by means of consequence, to ignore the *now* and the *here*. *Respite*, which means *a postponement*, is closely linked with *respect*. So what one respects is what one respites and what one respites is what one fears. Fear is present only allowed by guilt.

¹⁵ The individual domain serves as analogy for all levels of Reality. Universal manifestation is made up both by formal (individual) and super-formal (super-individual) degrees of Reality. Therefore, the Person disguises Itself with and within *the three realms*, wearing super-individual masks (the super-formal divine aspects), infernal masks (amorphous influences, manifesting as corrosive within the present state) and formal masks. The form must be well defined before transcending itself. This is what the individual self-inquiry serves for. The high definition of form takes place in the moment of the greatest tension (stretch) between the coagulant (sattwic) tendency and the dissolvent (tamasic) one. It is when the

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Person behind it. The mask's relation with the Person is hierarchical, in the sense that the mask is everything and something (*so and so*), and the Person is nothing (neither, nor; *neti neti*).¹⁶ If the mask reveres something, this reverence is the play of the Person. This reverence is not the field upon which mask and Person meet, because these two will never meet on the same field. Properly speaking, no relation can exist between them. The mask has reality only as long as it is played by the Person. The reverence is the field whereupon the mask relates with another mask. Any relation is the expression of a fundamental tension (Lat. *tendere*, to stretch), which is the consequence of a transcendental drama (Gr. *drama*, play, action, deed). This dramatic event, basically, gives birth to the *two* involved in any kind of relation. For the relation of the *two* to exist, the third is implied as Sire, therefore as transcendental. The third is the invisible splitter, the dramatist. It is the one that gives space (tension), so that the relation may exist. This space comes as a separation within the one. This event simultaneously kills the one and sires the relation. In itself, the dramatic event is beyond qualifications, but for the relation this event is simultaneously parturient and lethal. The sense of guilt comes from it. And so we have a tragedy. The sentimental mind lives in such a tragedy.

horizontal expansion (the rajas tendency) reaches its indefinite limit by cracking (the heart explodes, the waters brake, the smile is cracked), thus simultaneously dying and giving birth to the Person (or releasing It) to a qualitative superior level (mask). Within manifestation, the Person is apparently passive, being born or being killed by Its own play of masks. The player must allow Itself to get subjugated by Its *Maya*, otherwise the play would not be for real.

¹⁶ Because the mask is everything, it can relate only to and with other masks. Prosecutor and defendant are related, they are family. The relation takes place through recognition and reflection. I accuse because I recognize *something* from my intimate *everything*. *Everything* may very well, as in the case of the present humanity, be temporarily ignored and split in conscious and unconscious, but its actual presence comes from obscurity to light when the relation (the complaint) is produced. The trial begins with the prosecution's relation (complaint). Therefore, implicitly, a connection (a relation) is expressed. *I accuse you* means essentially *I judge you, I reason you. I relate to you and with you. I know you*, because that *something* I see in you, is part of my *everything*.

A very interesting fact comes out from all this. We know that the prosecutor works for the state. That is, he works for the law giver. Therefore, he is, more or less, the official agent of the Power. But he is not free. He doesn't work on his own. He *respects* the law. He *is not* the law. He judges, it is true, but he judges by mandate. To judge by mandate means to reason. Here is where prosecutor and defendant meet as relations. They have *something* in common. And that something is the very *reason* of the trial (or the trial of the reason), of the self-inquiry. The prosecutor says: "I see your guilt, therefore I accuse you. Show your guilty face." This is what prosecutor and defendant share, this is *everything*: guilt, and therefore, the relation of it, in it, through it. In other words, the prosecutor's request is this: "Show *me*, reveal *me*, display *me*, confess *me*, live all your life with *me*, in *me*, as *me*." But the defendant responds no more. The dialectic is over. *Something* broke. The *community* broke. The *relation* broke. The trial is over. Innocence is perceived, nothingness is realized. The Judicial Power unveiled Itself.