

CENTAUR – THE MAN AND HIS HORSE

The search for the new mission of men



"A horse and his man entered my session; a man and his horse walked out. The horse was riding the man at the start. At the end the man was the rider". YT

What is the mission of men in the 21st century?

Men used to have their unique mission. They ruled the world indisputably for thousands of years, regarding women as secondary class citizens, inferior human beings born to serve them, love them, bear their children, care for them, entertain them, obey them and have no say in the running of the world. Only 126 years ago women were given equal vote for the first time: New Zealand 1893, South Australia 1894. Switzerland gave women this right only in 1971. Many other women's rights followed slowly, but the struggle for complete women's equality still continues even in the developed world, fighting to overcome unequal pay in various industries, the 'Glass Ceiling' in the corporate world, academia and public services, 'The Boys Clubs' in politics and women's unpaid compulsory burden of care for early childhood. In most developing countries medieval conditions of discrimination against women still prevail. Only yesterday, 29th November 2019 Sudan's sovereign council and cabinet decided to repeal 30 years of establishment discrimination against women and to give Sudanese women rights equal to men. Women still have a long way to go to correct the injustices of historic discrimination against them as a group.

Men on the other hand were the leaders, the heroes, the warriors, the business and political masters, the heads of families, tribes, governments, countries, religions and culture. They had their rituals, rights of passage, initiation processes, leadership training, spiritual hierarchies, secret brotherhoods, symbols, temples, legends and chivalry. They are all fading into archaeology, folklore and relics of glorious past: King Arthur and the knights of the Round Table, the Grail Brotherhood, the Temple Legends, the Pharos, the great prophets of old, the Priest Kings, the religious founders, the discoverers of the new world, the great conquerors and liberators, the war heroes, the leaders of the great philosophical, scientific, political, ideological, artistic innovations and breakthroughs, the writers of history. But men everywhere are fast losing this superior role and status which was never earned on the basis of merit and fair competition but on gender, birth and legislation by the elite group of humanity: men. That position is fast vanishing. The number of tasks uniquely reserved for men is shrinking: women serve in elite front line troops in many armies, as combat pilots, paratroopers and tank officers, with no evidence of inferiority. Women lead parliaments, ministries, governments, universities, segments of the arts world, journalism and media, science and technology. Not in great numbers yet, but evidence enough for exposing the falsehood of institutionalised discrimination against them. So women, as a group, still have their valid mission: not only to reach complete equality with men in all walks of life – but also to fulfil their new tasks in women's style, in order to balance the long dominance of male competitive aggression with truly human characteristics.

Men lost their collective task, mission, service, status and associated rituals. The vacuum that was left in front of them now has not yet been filled with a new mission. Men groups everywhere are struggling with

this gap, attempting in a variety of ways to fill it up with new men's ideals, rituals and visions, often imported from indigenous tribes in North and South America, Australia and Africa. The vacuum is unbearable in the materialistic poverty of modern western spirituality. That is the temptation for young people of gangs, extremism and populist right-wing nationalistic movements today. Any remnant of old traditions where men still had their clear and powerful place in relation to their tribes, their gods, nature – is admired and immolated in order to fill the unbearable gap of men's spirituality, meaning, purpose, mission.

But that imported romantic, glorious past oriented, borrowed, out of cultural context replacements have no future. Those tribal traditions were created and operated in a tribal cultural context, long before the dawn of individual consciousness. They are based on the fading group-consciousness of old, not on individual consciousness which have shaped the Northern and Western European cultures ever since the early Renaissance of the 15th Century, the Reformation of the 16th Century, the scientific revolution of the 17th century, the Enlightenment of the 18th century and the industrial revolutions of the 19th and 20th centuries. These developments are rooted in the classic philosophical, cultural and political innovations of Ancient Greece and Rome, where individual thinking started. The culture of individuation never stopped evolving in Europe ever since, and over the past 200 years has spread over the whole world. Traditions left over by group-soul based indigenous cultures cannot fill the gap left by men's loss of his old leadership.

So what is left for men as a possible mission, direction, meaning, task – as a group?

As a group, I am afraid – nothing. As individual men – everything.

Patriarchy, the domination of men was created at the time of group souls, pre-individuation, between 3,000 and 5,000 years ago, around the time of the Trojan War. Before that period Matriarchy was dominant. The Amazon women warriors participated in that war on the side of Troy, a culture governed by female divinities and priestesses. It's the last we heard of them. Men took over as a group. That domination is fading, it has to end. But what will replace the old men's mission cannot be group based. The time for that is over. The new step in human evolution has to emerge out of the new individual consciousness which is not defined by sex, gender, race, nationality, religion, ideology, class interest, tradition. Therefore old group-based manhood purposes and rituals cannot fill the gap. But what can individuals aspire to? What ideals can be personal, individual, and at the same time universal?

The men's identity can only be replaced by an All Human identity. There is no way back to group identity. Women still have a task and a mission as a group to balance past class-based grievances of the long term discrimination against them. They still have to complete the mission of taking their rightful equal place in all aspect of civilization, everywhere. Men have no history of being discriminated against. They have no group-identity mission any more as men, but they can start the long road towards the Universal-Human Being identity, because, surprisingly, they are more free than women to do so: the concern of equality does not occupy them. They have never been discriminated against since prehistoric times.

Men lost their mission as men, and this is no mere philosophical matter. Men are broken everywhere. This is a serious crisis on a global scale, for which there is hardly a language. They still have to function as fathers, lovers, husbands, workers, and in all of these roles something is progressively missing: the nobility, strength and authority of a man with a mission. Of course some of them found a new mission, but it seems as if most of them have not. Pointing to just three symptoms of that crisis I wish to highlight the crisis of leaderless youth, the crisis of women who cannot find their match, and the crisis of political leadership world-wide. Obviously I can only point to these symptoms briefly here because of the limited scope of this article.

Nothing replaces father as mentor, guide, leader, the first teacher and role model of being a man for their boys, and as a representative of a man for their girls. But if a man cannot be fully himself without a sense of direction, purpose, task and mission – he cannot fully be the father that his children need him to be. I was working with Moroccan youth in a migrant town in the north of Israel in the 70's as a youth worker and community organiser. These families moved from isolated, close to mediaeval societies in the Berber tribes of the Atlas mountains of North Africa, as migrants, straight into modern, developed, European style Israel

with no preparation. Their children wanted to belong to modern society, to be connected and effective in a developed, industrial country. The fathers could not help them. For them they were cut off from the culture they knew with no roots or orientation in the new one. They functioned purely on menial jobs and social security. They could not play the proud mentor, leader, role model for their sons. There was a vacuum around the children and the teenagers. The vacuum was filled with street gang culture, petty crime, low school performance, emptiness, addictions. Something like that is happening now for youth on a larger scale. Are our high school teachers being prepared to fill that gap? I doubt it. In a content and exam oriented state school system in which only the intellect of children is being challenged and addressed – the vacuum persists. In the middle of a seminar about the modern mission of men recently in Kosice I interviewed two teenagers of 16 and 18 about what they need in an ideal teacher. Their answers: what they need from a teacher, and from a role model man is: confidence, bravery, pragmatism, strong will, ability to listen, being normal and successful, namely - preparing me for normal life. Are we preparing teachers for these qualities? Are we preparing future fathers for these qualities? I doubt it.

Men without a mission are broken men, half-developed men. In my observation women world-wide are becoming progressively disappointed by men, at least from their late 20's onwards. Nature is kinder to women: their development does not stop in young adulthood. Home-building, care and motherhood pushes them to grow as persons at least to their early 30's. Men's automatic natural development stops at 17. From there on – they only grow further psychologically if they choose to or if they are being inspired. When women had no social power – they could not fully express their superior soul maturity outside the confines of home life. But with the equality of education, work market and expanding social roles – women express their human maturity outwardly, they develop further confidence in their psychological capacities, and they tend to take their personal development seriously and much further than men. About 80% of all my students and clients of personal development in many countries over the past 30 years were and are women, and I hear the same from other teachers of personal development. The gap of maturity between men and women is growing constantly. Educated, professional, confident, developing, powerful women in their 30's in the developed countries find it progressively harder to find men that can attract them, interest them, engage them, excite them, motivate them for life commitment. Women who made a life commitment to men in their mid twenties – find it hard to keep their interest in the same men 10 years later. Men become progressively less attractive and less relevant to women. It is an unspoken tragedy of global proportion. In the same seminar about the lost mission of men I interviewed three women about what they need in a man. These were the answers: bravery, confidence, not to be afraid of woman's complexity, not to hide from challenges, to be expressive and to speak their reality openly, strong will do pursue and to do what they are committed to do, entertaining, interesting, facing the real world, making a meaningful contribution to the world, to have spiritual connection, to be original, leader and not a follower, to be able to express their feeling, to be sexually intelligent and empathetic.

Are we preparing teenagers and young men to be relevant to 21st century women? I doubt it. In order to be relevant to the growing number of self-developing women men will have to find their mission, to confront and to overcome their inner obstacles, to develop themselves in order to be capable of fulfilling their mission.

On the third symptom: the poverty of political leadership – I will not elaborate here for shortness of space. Suffice to say: look around in the world today and ask yourself when did you last hear about a political leader that you admire? A true servant of the people, one who uplifts people, has a true vision for humanity, courageous enough to lead towards that vision, truly cares for the people, honest, pure of heart, an inspiration? These kind of leaders are rare. You have to go back to the 2nd world war to find them, with the exception of Nelson Mandela of South Africa and Jacinda Arden of New Zealand. 'Coincidentally' the absolute majority of world leaders are still men. The man who cannot lead himself – cannot lead his people.

If the recovery of the mission of men cannot be found in the collective consciousness of men – where can it be found? I believe it can only be found in the individual consciousness of men as they strive towards all-human ideals of universal values. Women already do it: birthing, nursing and holding our children, creating our homes, caring for our communities – women have always acted on universal human values. It is time now for men to grow individually towards the humanisation of human society.

There were ancient, prehistoric times when the universal spiritual dimension of humanity was present directly to everyone. Some disappearing indigenous tribes in America, Australia, Africa and the islands still represent it. Then came the times when traditional spiritual leaders represented for their tribes those universal dimensions in a hierarchical way. There are many parts of humanity still living under these regimes, but they are not the leading vanguards of human civilization. Now, with the unstoppable rise of individualisation – individuals have to discover freely within themselves their connection to these universal values. As the direct presence of the Human-Universal spirit withdrew from tribal-oriented humanity – it left behind for the future the beginnings of the bridges that can reconnect humanity with its archetypes: the search for meaning in human life, individual conscience, compassion and idealism. What was once the knighthood granted by outside authority following local tribal tradition – now passes to the knighthood granted to the individual by oneself, following nothing but one's own independent thinking, the individual moral compass of conscience, the natural personal compassion in the face of suffering and need, and, very recently, the growing capacity of empathy. But these ideals cannot be imposed from outside. They have to be discovered and cultivated by personal initiative. The new source of purpose, meaning, task, mission – has to be forged from the inside of the human soul. There is a living source in the depth of the human soul, but in order to activate it – the individual has to initiate a deeper connection to oneself. In the terminology that started to be created by the Humanistic Psychology of the mid-20th century - this initiative is called 'Personal Development'. There was time when this was the luxury free time occupation of the elite classes. Today personal development is an existential requirement for everyone who wishes to live productive, creative, fulfilling and beneficial human life, to be a relevant partner, lover, colleague, friend and parent.

Yes of course, this is the developmental direction for all of us, men and women. But women have the advantage of cultivating universal-human capacities since time immemorial, and therefore they have an advantage over men regarding what now became the cutting edge of evolution. At the same time women are still full-time busy struggling to balance as women the injustices of past discrimination by dominant men against them. Men, on the other hand, have no such historic discrimination against them to overcome.

Therefore, paradoxically, men are freer to focus their efforts on their individual contribution to the all-human challenge of humanising humanity, family, society, politics, economy, community building and the environment. This is the new heroism that is expected of men, this is the new mission of man, and there will be no other, there will be no group-oriented men's mission to be found.

In Psychophonetics Vocational-Counselling process we present the seeker of new purpose, task, work, mission – with the three great 'Vocational Questions': 1) what do you LOVE to do? 2) what do you HAVE to do? 3) what is CALLING you for service? No man can find himself without finding his mission and service for humanity.

Manhood is not obsolete. The unique power of men is much needed, but the mission of men must be renewed and updated. A man needs his horse, but to ride it – not to be ridden by it, and in the service of humanity as a whole – not just in the self-service of himself. Some of them are already fully engaged in this new wave of the all-human mission of men, some just repeat what men always did, with less and less enthusiasm, innovation, inspiration and success. Our young people and our women are watching.

Yehuda Tagar