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Drama as Passion's Action in the World:

A Conversation between two Friends

*Theology that is not lived is not “real”—passion is about being real.
The perspective of passion is concrete, at ground level, not abstract,
up in the head.*

*It is the human heart which is thrown into and bound up with this
world, unbreakably.*

*And what makes that unbreakable attachment, involvement,
interconnection, is passion.*

The passion of heart is what binds the heart to the world.

*I have at times said that passion's struggle in and with and for the
world is a story, and that story is intensely dramatic. In conversation
with my oldest friend Andy HARMON, who has explored and pushed
the investigation of drama very far, I realised that his account of the
'dramatic' is addressing what I call the 'passionate'.*

I. Rehearsal

Andy believes that the ascetic path is itself dramatic. He thinks this in regard to BUDDHA's struggle for enlightenment, because BUDDHA had to wrestle with temptations, difficulties, and privations on his path. The walk to enlightenment is no stroll in the park. It is no airy fairy, sickly sweet, etherealising out of the world. The sitting posture in meditation is itself a posture of strength, a planting of oneself firmly on the ground. Meditation can become the “mind taken down into the heart,” as the Egyptian desert tradition instructs us to do. A deepening happens, something is at stake, there is a struggle, and a changed condition is reached on the other side of struggle. All this is, indeed, dramatic.



The ascetic is suspended, inwardly, between life and death, love and evil, discovering wisdom and losing the way entirely. The ascetic is, to borrow Federico Garcia LORCA's phrase, "on the rim." All this is the stuff of drama, without question. And existential pillars uphold this drama, according to Buddhism: faith, doubt (angst, anguish, dread, awefulness), and determination. All three of these elements are foundational to what I am calling "passion." Passion enters a drama, and its passage through is highly dramatic; and this is true of asceticism.

But, despite all this, asceticism has within its way neither the ultimate drama nor ultimate sacrifice of passion's road in the world. A greater and deeper drama awaits passion in the world. This is the drama that increasingly engulfed Jesus Christ in the second half of his ministry, climaxing in the Passion of Christ.

II. Real Performance

Both to those living the ascetic life in the monastery and those given over to the sacred life of the temple, I want to say, as a disturbing herald: neither asceticism, nor sacredness, is enough. As the means to an end, they are fine; as an end in themselves, they are deceiving, because they are not sufficient. There is a formula “necessary, but not sufficient” – asceticism’s yoke, and the temple’s sacredness, are necessary, but not sufficient.

One argument articulates that asceticism is not confined to the monastery but exists in the world, and similarly that sacredness is not confined to the temple but exists in the world, so that no religious Tradition owns either the ascetical yoke or the sacred temple in any exclusive way. But there is a bigger argument about the world that all religions tend to ignore because they do not have the fortitude and the heart to face up to it.

This bigger argument says that the world is more important than any inner arena within each of us or any sacred space between all of us, because it is in the world that God’s greatest and deepest purposes are put at risk, must be struggled and suffered for, and paid for, to be redeemed. Christ was speaking of this when he said: “I came not to judge, but to save the world.”

Christ did not come to strengthen the ascetical path that goes back to the dawn of time or to rebuild Solomon’s temple. No ‘Christ’ is needed for either of those tasks. Christ came and is needed for redeeming the world.

The world is the field of greatest risk, greatest danger, greatest cost, for God and for humanity, and thus greatest redemption. Our redemption is not “in the church.” Redemption is of the world—by ‘world’ is meant the entire material and historical world process over all time from innocent beginning to holy end. This redemption is great and deep; it is terrible and dreadful, as well as glorious and wondrous. It is totally universal.

The Church, or religious Tradition, is a part of the world; it is not the world. Christ called it the leaven in the bread, but it is not the bread; and thus the Church, or religious Tradition, loses its leaven power when it sets itself up as refuge from the world, or in any manner contrary to the world. The Church or Tradition is not a life raft sailing through the stormy seas of the world, saving its members ‘from’ the world. When the Church or Tradition seeks to do this, it

falsifies its role as a means to an end, but not the end. Such a Church or Tradition loses heart for engaging with and committing to the world as did Christ. It ceases having any redemptive meaning for the world. Instead, its members see it as a shelter where they can flee the world. All courage and generosity towards the world is thrown away. The bread loses its leaven and it rots. But what happens to the leaven? It is, in Christ's own words, "good for nothing," and is thrown away. All mission to the world, all heart for the world, all passion required to redeem the world, is evaded by religious people when the ascetic yoke or sacred temple becomes their escape from the world.

The human heart cannot escape. The heart is bound hand and foot to the destiny of the world: whatever happens ultimately to the world happens ultimately to the heart. The heart passes through the ascetical desert to be spiritually scorched, and the heart goes into the sacred place to be spiritually nourished, but the heart is basically in and of the world, bound to the fate of the world. The heart is on the ground, and enworlded, in a manner neither nous nor soul is. The heart and the world are tied up together. To untie the heart's bond with the world is to give up on any redemption for the world, and, at the same time, it is to give up on the heart and give in to the passionless, disheartened existence that allows the world to be taken over increasingly by the powers of hell. Redemption must heal and transfigure the world and the heart together.

But God holds the ace up his sleeve: however much we flee the world by becoming a wraith in the desert, or abandon the world by becoming a pillar-hugger in the temple, God has a way of showing human beings, including the religious, that we humans are all in one boat together, and that boat is the world, such that if the world is lost, then the boat sinks and we all go down with it. God restores us to the world through drama.

Drama engulfs the world, and reveals to all of us that there is no escape from the world. The world is it—or forget it. This is why the world is not secondary to, not added to, passion, but passion is inherently bound to the world. This is so because passion's mission is to the world.

What passion is really passionate about is the world.

Passion loves the world, sacrificially.

Passion fights for the world, sacrificially.

Passion carries the world, sacrificially.

III. God's Gamble

But all this can and needs to be stated in terms of *drama*. The drama which comes from God disturbs the peace of one and all: it disturbs the worldly and materialistic, ensconced in comfort, in laziness, in aspiration for status, in ambition for fame and riches, as well as disturbing the peace of the other worldly and religious, ensconced in some domain supposedly protected from the tumult of worldly *Sturm und Drang*.

Passion's entry into the world is dramatic, because the world process as made by God is itself dramatic. The world is a drama, something deep is at stake, it could go either way, there is no guarantee how it will turn out. Only when passion 'steps up' and takes on the world, does the drama of the world go electric. All the creation, including the spirits, is electrified, and they stop whatever they are doing to watch. They want to know what is going to happen next. They are on the edge of their seats.

The world is created by God as a drama.

Passion is created to enter this drama and make a difference to it, by its own loving sacrifice—by its sacrificial suffering of a wound, by its sacrificial fight with a lie, by its sacrificial carrying of a burden.

Thus, when passion withdraws from the world, what is really at stake is ignobly abandoned, but everyone and everything breathes a sigh of relief. The challenge is not taken on. We can all go back to our undramatic, static life, where nothing of the heart ever changes. We can 'relax.' But when passion steps up, and gets stuck in, everything goes electric, and suddenly becomes very dramatic. What is always at stake, though we tend to sleep through this in the routine of the everyday, is all of a sudden savagely in play. Now we are playing for high stakes, and it matters what happens. The air is humming and the ground is on fire.

Thunder shakes the earth, lightning strikes the hills.

It is important, indeed vital, to know that God created a deep drama in the world process, beneath the shallow "sound and fury that signifies nothing." Both the ascetical yoke and the sacred temple tend to assume that the world does not much matter because it is entirely sound and fury, signifying nothing. This is only true of the surface of things. Deeper down in the underneath, the world is resting on 'nothingness', because that 'nothing' is either the abyss of heart so deep it is fathomless, or the abyss of voidness and vacuity 'filled' by death and hell. In the depth of the world and in the depth of the

heart, there is an almost sickening, dizzying, dreadful and fearful drama, where something so ultimate is at stake, its outcome affects God and humanity equally. Both are bound to what is at stake. To ponder this, to look into its ambiguous abyss, is to start to tremble; it is to grow faint.

What is at stake?

God does play dice with the universe, contrary to what EINSTEIN thought; God is a gambler like DOSTOYEVSKY, because what is at stake in the world is whether the world can rest on, and be true to, the heart passion of sacrificial love. This 'at stakeness' places God and humanity at risk, because the drama—the ordeal, the clashing, the sweat, tears, and blood—cannot be resolved by God for humanity, nor by humanity for God, but requires both God and humanity, working in alliance ultimately, even if on the way they must also work in opposition. In fact, alliances and oppositions are essential to all drama. God and humanity are both at risk, at danger, at cost, in this drama of redeeming the world. Moreover, there is another player in the drama, because the devil does not want this gamble of God to succeed.

At its deepest, the drama is entrusting and risking the world to the care of the 'heart' with its 'passion' of love—thus God's heart and humanity's heart, divine passion and human passion, are required. And the devil seeks to deceive the human heart, that the divine and human may be separated. If divine and human are separated, the task and gift of the heart's passion will come to nothing. The drama will end tragically; it will end in ruin. And this will be ruin for the world, for all in it, and this will be ruin for God. As an existentialist, God fights fair: God relinquishes God's omnipotent power in order to make truth, or what in my writings I call 'heart truth', the only 'power', the only life, the passion of heart can use to win through the journey and battle of the world's drama.

Thus, the human heart wrestles towards truth; this is dramatic enough in itself because it is a hard road, with its own tests, ordeals and clashes. But the human heart also wrestles against evil's deception; the lie about heart and the lie about passion becomes the lie about the world and the lie about the world's redemption—and this is even more dramatic. Passion is the 'hero' of drama, who dramatically rises to the occasion and undergoes a whole dramatic journey and battle which matters for the whole world process, past, present, future. It is exciting, but fearful, because it counts. Indeed, it counts so much, we cannot bear to look at it. Deepest at stake is

heart truth and the change that the wrestling for this as the truth of the world brings to all concerned. But change is not attained quietly, peacefully, undramatically, by some unfolding organic growth.

As my friend Andy explained to me, drama progresses through the cooperation of alliances, and the ordeals, tests, and oppositions that elicit confrontation and conflict. Change is provoked; it emerges dramatically as both ordeals and tests, friends and enemies, wrestle. The climax is always preceded by a 'moment of truth', where truth is revealed or deception tries to distort and hide that truth. John the Baptist reached such a moment of truth in prison, while awaiting beheading, when he was plunged into crisis over whether Jesus Christ was really the Messiah or not. Had all his preaching and indeed the surrender of his life been true to the ultimate heart truth, or had he been a fool? Was it all for nothing? Andy has written an extraordinarily beautiful and dramatic song about John the Baptist just before his death—despite being a Jew practicing Zen Buddhism. And after the moment of truth comes change, through a sacrifice.

In fact, the Old Testament is a special book not because it contains historical genealogies and moral commandments, but because it tells the story of passion: it tells the story of the drama which God placed in the world at the centre or heart of the world process; the Old Testament tells how only God's passion and humanity's passion can contend with that drama and bring it through to its other side, despite the evil one seeking to derail it. Unlike any other sacred text I know, the Old Testament is 'sacred history' because it is an account of the "sufferings and raptures of the spirit" of heart passion, wrestling towards truth in the world, a world contested by the devil. We are in a fight for our life, and the life of the world, and for all time. Sacred history tells the dramatic story of this fight as it goes through an immense journey in time, and goes through all sorts of ups and downs of a radically dramatic nature. Abraham has to insanely and criminally kill his son to be true to heart truth: what passion enabled him to climb that mountain with a long knife, as his beloved son played in the undergrowth on the way up? Judith seduced, slept with, and killed an alien king to save her people Israel and had God's blessing for it: but was this action moral, by conventional standards? Was Abraham moral, by any moral standards even conceivable? What about David's life? Lover, warrior and poet: will you tell me his life was not dramatic, not passionate? It was David who killed the giant Goliath, which saved Israel, but it was also David who sent his best friend into the most risky, dangerous, costly, part of a battle,

knowing the friend would die, so as to get the friend's wife. Is David, like Abraham, Judith, and so many other Jewish heroes of heart passion, entirely rational or entirely moral? I think not.

In the life of passion, as it enacts the wrestling toward heart truth in the world, there is craziness to be gone through, there is amorality, immorality, and fallen passions, to be gone through. Yes, we recover our sanity as we go along and later become wise; yes, we take responsibility for and repent of our many delusive cravings and evil passions: we shed greed, hate, vanity, pride, envy, lust, and the rest, as we go along and later we become virtuous. This isn't the point. The point is that the struggles with these inner errors of heart passion are enacted outwardly, in the world. It is in the world our fallenness is exposed; it is in the world our fallenness is healed. It is in the world there is a change of heart, which then makes sacrifice for the change of the world. The Jewish heroes of the Old Testament both are changed in the world and change the world in a single process. This process is drama. Their story is part myth, part history: it is sacred history, realistic to the drama outside us in the world and inside us in our heart.

Indeed, in the Old Testament, the inner drama reflects the outer drama, and contributes to it for good or ill: if I have a bad heart, I add to the world's misery and push it further over the brink, if I have a good heart, I add to the world's redeeming and bring it closer to fruition. My interior battle of heart directly affects the outer battle for the world. If asceticism is dramatic, as Andy has argued, this is only because, from a Jewish orientation, it is enacted by people living in the world and seeking to redeem the world. The inner drama is dramatic, because the outer drama is absolutely crucial for me and for you and for all of us. The little drama inside me serves the big drama outside me, which involves many other people, and indeed ultimately involves everyone and everything.

But this entails, then, that our heart is purified so it can be given to the world, that the world may be saved. A heart saved out of the world is an evil deception, a lie, yet this is the lie all religions, all religious Traditions, tend to become fooled by. But the heart is not saved from the world; the heart is saved that the world can be saved. Thus in Judaism there is no monastic asceticism, because the human heart is not simply purified by the religious yoke, the commandments, and the sacred temple, but by the drama of living in the world. The drama inherent to the world exposes the heart, breaks the heart, changes the heart. Only such a scorched heart can scorch the world, only such a heart in which fire is lit can light fires in the world.

From Abraham, at one end, to Christ's Passion on the Cross at the other end, is the unbroken continuity of the story of the drama of passion. It is God's passion and humanity's passion in play, but the devil is the passionless one, trying to deceive and instil his lie. At stake is the world and all people and creatures and things that sail in the world over the ontological sea. At stake is whether heart passion can win through, or will be defeated. It is a fair fight. There is no guarantee. Tragedy is central to it, and might be what ends the day. When we witness such drama we are on the edge of our seats, because we know we merely witness the same drama in which we are all participants.

IV. The Hero

Drama, says Andy, is about the choices we make under pressure. In a drama, action is compelled. It is not chosen; it is a fate that befalls us. How we act, and what heart our action discloses, is our choice, but that we are in a situation where something is at stake, and we must act for or against it, is where drama really kicks off. The pressure demands we act, demands we give our heart or withhold it, and give one kind of heart or another kind. Drama forces the heart into action. This action is passion: passion moves us and we act towards the world.

When we reject passion, what we really reject is the action in the world that alone can change the world. The world is not changed in any other way. It is not changed by thought; it is not changed by planning directed by thought (the malaise of today). It is not changed by beauty, by good will, by romantic imagination, by idealistic ethics, by aspiration. We are not changed fundamentally in the heart except by our own action: and the world is not changed except by action that comes from the heart.

The true heart and the false heart both act in the world. Drama puts them together to create the tension, intensity, and pressure that will reveal deeper truth and will also expose the deception working against truth.

Passion stirs up drama in the world for reasons very basic and profound. Passion, by virtue of being enworlded, is situated in a drama. The world is a drama. But only passion really takes it on, really 'acts' in a way that can affect the balance of power in the drama already inhering in the world process. What I am calling 'passion' here is, in dramatic terms, the 'hero.' The hero enters an already

charged situation and that electrifies and galvanises it, because this hero can make a difference to the wider drama in whose grip we are all held. As Hamlet prevaricates on the rim, our anxiety goes berserk, for we wait to see how he will act, because this will affect us all. The hero's defeat is our defeat. The hero's coming through ordeals, tests, losses, and doing the noble heart action in the most intense clashes and conflicts is our winning through. .

It takes action to change the world, and the action that is redemptive of the world is a sacrifice.

Thus all dramatic storytelling, if it really is true to the world's drama, is about sacrifice. It is the hero's sacrifice that saves the situation, that saves the day. This unites God and humanity, and shows the devil to be the small hearted, passionless being that the devil in truth is. Drama reveals the heart truth that has the strength, wisdom, and love to care enough about the world to give and empty the heart for its sake.

The hero is staked to what is at stake.

Whatever happens to the hero, however much the hero must lose or even offer her or his own life to death, it is this heart truth that wins through, is revealed, is vindicated. It is tested and it is proved. It is deepened as it goes through the crises of the hero's journey and the hero's battle. Whatever the thunderous storm of the dramatic events and deeds that happen on the stage of history, the place where the two roads cross—the road of heart and its adversary—is clarified, and people's stand there and people's refusal to stand there is all starkly unhidden. Suddenly, despite shallow storms that add up to a hill of beans in the end, the depth is clearly displayed. What is at stake, what matters most, and what action this compels on everyone, whether it is an action of greater or lesser heart, is electrifyingly clear and set in motion.

The hero serves, protects, sacrifices.

In my slowly dawning understanding of heart, I see now four heart figures of supreme importance, exemplifying the heroism that only emerges through passion. I showed these four to Andy, and he confirmed them as the pillars of drama (though he named them differently). They are:

1. King or Chief, who is also Judge, Holding up the Light of Justice

He does not teach, he is not a mentor in that direct way, but he 'sets the standard', he is the model, the paradigm, the embodied vision of the human being who has attained heart truth. The king is the one who puts his money where his mouth is, the one who never talks without backing it up with the walk. He models what we all serve—the heart truth that is like a central lodge pole upon which all other poles lean. He is a moral exemplar in his person and deeds, but he is more than that; he is what the Lakota call a "person of great heart, who has self control, bravery and generosity." He takes care of his people, always, and has special concern for the poor, the bereft, the hurt and broken. He gives all he is and all he has to the people, constantly. The king can also be a warrior, a hero right down in the thick of it, because of the consequence that he never espouses for others what he cannot do himself. Basically, the king or chief is thus a powerful influence on all people, a powerful motivator for others. The king models the Stand on Heart Truth. He doesn't preach what that truth is, he does not talk 'about' it; rather, he existentially stands on and acts from heart truth. He is it, in his person. Thus, in his heart he has attained the truth which all persons seek.

It was as a king, not as a prophet and not as a priest, that Christ died for his people, for all people, making the ultimate sacrifice for their universal redemption.

2. Warrior, who is neither Soldier nor Thug

The warrior is the hero par excellence, the one going through the test, the one right in the midst of the clash. The warrior fights, but the warrior also works—he exemplifies both the fighting spirit and the hard-working shouldering of a burden, task, duty, implicit in one of the two root meanings of passion in both old Greek and old Hebrew. The warrior fights the battle, but he also 'carries the load.' He is a doer. He knows how to wade straight in, unhesitatingly. He is practical; he knows how to use tools and techniques, not just weapons but any and all implements, to get the job done.

Christ was a warrior, for as he says of himself, he brought not peace but a sword.

3. Holy Fool or Sacred Clown (Heyoka)

This is the reversal person, the heart reversed by God's dæmonic wound. The holy fool is portrayed in DOSTOYEVSKY's novels and is

very similar to the sacred clown, who disrupts religious ceremonies with foul language, obscene gestures, gutter humour. He protects true seriousness by challenging and shaking up religious airs. In one sense, he is the laughter of the heart when our human pomposity and vanity is deflated; but more profoundly, the fool shows the meaning of God's words in the Old Testament—“my ways are not your ways.” What we regard as wisdom is folly to God, and what God regards as wisdom is folly to us. The same holds with power: God's power seems weak to us, and our power is weak to God. A huge reversal, a huge turning upside down, is needed and will be part of the heart's learning of life lessons and coming to more real wisdom and more real power. The holy fool reveals the emperor has no clothes, whether a pope or a prince it makes no distinction; the holy fool exposes their paucity of heart, whatever bright package they put round it to hide its shame, or guilt, for being so small.

The holy fool challenges hypocrisy, both religious and worldly. The holy fool is also the craziness saner than sanity, the folly wiser than wisdom, the vulnerability more powerful than any power. The holy fool has the eyes of an innocent, with which to see through the deceptions and lies of the sophisticated. He or she comes out and says, directly, the heart truth in a person or in a situation, without hesitation or gloss, without politeness or deference. Like God, the holy fool is no ‘respector of persons.’ Holy foolishness is the lightning that strikes the tower to reveal the pit beneath it. God can even trick us into learning, into change—the lesson of many Red Indian trickster stories. The clever who think they can trick others by manipulation and superior wits are often the most easily tricked and shown up as utter fools.

Christ was a holy fool, for, according to Saint Paul, his wisdom was foolishness to Greeks and his vulnerability a stumbling block to Jews.

4. Prophet, Holy Person, Shamanic ‘Wounded Healer’, Mystical Ascetic

This is the heart disrobed and stripped naked in God's ‘duende’, burnt to ashes to be reformed in the furnace. Much of Federico Garcia LORCA's best poetry and his two stunning articles on the duende of flamenco music portray the process of suffering, sorrow, mourning, poverty and loss this heart undergoes. My chapter on asceticism in the book *Raising Lazarus* (2004) addresses the inner drama of spiritual warfare in the deep heart, as lived in Eastern Orthodox Christianity. This is the heart that most thoroughly faces the interior abyss, even as the king and warrior face this abyss in the world.

This figure is also the teacher, the mentor, the helper. In dramatic stories, the prophet advises the king or the warrior, as the keeper of principle. As such, the prophet does not stand back from the world, but, like John the Baptist, the prophet enters the world dramatically to herald change, to call people to change. And there is a price to be paid for this, like John the Baptist. The prophetic presence is still, collected, silent: the prophet has the mystical ascetic composure, but the prophet only ever withdraws to come back to the world, and get involved in its redemption.

Christ was a teacher, mentor, healer, and prophetic voice crying in the wilderness.

In a way, holy fool and mystical ascetic are flip sides of one coin, as is king and warrior. Holy fool and prophet are on the healing side of heart, while king and warrior are on the sacrificial side of heart.

Maybe there are more than four pillars to the heart—we know the soul has seven pillars to the house she builds in wisdom—but if so, it can rest for today.

V. Action Exceeds Reason

The world compels action, and action has consequences for the world. Such is drama. There is a deep drama in which we are all involved, whether we fully recognise this or not. Our angst, our anguish and agony of heart recognises it, even if, as is usual, our mind does not.

In this life, we will encounter tumult and trouble that means nothing in the end; we would be wise to become dispassionate toward it.

In this life we will encounter tumult that means everything in the end, and we will know desperate trouble of heart as we wrestle passionately in its drama. If we let the drama do its work, we will find the depth of the heart and the depth of the world. And we will find our heart is called to the world in a fateful encounter, a heroic meeting, make or break for us but also make or break for the world.

PASCAL famously said: “the heart has reasons the reason knows not of.” This is the essence. Though reason is sometimes needed to put a brake on passion, to weigh its alternatives, as we get deeper into the real drama of life our options reduce. On the rim, our options are very few, but very powerful. In the moment of truth before the final clash, we are reduced to basically only three options: trust that the way of heart truth in the world really stands upright from an abyss;

or flee the heat of the kitchen and run from any heart way in our response; or side with the devil and opt for some pseudo-advantage in the dramatic situation which is secured by some action false to the true passion of heart struggling and suffering to be true to truth.

In these moments of ultimate crisis, our heart has its reasons, but this is still irrational. The conscious mind, even the best intentioned reason, cannot decide what the heart must decide in its willingness, cannot do what the heart must do in its passionateness. This is a leap.

Let us try to be with John the Baptist, suddenly wondering if the man he baptised in the river Jordan really was, or wasn't, the Messiah. These moments of truth before final decision, before final engagement and commitment, are horrendous. Christ went through his moment in the garden of Gethsemane, before he was hauled away to the Jewish court, then the Roman court: religious and worldly authority would judge, accuse, and condemn him. BODDHIDARMA sweated 'white beads' in the drama of his wrestling toward enlightenment, but Christ sweated blood in the garden, before he finally gave himself over to his great and deep passion, and made the final sacrifice, of God to humanity and of humanity to God. In this horrendous garden of challenging truth, the devil tried to break his heart so he would not go on but put down the way of heart. We know from the Gospel account of how hard this moment was for him. He was almost broken in himself before he accepted to be broken for all.

This moment is awful for us too. It is awful and awesome. It is beyond any words. No images come when it is really upon us. On the rim, in that moment when we fight in a different way, before we go forth into the fight, or back off, or side with the devil's deception and lie, we know how deep and how irrational passion is.

Here I am; I will probably have to die, I am stepping off the rim and plunging into the abyss, going forth on to the killing ground, but for what?, and what will meet me? The mind cannot answer. Reason, at this moment, can neither guide nor decide. When the heart moves, as it did in John the Baptist before he was executed, as it did in Christ when he picked himself off the ground, accepting his fate for the sake of the destiny of all, this movement is irrational. It could be for nothing, it could be absurd, the heart is not allowed to know for certain, yet the heart leaps.

It knows, as it leaps, there is no guarantee. But this is the irrationality of passion. Something deeper in us says, let's go. Hoka hey!

The heart takes the risk, embraces the danger, pays the cost.

This is passion.

This is passion's irrationality.

This is passion's faith.

The heart is afflicted with deep doubt, but the very depth of this doubt forces the heart to go all the way in passion's faith and in passion's bearing and enduring, its ardent fervour, its patient persisting. There is no extrinsic reward, but something inherent to the heart, something intrinsic to passion, stirs and rises and goes into action only to what is deep, hard, fated. It falls back, and does not rise to, what is shallow, easy, take it or leave it.

The moment of truth is horrendous, yet when we are really in it, we also know it is the moment of destiny, and something in our heart irrationally says yes, let's leap, let's burn.

VI. Conclusion

It is through the deeper drama of the life of passion that the world is redeemed. This drama calls us out.

It is this deep drama where we either resist, or let our passion sew its seed in the ground, and spark a fire in the world.

Hoka hey!

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