

NOTES ON SIMONE WEILS HUMAN PERSONALITY

&

THE NEEDS OF THE SOUL

/Human Personality

In Simone Weil's essay *Human Personality*, she eloquently speaks of many things that trouble humans today. It seems most issues she spoke of as apparent in France at her time, are still apparent today in modern day America. Punishment and justice are two main themes in the entire essay. Simone writes that people have within them, an innocent soul which does cry out when punished. This portion of the soul, even in a serial criminal can be found, innocent and unchanged by age. She argues that the main purpose of punishment is to revitalize that bell from which the uninterrupted sound of mercy rings. In other words, it is important to punish on that basis of *reflecting* the innocent part of the soul upon the wrong doer so that he can be reunited once more with society. If he does not feel the weight of punishment he cannot be fully reunited nor touch the true light of mercy.

In the case of society it is important for punishment and consequence to be a pillar, for the future goals of safety and redemption. This is another reason why human beings feel such mercy in their hearts when one comes to confess, even if what he or she confesses is outside of what we consider "the common good". On this point I was brought to my own perspectives on the media and the state of journalism today. It is important for the purity of the news, media and official public opinion that those who are in control or rather take charge of some powerful position, to understand that

confession and redemption are necessary. To provide the public with statements of reflection that reveal your weaknesses, is actually a strength that shows an avid and clear conscience.

One of my favorite perspectives which Simone speaks about is her stance on truth and beauty. Simone says that truth, justice and beauty are the most impersonal and sacred parts of humanity. Far better than "personality".

We do not lack that silent feeling from which we desire to transcend, we lack the language and material vehicle to transmit it into. Beauty is transcendent and impersonal, as is truth and justice. Those are the aspects of humanity that make it hard for us to see injustice or pain brought upon another person. In that same way it is criminal to see the state fund artwork for arts sake which lacks beauty or truth. Such projects lack the fundamental qualities of truth and beauty which in my opinion is a crime against the collective soul.

Supremely, it is the ethereal and universal aspects of humanity which we must abide by, not the superficial or idolatrous.

/The Needs of The Soul

'The Needs of The Soul' is broken up into each layer from which Simone declared the requirements for a soul to be at peace and truly satisfied. Firstly she separated needs from desires and whims. Needs being that which can be satiated, especially so. She uses examples like a hungry man who is in need of food, he does desire for food but after he is full he desires time away from it, until he is once

again hungry. This is a need. There are many needs which she had listed in her essay, Truth, Order, Personal Property and Liberty among others. With each segment on The Needs of The Soul, I felt that Simone Weil understood very well the nuance of each need, without saying so simply "we are in need of liberty" excluding context or purpose behind it.

Truth above all is the essence from which I believe we are obligated to provide for society and most importantly, ourselves. There are silent truths within everything, reflected in the natural patterns of the world. These things must be held upwards, kept sacred and always safely tucked in graceful manners.

In some ways, you could say that truth provides the foundation for which all other true needs are created upon. A society without truth cannot provide beauty nor liberty nor order for its people. We see time and time again, societies which pretend to have true liberty and truth within it, but the representation of a societies people and the state of their collective soul speaks infinitely more words. The most profound purpose of life for human beings can be found within those secret ways, always creeping around corners, somehow slipping off of your tongue in a dream or a vision.

Beyond the scope of politics, a society must be aware of the mystery of the human soul and its requirements if it ever to achieve those fundamental needs: justice, order, tradition, truth.

We are built with such beauty within us, reflected by all of natures mirrors, existing deeply in its divinity. All of the needs of the soul are here, the basic and most primal which we are all aware: food, shelter, belonging- but even further, the transcendental needs which are: tranquility, ritual, balance and the sense of the sacred.

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