

Spirituality in Tolkien's Trilogy "The Lord of the Rings"

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Abstract: The Lord of the Rings is of course a fundamentally religious and Catholic work; unconsciously so at first, but consciously in the revision. The religious element is absorbed into the story and the symbolism. From an aesthetic standpoint, what gives The Lord of the Rings its narrative depth is Tolkien's other major creative work, the rich mythology of The Silmarillion that he had worked on throughout his life. This mythology provides a horizon and a texture for the story in a manner comparable, perhaps, to the role of the New Zealand landscape in Peter Jackson's films.

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Introduction

Tolkien's Catholicism has done more than simply influence his work. Tolkien's creative world is also, at one level, a sustained reflection upon the Gospel. His imaginative world grants him a certain amount of creative freedom in grappling with the theological implications of the Christian understanding of creation, incarnation, and salvation, enabling him to find new ways to think through old problems. Tolkien has tried to subject his imaginative exercise to the discipline of theological consistency. But in doing so Tolkien has been able to theologize in a novel way with benefit of a certain creative and reflective distance.

One of the most common criticisms of Tolkien's writing is that he merely produced idealistic, allegorical stories. Because the purpose and meaning of his work are often misinterpreted, the bulk of Tolkien criticism is "shallow and silly commentary, both hostile and laudatory" (Rosbery, 1992).

In response to this onslaught by the literary community, many writers rose to Tolkien's defense. Especially responding to Greer's reaction, Patrick Curry, author of *Defending Middle-Earth*, argues that critics have long misunderstood Tolkien and his reasons for writing:

Tolkien addressed the fears of the late-20th-century readers... he gave them hope. Far from being escapist or reactionary, *The Lord of the Rings* addresses the greatest struggle of this century and beyond.

Literature

The word "spiritual" is given a range of meanings within therapy and therapy related literature, varying from all forms of self

awareness(Farrow, 1984) to all states of awareness which possess values higher than average (Assagioli, 1986).

"Spirituality", generally speaking, seems to be one of those words, like "love" that have great importance to many people but whose meaning is hard to pin down. Many people when talking of spirituality will say that is beyond words: indeed it is as if people run out of words or find themselves in a territory where words fail them or even do not exist. Another key point that arises time and again when talking about spirituality is that it is not the same as religion.

It is interesting to compare this explanation with that provided by Alistair Hardy, the founder and the first director of the Religious Experience Research Unit at Oxford in 1969. One of the key features of Hardy's work there was to gather first-hand accounts of religious experience from thousands of people. He concludes:

It seems to me that the main characteristics of man's religious and spiritual experiences are shown in his feelings for a transcendental reality which frequently manifest themselves in early childhood; a feeling that "Something other" than the self can actually be sensed; A desire to personalize this presence into a deity and to have a private I-Thou relationship with it, communicating through prayer" (Hardy, 1979).

The subject of religion, philosophy, metaphysics, and occultism seems to be on a rampage among the peoples of the world in our times. Truthfully there has never been a more confused state of spiritual affairs.

The problem of spirituality, which is the overall effect of religion, philosophy, metaphysics, is that no

two writers, or two teachers, hardly ever agree upon any point. There are two reasons for this: first, everyone fits knowledge to his own state of consciousness; second, because of the difference in semantics that exist in the language of the whole of spiritual subjects.

Strange as it may sound, we all have the tendency to fit any teachings to our own spiritual understanding; thus a person with a lack of knowledge may reject the highest teachings because he does not understand. Christ is not accepted by everyone who tries to break new ground in the spiritual field.

"Resistance to The Holy Spirit is what brings so many difficulties to the seeker of Truth. Belief in their own lack of understanding, which does not see truth in either a partial or whole state, is that which gives added karma to anyone who puts himself in the position of not realizing the difference between the states of human consciousness and God- realization" (Twitchell, 1983).

As Tolkien himself mentions, he is a devout Catholic, and as such these beliefs manifested themselves in all aspects of his life including his writing. As he plainly states in one of his letters " I am a Christian, and am in fact a Roman Catholic." (Tolkien, 288)

It is because of Tolkien's strong religious background and beliefs that the readers often mistakenly consider The Lord of the Rings a Christian allegory. However, Tolkien decidedly rejects such interpretation:

"I cordially dislike allegory in all its manifestations, and always have done so since I grew old and wary enough to detect its presence. I much prefer history true or feigned, with its varied applicability to the thought and experience of readers. I think that many confuse " applicability" with "allegory" but the one resides in the freedom of the reader and the other in the purposed domination of the author (Second edition of LOTR).

Spirituality and Morality

"Spirituality does not necessarily mean leading a good moral life. Some people lead a very moral life, but they are so conceited and vain about it, you can't stand to be in the same room with them. Just being moral does not make them spiritual.

A true spiritual healing first heals the spiritual condition that caused the symptom to appear in the physical body. But this does not believe the fact that sometimes the body simply wears out. Just because a doctor has cured you of a number of illnesses do not mean you won't die some day. Nor does it mean that because you do die, the doctor was no good. When we have fulfilled our mission here, it's time to go on to another classroom, to another mansion in the other

worlds" (Harold Klemp, 1990).

The point is that if we go through the orthodox religious system, no matter how its system of representation or delegation is arranged, there is necessarily an alienation of liberty and freedom of individual souls.

The desire for personal property, in fact, springs from man's desire to free him from the slavery of tribal consciousness, the primitive form of society. The property in its turn can go to the other extreme. It can violate equality and support the acquisition of power by the privileged minority who are generally behind the religious systems of the earth and other worlds.

Within this true physical realm, Satan works through the human consciousness. The Satan force performs in the religious and political areas, for here it is working through the absolute rule of a single body of consciousness or that of a single individual.

We flatter ourselves that this earth theatre is the center of divine creation. In the Middle- Ages, man's vanity about his own importance was transferred to the earth—he felt sure the earth was the center of the universe. "Our God is greater and better than anyone else's. This attitude exists not just in the Christian religion but among many religious paths" (Harold Klemp, 1990).

All paths that do not teach active participation in the Sound Current are only shadows of truth. The spiritual master quietly steps aside, respecting our decision to fall back into the lower worlds of death and reincarnation.

Shadows of Truth

Contact with Spirit often goes unnoticed because the experience is too commonplace, too much a part of one's own being. Going back to the fundamental elements of the purpose of life, here is something that is second nature to you- earth is a classroom that brings about the spiritual maturity of Soul. When its education is completed, it must decide for itself what belongs to the realm of timeless truth and what is merely a subterfuge—a shadow of truth.

To start with, all truth is revealed to anyone who has earned it. Further, one can comprehend only so much of the truth as he has prepared himself for—by one discipline or another. Whenever the seeker is looking for the truth or consciousness it comes like a wind so that he cannot understand his uplifting. Also, it can improve his vision into his life so he can take control of his life. Actually he owes this uplifted vision and awareness to the spiritual masters.

As a matter of fact there are many spiritual seekers in the world who on the one hand are looking for spiritual awareness, and on the other hand help the spiritual masters on earth to show the Path to

others.

In the early stages of the spiritual path, one's awareness is really dormant and needs someone to help him sublimate this potentiality. As soon as he connects to the spiritual initiations, the Spiritual Master takes over the guidance of his spiritual and physical life.

Usually the seeker is not aware of truth within arm's reach, because his limited vision can capture only the hard realities caught within him. There is nothing wrong with this. There is always another step to truth. Therefore, we understand what we understand and are puzzled or ignorant about the rest of knowledge, wisdom and understanding.

I personally think that Frodo, as one of the main characters in *The Lord of the Rings*, is not aware of his own inner potentiality to take such a journey, but it is clear that with the help of Gandalf, the wizard, he can, like a spiritual seeker, by the help of a spiritual master, steps in to kindle his inner awareness.

The hero is often defined in terms of staying awake, maintaining consciousness, yet lapsing at fated moments of transition. Leadership is dreaming outside the boundaries of sleep. Bilbo saves his companions by staying awake and dreaming in the dry cave. Slow to sleep, he dozes off to a nightmare of goblins, then wakes and shouts a real warning. His alertness establishes new parallels between him and the hero of King Solomon's Mines.

Harvey [1985] has defined Frodo as a tragic hero and Aragorn as a quest hero, comparing them with Tolkien's other tragic and quest heroes. He also has analyzed the hobbits to represent the Everyman. Fliieger's [1981] analysis is concentrated on the medieval tradition in their respective stories. He has analyzed Frodo as the fairy-tale hero with whom everyone can identify and Aragorn as the epic, larger-than-life hero who we admire but cannot identify with.

J. R. R. Tolkien's myth of Middle Earth, recounted in his *Lord of the Rings* trilogy, is in a very real sense a long meditation on good and evil. The tale's central premise of seeking to destroy the one ring of power forged by the Dark Lord Sauron is itself not a quest in search of something but an "anti-quest, whose goal is not to find or regain something but to reject and destroy something." (Shippey, 2001) It is then in its very structure less a tale about something and more a tale about what should not have been and what should not be. The very ring itself reflects Tolkien's ambiguity about evil's simultaneity of being and non-being. The ring was forged. It is a creation of evil—that is disorder—designed, paradoxically, to rule and assert order: "One Ring to rule them all, One Ring to find them, One Ring to bring them all and in the darkness bind

them in the Land of Mordor where the Shadows lie" (Tolkien, 1993).

In *The Mythologies of Tolkien's Middle-Earth*, Ruth Noel compares Sauron to a number of "dark and baleful gods: Pluto, Balar, and, primarily, Odin," but only mentions, in passing, that Sauron is similar to the orthodox Satan in being incapable of material creation. It seems reasonable, however, that one of the larger bones that Tolkien put into his Cauldron of Stories ("On Fairy-Stories") to give the 'soup' a flavor of ultimate evil, was Satan. The comparison between Satan and Tolkien's Dark Lord is complicated by two factors.

Worship of Moloch

Some people in their spiritual journey try to follow their leaders' behaviors. By doing so they fall into Satan's trap. It is Satan's duty to prepare the human being to attain God's heaven by putting him in hardship. The purpose of the Spiritual Masters is not to destroy religions, but to enliven them. They try to prompt us to become stronger in our own religion, to become a student of the highest order—the cream of the crop in our faith. There are many people who try to worship their Spiritual Leader. When he translates (dies), his followers find themselves in trouble in interpreting the Bible, Torah.... This is a worship of Moloch. A Spiritual Adept shows the blessings of God, and then helps us to stand on our own feet in the physical and spiritual body. We have to take the responsibility of whatever we do.

In the Book of Revelations, it is said that Satan is a fallen angel, banished from Heaven after leading a rebellion (Revelations 12:7) and that a vast number of angels fell with him (Revelations 12:4, 9). Sauron, too, falls from grace. In his prelapsarian state, he is a Maia of Aulë, the crafts master of the Valar, but later becomes Melkor's lieutenant. (Silmarillion, 2001) The same limits apply to Satan, who is created by God. He is incapable of material creation, and can only do what God allows him to do.

Melkor and Sauron only have the power to corrupt and pervert that which is already created. The most notable example is when Melkor captures elves and, through "slow arts of cruelty," breeds the Orcs (Silmarillion, 2001).

There are also some interesting differences between Satan and Sauron, in relation to their powers over the dead, their relationship to their realms, and the strategy they employ to conquer the world. It is also worth noting that Sauron, unlike Satan, has a distinct group of henchmen, the Nazgûls, to do his bidding.

When sinners die, they go to Hell to be tormented (at least according to some), falling under Satan's power. Unlike Satan, neither Melkor nor

Sauron have any power over the dead, even though Noel claims that Sauron has supernatural powers concerning the dead. Her argument is not very convincing, however, resting on the fact that "Mordor" means "murder" in Old English, that Sauron rules demons and wraiths, and that he is described as black.

As we know, any action reflects its reaction, and as a matter of fact our actions result from the Cause and Effect Law, that is, Law of Karma. In many religions people believe that they can do everything and with the help of their religious leaders attain God's heaven. If so, what does the concept of "Spiritual Uplift" mean? I think he has to pay for whatever he does. It is believed that man should cross the Circle of Reincarnation and acquires his own experience on his way home to God. If he is free, he is able to do anything in the world, so he must be controlled in a way. It is done by the Silent Angels (they may come in any form) who are responsible for kindling the Torch of God's Wisdom and prevent him from doing anything destructive in the world.

Another essential difference between good and evil in the novels situated in Middle Earth is that evil cannot create anything new; it can only corrupt and in this way make slaves for its service. Thus, Orcs and goblins are corrupted elves, and trolls are corrupted Ents even though it is said in *The Lord of the Rings* that "nothing was evil in the beginning. Even Sauron was not so" [1995] by Kocher [1973] saying that Orcs "have been conditioned to will whatever Sauron wills."

Freedom of choice is also a big factor in the battle between good and evil: evil does not tolerate freedom of choice but wants to force everybody under its dominion, when one of the most important things in the nature of good is the freedom of choice – for example, the freedom to choose well (Harvey, 1985 and Kocher 1973).

As the God seeker gradually finds his way home, he may find himself facing some pitfalls especially after the Second Initiation. It is in this Circle he must develop his sense of balance. In fact balance speaks first in the spiritual journey. Spiritual seeker may off balance even after connecting to the higher spiritual circles. But a question! What is the responsibility of the spiritual Travelers? They guide the seekers to find their own ways to the spiritual planes while getting back to God's throne. The point is that we never become God but God-like as we are God's spark.

Traveler helps the seeker to find his way back to God's planes. To do so, he makes the use of Light and Sound Current and also by using life experiences warns him off the pitfalls in front of him. It is the seeker's responsibility to see the Light and hear the Sound in a proper way. He should be careful with

Chitta, Manas, Buddhi and Ahankara which are the main parts of the brain. Actually the quantity of the seekers makes no difference for the Traveler. What matters for him is to kindle the torch of God's Wisdom.

As we see in "the Lord of the Rings", Frodo is like a spiritual seeker who makes his way to the end and in his way to accomplish his mission he faces many pitfalls. It is his inward voice and also Gandalf, the wizard accompanies him to the end of his mission. Common sense also is not of less importance. He makes the best use of his common sense to find the next step in his journey.

The other feature in "the Lord of the Rings" is the middle-earth which is compared to the universe. It is said that our universe is like boiling water in which we have to pay for whatever we are given to be purified. The universe also has its own initiation and has to improve one day.

Healing

Spiritual Healing is complementary to orthodox medicine; it must not be considered as an alternative. When you are unwell, you need to get assistance from the doctor. If you receive Spiritual Healing, this will complement your treatment. The two will work together to assist in your recovery.

When we mention Healing of any sort, many people think immediately of making a person well due to a physical problem. This is true in part, but it is not the whole picture.

When we mention "Spiritual," many people immediately think of religion. With Spiritual Healing, this is not so. The Spiritual nature of mankind is all of those parts that are non-physical such as mind, emotions and the "life force." Spiritual Healing can be administered to a person of any religious denomination or none at all. Religion and Faith take no part in a Spiritual Healing session and will not be discussed with you. Remember that the purpose of your visit is to receive Spiritual Healing. If you have a question, the Spiritual Healer will gladly answer it, but being brief may be necessary.

When Spiritual Healing is administered, it can assist a person on any or all of those levels of self, thus treating the whole person.

In *The Lord of the Rings*, the concept of healing is a recurring theme, possibly the most central theme. When attempting to realize its frequency, one must first realize how Tolkien himself understood the idea of healing. The Oxford English Dictionary defines healing as a restoration "from some evil condition or affection such as sin, grief, disrepair, danger, destruction." According to this definition healing is not merely physical; rather, it includes a metaphysical component as well.

Throughout the trilogy, Tolkien supports this idea by describing many types of restoration, just as the body and land may experience wounding and require physical healing. The human spirit and interpersonal relationship may also suffer wounds, which require healing through different means. Healing a physical wound requires the harmony of the body; healing the land requires the harmony of the natural elements. Tolkien argues that healing is the defining characteristic of kingship.

Spiritual Truth and Healing

There is a lot said about spiritual truths and healing. Much of what you hear is foolishness; much of it is plain common sense. It is up to us, through the knowledge of the spiritual laws, to figure out which is which.

"I have tried many fasts: water fasts, the different lemon juice fasts. You can do these things as long as you don't use them to control other people or to change their minds. This happens when people go on fasts to stop the use of nuclear power, for example. They are being foolish. They take on a lot of karma and it does not do them any good" (Harold Klemp, 1990).

"God created the lower worlds as a place for us to learn. We go ahead and do whatever we want to—and we pay the price. This is the divine Law of Cause and Effect. The lower worlds are like a big room with only one exit door up on the ceiling. As you come into the classroom the instructor says, "The purpose is to try to get out any way you can, but there is one rule: Don't look up" (Harold Klemp, 1990).

The chief end of fairy stories is to deliver a deep truth and impart joy to the readers. Tolkien explains that this glimpse of joy and deep truth is a Eucatastrophe that all fairy stories must end with.

God's purpose in establishing the satanic worlds is to train each Soul to reach perfection and to become a co-worker with God. It is the purpose of Satan to temper each soul in the art of life. Therefore Satan was created and is subject to the laws of God. His duty is to create hardships, illusions, and make the path of life more difficult for each soul who must travel through the lower worlds trying to reach God. These illusions are to make soul believe that nothing exists beyond this world. But all and all God intends these lower worlds of Satan to be the school of life which all souls must attend before moving on to the heavenly path of Light and Sound.

In many religions, people curse Satan for deceiving them in evil-doing, but the truth is he is a special officer from God to bring unhappiness, create many sufferings and problems on our way home.

The Spiritual Master notes three basic problems in life: the fear of death, the fear of poverty, and the

fear of poor health.

The key to these three human life problems, Twitchell feels, is simply this: "Those who put their faith and trust in human nature are constantly disappointed and find little happiness."

"I learned that such frustrations and losses may have two, and sometimes three, reactions on the individual. First, they create a feeling of helplessness and one becomes a victim of his own state of consciousness and outer circumstances.

" Secondly, they may reverse the pattern of helplessness and stir up an immense psychic power within one which creates aggressiveness toward individuals and masses of people.

Thirdly, if such frustrations stir the higher spiritual forces in one's life he may become an inspired leader to lift others into the higher levels of spiritual understanding. He becomes an inspiration to many in far corners of the world who will never see nor know him personally. These forces act as a catalytic agent to jerk him out of the doldrums into a position of leadership that takes individuals and masses upward into inspired lives." Says Paul Twitchell in *In My Soul I am Free*:

"Although we dislike admitting it, black magic is on the rampage throughout the world today. It is even being practiced by many who are innocent of having the least notion that they practice such dark magic on others".

"Black magic is use of mind power to gain an objective in the physical universe. It is usually done by force and mental strength against another's will or to move objects into one's own orbit for self-comfort and indulgence".

"White magic is use of spiritual power to gain an objective in the spiritual universes. It is usually done by giving up one's own will to God's desire for him, and by following this desire regardless of where the path may lie and whatever the hardships may be.

Those who practice black magic are self-indulgent followers of the negative power. Whether they understand it or not, there will come a reckoning sooner or later, because the psychic, that which we often call the negative power, is not a stable force, like the positive, or the spiritual power" (Steiger, 1983)".

Role of Love

The religionists of the world claim that when the whole human race comes to the path of love all evil will disappear from the world. This is not a rational solution for few ever find the source of true love while they live in the physical consciousness.

Love does not come to those who seek it but to those who give love. It is a binding force between souls who have nothing to give but themselves to one

another. It is not a physical force of any nature, but one of deep tender compassion ready to give all should another demand it.

The very heart of the doctrine of Spiritual teaching is love. This love is that divine essence which unites all reality and brings together all souls. The higher soul goes into the other worlds, the greater this becomes. Love is the bond which holds the worlds together. It is the Spirit of God.

When man turns his attention to the universal love all suffering ceases. This does not mean that all mankind at any given time in this world will collectively give universal love. This is not in the consciousness of the human soul.

The vital importance of love is to love all live without doubt, wisdom or religion being uppermost in the mind of the lover.

Love as it is known to the human consciousness is only involvement with astral influences. It is emotional freedom that one seeks to be rid of this involvement of the astral influences. Human love which is involved with sentimentality and physical love is that part of the human consciousness influenced by the five Satan passions. These are Kama or lust, Krudha or anger, Lobha or greed, Moha or attachment and Ahankar or vanity. Of these, man is influenced mainly by Moha or attachment. Here is the heart of man's Karma. The very reason why he keeps moving constantly on the wheel of eighty four, the continued circle of birth and death in this physical world.

This is the type of attachment which means the illusive attachment or infatuation. It is perhaps the most insidious of the five destructive passions. It is the one which makes the human consciousness believe that it can love all life, that it can love anyone outside itself.

Satan keeps man blinded to the higher interest through the five passions. This particular passion, Moha, or attachment, is the king of procrastination. It keeps the human from attending to his spiritual interest.

If man could possibly grasp the principles of Karma which he believes to be love, then there would be a complete change in the social structure of society in the physical worlds. He would then know that instead of having to pay off everything as a debt to the Lords of Karma, he would be able to take the way of Light and Sound. He would know that in order to gain true love all he would have to do is break his karma. This can be done by giving up his attachment to the things of the material worlds.

Man believes that peace comes through this lesser form of love. This is the great allusion of life, the works of the Satan. Every man should know without pre-judging that all life in this world pays for

all he receives. There is no exception. If he does not give the highest love without attachment, he is apt to pay for it in this world.

Every man must first seek to give love to receive it. He must give it under any circumstance even though he is abused, mistreated, and given unnecessary hardship in this world. A demanding love is like a shadow for it has no substance. If anyone demands love in return for what he has not given, all is lost.

The three attributes to arrive from the Soul's relationship with God are love, wisdom and power. Of these three the greatest is love. Man understands this more than he does the other attributes. Reality has only one attribute and that is love. All love is given to soul when it is linked with the Light and Sound, the Audible life Stream.

Conclusion

It is felt that human beings are not necessarily the lord of the creatures. To attain this, he should make self realization and become a God man. When it is said he is the lord of the creatures, he is at the level of consciousness of the lower creatures though he is blessed with God's bounties, and he has a long way to prepare himself to enter the Throne of God through unclasping the material bodies.

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