

The Archetype of Wounded Healer

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Abstract—Healing tradition besides into historic and medicinal past, goes back to mythology. The world abounds in mythology concerning health and harmony of the spirit. The meaning of health beyond medicine is reflected upon in this paper. To understand illness and health in all its purity, the paper immerses into the archetypal and archaic roots of the medicinal legacy. Sacred narratives of Greek and Indian gods namely Chiron and Balaji are taken up to understand human pain and begetting of the cure from suffering. The perspective of Carl Jung is applied herein to dissertate on illness and health.

1. INTRODUCTION

Healing people is one of the oldest occupation pursued by men the other being farming, hunting, metallurgy and being a soldier. Being hurt or experiencing pains is as much part of an individual's and a collective's life history today as it was in our nocturnal past. Healing is a generic term which covers acts of intervention via medicine, cure and transformation. It usually suggests of a relationship between two people, a healer and an individual to be healed finding a cure but could also indicate the self healing capacities endowed within an individual. A healer's job also includes the capacity to be able to create circumstances inside the patient physically and psychologically which let his self healing propensities to come forth and heal them.

Pain as an experience in itself is a deeply ingrained part of the collective psyche and has always demanded to be felt, attended to, cured or transcended depending upon its intensity and site of incidence(s).

The actions of men are rooted in the actions of Gods unconsciously repeating the mythic past and enriching their life experiences reliving the deeds of gods. As with all archetypal symbols, the wounded healer finds the widest possible expression The archetypal image of the wounded healer makes comprehensible how it is that doctor and patient are related not only internally but externally as well. "In every doctor there is a patient, and in every patient a healer".^[1]

The wounded healer archetype is investigated and reflected upon in the paper using the lives of Chiron and Balaji. Both faced a fatal wound and paved a way for healing humanity. Beginning with the foundational, ancient story of this archetype according to Jung, that of Chiron.

2. STORY OF CHIRON

Chiron was a Greek god centaur (half horse, half human). He was the son of God Chronos and a nymph Philyra, hence a half brother to Zeus. Her mother had caught the eye of Chronos on one of his wanderings and she did not share his desires or longings, thus she began to flee. But the God of Gods could not be easily slipped away from, so she turned herself into a mare, and in the spirit of pursuit he turned himself into a stallion.

Chiron was conceived but the moment his mother looked upon him after his birth she found the child to be ugly and threw him in the river. Abandoned at birth he was picked up by the hand maidens of Sun God Apollo, who became his teacher and taught him all he knew. Like archery, prophecy, statesmanship, politics, music, poetry and the art of healing. Chiron taught many other Greek heroes and gods including the likes of Asclepius, Achilles, Jason, and Hercules etc. During one of the visits of Hercules he happened to open a bottle of wine at Chiron's place which was meant for all centaurs and the scent of wine attracted all of them towards Chiron's dwelling possessing their senses and driving them mad. Hercules intervened to control the madness by shooting arrows made by Chiron and laced with the blood of hydra. One of the arrows accidentally hit Chiron in the thigh and rendered him severely wounded. He could not die as he was an immortal and could not cure himself as the very blood of a venomous immortal being had wounded him. He was hit by one of his own arrows. However others have said that it was when Hercules once visited Chiron and they were examining his arrows, that one of them fell on his foot. In either case the wounding was accidental. Helpless, he went all around in search of a cure, thus learnt all the indigenous healing art forms and returned with the knowledge of healing. He became the paradoxical healer who could not heal himself.

He exchanged his place with Prometheus at Tartarus, giving up his immortality to end his suffering. As a gesture of appreciation of his selfless life he was given a place among stars by Zeus as the constellation Sagittarius.

2.1 Examining Chiron's wounds

Putting the above narrative to analysis it is observed that incidences of being wounded pervade his life history. Beginning with, being abandoned at birth by his mother and born of a father who never bothered to look back even once, leading a life of an orphan.

Chiron is affiliated with a tribe of creatures who symbolize wild, instinctual powers. The Centaurs were always described as crazy and raucous beings, unconcerned with cultured, rational ways of behaving. But Chiron separates himself from this behavior. He is civilized and wise and fulfills a duty to serve humanity as he is from a different lineage than the rest of the members of his community. He is a child of a God. Therefore, Chiron's second wound involves a search for his own uniqueness: he is neither totally wild, nor totally civilized. He is a demi-god and a hybrid being reflecting the struggle within us towards integration of our human, animal, and divine natures. Like shamans across cultures, Chiron must negotiate navigating the different worlds. He spends much of his time alone in his cave on the flank of Mount Pelion. Looking further into the act of dwelling in a cave, its observed 'with the exception of nymphs, the deities associated with caves tend to be represented as animal-hybrid, thus a being in which two states are being represented simultaneously is especially suited to the place where two states meet as cave act as pathways of meeting of the living and the dead. They do not guarantee its presence but facilitate movement, both physical and in terms of states of being'.^[2] His solitude allows him to develop his creative and healing gifts, which include the studies of astrology, astronomy, poetry, music, herbology etc. When he interacts with others, he is usually teaching or mentoring.

The horse part of Chiron's body represents the instinctual nature, the non-rational, chaotic, mysterious, dark side. The human part represents the rational, scientific, civilized, order of men. The two sides that make men are categorically visible in the body of Chiron. Chiron is also represented by the symbol of a stylized key with an oval base indicating the horse part and a 'K' indicative of the human part. A key acts as a tool to open a passage way or to transit from one point to another which is what Chiron also represents. He acts as a bridge between the human and the divine as well as what is civilized and instinctual. Forging a balance is what paves away towards a long and a fulfilling life.

With his third wound, Chiron is poisoned accidentally by an arrow from his own student, the hero Hercules. As an immortal, he cannot die so he suffers continuously. His suffering makes him move incessantly to learn and look for different ways to heal, making him the master healer, who bleeds yet heals the visitors. He is wounded by the arrows that he himself had prepared, here the doctor is seen to have tasted his own medicine and knows the experience of suffering first hand, unfortunately for the rest of his life. He doesn't source his healing from sympathy anymore but his suffering leads

him to empathize and feel the pain the seekers were going through. His experience of being wounded is what moved him to learn and eventually practice the art of healing. Therefore the excruciating suffering due to his wounds is what gave him the power to heal and relieve the man kind of its pain as well as disseminate and take forward the art of healing via his students. Thus he became the father of the medical art in Greek mythology. 'The meaning of Chiron is "hand" or "skilled with hand" and it is closely related to the word *chirurgos* (surgeon).^[1]

Also indicative of the healing touch between a doctor and a patient, which is so sought after and experienced by many in real lives. The art of healing allows a single person to touch so many lives and bring the people involved into touch with their self healing capacities both physically and psychologically.

Chiron is seen to be the perfect teacher for Asclepius, the son of God Apollo who goes on to become the Greek God of healing in his own accord and wields "The Rod-Of-Asclepius", with a snake entwined on a cypress branch, which is used as a symbol by doctors all over the world.

The only way Chiron can free himself from the chronic wound is to sacrifice his immortality, which he does in exchange for the life of Prometheus, the Titan chained to a rock for stealing fire from the gods and gifting it to humanity.

Chiron's selfless compassion, service to humanity and relentless spirit earned him a place among the stars, forever guiding the mankind to embrace their pain, accept their suffering and use their experience and hard earned wisdom with fellow beings. He is as important as he was in the mythic past echoing the need of balance between the world of spirit and the world of earth urging men to navigate the world by transforming themselves using their afflictions to work towards the greater good and clearing the path for others to follow and rejoice.

3. STORY OF LORD BALAJI

Balaji was born of Anjana a heavenly nymph who married a noble monkey named Kesari and was cursed by the gods to live a life of a monkey. One day, while standing on top of a mountain, lost in the natural beauty Anjana was desired by Vayu, the god of winds. Balaji was the offspring of this forced union. As an infant he was forever running after food. Once he took a flight towards the Sun to swallow it mistaking it for a shining mango and with all might to consume it he flew higher and higher reaching near the heavenly body. This caused great worry among the gods and led to an emergency action by the king of Gods. In anger, Indra, the king of Gods, hurled his thunderbolt breaking his jaw, or *hanu*, hence also his name Hanuman. The father Vayu picked up his unconscious son, and took residence in a cave refusing to release the winds and bringing the life on earth to a halt. All the Gods came rushing to the cave eager to have the breath of life back and promising necessary mitigation measures. As a

first step all the gods blessed Balaji with special powers. By the end of the celestial meet Balaji had become immortal and invulnerable and an amalgamation of all the qualities and power each individual God had. Brahma's blessing of total fearlessness is what attributes to his status as the divine healer, for those afflicted with possession by the spirits and other baneful influences in life including sorcery.

'The temple at Mehndipur Balaji is associated with the a legend, that following the above mentioned incident Balaji finally reunites with his mother waiting for him sitting between the two mountains and feeds him with her milk. After the loving meeting, both of them engage in spiritual practices for years, where Balaji continued to solve the problems of gods. A ghost of a dead prince murdered at the same spot pleads his case to the lord asking his help to reach the land of his forefathers and makes Balaji realize the evil influences such souls could have on human life as well as the importance of their ease of movement to the essential plane. So Balaji sends a vision to a young priest to build a temple on the spot that it is today'.^[3]

For the simple folk, he is *sankat-mocahn*, the one who removes and banishes ill health, baneful astrological influences and sorcery. He is also considered as an avatar or incarnation of Lord Shiva.

Hanuman chose Lord Surya, the sun god as his guru and learnt everything that was there to learn from him. Including diplomacy, the vedic texts, the various arts, perfection in grammar. He gave the world the music of Rama's name and became an immortal or chiranjeevi to chant the name forever till the time goodness resides in the heart of humans. Hanuman raised himself to the status of an immortal, forever living God by chanting his name.

His humility raised him in the hierarchy of gods.

He is the perfect yogi who had a disciplined mind, walking the three paths of yoga, the gyan yoga, bhakti yoga and karma yoga, he also gave the Surya- namaskar to keep the body and mind fit and healthy and as an act of reverence towards his Guru.^[4] He is associated with the healing arts, *ayurveda*, because he played a vital role in saving Lakshmana's life, by bringing the mountain having the herb *sanjeevani*.

3.1. Balaji's wounds

Hanuman is a descendant of a God, thus belongs to a different ancestry than his fellows. He is born of womb of Anjana whose name in Sanskrit comes from the verbal root *anj* to smear with, anoint, honor, Ungent, cosmetic; magic ointment, collyrium and he is called Anjaneya, the son of Anjani, whose name banishes all evil. Collyrium is still used by girls to protect their eyesight, maintain their eyes and its dot is put of children's cheeks or behind their ears to ward off the evil eyes that fall on them warding it off and protecting people. He is also the son of Kesari, known as Kesari nandan, the son of the one is the pioneer of his clan, the leader of the pack, the

protector, nurturer, provider and benefactor for the entire clan.

He receives a wound inflicted by the king of Gods himself. A child more beautiful than the gandharvas or the celestial court beings is landed unconscious with a broken jaw by the Lord Indra whose wound ultimately leads Balaji to be blessed by all the celestial beings and become a God worthy of worship, reverence, praise and prayer by the entire humanity. The wound acted as a blessing in disguise and led Hanuman to have the qualities of each God within him before he could really reach the place he was aiming for. Previously his attempt was to consume the Sun inside of himself to appease his senses, hence he was stopped in his tracks by the Lord of senses himself. But later on he gets his education and training from the Sun god himself, the Lord appeases his appetite for wisdom, knowledge and understanding of the universal principles. The wound helped Hanuman transform his basic instinctual urges into a longing of a higher order, a thirst for knowledge which motivated him to revolve around the Sun in opposite direction to get educated. It is now his hunger for wisdom befitting a celestial being is what is satiated.

His unshakable faith, discipline, honesty, fearlessness have always helped the collectives as well as individual people to look within and raise themselves up from the conundrum of daily hassles.

Hanuman's stories have entertained and enthralled audiences of all ages. His being a monkey is indicative of the monkey mind, restless, undisciplined, powerful but directionless.^[4] His progress in life from a naughty child to a disciplined humble servant and a master of all arts shows the way to all to become what they could become by reprogramming the only thing that's should be under one's control i.e. the one's own mind. Boon of being fearless is not only indicative of true understanding of the world outside but also the world within because that which one understands completely ceases to scare. The doubts, fears and the unconscious images conjured up by the mind are also completely understood and reined in by Lord Hanuman. Thus he is also a *mahasiddha*, i.e. has acquired sacred occult power. Therefore, he is capable of protecting from baneful planetary influences in the sky above to sorcery and black magic on the land below. He understands the workings of nature and the workings in the sky, thus he is capable of modifying and influencing both. By changing our perceptions we have the power of changing our world. When Hanuman enters Rama's life, he changes Rama's world. He transforms a crisis (the loss of Sita) into an opportunity (rid the world of Ravana). He transforms a victim into a hero. Thus, Hanuman is no ordinary monkey. He is the perfect mind. He embodies the highest potential that our mind can reach.^[4]

Self doubt clouds most individuals at some point of time in their lives, it wasn't any different for Hanuman. He didn't know who he was until he was reminded of his lost powers by Jambvan, to be able to change shape and of enormous

strength and divine capabilities, similarly we need moments of crisis and the capacity to look within ourselves and take the leap. The concept being studied as 'The Hanuman complex'.^[5] Every struggle in an individual's life can be used as an opportunity to look within and come into closer contact with latent potentialities in a person to transform himself/herself to a new level instead of just waiting to be fixed. Acting as a challenge to the entire being to move ahead and achieve a sense of purpose and wholeness. Thus a painful event or a wound becomes the healing wound^[6] for that individual's psyche as it helps him to grow and become the best of what he could become.

As in the case of Chiron mentioned above the residence in a cave like dwelling is significant and indicative of a place which acts like a connecting medium between the world of spirits and the everyday world. The temple being thronged by thousands of devotees each year some claiming to be cured of possession, others to have received divine luck so on and so forth stands as a testament of people re-living the myth of Balaji year after year.

4. CARL JUNG 'S CREATIVE ILLNESS

Carl Jung was a Swiss psychiatrist who gave the concept of archetypes and collective unconscious. According to him an individual is born with latent possibilities to inherit images, feelings of experiences endured by men throughout history beginning from the nocturnal past. The primal personality still exists in all of us, it directs, and shapes our experiences and in turn is shaped by them. It also determines in part of what they will become conscious of and respond to in their own world of experience. An individual is a complex entity who has a deep connection with the collective unconscious which is a great repository of the cultural and world history. "An individual's personality is a resultant of inner forces acting upon and being acted upon by outer forces."^[7] He dwelled in the study of human history and the mythology tracing the evolution of personality over the eons and ages as men progressed and experienced themselves in the presence of others and their interactions with the surroundings and other members of the groups. He paid attention to what his patients had to say, their hallucinations, incidences of neurosis were as much of importance to him as his studies to formulate a deep and rich understanding of human personality and humanity as a whole.

He initially worked with Freud but later broke up with him. 'According to Henri Ellenberger, Jung underwent a form of 'creative illness' where still struggling with the issues that prelude to condition, the sufferer grows convinced that he is beyond outside help, becomes socially isolated and turns deeper into himself. The disturbance could last for four to five years followed by spontaneous recovery and a complete reorganization of personality. The subject feels that he has gained insight into important truth if his life and feels it to be his duty to share these with the worlds.'^[10] Thus Jung observed: "there were things in the images which concerned

not only myself but others. It was then that I ceased to belong to myself alone, ceased to have a right to do so. From then on my life belonged to the generality...it was then that I dedicated myself to the service of psyche."^[8] Throughout his life he emphasized that therapists remember the experiences of woundedness that led them to become involved with therapy to begin with – that they remain open to further wounding. "Effective therapy depends upon the readiness of therapists to risk being hurt in the process and changed by it and their willingness to communicate their readiness."^[9] We always have to remember that we are not only healer but also wounded. "The therapist is effective only when he is affected. Only the wounded physician heals."^[8]

Carl Jung was the first one to emphasize that the therapist himself undergoes analysis first as a part of his training. "It is our own wounds that give the measure to heal."^[8]

He always advocated the acknowledgement of the dualities and contradictions of life, fully living them and thus transcending them after experiences to enrich one's life and one's soul. He gave the term wounded healer after studying the myth of Chiron and the deities associated with him like Asclepius.

The term wounded healer in itself embodies a state of person who has the capacity to heal or cure and become a whole and is still wounded or living with the experience of the wound though not in a painful manner but treating it as an opportunity of learning and wisdom gained by experiencing life. Thus moving towards a process of individuation in touch of the Self, a state of wholeness and yet being able to experience incompleteness. The therapist continuously working on himself is able to explore his unique capabilities and is also able to know his limits and work within best of his capacities optimizing them all along. "The personality of the patient demands the personality of the doctor."^[8] He becomes a reference point for the client to explore the world and becomes a conduit of energy via whom healing takes place. He is as much as a person in contact with the client as he becomes a symbol of the world the client is trying to be in touch with through which the healer archetype shines forth and in whose numinosity the healing takes place.

5. CONCLUSIVE REMARKS

The aim of the paper was to dissertate on the archetypal roots of illness and healing using the symbolic approach of school of Carl Jung. The idea of the 'wounded healer' originates from the Greek myth of Chiron, and hence it was necessary to study here to formulate an operational understanding of the archetype. Balaji is a uniquely divine being who has been revered as a healer by the masses since long, the narrative of his life is taken to understand the origins of his healing powers. Both the deities were half human half man, representing a state of earthly presence and connection of being in touch with their instinctual, mysterious side and also involving the rational, logical side of being indicating an

achievement balance between these two set of qualities. A nearer to human narrative as each human has both of the instinctual needs and higher qualities, still each individual life is more than just the expression of these two qualities separately, its rather an amalgamation determined by choice as well circumstance and manifests on a wide range of continuum. Both were fatally wounded due to accidental circumstances by/due to immortal beings. Hence the life of being a healer was not chosen by them but they were chosen for it, the circumstances around them were made in a way that they suffered themselves and could actually feel the pain and use their experience as a source of empathy towards the larger humanity. Both dwell in caves. The caves of both the beings were a sight of residence, nurturance and growth during their lives and became revered sights of worship and penance after they left.^{[2][3]} Both of them act as a connecting medium and provide a chance of communion with the spirits heavenly and dead, neither guarantees it but acts a medium for the same. Both were taught by the Sun god. The Sun sees everything there is to see, knows everything that is to know, he moves the world, makes the earth fertile, he brings light to man, brings heat and a source life to everything. Hence the best source of all knowledge and wisdom of the world. Both the healers were taught by the Sun God(s) who were the best teachers of their times teaching them all they knew including, art, prophecy, statesmanship, scriptural wisdom and the art of healing.

Both the healers assisted the sons of their masters in their lives Asclepius and Sugreeva being assisted by Chiron and Hanuman respectively besides teaching the heroes of their times who went on to do great deeds on their own accord. They both were of divine origin which separated them from the rest of the members of their clan. The transformative power of afflictions led them to lead a life of compassion, selfless service of humanity.

Chiron had to let go of his immortality in the form he existed but was made immortal in the form of the constellation Sagittarius by Lord Zeus, the Greek father of the world, Lord Hanuman was given the boon of immortality by Lord Rama, an avatar of the preserver of the world Lord Vishnu to look after mankind till the end of time. Both guide the lives around them and urge them to grow using their pains.

The life of Carl Jung also shows how he used his wisdom due to the nervous breakdown and continuous pain for years he suffered after his break up from Freud led him formulate the

basic tenets of his school of psychology and made him take a scholarly journey to study the obscure texts of alchemy and bring them to the world for scientific readership and discussion.

The healers suffered for themselves first and cured themselves out of their illness; it's the pain that they experienced during these times that provided the measure of their power to heal. The life of Chiron has an attitude of acceptance of his pain; Balaji is revered as a forever devoted servant to his beloved Lord Rama who he vowed to serve.

The cornerstone of Carl Jung's psychology lies in the fact of acceptance of human fallibility, forever dwelling in the dualities of life and nourishing the soul of the world by nourishing the individual's soul by treating their existence with respect and looking at illness as the attempts of psyche to heal itself. Diligently working with the psyche of an individual to help forage a contact with the psychic matrix and gently assisting individuals to move beyond their egos to establish the Self as the centre of their personalities.

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