

5. Hierarchies of Being

Story: The 1980s Montreal Incident

I'll tell you a story. When I lived in Montreal in the 1980s, I was typing away on my computer. So what does that mean? Well, I was kind of aware of the keys, although I'm a pretty accomplished typist and was then. Mostly, I was paying attention to the words I was writing, the screen, the words, and the phrases. I'd bounce up and down from word and phrase to sentence and paragraph. That was my field of apprehension.

The Collapse:

The computer died. That happens. It's very annoying. That's an anomaly.

- **What do you do when the computer dies?**
 - **Solution 1:** Turn it off and on. Reboot it. Reset to its beginnings.
 - But, the computer didn't work.
 - **What happened next?**
 - I went to get a light, but when I plugged it in, the light didn't work. I thought, "Must be a fuse." But all the fuses were fine.
 - I went outside and noticed there were no lights. Then I found out it was a blackout. **Why?** It turned out the **sun was unstable.**
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Nested Dependencies Example:

This is a good example of **nested dependencies**:

- **Predictability and Constants:** You expect the electrical system to work. But that relies on:
- **The Grid:** Is the grid working?
- **The Sun:** Is the sun functioning predictably? Generally yes, but not always.
- **The Solar Flare:** A solar flare occurred, disrupting the entire electrical system.

This explains how much of what you take for granted has to remain constant for everything else to function.

Apocalyptic Scenarios:

An apocalyptic catastrophe is often represented in mythological forms. Two types of catastrophes in stories:

1. **The Evil Queen (negative chaos)** – A natural disaster, such as a solar flare.
2. **The Malevolent or Blind King (internal chaos)** – As seen in stories like *The Lion King*, where Scar's blindness to the kingdom's wellbeing causes a natural disaster (a drought).

Case Study: Hurricane Katrina

When the hurricane hit New Orleans:

- **Act of God?** Not entirely.
- **What was the real problem?**
- Corruption in municipal administration.
- Poor maintenance due to fraudulent behaviors.

This highlights how much the stability of the world depends on the **integrity of the individual**.

Analyzing Problems: Car Example

When your car breaks down, there are multiple levels to explore:

- **The Car's Function:** It's a tool to transport you from point A to point B. If it doesn't work, it's no longer a car.

- **Possible Failures:**
- **Is it a mechanical flaw?**
- **Is the issue with the subcomponents?**
- **Could it be a geopolitical issue** (e.g., the quality of parts)?

When a problem arises, you must search the **hierarchy of being** to find the right level of analysis to solve it. This is seen in **arguments**, where the simplest resolution is often the best starting point.

Marital Disputes: Levels of Resolution

In a marital argument:

- You might instinctively jump to the **deepest level** of resolution: "Maybe we should just get divorced."
 - But the **simplest solution** is usually the best:
 - Address the core issue.
 - Avoid throwing everything up in the air.
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Hierarchy of Being: Layers and Relationships

Everything in life exists at multiple levels:

- **Levels of Being:** Subatomic, atomic, molecular, organ systems, and up to the phenomenological world we experience.
- **Family Dynamics:** The family is embedded in the community, which is embedded in the state, nation, ecosystem, and beyond.
- **Nested Systems:** The complexity of existence is immense both **downward** and **upward**.
- From a **molecular** level all the way to the **cosmos**.

Understanding Systems and Mental Health

- **Mental Health:** Mental health isn't just subjective. It's **related to the harmony** between all layers of being.
- If you're living in a **dysfunctional family**, your mental health is affected.
- **Health** = The harmonious functioning of **every level**.

Music as a Metaphor for Harmony

Music is a good analogy for **optimal functioning**:

- **Micro Elements:** When everything plays its role, there's harmony, which leads to meaningful engagement with life.
- **Action in Life:** When everything works together in a **nested hierarchy**, life itself becomes harmonious and meaningful.

The Importance of Attitude in Problem Solving

In any problem-solving situation:

- **Initial Step:** Look for the simplest possible solution.
- **What's more important?** Your **attitude** when facing challenges.
- **Do you aim to rise to the occasion?** Or do you adopt a victim mindset?

By choosing to **aim up**, you set yourself up for success in all endeavors.

Jacob's Ladder: Symbol of Spiritual and Moral Ascension

Jacob's ladder is symbolic of:

- **Moral Action:** One must climb the ladder, **sacrificing** the lesser for the higher aim.
 - **Upward Journey:** This journey is upward, with each step representing a deeper connection to what's good, real, and meaningful.
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Sacrifice as a Foundational Concept

- **Sacrifice:** Giving up something valuable to achieve a higher aim.
 - **Jacob's Vow:** He builds an altar to signify his willingness to sacrifice in pursuit of a higher moral goal.
 - **What's the highest form of sacrifice?**
 - Giving up personal comforts or desires to align with a higher good.
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The Story of Cain and Abel: Sacrifice and Responsibility

Cain's story shows:

- **False Sacrifice:** Cain brings subpar offerings and is rejected.
- **Responsibility:** God tells Cain to **improve** and bring his **best**.
- **Bitterness:** Cain rejects responsibility and falls into resentment, leading to murder.

The key lesson: **Sacrifice** must be made willingly and with **integrity** for it to be valuable.

The Role of Integrity in Society

- **Integrity:** The stability of the world depends on the **integrity of individuals**.
 - **Saying 'No' to Corruption:** Like in the case of the Soviet Union, where people turned a blind eye to corruption, integrity in individuals can either hold society together or bring about its downfall.
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Application of Jacob's Ladder in Everyday Life

- **Climbing the Ladder:**
- **Upward Sacrifice:** You must aim for the highest good and continuously elevate yourself.
- **Everyday Tasks:** Even small actions, like setting the table, contribute to your moral growth.

Jacob's ladder is about consistently improving and making the **right sacrifices** on the way to becoming your best self.

Jacob's Transformation: The Hero's Journey

Jacob's journey is a classic **hero's journey**, symbolizing:

- **Self-Reflection and Transformation:** Through facing his mistakes, Jacob vows to be a better person.
- **The Ladder:** His vision of the ladder represents the **connection between heaven and earth**, between order and chaos.

This story encapsulates the **necessary sacrifices** and steps to climb the **ladder of moral ascension**.

Nested Structures of Being:

- **Jacob's Ladder:** Represents the multiple layers of reality, from the material to the spiritual, that we must navigate to achieve **moral and spiritual growth**.
- **Sacrifice and Responsibility:** The key to moving upward in life is **sacrificing the lower desires** and aiming for higher goals.

This journey, represented in mythological terms, is one of **transformation and ascension**.

This concludes the formatting of the fifth section! Let me know if you're ready to proceed with the next one or if you'd like any adjustments!