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# Ego and Self

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Marie-Louise von Franz, Honorary Patron

Studies in Jungian Psychology  
by Jungian Analysts

Daryl Sharp, General Editor

# Ego and Self

The Old Testament Prophets

From Isaiah to Malachi

Edward F. Edinger

Transcribed and Edited by J. Gary Sparks



*To Edward F. Edinger himself, who passed away before seeing this book in print. We hope he likes it, wherever he is. And to his gracious partner and fellow analyst, Dianne D. Cordic.*

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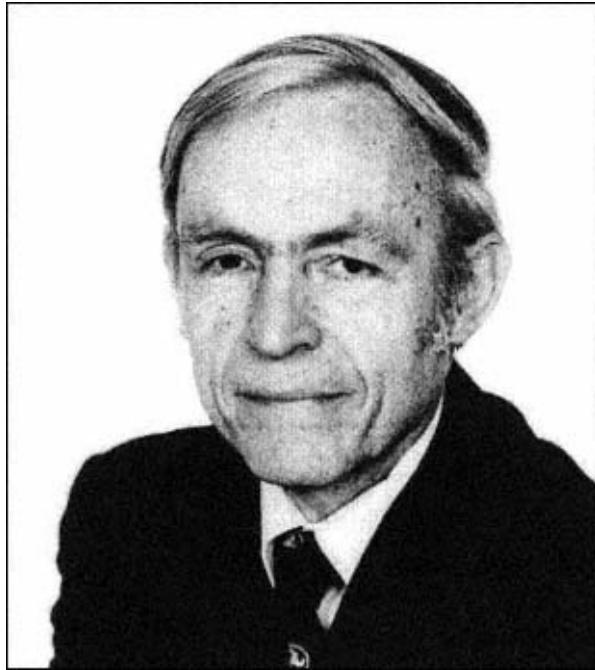
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Edward F. Edinger, 1922-1998

## Editor's Foreword

Jungian psychology is a distillation of the reactions from unconscious spheres to conscious experience. It is a record of life's spontaneous emotional fire searing its purposes onto human hearts and minds. It is an attempt to let the patterns in our sweltering turbulence show their meaningful face.

How profoundly that fire and amplitude lived for Edward F. Edinger. I find in all aspects of his work such nearness to heartfelt images as characterized C.G. Jung's own passionate genius. The intensity of Edinger's creativity expresses exactly the fervent richness of the unconscious's response to modern life. Throughout his authorship and in an unpretentious style brimming with feeling and care, Edinger has powerfully put forward for us the main features of today's complexity, psychologically seen: the dark side of God, the transformation of central values, a possible meaning in social fragmentation, the self-centered euphoria of our age, varied images of transformation at depth to name a few. His exceptional grasp of our experience and its background bears indisputable witness to the integrity of this man's consistently creative flame.

In the pages which follow Edward Edinger once more turns his ardent and discerning mind to a theme of acute importance for our era: the wider nature of symbolic processes.

One of Jung's enduring accomplishments is to have established that the apparently random images in our dreams and fantasies are in fact highly coherent symbols. When we seek to understand the messages of these symbols, the inherent wisdom within our personality is demonstrated to us, Jung could clearly show. Dreams and fantasies are not senseless happenings; they are meaningful psychological occurrences capable of conveying through their picture-language a knowledge of who we are and how our lives are purposefully to develop. Although Jung first located the symbol-creating capacity to lie within each individual, expressed most typically in night dreams and day-dreaming, he soon saw this formulation was inadequate to explaining the real nature of symbols. He had found certain facts which contradicted a merely subjective appraisal of them and how they work.

His observation of the phenomenon he called synchronicity challenged his initial thesis. In a synchronistic incident symbolic images which we know from our inner world appear, it would seem, in events of the outer world. Symbols do not merely occur "inside" us, in other words. Apparently events in the outer world, concrete physical events, also behave symbolically, insofar as an outer event resonating with an image we know from our inner world at times repeats a theme we have just become aware of in our subjective experience. The image-producing capacity of the personality does not merely lie inside us, then: it also seems to extend to the physical matter of outer reality. This indeed goes against Jung's original idea that symbols are mere "psychological" processes. It also goes against Jung well knew certainly goes against the predominant view of physical science which holds that matter is inert and without rational purpose

In his address at the 1948 founding of the C.G. Jung Institute in Zürich, Jung discussed how he hoped future research into his psychology would develop. At the top of his list was this issue: what is the relation between symbols and matter or, as he put it, between psyche and matter? His point likewise leads us to acknowledge several related questions. How does taking the confluence between psyche and matter seriously challenge us to review our understanding of both symbols and the material world? How is our inner psychology also part of the outer physical world, and vice-versa? What does the hidden unity between inside and outside mean for us and the way we live our lives? How will our values which so carefully keep the inner and outer worlds apart have to change as the distinction we make between the two is known to be false? What will become of our view of life which essentially sees material events as random and without purpose when the veil is lifted from happenstance as a frame of reference?

Edward Edinger's work on the Old Testament prophets takes up in an illuminating fashion this challenge of the link between symbol and matter, that is, between the inner world and outer world, and his work thus again stands directly in the mainstream of creative Jungian research. Edinger's discussion turns to a time when symbol and matter the locus of revealed meaning and concrete historical events were not separated. For the Old Testament prophets, the physical circumstances of history were connected with deeper actually, the deepest significance. The intention of Yahweh was manifest directly in the vicissitudes of Israel's history and was to

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be read through them. The prophets' idiom is a sacred one, of course, and analytical psychology proceeds from different foundations. But still we can take our cue from this ancient time and examine its understanding of meaning when symbol and episode are as yet not disconnected. Edinger beautifully makes the translation, for the modern reader, from the Hebrew interpretation of history as manifestations of divine significance to the language of depth psychology, which empirically documents symbolic intelligence in the material events of daily living. The lens of analytical psychology, here in the hands of the seasoned practitioner, affords the opportunity to investigate the phenomena of life when they are seen in their wider perspective.

The points Edinger raises and describes in his deep-hearted way are important for both layperson and professional to consider. What is a symbolic event and how does it take place in the history of a person or group? How does a mature individual understand his or her place in this historical process? How is an historical awareness an integral part of full living? What typical symbolic images accompany those incidents in the outer world which communicate to an individual their unique purpose in life? What do images of the unconscious manifesting in outer reality look like in the first place? What is to be recognized as general and historical in apparently personal and emotional reactions, and how are we to work with them analytically? In what way is it possible for an individual to live out the larger experience of the times in their specifically subjective reactions? What of these subjective reactions are expressions of the coming fate of a person's nation or culture? How is our own life and suffering ever to attain the dignity of expressing significance for our community, culture or historical period?

We live in a time of me, me and more me. We are obsessed with ourselves and seek to acquire more of what we already are so as to defend against the increasingly crushing brutality of a world that is at best callous and amoral. It certainly looks like the name of modern life is "me versus the world." But as the Old Testament prophets have shown and as Edinger reinterprets, it is just possible that the world we feel so adversarial toward is also part of us, and that in fact we've got it all wrong. The most important part of ourselves may not only be inside us, but also outside. Pressing on us now is the need to recognize that in giving ourselves to matters on the outside, we are also giving to the essence of ourselves

which we had thought was only on the inside, because often, if we know how to look, we will find out that the inside is really on the outside. The outer world can just as well reveal the symbolic nature of our life and destiny as can the inner.

I thank Edward Edinger for this work, and I am very happy to have had the opportunity to bring it to print. I particularly thank the author for his life-long devotion to demonstrating, through its own language, the full depth and breadth of the personality's extraordinary attempt to express who we are and where we are going, and so to heal us and our times.

J. GARY SPARKS

## Introduction

### History as Sacred Scripture

I want to say a few words about the idea of history as sacred scripture. Up to now what we've been reading purports to be history, the history of Israel.<sup>1</sup> But this history is simultaneously Israel's mythology. Along with the political and military accounts that are presented we are also given a record of Yahweh's intervention in human affairs, of the dialogue between God and humanity. And that is one of the precious aspects of this text.

The same phenomenon is alluded to, just very briefly, fleetingly even, in Homer's *Iliad*. Although the Trojan War was historical, we have the picture of it as unfolding with an almost capricious, erratic intervention of the gods. There is just the mere beginning of the idea of a dialogue between God and man, but it is primitive in comparison to the highly sophisticated, differentiated, ongoing dialogue between Yahweh and the nation of Israel.

One of the things this record tells us when we consider it psychologically is that this is the nature of history in general. All history is a visible manifestation of God's engagement in human affairs, God on the human plane, so to speak. All history is that, but it is as though the Jews were the only ones who realized it with their religious genius, their ability to perceive the transpersonal dimension working in the background.

In modern times the philosopher Hegel has given expression to this same idea. He said that history is the manifestation and unfolding in time of what he called the World Spirit sort of philosophical euphemism for God.<sup>2</sup> And he tells us that history is the visible manifestation of God which can occur only with the appearance of self-conscious man. Even more succinctly, he says that history is the autobiography of God. And we know psychologically that God needs history as his other, as his object. Hegel had a remarkable understanding of this overall phenomenon. And if one adds to his vision of things our own psychological understanding, we

<sup>1</sup> [This refers to Dr. Edinger's seminars on the historical books of the Old Testament (see below, p. 15), published as *The Bible and the Psyche: Individuation Symbolism in the Old Testament*.Ed.]

<sup>2</sup> See *The Philosophy of History*, particularly the Introduction.



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can then see that God's need for history and concrete realization is the basis of his need for humanity

The way I would put it is that the entire human drama of recorded history is God's dream, whereby, once he begins investigating his dreams, he will start becoming conscious of himself. And that is something of the purpose of what Jung called the "miserable morass of human history."

If we think of collective history as meaningful, then we'll attribute the same level of importance to individual history. First of all to our own history, and secondly to the history of our patients. And that's why every careful analysis starts with a detailed history of the patient. I think of such a beginning as a reading of the scripture of that person's life. So I study an individual's history the same way I study the books of the Old Testament. Because that history, if you are open to it, can be perceived as a record of God's intervention in this person's life and as a dialogue between the Self and the developing ego. So I always try to be on the lookout for evidence of a transpersonal purpose in an individual's life story. Once you are on the lookout for such a thing, it becomes visible in everyone's life account.

The material we deal with in these lectures is dense. What you need is a ruminant stomach: take it all in and then digest it later, regurgitate it and chew the cud. That is the stomach of a ruminant. That is the principle I operate on. I know that what I throw out is impossible to digest all at once, so I hope you have ruminant stomachs. You see there is something ludicrous about covering such a mass of material in the course of a brief academic year. And yet if one doesn't make the effort . . .well, let me just say I'd rather make the effort than not. So I am going to plunge right in.

1

## Isaiah, Part One

You may recall that one way of classifying or dividing the contents of the Old Testament is the threefold division of seventeen books of history, five books of wisdom and poetry, and seventeen books of the prophets, which may be listed as follows:

<i>Historical</i>		<i>Prophetic</i>
Genesis		Isaiah
Exodus		Jeremiah
Leviticus		Lamentations
Numbers		Ezekiel
Deuteronomy		Daniel
Joshua	<i>Poetical-Wisdom</i>	Hosea
Judges	Job	Joel
Ruth	Psalms	Amos
1 Samuel	Proverbs	Obadiah
2 Samuel	Ecclesiastes	Jonah
1 Kings	Song of Solomon	Micah
2 Kings		Nahum
1 Chronicles		Habakkuk
2 Chronicles		Zephaniah
Ezra		Haggai
Nehemiah		Zechariah
Esther		Malachi

By that classification we are starting the third category tonight in talking about Isaiah.

It is generally accepted that the Book of Isaiah was written by at least two authors. The original Isaiah lived in the eighth century B.C. and the so-called Deutero-Isaiah or Second Isaiah, who's thought to be the author of most of chapters 40-66. lived during or after the Babylonian exile. But they come down to us as a single book, most likely because of an underlying symbolic continuity. I think we'll find the continuity to derive basically from the preoccupation with the same archetypal image: the Messianic advent.

Tonight we'll be talking about the so-called First Isaiah, who is responsible for chapters 1-39. and who lived from approximately 760 B.C. to

somewhere past 700. We don't know precisely. Anyway it was a time of terror, because the militarist nation, Assyria, was rampaging through the Middle East, and Israel and Judah lived in perpetual danger of destruction by their aggressive armies.

I think we can understand the terror of the times to be at least partly responsible for the activation of Isaiah's unconscious. Though understandable on the surface as reactions to the threat of Assyria, when viewed psychologically we can see the archetypal psyche activated by the urgency of the circumstances. Isaiah's visions and prophecies therefore took on a universal relevance. They became an expression of archetypal reality, archetypal danger and archetypal rescue. That can be demonstrated as we examine the chief images contained in his message.

Isaiah is certainly a most remarkable individual. Not the least of his notable qualities was indicated in the description of his call, which is described in the sixth chapter where he is just sort of eavesdropping on Yahweh and hears that the Lord needs somebody. Isaiah says, "Here I am, send me (6:8)<sup>3</sup> That's almost unique among the prophetic calls, that degree of willingness; it certainly is in sharp contrast to Moses' reaction.

At any rate he had remarkable experiences of the unconscious, and out of those experiences crystalized several basic images of the Western psyche. The three chief images I want to talk about, really different aspects of the same core image, are the image of the Day of Yahweh, the image of the righteous remnant that survives the Day of Yahweh, and the image of the Messiah and the Messianic banquet that is part of the coming of the Messiah.

## The Day of Yahweh

In other translations that don't use the divine name it is "The Day of the Lord," or sometimes it's called "That Day," because it is the day of days.

We have a vivid account of "That Day" in the second chapter of Isaiah, starting with the tenth verse. I'll read a section of it:

Get among the rocks,  
hide in the dust.  
at the sight of the terror of Yahweh,

<sup>3</sup> [Biblical references are to the Jerusalem Bible, unless otherwise noted as follows: AV, Authorized (King James) Version; NAB, New American Bible; NKJV, New King James Version.Ed.]

at the brilliance of his majesty,  
when he arises to make the earth quake.

Human pride will lower its eyes,  
the arrogance of men will be humbled.  
Yahweh alone shall be exalted,  
on that day.  
Yes, that will be the day of Yahweh Sabaoth  
against all pride and arrogance.  
against all that is great, to bring it down,  
against all the cedars of Lebanon  
and all the oaks of Bashan,  
against all the high mountains  
and all the soaring hills,  
against all the lofty towers  
and all the sheer walls,  
against all the ships of Tarshish  
and all things of price . . .

Human pride will be humbled.  
the arrogance of men will be brought low.  
Yahweh alone will be exalted,  
on that day,  
and all idols thrown down.

Go into the hollows of the rocks,  
into the caverns of the earth,  
at the sight of the terror of Yahweh,  
at the brilliance of his majesty,  
when he arises  
to make the earth quake.

That day man will fling to moles and bats the idols of silver and the  
idols of gold that he made for worship,

and go into the crevices of the rocks  
and the rifts of the crag,  
at the sight of the terror of Yahweh,  
at the brilliance of his majesty,  
when he arises  
to make the earth quake. (2:10-21)

This image of the Day of Yahweh can be understood psychologically to refer to an eschatological projection of an anticipated encounter of the ego with the activated Self. And what is emphasized in the above passage is how all the inflated tendencies of the ego, any pretensions, anything of

height or elevation or pride, will be destroyed in the process of that encounter. One way I formulate this is that such an encounter dissolves any tendency of the ego to identify with the Self and to take on an authority and value not its own.

That same image, which was lived with for many centuries, has been elaborated in a somewhat different context in the *Dies Irae*, the wrath of God hymn of the Catholic burial mass. It is so vivid in its imagery that I want to read some of it to you. This will give you a real flavor of what the medieval Christian psyche lived with, so far as this particular archetypal image is concerned.

That day of wrath, that dreadful day  
When heaven and earth shall pass away  
Both David and the Sybil say.  
What terror then to us shall fall  
When lo, the judges steps appall  
About to weigh the deeds of all

The mighty trumpets' dolorous tones  
Shall pierce through each sepulchral stone,  
And summon men before the throne.  
Now death and nature in amaze  
Behold the Lord his creatures raise  
To meet the judges awful gaze.  
The book is opened that the dead  
May hear their doom from what is read.  
The record of our conscience dread.  
The Lord of Judgment on his throne  
Shall every secret thing make known,  
No sin escapes that once was sown.

Ah, how shall I that day endure,  
What patron's aid can make secure,  
When scarce the just themselves are sure'?  
O King of dreadful majesty  
Who grants us grace and mercy free,  
Grant mercy now and grace to me.  
My feeble prayers can make no claim.  
Yet gracious Lord for your great name  
Redeem me from the quenchless flame.

At your right hand give me a place.  
Among your sheep, a child of grace  
Far from the goat's accursed race.

And when your justly kindled ire  
 Lets sinners fall to ceaseless fire.  
 O call me to your chosen choir.  
 In suppliant prayer I humbly bend  
 In my contrite heart like ashes rend  
 Regard, O Lord, my final end.

O on that day, that tearful day  
 When man to judgement wakes from clay  
 Do you the sinner's sentence stay  
 O spare him God we humbly pray.  
 And grant to all O Savior blest  
 To die in you the saint's sweet rest.

That hymn emphasizes the judgment aspect of the Day of Yahweh when it says. "What terror then to us shall fall/ When lo, the judges' steps appall/ About to weigh the deeds of all." This weighing of deeds is a reference to the ancient Egyptian image I believe they were the originator of the projection onto the afterlife of a judgment to come. The Egyptian image is that after death the heart of the deceased is weighed on a balance. On one pan is the heart, and on the other is placed a feather which symbolizes Maat, the goddess of truth. If they don't balance out exactly, then that soul is doomed.

The picture on the next page shows the judgment scene. On the left side is a balance, with the jackal-headed god Anubis handling the balance. The heart of the deceased is on one pan and the feather I spoke of is on the other. Thoth, the ibis-headed god, is standing ready to record the findings. This is the "being weighed in the balance" of the last judgment. And right next to Thoth, who is doing the recording, is a very ugly looking monster. It has a crocodile head, a lion's torso and the hind quarters of a hippopotamus. It is called Am-mit. It is the devourer of the unjustified. So if one doesn't make it doesn't pass this balance test, one's soul is devoured by this monster.

If one does make it, then what's shown on the right side of the picture takes place: the deceased is introduced to the presence of Osiris, which takes place in the hall of the gods. Out of view here Osiris is enthroned. What takes place then is that the soul of the dead man is Osirified, in other words becomes an Osiris, eternal.

This Egyptian symbolism is really an astonishingly explicit description of the ego's encounter with the Self, projected onto the afterlife. To be



The soul of the deceased being weighed in the balance. (From the papyrus of Ani, British Museum; reproduced in E.A. Wallis Budge, *The Gods of the Egyptians*.)

devoured by the monster would correspond to succumbing to a psychosis in the encounter with the Self. I've often wondered why the psychogalvanic phenomenon, the basis of the modern lie detector test, wasn't used by Jung as an example of the workings of the Self. But it is a demonstration of the fact that the ego cannot get away with dishonesty even physiologically. Our own body will bear witness against us, if we're not loyal to the goddess of truth, an example of the archetypal image of the balance that's pictured here. Something in us won't let us get away with it.

Medieval Christianity picked up this imagery of the soul being weighed in the balance and called it the Last Judgment (opposite). You find such images carved on the cathedralssometimes over the entrance ways. And it was associated with the Second Coming of Christ, which is almost a literal transfer of the Egyptian alternatives. The ancient Egyptian alternatives were either being judged to be righteous and therefore to become a guest of Osiris, to be accepted by Osiris, or to be eaten by the monster. The medieval Christian view was of the same thing: you either go to heaven and join the enthroned heavenly Christ with the rest of the saints. or you go to hellthe picture of which was very often represented by a devouring monster with great jaws. So it's the same image.



The Archangel Michael weighing souls. (Van der Weyden, 15th century; Bourgogne, Hospice de Beaume. Reproduced in S.G.F Brandon, *The Judgment of the Dead*.)



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