

CHAPTER IV

A World Without Shadows

A world without shadows, the world of the new-born.

Time which is but a flashing moment to the stars - and to us an eternity - in that wink of time the stars saw what was and will be Solomon's Destiny. For the time being they looked down and smiled at the tiny bit of kicking humanity in its swaddling.

Retrospective time is not retroactive in those born on earth. And the stars, who in their wisdom know everything, also knew that in the newborn Fate would not alter its decrees: as to the events of the future of its own world, and as to its past among the stars - the past which will be forgotten and wiped off as if it had never ~~been~~^{been}. A secret of the heavens, both the past and the future. Man must come from a distant-long past, pass through an existence on earth, and go on to an equally distant-long future - in reality a going back to the past. Also the consciousness and purpose of each existence - on earth - to be known only in heaven. Each to start with a clean slate - to write his destiny that has been written long before? The stars, don't they before hand know what the writing is going to be? They know that revelation may come to the only selected few, worthy of it - to others only silence, the silence of mystery. To the naked bit of kicking human, thrust suddenly into a cold and inimical world, the past and the future are rolled into one - the present. And the present was all rolled into the little ball of moist sweetness, thrust into its vampire-like orifice of a mouth. Elixir of life - new,

young life. All his energies, his consciousness, his subconsciousness; all the exhalations of an inner spirit within him, which make for the beginnings of life that govern and dominate that life, or whatever the wheels that turn to urge the survival of that life; that grasping, that clutching, that holding on to the last straw in the sea of life - which to him is overwhelming and ^{is} threatening to absorb him in its overpowering hugeness; to drown him within its billowing convulsions; this new life which ^{is} neither heaven nor hell, but both; the straw tossed, thrust upon the storm of strange life on earth; earth's life, the base life, basic life on earth; the tumult and the denial on ~~the~~ earth of the peace and bliss of heaven, which he doesn't remember but feels through the intricate and delicate tendrils of nerves granted him from heaven, and which have an instinctive memory of the past; the cosmic life with the stars, ^{and the kinships} all these and others find their channels and their outlets in the grasping and sucking powers of his lips, in which all life to him is concentrated. The present. His life on earth!

His earthly sustenance; from the Earth, on the Earth!

The essence of life, which is the Present.

A child was born on the morning - with the first rays of dawn ^{get} to come - the Ninth of Ab. The midwife pronounced it a healthy boy. She claimed it had hardly been out of the well-lubricated wraps of the other world before it yelped for food.

"Never saw the likes of it," she added with a grimace, molding her lips in mock imitation of the infant's sucking mouth. "You should have seen how he fastened on that sugared cloth-ball with his lips, as if all life depended on it. He wouldn't let go of it even after it was sucked dry. When taken away, he nuzzled around looking for it. Never in my life..."

"Of course, of course!" one of her cronies interrupted her, "isn't he

the son of our Rabbi? He was born with a silver spoon in his mouth, and a zest for food."

"A blabbing idiot!" the midwife glared at her.

"Seeing it's a great fast today," the other one came back smirking, "you could wait an hour or two before slinging that blob into his mouth."

"Stupid goat," the midwife sneered at her, "don't you know that no fast, not even Atonement Day, applies to invalids and infants. With mine own ears I heard it from the Rabbi's mouth. Now, with your prattling be gone, I have work to do. The rebetzin (the rabbi's wife), I hardly looked after her. The poor dove, the poor bird of mine. My little pigeon. God bless her soul. A bit delicate, but of good health." Casting a side^{glance at Esther's chamber,} with beaming eyes as if she were her very own, her child, she said, "May God preserve her long on this earth. And may He bless her days. She is a good wife and a God-fearing woman."

"A prayer in her chamber let's say, to ward off the evil spirits!" the other woman said.

"Begone. She has someone praying for her right now in the synagogue. Her rabbi, her husband."

"But the Rabbi says that God listens first to the lowly and the poor."

"And the Rabbi, he is rich!"

"Aye, yes, he is very rich..." the woman said.

The midwife looked perplexed. Indeed, the Rabbi was rich, though not by earthly standards. But she also knew that her lovely bird, her little pigeon, must be protected, prayer or no. No one enters her chamber, not even the Rabbi were he to come right this moment from the synagogue. She loves her, like her own daughter - even more. She must have rest. Her primitive wifely heart^{had} told her this. She'll spread her eagle-wings over her lovely fragile bird and protect her. No one shall enter through the portals of her chamber.

"Begone!" she shouted, and turning she went into the chamber.

The infant was lying at his mother's side, a contact point between an infinite and intangible past and an immediate and tangible present. Outside his mother - whose radiant, life-giving warmth made him comfortable and content - the world was a void, a blur, a cold and forbidding entity, which didn't enter into the realm of his existence. But soon (An hour or two later, or a week - in an infant's time it may be the flash of a second or a century of years!) this concreteness, which was his mother's pliant body and which gave him so much physical pleasure, transferred and translated itself, by degrees, to his other senses. Definitely now there was the tactile sense, and a definite reaction to it. The sense of the vast, cold atmosphere (in contrast to the moist and warm confinement of before), exposed naked to it. A shivering blast to him. Ah, but there was the mother-warmth again. Life is worth living after all. The whole gamut of perception. He can do so with every inch of him. But the perception through the eyes, when they are open, intrigues him the most. Well, exactly he can see nothing but a void at first. Not a black void, but a dark one. And then suddenly he sees a lighter void in the dark one - in the center of the dark one. Soon this lighter darkness was assuming changes. Was it changes in color? Had he prism ~~for~~ eyes? His eyes before birth reflected the light of the stars, but saw nothing else; but now while the eyes became more finite and delimited, they also became more distinct in their recognition of definite objects about them. Nature's balance. To subtract and to add. To add and subtract. Nature's way.

More and more his eyes become the eyes of the earth. Things more and more become definite and finite. The colors he sees now are distinct and fewer in number, the hues are more brilliant, with purple and red predominating. Mostly they are in flashing circles within circles, some

revolving on their own axes, while others are in orbit, like satellite moons around a parent star. Now he sees configurations of all shapes and colors. Now he distinguishes a wall, a limitation he hadn't recognized before. And above there is a ceiling. But at first the wall and the ceiling were one and the same thing - a separation, a dividing line from the world outside. A partition. A prop that appeared from nowhere, popping before his eyes, cutting the measure of his visual horizon to the limit of the walls and the ceiling; but at the same time bring^{ing} things out in the clear, in greater relief. The dim infiniteness of ~~his~~ birth was being exchanged for the brighter finiteness of Earth: his new home. For his advancing, forthcoming present, which presently is becoming his future! He who had fallen from heaven, is becoming a creature of the earth, with earthly attributes, with earthly limitations.

Now he perceives a break in the wall which had a definite design, and the design was a window in the wall, and it was covered with a white sheet, or something of similiar lightness. The pale night - there was half a moon - obtruding itself with definiteness into the chamber through the covering of the window, was playing upon the brilliant figures transferred onto the window. But the veil over the window was not endless like the walls or the ceiling, it had edges; and these had chinks beneath them, which let the night in - and its silver translucence. And a moonbeam stole through and played about his face, and ^{the last remnant of} stabbed his amoeba eyes, and made them blink.

How soon after birth would the tentacles and censors of the flesh encompass and delimit the confines of the four walls, compared with the bigness of the night outside? Minutes, hours, or days! It must be left to the problematical. For the whole aspect of its being and surroundings having assumed - in the very earliest part of its life - the nature and ^{status} of infiniteness, contiguous with - or because of it - the very substance of its indefiniteness, is amoeba life, amorphous and flowing in all di-

a little heavy...
But -

rections. But soon to be differentiated in all its various and multitude-
nous specializations of function. But as yet living in every cell of its
protoplasmic mass, existing on the subconscious dimness of one desire - ^{is}
the instinct of self preservation! In that paramount purpose there was
no uncertainty. It concerned its own little self. And soon the life
outside the womb - in less time than the hours counted in one day -
began to crystalize itself in the little body, becoming more and more a
definite self, a limited and limiting entity; the very limitation a
blessing to its further progress. He could feel himself positively. There
was something very positive about being hungry or thirsty, or whatever
that feeling, painful need, or desire is called. And it had to be satis-
fied, or there would be convulsive seizures in every part of him; a
contractile painful sense in every ^{cell} that felt the emptiness of ungrati-
fied desire.

That new experience in his mouth, something soft and yielding that
his lips could ^{envelop} surround and hold and press. The gums came to the aid of
the lips as they pumped and sucked on it. A new exquisiteness of pleasure.
And that warm nectar-like spray that flooded his palate, that satisfied
so completely! Now for the ecstasy of relaxation when all his wants are
so completely and erotically gratified, when all painful experiences ooze
away in the serenity of a dream. The little body ^oloosening up its intri-
cate mechanism, having been well lubricated by his mother's nipple-
yielding fluid, curls up not into convulsion but in the relaxation of sleep.

A well earned rest.

The early impressions - the surrounding world, which could exist only
as a fleeting panorama in his subconscious mind - these impressions,
though unrecorded in conscious memory, remained with him to help mold
the half-submerged subconscious being; to bring to focus, to settle
within him the world within him, the world which must be his abode, in

which he must exist through a lifetime. But though yet everything was temporary, of fleeting impulses - hunger thirst, food, drink, crying, laughing - his mother's breast was something substantial, real, permanent and lasting. He felt its pliable softness through his sensitive lips and the occasional touch of his fingers. Because it was always with him; and because of its constancy, because it gave him life and pleasure, he came to recognize it as a part of him, and through it his mother. He knew his mother while the rest of the world was still cold and strange to him - a mystifying world. A blur!

Those human and racial tracings and markings on the delicate ^{web} of his nervous system! They were recorded before his birth. His birth right. Would these character-channels be allowed to widen and level off and mingle with other channels and sluices and engulf and encompass the essences and fluids of other peoples, to make them his own, and his to make their own; or would they be etched deeper, thus always remain in their own groove, and thus building for themselves their own enclosure, and thus permanently to live their own separation? Had the world in which all nations live been set in a more generalized frame of civilization the former would be true. But the world as yet must of necessity intensify those deeply grooved lineaments, so that they must forever (until another millennium) remain their own and separate.

~~But the kinship between Solomon and George will that remain as a~~
~~big and symbol of the beginning of the first exception?~~

~~But the kinship between Solomon and George, what the sign and symbol?~~

~~But there are exceptions as the kinship between George and Solomon.~~