



By the time this appears in print in November everything will be very different. At the moment it's clear that nothing will ever be the same.

September 1st

She died yesterday. How many people know that today there's an eclipse of the moon?

I wept, as so many people did, in these first two days. The shock; the unexpected loss. The recent pictures I'd seen of her in Bosnia, on TV, were of a Diana of almost breathtaking beauty and aliveness. I'd been cynical about her: envious and scornful of this over-exposed woman who was our possession (the 'good breast?'). I now had to see something else: a grace and a joy that we knew had grown from, and in spite of, despair and suffering.

Everybody is talking in symbols, mythically. The clichés of the media tap into their own origins. 'The Fates were against her from the start.' 'It's like a Greek tragedy.' Yes, I see the headlong descent into the underworld tunnel, the star-crossed lovers pursued by the hounds of vengeance. Their relationship could not have lasted in

The Death of Diana

Alix Pirani

the real world. It was the Al-Fayed fantasies that helped her to her doom. As John Skelton wrote:

*Diana in the leavës green;
Luna who so bright doth sheen
Persephone in Hell.*

I was surprised to read of her rigorous attention to detail in preparing for visits and meetings, memorising precise information. It seems she had a great capacity to learn, an intelligence that was courageously exercised in many ways — right-brain and left-brain.

This extraordinary sadness, the deep sorrow that's gripped everyone, the overwhelming sense of bereavement, feels like a mourning for all the violations, the misery, the disease that has been afflicting our world for so long now. Every bereavement resonates with past loss and separation. It has found its focus in the destruction of a young hopeful life.

How often are the young hopefuls doomed to die? Will Tony Blair go the way of Kennedy? Are these our 'dying gods'? Is Abraham's temptation archetypal? We begin to hear rumblings that the Establishment and its elders were also out to get Diana. But as yet less is being said about the way the paparazzi men were out to get this woman.

Alix Pirani is a founder member of AHPP, author of The Absent Father: Crisis and Creativity, and editor of The Absent Mother: Restoring the Goddess to Judaism and Christianity.

Tony Blair speaks with deep feeling of her loss. Will the cynics be criticising his 'performance'? It was the May election result that released the energy and humanity which was so suppressed under the heartless Thatcherite regime of Tory privilege. Now people are rebelling against the privilege they see in the monarchy. What was lost in those years is being mourned, and with anger. Titles like 'the people's princess' and 'the Queen of Hearts' have powerful meanings.

September 2nd

Mourning is a lonely business. After a while I don't want to talk any more, as we all have been doing, endlessly excited and loquacious. What I lose is precious to me alone: loss leaves me in my own aloneness. As it did Diana — a loneliness that frightened her, but then became a strength. But the talk multiplies: everyone wants to have their say. The predatory egos compete to feed off her image, before the meaning of her life is even digested. These metaphors of food, of a devouring public . . . her bulimia, our bulimia. I've been reading E.M. Farrell on work with bulimics. And I do feel sick when I see the almost obscene mass of flowers heaped outside the palaces. Quantity, not quality: force-fed flowers in synthetic wrappings; tributes as unnatural as Diana herself occasionally looked.

September 3rd

On this day 58 years ago World War II began, and I — like the Queen — lost the innocence and security of childhood; at the same age as Diana lost hers when her mother walked out of her life.

Where, now, is Diana's innocent soul? Are we betraying it? 'When we wrong the dream we wrong the soul' says Hillman,

and she is our dream. In *The Soul's Code* he writes of the 'acorn' that seeds the soul's destiny on earth. Diana's destiny surely was to give renewed meaning to monarchy — to transform it, and within its own symbolic mode. Prince Charles the Jungian, the ecologist, is aware of the myth of his life, the challenge of justifying the 'divine right' of kings. There is a mystique: king and queen, father and mother are archetypes. Symbols are bridges between the personal and the transpersonal: the danger lies in 'symbolic equation' — in literalism, in 'Royalist' and 'anti-Royalist' political labelling, and the ruthless excavation of the person behind the role. When someone transcends the personal, and accepts through suffering or martyrdom that they are or have become a symbol, then we are in the 'divine' realm — persecuted monarchs, messiahs, saints. How we play with these images and symbols creatively is, as Winnicott knew, the crucial question. The significance of Diana, for me, has to do with the repressed feminine returning: the Goddess, and her re-entry into an entrenched patriarchal system. The cataclysmic death of this princess has led to a stark exposure of the cracks in the system.

September 4th

I'm regretting the decision to write this for *Self & Society*. But editor David phones and urges me to buy *Private Eye*. It's a real tonic (for a jaded appetite) with its wickedly funny interpretation of events: here is witty satirising of the media and the royals — not that tedious cynicism which undermines every genuine good intention. If what's happening world-wide now is about the individual and the collective, about self and society, what is *Self & Soci-*

ety? Can I speak here in a way I can't elsewhere? When I'm tempted to be cynical, can I trust its readers to understand that I have feelings whose genuineness I sometimes don't quite trust myself?

I watch the Queen speak. It has seemed to me very important that she take charge again. A friend startles me by saying I seem to be very identified with her. Watching her eyes I see the willingness to be honest and generous in her praise of Diana, but also a secret, narrow, almost mischievous look that says 'You know and I know I've also had other opinions about her.'

September 5th

Yet another TV psychologist — Oliver James — is wheeled in to contribute to yet another panel discussion on the un-English, un-Protestant 'mass hysteria' of the populace. He tells us solemnly that the people who believe they're seeing a vision of the real Diana appearing to them are exhibiting the 'pathological hallucination' characteristic of schizophrenic states. Well, well.

All week I've listened to a multiplicity of responses from TV speakers, from friends, clients, therapists and their clients, from every possible kind of perspective. How to keep a coherent focus? Well, it happens that at the same time I've been absorbed in preparing, for a conference on the 7th, material about the Kabbalistic Tree of Life (that symbol *par excellence*) and about the divine feminine archetypes, Goddess figures, in the Judaeo-Christian tradition. Where is Diana in all this? There's talk of her as the impeccable devoted mother, and of Mary Magdalene, and Marilyn Monroe, the 'Goddess' who bore her evocative initials. Diana's mother Frances's sorrow is likened by her priest to that of the mother of Christ. And now the saintly Mother

Theresa dies, perhaps finally heart-broken at the loss of a young companion in compassion. But there is more to it than these conventional Christian images. The less well known divine feminine of the Hebraic tradition goes much deeper — uncomfortably so.

September 6th

The funeral; a gripping two days: virtual standstill, and a ceremony which has dramatically highlighted all the energies that are in play, and has contained them in a safe ordered burial service, in a church which positively breathes British history (and even contains the sculpted head of William Blake, that arch-heterodox visionary). This certainly was a service of a kind no-one could ever have imagined, its high point the commanding oration of Earl Spencer who is able to speak with clarity and forthrightness where the Windsor males must remain silent.

Here now, suddenly, I'm visited by the ghost of Ophelia. The girl who, out of her mind with grief, dies bedecked with flowers. They see it as suicide and bury her in unsanctified ground. 'What ceremony else?' protests her distraught brother. And the brother grapples, in the grave, with Hamlet, prince and heir to the throne, who has wrecked his own relationship with her and now passionately protests his love. Hamlet, who somehow can't be the hero he's expected to be, and is maddened by the pains and betrayals of love and loss, and the perplexity of acting a role. But Diana, had she lived, might well have become a Gertrude when her son the Prince reached Hamlet's age.

When I see Gertrude the unmotherly mother, the harlot figure, my 'familiar' Lilith comes to mind again. There are three

major divine feminine images in Judaism: the Shekhinah, Lilith, and Hochmah (the figure of Wisdom in Proverbs). They go into Christianity as, approximately, the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mary Magdalene, and Sophia. The Shekhinah is the benign, immanent presence of God on earth; though often in exile, she finds form for the divine in human activity. Lilith is the 'dark' serpentine sexual being cast out of Eden, inviting and defying banishment. These archetypal body/mind/spirit energies are inseparable and intertwined. Hochmah can consciously hold the personal balance between them and, through the Tree of Life, with which she is equated, the spiritual balance.

These characteristics were visible in Diana: the Shekhinah's compassion and warm maternal caring, her desire for peace and empathic interaction (called with aloofness her 'humanitarianism'). And sitting uneasily alongside, the Lilith in her: outsider, rebel, defiant, seductive, mischievous, spiteful, unstable, sexually provocative: an exciting range of attributes. But the Lilith who carries the shadow and is scapegoated has the power to infiltrate the system which rejected her. She worms her way in (she is a pest!) and can transform it. Today Lilith has gained the allegiance of feminism. But she is very complex. The rabbis who demonised her as an evil witch also had respect for her spiritual power as a possible consort of God.

What then of Hochmah? Diana did not have enough of Wisdom's guiding influence in her personal life to help her balance the dark and light forces that the collective projected on to her. There was no mother for her soul, no language of feminine spirituality to help her through mid-life, and I'm sure that Susie Orbach's Kleinian perspectives

wouldn't have given spiritual mothering.

September 7th

The images of Charles and his two sons are beginning to haunt me and demand my attention. But it's conference day. I describe the Tree of Life in one of the sessions, and look to it for guidance, and we can see in it the process that was/is Diana's. I'll try to convey it briefly here, aware that many readers may not be familiar with the Tree. It's a vertical structure, with four levels or worlds, from 'earth' below to 'heaven' above, and the pathways are signposted by circles or *sephiroth*. Diana followed the central path whose focus is the sephira *Tiferet*: Beauty, the Heart, Truth. This is in the second level, *Yetzirah*, the world of formation, where character is developed through relationships, but it draws its basic strength from the sephira *Yesod* (Ego, Foundation) which is in the lowest level of *Assiyah*, the world of action, of the basic, often sordid, business of life: the physical acts and political conflicts; greed, sex, money. Practice. Diana had much of that, both in her early life and later. Moving upwards then brings her to the third level: *Beriah*, the world of creativity and imagination, divine and human. But within that on her path is the sephira *Da'at*, a mysterious dotted circle; a place of hidden wisdom, unknowing, non-being, ego-loss, the abyss, dark night of the soul, place of the deep depression that precedes a birth of some new inspiration: the place where the monarchy, the system, the whole world, is at present. What will emerge, now unimaginable, is in *Azilut*, the highest level, world of Emanation, where divine purpose is, holding what is in store, to be understood by us and revealed to us — enlightenment. Diana has been lost in the dark, the underworld of *Da'at*, which is also

a place of silence without words or images. This has been the sacrifice, giving us an opportunity, an imperative, to find a language of spiritual authority, to meet the soul.

In personal life, it's now for William to carry on. Da'at is the place of separation and loss in childbirth: we could almost say that Diana died in giving birth to William. Lilith is associated with childbirth, and with the abyss. Since she is all about the facts of life, sex, birth, death, we have to ask how this affects an adolescent prince. The Hebrew Da'at also means 'carnal knowledge', and it could be the place of the 'little death'.

September 8th

I return to the images of Charles and his sons and see, under the habit of dignity, three forlorn men trying to share their loss, their dilemma. Surely now they will have to learn, in the exchanges between them, what it is to be fathers and sons and brothers, princes and kings, in a wholly new way. It will happen at levels of relating which weren't there before, and the effect will be far-reaching. There's no recent model: George VI had no son; Charles's father isn't king. Imagination and intelligence will be needed. I think they have it.

September 9th

More details emerge about the driver of the car, high on drink and drugs. How does such publicised knowledge affect William? Lilith, it's said, seduces men and then makes them impotent. Her refusal to be a self-denying mother can turn her into the *mère cocotte* who teases and subtly controls her sons. Any aristocratic woman whose children have nannies and go to boarding-

school becomes an unreachable, idealised, tantalising figure. Diana represented the same figure for the people: an object of infantile and sexual fantasy; also a contrast to the severe Thatcher/Queen/ Princess Royal images. And now there's something harrowing for me in this new image: the good-looking charmed boy, head bowed, perhaps in shame or guilt, with the burdensome prospect of becoming a victim of his own sexuality in his turn.

This too is part of what we have to deal with: that as womanpower is released from suppression it risks getting into the 'abuse of power, such as we've seen in British and Indian prime ministers, and in Winnie Mandela. Such women lose touch with their modesty and humility and overreach themselves. Perhaps that's why Wisdom decreed Diana had to die before becoming too powerful in later life. She was already out on a limb and overreaching herself. The enduring symbol of her death will remain, in an armoured expensive black car, accompanied by the 'prince' of a regime whose religion subordinates women, driven recklessly in the fastest of fast lanes by a Dionysian product of a Ritz culture: nothing there to protect a fragile woman and her soul.

They tell us it will take at least five weeks to dispose of the huge mass of flowers and other objects left outside the palaces, now to be used elsewhere or composted. Where did everyone think they would go? And the Shekhinah? It's the capacity to re-cycle, to symbolise, to dream, to give form and meaning to these events, to turn life into art, which is supremely the Shekhinah's. And she, too, is the one who, traditionally, weeps with us for what we have lost.