

**JOY UNSPEAKABLE:  
FULL OF GLORY**

As Yahweh had directed, Moses then sat up the court around the tabernacle and the altar, and placed the screen at the gateway of the court. Thus Moses completed the work.

Then a cloud covered the Tent of Meeting, and the Doxa (glory) of Yahweh filled the tabernacle. Moses could not enter the Tent of Meeting because of the cloud that rested upon it and because of the Doxa of Yahweh that filled the Tabernacle.

And at every stage of the people's journey, whenever (that Doxa) rose from the Tabernacle, the sons of Israel would continue their march. If it did not rise, they waited and would not march until it did. For the cloud of Yahweh rested on the tabernacle by day, and a fire shone through that cloud by night, for all the House of Israel to see. And so it was for every stage along their journey.

(Exodus 40:33-38)

Probably the Other World chart, worked on by hundreds of people, is the most creative thing we have ever done. On that chart is the new mythology of twentieth century man: what he is actually living out of. By that, I mean your sensitive man, your touchable man, your man toward the future. Yet, in another sense, it is every man of the twentieth century, though known only vaguely by most.

A few months ago we were doing Visits to the Other World. I have been on visits, but I could not possibly go on one again. For to go on a visit I would have to leave the Other World. Now, I can, as a pedagogue, take people on Visits because a pedagogue abstracts himself from his situation in order to manipulate. But you couldn't take me on a Visit, for I live there! How could you visit your own home? If you visit it, it is not your home. My interest is in how I self-consciously, actually, literally, concretely appropriate and act out my home. How is it that twenty-four hours a day, I intentionally and consciously, unintentionally and unconsciously, appropriate and act out the Other World.

Now, within those sixty-four states of Being, somewhat formally delineated, I am mostly centering in on the Sea of Tranquillity. I have had a great secret time with Problemlessness, or the tranquillity of peace. I have had a great time with Certitude, or the tranquillity of blessed assurance. I am a little shy about Endlessness; I do not want to go back to that for a while. I've thought a lot about tranquillity, blessed bliss; and the Joy Unspeakable. I find this most difficult to communicate. Perhaps it is "Unspeakable" because this joy is a strange joy. It knows nothing about darkness and nothing about light; nothing about day and nothing about night. It just is.

A few days ago, I had myself a time. To set it all off, in the early morning I beat the alarm clock by fifteen minutes. An eccentric old man like me, who cannot stand for himself to be late for anything, beat the alarm clock. Bouncing out of bed was a joy to me. Maybe it would not be to you, but it was to me. I walked into the bathroom, and as I entered the door I remembered that last night I had taken a shower and washed my hair. That was a delight, to have that done and over with! As I passed the door, I discovered somebody had stuck a document, that I had been wanting for days, under the door. Somebody had stayed up half the night to get that run off and put under my door; did not even knock to disturb me -- just put it there where he knew that the first thing in the morning I would find it. I simply bubbled over with gratitude for whoever that nameless colleague was; and rushed, still in my sarong, to my desk and began to peruse this document. Oh, I tell you, it was a morning! I walked into my closet, to deal with the chore of deciding which shirt I would wear! There were two that struck me; one was a fairly new one, and one was an old one I had come to like: a very fine pin-striped blue shirt. With a great deal of joy, I decided to wear the old one. I got myself dressed, picked up my briefcase, and started down the steps to my cubbyhole.

Now, I cannot stand to ever get on that elevator going down. Not only that, I cannot stand to see anybody in this building ride down. I look the other way so I will not remember that mass of people on the elevator. Now, walking up, that's something different, especially if you're sixty! I took delight that morning, because I remembered that I was going to walk down those stairs. Now, I learned about those tricky steps the hard way. The one between number 4 and number 3 has an extra step that sticks out. You know how you walk almost by instinct. So I was walking by the instinct that was dealing with another floor. Missing that step hurled me clear over to the far side of that stair corridor and almost knocked me out! Now, I tell you, that step and I have something going. I say good morning to it every morning, with respect! I have them all counted, now, and I know exactly how many are in between; especially that last flight where the marble is grooved out. That's a fine flight to come down. It was a great morning. Coming through the door is always great for me. It is usually early in the morning, and I wonder who is on security? What faces am I going to see? (Sometimes they're asleep! Some morning, the elevator man goes up to second, where he can sleep out of sight. Whenever I see that I go knock on the door --- it's mean, but it's furl!,

That night -- I think it was along about midnight or one o'clock a huge crash of thunder, just one, broke in. It woke me up for a second, and then I went back to sleep. Now, you can have your sunny days. As for me, I like rain. I could hardly wait to unlock that front door and walk out to see about the rain. When I got outside, I could see it had rained, but now had stopped. There was a fantastic mist, just unbelievable. It reminds me a bit of the way you think London ought to always be: exciting, mysterious. Delight swelled within me. Down the street I saw a strange figure coming, and as he got closer I began to get scared I thought I had better get back inside. I didn't let anyone know, but I got inside and locked the door before that stranger came by. I had delight in being my old cowardly self.

I go back to my little cubicle; I have a ritual of opening my briefcase and pulling out what I've done. I require of myself, through the night, at least one hunk of unbelievable creativity. I don't care if anyone else thinks it is creative or not. I pull that out first. Then Lingo came in. Talk

about dumping problems! He really wants to talk, but he feels that if he comes in that early in the morning, he needs to have a reason, so he brings in a bushel-basket of problems as his justification for having little fellowship. I blew at Lingo. Now, I pretend to be angry frequently. But I cannot stand myself when I'm angry. I hate myself for days; I cannot tolerate the anger I did not myself inject. But a few minutes after that, I discovered that that situation, along with my "blowing," was a delight.

You become unconsciously conscious of wholeness. You do not sit around and think, "Now I'm whole." You feel yourself as total, as whole. This means that some way or other, it is the alarm and I, the shower and I, it is the shirt and I, it is the rain and I, it is the briefcase and I, it is Lingo and I; and I is all of my past and my present and all of my future. It is all of my submission and all of my rebellion; all of my alienation and all of my togetherness; all of my happiness and all of my suffering. Without being aware of it, you experience yourself as being total.

But this is not the "Joy Unspeakable and Full of Glory." The Joy Unspeakable is utterly startling, nakedly objective, passionately objective, wholly other-than-I. It is experienced like a garment that does not envelop you, but puts you on. It is like a ghost, the Other-than, that sucks out all of the stuff inside your skin and inhabits you. It is like being possessed. I and the alarm and the Other, and I and the shower and the Other, I and the stairs and the presence of the Other --- the awareness of the Other.

JOY UNSPEAKABLE, and it is just your own life. There is nothing else there at all. Can you think of anything more mundane, more everyday, than beating the alarm up, taking a shower the night before, picking up a document somebody brought to you, picking out an old shirt, walking down four flights of stairs, going out to look at the weather, digging that stuff out of your briefcase, and then to top it all off, having Lingo come?

You become aware of the fact that you are making a decision, only it is more like feeling that you have "been decided." You had to decide that happiness did not define you, but, rather, you define happiness. Happiness is my life. My life is happiness. But remember that Other. That is the way it is. My life is joy and joy is my life, because that is the truth. No more to be added and nothing less to be subtracted. The Joy Unspeakable and Full of Glory Is my life enshrouded in the Other. This brings me to the Doxa. The Joy Unspeakable is also full of Doxa --- wild Doxa! In this joy is wildness, which shows itself in one degree or another of euphoria or one degree or another of unbelievably deep sorrow. They say of Ignatius, especially as he got older, that when he would do mesa, tears would stream down his face. It used to irritate people, disturb them. They wondered what the great tragedy of his life was. The great tragedy was this wildness, the joy of "Doxa," of glory and awe. This wild awe is mixed with unbelievable delight and unbelievable dread. Nothing less than the Awe.

Beating the alarm clock in the presence of the Other is both dreadful and fascinating. The joy you and I are talking about has nothing to do with dividing the world up into the pleasant and the unpleasant. The Doxa "joy" never heard of such things as pain and pleasure and sorrow and happiness. When the Doxa comes, it is the Doxa; it is the glory. This is the secret to the Other. It

is in the midst of the mundanities of your life. The one who experiences himself as decided by the Other, resolved by the other before the mundanities of life knows the joy unspeakable, full of glory.

I could have described another way. I will only mention it. I got a telephone call. One of my boys whom I had been "betting" on was killed. I feel ashamed, yet I couldn't help it; in the midst of that came the Joy Unspeakable and Full of Glory --- the Doxa. I said I was ashamed; I do not know why. All my life I thought of this joy. It is a strange joy. It knows nothing of temporal definitions of happiness. It has only to do with your life as it is. I knew it was not the joy people talked about; I knew it was not the kind of thing people meant when they said, "you people aren't happy enough." It is not, "If God loves you, of course you are happy." I am describing a state of being, not ratiocination. These things that are your life are your life. If the Joy Unspeakable and Full of Glory is not available all the time, it is not available any of the time. If I collapse when life is not working the way I believe God ought to work it; or lie down when something happens to one of my boys; or when I have caught myself in irrational anger, have become a moral failure, I live a lie. Because all I have got is my life. ~ cannot come to you and tell you that my life is a tragedy.- I cannot come to you and tell you my life is a sorrow. If you abstract this happening from my life, sure it is tragic, sure it is sorrow-filled, but it is my life! It is Joy Unspeakable and Full of Doxa.

Lastly, this strange joy is "showers of blessings." Do you know what showers of blessings are? I had beaten the alarm clock, I had taken a shower: the night before, somebody had slipped something under my door, I chose the old shirt, walked down that staircase, I checked the weather, and Lingo came. The mundane givenness of my life, in the midst of Doxa, was showers of blessings. If you can say, by definition, what you would consider a shower of blessings, other than just the mundane, everyday, nitty-grittyness of your life, before the holy presence of God, then you have not got the slightest idea of what I am talking about.

That is what I call spontaneous gratitude. It is what I mean by "My cup runneth over." Though I have not long lived in this awareness, the cup runneth over all the time -- not some *days*, not some years, not in some situations, but in life and in death the cup runneth over, in the Doxa".

--Joseph Mathews