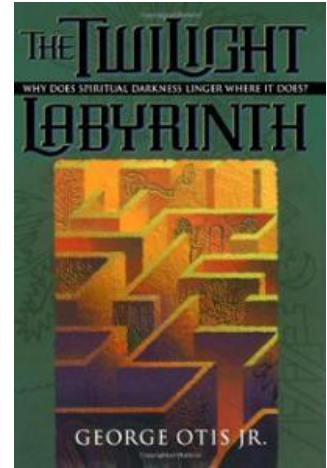


George Otis Jr: The Twilight labyrinth – why does spiritual darkness linger where it does?

Chosen Books, Grand Rapids, MI, 1997

Notes by Alison Morgan January 03



314pp with detailed notes! Result of 7 years' travel and research in nearly 50 countries; 'challenging the popular notion that they can endure only 20 minute sermons and newsletter-length books, many believers are displaying a formidable appetite for substance. Unfortunately a high percentage of pastors, authors and publishers are still wedded to the old paradigm' 11 ! But actually full of stories and anecdotes; a good read.

Purpose of book to help Christians arrive at a more complete understanding of the modern spiritual battlefield. Main thesis is that peoples search for meaning and control over life as they experience it, and so dedicate selves to gods and spirits of their own imaginations; which then become inhabited by compliant evil spirits whose power is perpetuated by festivals and cultural traditions which implicitly continue the contract. Result is oppression, poverty, violence in the society.

1. Encounters with the world next door

Dharamsala, India. Tibetan Buddhism in exile – this is the seat of the Dalai Lama. Description of divination and mediumship in Buddhist practice, inc a nice story about a Buddhist monk/oracle working as medium; levitation punctured by a Tibetan Christian's prayer in name of Jesus – he crashed to the ground and the Christians were politely asked to leave.

Haiti. A story about a researcher called Gersi working with world of Haitian voodoo; young woman called Marie marries a snake spirit.

Arizona – story of Pete Gray Eyes, a Navajo medicine man on whom other medicine men had placed a curse. Illness, oppression, haunting owls. Converted, rebuked owls who left, recovered. Revival the result. Another story of a Hopi fetish in a Washington museum, causing storms and accidents. Power of ritual objects brought back by tourists – story of a drum.

PART I : UNDER THE OVERWORLD – ILLUMINATIONS FROM THE BASEMENT OF REALITY

2. Navigating the labyrinth

Labyrinth just an image, of a hidden journey. The other world is the spiritual basement of reality, and if we understand it we have a powerful paradigm for interpreting events and priorities in the material world. Our worldview ('culturally structured assumptions, values, and commitments underlying a people's perception of reality' – Kraft) is more influential than theology in determining our perception of ultimate reality. Western Christianity has been viewing reality through the wrong end of the interpretive lens, like telescope held the wrong way round. Latest scientific hypothesis is that reality has not 4 dimensions but 10; 6 theoretical ones called hyperspace. We can't understand what such reality would be like.

3. Faces of the dragon

Ancient Mesopotamians were the first to see malevolent spirits as ubiquitous. Modern disbelief. But those who have met him have no difficulty recognising him. C14 Cistercian called Adam, St Theresa of Avila both did. OT and Satan. Demons as ex angels of light, still capable of imitating their divine counterparts. Spiritual forces traditionally associated with animals, esp dragons and serpents. China, Maya (S America); the dragon serpent is the morning star of Scripture – Satan. Serpent images in religions all over the world – Cambodia, Egypt, W Africa, Andes, Europe. Tibet, Nepal, American Hopi Indians. Sumerians, Druids – massive brief overview.

Dr Musgrave, space shuttle astronaut, saw serpent following the shuttle...

1. The devil exists
2. He is a ruler with an active master plan.

Evidence not just religious but in observation – outbreaks of inexplicable evil in human societies, Ghengis Khan, Nazis, Rwanda, Cambodia.

4. Ancient mysteries

Eden and the traffic between earthly and heavenly – God walking, angels seen by Jacob on stairway. Abode of higher dimensional beings on mountain; gateway to heaven. Ez 1.22 and Ex 24.9-10 describe a sparkling pavement of sapphire as boundary between the earthly and heavenly realms.

James Jeans, particle physicist: 'the universe begins to look more like a great thought than like a great machine'; idea that consciousness may define reality (quantum theory). p95. Lot of stuff here about Adam's superhuman capacities, and speculation that we have vast reservoirs of untapped mental and psychic powers; evidence of paranormal. Then the Fall, and acquisition of the

fear of death. Other religious traditions have similar stories – Malaysia, Ethiopia, Babylonian and Mesopotamian versions. Babylonian tablet found nr Ninevah shows serpent following naked and dejected couple – 3500BC.

Prehistoric ceremonial chambers all over world, cave art, darkness, perhaps shamanic initiations. Goddess worship. Otis puts this between Fall and Babel. Babylonia and ritual sexual intercourse in brick ziggurats. So God confused their language and dispersed them before disaster hit.

Demons congregate where people are; hence demonic activity worse in urban settings.

5. Out from Babel

Attempts overview of scattering of humanity over the globe, in order to suggest the spiritual history of humanity is all of a piece with scripture, is all infected by prehistoric shamanic practices which are related to one another, and all makes chronological sense. Migration routes of early peoples from Babel. He suggests that at one point or another each encountered some form of collective trauma – natural barriers, natural disasters, disease, famine, wars. Otis suggests that after an initial bargain is struck with divinities, usually after circumstantial duress, demons prove themselves by providing initial trauma relief. Then they demand interest payments on the debt – forever.

Examples:

- ❖ drought in Sahara and the beginning of the cult of the sun god Aten; passed into Egyptian religion.
- ❖ Smallpox in India and goddess Sitala, 'she who makes cool'; still in Hindu worship today
- ❖ S America: Maya Indians and rain deities, Mapuche Indians and drought/earthquakes, sea god and child sacrifice
- ❖ Bhutan and mountain spirits to deal with severe weather, disease, tribal conflict; daily appeasement and ritual prayers still required.

God does not punish but rescues

6. Enchanting the lie

Power of the human mind harnessed by shamans, lamas. Elaborate visualisation disciplines. God gives us HS. But the enemy desires to create a deceptive alternative to spiritual power. Psychic healing. One tactic is to expose people to images or circs which brim with violent or sexual content. Apparently stimulation produces physical changes in the brain, with creation of new neural connections – takes only 10 mins. If satan influences the kinds of connections, he gains control over our minds.

Shamans use magic mushrooms to make spiritual journeys (word shaman is Siberian).

Clusters of ideas form myths and become embedded in the psyche of a people; can lead to collective possession of a society by demonic spirits. Examples : Aztecs, C18 French Revolution, WW2, Uganda under Idi Amin, Khmer Rouge in Cambodia, cultural revolution in China, wars in Yugoslavia, genocide in Rwanda – all characterised by astonishing barbarity amongst often previously peaceful peoples.

7. The Art of shadow-ruling

Animism as a world view: belief that natural elements have personal identity and contain a life force with which we may communicate. Some forms embody deities or ancestors. Well dressing is the remains of this. Astrology. The word Paul uses for 'powers' in Ephesians is found in astrological contexts as star spirits. Likewise his 'world rulers' and 'elemental spirits' – would have been relevant to people who believed the stars were gods and spirits.

Also animal spirit guides – notion that animals have retained connection with golden age and can be relied on as sources of wisdom and power.

Goddess imagery. Mother Earth, Gaia; by 2500BC in Malta; resurgence now.

Jesus called Satan prince of this world – in Gk, means 'ruler over kingdoms or structures'. Satan retains dominion over human systems, political, economic, religious. Demonic princes seem to be linked to human counterparts, evil kings, priests, governors who serve as their earthly representatives:

- ❖ Isaiah 24.21 in that day the Lord will punish the powers in the heavens above and the kings on the earth below
- ❖ Eggs of alliances between demonic powers and rulers in Tyre and Babylon, Ezekiel 28 and Isaiah 14
- ❖ Revelation 2.13 speaks of Pergamum as the spot where Satan has his throne (it was the centre of political power in Roman Asia)

Modern examples: Ethiopia, communist dictator Mengistu Haile Mariam. Rulers vulnerable to pride. Roman emperors, Babylonian kings, Egyptian pharaohs all stood between heavenly powers and human society, persuaded of their divinity and reveling in their grandeur. See Ez 31.10; Daniel 4.30; Isaiah 14.13-14, Ez 28.2 and 29.3). God-kings who conquered rivals and built glorious cities and temples.

Uganda and Amin. Received 'prophetic dream' in 1952 and was seized with lust for power. Anti-Semitism, extermination campaign against Christians, mass murder and brutality.

Indonesia. Gods and enchanters on every island, but esp in cit of Jogjakarta. Govt consults witches.

Singapore and Taiwan – gvt officials acknowledge invisible spirits in their speeches

Dalai Lama takes advice from a national oracle, as for last 1300 yrs.

Japan – emperor Akhito preformed elaborate rituals at 1989 coronation to reaffirm allegiance to sun goddess Amaterasu Omikami.

Nepal, Bhutan, Thailand, Cambodia – similar links from divine monarchs to spirit world.

Libya, Saudi Arabia – consultation of spirits by rulers.

Latin America – Peru, Argentina, Panama – leaders all consult seers/astrologers/psychics/shamans

In West, it takes form of fascination with esoteric and occult philosophies, inc freemasonry. End C19 German and Russian rulers attending seances and heeding occult advisors.

Germany – Nazis. Himmler gathered senior officers for black rites. Other senior Nazis into occult.

Another strategy is to gain control over the prevailing mindset of society, through tv, academics, journalists, economic policy makers, politicians. Babylon the biblical stereotype, Rev 18.

Humans begin by making up their own gods, and end when their creations, invested with demonic power, begin to rule them instead.

Regional deities. Startling anecdote of Christian couple who moved into Navajo community – found self up against local sorcerer who offered to cut his hair, kept the bits and made curses with them, 194-5.

Territorial spirits are believed in all over the world. Entire communities have shaped their spiritual and material environment to accommodate them.

8. Territorial dynasties

To determine the strength of a given stronghold, need to consider 3 factors

- ❖ The explicitness of the original pact/welcome
- ❖ The nature of the evil spirits involved
- ❖ The length of time a pact has been in force

Strongholds are born when cultures welcome evil powers into their midst through pacts; and are extended when the provisions of the pacts are honoured by successive generations. They are honoured in a number of often unwitting ways:

- ❖ Religious festivals / pilgrimages
- ❖ Cultural traditions (esp initiation rites and ancestor worship)
- ❖ Adaptive deceptions / syncretism
- ❖ Unresolved social injustices.

Loads of examples given, some deliberately seeking contact with the spirit world, others just keeping well-meaning traditions going. If the devil is to maintain control over human communities, he must persuade people of his power not only to protect and provide, but also to reveal secret knowledge.

Some bondages are transitory. Others have deep foundations. Albania – communism not the real issue; real problem is blood feuds, animist symbolism, islamic allegiances which go way back. China – trust in ancient local gods outweighs allegiance to communism. S America – not drugs but mountain and serpent cults. Iraq – Saddam has linked his nations spiritual roots and destiny to Nebuchadnezzar's Babylon.

PART II : OVER THE UNDERWORLD – DEFEATING THE POWERS OF DARKNESS

9. Rising stakes

3 conditions apply now:

1. quantum leap in human knowledge unbridled by wisdom
2. rising tide of spiritual interest / supernatural activity
3. onset of critical mass in global evangelisation

114 people come to Christ every minute, p234

Ratio of nonbelievers to biblical Christians has fallen to less than 7 to 1.

Demonic desperation is a problem associated with the lateness of the hour.

Demonic attacks in Saudi Arabia, China, Algeria, Kurdistan.

On individuals working with Scripture translation, media ministries esp the Jesus Film, and unreached peoples – examples.

Our defence:

- ❖ humility
- ❖ obedience
- ❖ spiritual armour
- ❖ spiritual accountability
- ❖ prayer support
- ❖ taking godly risks

The risk free life is a victory-free life, offering lifelong surrender to the mediocre. And nothing is easier to hit than a stationary target.

Aquiring and using spiritual power.

1. expose ourselves to real battlefields – meet the demons in ministry
2. find a mentor
3. remain clean, humble vessels
4. remember purpose of signs and wonders – to glorify God and facilitate evangelism

5. release selves to God's sovereignty
6. develop sense of expectation

Story of Soroti, Uganda – revival following defeat of witch dr.

10. Spellbending

Dangerous to engage in strategic level spiritual warfare – warning stories of people who over-reached themselves spiritually. Ineffective to intercede against the wishes of the local inhabitants; no use banishing demons if locals are inviting them in with open arms.

Aim must be to draw back the curtain of deception that shields Satan from mortal view. People need to see the perpetrator behind the scenes. This is achieved through prayer.

First we must naturalise the binding influence of demonic strongmen. Mark 3.27, tying up the strong man.

Further progress can be made only when people repent of their sins, both individuals and entire communities.

Next step is corporate renunciation of ties to false gods and philosophies – paving over Satan's fishing hole.

11. Lights in the labyrinth

Summary. Our world is linked to a shadow realm, with entry points. Decisions taken in one domain influence the other. A battle is being waged in a twilight labyrinth which extends from the human heart out into the corridors of the spiritual dimension. The object of the battle is to liberate people from the effects of sin and demonic enchantment. It can be done. Some dramatic stories of spiritual reversals:

- ❖ Uganda – victory in an urban area of Kampala
- ❖ Kenya – Kiambu – victory in an urban area dominated by witch
- ❖ Cali, Colombia
- ❖ Guatemala

Achieved by: determined activism + focussed and united prayer.