

“I, my brother and my cousin against the stranger”: The soul of Saudi Arabia

Jeff: Hello my friends. Jeff Salzman here. Welcome to the Daily Evolver live. It's good to be with you. It's Tuesday, April 26th, 2016. I'm coming to you from Boulder, Colorado where I am here as always with our Daily Evolver producer Brett Walker.

Brett: Hey.

Jeff: Hey Brett.

Brett: What's up?

Jeff: Well you were playing Prince before we came on.

Brett: Yeah.

Jeff: Farewell to Prince.

Brett: Farewell to Prince.

Jeff: Yeah. You liked him.

Brett: I did. I wasn't a diehard Prince fan but I definitely thought that he was a brilliant songwriter and performer and just in general for our culture, he was the avant-garde.

Jeff: Yeah, I appreciated him more for that. I can't say I was a fan, I didn't get into his music, it didn't attract me that much. But I was reading about him of course and we all sort of appreciate these people after they're gone. There was a wonderful tribute by the music writer Carl Wilson in Slate and I copied a couple of paragraphs. I thought it was interesting, especially from an Integral perspective.

He writes:

When Prince emerged in the late 1970s, few people were talking about “defying the binary” in the manner people do in 2016 around trans issues. But Prince embodied the concept. He was a sexual revolutionary who nearly on first sight prompted the eminent Village Voice rock critic Robert Christgau to write in 1980, “[Mick Jagger should fold up his penis and go home.](#)”

As he sang in “Controversy,” Prince luxuriated in not conforming to any easy classification as male or female, black or white, straight or gay—and as his career developed, we might also add secular or sacred, fanatically insular or generously outreaching, commercial or uncommercial, keenly knowing or compulsively chaotic. In every zone, as Bowie had done the decade before, Prince queered the pitch, majestically neither red nor blue but purple.

Jeff: It's just so wonderful to read such brilliant writing and again, farewell to Prince. Thank you for your wonderful contribution.

THE SOUL OF SAUDI ARABIA

All right. Tonight on the Daily Evolver, we're going to be a little more international in scope. I think we could all use a little break from American politics, particularly as Donald Trump racks up another 5 state wins tonight. Oh dear God. Let's change the subject.

Okay, yes, tonight we are going to look at that beautiful and mysterious desert kingdom of our Arab frenemy, Saudi Arabia, where President Obama spent several days last week. In an Integral nutshell, the Saudis are in a struggle between Orange consciousness: freedom, science, progress -- that's modern consciousness -- and the struggles with their Red consciousness: ethnocentrism, the patriarchy, jihad. It's a country that really spans the developmental scale in a way almost like none other.

All right, before we do that, I'd like to thank Integral Life as always, Corey deVos, you're a champ, David Riordon, all of the gang for sponsoring the Daily Evolver Live all these years, for giving us a live home in Integral Radio and thank you all who are tuning in live here tonight in this moment, in non-local space, in the global brain. It's good to feel you with us always.

We have a couple of charts for those of you who are interested in the more technical aspects of Integral theory because I do throw around some jargon. It's in the comments section of the Integral Radio screen if you're listening live. If you're listening later, you can go to dailyevolver.com and scroll down. You'll see a section about Integral theory the first things you see.

All right. Let's take a look at this situation in Saudi Arabia. As I said, President Obama was there last week. It was his 4th visit to the country, more than any other sitting president, which gives you some idea of the importance that Obama gives Saudi Arabia, a country that he's having a notoriously bad relationship with in the last few years, who he referred to a couple of weeks ago as our "so-called ally" and as "free riders" in terms of providing for their own security. He's clearly trying to reset the relationship with that country.

This is all happening during a coincidental acute crisis where the Saudi involvement in the 9/11 attacks are really coming to the fore.

That's caused because there is a controversy around whether American intelligence officials ought to declassify the infamous 28 pages of the 9/11 report, which for the last 13 years has literally been locked in a vault. I don't think it's a conspiracy, it's all out in the open, but you know, it was seen by very few people ... by select senators and committees and so forth. By all accounts, it proves the existence of a Saudi support network for the 9/11 hijackers. Of course, we already know that 15 of the 19 9/11 attackers were citizens of Saudi Arabia. This leads back to institutions in Saudi Arabia, particularly this Wahhabi religious structure that is the underlying moral and spiritual institution in the country.

As I said, it's a really fascinating culture consciousness melange that is happening in Saudi Arabia. First of all, if you look historically at the country, the Saudi peninsula was, for thousands of years, populated by the Bedouin nomads, which in Arabic means desert dwellers. They had herds of goats and camels and like all nomads, they have the consciousness, center of gravity of roughly red. That means they go a little bit magenta tribal, they go a little bit amber traditional but most of their lines of development are centered around red. That means power gods, nature mysticism, trial by ordeals that sort of thing.

They have a famous trial in the Bedouin tradition where if 2 people accuse each other of some misdeed, they actually light a fire, put a sword in the fire until it's red-hot and the person who is accused and the accuser, in order to prove their innocence, place their tongue on the sword. Whoever is not injured by this act is innocent. What they find is it's really, these pre-modern and even pre-traditional tribal customs are really interesting in that they do set up this sort of extreme physical ordeal -- trial by fire literally in this case -- because most people in the final analysis will either admit their guilt or innocence before they have to lay their tongue on the metal. That's very typical of that sort of thing and we see the residuals of this in the brutal legal system, the Sharia system, that is still in place in Saudi Arabia.

The basic center of gravity of red is conflict, is some sort of war. When you start mixing it with monotheism and traditionalism, that amber stage, it becomes holy war, which is a particularly sort of sour spot in history because you get the power of the traditional stage, which is far more powerful than a tribal stage or a warrior stage, actually. You still get that intrinsically war-like nature and it's true for the culture and it's true for individuals. We can feel it in our own red strata. Part of Integral theory is that when we're looking at developmental qualities in other people, we also want to find it in ourselves and find it in other people in our lives. We all know people who operate, often, at least in a center of gravity of red where if you're not fighting, you're not doing your job. If you're not fighting, you're losing. Nothing else makes sense, really at this stage.

I promised I wouldn't bring him up but Donald Trump is a perfect example of Red consciousness in that he just fights everyone, that's what he does. When he wakes up in the morning and through the day and late at night when he's Tweeting. Fortunately, he's embedded in an orange and green culture, a modern and post-modern culture here in America and the western civilized world. His fighting is contextualized, it's held in this bigger, more civilized system, including within himself. His fighting is, as I said, reduced to Tweeted insults in the middle of the night. We'll talk more about Donald Trump at another show.

We want to see that and what's interesting is to see what red is when there is no higher context, when red is the ceiling of what the culture is able to do. To see what indigenous red is like when there's no modern or post-modern structures to hold it in. What you get is a society that is organized around honor codes. Now an honor code doesn't mean that people act as we understand the term "honorably." That definition of honor is really amber, it's traditional, that means when you're good and you play by the rules, you're an honorable person. No, that's not what we're talking about. That's later in development. What we're talking about with the *Red* honor code is that you must always be seen as strong and you must always have the respect of others.

As we feel into the Red strata in our own lives, that's a powerful thing. We do want to have the respect of others. It's really important how we're seen by others. People lay awake at night about perceived insults and there's something functional about that. We want to have a powerful red that says, "Respect me. This is the claim I stake. This is who I am. I am powerful. Look at me. Pay attention to me. Account for me. Deal with me."

That is what the center of gravity of a whole culture can be. I was trying to get a feel for this so I was looking at some Bedouin stories and poetry and it's really interesting. I'll read a little bit of it. You see that in red culture, selfishness is actually encouraged. You look after yourself first. It's weird in a way, and odd to those of us who are living in the modern world where we emphasize fairness and compassion and the golden rule and even loving our enemy, at least as a goal or an ideal. But that's not what we're talking about in the day to day reality of Red where it's a daily struggle to survive among tough people in a tough neighborhood in a tough land.

One of the most famous Bedouin slogans is this, "I against my brother. I and my brother against my cousin. I, my brother and my cousin against the stranger." I love that first line, it says a lot: "I against my brother." Okay, you know, there's me, my brother and my cousin and we'll be united against the stranger. If we don't have the stranger, then it's going to be me and my brother against my cousin. If we don't have my cousin, then it's going to be me against my brother. Just let that sink in.

That's really so alien to our more civilized sensibilities that start coming online really with the golden rule, monotheism and the amber traditional stage. This is "pre-traditional". Here are a couple of stanza's from a poem by the 6th century Bedouin poet Labid. I love this too. He says, "And he who shows kindness to one not deserving it, his praise is unworthy and there will be reproach against him and he will repent of having shown kindness. And he who is always seeking to bear the burdens of other people and does not refuse them, will one day be debased and will repent of his kindness."

There you go: the anti-kindness ethic!

Next, on the other hand, you don't want to be a free rider. You don't want to be on the other side of that equation. Labid writes, "He who does not cease asking people to carry him and does not make himself independent of them, even for one day of time, he will be regarded with disgust." You can't ask people to carry you or be dependent on other people. They also talk about how to be a supplicant, how to be servile. He writes, "He who rebels against the butt end of the spear, then verily, he will have to obey the spear points joined to every long spear shaft." If you don't keep moving with the butt end of the spear, you're going to have the sharp end.

Then the final stanza is, "He who is a nomad should consider his friend an enemy and he who does not respect himself will not be respected. And he who does not dominate the people will be dominated." Yeah. That is the tradition of the Bedouins.

Of course there's nothing particularly unique about this. This is Red consciousness and every culture has a Red stage. In the developed world, in the western world particularly, we went through that stage a thousand years ago or more. But the Saudis were in that stage a hundred years ago. They haven't had time, they've made a lot of changes in the exterior quadrants, in the upper right quadrant [personal

behavior] and particularly the lower right quadrant, which represents their technology and their cities and so forth.

But you can't make those kinds of changes in consciousness and culture in a hundred years.

What happened with the Saudis, well first of all they were *stationarized* I think was the word I read, by the Ottoman empire in 1850's, 150 some years ago. That's where they were forbidden to be nomads and they had to settle.

Then on through modernization, which hit like a sledgehammer in the mid-1930s with the discovery that the desert kingdom was sitting on a ocean of oil. And that began a long era of colonization and this oft-told story of conquest or deals being made between modern and pre-modern cultures where the modern cultures come in for the resources. We needed the oil because we had this industrial thing going in the lower right, so we made deals with the warlords and the kings. That has gone on for a long time where we protect them and they give us the oil. And not only do we get the oil but we also, particularly in America, have gotten many hundreds of billions of dollars in arms sales so it's been quite profitable for us on that side of the street too. Saudi Arabia spends, it's the 3rd highest budget for military in the world, after the United States and china. They pay more for military than the Russians do and the UK. It's the highest by far per capita of any country in the world.

We're largely the beneficiaries of that but you know, that's changed because as the geo-politics have changed, 9/11, this pernicious Red Wahhabi ideology that has been exported. As they say, the 2nd largest export after oil for Saudi Arabia is Wahhabism, which worships a desert version of a power god who's fighting everybody.

So you have this country that's in a way, not only modernized but they have leapfrogged other developed countries because of this huge economic wealth. The economic line of development just went off the charts while everything else lags behind. They become the richest people per capita on the planet. They could bring in the best architects and construction and they did. They built these beautiful cities, they traveled the world, they educate their children in private schools in Switzerland, they have magnificent palaces, particularly of course the ruling class.

If you ever want to see what pre-modern consciousness builds when it has unlimited modern money, Google "Donald Trump's Trump Tower penthouse". No, just kidding. Actually, that will work. You'll see what pre-modern consciousness with unlimited money builds. But no, Google Saudi palaces. It's amazing. You see these palatial estates, many of them quite beautiful in that sort of pre-modern aesthetic of grandiosity. "Look at me!" ... marble, gold, every surface a work of art. Artificial lakes, fountains, gardens ... and then you see these pictures in the grand drive at the front of the house, the prince and his entourage, standing there with a fleet of Bentleys and Lamborghinis and you know, it's something. It's what money will buy.

But you know, when it comes to those Bentleys and Lamborghinis, God forbid women get behind the wheel. Actually, women were behind the wall. There were certainly no women in those pictures. If you want to get down to the personal, they're behind the veil. It's really something. You have this astonishing disconnect, a differentiation between progress in the exteriors" money, stuff, technology ... they can buy anything in the world. And yet a pre-modern morality.

Think about women in Bedouin culture, where you can forget trusting a stranger -- of course you can't trust a stranger -- you're not sure you can trust your cousin, and you hope you can trust your brother ... but basically you've got to protect your women. To do that you keep them away and you shroud them so that people can't see them, men can't see them and that veil is protection for them. In red culture, men are stallions. We can't be expected to contain ourselves around a beautiful woman. We don't have that structure of consciousness online yet.

This is a glimpse into what patriarchy really is. There's a myth about patriarchy, particularly in the green meme, that it's a system of male domination supported by men against women. It's not that. The reality is patriarchy is a system of male domination -- yes, that part is true -- but it's supported by *both* men and women in the culture.

Last year we published several pictures of advertising and billboards promoting the veil from modern Saudi Arabia. On that sticks in my mind shows this big billboard with a beautiful photograph of a stick of butter with a bit of the foil wrapping peeled back in the corner. There are flies buzzing around where it's peeled back. The slogan or the headline of the billboard is, "Veil is purity." That's still a view supported by many women ... although fewer and fewer because at this point, Saudi Arabia itself is contextualized by a modern and post-modern world.

OK, I do want to look a little bit at the plus side because the elites understand their problems. Like I said, these are people, who have traveled the world, they take off the hijab when they go to Paris, they drink, they partake in Western culture. They have the internet. It's probably impossible to overestimate the power of the internet. They're basically all of a sudden, at least in terms of their thinking, and in terms of even communication, they're with the mainstream world when they have the internet.

What's going to happen to this culture? What's the way forward? There was an announcement yesterday, *Saudi Vision 2030*, an economic reform plan that was announced by the deputy crown prince Mohammed Bin Salman. He's the 30 year old son of the new King Salman. He's in contention to be the next king. This Saudi Vision 2030 is billed as the country's most extensive economic shakeup in decades. Basically it's a plan to largely privatize the economy. Let's just keep in mind that when we talk about privatizing in Saudi Arabia, we're not talking about privatizing what is already publicly owned, like American Social Security. We're talking about what was owned by the royal family. They'll be selling off part of Aramco, the big oil company and other family-owned businesses to the private sector. Which is progress. That's a move into modernity.

They have a plan to become basically a giant international investment bank, buying and selling assets throughout the world. They want to build tourism and they want to stop the floggings and beheadings so that the tourists will come.

The other thing that I think is interesting, is this King Abdullah University, which was a pet project of the late King. It's this university that is sort of off by itself on I forget, is it the Red Sea? It's 14 square miles of modernity and even post-modernity in the middle of this Saudi Kingdom. It's a research and technology park, huge university. It's the largest LEED certified campus in the world, has a full marine sanctuary, it's focused on clean combustion, desert agriculture, Red Sea science and engineering, solar and alternative energy science, water desalinization, that sort of thing.

It's mixed gender, men and women attend, and there are students from all over the world. The Saudis are the third largest group. There are no religious police, women are not required to wear the veil and women can drive.

It's interesting to just put this little tail on the dog here that will, in my view, begin to start wagging the dog. This little piece of modernity in the middle of everything and there's a morphogenetic field that will permeate and I think that's the idea. I think that's the goal of the whole thing.

Ok, I do want to say that when I think about solving the problems of Saudi Arabia, that it's not about problem solving as much as it is about evolving and creating the new next thing. That's how the problems are solved. I've been sort of stewing around this whole idea, and I wonder why am I bored with problem solving? Why when people talk about problem solving do I get uninterested?

One of my listeners, Tom, wrote to me and said, "To put it in Integral speak, problem solving is squarely a mechanistic, industrial first-tier paradigm. Problem solving is about lack and deficiencies." He says, "Instead of problem solving, we need to think about *creating*. Creating, in effect, is a second tier paradigm whose goal is to permeate and promote the health of the entire spiral." The last line is, "Creating transcends and includes problem solving." I really think he's onto something and I think that this is going to be a marker of how we need to think about things. Growing instead of fixing. I appreciate it, thank you very much Tom. I have the smartest listeners. Thank you for being in touch.

By the way, you can send me emails at jeff@dailyevolver.com and you can leave me voice mails at dailyevolver.com. You go to the site see an orange button that says, "Speak Pipe." You can leave me messages and sometimes I play them on the show.

Brett: I used to have a teacher, Jeff, who used to talk about the difference between a psycho-mental approach, which she said was always trying to fix problems versus a ... what did she call it? It was a different approach that was actually asking, "What can I create with this?" I always thought that it seemed, when I look back now, it seems Integral to me, although she didn't have that language.

Jeff: Yeah, I agree. I'm just beginning to feel my way into that and I think there's something really powerful and fruitful there.

Brett: That's cool.

Jeff: All right, I wanted to end with a 2 or 3 minute poem from the 6th century Bedouin poet Labid who I quoted earlier. It's a wonderful slice of the consciousness of Red, the glory and juice and sexiness, really, of this stage of development. See if you can find these things in yourself as I read this poem. Labid writes,

*"I am skilled to knot the bonds of friendship.
And I am skilled to break the knots of friendship too!
I am quick to be gone from places when they're unpleasing to me
unless, as happens, my destiny binds my spirit there.*

*Ha! But you have no idea, my dear, how many nights of agreeable warmth, delicious in sport and
companionship, I have passed chatting and
how many a taverner's hoisted flag I have visited when the wine it proclaimed was precious and
dear.*

*And I forked out a pretty penny for the pleasures of a song on a wet morning.
And, for a charming girl,
plucking with nimble fingers
the strings of her melodious lute.
Yes, I've raced the cock bright and early to get me my spirit's need
and to have my second wetting by the time the sleepers stir.*

*And many's the morning of wind and cold I've kept at bay.
My swift-stepping steed, her bridle at dawn flung about my shoulders.
I have climbed to a lookout post on the brow of a fearful ridge.
I have come down to the plain, my horse stood firm as the trunk of a tall, striped palm tree.*

*Then I pricked her on, to run like an ostrich and fleeter still,
until when she is warm and her bones are light and pliant,
her saddle slipped about and her neck streamed with sweat,
and the foam of her perspiration drenched in her leather girth.*

*She tosses her head and strains at the rein
and rushes on as a desert dove flutters with flight, swiftly to water.
... as a desert dove flutters with flight, swiftly to water."*

Thanks folks. Always good to be with ya. We'll check in with you next week to look at our ever-evolving world on the Daily Evolver. Take care!