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... A few days after I was born, I was presented to my grandfather who lived over fifteen miles to the east of Ladysmith. He was a squatter on a White farm. A ceremony was held in which he thanked the Ngubane ancestors for having brought me into his family; he thanked them also for my safe arrival. He then took me to the midst of his large cattle enclosure, dug a hole in its center, cut an incision on the tip of the smallest finger of my left hand and let the blood drop into the hole, which he filled with cow dung.

That was how I was inducted into the Ngubane family; that was how the Law was written into my blood.

When I reached puberty, my father organized another ceremony. Before the inevitable feasting, he took me into one of the rooms of the sprawling bungalow he had built for his family in Ladysmith and instructed me in the Law. What he told me was more or less what his father had said to him when he reached puberty. Each aphorism or cluster of aphorisms states the Law which gave a Ngubane his identity:

I;

I am;

I am alive;

I am conscious and aware;

I am unique;

I am who I say I am; I am the value UQOBO

I forever evolve inwardly and outwardly in response to the challenge of my nature;

I am the face of humanity;

The face of humanity is my face.

I contemplate myself and see everything in me.

I perceive; that which I perceive is form.

Form is an unchanging value.

Value is eternal consciousness;

Consciousness is that in which all things have their origin;

It does not change; it exists from eternity to eternity;

It is an infinite cluster of clusters of itself;

It is forever evolving in response to the challenge of its nature.

It is ULTIMATE VALUE;

It is UQOBO.

The value metamorphoses into a phenomenon;

Each phenomenon is a total of smaller forms;

Phenomena form clusters to produce other phenomena;

The cosmic order is an indefinite total of forms and phenomena.

I am a phenomenon; I am a person.

I am UQOBO; I am the consciousness.

The infinity is a unity; it cannot be destroyed;

I am a constituent of the unity;

I cannot be destroyed;

The infinity and I are inseparable;

I cannot exist outside of the infinity;

For, there is no outside of it.

Everything is inside the infinity.

UQOBO is the Infinity.

It is a Whole;

It cannot be other than Whole, without me it cannot be Whole;

Nothing can be added to or subtracted from the Whole.

The infinity is alive;

There is no death within it;

There is life and perpetual agmination.

That which is alive has purpose;

Purpose is destiny;

Perpetual evolution is the destiny of UQOBO;

UQOBO evolves in response o the challenge of its nature.

The Law regulates evolution;

It is a constituent of UQOBO

It is the well of the Infinity;

It is my will; it explains everything, for there are no mysteries;

Mystery is the redoubt of the ignorant.

Everything, everywhere, evolves according to the Law;

The Law is knowable;

I cannot violate the Law no matter what I do;

I incarnate the Law;

Everything I do translates into action one section of the Law or the other;

The processes of the Law are irreversible;

Ultimate Absurdity is the attempt to invert the Law;

The inversion of the Law is a cosmic cataclysm;

It is Ultimate Criminality;

I am the reconciler of all contradictions.

UQOBO, the Law and I are together the Definitive Agminate:

Nothing can separate us.

I live now;

And shall forever live, in UQOBO,

For, I am UQOBO;

I am eternal; I am the secret that drives out all fear.

Perpetual evolution is my destiny.

I evolve forever, in response to the challenge of being human.

I have a mind to light my path in the mazes of the cosmic order.

This mind has many sides;

It comprehends all things;

It establishes my right to latitude; to being heard;

It makes me feel at home in the cosmic order.

My neighbor has a mind;

It, also, comprehends all things.

My neighbor and I have the same origins;

We have the same life-experience and a common destiny;

We are the obverse and reverse sides of one entity;

We are unchanging equals;

We are the faces which see themselves in each other;

We are mutually fulfilling complements;

We are simultaneously legitimate values;

My neighbor's sorrow is my sorrow;

His joy is my joy.

He and I are mutually fulfilled when we stand by each other in moments of need.

His survival is a precondition of my survival.

That which is freely asked or freely given is love;

Imposed love is a crime against humanity.

I am sovereign of my life;

My neighbor is sovereign of his life;

Society is a collective sovereignty;

It exists to ensure that my neighbor and I realize the promise of being human.

I have no right to anything I deny my neighbor.

I am all, all are me.

I come from eternity;

I belong to the future.

I can commit no greater crime than to frustrate life's purpose for my neighbor.

Consensus is our guarantee for survival.

I define myself in what I do to my neighbor.

No community has any right to prescribe destiny for other communities.

This universe I challenge, a higher being than me to show;

My knees do now quake when I contemplate my destiny;

I know my way to eternity;

I make obeisances to the million sides of the ciliate mind;

The Eternal Person is Universal Man, Universal Woman and Universal Child.

I am a Universal Constant; I am a Cosmic Constant;

I am All-In-One; I am One-In-All.

I am the circle which encompasses infinity;

I am the point that is the beginning of the circle;

I am the value behind the circle.

I am umuntu, the knower of all probabilities and possibilities;

There is nothing I cannot know;

There is no tyranny I cannot crush;

The value of water is H<sub>2</sub>O; it lives from eternity to eternity;

Nothing exists anywhere which can destroy it.

I am who I am;

I am not a creature; nothing can destroy me;

I am the self-evolving value NTU; I live forever and ever.

I am the phenomenon MUNTU.

I am a person; a Ngubane; I am Ngogo Zabantu Nezezinkomo;

I am a cluster; I am Skeletons of People and their Cattle.

The cluster has vital elements;

They are the center and core: the value NTU;

The body, the aura, the LAW and UQOBO.

The Law and UQOBO are the environment in which I exist.

I am a Ngubane; the Skeletons tell my history; they, too, define me.

I am adequate; I have in me all I need to be the best I can be.

I have contempt for that which is not freely given to me.

Whoever wishes me good,

Let that good go to him.

Whoever wishes me to be a prince,

Let him become a prince;

Whoever wishes that I should die,

Let his wish be his fate,

For I want nothing to which I have no right.

I am the servant of my ancestors;

My ancestors are humanity;

All I live for is to be the best I can be.

I do not prescribe destiny for my neighbor;

My neighbor is myself in a different guise;

Equals do not prescribe destiny for each other;

They hold conversations of minds;

They oppose ideas with counter ideas.

This, my ancestors told Shaka,  
Was the behavior of civilized men.  
They told him this from their fortress cave.  
Shaka forgot nothing;  
He carved everything on stone;  
My adequacy makes me magnanimous;  
It makes me wise when strong and brave when weak.  
There are no frontiers I cannot cross,  
For I, the person, am my own challenge.  
Disease has no power over me when I know;  
I determine my health, I am what I want to be;  
I see mankind on the highroad to eternity;  
It marches along many routes;  
The Light in the person guides the march;  
It leads mankind along safer routes to a better future.  
I join my hand with the hand of my neighbor;  
This is my guarantee of reaching the future I desire;  
I march confidently and triumphantly into the future;  
My harmonized personality enables me to see my goal clearly;  
Every moment is a rebirth into a new dimension of being human;  
My duty is to guide the rebirth;  
I and I alone guide the rebirth.  
I outgrow the use of crutches;  
I face the challenge of being eternal;  
I align the cells in my body;  
I know each, by name;  
I am self-knowledge without end;

That which I eat, drink, or learn I convert into myself;  
I walk in humility in the presence of the person;  
I can afford to be humble; I am not afraid; I am adequate;  
That doctrine shall prevail which is not afraid of the person.  
I reject all dogma, for dogma is a prison of the mind.  
I am the egg in my mother's womb;  
I draw to myself that which I need to evolve;  
Every moment of my life I evolve,  
For perpetual evolution is my destiny.  
I am the clot that extends itself into the person;  
I am the person who extends himself into humanity;  
The mind of humanity comprehends infinity;  
Humanity is the blanket that covers my body; it is my flesh;  
It is the matrix in which I grow;  
It is the face of the infinity which sees itself.  
For UQOBO knows itself;  
It knows its nature;  
It knows its destiny;  
It has within itself everything it desires;  
It is itself;  
It has not race and no color;  
The human value has no race and color;  
Each value metamorphoses in response to its environment;  
Behind each complexion is the environment;  
In each environment is a section of the Law;  
The Law is a Whole.  
UQOBO is an infinite cluster of forces;

Life is one of its components;  
The Law is another;  
So is Energy;  
So are others, seen, unseen and incapable of being seen;  
My mandate is to know them all;  
To understand them all.  
I move from eternity to eternity to understand them.  
My sojourn on earth is a moment in my never-ending journey.  
My destiny is forever to respond to the call of the morrow.  
I have in me all I need to make the journey;  
I move from one dimension of being human to another;  
I move in proportion to the degree that I know;  
Knowledge is the key to the gates of every dimension;  
My title to the key is that I am human;  
I contemplate myself to discover myself;  
The key is my birthright;  
He is the enemy of humanity who denies me the key.  
For the key is the Law.  
I am born according to the Law.  
I live, grow, and die according to it:  
My mother is the Law;  
My father is the Law;  
My relatives and neighbors are the Law;  
We are all bound together by the Law;  
My neighbors are mankind;  
Mankind is the Law.  
Phenomena divide and fuse according to the Law.;

Conflict is a dimension of the Law;

Conflict is a moment of agmination;

The stages of agmination are collision, disintegration and fusion.

Harmony and equilibrium are the fulfillment of the Law;

The world is the Law;

Everything is the Law; I am everything.

I am the Law; I am a jewel of the cosmic order;

The Law is my and my neighbor's will;

I am a value; I have all the power to be what I want to be;

There is glory in being human; in being a self-defining value;

My name is Man; my name is Woman;

I formed myself from my mandate;

My mandate was the Law;

I entered earth as an act of will;

I came to realize the promise of being a value;

To realize the glory of being human;

To discover more satisfying dimensions of being a person.

I am not alone; I have never been alone;

I shall never be alone,

For I am a cluster.

I am Father-Mother;

I am the cluster of phenomena which constitute me.

I am Father-Mother-Child.

I am the past, the present, and the future.

I have no beginning and no end;

I am the geodesic circle in which Father and Mother merged to become Me.

I extend myself into the child.

I am the brick out of which society is built;

I am the Eternal Person.

In everything I think and do, I describe myself;

I show how I face the challenge of being human.

The Law is a component of UQOBO.

It has an infinite number of sections;

The sections interact on each other;

The interactions produce thought;

The Law interacting on itself produces thought;

I translate thought into action;

I create the world I desire through action;

I evolve in response to the challenge of my nature.

Thus to evolve is life's purpose for me and my neighbor;

We have in us everything we need to evolve;

To discover satisfying dimensions of being human;

To realize the promise of being persons.

I am a witness of eternity;

So is my neighbor;

We are witnesses of what we are;

We are living moments in eternity.

I am a tiny component of UQOBO

I am an element, a substance and an incarnation of UQOBO

I am an incarnation of the Law;

I live in the Law; the Law lives in me;

It act through me and fulfills itself through me.

When I know, the Law fulfills itself freely.

When I am ignorant I disorganize the Law's interactions;

I create disharmonies in my personality;  
I hurt my neighbor;  
I sow dissension in my environment;  
I frustrate life's purpose for humanity.  
I flee from the challenge of being human;  
I live in terror of myself;  
I plant terror into my neighbor's psyche;  
I terrorize all human beings;  
I move the world in cycles of conflict to catastrophe;  
I finally collapse amidst the ruins I build;  
I rot in the prison of the mind I create;  
Passers-by note the stink;  
Here lies one who fled from the challenge of being human, they say.  
For I create my destiny in everything I do;  
I and I alone know this destiny.  
The challenge of being human is forever to explore myself;  
It is forever to understand my neighbor;  
Forever to reveal the power of the Definitive Agminate.  
The cosmic order is the seraskierate of the Definitive Agminate;  
I am the vizier of the seraskierate;  
The Law is my scepter;  
To know it is the challenge of being human;  
Forever to discover it is the promise of being human.  
Perfection is the continuing response to the ever-beckoning hand of the Law.  
Conquest forever distorts my personality;  
It is the aching wound that never heals.  
I listen to the call of the morrow,

When to Ncome I shall return;

When to Ulundi I shall return.

I wait in the shadows of eternity;

I wait for the day of rebirth into a satisfying destiny.

I do not apologize for being human.

I walk in humility in the presence of the person;

If aught there is to worship, it is the person.

To worship the person is to glorify myself.

The person is real; he needs no oracles to interpret him;

He has compassion in his bosom; the gods are capricious;

They are crutches for all partisans for ignorance.

The gods are trustees of my estate, I am the master.

I grow in understanding.

I outgrow the need for divine trustees; I stand on my feet;

I march into the future on my terms.

Nothing can strike terror into my heart,

For I am uqobo of UQOBO.

I know every one of my cells;

My mother taught me how to count them.

My mother is all women; all women are my mother.

I prostrate myself before all women;

I cry out to them; Arise, mothers of the person!

Lead your children along safer routes to a better future!

To all men I cry: Arise, fathers of the person!

Create the world in which it will be no crime to be your children!

For all I desire is to realize the promise of being human.

Good and evil are related;

Either translates the Law into action

Virtue is knowledge and practice of the Law;

Vice is ignorance of the Law.

To know the Law is the glory of being human;

It is ukuba ngumuntu;

Perpetually to be responsible is ukuba ngumuntu.

I have all I need forever to be responsible,

For I am the source of all meaning, all value and all authority.

I build a Civilization in homage to the person;

The highest points reached by other civilizations are in the sky;

These zeniths are the levels from which I start building;

I entered the earth to create order out of chaos;

I recognize the person as my Light;

I pay homage to the Light:

The Light will prevail,

For I know the heights from which they made me fall;

I know the depths into which they thrust me;

I know I shall prevail;

For I am who I say I am;

He has not been born who shall say he has conquered me.

Heavens and universes were the only fit and proper abodes for peoples who

defined the person in these exalted and almost unprecedented terms. By the side of this Zulu Definition of the Person the Greco-Romano-Hebraic view of the human being diminished the worth of the person. It is this diminution which forced the All-African-Church Conference to look around for a 'universal dimension' which would give Christianity a more relevant meaning in the African experience. It is to this diminution that we must look for the basic cause of conflict between Black and White in South Africa.

The last point above might be stated differently. We Africans oppose apartheid not only because it is a standing insult to the African race as a whole, not only because it prescribes destiny for us and not only because it does violence to the exalted terms in which we define the person, and proceeds from this to hold out to us ideals of fulfillment which belong to the childhood days of the human race. We Sudic people outgrew these ideals long, long ago. Apartheid says we must go back to them when our evaluation of the person, the ideal of nationhood we developed on the basis of this philosophy and the specific terms in which each of our nomes has been defining itself for thousands of years point to the larger future we are building for ourselves.

It is at this point that Sudic and Caucasian attitudes clash in ways which cannot be mistaken.

Defining the person in devaluative terms and proceeding from this to prescribe destiny for him has been moving Caucasian societies in the last two thousand years or more in cycles of conflict to eventual catastrophe....

... The government had told the African people that they should develop along their own lines.

The Zulus decided to accept the challenge to the letter. They formed the National Cultural Liberation Movement. Stress on cultural liberation. Pretoria liked the emphasis; they liked it so much that they registered the constitution of the NCLM with the now famous military clause described elsewhere in this discussion. One of the explanations for the regime's acceptance of the NCLM was given to me by a Zulu lawyer from Natal: he said that the apartheid regime wanted to denaturalize as many African language-groups as possible in order to isolate the Zulus, reduce them to the status of a minority vis-à-vis the Whites and then liberalize the structure of South African society as the first step toward incorporating the Zulus in the South African army on terms they would accept....

... But for him to succeed, there always had to be an effective, 'extreme' group to his left which would define him as a 'moderate' no matter what positions he assumed between the 'extremists' and the apartheid regime. The Black Consciousness Movement played the role of 'extremist....'

... Our victories and setbacks call for a policy of giving constructive purpose to our defeats; for a policy yokubophana amanxeba (of binding each other's wounds) which would re-unite those whom apartheid has divided and give us a formula for accommodating 'collaborators' and non-collaborators in a coordinated effort to crush the corrupt power-structure....

... Buthezi has given ideological content to his fight with apartheid; he has made it known that he and the NCLM are committed to UBUNTU, the philosophy which the African experience translates into action. The oppressed understand the fundamentals of conflict because these are translated into real action in their lives. When an oppressed people clearly sees the relationship between ideology and revolt, it has reached the point of no return in its struggle to create the world after its design; the world based on its own ideal of fulfillment....

... Defeat on the battlefield combined with conversions to Christianity and industrialization to split

each language group into the Christians, pagans, dwellers in urban locations, squatters on White farms, those who lived in rural reserves, the educated and the unschooled....

... Some made it clear that the alternative to the prescribed destiny was the creation of a 'new and unique civilization' on the basis of 'a common controlling idea.' This idea was the Sudic evaluation of the person, which the 'people with a common destiny' translated into experience in their different environments. No African should ever apologize for being a member of his language-group; none should ever be made to apologize for being the child of his or her particular parents, for to belong to a given language-group or nomarchy was a quality of being human; all were the faces of humanity's many-sided face; all were the faces of Africa's many-sided face. This 'enlightened perception of the true intertribal relation' gave a unifying momentum to the cultures of the peoples of Africa; it made them a 'people with a common destiny.' The 'perception' had 'fusing force' because it defined the person in the mature and positive terms....

... Anton Mziwakhe Lembede and Ashby Peter Mda were the principal spokesmen of the League. These two worked with the present author and others to organize the Congress Youth League. Lembede was elected first president of the League. Lembede's and the Youth League's attitudes were stated in an article in a weekly I edited, Inkundla yaBantu, (May, 1946):

Africa is a blackman's country. Africans are the natives of Africa and they have inhabited Africa, their Motherland, for times immemorial; Africa belongs to them.

Africans are one. Out of the heterogeneous tribes, there must emerge a homogeneous nation. The basis of national unity is the nationalistic feeling of the Africans, the feeling of being Africans irrespective of tribal connection, social status, educational attainment or economic class. This nationalistic feeling can only be realized in and interpreted by [a] national movement of which all Africans must be members.

The Leader of the Africans will come out of their own loins. No foreigner can ever be a true and genuine leader of the African people because no foreigner can ever truly and genuinely interpret the African spirit which is unique and peculiar to Africans only. Some foreigners, Asiatic or European, who pose as African leaders must be categorically denounced and rejected. An African must lead Africans. Africans must honor, venerate and find inspiration from African heroes of the past: Shaka, Moshoeshe, Makana, Hintsa, Khama, Mzilikazi, Sekhukhuni, Sobhuza and many others....

The divine destiny of the African people is National Freedom. Unless Africans achieve national freedom as early as possible they will be confronted with the impending doom and imminent catastrophe of extermination. Vol II, pp. 317-318

... Biko become one of the heroes of the Black Consciousness Movement because of his

uncompromising commitment to non-collaboration. He wanted the African to go it alone and to have his own system of values; he demanded that his world should not be involved with the White world and rejected Black-White alliances and stood for the policy of keeping Whites out of Black universities, etc. In going to these extremes, he rejected the destiny prescribed by the Whites; he described the chasm White domination had created between the Africans and Caucasians; he announced that the African counter-rejection was a determinant of policy among those for whom he spoke.” (pages 1 – 151)

End of excerpts.

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