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MESSIAH APPREHENDED AT HEATHROW!

To the Manic Messianic Man

The seven clinical stages of type 3 [Jerusalem Syndrome]

- Anxiety, agitation, nervousness and tension, plus other unspecified reactions.
- Declaration of the desire to split away from the group or the family and to tour Jerusalem alone...
- A need to be clean and pure: obsession with taking baths and showers; compulsive fingernail and toenail cutting.
- Preparation, often with the aid of hotel bed-linen, of a long, ankle-length, togalike gown, which is always white.
- The need to scream, shout, or sing out loud psalms, verses from the Bible, religious hymns or spirituals. ...
- A procession or march to one of Jerusalem's holy places.
- Delivery of a 'sermon' in a holy place. The sermon is usually very confused and based on an unrealistic plea to humankind to adopt a more wholesome, moral, simple way of life.¹

The British Journal of Psychiatry

The Jerusalem Syndrome was first described back in the 1930s, but became increasingly common as the new millennium approached, with hundreds of enthusiastic tourists ranting at the locals in the street. The peak has not fallen off; around 40 individuals have been hospitalised every year since. It shows no signs of easing, and neither is this kind of thing limited to Israel; a friend of mine went messianic in an ashram in India. Poor dude, he lost his sense of hygiene along with his grip on consensus reality, and was put in a taxi bound for the airport, where he sang *Imagine* at the check-in desk. When airport staff exchanged his stinking clothes for a cotton smock to go with his scraggly beard, it was confirmation that he was the saviour reborn. He started preaching, ranting, and eventually masturbating in the cabin, and the police were waiting for him at Heathrow.

He lost it, but so have the rest of us, judging by the state of our civilisation. The Messiah, the Mahdi, the Maitreya is here already, one of 330,000,003 personalities in our schizophrenic heads, serene amongst the bickering. The Messiah is a mode, not a man. He is not going to fly in on a cloud, bearded and iridescent, holding a sickle, nor on a plane, bearded and smelly, holding his knob. Psychologists recognise him only as a delusion, most scientists want nothing to do with him. Even my rabbi would rather not talk about him. He is there in the mysteries of nature and the depths of our brains, and science reveals, but Scientism obscures him. He is there in our scriptures, for those who know how to read, but our churches monopolise him. He is beyond the boundaries of polite conversation, and beyond the range of normal perception, but he is with us all the same.

Let's go find him.

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Part Two is about the apocalypse as it happens in our minds, in our history, and in our future. The story begins in the brain, exploring how different languages construct and limit the realities we experience differently, how this has manifested in different scriptural traditions, and what a brain free of these limits is capable of.

¹ *Jerusalem Syndrome* - Yair Bar-El et al. in *The British Journal of Psychiatry* (2000) 176: pp. 86-90