

23-12 Reflection 02

Recognizing the inner being within you

Spiritual development is often seen as the start of a long and arduous journey. In a way that is right, but those who devote themselves to real spiritual development, soon experience that in practice almost everything is different than they had imagined.

To actually follow a spiritual path requires that we find the inspiration for this in our lives so that we become aware that we are twofold beings affected by both heaven and earth. On this basis and through an urge from within we strive to give expression to our inner heavenly being in daily life. Although the journey may be long and at times difficult, it is a journey that everyone must begin at some point, in this life or in a future one.

Reaching a limit

The path of the soul, situated between heaven and earth, between the personality and the inner man, will at some point arrive at a border. The human being at the border is aware that he/she could still evolve in a number of ways: the social, cultural and scientific horizons have not yet been reached by far... But what lies beyond these horizons? What do those opportunities for development really contribute to finding the truth? Is achieving this development what one really wants? Beyond that border, two paths diverge: the outer path which we have been following for so long, and an inner path.

At this crossroads, the human being who consciously chooses the inner path, due to an irresistible urge, will actually give shape to the inner being. On that path, the outer person can learn step by step how he can best fulfil his mission and vocation as a 'creative being' and give way to the other-one-within: he makes the paths straight for the one who comes after him. Put in this way, a spiritual path is a process during which two beings, an outer and an inner one, are both born and accompany each other on their way.

In order to properly understand the path, we should keep in mind that man is a dual creature. Hermes Trismegistus states that of all creatures only man is twofold; for only man has a mortal body and an immortal soul. Every human being is the inhabitant of two worlds: the outer world of matter and the senses and an inner world of higher consciousness.

Therefore, human consciousness is also connected to both worlds. One part of the consciousness is connected with the personality and covers the entire spectrum of human perceptions, passions, and thoughts, from the highest down to the lowest.

We are quite familiar with this personal consciousness (which includes the unconscious): it makes us who we are, and we need it to be able to maintain ourselves in life. We make ourselves known to others by means of this personality. It manifests itself in our likes and dislikes, our talents, and shortcomings, and it determines how we respond to the material world. Through the five senses, which open the windows of our consciousness to the material world, the material world in turn determines our consciousness.

The other part of our consciousness is related to our 'True Self'. This 'inner man' is invisible and does not manifest itself as powerfully as the 'I', but it permeates our lives like a fragmentary perception that one could characterize as a silent yet relentless call saying, "Look for me, seek me...". Very occasionally the sound seems to fade away.

Disciple of the soul

The first step on the gnostic-spiritual path is the awareness of this inner voice and a conscious recognition of one's own duality. Not until then can a definite decision be made to seek the other-one-within.

Walking the path can be seen as passing through an inner gate – as a journey within ourselves from the outer life to the inner life. A deeply felt desire to find the other-one-within is a prerequisite for finding the entrance to the passage, to that gate. And this longing inevitably leads us to the place where the perceived but as yet unknown soul resides; it leads us to the heart of man.

The 'Other One' is a being which – like an ungerminated seed – lies hidden in our hearts. It stems from a higher human order, one linked with love, wisdom, compassion, friendship, and unity. We carry the germ of that Other One with us in our hearts and Its image will not let go of us. It incessantly arouses feelings of homesickness and disquiet, the sensation of belonging somewhere else. This is a sign that the seed is germinating, that the "Inner Man" is about to be born and that the outward man is called to contribute to this birth.

Through the ages, love and compassion have always been considered to be the core of all spirituality, and it has been experienced that the way to God is through the heart. But besides love, high reason and inspired activity are important also.

A purified thinking faculty is indispensable on the path to higher soul-life because only a pure mind will be able to encompass Wisdom. Love ensures the awareness of the unity of all existence. Awareness of unity is the vehicle of Love. Wisdom brings us knowledge and guides the movement of the soul to its origin. The power of activity drives the soul forward to that movement.

Therefore, the experience of unity connects us directly with the responsibility for that unity. It is a special responsibility that can express itself through our individualized personalities as soon as we are willing to be 'disciples of the soul' and to orient ourselves to the high lessons of the soul.

Being of service

Being of service is therefore an obvious aspect of the soul and therefore of the disciple on the path. Where formerly 'service' was identified with suffering and sacrifice, the disciple of the soul will be able to understand the meaning of 'being subservient' in its highest form: to joyfully surrender to the new order of the inner life, in all circumstances and within all social, political, cultural, and scientific contexts.

Experiencing one's own duality – the experience of 'not being the one who you essentially are' – and the desire to fully express that higher Self in your life are the starting points for a spiritual path.

From this experience, you immediately enter into a different relationship with yourself and there will be a new focal point in your life: the pure and higher state of life that you know to exist. The focus on common issues such as worldly success, individual wealth and prosperity will gradually and naturally fade into the background, giving way to a new orientation.

A new certainty

So, the way to your true identity begins with a birth, the birth of a new inner certainty. The life that follows is a life of striving to bring the highest within yourself to manifestation, provide it with vitality and bring it to maturity. And that is why the Christmas narrative in The Aquarian Gospel begins with the birth of..... Mary, the mother of Jesus. Mary was borne from Joachim, a Jewish scribe and a rich man, and Anna of the tribe of Judah. In honour of the birth, Joachim prepared a feast where the poor, the crippled, the lame and the blind are invited.

...and to each one he gave a gift of raiment, food or other needful thing. He said: The Lord has given me this wealth; I am his steward by his grace, and if I give not to his children when in need, then he will make this wealth a curse.

Someone who tries to respond to the whispers of the soul will always spontaneously think and act from unity. It cannot be otherwise than that Mary, the woman giving birth to Jesus, is born to such parents. Who are these parents?

Joachim (meaning 'may Jehovah exalt') and Anna (meaning 'grace') are aspects of ourselves! It is these forces of our personality that are released through the purification of our daily life and by our focus on the good in this material world. These purifications have led the heart and the head to a border and prepared them for a higher form of life.

Mary (meaning 'bitter/sad' and also: 'the sea', the life field of the soul), this unshakable inner certainty, is destined for a special purpose in life, and at the age of three she is 'received in the temple': the ever-so-tender inner state is protected and prepared for its high task.

Once she is mature, Mary is betrothed to Joseph, a carpenter, and a dedicated member of the Essenes. The goal of the Essenes was primarily inner development, and Joseph represents the manifesting power within us that will execute the assignment together with Mary. In this way, the path to the new life is being prepared by means of a new certainty and a new inner strength.