

Gnostic Reflection for March 2024

As a human being we are so much more than simply a complex biological organism with intelligence. We are also much more than a psychological individual with personal thoughts, feelings and will power.

Our very essence is pure consciousness. Our very essence is soul:
a potential living connection between the unity and the multitude,
between the eternal and the temporary, between the Holy and our personality.

To experience this connection is a great joy, a supreme bliss.

Every human being is invited to free him/herself from delusion, to sense this lasting peace and inner joy.

This possibility may seem very distant from how we experience ourselves, our life and the world right now.

That is because we are living in a self-created prison of delusion which has arisen because we have placed externalities above ourselves, because we have identified with transient forms.

There is a lot of chaos in the world around us and within ourselves. We keep experimenting with different solutions to find our way out of all these stubborn problems.

But none of these attempts lead to lasting results.

Nevertheless we keep on trying and continue to hope to find 'the' answer .

There must be an answer to all our yearning and seeking,
there must be something else...-the one TRUTH behind everything that is.

Maybe we need to seek in an entirely different direction.....?

Maybe it even begins with questioning our understanding of who we really are....?

We will illustrate today's reading with excerpts from 'Ashtavakra's song' , an ancient vedic text in the

form of a dialogue between the sage Ashtavakra and Janaka, a seeker of truth.

Here Ashtavakra tries to make an appeal to us to pay attention to who we really are.

If you think you are free, you are free. If you think you are bound, you are bound. For the saying is

true: You are what you think. The Self looks like the world. But this is just an illusion. The Self is everywhere. One. Still. (...)But if you see yourself as separate, then you are bound. "I do this. I do that." The big black snake of selfishness has bitten you! (...)Free yourself from sorrow, and be happy. Be happy! For you are joy, unbounded joy. You are awareness itself.

When we connect the concepts 'consciousness' and 'soul' with one another, then we mean being aware of our consciousness as something that characterises humanity.

It is good to realise this fact since, according to spiritual principles, consciousness is the basis of all manifestations.

A well-known Sufi saying expresses this idea as:

'God sleeps in the rock, dreams in the plant, moves in the animal and awakens in man'.

Our rational thinking capacity is a great gift, one we very much need to be able to live in the sensory perceptible world.

However it is not intended that we become stranded in it or further develop ourselves exclusively in that direction.

we can no longer linger in our intellectual brain consciousness, even though it could still be extended endlessly.

Without any doubt, we have come a long way over the last centuries – may it be in our scientific understanding of the world and nature or in the awareness of our self in the world .

We might understand quite a lot about our psyche, our relationships with others, how experiences influenced who we are today, etc...

The conscious and sub-conscious levels of our self-awareness seem to be endless fields. But have we come any closer to our true essence? Our true soul?

We have to advance to the gnostic soul consciousness to which every human being is summoned internally

We might speak of the life of 'our soul', but see it the other way around: I do not have a soul,

the soul has me! -And the soul is barely able to express itself in me.

We ourself form the barrier that makes it difficult or impossible for the soul to manifest itself

As human being our task is to become transparent for the light of truth that glows imperishably.

We can be renewed internally and experience great happiness.

We can cooperate joyfully with the realisation of the divine plan of creation;

however, for this purpose, we must first undergo a an inner renewal , a transformation process.

Inner renewal is not a merit but a result of grace, of heavenly forces that are given.

As a result of our longing and efforts to be inwardly renewed and better equipped to serve – we can receive divine grace;

the all-encompassing love can then manifest itself and new capacities will gradually develop.

If we would consider ourselves as the source or the cause of spiritual growth that we are experiencing within ourselves, we would fall prey to self-identification and we would not form a living connection between heaven and earth.

In the following quote Ashtavakra answers Janaka's question.

Janaka has become conscious of the fact that he is bound and does not live in the truth.

He is longing for liberation. He asks the Master how to find freedom.

'O friend, if you wish to be free, shun the poison of the senses.

Seek the nectar of truth, of love and forgiveness, simplicity and happiness. Earth, fire and water, the wind and the sky - you are none of these.

If you wish to be free, know you are the Self, the witness of all these, the heart of awareness.

Set your body aside. Sit in your own awareness. You will at once be happy, forever still, forever free.'

Ashtavakra encourages Janaka to give up his fascination for the sensory perceptible world in order to allow the qualities of the soul – like selflessness, simplicity, compassion, peace of mind and sincerity – to manifest.

He also advises Janaka not to identify with all the forms that appear in his consciousness but to be a witness to them, because only if he is a neutral witness

will his very nature be happy, peaceful and free from bonds.

On a spiritual path people gradually free themselves from the prison of delusion through inner detachment, thus enabling them to dedicate themselves to their actual assignment: to give soulful significance to revelations of reality so that they are in accordance with the domain of the soul,

The essence of that is a new thinking, feeling and acting from the world of the soul.

When earthly forms are connected with heavenly structures in this way, then actual liberation appears on the horizon both for the person concerned and, at the same time, for all humanity as well as other life-waves.

In the earthly dimension we primarily experience repetition, attachment and fear.

When we gain access to the dimension of the soul there will be an experience of unity, freedom and love.

Thus we can signify much more for humanity when we live from the soul rather than from our self-preserving personality, as the development of the soul benefits everything and everyone.

'Your nature is pure awareness. You are flowing in all things, and all things are flowing in you. But beware the narrowness of the mind!

You are always the same, unfathomable awareness, limitless and free, serene and unperturbed.

Desire only your own awareness. The heart of awareness.

Whatever takes form is false. Only the formless endures.

When you understand the truth of this teaching, you will not be born again."

As a soul, we are called to become a link between the unity and the multitude, a living connection between heaven and earth.

This new genesis will arise when we realise, based on boundless awareness, that the soul is formless and timeless;

when we experience that our consciousness is a revelation of a grandiose reality, all-pervasive and perfect.

The domain of the soul is characterised by unity, freedom and love.

These are not objective characteristics but rather qualities that can be experienced intensely, for the world of the soul is not localised in time and space but encompasses living experience, where there is no distinction between subject and object.

To lead a conscious and attentive life in the here and now contributes to the possible

awakening of the soul.

Ancient texts can give us guidance for our inner path.

When we reflect on them, they not only speak to us, but they also nourish our soul.

The following verses of Ashtavakra's song address the soul, not the personality.

'You have no caste. No duties bind you. Formless and free, beyond the reach of the senses, the witness of all things. So be happy!

Right or wrong, joy and sorrow, these are of the mind only.

They are not yours. It is not really you who acts or enjoys'.

The soul is totally free indeed, having no desire. We might infer from the above text that we are free if we are aware of the soul and live mindfully.

Such living does lead to a certain enlightenment, but not to the resurrection of the true human being of which the holy scriptures speak

The resurrection of the true human being is the result of a new creation that unfolds in an entirely natural way, for such a renewal has nothing to do with time and space.

Yet going a spiritual path requires a considerable amount of time and attention because dissolving obstructing conditions takes time.

When those barriers are gone, the new creation unfolds by itself.

It is comparable to a block of wood that is hidden under a heap of stones at the bottom of a deep lake.

The wood has a natural tendency to rise to the surface of the water due to its lower density, but it can do that only after all the stones on top of it have been removed.

The 'stones' are our identifications as an individual, as a separate entity.

The 'barrier' is the consciousness of the 'me-myself and I' , -the mind.

Our true essence is not the I, the individual being,
but it is the true soul.

It is the universal divine principle in our heart, which is the basis for the true human being.

There is no separation in the Divine. It is THE ONE.

It is the same in all of us and around us.

Give up the illusion of the separate self. Give up the feeling, within or without, That you are this or that. My friend, because you think you are the body, for a long time you have been bound. Know you are pure awareness. With this knowledge as your sword cut through your chains. And be happy! For you are already free, without action or flaw, luminous and bright. . Your nature is pure awareness. You are flowing in all things, and all things are flowing in you . But beware the narrowness of the mind! You are always the same, unfathomable awareness, limitless and free, serene and unperturbed. Desire only your own awareness. The heart of awareness whatever takes form is false. Only the formless endures. When you understand the truth of this teaching, you will not be born again.

For God is infinite, within the body and without, like a mirror, and the image in a mirror. As the air is everywhere, flowing around a pot and filling it, so God is everywhere, filling all things and flowing through them forever.'