

02-01 Reflection 12

The hidden treasure in your heart

In this new calendar year, your life stretches before you like a book with blank pages. At the end of this year, on December 31st, it will be filled with everything you will have experienced and achieved this year. You cannot completely control your life but you can give it a specific direction and, up to a certain extent, you can also shape it.

If you do not take the initiative, life will automatically do it for you. Then you are at the mercy of forces outside yourself. If you do not make any conscious choices and decisions, you will be lived. Then your book of life will describe a series of events that you will probably experience without much joy. Maybe then you will feel like the billions of poor toilers in this world of whom it is written in The Aquarian Gospel:

There was no look of joy in any face. Not one of all the group could think of anything but toil. And Jesus spoke to one and said, Why are you all so sad? Have you no happiness in life? The man replied, We scarcely know the meaning of that word. We toil to live, and hope for nothing else but toil, and bless the day when we can cease our toil and lay us down to rest in Buddha's city of the dead.

Such fatalistic beliefs occur in the East more than in the West. In the West, there is generally a stronger urge to take matters into our own hands and create situations that are believed to make us happy. Since ancient times, all kinds of philosophies have been based on that.

Conceptions of happiness

In the first century of the Christian era, so in the time of Jesus, there were two main schools of philosophy in Athens, each of which had rather strong opinions about happiness. The supporters of these two currents are known as the Epicureans and the Stoics.

The Greek philosopher Epicurus (who lived from 341 – 270 BC) was said to have written three hundred books: on love, on music, on right action, on human life and on nature. The Letter to Menoeceus – also called The Letter on Happiness – immediately betrays the author's deepest conviction: human existence is only about happiness.

And how do you become happy? Epicurus appealed to everyday experience in which he found a simple and beautiful starting point: whoever manages to satisfy his natural needs while remaining distant from pain and discomfort is a happy person. He was convinced that with death everything is finished: there is no resurrection, and there is no life after death. His message was: live and enjoy and seize the day! The motto of his followers, the Epicureans, was: enjoy life while you can.

The Stoics were disciples of Zeno (who lived from 333 – 262 BC). They were much more subdued and valued thinking above feeling. They tried to live in accordance with nature through developing and realising the good in man by means of reason.

Ethics (the doctrine of right and wrong) played an important role in the Stoic way of thinking. According to the Stoics, the human soul finds its greatest happiness in virtue. They defined virtue as the conformity of the human will with the laws of the universe; to be virtuous is to live according to nature.

According to them, the things that matter in life are living wisely, controlling yourself, pursuing temperance and practising virtue.

Happiness and inner sacrifice

At the turn of the year, people wish each other a Happy New Year. One may wonder if this 'happiness' is actually in line with the spirituality of the inner sacrifice of the personality to the soul. After all, the first Noble Truth of the Buddha is that suffering is universal. We know however that everything that lives will eventually perish, and we can grow only through overcoming difficulties. Does the universe not know much better than we ourselves what is good for us? How then could we strive for something so intangible and fragile as happiness? How are we able to wish each other happiness?

Yes, all this is true. Nevertheless, true spirituality and happiness can go hand in hand very well. Even more than that! The goal of all authentic spirituality is to let everything and everyone become radiantly happy! And the possibilities for being radiantly happy are present within you and within every human being!

Man can experience the greatest happiness now, in the present, not in a future life or in the hereafter! The greatest happiness is to consciously experience the link with the original human life. That does not mean that experiences such as pain, grief and sorrow have ceased to exist because they are inextricably linked with life on earth. Jesus says in The Aquarian Gospel:

Your heaven is not far away; and it is not a place of metes and bounds, is not a country to be reached; it is a state of mind. God never made a heaven for man; he never made a hell; we are creators and we make our own. Now, cease to seek for heaven in the sky; just open up the windows of the hearts, and, like a flood of light, a heaven will come and bring a boundless joy.

The human heart is much more than a necessary organ that pumps blood throughout the body. There are multiple levels of activity all of which are in communication with each other. According to several spiritual traditions, the heart centre of the human being includes:

- the physical or material heart which is vivified by its etheric counterpart;
- the heart chakra: the central element of a system of seven power-centres or chakras; it is an element that, among others, deals with our interaction with other people, with the propensity to love and be loved, and with our social identity;
- the immortal spiritual kernel in the human system which is also referred to as the divine spark, the primordial atom, the spirit spark, the lotus, rose or pearl.

The heart centre plays a vital role in the spiritual development of the human being. That is why it is often referred to as the 'heart sanctuary'. In the symbolism of the Jewish temple, the heart centre is the Holy (Place), the pelvic centre is the Forecourt and the head centre is the Holiest of Holies.

In most people, the three centres do not operate as sanctuaries. When one follows the Gnostic spiritual path however, these centres are purified and renewed so that they can begin to function out of a dimension that transcends space and time. Then the three sanctuaries in the temple of man are made whole and holy.

Purification of the heart

This development begins with raising the consciousness from the abdominal centre to the heart centre and with the purification of the heart. The purification of the heart is symbolically described not only in the Christmas narrative but also, for example, in the parable that Jesus relates to the poor toilers.

That parable is about a man who owned a field where the soil was hard and poor. Despite his toil the field produced insufficient food, so hunger tormented him. This hunger refers to our constant desire for a deeper understanding, the search for an answer to that one big question: "What then is the meaning of everything?"

If that question really wells up from the depths of our souls, then we will experience that an answer will always come because the soul has a magnetic quality. Therefore, there will certainly come a moment in your life when you will be reminded of your true existence. In some strange way, something or someone crosses your path making you aware that you are more than a mortal being that yearns for a shred of happiness, that you also carry a spark of immortality within you and that this little spark is the gateway to lasting happiness.

According to the parable one day a miner, a light messenger, who has the ability to see under the surface of the barren field, calls to the poor man:

You know, my brother, that under the hard rocky soil of our superficial reality, the true meaning of our being human is hidden? Under the rocky soil of material things, the most beautiful jewels abound. And all values of this world cannot compete in beauty with the brilliance of that pure gold of the spirit. Dig deep under the earth and you will find that goldmine, that holy place!

The primordial atom within us is shining like a jewel, a lotus, a rosebud which causes deep joy. Once we have tasted of that joy, then there is no earthly treasure that can tempt us anymore.

Jesus advised us to open the windows of our heart to this jewel. By quieting the heart and letting it enter into the deep peace of Bethlehem, we open our being to the harmonious radiation emanating from the kernel of our heart sanctuary.

And when we are thus ensouled by that gentle, yet very powerful radiation, then the foundation is laid for the great process of renewal that will lead us to lasting happiness.

We wish you a Happy New Year!