

Tuesday reflection 3

PARTAKING OF ETERNITY

Within the divine plan human beings have a certain amount of freedom in designing their own lives. In our society, social rules and laws apply that are aimed at maintaining order.

Likewise at the cosmic level there are cosmic laws that secure the harmony and steady development in the cosmos of which we are a part. Whenever we violate these guidelines and laws, we will inevitably be corrected – not as punishment, but out of concern for and protection of the cosmos.

But within that framework and within our personal circumstances, humanity has been given freedom of choice. It is a special gift. We have to choose. But choosing also implies self-restraint, for choosing means at the same time sacrificing. By choosing something we exclude all other possibilities. If we make a choice and follow it through, we simultaneously sacrifice everything else.

It is not always easy to choose, even when we desire to let the inner being within us awaken and grow. If we were to meet an enlightened teacher, we also might want to ask the question presented to Jesus in Chapter 37 of *The Gospel of the Holy Twelve* in the porch of the temple: “Master, what do you teach concerning life?”

Perhaps we hope for concrete and practical instructions on what to do and not do. Then we would not have to make choices ourselves but simply follow the rules in a way that probably suits us best. For this reason, in a real mystery school pupils will not receive answers to such ‘what-and-how-questions’ for that would impede their self-authority, their freedom of choice and their opportunities for the development of consciousness.

Only if we truly search for the ‘why’ of life are we open to what our inner voice tells us. Then the ‘how’ and the ‘what’ flow into our consciousness in a natural way. Jesus discusses the ‘why’ of life. The ‘why’ is the starting point.

Blessed are they who suffer many experiences, for they shall be made perfect through suffering; they shall be as the angels of God in Heaven and shall die no more, neither shall they be born anymore, for death and birth have no more dominion over them.

They who have suffered and overcome shall be made Pillars in the Temple of my God, and they shall go out no more. Verily I say to you, unless you are born again of water and of fire, you cannot see the kingdom of God.

The Gospel of the Holy Twelve 37: 2-3

The world in which we currently live is particularly focused on collecting experiences.

At the top of our wish list we find the experiences that are special, amusing, exciting, relaxing, adventurous, challenging, satisfying or spiritual. In our search for a perfect life we want to get the most out of it. Although many people have the financial and technological means for doing this at their disposal, the question remains whether outward perfection leads to inner wealth.

It is clear that Jesus refers to all types of experiences – even the bad ones which we would rather avoid – because he associates experience with suffering. Of course, attaining perfection sounds great, but if we have to suffer for this, it immediately becomes less attractive.

Suffering is inevitable. Suffering means purification, insight, letting go, reversal. Suffering leads to the experience of ‘not that again,’ to seeking a way out. Suffering, however harsh, is the driving force behind the progress and the dynamism in our world of space and time.

And the pupil of the soul who accepts his symbolic pilgrimage through the desert to the promised land has to deal with the inconveniences that are attached to this journey. When a human being gains many experiences, both pleasant and unpleasant, then they may reach a fullness of experience from which a strong desire for lasting fulfilment arises.

Suffering has a purifying effect on people, especially in the long run. It makes them humbler, gentler, wiser and more open to other life perspectives. But clearly this does not imply that we should consciously seek suffering, nor that we should hold on to it.

It would be a great mistake to believe that a miserable life is a precondition to the Gnostic spiritual path, because our companions on the Gnostic way are the sparkling joy and delight of the inner life, right through all external difficulties.

Prince Siddhartha Gautama in India led a wonderful life. Without being aware of it, he possessed everything a man can possess; suffering and sorrow were unknown to him. But when in his environment he came across the suffering resulting from old age, disease and death, he began to search for their causes and the possibilities to be liberated from that suffering. He attained enlightenment and became the Buddha. During the rest of his life he taught how human beings can be freed from suffering and enter into what he called nirvana.

In Buddhism and Hinduism the doctrine of reincarnation and karma is considered to be self-evident. In the time of Jesus scholars in the countries around the Mediterranean, such as the early Christians, were also familiar with this doctrine.

The law of karma is a cosmic law of love that maintains creation in balance, protects it and keeps it within the limits of the cosmic order. Karma works in a corrective way by bouncing everything back to its origin like a mirror. All thoughts, all actions and all feelings will eventually return to their unconscious creator to make him or her aware of their impact on the greater whole. Karma can extend over many lifetimes, but also occur within a couple of hours.

Only on the basis of understanding and free choice can a human being make the decision to definitely refrain from certain thoughts, actions and feelings. Everything that the law of karma bounces back to us is often experienced as revenge or punishment, even though karma is only trying to navigate human life away from the abyss of even more karma.

In chapters 37 and 69 of *The Gospel of the Holy Twelve*, Jesus speaks briefly about reincarnation and karma. In chapter 37 he says that people who are made perfect through suffering, will be like the angels of God in heaven and will die no more, nor be born anymore. Here 'perfection' refers to the subtle resurrection body of the new immortal human being, which has been constructed on the purifying spiritual path.

This new human being is part of eternity, of the divine dimension beyond space and time, and in that sense he is like the angels of God. But he is no angel, nor will he ever be. This being may rightly be called 'Man' because he or she is part of the tenth hierarchy, and thus forms an indispensable element in the execution of the divine plan of creation. He is a living link between time and eternity.

For him or her, the wheel of birth and death has ceased to turn; the assignment of life on earth has been fulfilled. When finally the physical body, together with the other invisible bodies of the earthly personality, has died, there is no more need to reincarnate, to re-enter a physical body. For then such a human being has taken his place as a living pillar of light in the invisible temple, the temple not made by human hands. He is born again out of water and fire: he has passed the ordeals of water and fire according to the practice of the Mysteries. This state reminds us of the words of John the Baptist:

This is the record of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?" And he did not deny, but confessed, "I am not the Christ."

And they asked him, "What then? Are you Elias?" And he said, "I am not." "Are you that prophet of whom Moses spoke?" And he answered, "No." Then they said to him, "Who are you that we may give an answer to those who sent us? What do you say about yourself?" And he said, "I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness; make straight the way of the Holy One as the Prophet Esaias said."

And they which were sent were of the Pharisees and they asked him and said to him, "Why then are you baptising, if you are not that Christ nor Elias, neither that prophet of whom Moses spoke?"

John answered them, saying, "I baptise with water, but there stands One among you, whom you do not know; He shall baptise with water and with fire. He it is who coming after me, is preferred before me, the latchet of whose shoe I am not worthy to unloose."

The Gospel of the Holy Twelve 8: 4-7

The fact that the Pharisees ask John the Baptist if he is Elijah indicates that they are familiar with the principle of reincarnation. Possibly they were expecting Elijah, following the words of the prophet Malachi: "Behold I send you Elijah the prophet before the coming great and dreadful day of the Lord." (Malachi 4:5)

John's response shows that Elijah or Moses do not return as identifiable individuals, but that their essences descend into all new-born children of mankind. They receive these essences of Elijah and Moses as a legacy which enables them to find their way through their own lives.

The historical John the Baptist had the task of preparing the way for the Christ impulse on earth. The inner John, as a spiritual aspect of the outer man, faces the task of making this outer man suitable for the descent of Christ, the incarnation of the Christ Power.

John the Baptist symbolises the first phase of the gnostic path. A John human being knows from within that there exists an elevated field of human life in which, however, he has no part. Due to this insight and longing for salvation such a person cannot act otherwise than to make straight the paths for this new life in complete self-surrender.

He submits himself to a cleansing process which leads to the rebirth out of water, an event symbolised by the baptism of water.

The baptism of water is the first answer, the first touch of the sevenfold power from the new field of life. It is being taken up into the reality of that new life and being linked to its uplifting power. And from that moment onward the suffering, so closely connected to earthly life, will no longer be pointless suffering but rather an opportunity for purification and inner growth.

Here rebirth does not refer to receiving a new body according to the principle of reincarnation. Instead it points to a very special transformation process which takes place during our lifetime on earth and not after it. Being born again out of water is the result of an intense process of preparatory cleansing and purification in the personality of the human being: physically, etherically, astrally and mentally. These purifications take place throughout our entire lives as seekers and are symbolised by Elizabeth and Zacharias, the parents of John.

Those who have been granted the rebirth out of water, will change; they become more balanced, wise and loving than before because they are attuned to the guiding voice of their souls. Although they are constantly changing, they are still not **new** human beings. Therefore they cannot enter the kingdom of heaven for they would burn there. The forces of this kingdom are too strong for a mortal body. The baptised person must first be born again out of fire, out of spirit-power.

Water cleanses and purifies, but fire brings about fundamental change. Fire causes (al)chemical processes. Fire is necessary in order to forge something new. John baptises in water, but Christ baptises in fire, in the fire of the Holy Spirit. That baptism of fire can only take place when the soul has matured and the personality has accepted the Other-One-within as his or her superior, as "He who, although coming after me, is preferred before me, the latchet of whose shoe I am not worthy to unloose."

The rebirth out of water and fire, or water and spirit, is also indicated by the word 'transfiguration'. Transfiguration is the ancient Gnostic process by which the mortal, matter-born human being merges into the immortal, divine human being, the true Spirit-Man. Thus the bridge is formed between heaven and earth.

Transfiguration is **the** reason for the existence of humanity on earth. But no one can and may be forced into this process of renewal. It can begin only on the basis of a fullness of experience and a deep longing for true fulfilment, gained throughout many earthly lives. Verse 8 of chapter 37 of *The Gospel of the Holy Twelve* says this with the following words:

I am a wanderer, changing place after place and house after house until I come to the City and Mansion which is eternal.

The Gospel of the Holy Twelve 37: 8