

Contemplative Reading March 2023 - *TIME AND ETERNITY*

If you possess true knowledge , o soul, you will understand that you are akin to your Creator; and thence you will experience true joy.

From 'The Admonition of the soul' , a hermetic text

Time and Eternity

When during a quiet moment we look at nature and its cycles
or at our life with its struggles and joys,
and its constant changes,
we realize that there is a guiding force underlying all and everything.

But what is the purpose of all this?

Were we born here on earth to live for a while,
hopefully as well as possible,
and then disappear again - just like that?
Or does our life have a much more profound purpose?

We seek for something lasting, for meaning, for fulfilment...
However, this longing cannot be satisfied by things or beings belonging to time.

In the 'The Book of Mirdad' by Mikhail Naimy we can read:
'The human being is a God in swaddling clothes.

*Time is a swaddling cloth and also all sensory organs
and all things that can be observed by them.*

Naimy continues:

*'The Mother only knows too well that the swaddling clothes are **not** the baby.
However, the baby does not know it.'*

....

We are Gods in swaddling clothes.

Time, space and our natural body are the swaddling clothes.

And as human beings, we are mainly occupied with those swaddling clothes.

We take care of our body, cultivate our mind
and pursue our wishes and desire

We are seeking beauty and purpose outside of us and not within ourselves,
because we do not yet know **what is within us**.

We often call it the Rose of the heart.

It is the soul, a spark of the Divine .

This eternal divine spark that has been waiting for a long time.

The soul within us suffers,

Like a prisoner held captive by our outward focus of life, by our identification with matter and time.

Shankara, the great Indian sage, wants to awaken us from this dream and says:

'The world that presents itself to our eyes, is caused by our imagination, in its ignorance.

It is not real, not lasting

It is like a passing dream:

in this way, human beings must practise spiritual discernment

and liberate themselves from their consciousness of this subjective world.'

J van Rijckenborgh , a founder of the Golden Rosycross says:

'How small and how simple is the insignificant life of the nature-born human being in comparison to the Essence of eternity.....,'

'It is like a ripple on the water's surface, an incidental deformation of reality.

*Do not consider the ripple in the water to be the Essence,
but look at the immense surface.'*

An ancient Indian legend relates how Brahman, the Divine Spirit,
taught His sons the wisdom of God.

His youngest son wanted to become familiar with the human kingdom on earth.

Only in the realm of time, He could teach His son

how to liberate his inner divine powers.

Brahma took His son through all the spheres surrounding the earth,

until they had reached a region on earth, where no rain had fallen for a long time.

They walked in heat and dust along a dry riverbed.

Finally, they sat down on a protruding rock on the riverbank,

and Brahman asked His son to fetch water to quench their thirst.

'Do not stay away too long, my son,' He asked him.

The son set out and after a while, he reached a small house and knocked.

A man opened the door and invited him in.
When the son asked for water, the beautiful daughter met him with a jar
and he was able to quench his thirst.
He was surrounded by much love and care,
and was asked to help taking care of the land and the cattle.
And quickly he was fully absorbed in all the work.

Thus he forgot his descent *and* his father,
who was waiting for him on the riverbank.

After some time, he married the daughter of the house, who bore him two children.
After the grandparents had died, they took over the care of the house and the gardens.

But one day, after a very warm and dry period,
an enormous rain let the river swell until it flooded the surrounding land.
Brahman's Son had to flee with his wife and children, leaving everything behind.
However, they were quickly overtaken by the rising water.
His wife was unable to hold on and drowned.

With both children on his shoulders, he waded on,
until one of his children was torn from his hands
by the sweeping force of the water and also drowned.
The same happened to the second child.
And while he did everything to find this child again,
the water also seized him and he was swept along by its force.

Thus he discovered that he *could* not hold on to what is mortal.

Just in time, he grasped a protruding rock that hung over the water
and pulled himself up.

On that rock, Brahman was (still) sitting and said to him:
'You have stayed away for a long time, my son,
I have been waiting for you for half an hour.'

Looking around, he saw the dry riverbed again, and there wasn't a trace of water.

Thus he learned to know the earth and human beings.

After what seemed like long and difficult years to him,
 he was now more certain than ever before
 that his Father was always waiting for him.
 Yes, that the Father and he were one.

In the same way, we are living here on earth, in the delusion of space and time.
 We, too, have forgotten our origin and the purpose of our temporary stay here.
 We, too, live a life of rising, shining and fading,
 of joy and grief,
 and are completely absorbed by it.

In this way, separation is generated.
 We identify with the body and its desires, our character and psychological 'make-up'
 and think that this is all we are!
 Imprisoned in this I-delusion we suppress our innermost self, our soul,- the divine spark in
 our heart.

When we give *the I* the control of our life, we will stay in life's turbulence.
 We can't ever win this game of contrary interests, of attraction and rejection with *the I*.

It is in the structure of the ego, of our ego,
 that it will always feel dissatisfied, abandoned, rejected, tense....
 The I usually wants to be right and better than others.

We so much want to be somebody.
 We are looking for something... and do not even know for what.
 But the soul, this wonderful, inner Other One, is forgotten.
 We are totally absorbed in the illusion of time with all its struggling and striving.

Eventually we might reach the point when we just feel overwhelmed by the self-released
 storms and tides of earthly life,
 It feels as if everything, even our most precious possessions and convictions,
 our self-created foundations of life are torn from our hands.

Then an unstoppable seeking for liberation puts everything else in its shadows.
 Like in the story of the Brahman and his son, the human being in this inner distress will
 reach for the protruding rock over the water, the Great rock.
 We may call it God, the Christ-force, Brahman, the source or any other name.

In the story it is the son's memory of the Father.

It is the memory of the One from where we all have emanated, but which we have forgotten.

The father is still waiting for the son

The One is waiting for us to return – always.

It is said ‘With God, a thousand years are like one day’

To Him, only the love for the son counts,

(which is the eternal principle in a human being) ,

who *will* one day return, *with* the knowledge of the experiences gained.

Yet, we must gain all these experiences in the play of changes,

in the realm of time, in order to be able to turn around.

‘Insight is the open Gate,’ the Golden Rosycross says.

Insight gained by experience.

And this is why we have been given this body as an instrument (in this world)

It gives us the opportunity to turn around on the basis of insight

and to return from what is temporary to Eternity.

Then life acquires an Other perspective.

Hermes Trismegistos said

‘To him who is able to see, it is as follows:

*God **wants** life, and He is life.*

Everything that is, only exists for the benefit of this one thing:

that the Good, as to His essence, will be manifested.’

For him who is going to live on the basis of this inner perspective,

life will acquire a totally new significance.

It will become consciousness, *growth*, the goal.

Then life becomes a development from the swaddling clothes.

Then a shift occurs as it were.

Life and death will be seen in another Light,

no longer from the outside, but from within.

Then life is no longer the beginning, and death no longer the end,

because we have found again something within ourselves that far surpasses it.

The I is born and perishes.

The One, resting as a rosebud in the human heart, has no beginning, no end.

It always is.

The I limits our existence.

The One is Light, unlimited; it is pureness and clarity.

The gratification of the I offers temporary enjoyment.

The One *is* Peace and happiness.

The I is ignorance.

The One is true Knowledge.

It is the Knowledge of eternal Life itself.

Not until we are conscious of *that*,
not until we inwardly know *it* through many experiences,
we will remember again what *really* matters.

And at that special moment, the Light that has always been waiting for us, flows into us.

It cleans out everything that is in the way, and uncovers everything.

And under the dust of the ages of time

the eternal divine essence, the Rose of the Heart, is radiating.

In this encounter, we are lifted above time and are standing in the Eternal Now.

There is no longer a past and a future.

Not until then, we encounter the Principle of Eternity

in all the others, our fellow human beings,

because this principle is One in all of us.

Then we **are** one.

God is everything in everyone; everything else is illusion, transient.

He who is seeking the profound meaning of life, will no longer seek it in external things.

He will no longer seek what is transient,

but finds the Answer in his heart- the Other One within - God.

O, that we all would solve
the great inner conflict between
time and Eternity.

Born and bred in time,
we are seized by Eternity.

Shall we then make the Lights of Eternity
which are given us
subservient to time?

May clear Insight guide us here.

O Eternity – touch us.
O Eternity – liberate us.
Recreate us through Your Majesty.

O Eternal One, Who art forever,
make us understand,
make us go the Path
to Your Lustrous Light.