

## The Path of the Soul - 2

T158 The Inner Teachings 10th October 1945 St Mary Abbot's Place, London

*No. 2 in the series and based upon St Matthew, chapter 3, which should be read together with this record.*

### Invocation:

Let us unite in spirit and pray to the source of all being, our Father-Mother God—Great White Spirit, all enfolding love, all wisdom and power. We pray this night that we may enter into the temple of learning and that we may be cleansed from all that would hinder our reception of truth. O God, may the lower mind not impede our understanding of the truths of the spirit. May we truly come as little children into Thy kingdom of heaven. We ask not for ourselves alone but because we long for truth to enable us to discipline ourselves during our life's journey and thus be able to help our brother man\*, not by preaching but by living and serving according to Thy spiritual laws.

Amen.

*[\*For editorial policy around gender, see the introduction.]*

Beloved brethren, we meet to search for truth. We come from the realms of spirit to try to give some of the knowledge which we have found. But this is no easy task, because it is rarely possible for one soul to give truth to another. We cannot travel the path which is yours on your behalf, but we can act as a signpost and tell you from our own experience where that path will lead; but the freewill choice is yours. Every soul is blessed with discrimination and discernment and it is for the soul to use these faculties. One thing, however, is quite certain; truth can only be discerned from the innermost, the pure spirit. This is why the Master so clearly advised his disciples and hearers to become as little children, which means to draw aside from that earthly or reasoning mind. Some will not agree with this. They say, 'But reason is given to us for a certain purpose'. Yes, your reason has its purpose but does not enable you to discern spiritual truth. Spiritual truth when it is revealed by the Christ within, by the vision of the spirit, will pass all the tests of reason because it is unanswerable. When once the soul has discovered spiritual truth with the inner vision there is no more questioning because it satisfies everything in a man's being.

The first talk of this series dealt with the meaning of initiation. Those of you who were present will no doubt remember that we said initiation in its deepest and fullest sense is a spiritual experience, an awakening and quickening of spiritual faculties. No earthly ceremony is of itself the real initiation, being only a form or ritual which may (or may not) quicken the soul.

We also touched on the Christian teaching and we told you that in the story of Jesus of Nazareth—or preferably let us say the story of the Christ—is revealed the perfect plan of the path which every soul, whatever its religion, must tread from earth to heaven. Many, indeed we will say all the episodes recorded in the gospels are actual historic events; nevertheless their real purport is not to give an account of what happened long ago but rather to reveal to the student, to the aspirant, the method of his own development, of his own spiritual unfoldment.

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Tonight we are going to deal specifically with the meaning of baptism. There are some who believe that baptism as a rite is very effective. Maybe, but there is something behind the rite which we as neophytes need to understand. It is the first of the major initiations which the soul has to undergo. It is the water initiation. However, before we proceed further we will read the account of Jesus's baptism by John, first explaining that this baptism or cleansing in the waters is usual when the soul first leaves the physical body. Those of you who join in the meditation classes will remember that in the early stages when going on to the inner planes in meditation, one was confronted on the inner planes by a bath or lake of blue water, in which the soul is assisted by two helpers to bathe. This form was always used in the ancient mystery schools before the candidate was allowed to proceed into the temple. Esoterically, it means that the soul had to be bathed, cleansed, purified. In meditation, coming from the harsh and turbulent conditions of earth, the soul on entering the higher planes has need to be purified before it can proceed further, and so it is thus cleansed.

It is not only the water which cleanses but the soul itself is of the water element. The psyche, the soul, means 'the waters'. We do not speak astrologically but you will know that there is water that is still and calm and which will reflect truth, and there is water which is so rough and turbulent that it cannot reflect the true image. So the soul qualities of the individual have to be brought under control by the Master. By this we mean that before the soul can proceed on the path of initiation the Christ within must discipline that soul and make it calm enough to reflect the true image of the higher worlds. This was the first initiation undertaken by Jesus of Nazareth. Some would ask, 'Why did Jesus need such initiation?' Well, as most of you know, Jesus of Nazareth was Jesus the man; he had to undergo exactly the same training and follow the same path as any other soul. But we must also remember that in the story we are looking upon a picture, an allegory, depicting the procedure of the ordinary soul, of any soul. Jesus underwent the ceremony of baptism, just as every man and woman must. We do not mean by this the ordinary ceremony of baptism in a church—we would make this quite clear. We are speaking of the inner experience of every soul, and mean that every soul must eventually be baptised and thereby cleansed emotionally.

Now we will read the chapter and continue afterwards.

*(Reading of St Matthew, chapter 3, verses 1-3)*

Notice that the place was a wilderness—but then all the world is a wilderness. The chaotic condition of man's soul produces this. We are all a wilderness within until we commence to discipline ourselves, and the work we have to do is to turn that wilderness which is our soul into a beautiful garden. The word stands for that state of chaos, loneliness and unhappiness which is the lot of the soul before it is awakened.

It is interesting to note that John was the name of the teacher,\* because the meaning of the name John is 'the gift of God'. God sends to the soul of man the gift of a teacher. When the soul is ready to be baptised, the teacher is there to teach the soul what it longs to hear, what it

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longs to know. So John, the gift of God, was ready to teach the soul that came to be cleansed and purified.

*[\*That is, John the Baptist.]*

*(Reading of verses 4-5)*

Here we have a description of John's raiment and the way he lived. This too has an inner meaning. The soul who wants to learn must be simply clothed, simple in spirit, gentle, humble. He must be prepared to eat very simple food. There are some who are not satisfied unless they have an intellectual feast put before them. They eat grossly and then suffer from intellectual indigestion afterwards. Then they throw the whole thing up, saying, 'I do not think there is anything in this'. The true aspirant is clothed with humility and prepared for simple spiritual food. He does not want a lot of high-flown intellectualism.

*(Reading of Verse 6)*

They confessed their sins. Here is an important point. I think John is said to have called the people to repent. What is repentance? Does it mean just saying, 'Oh, I am sorry, I won't do it any more,' and then forgetting your sorrow and doing exactly the same thing again? This is what we all do many, many times. Repentance means real effort and determination not to sin\* again, not to miss the mark. What does sin mean? When you analyse it, you will agree that sin is a failure to go directly to the truth. We remember hearing someone give an address in which reference was made to the marking-post on which a ploughman has to keep his eye fixed. Now if he fails he cannot drive a straight furrow. This applies also to our own actions, particularly our relations with our brother man. We sin for we do not keep a straight furrow to the marking-post. That is our interpretation of sin.

People say, 'But I have not sinned. I have kept the Ten Commandments. How can I have sinned?' Well, the answer is that every time the soul or the man does not hit truth—does not speak truth, live truth from his innermost being, he is sinning. Sin is something which is just off the straight, off the mark. Sin is not of the body only—in fact, the bodily sins we would not call sins at all. Sin is the failure of the soul to live truly, and when we say live we mean failure of the soul to express truth in thought and word and deed. To be true is one of the most difficult things in life. Nevertheless when the soul fails, that soul is guilty of sin; so we see how many of us are sinners—not wanting to be or meaning to be but just through weakness.

*[\*White Eagle's use of the term 'sin' here is characteristic of the Bible references and the context of the 1930s in which this teaching was given and does not imply condemnation. White Eagle is without judgement with regard to human behaviour and feelings.]*

*(Reading of verses 7-10)*

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'God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.' Notice the esoteric meaning of the word 'stone'. The stone is the cornerstone, the Christ within. God is able from the stone, from the Christ within, to raise up children unto Abraham. You will remember that Jesus was tempted of the devil to turn stones into bread and he refused. Bread—but of what kind? Many try to turn the stone of Christ or the inner spiritual truths into bread to satisfy the intellect, and we say this in all humility and simplicity. This is what is happening in the world so much today—the intellectualist, particularly the theologian, is trying to turn the beautiful Christ principle into bread to feed and satisfy the intellect of the people instead of trying to give to the people the simple truth of Christ. That may be a sin because it does not hit the mark, it is not going straight to the heart of things. It is turning spiritual things into something else to satisfy the greed of the intellect.

*(Reading of verses 10-12)*

We would draw your attention to the higher initiation which must come to every soul—the first initiation. John the Baptist was only concerned with the purification of the soul by the baptism of water. He prepared the way of the soul to step upon the path to the higher initiations, those of air, fire and earth, which as we told you last time are found in the inner, esoteric aspect of all the ancient religions.

*(Reading of verses 13-17)*

Jesus came up out of the water and the heavens were opened. He heard the voice saying, 'This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased'. Now when the soul has been mystically baptised it passes the water initiation, which means that the soul has become disciplined and no longer gives way to angers, fears or passions. It has learned the lesson; it has passed the test. It has learned how to be still and calm and tranquil. It has overcome all hasty judgment, all angry passions, all fears and anxieties. Now it is ready for the heavens to be opened and to see the vision of God. When in this state the soul is able to hear the voice of God. How could it hear the voice of God when it is making too much noise in itself? But when it is like a calm lake beneath the sun or moon, then the heavens will reflect their glory on the waters of the soul. The soul, when in meditation, is a reflection of the heavens—a true reflection, not a false reflection which is so frequently the case when the psychic feelings are all astir, when there is mental and emotional disturbance. Then it receives distorted messages and is dismayed. It does not realise that as a result of its own inner disturbance the reflection from the astral plane is distorted. Then follows disappointment. But you see these disappointments which come to the aspirant are good, because they test the sincerity and the earnestness of the soul. If the soul is not truly treading the path, that soul does not make any progress, but if it is true it is not dismayed; it keeps on striving for spiritual truth and learns how to discipline itself.

When the soul is dispassionate, calm, and tranquil, it hears the inner voice. It hears God saying, 'This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased'. How does the soul hear? The innermost soul knows in a flash that interchange of spiritual power from the Great White Spirit, from God, the source of its being, and it is then that the soul can say, in spite of the

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criticism which seeks to disprove spiritual things, in truth and sincerity, 'I know because I have heard the voice of God. Nothing can ever shake or alter me.'

The first initiation which the soul has to take, then, is the water initiation. It has to learn to overcome all turbulent emotions, to live tranquilly, calmly, kindly, lovingly. It must not be harsh nor rash in its judgments. The physical body is to be healthy, perfect. This may be rather a sensitive spot we touch upon because most people suffer more or less from some form of physical ailment. The body is rarely the perfect expression of the Christ within. But how many people understand or realise that undisciplined and uncontrolled emotions disturb the bloodstream and the glandular system of the body and this emotional disturbance eventually produces all kinds of minor ailments and later perhaps major ailments? This should not be. When the water initiation is passed so that the feelings and the emotions are disciplined and controlled, so that the soul can go calmly and patiently and happily day by day, unperturbed and undisturbed, reflecting only heavenly, the true conditions of the God-life, then that soul is able to transmit or express through the physical body perfect wholeness or healthfulness. The cause of physical suffering and ill health is the emotional body. When the emotions are governed, there will be nothing wrong. Beloved, do not think that this is harsh or unkind. If you are suffering, take heart from what we say and try to understand, try to absorb this truth and know that there is always tomorrow, always a fresh opportunity. Endeavour to attune all the higher bodies harmoniously to the spiritual law, and then in time there will be recreated in you a new body of health and perfection, a body of harmony, a heavenly body if you like.

There are many things that we have left out. If there are any questions we will endeavour to answer them.

Q. Why were the Pharisees and the Sadducees introduced into this early chapter? Was it to point a moral?

A. The Pharisees and the Sadducees were the people who had much earthly knowledge and power, so they were brought into the picture to show that those who think they know everything do not always produce the fruits of the spirit. They are fit for nothing but to be cut down, being all outward show and outward power. Although all the world worships outward show and power, all has to be left behind when the physical body is no more. But the real treasure, the real fruits of the spirit are those things which the soul is nurturing deep within. That is life; that is what continues; that is what brings a man into heavenly glory. Such a man is rich but the Pharisees and the Sadducees are very poor. They are barren. There are some incarnations which yield nothing and which appear to be wasted in that way but the time comes eventually when even that soul is called to the banks of the Jordan.

Q. Does the soul have to pass the water initiation in every incarnation?

A. That is an interesting question. Even advanced souls who come anew into a child's body have to pass the tests of the physical life. But the advanced soul will pass the test easily, because in past lives it has undergone the initiation and has acquired dispassion. In the course

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of its life it will pass through all the tests without difficulty, if it has undergone the initiations in the past. It is like learning the password. Once the soul has been admitted into the Lodge\* and learned the password, all is well. It simply utters the password and is admitted.

*[\*White Eagle refers not only to his own Lodge, but generally.]*

Q. Can one consider this chapter as having been published by the mystery schools?

A. According to the times and the needs of the people the same stories are forthcoming again and again and again in different forms—truth is always coming through. Unfortunately most people are not ready to recognise inner truth and try to materialise their religious teaching. Then it is organised into a state religion and then people accept it as a material happening instead of receiving it as spiritual and mystical truth. It is far more beautiful when we discover the mystical interpretation of this Christian story. Indeed the whole Bible is a mystical story. The Old Testament is chiefly astrological and relates to the heavens and the New Testament relates to the mystical journey of the soul of every man.

In the next talk we will consider this water initiation again. We have not exhausted our subject yet. After, we will talk about the temptations of Jesus and how they followed on the baptism and how that also applies to the soul of every man on the path.

### Benediction:

Let us be still so that we may become aware of the presence of the holy ones and the angelic hierarchies. O great ones, divine and perfect One, Cosmic Christ and Father-Mother God, the source of our being, we humbly give forth from our innermost hearts thanks to Thee for our creation, our guidance and protection. We give thanks to Thee for all happiness we know and for every experience, be it joyful or sorrowful, which has enriched our souls. O God, we would be patient and meek and humble. To Thee we look for everything. May we never forget Thou art the source, Thou art our strength, Thou art our joy, Thou art our love, our beloved, and in Thee we are united with our brethren, with all those whom we love. May we be forever at one with them and with Thee.

Amen.

*The search matches with either words and phrases, which appear in the text, or the following 'key' words and phrases, which are similar in meaning to those in the document:*

*Guidance, weak, limitations, discrimination*