

# The Mystical Teaching of St John: 14

T147 The Inner Teachings 9th May 1944 St Mary Abbots Place, London

*[Chapter 13 of St John's Gospel should be read alongside this record.]*

## Invocation:

We who are assembled in this temple of learning would humbly approach the Almighty Spirit, Father–Mother God, praying to be purified and cleansed of all the inharmonies of the physical life; that the Sea of Galilee, the sea of emotion and desire, may be stilled by the voice of the Master who speaketh from the innermost centre of each heart. Let us be still and know Thee O God, for Thou art the love, the truth and the life.

Amen.

Before we talk on the subject matter in the 13<sup>th</sup> chapter of St John we would speak of what is to be looked for in a purified soul, in an elder brother and master. People doubt the existence of so-called masters, but then earthly people lack the power to see a master and this is why they doubt. To the purified, the aspiring, the soul that has been quickened by the light of the true spirit in his breast, recognition of purity and perfection is easy. You may have had visions, or imagined or created a mental picture of your guide, teacher, or one whom you love who lives in a higher world than the material. You always create a mental image of one who is beautiful. The sins and the darkness which dominate the flesh are non-existent; only beauty and peace exist in your beloved.

When a clairvoyant vision is received, the visionary sees a pure impression of the spirit who is manifesting. Instead of a fleshly heaviness, the beauty of the manifesting spirit looks pure, ethereal, almost delicate, as though illumined from a light within. In the case of a master or an elder brother who is manifesting through the coat of flesh, a significant delicacy and purity about the very texture of the flesh can be noted. You cannot mistake a master.

I will give you a picture: let us imagine that we are travelling along a lonely road over a mountain pass in Tibet. In the distance a man approaches. We see nothing extraordinary about him, but as he draws near there is a change within ourselves; we respond to certain vibrations which come from him. We are raised in consciousness, we are raised in understanding. Something is happening which we cannot quite define. As we come within a few yards of him we see that he is no ordinary mortal. His very flesh is illumined, radiant. Light streams from his eyes, his face and his whole body. The very texture of the flesh is different from that of an ordinary mortal – it is heavenly. I want you to get this picture and meditate upon it. Once it is firmly established through imagination it becomes a living reality. You will know that holy man henceforth, and at any future time you can meet him in your meditation. He may have features resembling those of a Tibetan, of a Hindu or of an Englishman, or they may recall some well-known artist's painting of the Master Jesus. He may even be an Indian of the American continent, but whatever facial form he takes, the stamp of purity will be the same. You will recognise him.

Why are we giving you all this?—because it has a distinct bearing upon the matter in this chapter of St John in which the Master Jesus is endeavouring to teach a vital truth concerning the psyche of man.\* Sometimes it is called the etheric body or the soul, but whatever name

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you give it, it is the bridge, the connecting link between the physical body and the pure spirit. Through this link the pure spirit is enabled to manifest through a physical body.

*[For editorial policy on gender issues see the introduction.]*

Now the psyche, as we have told you before, has two aspects: that is to say the pure psyche which is attached to the pure spirit, and the more earthly psyche which is more attached to the physical body. At death this lower portion is withdrawn and eventually disintegrates, but the higher part of the psyche can be made eternal. This is what is taking place slowly through every incarnation, this eternalisation of the psyche. As the psyche or the soul is composed of these two parts it can be beautiful and heavenly or the reverse. Much is absorbed into the psyche in successive incarnations; it is a storehouse, a repository for all the experiences of the earth. In the ordinary man it is not purified, and indeed the cause of selfishness and greed and the selfish desire with which the aspiring soul has to contend.

The teaching in this chapter concerns the need for the psyche to be purified. It is a very subtle lesson this purification of the psyche so that the soul becomes utterly simple and humble. How few people we meet who are utterly humble and pure, who can be called as simple as little children! Yet the Master said 'Except ye ... become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven'. Unless the psyche becomes purified through acts of absolute love it cannot proceed very far, it cannot follow the Master. Did not Peter say, 'Lord, why cannot I follow thee even now? I will lay down my life for thee', but the Master had said, 'Whither I go thou canst not follow me now'. Why did the Master say this? Because he could see that Peter's psyche was very far from being purified. Are there not many people who would renounce the world in order to follow a spiritual life, but they still desire public recognition – to occupy a position in that spiritual, occult, or religious world? They are not content to be used as a channel in some simple and humble way; they want position and recognition of their leadership. This is what the Master could see in Peter, this arrogance, this desire to be somebody of importance. No Peter, except ye become as a little child, with a great love in your heart not for yourself, not for the world, but for God alone. Do you not see? Jesus was trying to teach the need for this utter simplicity, the need to live a life that is quiet and unnoticed, yet all the while is like a healing spring of living water to the parched places. How few live such a life as this.

Jesus put off his outer garment and girded himself with a towel; he took water and washed his disciples' feet, but Peter said, 'Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head.' You see Peter did not want to miss anything; he wanted to do everything more ardently than anyone else, but Jesus indicated that if he washed Peter's feet there was no need for anything else.

What is the esoteric meaning of this? It is most important the act of washing the feet. The feet are astrologically associated with the water sign Pisces and Pisces is associated with the soul. Jesus' washing the feet was symbolical of the purification of the psyche or of the desire body. He was teaching his disciples that if the desires are pure there is no need to worry about anything else. This perhaps doesn't sound very important, but ponder upon it. If the psyche is

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cleansed, the desires pure, there is no need to worry about any resulting action or speech for they are bound to be pure too.

So Jesus told Peter that there was no need to wash his face or his head, for if his feet were washed his psyche was purified and then everything was pure. This is what we mean in the little story of the meeting of the master on the journey through the mountains. The psyche of the master is freed from desire, it is so purified that the very texture of the flesh is transmuted. This is possibly what occultists have in mind when they refrain from eating meat or other coarse foods. They think that by eschewing these things they will grow pure. It probably helps – we think it does – but if the desires are pure it doesn't matter much what you eat because the inflow of the pure waters of the spirit will cleanse and refine the physical atoms.

Then we come to the episode of the betrayal of Jesus by Judas. We have dealt with this story on a former occasion but we will speak of it again. Here is one of the most perfect examples of true brotherhood or divine love. It seems as if the Master selected Judas to betray him. You will remember that as they were gathered round the supper table he said 'One of you shall betray me'. The disciple who is called 'beloved' laid his head on the Master's breast: 'Lord, who is it?' Here is an inference that the Master Jesus deliberately chose his betrayer. Jesus said, 'He it is for whom I shall dip the sop (or bread), and give it him.' It was Judas. Jesus then said, 'That thou doest, do quickly'. This again is curious. What does it mean? Our interpretation is this: the Master knew that when an act is dwelt on in thought for too long many more implications are drawn into the act itself.

So many different little threads or little events all centred around a big event. In working out karma you find many incidents which all seem to lead up to the actual happening: if so and so hadn't happened this would never have occurred. A whole series of events seem to lay the train for the one central event. As an example, many minor symptoms of physical disorder, teeth, indigestion and so on, can result in a severe breakdown in health. We say, 'If I had not been so ineffective or overworked, or if I had not done this or that, so and so would never have happened.' For this reason Jesus said to Judas, 'That thou doest, do quickly', because by meditating upon it Judas would have increased his karma. Jesus knew that it was best to act quickly. That again opens out a whole vista of teaching that we could dwell upon. The spirit has to learn to act spontaneously. It is better, my dear brethren, to make mistakes through impulse than by deliberate malice or evil thinking. Do you not see? Lessons can be learned through burning one's fingers.

Why did Jesus select Judas to betray him? This is a most wonderful example of perfect love. Jesus was able to read far back into the past. He knew the karma which surrounded Judas. In the past Judas had been the victim of betrayal and murder and, by the cosmic law thereby implanted in him, his instinct was to repay that karmic debt by another murder and betrayal. Jesus knew that if Judas gave way to that instinct (which was his right – it was the law of karma) the karma which would be set in motion between Judas and an ordinary man would continue, perhaps through many lives backwards and forwards, backwards and forwards. Do you remember how we explained that the interplay of karma between souls might be likened to a ball tossed backwards and forwards until such time as one soul returns good for evil? Forgive! Herein we read the true doctrine of the forgiveness or the remission of sins. Jesus

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was remitting the sin of Judas. By his great love he drew that debt to himself with the object of forgiving Judas, or returning love for hate, and thereby breaking that sequence of events which might have gone on for ages. Jesus would not repay evil in the same way as an ordinary man. He immediately forgave the sin and wiped it out. This same forgiveness of sins is deeply embedded in the Master's teaching – forgive, forgive. Every man has like opportunities; you can either render tremendous love to one who has sinned against you or you can withhold that love and let your karma work it out.

The concluding verses of the chapter contain the commandment to 'love one another'. The Master Jesus, or rather Christ through the Master Jesus, said: 'By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples if ye have love one to another'. The whole doctrine of the great World Teacher of the Piscean age was love, divine love. There is no compromise. he meant what he said. He did not say 'Love in certain circumstances'. He said 'Love one another' and 'Bear ye one another's burdens'. My brethren, the whole doctrine of the Lord Christ is that of brotherhood. Therefore we say the Piscean age, the two thousand years which have passed, has been a period of preparation. Man has endeavoured to understand and appreciate so wonderful a truth, but as yet has failed to practise it. In the age ahead, the Aquarian age, mankind will be given all the opportunities (you see this happening now) to put into action this teaching. It remains to be seen how quickly man will assimilate love and brotherhood and thereby how quickly he will remit the sins of the world. In this sense we shall witness the second coming of Christ—not through one divine man but through collective humanity. Christ will express through brotherhood and love the way, the truth and the life. 'And I, if I be lifted up from the earth will draw all men unto me'—this is what the words mean.

*(Reading of verses 1 to 4)*

'He laid aside his garments' could be interpreted as: he laid aside that heavenly life from which he had come. He came back to the world voluntarily, not by compulsion for the completion of his karma. He laid aside his outer clothing (his universal life) and girded himself with a towel; he put on flesh, a physical body. He took the water (the symbol of the psyche) and he came to the world to help to purify man's soul from the lower desires.

*(Reading of verses 5 to 10)*

Peter had the aspiration, he wanted to be good, he wanted to follow the Master. His desire body was stained with desires which no man but the Master could see. Jesus wanted to cleanse Peter from this unworthiness. Peter wanted to shine before the world. The Master said to him, 'The cock shall not crow till thou hast denied me thrice'.

He knew the longing in Peter's soul to stand well in the eyes of the world. He lacked courage or strength to live simply and humbly for the truth. How many are there like Peter in the world?

*(Reading of verses 11 to 16)*

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The Master said he meant this as a demonstration. I wash your feet. In other words you must wash your brother to cleanse his desires; do nothing to increase unworthy desires in your brother. The teaching also shows the need for utter and complete humility of soul. As he said once before, 'Not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven'—the soul that has so purified its desires that it has become unconscious of its own goodness. You cannot tell by outward appearance or by a man's own words what he really is, but by his complete simplicity and what you call genuineness. A truly humble man or woman rings true, is unconscious of himself and is thus truly like a little child.

*(Reading of verses 17 to 31)*

'Now is the Son of Man glorified'—what does this mean? Our interpretation is that by the act of drawing to himself the karma of Judas the soul of the Master Jesus was glorified in that it was manifesting divine love. When the Christ is glorified in man it means that man is manifesting the glory of God. That is what happens when true forgiveness enters man's heart, true love for his brother who has hurt him. Then God is being glorified. When God is glorified in man God takes man up and man is glorified in God. In other words when a man forgives his enemy and loves him that very act causes his soul to be so raised in consciousness that it goes direct to the Christ sphere and shares in the radiance of God's love. You have experienced this in a small degree when you have forgiven someone and given love when you could have done the reverse. You are raised in consciousness and you are deeply, quietly, subtly happy. God glorifies Himself in you; He raises you up so that you share His happiness in heaven.

I want to say here that all these esoteric truths are for *you*; they are for every soul and we are all slowly moving forward on this mountain path. These lovely things which we describe to you, which happened to the Master are for every man and for every age. I assure you, my dear ones, that before you opens a path of ever-unfolding glory and happiness, unbelievable to you as yet. We have described the appearance of the Master and the beauty of the texture of his flesh and the purification of his soul; this is for you too. You will experience this. God will glorify himself, He will manifest through you and you will be raised up. Yes, every word that we speak is true. This is the path upon which your feet are set, and every act, every effort to love and to forgive is taking you higher and higher up that path to the mountain of happiness and the perfection of life.

*(Reading of verse 32 to the end of the chapter.)*

You see the insight, the vision of truth: 'Thou canst not follow me now', thou canst not come yet, because he could see the karma and the desire body of Simon Peter and he knew that it needed to be cleansed and all the karma worked out before the spirit could follow Christ. What a glorious vista opens before us, what happiness enters our breast when we know that we too shall attain and enter into the heaven prepared for us by the love of Christ the Son!

**Q.** Take the Mosaic law: an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth, which of course is the law of retribution and also the law of karma. It would also be expressed by the Buddhist doctrine

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of the soul in its ignorance clinging to the wheel of reincarnation and ‘hugging its spokes of agony’. Is not freedom from such condition expressed by ‘rebirth’, ‘salvation’ or ‘redemption’ through Christ, and the change over from the love of the mortal Adam to the love of the newborn Christ? Is that not so?

**A.** Yes, that is the whole story. That is the sole meaning of this manifestation of the love of Christ: to show man the way to transmute karma.

**Q.** Is the whole keynote this tremendous transition from one life to the other?

**A.** Yes. That is what is happening now, a rebirth. The law of the psyche or the law of the physical life, the earth life, is the Mosaic law, but the law of the spirit can cut across the psyche or psychic law.

An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth is the law of karma, the being bound on the wheel of rebirth, this is all involved with the psyche and physical life, but the spiritual law is concerned purely with the spirit. Is there an analogy on the earth? Yes. Water can be changed by two different processes. It can be solidified into ice or, if fire is applied to it, it goes off as steam. Do you see the analogy? The law of the earth is that of solidification; the law of the fire, or the spirit sets free, transforms, transmutes and purges away all dross.

*(In answer to another question:)*

It is true that there is a great deal of karma involved between a parent and child. Through such a relationship one sees more clearly than through any other how sins can be remitted through love, because usually the love of a mother for her child is of the quality of divine love, and a mother has that quality of forgiving and forgiving and forgiving. You all know that. This thought we leave with you. Those who have a special link with a child or parent will rejoice in the relationship and realise what a wonderful thing it is that two souls are thus brought together, because it affords such a glorious opportunity for the true remission of sins, absolute forgiveness through love. There is no other earthly love to equal a parent’s love, but more especially a mother’s.

**Q.** Has everybody got karma to work out?

**A.** Yes, everyone. Karma is that which is the result of action either good or evil in the physical body. Not only this, but you are continually making karma which has to be met sometime either here or in the future. Only through the aspiration to love and to follow and express God can you hope to pay off, dismiss or clear away all the entanglements of karma, and in the future to meet what we call good karma or the results of good karma.

Benediction:

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We pray that we shall become more united in spirit and so, as a family of brothers and sisters, feel the heartbeat of love in our relationship in this spiritual work. We pray to receive the blessing of God and to know heavenly peace in our hearts.

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:*

*Esoteric Christianity, etheric bridge, mastery, astrology, transmutation, initiation*

