



The Light of Christ

An address for the Cosmic Mass ● 22nd February 2009 ● Rev Lukas

As he passed by, he saw a man blind from his birth. And his disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" Jesus answered, "It was not that this man sinned, or his parents, but that the works of God might be made manifest in him. We must work the works of him who sent me, while it is day; night comes, when no one can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world,"

As he said this he spat on the ground and made clay of the spittle and anointed the man's eyes with the clay, saying to him, "Go, wash in the pool of Silo'am" (which means Sent). So he went and washed and came back seeing.

John 9: 1-7

This passage of Scripture from the Gospel of John is often held up as evidence that reincarnation and karma were in the consciousness of the Disciples of Christ.

A knowledge of reincarnation and karma seems to be the unspoken premise from which the question was asked: Rabbi, teacher, teach us, who sinned (whose karma is it) that this man was born blind? Is it something his parents have done to create this karma, or is it the consequences of something this man did in a previous existence, that has resulted in him being blind at birth, to be blind in his present incarnation?

The answer given by the teacher, as we heard, was that neither the parents nor the man were responsible for the karmic consequence of blindness, but that the situation was presenting itself so *'that the works of God might be made manifest in him.'*

There is also a reference to Silo'am, which the text indicates means 'sent'. It also means 'sent forth' and 'messenger'. The word Silo'am comes from the Hebrew word Shiloah which can mean 'sending forth', but also refers to a flash, a ray, inspiration or luminous flash *. These latter interpretations contain the idea of light and enlightenment.

In this passage Christ speaks the words: *'I am the light of the world'*. It is the subject of the light of Christ that I want to enter into, to some degree, this morning.

The story is of a man whose blindness is healed. On one level it is about the act of healing physical blindness, and on another level of interpretation this story relates to enlightenment or illumination.

This second level of interpretation brings to mind an early verse in chapter 1 of John's Gospel: *'The light shines in the darkness and the darkness has comprehended it not.'* We are all born into the darkness of earth consciousness. The healing of blindness in this story can therefore be interpreted as the darkness of our consciousness awakening and comprehending the light of Christ.

Physical Healing

I can remember Mario talking about the healing of the blind man at some point and he said something like this – that the saliva of Christ, when mixed with the earth substance, released a power which healed the man's blindness.

We know that the earth and sun were once one body. So we can imagine the mineral earth being a denser, more condensed form of the sun and of light. This is easy to imagine when we look at the formation of a crystal, or precious stone; there is something of spirit manifested in those shapes and colours. Fallen spirit, but spirit nevertheless.

The power contained in the saliva of Christ may then have converted the mineral earth back to a form of light, thus stimulating the sense of sight in the eyes of the blind man.

If you read Anatomy and Embryology in relation to the senses, you discover that the sense organs of smell, touch, taste and even hearing are formed from the external skin cells of the embryo. An external surface becomes sensitive and then connects in an inward direction with the brain thus forming a sense organ.**

However the eyes, the organs of sight, are the only sense organs that grow outwards, and they are formed from the same embryonic cells that create the brain. The eyes develop like a plant: as a plant grows out of the dark earth towards the light, so do the eyes grow out from the brain towards the light, and in response to the light. For example, the white of the eyes is in fact from the same material as the white matter, known as the 'dura mater', that envelops the brain.

So the blind man's eyes needed an extra drawing out to the light to finally begin to function. This drawing out was provided by the Christ.

Enlightenment

What can we make of the phrase translated as: *'that the works of God might be made manifest in him'*?

The literal translation in an Interlinear Bible reads: *'in order that might be manifested the works of the God in him.* 'The God in him': an idea to keep in mind as we move on from the literal physical healing of the blind man to the interpretation involving enlightenment.

After the man was healed, we read that the neighbours and those who had seen him before living as a beggar, said: *'Is not this the man who used to sit and beg? Some said, 'It is he', others said, 'No but he is like him,' He said, 'I am the man.'*

The actual Greek words spoken by the man were 'ego eimi'. In other words, his response was 'I AM, which is different from the English idea of 'I am the man'. He makes a clear statement concerning his individuality. He says, 'I AM.'

Individuality and its Consequences

Because those from his local community were uncertain about him, they took him off to the Pharisees. It seems they needed some confirmation or judgement from the religious authorities that it was okay for this man to be what he had now become, able to see and saying 'I AM.

The Pharisees questioned him but did not believe that he had ever been blind in the first place. So they called his parents to get the required evidence.

The parents confirmed that he was blind from birth, but they added that they did not know anything about how he had received his sight. And they suggested that the Pharisees ask their son. *'We know nothing about that; he is old enough to tell you himself.'* John writes that the parents adopted this stance because they feared they would be kicked out of the synagogue if they were to acknowledge the Christ.

After further questioning by the Pharisees, the healed man said: *'If this man (meaning Jesus) were not from God, he could do nothing.'* They answered him, *'You were born in utter sin, and would you teach us?'* In other words, 'You are a beggar now and you were also a loser in your previous life and you dare to teach us!'

'And they cast him out.' I assume this means that he was cast out of the synagogue, the very thing his parents had feared would happen to them.

For this man there were consequences for making the statement 'I AM', and for standing in the truth of his experience. Major areas of his life where he had previously belonged were now adversely affected: the realm of livelihood and social connections within a community. Those who knew him and associated with him in his daily life as a beggar took him off to be judged. He was in a sense disowned by his own family. The blood ties were now changed. He was cast out of his traditional religious community by the authorities.

There are consequences when one recognises the I AM. Standing in that truth will change our life. We may need to stand alone, as our relationship to blood ties, and to the dogma of tradition, changes.

Christ the Good Shepherd

Immediately after the man's ejection by the Pharisees, we read that Jesus heard that he had been cast out and went and found him.

After Jesus finds him, he asks the man:

'Do you believe in the Son of man?' He answered, And who is he, sir, that I may believe in him?'

Jesus said to him, 'You have seen him, and it is he who speaks to you.'

He said, 'Lord I believe'; and he worshiped him.

Christ asked the man: *'Do you believe in the Son of man?'* Do you believe in the son of 'anthropos'? The scholars say that the Son of Man is a title that Jesus used to describe himself, which seems to be the case. But we can wonder further about the meaning of this title, and ask what is born from the earthly experience of 'anthropos'. What is the purpose of the human experience of incarnation, and what is the son or the offspring of this experience? The purpose is so that the I AM may be born in us. The son or offspring is the I AM.

This is what the healed man is awakened to: the I AM, the god manifest within. Christ confirms the man's experience of self, the I AM, and the man then worships Christ

You will remember last week the subject of the address was the Good Shepherd. Here we have a picture of the Good Shepherd at work. He finds one of his own and the one he finds recognises his voice and follows him. The Good Shepherd *goes before them and the sheep follow him for they know his voice* (John 10).

Once we have an experience of the I AM and of Christ, our lives are different. Life is imbued with worship – which means to pay divine honour to Christ, to hold the presence of Christ in high esteem. The old-fashioned term 'piety' also seems to apply here – that is a deep devotional feeling towards Christ. The Greek word used for worship in the text is 'proskuneo',

which contains 'pros' which means towards and 'kuneo' which means to kiss. Life becomes reverent, life becomes prayerful, which means living life with 'proskuneo' for Christ.

The Flock of the Good Shepherd

We can conclude from this story from John's Gospel that one of the characteristics of being connected with Christ, being part of Christ's flock, is an experience of aloneness which comes with a freedom from old dogmas, and other cultural and blood ties. Not necessarily a rejection of them, but a sense of freedom from them - an acceptance of what they have given and their place in the formative stage of one's life but now not being controlled by them. One's humanity and love is enhanced, even though one can be misunderstood and rejected.

St Paul teaches of this experience when he wrote to the Romans:

*'I appeal to you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. **Do not be conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewal of your mind**, that you may prove what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.'*

Christ and Karma

In chapter 13 of John we read that after Judas had left the Last Supper Jesus said,

'Now is the Son of man glorified and in him God is glorified; If God is glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself, and glorify him at once.'

It takes me a few readings of this verse to glean some meaning. I think one way to reword this text is - God is glorified in the son of man, and the son of man is glorified in God.

It is a verse that needs to be contemplated for a long time. So I am unable to do it justice yet. However, for me it contains the glimmer of the wonder of the microcosm and the macrocosm. God is glorified in the Son of man, the microcosm, and the Son of man is glorified in God, the macrocosm.

Before Christ a gulf had developed, separating the human being from the heavens. Christ is now bridging that gulf. The incarnation of Christ marks the beginning of our redemption.

Christ said, 'I have come as light into the world, that whoever believes in me may not remain in darkness'(John 12). Christ is healing the blindness of humanity. Christ is resolving the karma of humanity and in so doing reconciles us with the heavens.

It is this light of Christ that is now in the world, which can open our eyes to the I AM and the glory of reconciliation with the heavens. This is the potential each of us has.

So shall it be.

* The Metaphysical Bible Dictionary, Charles Fillmore.

** Our Twelve Senses, Albert Soesman.

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