

An Inner Labyrinth of Initiation

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The symbolism of the Easter story is rich and multifaceted. In this article, which is based amongst others on works by Geoffrey Hodson, a great number of aspects of esoteric correspondence in the Easter story are given in brief. Together they are the facets of a diamond that light up when the light of spiritual awareness is directed at them. The power lies hidden in the manifold keys and symbolism of these stories, which have stood the test of time.

Several dimensions may be detected in biblical stories:

- In first instance, one has the *historical component*, expressed in events, places, times, human activities, etc. This historical dimension contains many improbable aspects such as things that seem physically impossible like walking on water; making the sun stand still; raising the dead from the graves; and the simultaneity of events at different locations that are far removed with regard to time and place, or which chronologically are impossible. Therefore, from the esoteric viewpoint, this dimension is regarded as the vehicle of a deeper, spiritual symbolism. The historical discourse is therefore of lesser importance than the inner message it contains.
- The inner message manifests itself in different ways. *The development of the human being and its soul* is one of these ways. This concerns the spiritual growth that occurs in every human being. In this sense, Jesus is the personification of the enlightened one treading the path of initiation. The personages around him represent the aspects of this human being on the path, with all their good, problematic, challenging and surprising features and all their qualities, trials and tribulations.
- A yet deeper aspect in the esoteric biblical interpretation may be found in the *story of the World Teacher*, the perfected Christ Consciousness. The World Teacher is "the Perfect One", who willingly takes form to lead humanity further along the spiritual path of at-one-ment. The great mottoes of Love and Unity of the New Testament is in the spirit of and carried by this Perfect One, who lives the path of perfection of every human being.
- The deepest level is the so-called *cosmogensis, the birth and development of the spiritual and material manifestation*. This stands for the manifestation of what is sometimes called the Word, or Logos, in the primordial space of the Great Mother. Brought into the context of our solar system, it represents the life of our Solar Logos, the Lord the Sun, the Cosmic Christ, to whom we refer in the Holy Eucharist as "the eternal High Priest who forever offers Himself as the eternal sacrifice."

In the following paragraphs we will take a bird's eye view of the most important passages of the Passion story and briefly touch on some elements that correspond with these levels of esoteric interpretation.

Entering Jerusalem

Jesus is the enlightened one and is, in this sense, an inner realization of Light and Love. He is master of the body, emotions and thoughts that serve him faithfully as if they were a pack animal, like the ass on which he is seated. Riding an ass he enters Jerusalem -the symbol for the sacred center of the heart-, receptive, as the gentle one. The shining presence of the light of the soul raises the thoughts and feelings to an exalted state of consciousness, expressed in the cheering crowds. The Divine Self is recognized and admired as the ray of limitless Being.

The temple is the symbol of the universe in manifestation and of the incarnated human being. When the light of the soul is present in this temple, it is purified of personal tendencies and attachment to the physical plane. Healing occurs when the connection with the light of the soul is made. The enlightened state of awareness heals all imperfections and returns everything into the perfection of conscious divine existence.

The Last Supper and the betrayal

The Lord the Sun -the Cosmic Christ- reveals himself with the twelve signs of the zodiac. This inner structure is also present in the human being. The twelve disciples represent this inner structure.

The divine self can only become manifest by voluntarily enwrapping itself in matter. The creative angels assist the pristine spirit to involve into materiality. However, matter provides huge resistance, as it cannot know the divine indwelling being, which only the enlightened consciousness is able to do. Hence matter exhibits its resistance against the light. This is powerlessness and ignorance, expressed as betrayal against the spirit. In the story Judas symbolizes the resistance offered by matter against the inflowing divine light essence.

When the divine light becomes active in a human being, all the qualities that are present are activated - therefore also the egocentric aspects; this allows the negative aspects to come to the surface.

The thirty pieces of silver Judas receives are symbolic of the threefold reward that matter receives due to the incarnation of spirit in it.

At the Last Supper the words "*This is my Body*" and "*This is my Blood*" are expressions dating from the Ancient Mysteries from as far back as Atlantis. These mysteries, which came via India and Egypt, were also known in the Middle

East, amongst others by the Essene community. These are words referring to the divine identification: "I am That". "That" is an expression indicating the all-supporting and ineffable One Life Principle. It is the Unity of Being that manifests itself in the diversity of appearance.

The chalice is also a symbol of the causal body of the human being, which is the vehicle of the higher self. Blood represents pure intuition, the healer of all imperfection. The symbolism of the vine in the story is that of the anthakarana, the awakened connection between the personality and soul using the rainbow-bridge. The bread represents the divine spark, atma, the light of the divine sun in the human being. In the symbolism of the last supper we see a conscious expression of the complete self-realization and unification with the one life in which everything lives, moves and has its being.

During the last supper, the Christ promises to forgo eternal peace (nirvana) until each and every human divine spark (monad) has reached complete realization of the Divine Self. In the esoteric tradition this is sometimes referred to as the Buddha-promise, which promise expresses in a special way the duty and function of a World Teacher.

Getsemane

A field of divergence exists between the Christ -the World Teacher- who gives a new spiritual impulse to the world and the initiated Jesus, who is the vehicle for the Christ Consciousness.

Jesus needs to free himself of his last karmic barriers and remains, still present in his system, so that in him the fullness of the Christ can express itself. The Easter story conveys this clearly. *Getsemane* means the place where the oil is pressed. A press is the symbol of struggle and the pressure required until the essence appears. The passage about *Getsemane* conveys this inner confrontation. A struggle in consciousness; when the inner truth is recognized the old consciousness is converted by the new: "Thy will be done".

The three disciples depict the mental, astral and etheric/physical parts of the personality that are under the control of the initiate. The neophyte can only undergo the initiation alone. He leaves everything behind him; even the inner parts of his personality and higher self and pursues his way completely alone. The disciples cannot follow him, as they are not of the spiritual consciousness of the initiate, so they fall asleep three times. The soul -the Son- directs itself to the highest -the Father-, its monad or divine spark!

The emptying of the cup to the last drop symbolizes the dissolution of the higher self. In the long run even the soul vanishes. Everything dissolves and transforms into the *Great Sacrifice* in which the initiate unifies himself with the universal sacrifice that sustains everything. The Son of Man is a reference

to the initiate who rises from his personal existence into divine existence. The Son of God is a reference to the World Teacher or the Logos, which manifests itself as a divine being. Being delivered into the hands of sinners is an image of spirit in tension with matter. The soul -often referred to as the son- stands at the threshold of vanishing and being completely assumed in the Father.

Taken as a Prisoner

How can an enlightened one in a spiritual drama succumb to a group of people with weapons? This rather improbable situation expresses an inner meaning. Perhaps, in the story, it is about an old piece of karma that had to do with violence and suppression. Everything needs to be worked out completely - the cup must be entirely empty before there is sufficient space for something entirely new. Judas represents the part of the human being that denies, that does not know and resists. It is the fact that he betrays himself that for him is the heaviest burden. Later he repents and hangs himself.

The striking of the right ear portrays the elimination of the rational mind. In another version of the story, Jesus heals the ear, indicating that the rational mind is reconnected to divine knowledge. The intuition is then repaired. Living by the sword means dying by the sword. Living by love implies the perfect sacrifice of unification and freedom. The continual reference to old prophecies is a reference to the timeless knowledge, *the ancient wisdom* and the Divine Plan in which spiritual evolution is contained. In this manner is indicated that everything happens according to divine law.

If we understand this story as cosmogenesis, as the birth of a universe from the Logos, the great multitude that overpowers the Lord of Light may be seen as the legions of elemental angels, the builders, who are on the involutionary path of the Logos. They push, flatten and force spirit into the confines of matter. The Solar Logos expresses himself thus in the material dimension.

The kiss is a symbol of the tight relationship between spirit overshadowing and matter resisting, whereby an extreme friction occurs. This is the case in the human being as well as in the universe.

The Crucifixion

The location of this crucifixion drama is in the head of the human being - the place of the skull. The whole story symbolizes a drama of consciousness. It is not so much the physical human being that is crucified, but the spiritual human being who is transformed in consciousness and becomes one with the Divine Self. The transformation that is experienced is not only on the outside but also on the inside. The pain and bitterness is expressed in the gall. Jesus is however pure and free of karmic remains and does not drink the gall: He does not experience the bitterness of this experience in his personality as it has been completely transformed.

The cross is a symbol of the manifestation of spirit in matter. The Self-sacrifice of the divine spirit is voluntary. It is in fact a loss of infinite life that hides itself in the veil of illusion of temporal existence. The crucifixion indicates the loss of freedom: The crucified one is first made to lie flat on the ground so that the four-sided nails can fix him to the cross.

The clothing is distributed. This is symbolical of the various spheres of manifestation. That they play dice for the various pieces of clothing indicates an apparent randomness without divine order. The divine self is no longer known under the veil of matter, it seems as if things occur at random, yet everything is contained in the divine plan. Einstein once said: "God does not play dice"!

The bleeding heart is symbolical of the Logos, who continually gives love and life with an open heart, also during manifestation and self-sacrifice.

In the human being the higher self is crucified to thought and emotion. When the higher is completely manifested and self-conscious, it knows itself as a prisoner in matter.

The Death

In the specification of the hours, six means connection and nine means regeneration and a new birth. The death drama therefore indicates the new birth that occurs due to the connection of the opposites spirit and matter. Darkness means ignorance. The human awareness cannot understand nor view what is actually happening. It is the description of the ignorance about the ancient initiatory mysteries that are given in this story.

The words "*Why hast thou forsaken me*" could indicate the experience of utter loneliness when the neophyte hangs over the abyss between detachment from the old -the personality and the individuality of the soul- and the realization of the unity in the Divine Self. At that moment in time the soul vanishes, whereby the spirit no longer exists in a veil but can manifest itself directly.

A second explanation of this sentence is: "*How thou dost glorify me*" and indicates the merging with the One. It is the mystery of the dewdrop merging with the ocean. Sometimes it is referred to as reaching the other side.

Ridicule and contempt indicate the utmost ignorance of the masses. This is emphasized (in the image of the vinegar) that for human awareness it is a bitter ordeal to break all bonds between the personality and the soul. Calling loudly shows the power of the will of the spirit.

That the veil of the temple tears implies that the separation between the causal and personal human vanishes and spirit can penetrate directly into awareness

and the physical being. The veil is also rend from above to below - a sign that it is the higher that brings about the vanishing of the separation at this moment of victory. The result in the physical system is such that it trembles on its foundations as in an earthquake.

The dead rising from the graves -something that simply is not physically possible- is here also meant symbolically and refers to the spiritual powers in man that were previously latent. Sleepers and the dead are often-used symbols in the scriptures to denote "spiritual" life slumbering and as yet inactive in the consciousness of the human being. These are now activated and they unfold themselves, they rise from the grave of physical existence and appear in the healed system, the holy city.

The headman -the thinking-, seeing the wonder of the crucifixion of the ego, and all the other personages -aspects of the human being- are enlightened and behold the spirit.

Resurrection

The mysteries mark the road from darkness to light, from death to immortality, from spiritual night to divine dawn. The grave is the world and materialism. The stone in front of the entrance shows the imprisonment of spirit in the grave of matter. However, when the stone has been rolled away, the mystery of the spirit awakened in matter is shown.

The two angels with their wings directed towards each other, one at either end of the grave, represent the spiritual Will and Intelligence of the threefold divine Self. Jesus, who appears later, represents divine Wisdom. Together they form the spiritual trinity.

The two angels can also be seen as the two kundalini forces in the human being, the grave being the skull in which the divine fire awakens. Also the ancient symbol of the caduceus -an image of the fully awakened kundalini power- is often topped by the head of the kalahansa -the world swan- as the apex in which the two serpents meet. The fully awakened kundalini is the spiritualization of the human being. This lays aside the swathing -the sheath of illusion by matter- and frees itself from the death of the physical form and leaves the grave.

The divine spirit first appears as the gardener, a symbol of the controller of matter and the growth therein. It is only when Maria is touched as a result of Jesus calling her mystical name, that she sees the mystery of the divine life that has been raised from the death of physical illusion.

Maria Magdalene is the intuition that is enlightened by beholding the divine Self. In her turn, she passes this vision on to the other aspects, symbolized by the disciples. In this manner the awakened spirit works via the intuition on the

higher thought and the personality and enlightens the whole human being and humanity.

In this manner the various inner dimensions display the story of human development. For the seeker for inner truth and unity, these scenes are locations in a labyrinth of meditation, transformation, enlightenment and unification. Each lights up when the consciousness directs the light of inner vision upon it.

Literature

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