

SPIRITUAL CHRISTMAS

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SPIRITUAL CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR

GUIDING HAND FOR INNER REFLECTION
AND INSPIRATION IN THE CHRISTMAS SEASON

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Book development Lectorium Rosicrucianum

Graphical design and print Rozekruis Pers, Haarlem, the Netherlands

Letter Adobe's Chaparral Pro

Paper 90 grams BioTop from Antalis

ISBN 978 90 6732 457 1

© Rozekruis Pers – Haarlem, the Netherlands, 2016

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Preface

In the autumn of 2014, we came into contact with André de Boer, who was filled with the idea to create an online program about the deeper meaning of Christmas and New Year's Eve. He suggested creating a small team that could realize a series of written and spoken texts which discuss the spiritual path that every human being can follow on the basis of the mysteries behind the Christmas narrative.

More and more, people are searching the internet for what they need. That is certainly true for philosophical knowledge, spirituality and wisdom. So we were quickly convinced that creating an online program would be an appropriate way to share the esoteric backgrounds of Christmas and New Year's Eve with a wide audience, and decided to do this by offering daily emails with links to texts that are suited to the day of the year. In sixteen consecutive days, from December 22 to January 6, participants received a narrative from The Aquarian Gospel, followed by a reflection on that narrative.

Many participants were enthusiastic about this online program, not only because the texts appealed to them but also because they could listen to them. In this way the Christmas period received more value and meaning for them. Many asked for similar online programs that deal with the other two major Christian festivals. We honored these requests by establishing the online programs 'Spiritual Easter' and 'Spiritual Pentecost' in the spring of 2016.

In the autumn of 2016 'The Mirdad mysteries' followed, and we are working on two more programs entitled 'The mysteries of Tao' and 'The mysteries of the soul', planned for release in 2017.

Soon after the first program there came an explicit request to also publish the texts in the form of a book. There was a clear desire to be able to read the texts on paper; also, a book of these texts was considered an appropriate Christmas present. Thus we see that active participation in the digital world is able to increase the interest in the printed word! We are therefore particularly pleased that the texts of the online program 'Spiritual Christmas' are now published as a book and an e-book.

This year (2016) the 'Spiritual Christmas' program will again be offered through email and the website www.spiritualtexts.academy. The book *Spiritual Christmas* allows you to read the texts offline or read them along with the spoken word.

We especially thank Daniel van Egmond for the profound words in the introduction to this book.

Rozekruis Pers
Doride Zelle

Introduction

THE WONDER OF THE LIGHT-BIRTH

Daniël van Egmond

During the autumn equinox light and darkness are precisely in balance with each other. Subsequently the influence of the darkness begins to increase more and more as the power of the light is fading. The darkness is the deepest around Christmas and we can only wait in confidence until the light is born again. That is how people of yore experienced the alternation and struggle between the light and the darkness in their own lives. Before villages and towns were bathed in electric light, the increasing darkness was almost tangible to the inhabitants and they could not help but eagerly await the new light. They heard stories about the miraculous birth that took place in this darkness in the distant past: God's son was born in a hidden place in order to liberate humanity from the darkness. The light that would soon become stronger again was a sign of this birth. It was not only an external light but could also be experienced as an inner light that pierced the darkness of everyday life.

Christmas has always been interpreted in a spiritual way in the Christian mystical movements. It is not so much important whether the son of God ever came to be born on earth or not; what matters is that his birth is going to take place within us.

Not until the rise of the Rosicrucian movement in the 17th century and the increasing influence of the writings of Jacob Boehme was the inner meaning of Christmas discussed more and

more outside the monastery walls: Christmas is not so much the commemoration of an historical event but rather a miracle that can happen to all of us; it is the birth of this son within us. The Christian Theosophical tradition of Jacob Boehme relates that we are living in darkness as long as there has not been an inner transformation or rebirth. What to our ordinary eyes is light, is deep darkness to the inner being.

This tradition emphasizes that we should make a radical distinction between the outer and the inner man. We are the outer being, as it is functioning in our daily lives. Our attention is constantly drawn to our sensory experiences. But above all we are governed by the incessant flow of our thoughts, feelings, fantasies and desires. Although we believe that we ourselves are the source of this continuous flow, we are unable to stop it. Consequently we are determined by this stream, rather than the opposite. Since this condition is comparable to the dream state, most traditions emphasize that we are not awake in our daily lives, but rather still asleep. The only difference between daytime sleep and the 'normal' night time sleep is that during the former we do respond to all kinds of sensory stimuli. And just as during sleep we believe to be awake, even in our so-called waking state we are still in a kind of sleep.

But what or who, then, is the inner man? It is the soul which can be born within us. Just as Jesus was born of Mary, so may the soul be born of us, external people. For that reason, Angelus Silesius, a pupil of the Christian Theosophical and Rosicrucian tradition, wrote:

What good does Gabriel's "Ave, Mary" do

Unless he give me that same greeting too?

We can – like Mary – learn to no longer identify ourselves with the incessant flow of thoughts, feelings and desires. But that

implies that we, outer beings, need to wake up and be willing to listen to the words that Gabriel and other messengers speak to us. Living in our darkness, but awakened by these messengers, we learn to say in complete self-surrender: *let it be to me according to your word*. Therefore, Angelus Silesius said:

*Be silent, silent, dearest one,
Only be silent utterly.
Then far beyond thy farthest wish
God will show goodness unto thee.*

In order to receive this message, it should become silent within us so that we can become focused. It means that we no longer automatically respond to whatever we are being told, but that we are really going to listen, and – like Mary – keep the words in our hearts like a seed that will later be able to unfold. This attentive attitude of life is a necessary condition for the inner man – the Son of God – to be born within us. Such an attitude to life means that we learn to listen and observe in a responsive manner. Usually, however, we have already made up our minds before the other person has finished speaking and we do not really listen to what he or she is telling us. Only rarely do we let ourselves be surprised by what presents itself to us in the world. For we have seen it all so many times; by now we know what the world looks like. A receptive mode of perception, however, suddenly allows the everyday things to present themselves to us in new and refreshing ways. That is the beginning of the return of the light! When we are waiting, being quiet and receptive, then the light can penetrate into the darkness of our waking consciousness; then the moment of the inner Christmas has arrived. The outer human being lives mainly from the head; hence the incessant stream of thoughts that constantly drags us along. On the other hand, in the tradition of the Rosycross, the heart takes the central place, often symbolized by the rose. The heart will open, to

the extent that we learn to live our lives with attention.

As Angelus Silesius said:

*Thy heart receives God's dew and all that with Him goes
When it expands toward Him as does an opening rose.*

Dew is an alchemical symbol. When the dew descends from heaven on the outer man who has died, then the resurrection will take place: the soul - the son of God - will arise from the earthly shell of the outer man. Indeed, this process means that the outer man must die. If we no longer speak and act from our own will and desire, but instead become attentive and receptive to the soul, then the outer man actually begins to die. Without this process of dying – without the darkness that precedes the birth of the light – the birth of the soul cannot take place:

*If He should live in you, God first Himself must die.
How would you, without death, inherit His own life?*

Without this birth, our life as an outer human being is infertile. The outer man is composed of dust and will return to dust. This 'dust' refers not only to the physical body but to our entire personality, to everything with which we usually identify ourselves. We should learn to let go of all this, because:

*Though Christ a thousand times in Bethlehem were born,
but not within thy self, thy soul will be forlorn.*

That sounds serious, and it is. But the annual return of the light which we celebrate at Christmas reminds us ever again of the light that can be born within us. The annual - and daily - return of the outer light nourishes our hope and our confidence that the miracle of the birth can also take place in us.

Bilthoven, oktober 2015.

DECEMBER 22
PREPARING YOURSELF

DECEMBER 22 REFLECTION PREPARING YOURSELF

In this book you will find the texts of the daily emails that were sent to the participants in the online program Spiritual Christmas during the Christmas season of 2015/2016, from December 22 – the day after the winter solstice – until January 6, the day of Epiphany. The texts allow you to contemplate the esoteric meaning of Christmas and the Christmas season. By focusing your attention on it you create a receptivity to a very spiritual process: the Light-birth within yourself. That is the Christmas miracle of awakening and activating the divine being within you. It is the beginning of a completely new spiritual path that never ends. In English, the time period following Christmas has a meaningful name: ‘holidays’, which literally means ‘holy days’, days that can be seen as a gift to focus on healing in the broadest sense of the word. These days, when you can be ‘vacant’ from all your usual worries, allow you to be filled with healing powers. The word ‘vacant’ means ‘empty’, while the word ‘holy’ is related to ‘being whole’. According to several traditions the cosmic ‘gates to the divine’ are wide open during the period from December 24 until January 6. This time period from Christmas until Epiphany is also referred to as the twelve holy nights. This idea is not based on historical events of more than two thousand years ago; rather it concerns cosmic processes.

Spiritual development

Where did the idea of the twelve nights originate? Long before Christianity arrived in Europe, the Germanic and Celtic peoples

celebrated a midwinter feast (or Jul-feast) sometimes lasting eleven days and twelve nights, following the winter solstice. That time period is exactly the difference between twelve revolutions of the moon around the earth, in 29.5 days (354 in total), and the 365 days it takes the earth to complete one rotation around the sun: $365 - 354 = 11$ days and 12 nights.

The number twelve expresses fullness and completeness. Think of the 12 signs of the Zodiac, the 12 hours of the day and the 12 hours of the night. Consider also the 12 tribes of Israel, the 12 disciples of Jesus and the 12 Knights of the Round Table. Twelve is the product of three and four: $3 \times 4 = 12$. The twelve holy nights can be seen as stages along the path of spiritual development, symbolically indicated in the twelve hours of the Nuctemeron of Apollonius of Tyana, the twelve labours of Hercules and the thirteen songs of repentance in the Gospel of the Pistis Sophia.

In many traditions three is considered a divine number, while four is considered an earthly number. From this point of view the number 12 encompasses both the earthly and the divine.

Humanity also holds both the earthly and the divine within itself. Human beings as we know them are indeed manifestations of the divine, but they themselves are not divine and never will be. Our physical bodies will eventually die. The physical body is dust and will return to dust.

The bridge between time and eternity

Several wisdom teachings speak about an immortal divine principle, lying dormant in every human being, that is just waiting to wake up and be active. Based on that awakened and active divine principle, the human being can become a bridge between time and eternity. What matters is not that we will enter eternity, but that the eternal being within us may be vivified. That is the core of all Gnostic teachings and also of esoteric Christianity: the human being is twofold.

The daily texts contain reflections inspired by selected chapters of *The Aquarian Gospel* of Jesus the Christ. This book by Levi Dowling was published in 1908.

The Aquarian Gospel was chosen because it expresses the essence of inner Christianity very powerfully and purely. Inner Christianity is also sometimes referred to as original Christianity, esoteric Christianity or Gnostic Christianity. Gnostic Christianity locates the divine within the human being; outer Christianity declares that the divine is only external. Moreover, *The Aquarian Gospel* considers other world religions as well, all of which express certain aspects of what we may call ‘universal wisdom teachings’.

Various researchers have argued on the basis of solid arguments that, from the historical point of view, *The Aquarian Gospel* as well as the Gospels in the Bible are incorrect. Probably they are right. For us it does not matter because the narratives are full of deeper meaning. And that is something which will become increasingly apparent in the course of this program.

Focus

We recommend that you read the daily narrative of *The Aquarian Gospel* just before bedtime and the accompanying reflection the next day right after getting up. In this way you end and begin every day with focus and openness. You take the narrative along in your sleep, where unconsciously it may open sources of inner knowledge. And you can carry the text of the reflection in your heart throughout the day. Sleep is most beneficial when the night consciousness can raise itself into an area where the ordinary waking consciousness cannot follow.

“The sleep of the body becomes the sobriety of the soul” are the profound words of Hermes Trismegistus. By directing ourselves inwardly, the quiet of the body can become the freedom of the soul. In the spatiotemporal nature there is no place of rest for the

soul. During sleep, however, it may travel to the place where the turmoil of the opposites cannot exist: the Temple of Silence. In that sacred place, it is nourished with the essence of a higher human life and receives the rich teachings of universal wisdom.

Upon awakening, the soul will transfer the inner certainty obtained to the physical human being. In this way sleep can be a blessing for those who seek for the truth.

We wish you an inspiring Christmas period.



DECEMBER 22 NARRATIVE THE BIRTH OF MARY

Chapter 1 of *The Aquarian Gospel*

The Birth of Mary Augustus Cæsar reigned and Herod Antipas was ruler of Jerusalem. Three provinces comprised the land of Palestine: Judea, and Samaria, and Galilee. Joachim was a master of the Jewish law, a man of wealth; he lived in Nazareth of Galilee; and Anna, of the tribe of Judah, was his wife. To them was born a child, a goodly female child, and they were glad; and Mary was the name they gave the child. Joachim made a feast in honour of the child; but he invited not the rich, the honoured and the great; he called the poor, the halt and the lame, the blind, and to each one he gave a gift of raiment, food or other needful thing. He said, The Lord has given me this wealth; I am his steward by his grace, and if I give not to his children when in need, then he will make this wealth a curse.

Now, when the child was three years old her parents took her to Jerusalem, and in the temple she received the blessings of the priests. The high priest was a prophet and a seer, and when he saw the child he said, Behold, this child will be the mother of an honoured prophet and a master of the law; she shall abide within this holy temple of the Lord. And Mary did abide within the temple of the Lord; and Hillel, chief of the Sanhedrin, taught her all the precepts of the Jews, and she delighted in the law of God. When Mary reached the age of womanhood she was betrothed to Joseph, son of Jacob, and a carpenter of Nazareth. And Joseph was an upright man, and a devoted Essene.



DECEMBER 23
RECOGNISING THE INNER BEING
WITHIN YOU

DECEMBER 23 REFLECTION RECOGNISING THE INNER BEING WITHIN YOU

Spiritual development is often seen as the start of a long and arduous journey. In a way that is right, but those who devote themselves to real spiritual development soon experience that in practice almost everything is different than they had imagined. To actually follow a spiritual path requires that we find the inspiration for this in our lives so that we become aware that we are twofold beings affected by both heaven and earth. On this basis and through an urge from within we strive to give expression to our inner heavenly being in daily life. Although the journey may be long and at times difficult, it is a journey that everyone must begin at some point, in this life or in a future one.

Reaching a limit

The path of the soul, situated between heaven and earth, between the personality and the inner man, will at some point arrive at a border. The human being at the border is aware that he/she could still evolve in a number of ways: the social, cultural and scientific horizons have not yet been reached by far...

But what lies beyond these horizons? What do those opportunities for development really contribute to finding the truth? Is achieving this development what one really wants?

Beyond that border two paths diverge: the outer path which we have been following for so long, and an inner path. At this crossroads the human being who consciously chooses the inner path, due to an irresistible urge, will actually give shape to the inner

being. On that path, the outer person can learn step by step how he can best fulfil his mission and vocation as a 'creative being' and give way to the other-one-within: he makes the paths straight for the one who comes after him. Put in this way, a spiritual path is a process during which two beings, an outer and an inner one, are both born and accompany each other on their way.

In order to properly understand the path we should keep in mind that man is a dual creature. Hermes Trismegistus states that of all creatures only man is twofold, for only man has a mortal body and an immortal soul. Every human being is the inhabitant of two worlds: the outer world of matter and the senses, and an inner world of higher consciousness.

Therefore human consciousness is also connected to both worlds. One part of the consciousness is connected with the personality and covers the entire spectrum of human perceptions, passions and thoughts, from the highest down to the lowest.

We are quite familiar with this personal consciousness (which includes the unconscious): it makes us who we are and we need it to be able to maintain ourselves in life. We make ourselves known to others by means of this personality. It manifests itself in our likes and dislikes, our talents and shortcomings, and it determines how we respond to the material world. Through the five senses, which open the windows of our consciousness to the material world, the material world in turn determines our consciousness. The other part of our consciousness is related to our 'True Self'. This 'inner man' is invisible and does not manifest itself as powerfully as the 'I', but it permeates our lives like a fragmentary perception that one could characterise as a silent yet relentless call saying "look for me, seek me...". Very occasionally the sound seems to fade away.

Disciple of the soul

The first step on the gnostic-spiritual path is the awareness of this inner voice and a conscious recognition of one's own duality.

Not until then can a definite decision be made to seek the other-one-within. Walking the path can be seen as passing through an inner gate – as a journey within ourselves from the outer life to the inner life. A deeply felt desire to find the other-one-within is a prerequisite for finding the entrance to the passage, to that gate. And this longing inevitably leads us to the place where the perceived but as yet unknown soul resides; it leads us to the heart of man.

The 'Other One' is a being which – like an ungerminated seed – lies hidden in our hearts. It stems from a higher human order, one linked with love, wisdom, compassion, friendship and unity. We carry the germ of that Other One with us in our hearts and its image will not let go of us. It incessantly arouses feelings of homesickness and disquiet, the sensation of belonging somewhere else. This is a sign that the seed is germinating, that the "Inner Man" is about to be born and that the outward man is called to contribute to this birth.

Through the ages, love and compassion have always been considered to be the core of all spirituality, and it has been experienced that the way to God is through the heart. But besides love, high reason and inspired activity are important also.

A purified thinking faculty is indispensable on the path to higher soul life because only a pure mind will be able to encompass Wisdom. Love ensures the awareness of the unity of all existence. Awareness of unity is the vehicle of Love. Wisdom brings us knowledge and guides the movement of the soul to its origin. The power of activity drives the soul forward to that movement. Therefore the experience of unity connects us directly with the responsibility for that unity. It is a special responsibility which can express itself through our individualised personalities as soon as we are willing to be 'disciples of the soul' and to orient ourselves to the high lessons of the soul.

Being of service

Being of service is therefore an obvious aspect of the soul and therefore of the disciple on the path. Whereas formerly 'service' was identified with suffering and sacrifice, the disciple of the soul will be able to understand the meaning of 'being subservient' in its highest form: to joyfully surrender to the new order of the inner life, in all circumstances and within all social, political, cultural and scientific contexts.

Experiencing one's own duality – the experience of 'not being the one who you essentially are' – and the desire to fully express that higher Self in your life are the starting points for a spiritual path. From this experience you immediately enter into a different relationship with yourself and there will be a new focal point in your life: the pure and higher state of life that you know to exist. The focus on common issues such as worldly success, individual wealth and prosperity will gradually and naturally fade into the background, giving way to a new orientation.

A new certainty

So the way to your true identity begins with a birth, the birth of a new inner certainty. The life that follows is a life of striving to bring the highest within yourself to manifestation, provide it with vitality and bring it to maturity. And that is why the Christmas narrative in *The Aquarian Gospel* begins with the birth of... Mary, the mother of Jesus. Mary is born from Joachim, a Jewish scribe and a rich man, and Anna of the tribe of Judah. In honour of the birth Joachim prepared a feast where the poor, the crippled, the lame and the blind are invited

...and to each one he gave a gift of raiment, food or other needful thing. He said, The Lord has given me this wealth; I am his steward by his grace, and if I give not to his children when in need, then he will make this wealth a curse.

Someone who tries to respond to the whispers of the soul will always spontaneously think and act from unity. It cannot be otherwise than that Mary, the woman giving birth to Jesus, is born to such parents. Who are these parents? Joachim (meaning 'may Jehovah exalt') and Anna (meaning 'grace') are aspects of ourselves! It is these forces of our personality that are released through the purification of our daily life and by our focus on the good in this material world.

These purifications have led the heart and the head to a border and prepared them for a higher form of life. Mary (meaning 'bitter/sad' and also: 'the sea', the life field of the soul), this unshakable inner certainty, is destined for a special purpose in life, and at the age of three she is 'received in the temple': the ever-so-tender inner state is protected and prepared for its high task.

Once she is mature, Mary is betrothed to Joseph, a carpenter and a dedicated member of the Essenes. The goal of the Essenes was primarily inner development, and Joseph represents the manifesting power within us that will execute the assignment together with Mary. In this way the path to the new life is being prepared by means of a new certainty and a new inner strength.



*Behold, for soon the Day Star from on high will
visit us, to light the way for those who sit within
the darkness of the shadow-land, and guide
our feet unto the ways of peace.*

The Aquarian Gospel 2: 26

DECEMBER 23 NARRATIVE THE BIRTH OF JOHN

Chapter 2 of *The Aquarian Gospel*

Near Hebron in the hills of Judah, Zacharias and Elizabeth abode. They were devote and just, and every day they read the Law, the Prophets and the Psalms which told of one to come, strong to redeem; and they were waiting for the king.

Now, Zacharias was a priest, and in his turn he led the temple service in Jerusalem. It came to pass as Zacharias stood before the Lord and burned the incense in the Holy Place, that Gabriel came and stood before his face. And Zacharias was afraid; he thought that some great evil was about to come upon the Jews. But Gabriel said, O man of God, fear not; I bring to you and all the world, a message of good will, and peace on earth. Behold, the Prince of Peace, the king you seek, will quickly come. Your wife will bear to you a son, a holy son, of whom the prophet wrote, Behold, I send Elijah unto you again before the coming of the Lord; and he will level down the hills and fill the valleys up, and pave the way for him who shall redeem. From the beginning of the age your son has borne the name of John, the mercy of the Lord; his name is John. He will be honoured in the sight of God, and he will drink no wine, and from his birth he will be filled with Holy Breath.

And Gabriel stood before Elizabeth as she was in the silence of her home, and told her all the words that he had said to Zacharias in Jerusalem. When he had done the service of his course, the priest went home, and with Elizabeth rejoiced.

Five months passed by and Gabriel came to Mary in her home in Nazareth and said, Hail Mary, hail! Once blessed in the name of God; twice blessed in the name of Holy Breath; thrice blessed in the name of Christ; for you are worthy, and will bear a son who shall be called Immanuel. His name is Jesus, for he saves his people from their sins.

When Joseph's daily task was done he came, and Mary told him all the words that Gabriel spoke to her, and they rejoiced; for they believed that he, the man of God, had spoken words of truth. And Mary went with haste to tell Elizabeth about the promises of Gabriel; together they rejoiced. And in the home of Zacharias and Elizabeth did Mary tarry ninety days; then she returned to Nazareth.

To Zacharias and Elizabeth a son was born, and Zacharias said, Most blessed be the name of God, for he has opened up the fount of blessings for his people, Israel. His promises are verified; for he has brought to pass the words which holy prophets spoke in olden times.

And Zacharias looked upon the infant John, and said, You shall be called the prophet of the Holy One; and you will go before his face, and will prepare his way. And you will give a knowledge of salvation unto Israel; and you will preach the gospel of repentance and the blotting out of sins. Behold, for soon the Day Star from on high will visit us, to light the way for those who sit within the darkness of the shadow-land, and guide our feet unto the ways of peace.



DECEMBER 24
PREPARING YOUR WAY

DECEMBER 24 REFLECTION PREPARING YOUR WAY

In times past when the human mind was much more imaginative than it is now, the spiritual path was described mainly in the form of stories such as fairy tales, myths and legends. When we can let such stories, which carry universal truth, touch us profoundly, then we will change inwardly. It is at this point that the images from the primordial wisdom become etched into the subconscious.

Modern man, even with his more rational and individualised consciousness, can also experience a healing, transforming influence from such stories. Even a more powerful effect can be realised from these stories than from mere explanations because symbols impact the human psyche in a way that differs greatly from rational considerations and intellectual concepts.

For almost two thousand years the written stories about the life of Jesus of Nazareth have deeply impressed humanity. These stories present us with puzzles, with closed doors that can be opened only with the key that is to be found in 'man's duality'. Only then can the riddles become 'glad tidings' (Gospel means 'good news').

Of the many gospels that were written, ultimately only four were included in the Bible. Of these, only Matthew and Luke describe the birth of Jesus. The birth narrative in Matthew is not quite comparable with Luke's account. Mark and John did not write about the physical birth of Jesus, but began almost immediately with the transcendental birth of Christ at the baptism in the Jordan River.

We can see the life of Jesus described in the Gospels as a meticulous representation of a spiritual path that every human being can follow. From this point of view the Gospels are symbolic records of inner processes and the characters represent aspects of both the outer and the inner human being.

The Christmas narrative, the birth story of Jesus, is the beginning of a much larger story. It is the story of Jesus who grows up, who heals and works wonders, who chooses his disciples, and whose physical life finally ends at Golgotha, followed by the resurrection. It is the story of a journey through the outer world towards the world that lies beyond the inner horizon, the world of the Spirit. In *The Aquarian Gospel* the story of that journey begins with the birth of Mary.

In addition to 'bitterness' or 'sadness' the name Mary also means 'star of the sea'. In earlier times the course of a ship was derived from the positions of the stars. The birth of Mary-within-us grants to our lives a new star, a new destination. How else should we be able to cross the inner sea and find the entrance to the inner passage?

The great nostalgia

Mary can be seen as the inexplicable but unshakeable certainty that there exists a higher order of life and a great human dignity. The certainty of that other life also includes the great promise that we will be able to reach that goal. It manifests itself as a feeling which The Book of Mirdad (written by Mikhail Naimy) refers to as 'the great nostalgia'. That nostalgia is full of unborn forms but still has a very special purpose.

In chapter 31 of *The Book of Mirdad* we read about this:

Like mist is the Great Nostalgia. Emitted by the heart, it shuts away the heart, as mist, effused by sea and land, obliterates both land and sea. And also as the mist bereaves the eye of visible reality making itself the sole reality, so this Nostalgia subdues the feelings of the heart and

makes itself the feeling paramount. And seemingly so formless, and aimless, and blind as the mist, yet like the mist it teems with the forms unborn, is clear of sight and very definite of purpose.

The high reality of life 'beyond the horizon' will inevitably make itself known to those who feel themselves alienated from the world around them. This nostalgia lifts the heart to a higher plane and closes it off from the aridity and flimsy appearances of the outer life. Then there is a willingness and openness to become the 'disciple of the soul' and to listen to the inner voice that indicates a completely different direction. In the *Gospel of Luke* and in *The Aquarian Gospel*, Jesus's birth is preceded by the announcement and the birth of John, who later becomes John the Baptist.

John is born from the old priest Zacharias and his aged wife Elizabeth. Every human being who has arrived at his or her border of life, his or her own year zero, is a Zacharias/Elizabeth human being. Head and heart no longer know where to turn. They become silent. Life experiences in the outer world turned out to be fruitless, 'childless'. In reality, this 'old age' and apparent barrenness carry the signs of exceptional maturity and a fertile ground for something new: John...

Something special happens: during his work in the temple, Zacharias hears the voice of the angel Gabriel telling him that the prophecy will be fulfilled, that Elijah will be the precursor of the Lord, and that his wife Elizabeth will bear him a son whom he should name John.

It came to pass as Zacharias stood before the Lord and burned the incense in the Holy Place, that Gabriel came and stood before his face. And Zacharias was afraid; he thought that some great evil was about to come upon the Jews.

Discovering the aridity of our existence and inwardly recognising another reality can have the purifying effect of a shock. The forces

from the field of the Soul penetrate into the silenced personality. And deep down within lives the awareness that a great change is about to come, that from that moment on nothing will remain the same.

Then Gabriel turns to Elizabeth “as she was in the silence of her home” and announces John’s birth to her as well. John, the fore-runner, is born out of our increasingly fruitless pursuit of a good and pure life (Elizabeth) and our search for truth and knowledge (Zacharias).

Inevitably, each of us will encounter that limit at some point. Each of us will sooner or later experience that the purity and the knowledge we really seek seem to hide behind a distant horizon which slides forward at the same speed with which we are trying to approach it.

No matter how much we may read and know, no matter how much good we may do for our fellow human beings, it is never enough. This characterises John: the longing of the Other-one-within-us, who provides us with the power to enter new pathways and who is willing “to be the disciple of Him who comes after him”.

Because as soon as we experience the great nostalgia, the deep longing for life beyond the horizon, there will be two processes taking place within us: the ever-more-consciously-experienced futility and aridity of our existence, and an increasingly strong desire for higher life.

John, it is said, is the incarnation of the prophet Elijah. Elijah symbolises the immaterial spiritual heritage in the form of the strength and wisdom left behind in our world by all the human entities who returned to the world of the Spirit.

As soon as John is born within us, then ‘Elijah’ is made available to us as well. The outer man is born unto a ‘John-man’.

The name John means ‘God is gracious’ because this condition means that the higher life can express itself as more than nostal-

gia. John, the outer man, starts from the inner urge to “make his paths straight for the one who comes after him.”

Through Mary, we have the inner certainty that by John we possess the new power to proceed. And with Elijah, all the inner knowledge we need is at hand. John is the human being standing in the service of the inner being – symbolised by Jesus – who will be born not simply after him but also within him.

Five months passed by and Gabriel came to Mary in her home in Nazareth and said, Hail Mary, hail! Once blessed in the name of God; twice blessed in the name of Holy Breath; thrice blessed in the name of Christ; for you are worthy, and will bear a son who shall be called Immanuel. His name is Jesus, for he saves his people from their sins. [...] And Mary went with haste to tell Elizabeth about the promises of Gabriel; together they rejoiced. And in the home of Zacharias and Elizabeth did Mary tarry ninety days; then she returned to Nazareth.

A new phase of the path presents itself.



*Fear not! Behold I bring you joyful news. At midnight in
a cave in Bethlehem was born the prophet and the king
that you have long been waiting for*

The Aquarian Gospel 3: 11

DECEMBER 24 NARRATIVE THE BIRTH OF JESUS

Chapter 3 of *The Aquarian Gospel*

The time was nearly due for Jesus to be born, and Mary longed to see Elizabeth, and she and Joseph turned their faces towards the Judean hills. And when upon their way they came to Bethlehem the day was done, and they must tarry for the night. But Bethlehem was thronged with people going to Jerusalem; the inns and homes were filled with guests, and Joseph and his wife could find no place to rest but in a cave where animals were kept; and there they slept.

At midnight came a cry, A child is born in yonder cave among the beasts. And lo, the promised son of man was born. And strangers took the little one and wrapped him in the dainty robes that Mary had prepared and laid him in a trough from which the beasts of burden fed. Three persons clad in snow-white robes came in and stood before the child and said, All strength, all wisdom and all love be yours, Immanuel.

Now, on the hills of Bethlehem were many flocks of sheep with shepherds guarding them. The shepherds were devout, were men of prayer, and they were waiting for a strong deliverer to come. And when the child of promise came, a man in snow-white robe appeared to them, and they fell back in fear. The man stood forth and said, Fear not! behold I bring you joyful news. At midnight in a cave in Bethlehem was born the prophet and the king that you have long been waiting for. And then the shepherds all were glad; they felt that all the hills were filled with messengers of light, who said, All glory be to God on high;

peace, peace on earth, good will to men. And then the shepherds came with haste to Bethlehem and to the cave, that they might see and honour him whom men had called Immanuel. Now, when the morning came, a shepherdess whose home was near, prepared a room for Mary, Joseph and the child; and here they tarried many days. And Joseph sent a messenger in haste to Zacharias and Elizabeth to say, The child is born in Bethlehem. And Zacharias and Elizabeth took John and came to Bethlehem with words of cheer. And Mary and Elizabeth recounted all the wondrous things that had transpired. The people joined with them in praising God. According to the custom of the Jews, the child was circumcised; and when they asked, What will you call the child? the mother said, His name is Jesus, as the man of God declared.



DECEMBER 25
GIVING BIRTH TO THE DIVINE BEING
IN YOURSELF

DECEMBER 25 **REFLECTION**
GIVING BIRTH TO THE DIVINE BEING
IN YOURSELF

And when upon their way they came to Bethlehem the day was done, and they must tarry for the night. But Bethlehem was thronged with people going to Jerusalem; the inns and homes were filled with guests, and Joseph and his wife could find no place to rest but in a cave where animals were kept; and there they slept. At midnight came a cry. A child is born in yonder cave among the beasts. And lo, the promised son of man was born. And strangers took the little one and wrapped him in the dainty robes that Mary had prepared and laid him in a trough from which the beasts of burden fed. Three persons clad in snow-white robes came in and stood before the child and said, All strength, all wisdom and all love be yours, Immanuel. Now, on the hills of Bethlehem were many flocks of sheep with shepherds guarding them. The shepherds were devout, were men of prayer, and they were waiting for a strong deliverer to come. And when the child of promise came, a man in snow-white robe appeared to them, and they fell back in fear. The man stood forth and said, Fear not! behold I bring you joyful news. At midnight in a cave in Bethlehem was born the prophet and the king that you have long been waiting for. And then the shepherds all were glad; they felt that all the hills were filled with messengers of light

In a cave, among the animals, a child was born in the middle of the night. The other-one-within-us has broken loose from his bonds and breathes... The first delicate signs of a completely new life, deep in the human heart, are immediately surrounded by

the unknown forces of the new life, a life to which Mary-within-us had directed herself with unshakable certainty. And the child is “wrapped in the dainty robes that Mary had prepared”, which means that the child is immediately surrounded by light forces that protect him from harmful influences.

Then this new-born is carefully laid down in the manger of the animals; and immediately three men appear in snow-white garments. They bring three gifts: strength, wisdom and love. Those are the three fundamental forces that make everything possible, the invincible forces that require a completely new life. For no human being of this world would be able to endure perfect power, absolute wisdom and all-embracing love.

Opening up the new life within a human being is therefore like an all-encompassing love, like being irradiated by hitherto unknown forces that well up from an unfathomable source in the heart ... The light birth, the birth of the light-in-man, has taken place.

Gnostic Christianity considers the birth of Jesus as the birth of the new soul in a person who became like John. John is the one who had the power to purify himself by following a new path. The new soul is the higher vehicle, ‘the new garment’ which will ultimately allow the human being to enter his original world once again.

The paradise myth in the Book of Genesis, at the beginning of the Old Testament, tells the story of Adam and Eve: a man and a woman who left their birthplace (paradise) and obtained a new residence (outside of Paradise).

With the birth of Jesus at the beginning of the New Testament, the return journey begins. There we read of a man and a woman, Joseph and Mary, traveling from their home to their place of birth. Mary is pregnant through the Holy Spirit. She is a virgin in the spiritual sense, pure and untainted, completely oriented towards the higher life.

Joseph is the free builder, one who has purified his thoughts and directs them towards the soul. He symbolises the aspiring human

being who deliberately and perseveringly works and builds while staying focused on the divine. That work brings about a continuous process of purification that is guided by the soul.

A higher octave

We can describe the Joseph and Mary within ourselves as the new thinking activity and the new way of feeling which are caused by the touch from the domain of the soul. In this sense, Joseph and Mary can be seen as a higher octave of Zacharias and Elizabeth. After all, Elizabeth symbolises the longing that is oriented to the good of the world, while Mary represents the orientation towards the higher life. The two are therefore related to each other and both bring forth children with a special task:

- John, who has the task of adopting the outer life to the new inner life; and
- Jesus, the child in whom pure Love, the highest possible in this universe, assumes a physical form.

Jesus is born in the greatest darkness of the night in a cave in Bethlehem (meaning 'bread house') where 'beasts of burden' reside as well. Our inner 'beasts of burden' have done their job: the persevering, goal-oriented ox caused us to proceed ever onward and the donkey carried us on the most inaccessible roads of life. They brought us 'home'. They belong to us and therefore they stay in the cave where the soul-being is born.

And what could this cave be other than our own human heart? The human heart is like a cave system with one special birthing room: the right ventricle. There is the manger where our 'beasts of burden', the ox and the donkey, found their food with which we were able to complete our journey so far.

But after all the preparation and purification, the same feeding place became a place where a completely different life-force could descend: Light itself. Food and energy for a whole new journey with which the entire personality will joyfully cooperate.

In many cultures, a cave is an ancient symbol of a shelter, an image of birth and rebirth. Ritual meetings were often held in caves. Caves were also shelters for cattle and refuges for people in times of danger.

The ox and the donkey

Where do the legendary ox and donkey come from? In the first chapter of the Book of Isaiah, verses 2 and 3, the following is said on behalf of God:

I reared children and brought them up, but they have rebelled against me. The ox knows its owner, and the donkey its master's crib; but Israel does not know, my people do not understand.

So the cattle know who feeds them and where they belong, but people have forgotten where they come from, who feeds them and who guides them.

In a certain tradition, the ox and the donkey represent the 'Jews' and the 'Gentiles'.

The donkey symbolises the Gentiles, the heathen who are suffering under the burden of sin and idolatry.

The ox is then a symbol for the Jews who live under the yoke of the law, like an ox wearing a yoke during ploughing. In this instance, the yoke refers to being fully connected with and guided by the divine. The word yoke is derived from the Latin word 'iungere' meaning 'to connect' and is still recognisable in the word yoga, for example.

Thus, the ox and the donkey stand together at the manger of Jesus, which symbolises the idea that the inner light birth is not restricted to one single race or country but that it is a calling for all humanity. Every human being is able to celebrate the inner light birth at the appropriate moment in his or her life, in his or her own year zero.

God in man

The Light Messengers, the visible and invisible spiritual leaders of humanity, descend into the world of time and space to support and guide humanity at every step on the spiritual path.

The divine birth cannot be forced. You can only create the conditions for this birth to take place. How do you know if the new soul is born in you? The famous mystic Meister Eckhart wrote about this:

Now you turn your face entirely to this birth. Yes, you will encounter this birth in everything you see and hear, whatever it is. You are like someone who looks for quite a while at the sun, and afterwards sees the image of the sun in whatever he looks at. As long as you do not seek and perceive God in everything, this birth has not yet occurred in you.



*The master's cross I see upon the forehead of this child,
and he will conquer by this sign.*

The Aquarian Gospel 4:7

DECEMBER 25 NARRATIVE THE CONSECRATION OF JESUS

Chapter 4 of *The Aquarian Gospel*

Now, Mary took her son, when he was forty days of age, up to the temple in Jerusalem, and he was consecrated by the priest. And then she offered purifying sacrifices for herself, according to the custom of the Jews; a lamb and two young turtle doves.

A pious Jew named Simeon was in the temple serving God. From early youth he had been looking for Immanuel to come, and he had prayed to God that he might not depart until his eyes had seen Messiah in the flesh.

And when he saw the infant Jesus he rejoiced and said, I now am ready to depart in peace, for I have seen the king. And then he took the infant in his arms and said, Behold, this child will bring a sword upon my people, Israel, and all the world; but he will break the sword and then the nations will learn war no more. The master's cross I see upon the forehead of this child, and he will conquer by this sign.

And in the temple was a widow, four and eighty years of age, and she departed not, but night and day she worshipped God. And when she saw the infant Jesus she exclaimed, Behold Immanuel! Behold the signet cross of the Messiah on his brow! And then the woman knelt to worship him, as God with us, Immanuel; but one, a master, clothed in white, appeared and said, Good woman, stay; take heed to what you do; you may not worship man; this is idolatry. This child is man, the son of man, and worthy of all praise. You shall adore and worship

God; him only shall you serve. The woman rose and bowed her head in thankfulness and worshipped God.
And Mary took the infant Jesus and returned to Bethlehem.



DECEMBER 26
IN THIS SIGN YOU WILL CONQUER

DECEMBER 26 REFLECTION IN THIS SIGN YOU WILL CONQUER

In the Paradise myth, Adam and Eve leave their place of birth and move to their new residence: the world of matter, time and space. In the Christmas narrative, Joseph and Mary leave their residence and set off to their place of birth. The journey that Joseph and Mary make is therefore the opposite of the journey of Adam and Eve. As a human being, you are called to return to your origin. You can start that return journey only if you have entered the Zacharias-Elizabeth-state, only when you have deeply experienced how fruitless it is to allow your thinking and desiring to be focused exclusively on the world that is perceived with the senses. When you, as a result of countless experiences, start to understand that lasting happiness does not exist in the world in which we live, then you will, step by step, become the John-personality who is preparing for the inner journey.

Purifications

Through purifying your thought life (Joseph) and your orientation in life (Mary), Jesus (the new soul) is born within you. The name 'Jesus' means 'God saves' – the new soul is connected to the spirit of the original Life Field; and through the soul, eternity can literally descend into the world of time and space.

For nearly twenty centuries the Christian community has seen the birth of Jesus as a wonderful event that occurred long ago and far away. This thinking about the Christmas narrative is certainly not wrong.

Esoteric Christianity views Christ as a force, the most powerful force in the universe, a force which was actually 'born' in the heart of our planet Earth around the beginning of our era and which ever since has expanded around the earth as a radiant field. Christ is also called the 'Planetary Spirit' of the earth.

The Earth as a planet has received the light birth, thus ushering in a new phase for humanity living on the earth.

Since the light-birth of the earth, the forces of the higher field of life have been made available to every human being on earth who wants to go the path of return. He or she no longer needs a priest, a guru or a master in order to re-establish the connection with the divine. Every human being in whom the germ of Light in the heart makes itself felt as 'the great nostalgia' is enabled to begin his way back in self-authority and according to his own decision.

In this sense, Jesus was the Messiah for whom the prophets of ancient times were longing. Should we, however, see the Christmas narrative only as an historical event or an event outside ourselves, then we would not progress any further on the spiritual path. A well-known hermetic law says: as above so below; as in the greater so in the lesser; as the outside so the inside. Thus the outward Christmas narrative is the blueprint for an entirely inner process.

A helping hand reaching out

Everything that is born from the realm of the soul receives protection, help and strength from that realm. If we choose to go the spiritual path, there is always help available. Then what matters is that we learn to grasp the helping hand reaching out to us.

What does that help consist of? Firstly there is a life field of the human souls who walked the liberating path previously. In *The Aquarian Gospel* this field-of-life is referred to as Elijah. Secondly there is a cosmic force called 'Christ' which connected itself with the organic and atmospheric layers of the earth at the Mystery of Golgotha shortly after the beginning of our era.

And thirdly there is the living spiritual tradition which has been active in the physical, material reality, for example in the form of mystery schools. These three helping forces are closely intertwined, and cannot be considered separately. For example, the living spiritual tradition can only be truly effective if it is linked with the radiation fields of 'Elijah' and 'Christ'. This living tradition is mentioned several times at the beginning of *The Aquarian Gospel*. Mary received an education in Jewish law in the Temple. Joseph was a dedicated member of the Essenes. The priest Zacharias led temple services. When Jesus was forty days old, he was consecrated by a priest in the temple of Jerusalem.

Living spiritual tradition

The living spiritual tradition – the transfer of knowledge by initiates such as Elihu and Salome – runs like a thread throughout *The Aquarian Gospel*. Why is this? It is because it is virtually impossible to go the spiritual path on your own. There are too many opposing forces.

The Christ-force enables the human being to connect to the higher life on an individual basis, on the basis of the awakened soul kernel in the heart. We can develop our own spiritual strength to a certain level but soon we inevitably reach a certain limit.

The forces of the new soul are totally unknown to the I-consciousness and will be experienced as threatening forces that are stronger than oneself. The natural human defence system will take action to neutralise these alien forces, either consciously or unconsciously, just as it does when pathogenic viruses or bacteria enter the body.

But when, through trial and error, the spiritually striving human being manages to continue listening to the voice of the soul, then an inner peace and certainty develop. Therefore on the spiritual path we need not only knowledge, but also power. At his birth Jesus received three fundamental forces: strength, wisdom and love.

Strength is released within a living spiritual tradition of dedicated people working at all levels of development. Tradition literally means 'to transfer'. What is meant here is the transfer from generation to generation and from person to person.

Just as in ordinary journeys, many obstacles and threatening situations will occur on the spiritual path. If somebody goes the spiritual path within an authentic living tradition, those dangers can more easily be recognised and neutralised.

Simeon (meaning 'listener') in the temple of Jerusalem not only listened intently to the teachings of his tradition but he also listened to his inner voice, the voice of silence. He put the teachings into practice because, as the text says, he was a pious Jew. The old widow who day and night worshipped God in the temple was also pious. In the *Gospel of Luke* she is called Anna (meaning 'grace').

The fullness of experience and the new sign

It is said that Anna is 84 years old, meaning that she has passed 12 cycles of 7 years, or 7 cycles of 12 years. So the number 84 expresses a fullness. As was the case with Elizabeth, Anna's advanced age refers to a fullness of experience and also to maturity in the spiritual sense.

The Light of Christ has not only manifested itself in the earth field and in a full-grown living spiritual tradition in the form of a mystery school, but above all it must be revealed within man himself: this is the true mission of Christianity for this time.

... Behold, this child will bring a sword upon my people, Israel, and all the world; but he will break the sword and then the nations will learn war no more. The master's cross I see upon the forehead of this child, and he will conquer by this sign.

A sword has the shape of a cross and can have several symbolic meanings. Of course, there is the sword as a symbol of strife, not only of outward strife but also of inward strife. Once a new soul is

born in a human being and becomes active, an inner conflict inevitably arises.

The sword also stands for pure strength and discernment. The new soul discloses to the human consciousness not only the opportunities but also the obstacles in his or her path.

Inner change

By means of falling down and above all by standing up again, we must learn to deal with both the eternal and the temporal within ourselves. Such is the process of walking the inner path; it is the highest form of spirituality, the highest form of yoga.

The eternal and the temporary, the heavenly and the earthly, are diametrically opposed. Thus a cross is planted in us, the cross of the higher life which has broken into our ordinary life. If in that situation we are willing to conform to the lessons of the soul, we will break the sword as a result of which “the nations will learn war no more.”

Simeon sees the cross of the master on the forehead of the young Jesus. The vertical beam of the cross symbolises the forces flowing in from the new field of life, forces which can transform the human being on the path according to the suggestions of the soul. Subsequently he or she will be able to radiate these forces into the world, as symbolised by the horizontal beam. In this way the human being carries his own cross.

When the new soul is born in the heart and sufficient attention is given to the new soul, then ‘the sign of the forehead’ will start to shine. This special radiation from the sign of the Son of man on the forehead is proof that the new soul is active not only in the heart but also in the head. Through this sign, man will conquer and bring his Path to a good end.

When the new soul is born, the tendency may arise to linger here because it is such a special feeling. However, the birth of the soul is only the beginning of the spiritual path.

Therefore in the fourth chapter of *The Aquarian Gospel* we are given the advice:

Good woman, stay; take heed to what you do; you may not worship man; this is idolatry. This child is man, the son of man, and worthy of all praise. You shall adore and worship God; him only shall you serve.



*The magians went their way and found the child with Mary
in the shepherd's home. They honoured him; bestowed upon him
precious gifts and gave him gold, frankincense and myrrh.*

The Aquarian Gospel 5 : 14-15

DECEMBER 26 NARRATIVE
THE MAGI FROM THE EAST AND THE
FLIGHT INTO EGYPT

Chapter 5 of *The Aquarian Gospel*

Beyond the river Euphrates the magians lived; and they were wise, could read the language of the stars, and they divined that one, a master soul, was born; they saw his star above Jerusalem. And there were three among the magian priests who longed to see the master of the coming age; and they took costly gifts and hastened to the West in search of him, the new-born king, that they might honour him. And one took gold, the symbol of nobility; another myrrh, the symbol of dominion and of power; frankincense the other took, the symbol of the wisdom of the sage. Now when the magians reached Jerusalem the people were amazed, and wondered who they were and why they came. And when they asked, Where is the child that has been born a king? the very throne of Herod seemed to shake. And Herod sent a courier forth to bring the magians to his court. And when they came they asked again, Where is the new born king? And then they said, While yet beyond the Euphrates we saw his star arise, and we have come to honour him. And Herod blanched with fear. He thought, perhaps, the priests were plotting to restore the kingdom of the Jews, and so he said within himself, I will know more about this child that has been born a king. And so he told the magian priests to tarry in the city for a while and he would tell them all about the king. He called in council all the Jewish masters of the law and asked, What have the Jewish prophets said concerning such a one? The Jewish masters answered him and said, The prophets long ago foretold that one would come to rule the tribes of Israel; that

this Messiah would be born in Bethlehem. They said, The prophet Micah wrote, O Bethlehem Judea, a little place among the Judean hills, yet out of you will one come forth to rule my people, Israel; yea, one who lived in olden times, in very ancient days. Then Herod called the magian priests again and told them what the masters of the Jewish law had said; and then he sent them on the way to Bethlehem. He said, Go search, and if you find the child that has been born a king, return and tell me all, that I may go and honour him.

The magians went their way and found the child with Mary in the shepherd's home. They honoured him; bestowed upon him precious gifts and gave him gold, frankincense and myrrh. These magian priests could read the hearts of men; they read the wickedness of Herod's heart, and knew that he had sworn to kill the new born king. And so they told the secret to the parents of the child, and bid them flee beyond the reach of harm. And then the priests went on their homeward way; they went not through Jerusalem. And Joseph took the infant Jesus and his mother in the night and fled to Egypt land, and with Elihu and Salome in ancient Zoan they abode.



DECEMBER 27
YOUR MAGIC GIFTS

DECEMBER 27 REFLECTION YOUR MAGIC GIFTS

The sun rises in the east. A sunrise is the promise of new opportunities. If the 'great nostalgia' was like a fog full of unborn forms, then the rise of the inner sun is the beginning of a completely new development. The new-born soul begins to grow. It allows itself to be guided by a star, the star of Bethlehem, the five-pointed star, also known as the pentagram.

All through the ages the pentagram has been the lofty symbol of the reborn man, the new man. It is also the symbol of the universe and its eternal genesis in which God's Plan comes to manifestation. The pentagram is also the five-pointed star of Bethlehem which shines above the cave of birth after the light birth, thus showing the way to the Magi.

In the Bible the earthly birth of Jesus in Bethlehem is described in the *Gospel of Matthew* and the *Gospel of Luke*, which both recount the story of a group of people who saw a light and therefore set out to worship the new-born one.

With Luke it was the shepherds who received a message from an angel that caused 'the glory of the Lord' to shine around them, while Matthew relates a story about the Wise Men or Magi from the East, the region of the dawn, who set out on their journey because they had seen a special star appear.

In *The Aquarian Gospel* not only is the story of the shepherds mentioned but also that of the Magi, to make it clear that inner Christianity, the path of the inner light birth, is a path for everyone: for shepherds and wise men. That is, for the illiterate and for

scholars, for the poor and for the rich, for people nearby and for people far away. But above all it signifies that it is a twofold way in which the inner and the outer man proceed together.

But this simple story of the wise men from the East tells us even much more. The first six verses of chapter 60 of the Old Testament Book of Isaiah read:

Arise! Shine! Your light has come; the LORD's glory has shone upon you. Though darkness covers the earth and gloom the nations, the LORD will shine upon you; God's glory will appear over you. Nations will come to your light and kings to your dawning radiance. Lift up your eyes and look all around: they are all gathered; they have come to you. Your sons will come from far away, and your daughters on caregivers' hips. Then you will see and be radiant; your heart will tremble and open wide, because the sea's abundance will be turned over to you; the nations' wealth will come to you. Countless camels will cover your land, young camels from Midian and Ephah. They will all come from Sheba, carrying gold and frankincense, ...

Light, darkness, kings, frankincense and gold: these elements are also included in the story of the Magi in the *Gospel of Matthew*.

The magic priests come from the East, from beyond the Euphrates (literally 'the land of great fertility'), from across the river. Coming from 'across the river' or from 'across the sea' is a veiled reference to 'coming from another plane of existence'. Once the light birth has taken place, and the star is shining above the cave of birth, three spiritual forces begin to flow in.

And one took gold, the symbol of nobility; another myrrh, the symbol of dominion and of power; frankincense the other took, the symbol of the wisdom of the sage.

Isaiah reads:

the abundance of the sea shall be turned to you, the wealth of the nations shall come to you.

According to the legends, the names of the Magi were Melchior, Balthazar and Kaspar. Melchior is presented as an old white man from Europe who offers gold; Balthazar as a black African from Ethiopia who gives myrrh, and Kaspar as a beardless young man from Asia offering frankincense.

What function do the three wise men serve anyway? Are they kings? Are they priests? Or are they perhaps magicians? In the teachings of inner Christianity, the characters in the Gospels are to be considered aspects of ourselves. We are much more than we usually realize, and we are also much richer than we usually think. Melchior, Balthazar and Kaspar are aspects of ourselves.

Melchior means 'king of his city' and symbolises the king in us – the principle in ourselves that directs our lives.

Balthazar means 'God protects' and symbolises the priest in us – the principle in ourselves that maintains a living connection between the domain of the personality and the domain of the soul.

Kaspar means 'treasurer' and symbolises the magician in us – the principle in ourselves that builds and realises.

The king, the priest and the magician correspond respectively to the head, the heart and the hands. And their attributes are knowledge, love and deed. Within the nature-born human being there are three inner personalities focused exclusively on the domain of the personality.

However, as soon as they place themselves in the service of the new soul, then knowledge, love and the deed will be manifested from a different dimension, a different domain. Then they will be transformed into gold, myrrh and frankincense.

Head, heart and hands, as they are now led by the new soul, are the magic gifts that are brought to us. They provide the human being on the path everything needed to work from the fervent desire that each path in life may be light, that every deed may be crowned with goodness and that all that lives may thrive through our intermediary.

That is the royal art of building, the Ars Magica, the art of Magic. It is: to build the new temple of the soul (Jesus), based on purified life orientation (Mary) and purified thought (Joseph). If that process is taking place within you, then your individual path will be of great significance for the world and humanity. Then the prophecy of Isaiah becomes reality in you:

Arise! Shine! Your light has come; the LORD's glory has shone upon you. Though darkness covers the earth and gloom the nations, the LORD will shine upon you; God's glory will appear over you. Nations will come to your light and kings to your dawning radiance.



*I can but give my life for truth; and if the king does shed my blood
the Lord will save my soul..*

The Aquarian Gospel 6 : 16

DECEMBER 27 NARRATIVE
THE CHILDREN'S MASSACRE BY KING
HEROD'S ORDERS

Chapter 6 of *The Aquarian Gospel*

Now, when the magian priests did not return to tell him of the child that had been born a king, King Herod was enraged. And then his courtiers told him of another child in Bethlehem, one born to go before and to prepare the people to receive the king. This angered more and more the king; he called his guards and bid them go to Bethlehem and slay the infant John, as well as Jesus who was born to be a king. He said, Let no mistake be made, and that you may be sure to slay these claimants to my throne, slay all the male children in the town not yet two years of age. The guards went forth and did as Herod bade them do. Elizabeth knew not that Herod sought to slay her son, and she and John were yet in Bethlehem; but when she knew, she took the infant John and hastened to the hills. The murderous guards were near; they pressed upon her hard; but then she knew the secret caves in all the hills, and into one she ran and hid herself and John until the guards were gone. Their cruel task was done; the guards returned and told the story to the king. They said, We know that we have slain the infant king; but John his harbinger, we could not find. The king was angry with his guards because they failed to slay the infant John; He sent them to the tower in chains. And other guards were sent to Zacharias, father of the harbinger, while he was serving in the Holy Place, to say, The King demands that you shall tell where is your son. But Zacharias did not know, and he replied, I am a minister of God, a servant in the Holy Place; how could I know where they have taken him? And when the guards re-

turned and told the King what Zacharias said, he was enraged and said, My guards, go back and tell that wily priest that he is in my hands; that if he does not tell the truth, does not reveal the hiding place of John, his son, then he shall die. The guards went back and told the priest just what the king had said. And Zacharias said, I can but give my life for truth; and if the king does shed my blood the Lord will save my soul. The guards again returned and told the king what Zacharias said. Now, Zacharias stood before the alter in the Holy Place engaged in prayer. A guard approached and with a dagger thrust him through; he fell and died before the curtain of the sanctuary of the Lord. And when the hour of salutation came, for Zacharias daily blessed the priests, he did not come. And after waiting long the priests went to the Holy Place and found the body of the dead. And there was grief, deep grief, in all the land. Now Herod sat upon his throne; he did not seem to move; his courtiers came; the king was dead. His sons reigned in his stead.



DECEMBER 28
THREATS FROM THE WORLD
AND FROM YOURSELF

DECEMBER 28 REFLECTION
THREATS FROM THE WORLD AND FROM
YOURSELF

If anything of the new soul begins to glow in a human being, then there is great joy. Such a person has, after all, experienced something of a higher reality, of a grand plan and now knows from within that also for him or her there is a mighty spiritual perspective.

However, for those human beings who have been touched in such a special way, the joy is still incidental and certainly not stable. For as soon as a person (symbolised by Elizabeth, Zacharias and John), driven by inner recognition and insight (Mary and Joseph) is longing to let the spiritual being (Jesus) come to development within him or her, it seems as if everyone and everything is trying to prevent it.

If the soul begins to awaken within you, you will have the natural tendency to share your joy about this with people who are dear to you, your life partner, relatives and friends. However, it often appears that they do not have any interest in this and switch to everyday topics as soon as possible.

As a consequence, you can experience a great loneliness and grief because of so much superficiality. No one seems to realise what, according to you, really matters in life. You will be thrown back on yourself and so you withdraw to protect yourself:

Elizabeth knew not that Herod sought to slay her son, and she and John were yet in Bethlehem; but when she knew, she took the infant John and hastened to the hills. The murderous guards were near; they pressed upon her hard; but then she knew the secret caves in all the

hills, and into one she ran and hid herself and John until the guards were gone.

In a fairy tale by Hans Christian Andersen, the Ugly Duckling is bullied by the young ducks because he is different. He thinks that there is something wrong with him but is not yet aware that he is a swan in the making. But as soon as the swan (symbolising the soul) has reached maturity, he is free and the ducks no longer bother him.

A human being must overcome quite a few resistances on the way to adulthood. However, the resistances on the way to the maturity of the soul are even greater and above all of a different character. Both the personality and the soul need opposition in order to obtain strength. Without resistance there is no progress. One cannot polish without friction, nor fly a kite without wind.

In our society there is much that makes it difficult for the Other-one-within-us to awaken, to be active and to grow. Every day our attention is drawn towards the external world by means of a bombardment with stimuli from sight, sound, smell, taste and feelings. The subtle voice of the soul is easily deafened by this.

There are forces that prevent human beings from going the Gnostic spiritual path. Why? Because everything in this world has the natural tendency to maintain the existing equilibrium.

Anything that places this equilibrium at risk, will be fought against. It is this primal basis of existence that causes human beings, plants and animals to recover from illnesses and injuries. This principle is the reason why organisations, social systems, cultures, solar systems, et cetera, can remain in existence and why it takes so much effort to change existing situations.

This equilibrium-seeking force is an inwardly directed force. When it concerns the individual human being we call this force: ego-centricity. As soon as any human being chooses to suddenly withdraw from that world, he or she will inevitably evoke counter forces.

In the Christmas narrative these counter forces are referred to as King Herod.

These magian priests could read the hearts of men; they read the wickedness of Herod's heart, and knew that he had sworn to kill the new born king. And so they told the secret to the parents of the child, and bid them flee beyond the reach of harm. And then the priests went on their homeward way; they went not through Jerusalem.

And Joseph took the infant Jesus and his mother in the night and fled to Egypt land, and with Elihu and Salome in ancient Zoan they abode.

There is no place for the new soul in this world. There is no room in the inn. In fact, all kinds of powers of this world seek to kill the new soul, the young Jesus. They seek to kill not only the new soul, but also the personality that is paving the way for this soul: John. That is what the story of the massacre of innocent children in *The Aquarian Gospel* makes clear.

Their cruel task was done; the guards returned and told the story to the king. They said, We know that we have slain the infant king; but John his harbinger, we could not find. The king was angry with his guards because they failed to slay the infant John; He sent them to the tower in chains.

In the story about the children's massacre by order of King Herod, not just one child is killed but countless children. The 'children's massacre' has perhaps taken place within ourselves many times, because even the story of this slaughter indicates a spiritual process: the emerging powers of the soul are nipped in the bud through natural resistance to alien forces.

So again the character Herod has a symbolic meaning. Herod is the essential force of natural resistance on the spiritual path. This resistance is located both inside and outside of us and can occur in many forms, shapes and situations that we encounter, especially

at those times when we least expect it. But it is also the force that the inner life can and must fight in order to be able to rise to a higher plane. If the inner life of the soul is strong enough, then it will overcome the resistance of that moment and be able to proceed. Thus the impediments may turn into milestones on the path that we have to follow.

However, on the spiritual path, where the personality-being is the disciple of the soul, resistance to the inner life is exercised through the personality. And therein lies the great danger of the 'children's massacre'.

The higher self of man arouses in the lower self the desire to walk a spiritual path. But the lower self on its own does not feel the slightest need to do so because it knows that it will then have to recede into the background.

In the narrative, Herod even invites the three wise men to his court. He wants them to supply as much information as possible about the new-born king in order to be able to effectively combat him. The personality-being considers himself more excellent than the powers of the soul and makes every effort to maintain his position. Obviously this plan fails; the wise men know better...

And so they told the secret to the parents of the child, and bid them flee beyond the reach of harm.

Joseph and Mary, the head and the heart, are informed about what to do from within: to protect the young child and flee into Egypt, the symbol of the state of neutrality and silence of the soul. The soul never fights. At most the soul makes itself known to the personality from within by means of suggestions on how to act. The natural reaction of the personality is to fight the Jesus and John within him. To which voice will he/she listen...?

In this delicate early stage there is only one way to escape the inner and outer violence... by taking flight, that is, by rushing to a place where the threats are much reduced. In practice this means:

protecting yourself as much as possible from harmful influences and thereby opening yourself to the whispers of the other life. Joseph and Mary flee to Egypt with their child (Egypt is also the symbol of the Mysteries, the force field of the soul). Along with Elizabeth and John, they have been taught in the mystery schools of Elihu and Salome. They have overcome the resistances; Herod dies. In Zoan the inner Man as well as the personality receive the insight and strength to further devote themselves to their task. That is the great miracle of the Mysteries.



*He who knows well his lower self,
knows the illusions of the world,
knows of the things that pass away;
and he who knows his higher self, knows God; knows well
the things that cannot pass away.*

The Aquarian Gospel 8 : 15

DECEMBER 28 NARRATIVE
MARY AND ELIZABETH ARE TAUGHT
IN A MYSTERY SCHOOL IN EGYPT

Chapter 7 and 8 of *The Aquarian Gospel*

The son of Herod, Archelaus, reigned in Jerusalem. He was a selfish, cruel king; he put to death all those who did not honour him. He called in council all the wisest men and asked about the infant claimant to his throne. The council said that John and Jesus both were dead; then he was satisfied.

Now Joseph, Mary and their son were down in Egypt in Zoan, and John was with his mother in the Judean Hills. Elihu and Salome sent messengers in haste to find Elizabeth and John. They found them and they brought them to Zoan. Now, Mary and Elizabeth were marvelling much because of their deliverance. Elihu said, It is not strange; there are no happenings; law governs all events. From olden times it was ordained that you should be with us, and in this sacred school be taught.

Elihu and Salome took Mary and Elizabeth out to the sacred grove nearby where they were wont to teach.

Elihu said to Mary and Elizabeth, You may esteem yourselves thrice blest, for you are chosen mothers of long promised sons, Who are ordained to lay in solid rock a sure foundation stone on which the temple of the perfect man shall rest – a temple that shall never be destroyed. We measure time by cycle ages, and the gate to every age we deem a mile stone in the journey of the race. An age has passed; the gate into another age flies open at the touch of time. This is the preparation age of soul, the kingdom of Immanuel, of God in man; And these, your sons, will be the first to tell the news, and preach the gospel of good will to men, and

peace on earth. A mighty work is theirs; for carnal men want not the light, they love the dark, and when the light shines in the dark they comprehend it not. We call these sons, Revealers of the Light; but they must have the light before they can reveal the light. And you must teach your sons, and set their souls on fire with love and holy zeal, and make them conscious of their missions to the sons of men. Teach them that God and man were one; but that through carnal thoughts and words and deeds, man tore himself away from God; debased himself. Teach that the Holy Breath would make them one again, restoring harmony and peace; That naught can make them one but Love; that God so loved the world that he has clothed his son in flesh that man may comprehend. The only Saviour of the world is love, and Jesus, son of Mary, comes to manifest that love to men. Now, love cannot be manifest until its way has been prepared, and naught can rend the rocks and bring down lofty hills and fill the valleys up, and thus prepare the way, but purity. But purity in life men do not comprehend; and so, it, too, must come in flesh. And you, Elizabeth, are blest because your son is purity made flesh, and he shall pave the way for love. This age will comprehend but little of the works of Purity and Love; but not a word is lost, for in the Book of God's Remembrance a registry is made of every thought, and word, and deed; And when the world is ready to receive, lo, God will send a messenger to open up the book and copy from its sacred pages all the messages of Purity and Love. Then every man of earth will read the words of life in language of his native land, and men will see the light, walk in the light and be the light. And man again will be at one with God.

Again Elihu met his pupils in the sacred grove and said, No man lives unto himself; for every living thing is bound by cords to every other living thing. Blest are the pure in heart; for they will love and not demand love in return. They will not do to other men what they would not have other men do to them. There are

two selves; the higher and the lower self. The higher self is human spirit clothed with soul, made in the form of God. The lower self, the carnal self, the body of desires, is a reflection of the higher self, distorted by the murky ethers of the flesh. The lower self is an illusion, and will pass away; the higher self is God in man, and will not pass away. The higher self is the embodiment of truth; the lower self is truth reversed, and so is falsehood manifest. The higher self is justice, mercy, love and right; the lower self is what the higher self is not. The lower self breeds hatred, slander, lewdness, murders, theft, and everything that harms; the higher self is mother of the virtues and the harmonies of life. The lower self is rich in promises, but poor in blessedness and peace; it offers pleasure, joy and satisfying gains; but gives unrest and misery and death. It gives men apples that are lovely to the eye and pleasant to the smell; their cores are full of bitterness and gall.

If you would ask me what to study I would say, yourselves; and when you well had studied them, and then would ask me what to study next, I would reply, yourselves. He who knows well his lower self, knows the illusions of the world, knows of the things that pass away; and he who knows his higher self, knows God; knows well the things that cannot pass away. Thrice blessed is the man who has made purity and love his very own; he has been ransomed from the perils of the lower self and is himself his higher self. Men seek salvation from an evil that they deem a living monster of the nether world; and they have gods that are but demons in disguise; all powerful, yet full of jealousy and hate and lust; Whose favours must be bought with costly sacrifice of fruits, and of the lives of birds, and animals, and human kind. And yet these gods possess no ears to hear, no eyes to see, no heart to sympathise, no power to save. This evil is a myth; these gods are made of air, clothed with shadows of a thought. The only devil from which men must be redeemed is self, the lower self. If man would find his devil he must look within; his name is self. If man would find his saviour he

must look within; and when the demon self has been dethroned, the saviour, Love, will be exalted to the throne of power. The David of the light is Purity, who slays the strong Goliath of the dark, and seats the saviour, Love, upon the throne.



DECEMBER 29
YOUR ASSIGNMENT IN LIFE

DECEMBER 29 REFLECTION YOUR ASSIGNMENT IN LIFE

Man is a twofold being: he is mortal as to his earthly nature and immortal as to the original, divine nature. *The Aquarian Gospel* does not fail to point out this duality, as for example, in the teachings of the sages in Zoan when they talk about the two egos.

In every human life there is always both an outer assignment and also an inner assignment. One can accept or reject an outer assignment, addressed to the mortal being. An inner assignment, however, addressed to the immortal, divine being within us, is part of the divine Plan of Creation. If we accept this inner assignment and show our willingness to cooperate, then this acceptance immediately includes the key to fulfilment.

Just like all Gospels, *The Aquarian Gospel* tells us of an inner assignment, of the inner development of man. The messengers, wisdom teachers such as Elihu and Salome, have the task of reminding us unceasingly of our inner mission, of our high origin, of the possibility of returning to the original nature and of living accordingly.

Revealers of the Light

According to *The Aquarian Gospel*, Elizabeth and Mary receive an assignment following the births of John and Jesus. They are subsequently instructed in the caves of Zoan (in Egypt), that is, in the mystery school of Elihu and Salome. Elizabeth and Mary are called the 'chosen mothers' of the long-promised sons, the Revealers of

the Light. Elizabeth and Mary accept the responsibility of teaching their sons in order to lay a solid foundation stone on which the Temple of the New Original Man must once again be erected. They have to inspire their sons, ignite them with love and a sense of justice, pointing them to the holy purpose of their mission so that in due course the mighty work that awaits them can be fulfilled. Once God and man were one. Due to thoughts, words and deeds linked to the world of space and time, man separated himself from the original, divine world and fell into the material world. However, God does not abandon the world and humanity; rather, He seeks those who are lost. He wants to restore the original relationship among God, the cosmos and humanity by means of Love. Therefore, He sends his children into the world to compel them to reveal the Light, the Love, and thereby to proclaim to humanity the possibility of a return to the Unity. In order for that mission to succeed, John is given the task of preparation by means of unceasing purification. Only purity can clear the way, remove stumbling blocks and make the paths straight in order to allow Jesus to bring Love to humanity.

Love and purity

What is the essence of this message? The starting point is that nobody lives only for himself; every living being is bound to every other living being by invisible threads.

We all have a twofold inner assignment:

Firstly the individual assignment to live the life of our current situation, and thus, via life experience, to reach consciousness and renewal.

And secondly, to carry out the inner work and thereby be of help towards the spiritual development of the world and humanity.

Every human being has his ideals and is constantly striving to realise them. There are three areas of human endeavour that demonstrate this most clearly: science, art and religion. Each of these

areas has its own ideal: in science man seeks for truth, in art man strives for beauty, in religion man pursues goodness.

The true, the beautiful and the good

The areas of the true, the beautiful and the good correspond to thinking, feeling and acting. They become reality by means of three attributes: head, heart and hands.

But when we soberly consider what humanity has managed to achieve with its pursuit of ideals, it is noteworthy that man appears not to be able to gain lasting results – at most there are results that are only transitory. Therefore our world has proven to be a world of delusion.

Why is this? Why is everything only temporary? Why does it turn into its opposite and grind to a halt? It is because our world is not the original world. It is because our aspirations are based on the lower ego, even if we think this is not so.

Let us consult *The Aquarian Gospel*, which relates what the difference is between the two egos: “He who knows himself well, knows the illusions of the world and knows of the things that pass away; but he who knows God, knows well the things that cannot pass away.” Therefore, the sages of Zoan teach us: if man wants to be freed from the delusion of this world, let him turn his eyes inward. For this reason the teacher Elihu makes a sharp distinction between the two egos.

Two egos

The self-created gods and demons who have neither ears to hear, nor eyes to see, neither a compassionate heart nor the power to save, who are made of air and dressed with shadows and thoughts: they reside in the lower ego, which we know as our self-centred personality.

Elihu encourages us to learn to know this self-centred ego, to understand it and, having become fully aware of it, to purify our

thoughts, feelings and deeds. If we can pursue such a pure attitude to life, these demons will disappear through the power of love.

John is the forerunner.

His mother, Elizabeth, is aware of the delusion of this world, from which she has stopped expecting anything. Her mind has come to the point where she will actually begin with the purification because there is no longer any other solution.

John is the one who receives the assignment to effectively take charge of this purification and to realise a new mode of life, thus paving the way for the one who will come after him. For what comes after the purification is the love-power of Jesus, which is born of the most sublime purity we could possibly imagine: Mary. Thus we see that John and Jesus are not characters outside ourselves but rather aspects of the inner assignment which all of us have received. We ourselves have been called to become and be revealers of the Light. As soon as the light of the Jesus-character has manifested itself within us, the way is open for the true, the beautiful and the good that know no opposite and are truly divine.



*But you must know that words are naught
till they are made alive; until the lessons they contain
become a part of head and heart.*

The Aquarian Gospel 10 : 28

DECEMBER 29 **NARRATIVE**
ELIHU AND SALOME TEACH IN THEIR
MYSTERY SCHOOL IN ZOAN

Chapters 9 and 10 of *The Aquarian Gospel*

Salome taught the lesson of the day. She said, All times are not alike. Today the words of man may have the greatest power; tomorrow woman teaches best. In all the ways of life the man and woman should walk hand in hand; the one without the other is but half; each has a work to do. But all things teach; each has a time and a season for its own.

The sun, the moon have lessons of their own for men; but each one teaches at the appointed time. The lessons of the sun fall down on human hearts like withered leaves upon a stream, if given in the season of the moon; and so with lessons of the moon and all the stars. Today one walks in gloom, downhearted and oppressed; tomorrow that same one is filled with joy. Today the heavens seem full of blessedness and hope; tomorrow hope has fled, and every plan and purpose comes to naught. Today one wants to curse the very ground on which he treads; tomorrow he is full of love and praise. Today one hates and scorns and envies and is jealous of the child he loves; tomorrow he has risen above his carnal self, and breathes forth gladness and good-will.

A thousand times men wonder why these heights and depths, these light hearts and these sad, are found in every life. They do not know that there are teachers everywhere, each busy with a God-appointed task, and driving home to human hearts the truth. But this is true, and every one receives the lessons that he needs. And Mary said, Today I am in exaltation great; my thoughts and all my life seem lifted up; why am I thus inspired?

Salome replied, This is a day of exaltation; a day of worship and of praise; a day when, in a measure, we may comprehend our Father-God. Then let us study God, the One, the Three, the Seven. Before the worlds were formed all things were One; just Spirit, Universal Breath. And Spirit breathed, and that which was not manifest became the Fire and Thought of Heaven, the Father-God, the Mother-God. And when the Fire and Thought of heaven in union breathed, their son, their only son, was born. This son is Love whom men have called the Christ. Men call the Thought of heaven the Holy Breath. And when the Triune God breathed forth, lo, seven Spirits stood before the throne. These are the Elohim, creative spirits of the universe. And these are they who said, Let us make man; and in their image man was made. In early ages of the world the dwellers in the farther East said, Tao is the name of Universal Breath; and in the ancient books we read, No manifesting form has Tao Great, and yet he made and keeps the heavens and earth. No passion has our Tao Great, and yet he causes sun and moon and all the stars to rise and set. No name has Tao Great, and yet he makes all things to grow; he brings in season both the seed time and the harvest time. And Tao Great was One; the One became the Two; the Two became the Three, the Three evolved the Seven, which filled the universe with manifests. And Tao Great gives unto all, the evil and the good, the rain, the dew, the sunshine and the flowers; from his rich stores he feeds them all. And in the same old book we read of man: He has a spirit knit to Tao Great; a soul which lives within the seven Breaths of Tao Great; a body of desires that springs up from the soil of flesh. Now spirit loves the pure, the good, the true; the body of desires extols the selfish self; the soul becomes the battle ground between the two. And blessed is the man whose spirit is triumphant and whose lower self is purified; whose soul is cleansed, becoming fit to be the council chamber of the manifests of Tao Great. Thus closed the lesson of Salome.

Elihu taught; he said, In ancient times a people in the East were worshippers of God, the One, whom they called Brahm. Their laws were just; they lived in peace; they saw the light within; they walked in wisdom's ways. But priests with carnal aims arose, who changed the laws to suit the carnal mind; bound heavy burdens on the poor, and scorned the rules of right; and so the Brahms became corrupt. But in the darkness of the age a few great masters stood unmoved; they loved the name of Brahm; they were great beacon lights before the world. And they preserved inviolate the wisdom of their holy Brahm, and you may read this wisdom in their sacred books. And in Chaldea, Brahm was known. A pious Brahm named Terah lived in Ur; his son was so devoted to the Brahmic faith that he was called A-Brahm; and he was set apart to be the father of the Hebrew race. Now, Terah took his wife and sons and all his flocks and herds to Haran in the West; here Terah died. And Abram took the flocks and herds, and with his kindred journeyed farther west; And when he reached the Oaks of Morah in the land of Canaan, he pitched his tents and there abode. A famine swept the land and Abram took his kindred and his flocks and herds and came to Egypt, and in these fertile plains of Zoan pitched his tent, and here abode. And men still mark the place where Abram lived – across the plain. You ask why Abram came to Egypt land? This is the cradle-land of the initiate; all secret things belong to Egypt land; and this is why the masters come. In Zoan Abram taught his science of the stars, and in that sacred temple over there he learned the wisdom of the wise. And when his lessons all were learned, he took his kindred and his flocks and herds and journeyed back to Canaan, and in the plains of Mamre pitched his tent, and there he lived, and there he died. And records of his life and works and of his sons, and of the tribes of Israel, are well preserved in Jewish sacred books. In Persia Brahm was known, and feared. Men saw him as the One, the causeless Cause of all that is, and he was sacred unto them, as Tao to the dwellers of the

farther East. The people lived in peace, and justice ruled. But, as in other lands, in Persia priests arose imbued with self and self desires, who outraged Force, Intelligence and Love; Religion grew corrupt, and birds and beasts and creeping things were set apart as gods. In course of time a lofty soul, whom men called Zarathustra, came in flesh. He saw the causeless Spirit, high and lifted up; he saw the weakness of all man appointed gods. He spoke and all of Persia heard; and when he said, One God, one people and one shrine, the altars of the idols fell, and Persia was redeemed. But men must see their Gods with human eyes, and Zarathustra said, The greatest of the Spirits standing near the throne is the Ahura Mazda, who manifests in brightness of the sun. And all the people saw Ahura Mazda in the sun, and they fell down and worshipped him in temples of the sun. And Persia is the magian land where live the priests who saw the star arise to mark the place where Mary's son was born, and were the first to greet him as the Prince of Peace. The precepts and the laws of Zarathustra are preserved in the Avesta which you can read and make your own. But you must know that words are naught till they are made alive; until the lessons they contain become a part of head and heart. Now truth is one; but no one knows the truth until he is the truth. It is recorded in an ancient book. Truth is the leavening power of God; it can transmute the all of life into itself; and when the all of life is truth, then man is truth.



DECEMBER 30
LOOKING BACK AT THE PAST

DECEMBER 30 REFLECTION LOOKING BACK AT THE PAST

*M*an is a twofold being: he is mortal as to his earthly nature and immortal as to the original, divine nature. *The Aquarian Gospel* does not fail to point out this duality, as for example, in the teachings of the sages in Zoan when they talk about the two egos.

At the end of each year, the media devote extensive attention to the highlights in the news of the previous year. In words and images we are taken back to forgotten past events and say: “Oh yes, it’s true ... I forgot.” For a moment our senses – the gates to our consciousness – are open to that which has passed. The desire to look back is not the same for everyone, but one could say that reminiscing is in itself a method of cleansing that can bring closure to the past and may herald a new beginning. Looking back at the world news may contribute to an awareness that this world of delusion does not correspond to the world that we carry in our inner minds.

Obviously, concerning the inner path we should not become otherworldly; rather it is quite the contrary. We, human beings, were even born into this world in order to experience life on earth and to discover that ‘this is not it’, so that we would go the path of return through our own volition. As soon as we realise our duality and our separateness from the Light, we discover more and more clearly that there are many forces working to impede our return journey. Too much ruminating about the past is one of them, but at the same time the phrase “he who does not want to learn from

the past, will be punished in the future” has validity. The information that reaches humanity in all its forms through the mass media is another example. It is King Herod in a modern shape. The sages of Zoan teach us: if we are to be liberated from the illusion of this world, then we must turn our gaze inward.

For what would it add to the accomplishment of our inner assignment if we allow ourselves to be consumed with the intolerable suffering of millions of people and animals, which we cannot possibly prevent, or by the emotions of others in the face of which we are likewise powerless?

No human being in whom the new soul is born can be indifferent to the suffering of this world. The union of the soul with all living beings causes the soul to suffer with them. That is the nature of the soul; it cannot do otherwise. But for the outer human being on the path the situation is different.

By nature he is a self-maintainer, one who actually does not want to have anything to do with this unity and is naturally directed towards self-preservation. That is why the inner and the outer man are so often standing opposed to each other, both heading in different directions. And yet it is the outward human being who must learn to accept the leadership of the soul and become a disciple of the soul.

It is true that everything grows when we focus our attention on it. What does not receive attention will fade. If we want the soul within us to grow, then we should turn our attention to it. That means the outer human being should as much as possible try to avoid connecting himself through the senses with things that ‘drag’ the soul down. In particular, these are the emotions that stir the heart and cause it to lose its direction. The soul is connected with everything, because it is one with everything.

Following the spiritual path demands a conscious cooperation and progressive purification. Therefore Mary, Joseph, Elizabeth and the young John and Jesus are instructed in the mystery school of

Elihu (meaning 'Yahweh is God') and Salome (meaning 'peace of Zion'). How could it be otherwise?

Life on earth was our initiator and teacher until the birth of John. And another stage is entered at the moment Jesus is born. At that point there are new lessons to learn.

Inner covenant

A new inner covenant has been made between the higher and the lower human being, now following the path together. This path leads to the highest possible covenant: the covenant with Jesus, with the Christ, for which John as the precursor dedicates his life in complete servitude.

Step by step, the inner and the outer man are both guided on their way. Little by little, through insight and inner instruction, they are driven forward on their common path in mutual dependence.

Throughout time there have been Mystery schools formed for the purpose of teaching both the lower and the higher human being to be able to follow such a special twofold path, and to support them in their task. Otherwise how would a mortal human being be able to understand the high assignment of the Other-One-within and be of service to him?

People cannot see the world of the soul with their physical eyes; neither are they able to understand it with their intellectual capabilities. The personality will never be able to comply with the high laws of the soul – it is simply not his life. At best the personality can strive with all its efforts to lessen the gap between itself and the life-of-the-soul.

Spirit, soul and personality

It is part of the Divine Plan that the personality will increasingly live through the forces of the soul in order to enable it to live by and through the Spirit. In this way the human being forges the three revelations within himself into a unity: spirit, soul and per-

sonality. The spirit, soul and personality of man correspond with the Trinity of Christianity: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Comparable triads occur in other world religions as well. For instance, in Hinduism there are the three main gods: Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva. The heart of Buddhism is the 'three jewels' of the Buddha, dharma and sangha.

It is important, however, to realise that the various triads are not always interchangeable, because they originated from different ideas. In chapter 9 of *The Aquarian Gospel* Salome broadly discusses the divine process of creation that took place and is still taking place, even beyond time:

Before the worlds were formed all things were One; just Spirit, Universal Breath. And Spirit breathed, and that which was not manifest became the Fire and Thought of Heaven, the Father-God, the Mother-God.

And when the Fire and Thought of heaven in union breathed, their son, their only son, was born. This son is Love whom men have called the Christ. Men call the Thought of heaven the Holy Breath.

And when the Triune God breathed forth, lo, seven Spirits stood before the throne. These are Elohim, creative spirits of the universe. And these are they who said, Let us make man; and in their image man was made.

The genesis of man

The ancient knowledge about the genesis of man has been extensively described for our modern times by authors such as Helena Blavatsky, Rudolf Steiner and Max Heindel. All three distinguish seven eras, each era consisting of seven distinct phases which in turn are subdivided into seven stages.

For the human being on the spiritual path such a 'retrospective' has an important meaning for it is related to three fundamental questions: who am I, where do I come from and where am I going. As it is stated in the classical Chinese teachings of the *Tao Te Ching*

of Lao Tzu: "He who knows the beginning of the Original has the thread of Tao in his hands." That is why Elihu and Salome speak about the ancient wisdom schools and religions in China, Chaldea, Egypt, Persia and India. The universal teachings of wisdom took shape in spiritual traditions that were adapted to the consciousness and the assignment of humanity in those particular time periods and earth regions.

All spiritual traditions wither, just as do all high civilisations. They are usually corrupted from the inside due to gradually diminishing attention to the inner aspect. The inspiring force loses its focus and slowly ebbs away. What remains is not much more than a shell without real content. Therefore, time and again, new spiritual impulses are needed to propel humanity towards consciousness and renewal as it continuously evolves.

Everything that the streams of wisdom had yielded in ancient times in the form of strength, wisdom, and love was gathered and renewed in original Christianity. Over the centuries, however, even Christianity became subject to formalism and decay. But always there have been individuals and groups who knew and practiced the inner religion, sometimes openly but often secretly.

If a person looks back at the development of humanity with inner knowledge, he will know where to go. At that point this striving for a high purpose in the future is not based solely on knowledge of the past. No, rather it concerns an attunement to Tao, to that which is eternal, to that which transcends and yet irradiates time and space.

Reflection on the past and the future

For those who follow the spiritual path it will be of help to reflect regularly on what lies behind as well as what lies ahead. After all the human mind, this power of reflection, has been created precisely for the acquisition of this consciousness!

Therefore contemplation and reflection have been taught in all

mystery schools with the goal of daily practice, not just at the turn of the year. A writing called *The Golden Verses of Pythagoras* recommends the following to us:

Never allow sleep to close your eyelids, after you have gone to bed, until you have examined all your actions of the day through your reason.

Where have I done wrong? What have I done?

What have I omitted that I ought to have done?

If in this examination you find that you have done wrong, reprove yourself severely for it; and if you have done any good, rejoice.

Max Heindel clearly explained the background of this evening exercise of retrospection. According to him, this contributes to ensuring that the lessons of life become a part of head and heart. That is why Elihu says at the end of chapter 10 of *The Aquarian Gospel*:

Now truth is one; but no one knows the truth until he is the truth.

Truth is the leavening power of God; it can transmute the all of life into itself; and when the all of life is truth, then man is truth.



*With good destroy the bad;
with generous deeds make avarice ashamed;
with truth make straight the crooked lines that error draws,
for error is but truth distorted, gone astray.*

The Aquarian Gospel 11 : 7

DECEMBER 30 NARRATIVE
THE LAST LESSONS OF ELIHU AND SALOME
FOR MARY AND ELIZABETH

Chapters 11 and 12 of *The Aquarian Gospel*

Again Elihu taught; he said, The Indian priests became corrupt; Brahm was forgotten in the streets; the rights of men were trampled in the dust. And then a mighty master came, a Buddha of enlightenment, who turned away from wealth and all the honours of the world, and found the Silence in the quiet groves and caves; and he was blest. He preached a gospel of a higher life, and taught man how to honour man. He had no doctrine of the gods to teach; he just knew man, and so his creed was justice, love and righteousness.

I quote for you a few of many of the helpful words which Buddha spoke: Hate is a cruel word. If men hate you regard it not; and you can turn the hate of men to love and mercy and goodwill, and mercy is as large as all the heavens. And there is good enough for all. With good destroy the bad; with generous deeds make avarice ashamed; with truth make straight the crooked lines that error draws, for error is but truth distorted, gone astray. And pain will follow him who speaks or acts with evil thoughts, as does the wheel the foot of him who draws the cart. He is a greater man who conquers self than he who kills a thousand men in war. He is the noble man who is himself what he believes that other men should be. Return to him who does you wrong your purest love, and he will cease from doing wrong; for love will purify the heart of him who is beloved as truly as it purifies the heart of him who loves. The words of Buddha are recorded in the Indian sacred books; attend to them, for they are part of the instructions of the Holy

Breath. The land of Egypt is the land of secret things. The mysteries of the ages lie lock-bound in our temples and our shines. The masters of all times and climes come here to learn; and when your sons have grown to manhood they will finish all their studies in Egyptian schools. But I have said enough. Tomorrow at the rising of the sun we meet again.

Now, when the morning sun arose the masters and their pupils all were in the sacred grove. Salome was the first to speak; she said, Behold the sun! It manifests the power of God who speaks to us through sun and moon and stars; Through mountain, hill and vale; through flower, and plant and tree. God sings for us through bird, and harpsichord, and human voice; he speaks to us through wind and rain and thunder roll; why should we not bow down and worship at his feet? God speaks to hearts apart; and hearts apart must speak to him; and this is prayer. It is not prayer to shout at God, to stand, or sit, or kneel and tell him all about the sins of men. It is not prayer to tell the Holy One how great he is, how good he is, how strong and how compassionate. God is not man to be bought up by praise of man. Prayer is the ardent wish that every way of life be light; that every act be crowned with good; that every living thing be prospered by our ministry. A noble deed, a helpful word is prayer; a fervent, an effectual prayer. The fount of prayer is in the heart; by thought, not words, the heart is carried up to God, where it is blest, Then let us pray. They prayed, but not a word was said; but in that holy Silence every heart was blest. And then Elihu spoke. He said to Mary and Elizabeth, Our words are said; you need not tarry longer here; the call has come; the way is clear, you may return unto your native land. A mighty work is given you to do; you shall direct the minds that will direct the world. Your sons are set apart to lead men up to righteous thoughts, and words, and

deeds; To make men know the sinfulness of sin; to lead them from the adoration of the lower self, and all illusive things, and make them conscious of the self that lives with Christ in God. In preparation for their work your sons must walk in many thorny paths. Fierce trials and temptations they will meet, like other men; their loads will not be light, and they will weary be, and faint. And they will know the pangs of hunger and of thirst; and without cause they will be mocked, imprisoned, scourged. To many countries they will go, and at the feet of many masters they will sit, for they must learn like other men. But we have said enough. The blessings of the Three and of the Seven, who stand before the throne, will surely rest upon you evermore.

Thus closed the lessons of Elihu and Salome.

Three years they taught their pupils in the sacred grove, and if their lessons all were written in a book, lo, it would be a mighty book; of what they said we have the sum. Now, Mary, Joseph and Elizabeth with Jesus and his harbinger, set forth upon their homeward way. They went not by Jerusalem, for Archelaus reigned. They journeyed by the Bitter Sea, and when they reached Engedi hills they rested in the home of Joshua, a near of kin; and here Elizabeth and John abode. But Joseph, Mary and their son went by the Jordan way, and after certain days they reached their home in Nazareth.



DECEMBER 31
TAKING LEAVE OF YOUR TEACHERS

DECEMBER 31 REFLECTION TAKING LEAVE OF YOUR TEACHERS

There are several special moments in the lifetime of each human being when a certain development has been completed and a new development begins. Obviously birth and death are the most radical examples. Other milestones include your first day of school, graduating, getting your first job, starting to live on your own, marriage, children, divorce and retirement.

In all these phases life is lived, lessons are learned and certain qualities are developed. Sometimes it can be said of a person that youth was like a flower and old age like a bouquet. It could be a fresh and radiant bouquet, but it could also be a withered one. But that is just the outside, which is always subject to decay. The inside of man, his essence, is eternal, imperishable and always seeking opportunities to manifest itself in a more majestic and mighty way in harmony with the divine plan of creation.

Purification

In our lives things often happen quite differently than we had imagined or wished. Sometimes, when you look back on your life, you may find that all of your life experiences, no matter how radical they may have been, have contributed to a certain purification. And sometimes you feel that certain things just had to happen in order to either push you in a certain direction or to protect you.

When you look back at your experiences, most of them have turned out to have been purifications and blessings for the benefit of a great purpose. Everything in life has a spiritual purpose which usually can only be established in retrospect: purification! Then a particular mystery has taken place that previously could not have been fathomed: life itself, with all its aspects that seem to us to occur aimlessly, has initiated the lower man into higher truths. Such higher truths cannot possibly be found in books and temples; they cannot be transmitted by masters or gurus. No, they have to be found by us in that place where initially we neither seek nor expect to find it: within ourselves. Our Self (with a capital 'S') is waiting to be discovered by ourselves (with a lowercase 's').

Guidelines

Throughout all times mystery schools – schools in which both the personality and the soul are instructed – have existed in order to help people on their twofold path. Pure guidelines that mortal men can follow were lovingly given to the personality, such as the recommendations of the Buddha that Elihu mentions in *The Aquarian Gospel*:

If men hate you regard it not; and you can turn the hate of men to love and mercy and goodwill, and mercy is as large as all the heavens. And there is good enough for all. With good destroy the bad; with generous deeds make avarice ashamed; with truth make straight the crooked lines that error draws, for error is but truth distorted, gone astray.

He is a greater man who conquers self than he who kills a thousand men in war.

He is the noble man who is himself what he believes that other men should be.

Return to him who does you wrong your purest love, and he will cease from doing wrong; for love will purify the heart of him who is beloved as truly as it purifies the heart of him who loves.

Similar guidelines can be found in various guises in the Holy Language of all time. People who follow the spiritual path will recognise the high purity of these guidelines and spontaneously direct themselves to them because they reflect the high life of the soul. In this way they create the opportunity for the Spirit to connect with the soul.

By nature a human being, just as all other living beings on this planet, is focused on self-preservation until his last breath. Self-preservation is a necessary life force which often stands on the spiritual path diametrically opposed to the higher principles of the soul.

This sometimes causes us to experience our path as a long and especially arduous one. But the ineradicable longing for human dignity and inner life drives us to proceed on our way.

Daytime-life and nighttime-life

The inner man on the way to adulthood is not left without instruction. The soul belongs to the spiritual world but lives in the body of a mortal human being. It is completely connected with everything that happens in that person. And that is quite something because both the daytime life and the nighttime life of man provide a continuous series of impressions and influences in the form of thoughts, feelings and actions.

A mystery school is therefore much more than a building, in which certain masters are present and where only select pupils are admitted. A mystery school is first and foremost a force field, a field of energy where Truth (with a capital T) can express itself.

The Mysteries are ageless and unassailable. When we read that Elizabeth, John, Jesus, Mary and Joseph (who are all aspects of ourselves) were taught in the mystery school of Elihu and Salome, then a very special fact is revealed to us: both the personality and the soul are brought into contact with the force field of the Truth and are taught and nourished, each according to its own quality.

For the personality, the guidelines are presented in the form of Holy Scriptures, perceptible to the senses. Teachers appear in the world as representatives and bearers of the truth in human shape. Schools are established around the world so that people are enabled to make a connection with Truth and raise themselves up to it. But the soul needs no physical form of teaching – it breathes in Truth; it lives by Truth. Due to its connection with the personality, the soul is literally deprived of its ‘breath’ and thus of its opportunity to reveal itself.

It is not hard to imagine the damage that is caused by emotions such as jealousy, hatred, criticism and greed to both the inner and the outer human being. When someone is full of criticism, he is focused exclusively on the subject of his criticism. As a result he shuts himself off completely from the life of the soul which is then shunted to the background.

For that reason, the soul is instructed in how to steer the personality, for it is the personality that encounters many things in everyday life to which it is obliged to respond.

Often the situation can be rather confusing: on the one hand, the candidate on the path strives for the purest reaction, but that pure deed diametrically opposes his own self-preserving and self-centred nature!

The teaching of the soul takes place predominantly during the hours of sleep. “The sleep of the body is the soberness of the soul” reads an ancient hermetic text. Depending upon the directedness of the personality, during the nighttime the soul may be allowed to detach itself from the personality in order to establish a link with its own field.

There the soul receives council and instructions on how the personality can be lifted above itself in the best way, in order to let it remain subservient to the soul. During the daytime life, these nightly lessons of the soul can become apparent to the candidate by means of his reactions to events in everyday life.

Therefore, the mystery school of the soul can neither be perceived with the eyes nor understood with the intellect alone. The school of the soul reveals itself in those who actually follow the spiritual path and become disciples of the soul.

Special sustenance

When the soul has just been born in man, it is vulnerable. It must be cared for and it needs food. That food does not consist of physical sustenance or knowledge but rather of a special force. The person concerned is not yet able to attract or liberate this force by himself, but it can be found in mystery schools.

Joseph, Mary and Elizabeth with Jesus and John – all those aspects in ourselves – are initiated in the mystery school of Zoan and strengthened to carry out the inner work. They enter a new phase in their development.

In *The Aquarian Gospel* it is said that after three years of teaching they return to their homes, but not to Jerusalem where Archelaus, son of Herod, still reigns.

For although the personality is being instructed as well, its forces are still too dangerous for the soul. Yet at the same time, the inner strength gained as a result of years of inward directedness can be considered sufficiently strong because:

Elihu said to Mary and Elizabeth, Our words are said; you need not tarry longer here; the call has come; the way is clear, you may return unto your native land.



The universal God is one, yet he is more than one; all things are God; all things are one. By the sweet breaths of God all life is bound in one; so if you touch a fibre of a living thing you send a thrill from the centre to the outer bounds of life.

The Aquarian Gospel 28: 4-5

DECEMBER 31 NARRATIVE

JESUS TEACHES THE HINDUS IN BENARES

Chapter 28 of *The Aquarian Gospel*

Benares is the sacred city of the Brahms, and in Benares Jesus taught; Udraka was his host. Udraka made a feast in honour of his guest, and many high born Hindu priests and scribes were there. And Jesus said to them, With much delight I speak to you concerning life – the brotherhood of life. The universal God is one, yet he is more than one; all things are God; all things are one. By the sweet breaths of God all life is bound in one; so if you touch a fibre of a living thing you send a thrill from the centre to the outer bounds of life. And when you crush beneath your foot the meanest worm, you shake the throne of God, and cause the sword of right to tremble in its sheath. The bird sings out its song for men, and men vibrate in unison to help it sing. The ant constructs her home, the bee its sheltering comb, the spider weaves her web, and flowers breathe to them a spirit in their sweet perfumes that gives them strength to toil. Now, men and birds and beasts and creeping things are deities, made flesh; and how dare men kill anything? 'Tis cruelty that makes the world awry. When men have learned that when they harm a living thing they harm themselves, they surely will not kill, nor cause a thing that God has made to suffer pain. A lawyer said, I pray you, Jesus, tell who is this God you speak about; where are his priests, his temples and his shrines? And Jesus said, The God I speak about is everywhere; he cannot be compassed with walls, nor hedged about with bounds of any kind. All people worship God, the One; but all the people see him not alike. This universal God is wisdom, will and

love. All men see not the Triune God. One sees him as the God of might; another as the God of thought; another as the God of love. A man's ideal is his God, and so, as man unfolds, his God unfolds. Man's God today, tomorrow is not God. The nations of the earth see God from different points of view, and so he does not seem the same to every one. Man names the part of God he sees, and this to him is all of God; and every nation sees a part of God, and every nation has a name for God. You Brahmans call him Parabrahm; in Egypt he is Thoth; and Zeus is his name in Greece; Jehovah is his Hebrew name; but everywhere he is the causeless Cause, the rootless Root from which all things have grown. When men become afraid of God, and take him for a foe, they dress up other men in fancy garbs and call them priests. And charge them to restrain the wrath of God by prayers; and when they fail to win his favour by their prayers, to buy him off with sacrifice of animal, or bird. When man sees God as one with him, as Father-God, he needs no middle man, no priest to intercede; He goes straight up to him and says, My Father-God! and then he lays his hand in God's own hand, and all is well. And this is God. You are, each one, a priest, just for yourself; and sacrifice of blood God does not want. Just give your life in sacrificial service to all of life, and God is pleased.

When Jesus had thus said he stood aside; the people were amazed, but strove among themselves. Some said, He is inspired by Holy Brahm; and others said, He is insane; and others said, He is obsessed; he speaks as devils speak. But Jesus tarried not. Among the guests was one, a tiller of the soil, a generous soul, a seeker after truth, who loved the words that Jesus spoke, and Jesus went with him, and in his home abode.



JANUARY 1
DEVELOPING YOUR TALENTS

JANUARY 1 REFLECTION DEVELOPING YOUR TALENTS

New Year's eve, the transition from the old year to the new, is celebrated in many cultures and traditions together with family or friends. By preparing special food and fireworks celebrations the atmosphere is cleansed from old forces to make new developments possible.

The name of the first month of the calendar year, January, is derived from Janus, the Roman god of antiquity. Janus is associated with change, transition and progress and is usually depicted as a head with two faces: one face looking to the left (symbolising the past) and one face looking to the right (symbolising the future). The turn of the year is a time not only for looking back at the old year to draw the necessary lessons from it, but also a time for pre-viewing the coming year in order to live with new perspectives and new dynamics.

Intention and behaviour

Many people start the year with good intentions. In practice, these plans appear to be pointless because of the yawning gap between our intentions and our behaviour. An intention can change fairly quickly and easily. Changing our behaviour, however, usually requires considerable effort. But once certain desired behaviours do become a habit, it is no longer difficult to persevere. Integrating desirable habits into your personality will certainly yield fruits. The writer Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-1882) gave some good advice to help achieve that shift. He wrote:
Sow a thought and you reap an action; sow an act and you reap a hab-

it; sow a habit and you reap a character; sow a character and you reap a destiny.

From our childhood, we are trained to become individualised personalities and to understand and judge everything as such, to reason and control everything and particularly to stick up for ourselves. Quite a number of seeds are sown in us.

You can truly talk about a spiritual turn of the year when, at some point in your life, you decide to be a disciple of the soul on the basis of a soul consciousness that transcends space and time. The personality then makes itself subservient to the soul, it becomes an instrument for the soul.

Old and new

This transition from Old to New, therefore, forms a difficult phase on the spiritual path. At this turning point, the personality should consciously surrender to inner guidance by the soul. This surrender requires an entirely new attitude towards yourself because you have arrived at this point with everything that you currently are, with everything that has ever been sown in you. And you become aware that from that moment on, you yourself are going to play a different role in your own life.

Having arrived at this point of surrender, you can only say 'yes' to what comes your way and be inwardly silent. The outer life goes on – all civic and social obligations are conscientiously fulfilled – while deep inside your inner development takes place. If you experience something of the beneficent power of the new soul within yourself, then you might feel an inclination to focus all your attention on that and to regard that feeling as the goal of the path. But that would cause the inward orientation to slip away. Soon this inward orientation could be extinguished and dissolved by the natural tendency of the personality to be outwardly directed. It is a classical paradox on the spiritual path that the soul must

grow and become more powerful without being encapsulated by a personality that is drunk on itself. The soul can express itself only via the personality, and that by means of a dynamic mode of life arising from love and inner knowledge. In other words: "Sow a *new* thought and you reap a *new* action."

You can only react to the impulses of the soul insofar as your nature allows. Your reactions should, therefore, be completely authentic. Much of the inner work is done invisibly. If people on the spiritual path use their individual talents cooperatively, then despite great diversity they will work together harmoniously from a basis of unity, freedom and love.

Unity of all existence

In chapter 28 of *The Aquarian Gospel*, Jesus the adult man gives an address to Hindus in Benares, India. He speaks about the importance of being aware of the unity of all existence. He says, among other things:

The universal God is one, yet he is more than one; all things are God; all things are one. By the sweet breaths of God all life is bound in one; so if you touch a fibre of a living thing you send a thrill from the centre to the outer bounds of life.

The God I speak about is everywhere; he cannot be compassed with walls, nor hedged about with bounds of any kind. All people worship God, the One; but all the people see him not alike.

A man's ideal is his God, and so, as man unfolds, his God unfolds.

Man's God today, tomorrow is not God. The nations of the earth see God from different points of view, and so he does not seem the same to everyone.

You are, each one, a priest, just for yourself; and sacrifice of blood God does not want. Just give your life in sacrificial service to all of life, and God is pleased.

Jesus could have spent his entire life in the temple of Jerusalem

studying, teaching, meditating and praying. But he did not do so for that would have been in conflict with his mission for the world and humanity. In order to further develop himself, he travelled the world to meet with the greatest sages and thinkers and with representatives of existing religions. The concept 'world' is a symbol for our personality. There are many stories about Jesus healing the crippled, the lame, the blind and the sick. He argued with priests about the withered and degenerate aspects of their religion, which was no longer religion in the original sense of the word.

Reconnecting

Religion means 'reconnecting'. True religion, therefore, aims to re-establish the dynamic, living connection between human beings and the divine. This living connection is a universal principle that has been sought in all times and by all peoples.

It is only an intense longing for this restored connection that can facilitate our decision to set this as a new goal in life. This decision, this good intention, heralds New Year's Eve. It is from that moment onward that we give the Other-One-within-us – the Jesus principle – the opportunity to heal the blind, the lame and the crippled aspects of ourselves.

The 'Light of the World', the evolving soul power, attacks our crystallised, religious imagery and discards all distorted images which reside literally in our blood. That letting go and starting over again is sometimes perceived as fireworks popping within ourselves.

It gradually becomes clear that the only truly divine worship is the inner sacrifice of the personality. All seeds that have ever been sown are dug up one by one, because now there is a completely new seed that has germinated. And wherever the inner Jesus appears, he leaves his footprints behind within us. The inner life is growing. It gradually escapes our comprehension but its presence is felt increasingly as it irradiates our hearts, heads and hands more and more.

New Year's wishes

What do we wish you for the new year?

Not that no sorrow will come over you,

not that this year will be a bed of roses,

not that you'll never shed a tear,

not that you'll never feel a stab of pain.

No, all this we do not wish you ...

because tears purify the heart,

sorrow ennobles the mind,

pain and distress bring us closer to the Father-Mother

of the child of Bethlehem within us

and offer us blissful comfort.

Our wish for you is:

that the knowledge of the Light may manifest itself in you,

that you will experience the redeeming Love

and that you will thereby be emboldened to liberating deeds.



*Your heaven is not far away;
and it is not a place of metes and bounds,
is not a country to be reached;
it is a state of mind.*

The Aquarian Gospel 33:8

JANUARY 1 NARRATIVE
IN INDIA JESUS RELATES THE PARABLE
OF THE ROCKY FIELD AND THE HIDDEN
TREASURES

Chapter 33 of *The Aquarian Gospel*

In silent meditation Jesus sat beside a flowing spring. It was a holy day, and many people of the servant caste were near the place. And Jesus saw the hard drawn lines of toil on every brow, in every hand. There was no look of joy in any face. Not one of all the group could think of anything but toil.

And Jesus spoke to one and said, Why are you all so sad? Have you no happiness in life?

The man replied, We scarcely know the meaning of that word. We toil to live, and hope for nothing else but toil, and bless the day when we can cease our toil and lay us down to rest in Buddha's city of the dead.

And Jesus' heart was stirred with pity and with love for these poor toilers, and he said, Toil should not make a person sad; men should be happiest when they toil. When hope and love are back of toil, then all of life is filled with joy and peace, and this is heaven. Do you not know that such a heaven is for you?

The man replied, Of heaven we have heard; but then it is so far away, and we must live so many lives before we can reach that place!

And Jesus said, My brother, man, your thoughts are wrong; your heaven is not far away; and it is not a place of metes and bounds, is not a country to be reached; it is a state of mind. God never made a heaven for man; he never made a hell; we are creators and we make our own. Now, cease to seek for heaven in the sky; just open up the windows of the hearts, and, like a flood of light, a

heaven will come and bring a boundless joy; then toil will be no cruel task.

The people were amazed, and gathered close to hear this strange young master speak, Imploring him to tell them more about the Father-God; about the heaven that men can make on earth; about the boundless joy.

And Jesus spoke a parable; he said, A certain man possessed a field; the soil was hard and poor. By constant toil he scarcely could provide enough of food to keep his family from want. One day a miner who could see beneath the soil, in passing on his way, saw this poor man and his unfruitful field. He called the weary toiler and he said, My brother, know you not that just below the surface of your barren field rich treasures lie concealed? You plough and sow and reap in scanty way, and day by day you tread upon a mine of gold and precious stones. This wealth lies not upon the surface of the ground; but if you will dig away the rocky soil, and delve down deep into the earth, you need no longer till the soil for naught. The man believed. The miner surely knows; he said, and I will find the treasures hidden in my field. And then he dug away the rocky soil, and deep down in the earth he found a mine of gold. And Jesus said, The sons of men are toiling hard on desert plains, and burning sands and rocky soils; are doing what their fathers did, not dreaming they can do aught else. Behold, a master comes, and tells them of a hidden wealth; that underneath the rocky soil of carnal things are treasures that no man can count; That in the heart the richest gems abound; that he who wills may open the door and find them all.

And then the people said, Make known to us the way that we may find the wealth that lies within the heart.

And Jesus opened up the way; the toilers saw another side of life, and toil became a joy.



JANUARY 2
THE HIDDEN TREASURE
IN YOUR HEART

JANUARY 2 REFLECTION THE HIDDEN TREASURE IN YOUR HEART

In this new calendar year your life stretches before you like a book with blank pages. At the end of this year, on December 31st, it will be filled with everything you will have experienced and achieved this year. You cannot completely control your life but you can give it a specific direction and, up to a certain extent, you can also shape it.

If you do not take the initiative, life will automatically do it for you. Then you are at the mercy of forces outside yourself. If you do not make any conscious choices and decisions, you will be lived. Then your book of life will describe a series of events that you will probably experience without much joy. Maybe then you will feel like the billions of poor toilers in this world of whom it is written in *The Aquarian Gospel*:

There was no look of joy in any face. Not one of all the group could think of anything but toil. And Jesus spoke to one and said, Why are you all so sad? Have you no happiness in life? The man replied, We scarcely know the meaning of that word. We toil to live, and hope for nothing else but toil, and bless the day when we can cease our toil and lay us down to rest in Buddha's city of the dead.

Such fatalistic beliefs occur in the East more than in the West. In the West there is generally a stronger urge to take matters into our own hands and create situations that are believed to make us happy. Since ancient times, all kinds of philosophies have been based on that.

Conceptions of happiness

In the first century of the Christian era, so in the time of Jesus, there were two main schools of philosophy in Athens, each of which had rather strong opinions about happiness. The supporters of these two currents are known as the Epicureans and the Stoics. The Greek philosopher Epicurus (who lived from 341 – 270 BC) was said to have written three hundred books: on love, on music, on right action, on human life and on nature. *The Letter to Menoecus* – also called *The Letter on Happiness* – immediately betrays the author's deepest conviction: human existence is only about happiness. And how do you become happy? Epicurus appealed to everyday experience in which he found a simple and beautiful starting point: whoever manages to satisfy his natural needs while remaining distant from pain and discomfort is a happy person. He was convinced that with death everything is finished: there is no resurrection, and there is no life after death. His message was: live and enjoy and seize the day! The motto of his followers, the Epicureans, was: enjoy life while you can.

The Stoics were disciples of Zeno (who lived from 333 – 262 BC). They were much more subdued and valued thinking above feeling. They tried to live in accordance with nature through developing and realising the good in man by means of reason.

Ethics (the doctrine of right and wrong) played an important role in the Stoic way of thinking. According to the Stoics the human soul finds its greatest happiness in virtue. They defined virtue as the conformity of the human will with the laws of the universe; to be virtuous is to live according to nature.

According to them, the things that matter in life are living wisely, controlling yourself, pursuing temperance and practicing virtue.

Happiness and inner sacrifice

At the turn of the year, people wish each other a Happy New Year. One may wonder if this 'happiness' is actually in line with the

spirituality of the inner sacrifice of the personality to the soul. After all, the first Noble Truth of the Buddha is that suffering is universal. We know however that everything that lives will eventually perish, and that we can grow only through overcoming difficulties. Does the universe not know much better than we ourselves what is good for us? How then could we strive for something so intangible and fragile as happiness? How are we able to wish each other happiness?

Yes, all this is true. Nevertheless, true spirituality and happiness can go hand in hand very well. Even more than that! The goal of all authentic spirituality is to let everything and everyone become radiantly happy! And the possibilities for being radiantly happy are present within you and within every human being! Man can experience the greatest happiness now, in the present, not in a future life or in the hereafter! The greatest happiness is to consciously experience the link with the original human life. That does not mean that experiences such as pain, grief and sorrow have ceased to exist because they are inextricably linked with life on earth.

Jesus says in *The Aquarian Gospel*:

Your heaven is not far away; and it is not a place of metes and bounds, is not a country to be reached; it is a state of mind. God never made a heaven for man; he never made a hell; we are creators and we make our own. Now, cease to seek for heaven in the sky; just open up the windows of the hearts, and, like a flood of light, a heaven will come and bring a boundless joy.

The human heart is much more than a necessary organ that pumps blood throughout the body. There are multiple levels of activity all of which are in communication with each other. According to several spiritual traditions, the heart centre of the human being includes:

- the physical or material heart which is vivified by its etheric counter part;

- the heart chakra: the central element of a system of seven power-centres or chakras; it is an element that, among others, deals with our interaction with other people, with the propensity to love and be loved, and with our social identity;
- the immortal spiritual kernel in the human system which is also referred to as the divine spark, the primordial atom, the spirit spark, the lotus, rose or pearl.

The heart centre plays a vital role in the spiritual development of the human being. That is why it is often referred to as the 'heart sanctuary'. In the symbolism of the Jewish temple, the heart centre is the Holy (Place), the pelvic centre is the Forecourt and the head centre is the Holiest of Holies.

In most people the three centres do not operate as sanctuaries. When one follows the Gnostic spiritual path however, these centres are purified and renewed so that they can begin to function out of a dimension that transcends space and time. Then the three sanctuaries in the temple of man are made whole and holy.

Purification of the heart

This development begins with raising the consciousness from the abdominal centre to the heart centre and with the purification of the heart. The purification of the heart is symbolically described not only in the Christmas narrative but also, for example, in the parable that Jesus relates to the poor toilers.

That parable is about a man who owned a field where the soil was hard and poor. Despite his toil the field produced insufficient food, so hunger tormented him.

This hunger refers to our constant desire for a deeper understanding, the search for an answer to that one big question: "What then is the meaning of everything?"

If that question really wells up from the depths of our souls, then we will experience that an answer will always come because the

soul has a magnetic quality. Therefore, there will certainly come a moment in your life when you will be reminded of your true existence. In some strange way something or someone crosses your path making you aware that you are more than a mortal being that yearns for a shred of happiness, that you also carry a spark of immortality within you and that this little spark is the gateway to lasting happiness. According to the parable one day a miner, a light messenger, who has the ability to see under the surface of the barren field, calls to the poor man:

You know, my brother, that under the hard rocky soil of our superficial reality, the true meaning of our being human is hidden? Under the rocky soil of material things the most beautiful jewels abound. And all values of this world cannot compete in beauty with the brilliance of that pure gold of the spirit. Dig deep under the earth and you will find that goldmine, that holy place!

The primordial atom within us is shining like a jewel, a lotus, a rosebud which causes deep joy. Once we have tasted of that joy, then there is no earthly treasure that can tempt us anymore. Jesus advised us to open the windows of our heart to this jewel. By quieting the heart and letting it enter into the deep peace of Bethlehem, we open our being to the harmonious radiation emanating from the kernel of our heart sanctuary. And when we are thus ensouled by that gentle, yet very powerful radiation, then the foundation is laid for the great process of renewal that will lead us to lasting happiness.

We wish you a Happy New Year!



And Jesus said, There is a Silence where the soul may meet its God, and there the fount of wisdom is, and all who enter are immersed in light, and filled with wisdom, love and power.

The Aquarian Gospel 40:3

JANUARY 2 NARRATIVE
JESUS DISCUSSES THE IMPORTANCE OF
REST, SILENCE AND REFLECTION

Chapter 40 of *The Aquarian Gospel*

Now, in the early morning Jesus came again to teach and heal. A light not comprehended shone about, as though some mighty spirit overshadowed him. A magus noted this and asked him privately to tell from whence his wisdom came, and what the meaning of the light.

And Jesus said, There is a Silence where the soul may meet its God, and there the fount of wisdom is, and all who enter are immersed in light, and filled with wisdom, love and power.

The magus said, Tell me about this Silence and this light, that I may go and there abide.

And Jesus said, The Silence is not circumscribed; is not a place closed in with wall, or rocky steeps, nor guarded by the sword of man. Men carry with them all the time the secret place where they might meet their God. It matters not where men abide, on mountain top, in deepest vale, in marts of trade, or in the quiet home; they may at once, at any time, fling wide the door, and find the Silence, find the house of God; it is within the soul. One may not be so much disturbed by noise of business, and the words and thoughts of men if he goes all alone into the valley or the mountain pass. And when life's heavy load is pressing hard, it is far better to go out and seek a quiet place to pray and meditate. The Silence is the kingdom of the soul which is not seen by human eyes. When in the Silence, phantom forms may flit before the mind; but they are all subservient to the will; the master soul may speak and they are gone. If you would find this Silence of the soul

you must yourself prepare the way. None but the pure in heart may enter here. And you must lay aside all tenseness of the mind, all business cares, all fears, all doubts and troubled thoughts. Your human will must be absorbed by the divine; then you will come into a consciousness of holiness. You are within the Holy Place, and you will see upon a living shrine the candle of the Lord aflame. And when you see it burning there, look deep into the temple of your brain, and you will see it all aglow. In every part, from head to foot, are candles all in place, just waiting to be lighted by the flaming torch of love. And when you see the candles all aflame, just look, and you will see, with eyes of soul, the waters of the fount of wisdom rushing on; and you may drink, and there abide. And then the curtains part, and you are in the Holiest of All, where rests the Ark of God, whose covering is the Mercy Seat. Fear not to lift the sacred board; the Tables of the Law are in the Ark concealed. Take them and read them well; for they contain all precepts and commands that men will ever need. And in the Ark, the magic wand of prophecy lies waiting for your hand; it is the key to all the hidden meanings of the present, future, past. And then, behold, the manna there, the hidden bread of life; and he who eats shall never die. The cherubim have guarded well for every soul this treasure box, and whosoever will may enter in and find his own.

Now Kaspar heard the Hebrew master speak and he exclaimed, Behold, the wisdom of the gods has come to men!

And Jesus went his way, and in the sacred groves of Cyrus, where the multitudes were met, he taught and healed the sick.



JANUARY 3
ATTENTION FOR
YOUR INNER DEVELOPMENT

JANUARY 3 REFLECTION ATTENTION FOR YOUR INNER DEVELOPMENT

*A*n enormous drive for development hides behind every visible and invisible creation. In everything and everyone are hidden very dynamic life forces that wish to manifest themselves, right through all kinds of resistances. Resistances, as we saw, are the steps with which the ladder of development can be climbed and so they are the unexpected helpers of creation. Each seed contains such an urge to life and it shall germinate when the right circumstances occur. It can be the seed of a thought, of an inner image or emotion, or of a wonderful plan, and once germinated the thought or the emotion is very difficult to put back into the seed...

Driven by the corresponding emotion a thought leads you irrevocably to action. Sometimes you regret the action but could not have stopped it. The life force of your invisible thought has then made itself visible through your action.

Universal law

On each level of life and within each plan or thought there exists a force that drives the invisible to a visible form. That is a universal law. And when you take a good look at yourself you will certainly notice that the working out of this universal law is also taking place in you. Thoughts, life force, struggle and development eventually lead to action, even right through all resistance. Each action makes us into creators and all our acting makes visible that which takes place within us.

When on the spiritual path you then become conscious of the Other-One-within-you, of the inner Jesus, then you will want to show his invisible life force to the outside world. And there you are, as nobody understands what has ‘suddenly gotten into you’... And you yourself do not actually know what to do with this new urge. There exists more in the germinated seed in your heart than the urge that you are experiencing. Enclosed within it lies a plan of development for you and for humanity. And you, as a material human being, are the only one who is able to make this invisible plan visible to others.

It is the plan for the new phase of humanity, the Aquarius-phase, the phase in which the higher soul must come to life. It is the cosmic and divine plan for ‘the path of return’. That is why Jesus travels through ‘the world’ – through you as a personality – to teach you all aspects of this higher plan. It is up to you to accept His lessons and become an Aquarius-man.

Now that the outer development of humanity seems to be reaching a limit, interest in inner development is increasing. It is experienced more and more that the outer development of man alone does not make him happy. But for many, the interior is still only a world of emotions, thoughts and motives.

Wisdom instead of knowledge

At this border there is an increasing longing for wisdom instead of knowledge, for true harmony and unity, for pure love and true friendship. However, as personalities we search for the realisation of all this outside ourselves and not within. And then we find ourselves on social media or surfing the Internet, twittering and taking selfies. We search for unity and connection, because our inner urge drives us. In chapter 40 of *The Aquarian Gospel* Jesus tells us where the source of wisdom is to be found. In order to find this source, inner silence is needed. In that silence the soul is able to meet God, or the Gnosis, the Light.

Now, in the early morning Jesus came again to teach and heal. A light not comprehended shone about, as though some mighty spirit overshadowed him. A magus noted this and asked him privately to tell from whence his wisdom came, and what the meaning of the light. And Jesus said, There is a Silence where the soul may meet its God, and there the fount of wisdom is, and all who enter are immersed in light, and filled with wisdom, love and power.

That is true inner development. And when we truly wish to realise this wisdom and love within our own being, that will demand all our attention and cooperation.

The basis is being formed by the surging remembrance of an original life of all-encompassing love and wisdom. The experience that everything on this earth turns into its opposite causes us to feel that the destination of our life lies elsewhere, and so we want to return to that source of wisdom.

Silence

That wisdom is already potentially present in us, namely in our hearts. Although the human being is mortal, he possesses an immortal nucleus, a seed which corresponds with the higher life-field where true love and wisdom exist. That seed will awaken when it receives the right kind of attention, when “there is a silence where the soul may meet its God”, as stated in *The Aquarian Gospel*.

What kind of silence is meant here? Not the absence of sound, not the ending of all dialogue. This silence is not easy to describe – it is not a place enclosed by walls or steep cliffs nor is it guarded by the sword of a human being. We are not able to demonstrate it, write it down or speak about it, we cannot put it on YouTube; we can at the very most have an inner image of it.

Silence is the absolute stilling of the forces of the natural human being, putting aside daily turmoil, relaxing our connections to this world with its matter, money and possessions.

It is the 'not-doing' with regard to the interests of this world, the 'wu wei' of Lao Tzu.

Silence exists beyond our direct sphere of influence but can impart itself to us. It connects the extrasensory with the indwelling, the transcendent with the immanent.

Creative Spiritual Force

Silence is a creative spiritual force that can only do its work when we make space for it. Silence provides a confrontation with yourself but it also offers a voyage within yourself that poses enormous possibilities to the spiritually driven human being.

There is a silence where the soul can meet the Gnosis. That silence is the source of knowledge and wisdom. Those who enter there are immersed in light and become filled with the Spirit.

Human beings always carry this place of silence with them, as is stated in *The Aquarian Gospel*. No matter where one is – on top of a mountain, in the deepest valley, at trade markets or quietly at home – one can immediately, at any time, throw the door wide open and find the silence. In that silence there is Gnosis, which is knowledge, wisdom and love. If you want to find this silence of the soul, you will have to prepare the way to it yourself and make space for it.

How can a human being find the way to the silence?

Through a completely new mode of life.

Put all the mental tensions aside. Distance yourself as much as possible from all daily worries, all fear, all doubt and all troublesome thoughts. Do not allow yourself to indulge in the wounding power of criticism, or rash conclusions and judgements, both of yourself and of others.

Criticism and judgement are powerful thought-seeds that germinate quickly and easily. Do not allow them to do so. Do not allow emotions such as aggression, anger or irritation to suffocate the silence of the soul. Forcing or suppressing yourself, however, is

not the answer, as these approaches are not in accordance with the nature of the soul.

Move along harmoniously with all possibilities that the world offers because a great plan underlies your life. Your victories over yourself form the steps upon which you become co-creator of the great plan for the new phase of humanity: the higher life of the soul.



*The secret spring that throws ajar the door of soul
is touched by nothing else than purity in life, by prayer
and holy thought. Return, O mystic stream of Grecian thought,
and mingle your clear waters with the flood of Spirit-life;
and then the spirit consciousness will sleep no more,
and man will know, and God will bless.*

The Aquarian Gospel 44: 25-26

JANUARY 3 NARRATIVE
GREEK MASTERS LISTEN TO A SPEECH
ABOUT THE LIMITATIONS OF THE MIND

Chapter 44 of *The Aquarian Gospel*

The Greek philosophy was full of pungent truth, and Jesus longed to study with the masters in the schools of Greece. And so he left his home in Nazareth and crossed the Carmel hills, and at the port took ship, and soon was in the Grecian capital. Now, the Athenians had heard of him as teacher and philosopher, and they were glad to have him come to them that they might hear his words of truth. Among the masters of the Greeks was one, Apollo, who was called, Defender of the Oracle, and recognised in many lands as a Grecian sage.

Apollo opened up for Jesus all the doors of Grecian lore, and in the Areopagus he heard the wisest masters speak. But Jesus brought to them a wisdom greater far than theirs; and so he taught.

Once in the Amphitheatre he stood, and when Apollo bade him speak he said, Athenian masters, hear! In ages long ago, men, wise in nature's laws, sought out and found the place on which your city stands. Full well you know that there are parts of earth where its great beating heart throws heavenward etheric waves that meet the ethers from above: Where spirit-light and understanding, like the stars of night, shine forth. Of all the parts of earth there is no place more sensitised, more truly spirit-blest, than that where Athens stands. Yea, all of Greece is blest. No other land has been the homeland of such mighty men of thought as grace your scrolls of fame. A host of sturdy giants of philosophy, of poetry, of science, and of art, were born upon the soil of Greece, and rocked to manhood in your cradle of pure thought. I come not here to speak

of science, of philosophy, or art; of these you are the world's best masters now. But all your high accomplishments are but stepping stones to worlds beyond the realm of sense; are but illusive shadows fitting on the walls of time. But I would tell you of a life beyond, within; a real life that cannot pass away. In science and philosophy there is no power strong enough to fit a soul to recognise itself, or to commune with God. I would not stay the flow of your great streams of thought; but I would turn them to the channels of the soul. Unaided by the Spirit-breath, the work of intellection tends to solve the problems of the things we see, and nothing more. The senses were ordained to bring into the mind mere pictures of the things that pass away; they do not deal with real things; they do not comprehend eternal law. But man has something in his soul, a something that will tear the veil apart that he may see the world of real things. We call this something, spirit consciousness; it sleeps in every soul, and cannot be awakened till the Holy Breath becomes a welcome guest. This Holy Breath knocks at the door of every soul, but cannot enter in until the will of man throws wide the door. There is no power in intellect to turn the key; philosophy and science both have toiled to get a glimpse behind the veil; but they have failed. The secret spring that throws ajar the door of soul is touched by nothing else than purity in life, by prayer and holy thought. Return, O mystic stream of Grecian thought, and mingle your clear waters with the flood of Spirit-life; and then the spirit consciousness will sleep no more, and man will know, and God will bless.

When Jesus had thus said he stepped aside.

The Grecian masters were astonished at the wisdom of his words; they answered not.



JANUARY 4
AWAKENING OF
THE SPIRIT-CONSCIOUSNESS
WITHIN YOU

JANUARY 4 REFLECTION
AWAKENING OF
THE SPIRIT-CONSCIOUSNESS WITHIN YOU

Man is a thinker. The word 'man' is derived from the Sanskrit word 'manas' meaning 'thinker'. Unlike animals, the human-animal possesses a thinking faculty. That thinking faculty has played a crucial role in the development of humanity. Science, art and religion flow forth from the human mind. The thinking faculty has brought man to the greatest heights but also led him to the deepest depths. Although the development of the thinking faculty of the human being has been limited, now it is ready to grow further and serve humanity in its next step. But presently the human being's thought process is fed largely by what can be observed through the senses.

The Aquarian Gospel says:

The senses were ordained to bring into the mind mere pictures of the things that pass away; they do not deal with real things.

The senses were only meant to examine the transitory, but we human beings have become so fascinated by the sensory perceivable world that we still lose ourselves in it every day. Our thinking is largely degenerated and directed to the outer world, to the knowledge of this world.

An automatic and chaotic process

Moreover, the thinking of the human being is mostly an automatic and chaotic process. We are generally not conscious that we are thinking. One thought calls up another one through association,

which then again calls up another thought, etcetera.

We are not able to observe the exalted truth of the soul with our senses and our thinking faculty. That is why in the beginning the super-natural life announces itself via the heart. Inner development is possible only on the basis of pure thinking that is nourished by the living soul. Pure thoughts do not relate directly to the sensory world but arise from inner images that well up from the heart. Pure thinking does not happen on its own but requires attention and training.

Books describing the history of western philosophy usually begin with the philosophers of Greek antiquity. These sages presented classic examples of pure thought and laid down the foundation for the development of science in the western hemisphere. That is why Jesus says to the Greek masters in Athens:

Yea, all of Greece is blest. No other land has been the homeland of such mighty men of thought as grace your scrolls of fame. A host of sturdy giants of philosophy, of poetry, of science, and of art, were born upon the soil of Greece, and rocked to manhood in your cradle of pure thought.

A preoccupation with science can lead to a certain purification of thought. Such scientific thinking can deflect the fascination with what is perceived with the senses, even though images will always play a role in thought.

For example pupils in the Greek mystery school of Pythagoras occupied themselves with what we now call mathematics and physics. Attempts were made to elevate thinking to the higher life which could then express itself in the sensory and observable lower life. In this way, according to the plan, human thinking could develop itself into a 'vehicle for higher truth'.

Socrates and Plato

That approach, whereby spirituality and intellectual thinking go hand in hand, reached its pinnacle in the schools of Socrates and Plato around the third century before Christ. By the time of Jesus these thoughts were no longer alive in Athens.

For example, in the beginning of our era the philosophy of Epicurus was in vogue. It was taught in that school that happiness was to be found especially in the experience of sensory enjoyment, in 'carpe diem' (seize the day).

The Stoics, on the contrary, valued pure thinking above emotions. Feeling was of minor interest. The lack of true inspiration from the purified heart centre led easily to dogmatism and crystallisation. And thus through history the human thinking facility developed via all sorts of thought-schools into a means for finding happiness, unity and truth. And as in our individual lives throughout the ages, every path had to be explored in order to arrive at a border, a border where a new path announced itself.

Living experience

Both science and philosophy deal with the phenomenon of perception. There is always a question of a duality in perception, a differentiation between the perceiver and the perceived. Spirituality deals with experiencing. There is unity in the living experience, an immediate and unshakable knowing that does not come from reasoning. The living spiritual experience rises above thought. Therefore Jesus says to the Greek masters:

But all your high accomplishments are but stepping stones to worlds beyond the realm of sense; are but illusive shadows flitting on the walls of time. But I would tell you of a life beyond, within; a real life that cannot pass away. In science and philosophy there is no power strong enough to fit a soul to recognise itself, or to commune with God. I would not stay the flow of your great streams of thought; but I would turn them to the channels of the soul. Unaided by the Spir-

it-breath, the work of intellection tends to solve the problems of the things we see, and nothing more. The senses were ordained to bring into the mind mere pictures of the things that pass away; they do not deal with real things; they do not comprehend eternal law. But man has something in his soul, a something that will tear the veil apart that he may see the world of real things. We call this something, spirit consciousness; it sleeps in every soul, and cannot be awakened till the Holy Breath becomes a welcome guest.

The Greek masters are a symbol for our own thinking which follows a dead-end path if we want to reach the soul life. Therefore Jesus brings them a wisdom greater than their own along with a completely different meaning of happiness.

The senses endow us with a life that is incomprehensibly great, profound and of high value, but the life of the soul provides the only possibility to elevate the thinking to what is 'above'. Listening to the suggestions of the soul is the only way to rend the veils that thinking pulls over our eyes. However, as the Chinese sage Lao Tzu wrote in the Tao Te Ching, the 'above', the realm with eternal values, cannot be spoken nor studied in books or writings. Tao, the Way, can only be lived consciously and inwardly through the cooperation of heart and head.

The poverty of our current knowledge and reason, the limitations of our present comprehension and our brain consciousness all stand before us in their nakedness. We are not able to know anything that is worth knowing, nor possess anything that is worth possessing, until the purified heart elevates our thinking.

Light message

Many sages from all cultures have shown us the universality of this light-message. The great sage Shankara of India said it thus: *The human being is pure spirit, free from attachment. The thought misleads him It binds him with the shackles of the body, the senses and the breathing of life. It creates in him the feeling of 'I' and 'mine'.*

It makes him endlessly wander in the midst of the fruits of the actions it causes. The thought-shell therefore cannot be the Atman, the 'true one'. It has a beginning and an end and is susceptible to change. It is the sojourn of pain. Therefore the seeker of liberation must apply himself carefully to the purification of the thought. When the thinking is purified, the liberation is as easy to grasp as the fruit that lies in the palm of your hand.



*A selfish faith leads not to light. There is no lonely pilgrim
on the way to light. Men only gain the heights by helping
others gain the heights. The steed that leads the way
to spirit life is Love; is pure unselfish Love.*

The Aquarian Gospel 59 : 5-6

JANUARY 4 NARRATIVE THE FUNDAMENTAL POSTULATES OF THE SEVEN SAGES

Chapter 58 and 59 of *The Aquarian Gospel*

Now, when the sages were refreshed they opened up the Book of Life and read. They read the story of the life of man; of all his struggles, losses, gains; and in the light of past events and needs, they saw what would be best for him in coming years. They knew the kind of laws and precepts suited best to his estate; they saw the highest God-ideal that the race could comprehend. Upon the seven postulates these sages were to formulate, the great philosophy of life and worship of the coming age must rest. Now Meng-ste was the oldest sage; he took the chair of chief, and said, Man is not far enough advanced to live by faith; he cannot comprehend the things his eyes see not. He yet is a child, and during all the coming age he must be taught by pictures, symbols, rites and forms. His God must be a human God; he cannot see a God by faith. And then he cannot rule himself; the king must rule; the man must serve.

The age that follows this will be the age of man, the age of faith. In that blest age the human race will see without the aid of carnal eyes; will hear the soundless sound; will know the Spirit-God. The age we enter is the Preparation age, and all the schools and governments and worship rites must be designed in a simple way that men may comprehend. And man cannot originate; he builds by patterns that he sees; so in this council we must carve out a pattern for the coming age. And we must formulate the gnosis of the Empire of the soul, which rests on seven postulates. Each sage in turn shall form a postulate; and these shall be the

basis of the creeds of men until the perfect age shall come. Then Meng-ste wrote the first:

All things are thought; all life is thought activity. The multitude of beings are but phases of the one great thought made manifest. Lo, God is Thought, and Thought is God.

Then Vidyapati wrote the second postulate: Eternal Thought is one; in essence it is two – Intelligence and Force; and when they breathe a child is born; this child is Love. And thus the Triune God stands forth, whom men call Father-Mother-Child. This Triune God is one; but like the one of light, in essence he is seven. And when the Triune God breathes forth, lo, seven Spirits stand before his face; these are creative attributes. Men call them lesser gods, and in their image they made man.

And Kaspar wrote the third: Man was a thought of God, formed in the image of the Septonate, clothed in the substances of soul. And his desires were strong; he sought to manifest on every plane of life, and for himself he made a body of the ethers of the earthly forms, and so descended to the plane of earth. In this descent he lost his birthright; lost his harmony with God, and made discordant all the notes of life. Inharmony and evil are the same; so evil is the handiwork of man.

Ashbina wrote the fourth: Seeds do not germinate in light; they do not grow until they find the soil, and hide themselves away from light. Man was evolved a seed of everlasting life; but in the ethers of the Triune God the light was far too great for seeds to grow; And so man sought the soil of carnal life, and in the darksomeness of earth he found a place where he could germinate and grow. The seed has taken root and grown full well. The tree of human life is rising from the soil of earthy things, and, under natural law, is reaching up to perfect form. There are no supernatural acts of God to lift a man from carnal life to spirit blessedness; he grows as grows the plant, and in due time is perfected. The quality of soul that makes it possible for man to rise to spirit life is purity.

Apollo wrote the fifth: The soul is drawn to perfect light by four white steeds, and these are Will, and Faith, and Helpfulness and Love. That which one wills to do, he has the power to do. A knowledge of that power is faith; and when faith moves, the soul begins its flight. A selfish faith leads not to light. There is no lonely pilgrim on the way to light. Men only gain the heights by helping others gain the heights. The steed that leads the way to spirit life is Love; is pure unselfish Love.

Matheno wrote the sixth: The universal Love of which Apollo speaks is child of Wisdom and of Will divine, and God has sent it forth to earth in flesh that man may know. The universal Love of which the sages speak, is Christ. The greatest mystery of all times lies in the way that Christ lives in the heart. Christ cannot live in clammy dens of carnal things. The seven battles must be fought, the seven victories won before the carnal things, like fear, and self, emotions and desire, are put away. When this is done the Christ will take possession of the soul; the work is done, and man and God are one.

And Philo wrote the seventh: A perfect man! To bring before the Triune God a being such as this was nature made. This consummation is the highest revelation of the mystery of life. When all the essences of carnal things have been transmuted into soul, and all the essences of soul have been returned to Holy Breath, and man is made a perfect God, the drama of Creation will conclude. And this is all. And all the sages said, Amen.

Then Meng-ste said, The Holy One has sent to us a man illumined by the efforts of unnumbered years, to lead the thoughts of men. This man, approved by all the master minds of heaven and earth, this man from Galilee, this Jesus, chief of all the sages of the world, we gladly recognise. In recognition of this wisdom that he brings to men, we crown him with the Lotus wreath. We send him forth with all the blessing of the seven sages of the world.

Then all the sages laid their hands on Jesus's head, and said with one accord, Praise God! For wisdom, honour, glory, power, riches, blessing, strength, are yours, O Christ, for evermore. And every living creature said, Amen. And then the sages sat in silence seven days.



JANUARY 5
SEVEN FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES
FOR YOUR LIFE

JANUARY 5 REFLECTION SEVEN FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES FOR YOUR LIFE

As humanity, we stand at the beginning of a new era with great possibilities that will last more than 2100 years: the Age of Aquarius. At the present time the deeper spiritual aspects of the great lessons that Jesus gave to the world can be understood and realised by millions of people, because the possibilities of arriving at a heightened state of spiritual consciousness have never been greater than now.

On our journey through life we may depend upon our deepest inner self and the Wisdom that is made available to humanity. If we want to go a spiritual path, more is needed however: the deed, the intelligent act in accordance with the inner knowledge and the insights gained. That's what matters. Because the human intellect is far from complete, it serves a great purpose! And faith will never mean adhering to a system, but rather using the opportunity to convert the power in the heart into a conscious deed. Heart, head and hands: every conscious action – be it an internal or an external act – that comes from inner knowing is a testimony.

If you want to determine a course for your life from a gnostic spiritual starting point, it is meaningful to know where you came from, where you are now and in which direction you might go. The seven sages define seven fundamental principles (seven postulates) which reflect the inner spiritual journey of the Aquarian age. The seven fundamental principles or axioms are based on the idea formulated by Lao Tzu as “He who knows the beginning of the Original has the thread of Tao in his hands.” These principles are

abstract but will be understood by more and more people as human thought becomes less and less determined by what is perceived with the senses.

In chapter 60 of *The Aquarian Gospel* Jesus says:

The history of life is well condensed in these immortal postulates. These are the seven hills on which the holy city shall be built. These are the seven sure foundation stones on which the Universal Church shall stand. Man is not far enough advanced in sacred thought to comprehend the Universal Church, and so the work that God has given me to do is not the building of that Church. I am a model maker, sent to make a pattern of the Church that is to be – a pattern that the age may comprehend. And when the better age shall come the Universal Church will stand upon the seven postulates, and will be built according to the pattern given.

It can be deduced from the Introduction to *The Aquarian Gospel* that in this passage Jesus refers to the Piscean era as ‘the age’, and the Age of Aquarius as ‘the better age’. Here an ‘age’ is one 12th part of a solar cycle of around 26,000 years. Each solar year goes through 12 different periods that are influenced astronomically by a sign from the well-known zodiac. The solar year is the result of the cone-shaped spinning motion of the earth’s axis. When we clearly and concisely formulate the ideas on which the seven fundamental principles of *The Aquarian Gospel* are based, and we link these with what we have discussed so far in the reflections in Spiritual Christmas, then their sequence and relationship become clear.

1. The first principle: Creation begins with thinking. The unknowable God also creates by thinking.
2. The second principle: There is a grandiose divine plan of creation that evolves according to certain laws. Man is also a part of this and is called to collaborate in the realisation of this plan of crea-

tion. Man was originally a purely spiritual being.

3. The third principle: Due to his strong desires, the original spiritual man descended into the realm of matter, causing all forms of life to become disharmonious and the living exchange between man and the higher divine realm to disappear.

4. The fourth principle: This 'descended spiritual man' degenerated and was connected to a physical body and an earthy personality that develop almost automatically to a more or less perfect form. He grows as a plant grows, reaching a limit whereupon it becomes possible to ascend to spiritual life. The personality, based on inner desire, begins to make preparations for spiritual awakening and renewal. John is born, grows up and starts to prepare the way.

5. The fifth principle: The New Soul (Jesus) is born and grows in the physical human being based on will and faith, neighbourly love and universal love. Man can once again connect with the spirit through this new soul. Spirit is not the mind but is 'holy breath', the healing power.

6. The sixth principle: The new soul grows and becomes more powerful. The inner light dispels the vices of the personality. The entire human system is now a prepared temple in which the cosmic power of Christ will live.

7. The seventh principle: The power of Christ transforms all the essences of the human soul into 'Holy Breath'. Through this inner alchemical process, through this transfiguration, the human being can return to the high divine realm from which he originated. Personality, soul and spirit once more form an effective and harmonious trinity. The return journey to our native spiritual land is complete.

According to the Chinese sage Meng-ste, it was necessary for these basic principles to be formulated. The vestures of the ancestors, he says, were threadbare, and humanity was longing for more light because a higher means of thinking had been reached.

What is meant by 'vestures' is all the outward forms in which the divine wisdom is expressed. Sacred scriptures and rituals are like garments: they express something of the divine wisdom, but they are not gnosis itself.

The seven basic principles reveal a cosmic image that is almost impossible for the human mind to imagine. They describe the great development plan for creation wherein the well-known hermetic law always applies: 'as above, so below' and: 'as in the greater, so in the lesser'.

These abstract principles therefore contain universal and useful guidelines for the human being who wants to be a 'disciple of the soul'. The guidelines for the daily life of the human being who wants to develop him/herself in the highest spiritual sense are based on Love and are derived from the seven fundamental principles of *The Aquarian Gospel*. They appeal to heart, head and hands, and they read:

1. Purify your thoughts by focusing on the highest within you, because thinking is a creative activity. Each creator is bound to his creature.
2. Add your harmony to the seven creative, driving forces emanating from the One. They have shaped the human being and help to build the kingdom of the soul within us. Do not point your lamp at the seductive powers of this world.
3. Pay attention to your desires. They often pull the soul downward into the world of the senses in which the soul then becomes entangled.

4. Acknowledge your great task as a personality, because you are the soil wherein the seed of the true man shall germinate and grow as the plant grows.

5. Rely on your inner knowing and follow it, because faith is a force that liberates the all-conquering Love of the soul. The soul is being drawn towards the absolute light by four steeds: will and faith, neighbourly love and universal love.

6. Allow the process of renewal to complete itself within you by going your inner path, for then all the things of the senses will be transformed into soul attributes. It is in unity, liberty and love that the soul builds the Empire of the Soul, the Universal Church, which was not made by human hands. The holy, healing breath can then spread itself in the soul and transform the human being into the spiritual being that he originally was.

7. Accept these seven touchstones as they are the seven steps through which the Christ can descend into the soul. The mysteries of Love are found in the tomb of your heart. Christ, the universal love, lives there where your passions also reside.

These seven principles are the vestures of the universal gnosis by which the great cosmic processes can take place within you. And they invite you to follow them, through inner understanding.



*Accept the ministry of helpfulness for all mankind;
spend not upon your selfish selves all that you have.*

The Aquarian Gospel 63 : 16

JANUARY 5 NARRATIVE
JOHN PREACHED. JESUS IS BAPTISED
BY JOHN IN THE JORDAN

Chapters 63 and 64 of *The Aquarian Gospel*

And John went down to Jericho; there he abode with Alpheus. And when the people heard that he was there they came in throngs to hear him speak.

He spoke to none; but when the time was due he went down to the Jordan ford, and to the multitudes he said, Reform and in the fount of purity wash all your sins away; the kingdom is at hand. Come unto me and in the waters of this stream be washed, symbolic of the inner cleansing of the soul.

And, lo, the multitudes came down, and in the Jordan they were washed, and every man confessed his sins. For many months, in all the regions round about, John pled for purity and righteousness, and after many days he went again to Bethany; and there he taught. At first few but the honest seekers came; but, by and by, the selfish and the vicious came with no contrition; came because the many came. And when John saw the repentant Pharisees and Sadducees come unto him, he said, You children of the vipers, stay; are you disturbed by news of coming wrath? Go to, and do the things that prove repentance genuine. Is it enough for you to say that you are heirs of Abraham? I tell you, no. The heirs of Abraham are just as wicked in the sight of God when they do wrong as any heathen man. Behold the axe! and every tree that bears not wholesome fruit is cut down at the roots and cast into the fire.

And then the people asked, What must we do?

And John replied, Accept the ministry of helpfulness for all mankind; spend not upon your selfish selves all that you have. Let him

who has two coats give one to him who has no coat; give part of all the food you have to those in need.

And when the publicans came up and asked, What must we do?

John answered them, Be honest in your work; do not increase for selfish gain the tribute you collect; take nothing more than what your king demands.

And when the soldiers came and asked, What must we do? the harbinger replied, Do violence to none; exact no wrongful thing, and be contented with the wages you receive.

Among the Jews were many who had been waiting for the Christ to come, and they regarded John as Christ. But to their questions John replied, In water I do cleanse, symbolic of the cleansing of the soul; but when he comes who is to come, lo, he will cleanse in Holy Breath and purify in fire. His fan is in his hand, and he will separate the wheat and chaff; will throw the chaff away, but garner every grain of wheat. This is the Christ. Behold he comes! and he will walk with you, and you will know him not. He is the king; the latchet of his shoes I am not worthy to unloose.

And John left Bethany and went again to the Jordan ford.

The news reached Galilee, and Jesus with the multitude went down to where the harbinger was preaching at the ford.

When Jesus saw the harbinger he said, Behold the man of God! Behold the greatest of the seers! Behold, Elijah has returned! Behold the messenger whom God has sent to open up the way! The kingdom is at hand.

When John saw Jesus standing with the throng he said, Behold the king who comes in the name of God!

And Jesus said to John, I would be washed in water as a symbol of the cleansing of the soul.

And John replied, you do not need to wash, for you are pure in

thought, and word, and deed. And if you need to wash I am not worthy to perform the rite.

And Jesus said, I come to be a pattern for the sons of men, and what I bid them do, that I must do; and all men must be washed, symbolic of the cleansing of the soul. This washing we establish as a rite – baptism rite we call it now, and so it shall be called. Your work, prophetic harbinger, is to prepare the way, and to reveal the hidden things. The multitudes are ready for the words of life, and I come to be made known by you to all the world, as prophet of the Triune God, and as the chosen one to manifest the Christ to men. Then John led Jesus down into the river at the ford and he baptised him in the sacred name of him who sent him forth to manifest the Christ to men. And as they came out of the stream, the Holy Breath, in form of dove, came down and sat on Jesus's head. A voice from heaven said, This is the well-beloved son of God, the Christ, the love of God made manifest.

John heard the voice, and understood the message of the voice. Now Jesus went his way, and John preached to the multitude. As many as confessed their sins, and turned from evil ways to ways of right, the harbinger baptised, symbolic of the blotting out of sins by righteousness.



JANUARY 6
THE DESCENT OF THE HOLY BREATH

JANUARY 6 REFLECTION

THE DESCENT OF THE HOLY BREATH

In the Christian tradition the Christmas season is a period beginning with Christmas Eve on December 24th, and ending with the highpoint on January 6th. The visit of the three kings, or wise men, from the East to Joseph and Mary to worship the new-born Jesus with gifts of gold, myrrh and frankincense is commemorated on January 6th. The story about the veneration by the magic priests is an invitation to place our head, heart and hands in the service of the new soul of the Other-One-within-us, of the new-born Jesus within ourselves.

On January 6th another event is also commemorated, one that took place, according to tradition, exactly thirty years after the worshipful visit by the magic priests: the baptism of Jesus by John the Baptist in the river Jordan. With this baptismal covenant, the cosmic Christ-power bound itself with the physical man Jesus. In chapter 64 of *The Aquarian Gospel* we read about this:

Then John led Jesus down into the river at the ford and he baptised him in the sacred name of him who sent him forth to manifest the Christ to men. And as they came out of the stream, the Holy Breath, in the form of a dove, came down and sat on Jesus's head. A voice from heaven said, This is the well-beloved son of God, the Christ, the love of God made manifest.

For this reason January 6th is also called 'the feast of the Epiphany' because Epiphany means 'appearance from on high'. In our culture almost everyone knows the background of the celebration of

Christmas as the commemoration of the physical birth of the man Jesus, but only a few know the background of the Epiphany: the commemoration of the transcendental 'birth' of Christ in the man Jesus. The Christmas story about the birth of Jesus is described in only two of the four Gospels of the New Testament. All four Biblical Evangelists, however, pay attention to the baptism in the Jordan, by which the man Jesus of Nazareth became 'Jesus the Christ'. The transcendental birth of the Christ is thus at least as important as the physical birth of the man Jesus.

The writer of the Gospel of John – a different person than John the Baptist – attached great importance to the fact that the power of Christ connected itself to a person who lived in a physical body on earth. In the prologue of the Gospel of John, which is widely regarded as the most Gnostic Gospel in the Bible, he wrote that the Word – a designation of the Logos or Christ – had been incarnated on earth:

And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth, and we have beheld his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father. John bore witness to him, and cried: This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me ranks before me, for he was before me!' From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. (The Gospel of John 1: 14-17)

In the last fifteen reflections it was continually noted that we can see the events in the Gospels as processes that occur within ourselves when we follow the gnostic path. The inner birth of Jesus is only the beginning of a spiritual path where we focus on the fulfilment of our inner task: to restore the living connection with the divine realm from which we originated.

In the program, *Spiritual Christmas*, we have explained four different births in *The Aquarian Gospel*, the successive births of Mary, John, Jesus and Christ.

These four figures represent aspects in ourselves which can develop alongside each other for a considerable time. It is therefore not true that Mary disappears when John appears. And John does not disappear immediately when Jesus appears. How can we view these four births?

1. The birth of Mary refers to learning of the inner task.
2. The birth of John refers to preparation for the inner task.
3. The birth of Jesus refers to the growing execution of the inner task.
4. The transcendental birth of Christ refers to the crowning completion of the inner task.

What is the actual meaning of baptism? It is immersion in order to achieve purification! John said:

In water I do cleanse, symbolic of the cleansing of the soul; but when he comes who is to come, lo, he will cleanse in Holy Breath and purify in fire.

Of course immersion in water may be meant literally. But spiritually the baptism by water is the admittance into the higher power field of a living spiritual tradition. As a result of this entrance the spirit-spark in the heart can be rekindled and then initiate a renewal process.

Baptism by fire means receiving the cosmic Christ-force in the human system, and it becoming effective. You can understand that the need for a purification of the personality is necessary so that the latter is prepared and attuned; otherwise the high spiritual forces could not be received. The baptism by fire enkindles hidden forces in the head.

After the baptism in the Jordan, Jesus, who from that moment on was the Christ, first withdrew for forty days in the desert. Then he began his outward mission in the world on the basis of the internal task he had completed.

The great Christ-mystery is a mystery that cannot simply be understood with our ordinary thinking capability. Yet we certainly can form an idea of it, for instance by using the following excerpts from the preface of *The Aquarian Gospel*:

Before creation was the Christ walked with the Father God and Mother God in Akasha. The Christ is son, the only son begotten by Almighty God, the God of Force and God omniscient, God of thought; and Christ is God, the God of Love.

The Son is called the Christ, because the Son, the Love, the universal Love, was set apart, ordained to be creator, Lord, preserver and redeemer of all things, of everything that is, or evermore will be.

Through Christ they are preserved and if they fall it is the Christ who lifts them up;

Now Christ, the universal Love, pervades all spaces of infinity, and so there is no end to love.

Perfection is the ultimate of life. A seed is perfect in its embryonic life, but it is destined to unfold, to grow. Into the soil of every plane these seeds, which were the Thoughts of God, were cast – the seeds of protoplast, of earth, of plant, of beast, of man, of angel and of cherubim, and they who sowed the seeds, through Christ, ordained that they should grow, and should return at last, by effort of unnumbered years, to the great granary of thought, and each be a perfection of its kind.

And in the boundless blessedness of Love the man was made the Lord of protoplast, of earth, of plant, of beast; and Christ proclaimed: Man shall have full dominion over everything that is upon these planes of life; and it was so.

And he who gave the lordship unto man declared that he must rule by Love.

*But men grew cruel and they lost their power to rule, and protoplast,
and earth, and plant and beast became at enmity with man;
But man had lost his consciousness of right; he could no longer com-
prehend the boundlessness of Love; he could see naught but self, and
things of self.*

*So that he might be close to man in all the ways of life, that man
might comprehend the mighty spirit of the Love, the Christ of earth
made manifest to human eyes and ears by taking his abode in some
pure person, well prepared by many lives to be a fit abiding place of
Love.*

*Thus Christ made manifest Love's power to save; but, men forgot so
soon, and so Christ must manifest again, and then again.*



*The birth of which I speak is not the birth of flesh.
Except a man be born of water and the Holy Breath,
he cannot come into the kingdom of the Holy One.
That which is born of flesh is child of man; t
hat which is born of Holy Breath is child of God.*

The Aquarian Gospel 75 : 10-13

JANUARY 6 NARRATIVE
JESUS REVEALS TO NICODEMUS THE
MEANING OF THE REBIRTH OF WATER
AND THE HOLY BREATH

Chapters 75 of *The Aquarian Gospel*

Nicodemus was a ruler of the Jews, and he was earnest, learned and devout. He saw the master's signet in the face of Jesus as he talked, but was not brave enough to publicly confess his faith in him; So in the night he went to talk with Jesus at the home of Jude.

When Jesus saw him come he said, Full blessed are the pure in heart; Twice blessed are the fearless, pure in heart; Thrice blessed are the fearless, pure in heart who dare to make confession of their faith before the highest courts.

And Nicodemus said, Hail, master, hail! I know you are a teacher come from God, for man alone could never teach as you have taught; could never do the works that you have done.

And Jesus said, Except a man be born again he cannot see the king; he cannot comprehend the words I speak.

And Nicodemus said, How can a man be born again? Can he go back into the womb and come again to life?

And Jesus said, The birth of which I speak is not the birth of flesh. Except a man be born of water and the Holy Breath, he cannot come into the kingdom of the Holy One. That which is born of flesh is child of man; that which is born of Holy Breath is child of God. The winds blow where they please; men hear their voices, and may note results; but they know not from whence they come, nor where they go; and so is every one that is born of Holy Breath. The ruler said, I do not understand; pray tell me plainly what you mean.

And Jesus said, The kingdom of the Holy One is in the soul; men cannot see it with their carnal eyes; with all their reasoning powers they comprehend it not. It is a life deep hid in God; its recognition is the work of inner consciousness. The kingdoms of the world are kingdoms of the sight; the kingdom of the Holy One is that of faith; its king is love. Men cannot see the love of God unmanifest, and so our Father-God has clothed this love with flesh – flesh of a son of man. And that the world may see and know this love made manifest, the son of man must be lifted up. As Moses in the wilderness raised up the serpent for the healing of the flesh, the son of man must be raised up. That all men bitten by the serpent of the dust, the serpent of the dust, the serpent of this carnal life, may live. He who believes in him shall have eternal life. For God so loved the world that he sent forth his only son to be raised up that men may see the love of God. God did not send his son to judge the world; he sent him forth to save the world; to bring men to the light. But men love not the light, for light reveals their wickedness; men love the dark. Now, every one who loves the truth comes to the light; he does not fear to have his works made manifest.

The light had come, and Nicodemus went his way; he knew the meaning of the birth of Holy Breath; he felt the presence of the Spirit in his soul.

And Jesus tarried in Jerusalem for many days and taught and healed the sick. The common people gladly listened to his words, and many left their all of carnal things and followed him.



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