

## Overcoming Identification

«Gnosis is inner devotion, as well as intellectual intuition; contemplation and Divine Vision through the eyes of the heart. Such Vision is achieved only when there are no words that can be spoken of it»<sup>1</sup>

Inner detachment from the ego represents the end of a higher-level path rather than the beginning of the initiatory journey; it marks the achievement of the second *Opus* in Alchemy: «...the Black *Opus* is perfected through the rectification, re-orientation and solution of the *kāma-manas*, enabling the attainment of *Albedo* (whiteness) phase. Once this is attained, the incarnated Presence can reunite itself with its source, and that is precisely the Red Opus...»<sup>2</sup> Red is pure “attraction” and at the same time deep abstraction from any chromatic gamut; threshold to pure Transparency.

At the beginning of the path, one might believe that the overcoming of the ego, the scaly black, can be idealized and imagined; but it is not that simple. The Buddha freed himself from the “I’m this” right before his Vision of *Nirvāna*.

How can the bondages of the ego be broken?

In its innermost simplicity, this challenge requires total and conscious embracement of all that is not “mixing of seeds”, or accumulation of projections-images which, hidden as a form of gnosis, represent only an exterior devotion of the heart. «True Devotion is tuning in with the Devine, not emotion-passion»<sup>3</sup>

«High among the means that lead to liberation is devotion (*mokṣakāraṇasāmagryām bhakti*). The constant search for one’s own real nature is called devotion (*bhakti*)»<sup>4</sup>.

Embracing a “Master”, who *embodies* a form of the sacred Doctrine or *Perennial Philosophy*, is the gift borne out of truly comprehending *Who We Are*. As a result of receiving that gift, we can unite with That, because his “action” is not outside of us but inside of us; He is us and «*Tat Tvam Asi*». Devotion to the Tradition is not and cannot be viewed as sterile passivity - “no barren woman can bear a child”; but Union in Simplicity, devoid of composite modalities; *asparśa*. Donation and Devotion are, in fact, Love-Knowledge so as Humility is Silence.

How does Humility manifest itself? Humility is *pratyāhāra*<sup>5</sup>, detachment from all identifications, including one’s own *sādhāna* and Teacher when these tend to become mere ego projections. Humility is inner listening<sup>6</sup> which leads consciousness to *discern*

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<sup>1</sup> Corpus Hermeticum, IX - 4

<sup>2</sup> Letter to a disciple.

<sup>3</sup> Raphael

<sup>4</sup> Śaṅkara, *Vivekacūḍāmani, sūtra* 31. Aurea Vidyā, New York.

<sup>5</sup> «The state of *Pratyāhāra* is reached when the senses are no longer in touch with their objects, identifying with the true nature of the mind [which remains still and colorless]». Patañjali, *Yogadarśana*, and Commentary by Raphael. Edizioni Āśram Vidyā Roma.

<sup>6</sup> «As a result of this, the absolute control over the senses». Ibid.

between real and non-real. «... Listening is oral hearing aimed at clarifying what has been read in the sacred texts; it is to offer the right Vision and all which is needed to move one's *sādhāna* forward; through reflection, one reaches a true state of meditation which eventually flows into contemplation or *Samādhi*. Listening can be very difficult because the Word of the Master is directed to the awakening of the disciple's consciousness, not to the mind,..»<sup>7</sup> It is to conduce oneself with "Dignity and Composure; with Gentleness"; it is a process of *solve et coagula*, of death and rebirth where the mind looks inside, with Him, for Him, in Him.

«... One who yearns for the truth of *ātman* ... must approach a wise Instructor who will guide him to freedom from bondage. A Sage who is versed in the *Śruti*... who is absorbed in *Brahman*, without desires, and is as calm as fire that has consumed all its fuel, [a Sage] who has become an ocean of mercy, whose benevolence is poured inexhaustibly upon all who prostrate themselves before him. The disciple should approach such a *guru* with profound devotion and, humbly offering him his service [his willingness to act on behave of the Sacred Universal Tradition]<sup>8</sup>, should ask him what he needs to know»<sup>9</sup>

In this respect, the words of Christ become very clear: «Blessed [are] the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven...» Here, spirit means free of attributes and cognitive instruments that aim at qualifying; this is the ascension to the top of Mount Carmel<sup>10</sup>, the passion of the disciple<sup>11</sup>, who can only *exhale*, in the ascending potency of the *prāṇa*, the words "Mighty Lord, to You I entrust my Spirit." It is true and we can believe in it: «The Vision of the Devine is achieved through the eyes of the heart and *this Vision can be attained only when there are no words that can be spoken of it*». Here, cease one's suffering and fear of death; here, these states lose their imaginative vitality; here, the mental mirror stops reflecting.

A few *sūtra*:

«An idea such as "I'm the Witness" is a notion that can only belong to the mind; it cannot happen in the *ātman* because *ātman* is devoid of any qualifications; nor has *ātman* another Witness;

Suffering is overcome through discernment arising from the Consciousness of the *ātman*... It exists until the mind, through its existence, which itself is the outcome of non-discernment, unwillingly projects movement;

On the contrary, no suffering is experienced when the mind is still... Thus, suffering cannot be reasonably attributed to the intimate *ātman*.

The notion "I'm happy" is driven by identification with the body, etc., as the idea of possessing a ring. This notion is destroyed by the right discrimination in that who has intimately recognized himself as being *ātman*;

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<sup>7</sup> Raphael: Letter to a Disciple.

<sup>8</sup> Square brackets are ours.

<sup>9</sup> Śaṅkara, *Vivekacūḍāmani*, Op. cit. *sūtra* 32, 33, 34.

<sup>10</sup> The transcending of the mind.

<sup>11</sup> Platonic reconversion.

Therefore, the terms “Thou” and “Being” [in the Guidance “Thou are pure Being] refer to the one and same Reality...

The term “Thou” [*jīva*], used in connection with any term that refers to That, who is one and always free of suffering, takes the meaning of That [*Brahman*]. Similarly, the term That, used with the same reference, indicates the absolute Consciousness of the intimate *ātman*.

Without ignoring their [literal] connotation, the terms [Thou and That] express a unique meaning which is the Consciousness of the intimate *ātman*. It’s not possible to attribute them any other meaning, because, otherwise, we would fall in contradiction». <sup>12</sup>

Let us go of it:

*«O Master and friend of those who abandon themselves to you, I bow down. Release me from the ocean of births and deaths in which I am struggling, look at me with your penetrating eyes which pour forth streams of grace»*<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Śaṅkara, *Upadeśasāhasrī*, *sūtra* 159, 161, 170, 172, 173.

<sup>13</sup> Śaṅkara, *Vivekacūḍāmani*, Op. cit. *sūtra* 35.