

True Self / False Self

19-20 August 2017

A) GIVING AND RECEIVING

01) 09.30 - Introduction (30')

Practice of our sharing (being aware of what makes sense): 1) we will concentrate on the topic + 2) we will say only what is useful. 3) Confidentiality.
Ursula's introduction.

02) 10.00 - God and Christ (10')

Make God free! The false self acts mainly in our definition (representation) of God. What "God" means here (as there will be many quotations) = the mysterious source and energy of Life. And "Christ" = God made visible in our daily lives.
Ursula: spirituality.

03) 10.10 – Milou (20')

True Self / False Self. Good and evil = a caricature.

1) The tree of knowledge: dualistic. The stolen fruit. No personal growth but false dualism: 2 forces as if they were equivalent: good and evil.

2) The tree of life: our own growth. No duality. One unique energy of life. The energy of our true nature = true self. Evil is only the absence (denial) of it, as shadow is just the absence of light.

Q: When and where do you experience the Tree of Life and the Tree of Knowledge in your life?

04) 10.30 – Basics in economics (30')

St Augustine + Merton (success).

The nature of the true self is about receiving what is given.

A) Our practice of exchanges in our western society is based on the opposite logic.

There are indeed 3 ways:

1) At the origin, everything is given, free by nature. Given by nature. Gratitude is the way. Your skills are made to be shared / offered to others. Life happens in you.

2) Money = your ox in your pocket. Only as a yardstick for measuring and exchanging value. Exchange and relationships. The more goods / gifts circulate, the richer people get.

3) Money as speculation = finance. Interest rate. Speculate = manipulate. Power and dominance. The possibility to use money as a means for empowerment (in contradiction with the natural system).

Inversion. Go back from (3) to (2) or (1).

B) To be a recipient (wonder) or an entrepreneur (control).

Metaphor of the sailing boat: motor or sails? (10')

Q: Comment now spontaneously about this inversion (play with money or sailing boats).

05) 11.00 - We are all One Mind (30')

Refer to the Haudenosaunee Thanksgiving Address. We are all one (to be read at lunch).

2 quotations from Robin Wall Kimmerer. Beauty + Giving back.

A) Life as business...

B) or Life as a wonder / act of gratitude and free giving. Necessary radical change of Mind.

The 7 gifts of the Spirit: Wisdom, Intelligence, Counsel, Strength, Science, Piety, Awe.

Sharing in groups of 2 (10'). Q: Which one of these gifts speaks to you the most?

11.30 – MORNING TEA

06) 12.00 – A community of subjects (45')

A) English language is based on the use of nouns. Nouns are considered as inanimate things: nouns describe dead things (objects) = it. Disrespect of nature. Domination, exploitation.

See racism: hierarchy allows exploitation / colonisation. Ditto with nature.

B) The world is made of relationships / not things. Not objects but subjects. Attraction = love. Processes rather than objects. Processes are acts of constant transformation as an action of becoming. Relationship is a verb. Everything is a verb (action, mutation, being).

Imagine words only as verbs (action). No nouns. Dynamic of transformation (not static).

Thomas Berry: universe is a community of subjects and not a collection of objects.

Q: Try to compose a text where everything is alive (no objects but only nouns that are active = verbs). Transform English language into a living (animated) expression!!

Example: “When I came here, my car took me along a road that was leading us over the hills that were jumping like sheep and were greening to make us happy.” Do better than that!!

Q: Comment lively and spontaneously about this way of understanding everything as a verb (no nouns!). Comment lively = make it alive = make it a verb.

13.00 – LUNCH (Haudenosaunee Thanksgiving Address)

B) I AM THAT

07) 14.30 - I am That (Gangaji + Nisargadatta Maharaj) (45')

a) Moses - Exodus: I am who I am.

b) Gangaji: The last place you thought to look – the Diamond in your pocket.

c) Nisargadatta: Hold on “I am”

Being and consciousness rather than doing. Consciousness and Love are our true essence. The rest in anecdotal, just simple temporary accidental facts in a world that never stops changing.

Reflect on these 3 texts (10')

Q: Do these 3 texts talk to you? Do they inspire you to move forward and to be transformed?

Q: How do you understand being only Consciousness and Love?

08) 15.15 - The spectator, the actor and the screen (45')

A) Laterna Magica

1) **The story:** the show in Prague, a city with a very hilly part, with many stairs up and down the hill.

2) **The show:** 1) A stage with 2 actors, 2) 1 screen (film) at the back as only stage setting (the streets and stairs in Prague), the 2 actors on roller skates, sometimes on the screen, sometimes on the stage (same clothes, with their roller skates, acting on the stage according to the constant changes in the film, i.e. setting on the screen), 3) me in my armchair watching the show.

3) **The metaphor:** the spectator, the actor and the screen are 3 aspects of the same person at the same time. 1) **The spectator**, me as observer, the one who is aware. 2) **The actor**, me in my everyday life, acting, doing, feeling... 3) **The screen** as projection of my representations and desires that guide me. We are at the same time the actor, the spectator, and we are all the time aware of the screen in the background (our intuitions). The 3 happen at the same time!! Spectator = consciousness. Actor = experience. Screen = perception.

B) See Prajnanpad: “Internally, actively passive. Externally, passively active.”

Q: Make the metaphor yours (if it speaks to you). If not, try to see why it does not talk to you.

What does the quotation “Internally, actively passive. Externally, passively active” mean?

16.00 – AFTERNOON TEA

C) TRUE SELF / FALSE SELF

09) 16.30 - True Self (45')

Rohr: text True Self. Our essence. We are an expression of the One Self (with capital S).

Oneness. The network of life (nature, community). The blood that circulates.

Q: Compare the True Self with the image of God. And the Tree of Life.

Q: Compare 1) “Enlightenment” as the understanding by 18th cent. philosophy placing emphasis on reason and individualism against tradition (Oxford dict.) and 2) “Enlightenment” in the Buddhist understanding (not in the Oxford dict.!).

10) 17.15 - False Self (45')

Rohr: text False Self.

Q: What is the difference between Ego and False Self?

Q: Illustrate the True and the False Self with examples of your everyday life or past experience.

Q: Is the True Self mine as I may say “my false self”?

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SUNDAY MORNING

11) 9.30 - What did we learn so far?

12) 10.00 – Beyond representations: Innocence and Knowledge (60')

A) Merton. The Birds of Appetite. The Zen way.

The way of Zen is to go beyond any mental representation and concept. All our representations are nothing but just subtle forms of idols. God is in no way as we represent him/her to ourselves. These representations are just our construct. One used to say: God made man and woman at his image, and mankind returned the compliment. We have created a God that suits us.

Zen intends to go beyond any mental representation: beyond any distinction between right and wrong, good and evil, life and death. Beyond these concepts is Emptiness, the realm of Pure Being. Emptiness is not a void of Life; it is a void of narrow concepts and representations. In Emptiness our true essence is to be found.

True Life / True Self is ungraspable. Living out of the True Self is to let this unknown True Essence of ours lead us on the mysterious path of life. Trust and hope and faith are our only security because we know that there is a leading Energy of Harmony and Love that orients the world.

B) Merton / Suzuki: Innocence and Knowledge

Personal notes (15').

Q: How do Innocence and Knowledge oppose each other? How do you combine them in your life?

Q: Innocence and Emptiness: are they the same?

11.00– MORNING TEA

13) 11.30 – Transfiguration (90')

A) The Ground of Being. The Self as transpersonal.

Not by our own power. Mindfulness is a necessary condition but not the solution. Grace is the gift of Life. Everything is given. Nothing to be achieved. Yet letting go is needed: stop to prevent!

In all traditions, there is a symbol of death (detachment, letting go, end of greed, kill the Buddha...) and of resurrection (enlightenment, conversion of heart, change of mind, equanimity...).

What dies? (The less I do...) Who lives? (The more I get...)

The loss and the gain. Freedom from fear.

B) 2 groups of 3-4.

1) About death (detachment, letting go, end of greed, kill the Buddha...): what is it and how far is it a necessary step in life and how does it relate to resurrection? What about grace?

2) About resurrection (enlightenment, conversion of heart, change of mind, equanimity...): what is it and how is it related to a previous form of death? What about grace?

We do not talk about theology, but about our own experience of what death and resurrection are. Not at the end of our incarnated life, but during this life.

Each group concentrates one on Death, the other on Resurrection (but in each case related to the other one). Spend 20' sharing about the theme, 20' preparing a short presentation to the other group. Then 20' presentation for each group.

13.00 – LUNCH

D) THE DIFFERENT WAYS

14) 14.30 - The doctrinal approach and Prometheus (90')

A) Finley-Merton. Doctrinal approach. Our need for structure.

The Teaching is a finger that shows the moon (it is not the moon).

B) Finley-Merton. Prometheus. Everything is given.

Nothing to be achieved / stolen. It is already given here and now (the diamond in your pocket).

Q: Same thing as before: each group prepares a short presentation.

Each group concentrates one on the doctrinal approach, the other on Prometheus.

Spend 20' sharing about the theme, 20' preparing a short presentation to the other group. Then 20' presentation for each group.

15) 16.00 - Meister Eckhart: the most intimate poverty (30')

A) Merton-Eckhart

“Form is emptiness and emptiness is form” says the Heart Sutra.

Q: What is the difference between poverty and Emptiness?

B) Giacometti

Q: Contemplate the picture. Make personal notes. Eventual sharing.

16) 16.30 - The pipe (15')

We are just awareness. Life transforms it into Consciousness and Love.

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