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Suffering as an entrance to the Source

The Danish philosopher Niels Thomassen examines suffering under the following five categories: unreality, division, stagnation, anxiety and meaninglessness. These are in my teaching inextricable linked with the painbody (see my article **The emotional painbody and why psychotherapy can't heal it**).

Unreality consists in, that the Ego constantly compares the Now with earlier and hopes, desires or fears something else. This way the Ego makes the Now (the existential facts), into a problem. Hereby there is created resistance. The Ego places itself outside life itself. Unreality is in this way the experience of, that what happens around you, and with you, do not concern you, that you are not in it, not involved. You are not here, nor other places, but outside, in the meaning absent. A condition filled with negativity.

Division consists in, that the Ego, through evaluations of the images of time, split the world up in opposites (good and evil, power and powerlessness, perfect and fiasco, love and hate). Thereby is created a line of one-sided and extreme basic assumptions (for example "I always have to be perfect!") and rules of living (for example "unless I always am perfect, then I am a fiasco"). But the energylaws of life will seek to balance these imbalances, for example through contrabalances (perfect becomes fiasco). Hereby there arise negative automatic thoughts, which again activate the painbody.

Stagnation has to do with being identified with the thinking's past and future. This identification forms an image of itself in the body, a negative energyfield: the emotional painbody. The painbody contains all the pain you have accumulated in the past, and when it, through negative automatic thoughts, is activated, there arise negative feelings, and your actions will be a never-ending repetition of the same. Negative feelings are for example anxiety (lack of lifecourage, obsessions, phobia), depression (ennui, guilt, shame, boredom), destructivity (hate, powerlessness, self-destructivity, anger, aggression).

Anxiety has to do with that you are too much in the future, in your plans and projects. You constantly formshape energy, whereby the energy runs up in your head. It forms a creative, spiral-like up-tension of the whole of your being, so that you loose contact with reality. You become paralysed, the world becomes a threat to you, the space

narrows, and there arises dizziness. You become constrained, captured and characterized by lack of lifecourage.

Meaninglessness is created by, that your mind (your thoughts) removes itself from the Now and invests the Now's energy in the past and the future. The mind is getting absent-minded and forms a negative and self-circling absence, characterized by ennui. Regardless how much meaning you in this way seek to find in the past or the future, then it will not be real meaning, because the loss of the Now always will lie behind in the form of emptiness.

These five categories constitute together the suffering, which in this way is a part of your lifestituation. Like this suffering has a past and a future. The past and the future form an unbroken continuum, unless the Now's releasing power is activated through your aware presence, which is the goal with spiritual practice. Behind all the different circumstances which constitute your lifestituation, and which exist in time, there in other words exists something deeper, more essential: life itself, your being in the timeless Now itself.

If you activate this deeper dimension you will get the opposite categories: reality, cooperation, movement, safety and meaning.

Reality is middle, is fullness, is lying in light. The middle is the quality, which is lying in, that you are not decentralized, not apart from yourself, not absent from the actual. On the contrary you are in the middle of the actual.

Cooperation means that you think flexible, that you are capable always to look at the challenges from different viewpoints, for hereby to find a balance.

Movement has to do with, that you don't make resistance, that you transform the painbody's negative energyfield, so that the energy can flow unhindered through you. At the same time you open yourself to the life-source, which is the unmoved mover behind everything. And then you find yourself in the middle of the stream of life.

Safety means that you have found ground connection. The creative up-tension has become relaxed down into the earth through a melting, a letting go, a devotion. The world has become a place where you feel at home. You are free and filled with lifecourage.

Meaning arises when the energy flows backwards from the past and the future, and fills the Now with presence, and therefore with joy of life. You are present in the Now with *the whole of* yourself, in the self-forgetful openness and devotion to the world. The Now is awareness. Life itself is openness and therefore love. The Now

and life itself is the same. In this way you discover, that the meaning of life is to express the awareness and the love which both are the essence in yourself and the essence behind everything else – the Source.

Both in Tibetan Buddhism, and in Christianity, suffering are seen as a possible way of entering into the Source.

In Tibetan Buddhism they see suffering as a so-called “bardo” state in the same way as dreams, lucid dreams, astral states, spiritual crises, and the deathprocess.

The word Bardo is specially known in connection with the Tibetan book of the Dead, which in Tibetan is called Bardo Thödol. Bardo is the Tibetan word for an intermediate state between two crucial states, for example life and death, birth and death, death and rebirth, unreality and reality, sleep and awake, good and evil, love and hate, perfectionism and fiasco. What characterizes the Bardo state is deep uncertainty and doubtfulness. Thödol means liberations through listening (spiritual practice in the intermediate state).

So Bardo can mean the after-death state, the death-nearness state, or a borderline state as such; that is: all kinds of suffering, sorrow, alcoholism, economical bankruptcy, all kinds of illness, physical as psychologically.

So if you actually begin to practice spiritual in a Bardo state, then the state can have a healing and transformational value, which can give your spiritual development a considerable lift upwards. This is because that you in this state are more open for change than usually; that is: the Ego is weak.

This gives some stuff for reflection. In the so-called “normal” (healthy) state, we are usually closed to life itself (hopeless Egoistic self-circling), while we in borderline states are more open.

In Christianity they talk about The Way of the Cross. Christian mystics have always known, that suffering can work advancing on a spiritual transformation-practice. This is because that suffering can be so unbearable, that you finally do not feel up to make resistance against it anymore. But this surrender exactly leads you into the Now. Paradoxically enough it is your resistance against the suffering, which upholds the suffering, while the surrendering of resistance neutralizes the suffering.

All inner resistance is experienced as negativity in some kind. All negativity is resistance. Negativity goes from irritation or impatience to violent anger, from bad mood or sulky reluctance to suicidal despair. Sometimes the resistance activates the

painbody, and in such cases even a small situation can create negativity, for example anger, depression or deep sorrow.

As we saw, then resistance is created by the inner thinker (the Ego), which through evaluations compares the Now with earlier, and hopes, desires or fears something else, whereby the Now (the suffering) is being made into a problem. And through negativity the inner thinker then tries to manipulate reality and get what it wants. But the inner evaluating ego, which the painbody is constructed around, is connected with the more dangerous depths of the collective images in time, which also are a kind of dark, ancient inertia, which opposes any change of the ego. That is also the reason why you, through therapy, can't heal Man from the ground.

In order to heal Man from the ground you need to go into a spiritual practice. It is only within the religions and their spiritual traditions they have knowledge and names for the more dark sides of the collective time. The West has very precisely called this factor the original sin. The East has called it negative karma (see my article **The value of having a religion in a spiritual practice**).

Seen from a spiritual perspective, this instinctive survival strategy (the Ego) appears as a resistance, an invincible inertia: original sin, negative karma. You can't, by therapeutic strategies, free the consciousness for its attachment to this inertia. You can therefore not dissolve or dilute or convert the original sin through therapy. Only the intervention of the Source (God, Christ, the enlightened consciousness) can basically help Man with a transcendence of the negative karma of the original sin. But in order to, that a human being should be able to receive this help from the Source (gift of grace), then this requires an eminently precise and profound preparation. And as part of this preparation serve the spiritual practice.

Returning negative feelings can therefore very well contain a message from the Source, in the same way as an illness does: a message about, that there is something you have to change. But every outside change is superficial and temporary, unless it is coming from a change in your consciousness. And what that concerns, it can only mean one thing, namely to start a spiritual practice.

When you have achieved a certain degree of spiritual training, you no longer need the negativity to tell you what you need in your lifesituation. But as long as there is negativity, or illness, then use it as a signal, which reminds you to begin a spiritual practice, or, if you already are practising, to deepen it.

If you have a serious illness, then use it to become enlightened. All "bad" which happens in your life – use it to become enlightened. Surrender to the existential facts, surrender to the Now (see the supporting exercise *The Change of Suffering into*

Enlightenment in my book **Meditation as an Art of Life – a basic reader**, and the article *Suffering as an Entrance to the Source* in my book **Dream Yoga**).

Finally both Tibetan Buddhism and Christian mysticism are common in training yourself in using your personal suffering to increase your love and compassion – which means: where you mentally receive and give. You use your own suffering in a way, where you receive *others'* suffering in your heart. Here you let it dissolve in the light of compassion, whereon you give the compassion on to these others. This practice works healing, both on yourself and on others (see the supporting exercise *The Heartmeditation* in my book **Meditation as an Art of Life – a basic reader**).

So, when you in this way do your part of the work, then you will discover that the enlightened consciousness (God, Christ, Buddha), already have cleansed the negative karma and taken on, and forgiven, the original sin. All enlightened teachers of this Earth (Rumi, Krishna, Francis of Assisi, Rabia, Meera, Yeshe Tsogyel, Teresa of Avila) are doing the same: they take on the original sin and are purifying it for us. And that is precisely what the above-mentioned heartmeditation is all about. The two processes mutually fertilize each other.

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