John the Baptist knows, inwardly, that it is not the mere initial transformation of his self-consciousness that must be the final product of the transformation, and so he announces that something much greater must manifest.
To part 1

In the first text of this series on Christmas and Spirituality (The Secret of Inner Alchemy), we dealt with the theme of Christian symbols and their relation to the Christian holidays and the phases of alchemy.

Continuing the reflection, we will draw a parallel between Christian teachings and one of its main sources: the Egyptian tradition. This is because Christianity, originating from the Hebrew people, also inherited what they had already assimilated from the Egyptians. And this inheritance is not restricted to the elements of the outer tradition, but rather includes the principles of the inner wisdom of the Egyptian.

The Four Phases of Transformation in Egyptian and Christian Wisdom

In the inner narrative of Christianity we find in the gospels, there are four especially important characters: Herod, John the Baptist, Jesus, and the Christ. These characters are different aspects of the same consciousness, the same human life. That is: they are different phases in which the human consciousness manifests itself. And, through the manifestation of human consciousness, a state of life takes shape.

Representations of these four symbols can also be seen in one of the most magnificent places in all of Egypt: the Abu Simbel Temple. In its last wall, that is, in the innermost aspect, which represents the deepest archetype of the human being, there are four figures sitting side by side. They are:

- Ptha: the God of Darkness.
- Ramses: the new consciousness that begins to be born in the human being.
- Ramses, in the form of Osiris, the Egyptian god: the human consciousness already united with the universal principle. Symbolically: the divinity within it.
- Horus, the Falcon god: the spirit manifested in the consciousness of the human being.

With the parallel between these four Egyptian figures and the four gospel characters, listed above, we see that also in Egyptian wisdom one can speak of nigredo, albedo, peacock tail and rubedo (the four phases of alchemy). In it we also find the meanings of Christmas, Easter, Pentecost and Manisola. Finally, we see the representation of a
process that begins with the birth of a seed in consciousness, unfolds with the germination and growth of this seed, and consolidates with its fruitfulness.

Nature and universal wisdom bear witness to the innermost reality of the human being.

**Herod and Ptha: Awakening Consciousness**

What defines ourselves?

What we call “I” is indefinable, because it is not our name, it is not where we were born, it is not our profession, it is not our particular tastes. That is, nothing we use to try to define ourselves really defines who we are. The self is this consciousness that has always existed, always manifests and it is indefinable. At the stage where we are now, we look a lot like Herod, or Ptha, because when human consciousness believes that its center, its self, is its thoughts, its likes, its desires, its conditioning, and everything else, it lives on a false identity: it lives bonded to these veils.

However, beyond this delusional identity, there is a much deeper principle, which is the same in all of us: it is the essence of self-awareness; it is the seed that lies soundly asleep in the winter of our consciousness, and it needs to be touched in order to become active again.

When the touch occurs, we hear a call, a voice, as if it was an electromagnetic force that stirs the compass of our consciousness and causes this compass, which worked smoothly with its north and south, its likes and dislikes, to convulse. In symbolic terms, within Herod, who is the self-king of this nature, awakens a different principle. In the language of the gospel, it is a new child who is born, about whom Herod desperately seeks to know its whereabouts, where it came from. This is because the first reaction of our self, when this seed becomes active, is to try to regain control of life: the order, what pleases you, what displeases you, the logic of the self. However, as we said in the first text of this series, from the moment the seed of light becomes active, the logic of the self will never work the same way again, and the human being necessarily becomes a seeker.

Here the parallel between Herod and Ptha is significant. Ptha is the god of darkness, not in the negative sense, but in what represents a state of consciousness that light cannot directly illuminate. There is a principle of light that has become active, but it is still invisible. That is why in the Abu Simbel temple, for example, the fourth statue,
that of Ptha, is never illuminated by sunlight, not even on the solstices, and this was intended to be so, for the other three are.

**John the Baptist and the limit of human consciousness**

The awakening of consciousness that marks the first stage evolves, and if consciousness indeed listens to that voice and stops insisting on its old egocentric logic, it begins a search path that generates a first transformation. Then we have the birth of a new consciousness, which is not yet a spiritual consciousness, and which we might call "fully human consciousness." At the same time, the seed germinates and it becomes the main engine of the life of this consciousness.

This is why, in the interior symbolism of Christianity, this second stage is associated with the figure of John the Baptist. John means the human conscience; and Baptist, because he announces something that comes, and clearly says:

> It is not me, but he who comes after me.

He knows inwardly that it is not the mere initial transformation of his self-consciousness that must be the end-product, and so he announces that something much greater has to manifest within him. And this transformation takes you to a limit.

Christians associated this boundary with the Jordan River, which flows from North to South. John was on the West bank and was looking to the East bank, where the sun rises, and from where, symbolically, comes the sunlight or the new light within the own human being.

But this limit of consciousness has been indicated in the past as the Nile River, in Egypt; as the Red Sea, to the Hebrews; as the Atlantic Ocean, in the Middle Ages, where people made a pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela, going to Finisterre («the end of the earth», the end of everything). And the very pursuit of gold in the Americas, largely associated with the crossing of the continent and the arrival on the great sea, the Pacific Ocean, may also, in modern terms, be an indication of this limit.

Therefore, the new consciousness (which is still a human consciousness, but in which the seed, the universal principle has germinated and already generated a great transformation) must reach its limit.
And what does it find when it reaches this limit?

It finds itself.

To part 3

Reference: To learn more about the crossing of the American continent and the search for the Great Sea, see From within to the ocean: The Peabiru