

## **Text SD 27: Thinking, being and silence**

*In the modern world we have forgotten that life is more than thinking, doing or doing. It is all that - and more. Life is being, is thought, is action - and it is, above all, awareness.*

The ninth-century Zen master Kyogen, after years of study, said, "Painted cake cannot satisfy hunger" (Shibayama 1974:93) and tore up all his remarks and notes. After years of despair over his futile search, the following happened: "One day, while he was cleaning the garden and carrying garbage in a basket to the bamboo copse behind the house and throwing it in, a small stone from the garbage hit a bamboo with one blow. At that moment he became aware of himself. The whole universe collapsed within him and his inner darkness dissolved. He burst into laughter" (Shibayama 1974:94). He had attained his enlightenment.

Meister Eckehart said, "Do not think of basing holiness on doing; rather, one should base holiness on being, for works do not sanctify us, but we should sanctify the works. However holy the works may be, they do not sanctify us at all, as far as they are works, but: as far as we are holy and possess being, as far as we sanctify all our works, be it eating, sleeping, waking or whatever it may be. ... Recognize from this that one should put all diligence into being good, - but not so much into what one does, or of what kind the works are, but how the reason of the works is" (Eckehart 1979:57).

"The world in which we generally live is built on dualistic distinction: The subject is distinguished from the object, the I from the Thou, the beholder from the beheld, etc. Zen now declares that there is another way of living, another dimension. It asks us to open our eyes to the realm where subject and object are not yet separate and I and you are still one, to live there and act in this new dimension" (Shibayama 1974:104): "Your form is the non-form form, your going-and-coming happens nowhere, because where you are" (quoted from Shibayama 1974:102).

Dualistic thinking is always limited. The Zen Master Joshu gave the following mondo [= Zen riddle]: "All things ultimately return to the One. But to where does the One return?" (Shibayama 1974:113).

Everyday actions often happen automatically and are hardly questioned. They often get in the way of awareness. For example, Shibayama (1974:175) reported of a German mystic: "One day he was walking down the street and met a beggar whom he had met many times before. Without much thought, he said, 'Good morning!' For some reason, the beggar replied, 'Is there any morning that is not good?' These words triggered a special experience in the mystic."

Nothing happens without reason. Everything is as it is - and it is good: "And God said, Let there be light. And there was light. And God saw that the light was good" (Gen1, 3-4). Then God created the solid body and water: "And God called the solid body heaven, and God saw that it was good" (Gen 1:8). And in all further acts of creation, namely, the creation of earth and water, the creation of heavenly bodies, the creation of animals, "[God] saw ... that it was good" (Gen 1:11; Gen 1:18 as well as Gen 1:21). And in Gen 1:31 it is again explicitly repeated, "And God saw all that he had made, and behold, all was very good." Everything that is, is created by God - and everything that is, is good.

God answered the question about his name: "I am the one - who is" or "I am the one I am" or "I am the being" (Ex 3,14). God is the one who always was, who is now and who always will be.

The following story beautifully illustrates the self-contained cycle of being, but also the paradox of the dual world:

"One morning a little girl sat beside her grandmother before the altar of Buddha. The little hands folded in prayer, the child asked full of inquisitiveness: 'Why are cranes and turtles [= candle sticks modeled after the animals, note CJ] up there on the altar, grandmother?' 'My dear child,' she answered, 'a crane lives a thousand years and a turtle ten thousand years.' Since they are such blessed creatures, they can be there on the altar where it is as beautiful as in the Pure Land.' The granddaughter looked even more curious and asked, 'What will he crane do after a thousand years and the turtle after ten thousand years?' 'Of course, they will die then. You should know that, my dear!' But the grandchild continued, 'What will happen to the crane and the turtle when they are dead?' The grandmother replied, 'Because the crane and turtle are blessed creatures, they will enter the Pure Land immediately after death.' The granddaughter did not rest, 'What will they do in the Pure Land, Grandmother?' 'What a silly child you are! They will be candlesticks in the Pure Land.' Grandmother's reply sounded slightly agonized, but the innocent child nodded his little head in satisfaction" (Shibayama 1974:179/180).

In the spirit of Mt 5:37, your speech should be yes, yes - no, no: "Becoming more silent means: speaking less, but more thoughtfully, with more thought control, and also observing Jesus' thought and word sense of possible silence in daily areas of life. For even the unspoken words are often invisible food for your spiritual souls" (Weidner 1998:156). For too many or even negative words lead to dispersion, fragmentation and weakness. Instead of losing energies to negative spirit beings through too many words, silence helps to refuel energy. Conscious silence can help personal progress (cf. Weidner 1998:157). Thereby, waiting, active silence can open the way for God-willed, pure things. Or, in the words of Weidner (1998:157), "Let us be silent, that we may hear the whispering of the guardian spirit and the messengers of God!" In this sense Merton (1954:36) wrote: "It is good to wait in silence for the salvation of God".

"Talking and listening properly, if you could do that, you would have gained something essential for your life! But how do you achieve that? Language, by its very nature, is what connects, what helps to understand each other. But we often use language to distance ourselves from each other, we talk a lot and for a long time, the real thing is kept silent. We speak in order to deceive and confuse, sometimes we speak in order to hurt. ... The most important characteristic of right and good speech ... is love. Words that come from love create the space in which something of God's Spirit is felt" (Kuhn and Kuhn 1988:26).

When one is in a group of people with different levels of spiritual development, spiritual issues can lead to very different reactions: From agreement, to indifference, to rejection. Therefore, one should respond at a certain level: "And once I give an answer, I observe the reactions. It is harder for you than for me, because I see your spirit soul. Some of them change color to light blue, gray, light yellow, white, sometimes even to pink when I give an answer, and in the process the auras resonate, and unfortunately you don't see that. But you should ask the

brothers and sisters, 'How did you understand that or how do you take that?' And so I always keep it in my consciousness: 'I have to keep this level, I can't go down any further.' Why? If I tell something untrue or say something bad and the other brothers and sisters believe me, then I burden myself, and I have to make it up to the brothers and sisters and to myself. That's why silence, when things are going nowhere, is the better thing to do" (Weidner 1998:191).

"Talking [is] not the only method of communication...There is encounter even before we say anything, just by wishing each other a 'good day.' In a sense, communication continues even after we have stopped talking. The encounter only has to happen in a right way, by being true and not ego-centered. Then the principle of duality is eliminated and the true model of communication is given" (Trungpa1977:20).

"Before going into silence, one needs energy - this is paradoxical, but it is true! I need shielding energy, higher vibration energy, purification energy, and freeing energy" (Weidner 1998:188).

"A day without being alone, without silence, without the green of a tree or the vastness of the sky is not a lived day" (Theodor Hieck, quoted by Sacken 1998).

One should avoid everything to tell negative things about other people. If I tell something negative that is not true, it is doubly bad. A problem exists when I have experienced another person negatively, that is, when they have treated me badly or unfairly. In this case, the truth, that is, what this person has done or said, is opposed by negative feelings on my part, which weigh on my vibration. I may feel that my counterpart, to whom I tell about the other person's negative action, should know this. The best thing to do in such a situation is to ask God to help, to stay with the truth and not to tell anything negative if possible. It is important from to maintain as positive a basic attitude as possible in the conversation.

"If your heart opens ... you will be able to speak from the heart, and they will understand what you say. Remember, however, that each of us understands in our own way and not necessarily in the way you are trying to convey.' 'How will I know when this is happening? How will I speak when I am really speaking from the heart?' ... 'When you speak in this new language [of the heart, note CJ], you will see that a real change is taking place in the people you are trying to reach.' The Word, together with the breath, carries the SPIRIT into the relative world and brings about this change. ... The heart is the seat of the soul. Speaking from the heart, you can ignite the fire in the hearts of others. By recognition you awaken the sleeping soul, And fire spreads - nothing is more contagious than love" (Feild 1977:111).

The important thing is to work on forgiveness: There is no quick total forgiveness or total erasure, but forgiveness is realized piecemeal, in steps (cf. Weidner 2002b:97). It is important to note that if we forgive only partially, the spark of God is partially walled up: "Through every full forgiveness, through every full understanding, through every demonstration of love, the spark of God in you becomes freer! You become more radiant, lighter, purer, brighter, higher vibrating..." (Weidner 2002b:98).

*Thinking is usually mind thinking, but it is about spiritual being. God wants us to participate in being - and if we truly ARE, every thought is superfluous, because knowing and being is then one.*

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