

### **Text SD 37: Instead of selfishness, trust in God and patience**

*Trust in God and patience on the one hand and acting in the service of one's neighbor on the other are the best means against egoism and impatience. At the same time, selfishness should not be suppressed or stifled by force, but successively transformed into ethical altruism, that is, action in the interest of the good of all.*

"It is the egocentric will that brings much ruin upon mankind!" (Weidner 1992:65).

Interesting is the Sufi view that sees the small ego, the little I, as a kind of "counter-god", therefore a person acting from the ego is actually a polytheist: Besides God, he worships the "little god" of the ego: "Abū Sa'īd taught: as long as you do not deny your ego, you do not believe in God. Everyone's idol is his ego, the ego that keeps you from God" (Gramlich 1998:71). This is not a matter of suppressing the ego or little I, but of fully submitting the I to the divine will. And Ğunayd said: "He who explores his innermost being and sees that there is something greater and more significant in it than his master, joins in the partner, for he attributes something equal to him" (quoted from Gramlich 1998:262).

Or in the words of Thomas Merton (1954:20): "The only true joy on earth is to escape from the prison of our own selfhood (I do not say: the body, because the body is God's temple and therefore holy) and to enter through love into union with the life that dwells and sings in the essence of every creature and in the innermost part of our soul. In his [= God's, note] love we possess all things and let them bear fruit joyfully in us, since we find him in them all." "Until we have learned to love God perfectly, we remain vulnerable to everything in the world" (Merton 1954:20).

Closely related to selfishness is any form of pride. If I feel better than others, I have lost humility in God: "If what Lucifer has seized, namely pride, seizes you, then it is extremely difficult to get back on the right track. And such people, unfortunately, because there is no other way and because they do not recognize this themselves - and unfortunately they do not recognize it, because the opposition strives to reinforce this - will be humbled!" (Weidner 2000d:245).

"The humbly living earth man matured to the realization, he accomplishes the God-willed good for the sake of the good doing - without waiting for external attention, applause or reward. He knows that every living being is a creature of our heavenly Father, and as such he respects it and scatters seeds of love" (Weidner 2011:11).

Muslim thought is also about overcoming the small ego: "Abū Bakr aṭ-Ṭamastānī knew: 'One cannot get rid of the ego through the self. Only through God can one get away from the ego, and that only when the striving toward God is healthy.' The same thought was put forward by Abū Bakr aṣ-Ṣaydalānī: 'It is not possible to get out of the ego through that very ego. Rather, to come out of the ego is possible (only) through God. But this can only happen when one is sincerely devoted to God.'" (quoted from Gramlich 1998:81).

Thomas Merton called the little ego "false ego": "Each of us stands in the shadow of an illusory person: a false ego. It is the person whom I myself would like to be, but who cannot exist

because God knows nothing about him. And to be unknown to God means the highest exaggeration of one's own ego. My false and selfish I is that in me which strives to exist beyond the reach of God's will and God's love - beyond reality and beyond life. And how could such an ego be anything but self-deception? ... For most people in the world, there is no greater personal reality at all than this false ego of theirs, which cannot exist. A life consecrated to the cult of this shadow is what is called a life of sin" (Merton 1954:26).

"Patience, in Sanskrit ksanti, is most often used for perseverance and serene endurance of toil and hardship. In reality, however, patience means more than this. It is enduring in the sense of looking closely at a situation and realizing that one must endure it and develop patience" (Trungpa 1977:55).

"And take your refuge in patience and prayer" (Sura of the Cow, verse 45; quoted from Stoddart 1979:87).

"The word 'freedom' is in itself a relative term. It means freedom from something, otherwise it is not freedom. And since it is freedom from something, the right situation must first be created, and that is patience" (Trungpa 1977:57). "No outsider, not even a higher authority, can create such freedom. One has to develop the ability to recognize the situation oneself. One must, in other words, develop a lucid, all-pervading awareness that surveys the situation at that very moment. It is a matter of knowing the situation and opening one's gaze to this moment of now. ... If a person is able to see what is present in the moment, without being influenced by the past or any hope for the future, if he just sees this present moment, then there is no limitation at all in this moment. ... The present moment has no limitations at all. Through this, man experiences that a tremendous energy to exercise patience is present in him" (Trungpa 1977:57/58).

"One who develops patience in the highest form will never expect anything from another. Not out of distrust, but because he knows how to be in his center and because he is the center" (Trungpa 1977:59).

Right patience as actively waiting for God's help is a virtue, wrong patience as an excuse for doing nothing is a vice. Patience always means acting according to the situation, but without depending on the outcome of the action. We should act because it is right, not because we are aiming at its personal benefit for our ego.

**Source references and bibliographic information at:**

<http://www.geistige-entwicklung.ch/angefuehrte-literatur---cited-literature.html>

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