

Duality and the Birth that Strengthens the Soul

We are on the eve of a day that sanctifies internal transformation: Yaldo, the Feast of the Nativity. For us humans, who possess a limited world of comprehension, this is a holy day far beyond the horizon of our meaning. In the context of coping with the ups and downs of daily life, it helps us find the gateways that open to the soul through its meanings.

This day finds its correspondence in the thought of Saint Mor Ephrem (303–373) as follows: *"While sin, with its outspread wings, covered everything so that no one could look upon the Truth above; TRUTH descended into the womb and dissolved the deception of sin by his birth."*

Saint Augustine (354–430), on the other hand, voices this reality with these words: *"From the great day of eternity, a day infinitely great has entered into our short day."*

This is the opening downward of a level that is far, far superior; the diminution of greatness, the elevation of smallness. That which is small is the human being; it is us. Greatness, however, is the Lord.

Through this greatness, the Lord was revealed to the world in the operation of the Holy Spirit, and those things peculiar to greatness were offered to smallness.

In order for smallness to grow, it is necessary to speak and live that which is peculiar to Christ. His path is not one imposed from without, but one that operates from within. The operating system of this path is love; and its continuity is growth in transformation. This is not a temporary state, but a path and a way of life. Because Jesus Christ is not merely one who points to the path, the truth, and the life; He Himself is the path, the truth, and the life. This path is directed not towards the body, but towards the soul; it is a path of meaning, not of matter. On this path, a human being attains the profound delight of light; they experience the joy of receiving in order to give.

Jesus Christ was born to transcend the old system of thought based on fear and to make possible a new understanding of life built upon love. Just as light scatters darkness, His birth has conquered fear. Transcending our fears and anxieties nourished by the ego is possible only by seeing His light and living within that light.

When the dominant modes of thought of the world seize our minds like a computer virus, the light of the Nativity protects us from erroneous thoughts and purifies fear-centred patterns like an antivirus programme. Therefore, the birth of Christ is not merely an event that took place in the past; it is a phenomenon of love continuously re-experienced within life. And this love is the very soul of life.

In terms of its world of meaning, the birth of Christ is a birth that strengthens the soul. By clothing Himself in our humanity, He aimed to liberate us from spiritual coldness and carnal bondage. For when the soul grows cold, intentions, thoughts, words, and actions are paralysed; human becomes alienated from human. In such times, not only the external world but also the internal universe of the human being freezes. Selfishness and cruelty reign; human dignity is damaged. This cooling is an inevitable consequence of duality turning into conflict instead of reconciliation.

It is precisely in an age dominated by injustices and grievances that Christ was born as divine compassion and unconditional love. This birth is a societal birth as much as an internal one, aiming to end the conflict between the ego and the soul, to strengthen the soul, and to make the governance of the soul visible once more. It is, at the same time, a call for the reconstruction of the spiritual and mental world. This call teaches us to keep our helm steady amidst the fluctuations and storms of the external world. As we are filled with the meaning of this birth operating from the inside out, we comprehend more clearly that personal transformation is the prerequisite for healing. Thus, our spiritual resilience is strengthened; we catch a more balanced, more meaningful flow against the difficulties of life.

The carnal self, expressed as **ܢܫܐ** (nafšo / nafša) in Syriac, defines the soul, the ego, and the self existing in the spirit that has not yet been disciplined. The source of many conflicts experienced in our inner world is this unbridled self. Christ was born to bring harmony to this internal opposition arising from the undisciplined carnal self; to make the power and governance of the spirit sovereign once more in worldly life. So that our thoughts, inoculated with the meanings of the spirit, may bear good fruit in the soil of life. However, without bringing harmony to the internal duality, it is not as easy as it is thought for this soil to yield abundance. Because living within duality is one of the most fundamental tensions of fallen human nature. A human being exists in a state of constant division between body and spirit, the worldly and the divine, the transient and the eternal. Overcoming this fragmented existence and establishing internal unity is the highest goal of the spiritual journey.

A human being's comprehension that they are a Spirit manifesting in bodily form, and their internalisation of this reality, is the beginning of the salvation process at the level of consciousness. This comprehension carries the human being from fragmentation to wholeness; from dispersion to unity. For internal peace is possible not through the denial of opposites, but through the reconciling power of correct knowledge.

The birth of Christ in the flesh is the most powerful proclamation that this internal conflict has resulted in reconciliation on the divine plane. The uniting of the divine with the human carries a striking meaning, showing that the opposites within the human being can also attain peace. In this aspect, the birth of Christ is not merely a historical event; it is a spiritual revolution proclaiming that a human being can attain unity by transcending the division within themselves.

With the birth of Christ, the holy has been revealed to the human being, and life has been made visible in Him. He is the source of all meanings and true satisfaction; the sole light of internal peace. When we can establish a genuine bond with His life-giving teaching without substituting His love with other loves; we find anew that which was lost within us, and we restore both ourselves and our sphere of influence. For as we are filled with Christ, our awareness deepens, our perception of self matures; we are purified from the covert arrogance and prejudices of the ego. Our harsh gazes soften, our rigid attitudes flex; we become more harmonious with the flow of life.

Like Christ, who challenged carnal desires by saying: "*Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world*" (John 16:33)

we approach our true self when we adopt love, generosity, humility, forgiveness, and internal freedom as our motto. Otherwise, if His teaching is not active within us, we remain no different from a device that is not connected to the network.

The person who becomes a "**new creation**" in Christ is the person who has passed under the governance of the spirit (2 Corinthians 5:17). Because the energy of the spirit, unlike that of the ego, is not limited by time and space; it is not condemned to the law of opposites. For this reason, the spirit does not defile life; it simplifies, deepens, and beautifies it.

This opposition between the ego and the spirit creates a constant field of tension in our inner world. In this tension, the mind and the heart are two decisive centres: when the heart unites

with the will of the spirit, the spirit is strengthened; when the mind surrenders to the will of the ego, the ego is nourished. As the will of the spirit strengthens, the dominion of the ego weakens and internal balance is re-established.

This internal struggle is often more shattering than the obstacles of the external world. Therefore, transforming the conflict between the ego and the spirit into peace through the meanings revealed by the birth of Christ is the fundamental principle of a stable and serene life. The knowledge of "**the path, the truth, and the life**" (*John 14:6*) lies at the centre of this principle. Because when this truth is lost, the blind spots of the human being multiply.

As blind spots increase, the ego hardens and the spirit narrows. Yet, when these areas are illuminated with the knowledge of "**the path, the truth, and the life**" (*John 14:6*), the spirit expands, the ego flexes and gains understanding. The true self is to transcend the bondage of the carnal self, to leave behind inferiority and superiority complexes, and to transcend oneself by knowing oneself. It is not possible to reach the depth of humanity and true life without purifying the carnal dregs that cover the spirit.

Therefore, with His birth in Bethlehem, Christ has illuminated our soul with light, our self with peace, and our mind with wisdom. He has substituted completion for domination, and service for harshness. He has healed the paralysed sides of the human being so that empathy may develop, compassion may grow, and humility may not diminish the human being; on the contrary, that it may multiply them.

The fundamental function of holy seasons is to strengthen the soul and to make it functional in life. With these thoughts, I sincerely celebrate the Feast of the Nativity (Yaldo), which nourishes our internal peace. May our life be warmed by His love; may the world be illuminated by His light. May wars cease; may hearts be filled with His radiance, and gazes with His light.

I wish that the year brings peace and abundance to the whole world, especially to our country.

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