

THE STILLING OF THE STORM ON THE SEA OF GALILEE

“A great Teacher who was sent from the heavenly Father-Mother entered into a little ship with His disciples, and launched into the Deep.

When in the midst of the Deep, a storm arose, and it grew more and yet more tempestuous, until it was so great as to almost overwhelm the boat; and fear laid hold of the disciples.

But the teacher was asleep in the hinder part of the ship,

Then the disciples came to Him in great distress, and called unto Him to save them.

And when the Teacher was awakened He asked them, saying ‘Why were ye so fearful? How was it that your spiritual vision was so easily obscured?’

‘O ye whose faith is not little, wherefore do ye doubt?’

And the Teacher arose and spake unto the storm-tossed waters, saying unto them ‘Peace! Let there be stillness.’

And there was the Great Silence in which the winds and the waves grew calm.”

Logia p126

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This story is an allegory in which the Sea of Galilee represents the mind and the little ship represents the Soul. The Master told it 2000 years ago when he dwelt in the Galilee. Even today the Sea of Galilee is renowned for its stillness and the remarkable fact that almost daily storms blow up, apparently out of nowhere. A peaceful mind is like a calm sea. A calm mind is a balanced mind that is capable of making good and wise decisions, decisions that can reflect the light of the heavens above. But the mind, like the Sea of Galilee, can get easily disturbed and upset and a troubled mind only needs the contrary winds of life to blow small waves into a tumultuous storm.

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“The Soul is like a ship upon the open Sea, when all its attributes are out of true harmony; it is tossed about upon the tempestuous waves, and is in danger of becoming over-whelmed.

The mind of the Soul, which should always be calm and clear like pellucid waters, is then filled with disturbing elements, so that it cannot reflect unto the Soul the Heavens of its Lord.

Even the powers of the mind itself are so troubled that they fill it with the fear of a great dread, and make it cry out like those who are in dire distress.

For, as I have said unto you, the mind of the Soul is the Sea of Galilee, and the sacred little ship upon it is the Soul, the sacred Ark within which the Divine Presence abides.”

Logia p126

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The Sea, sometimes referred to as the Great Deep, represents the Mystery of Life. Today its waters are unquestionably very troubled and many people in the world are being overwhelmed by the storms of life be it from hunger, homelessness, poverty or even the terrible devastation of war. Every day we hear reports of tragedy and violence. Life is not a voyage without tumult, storms and challenges. It is good to remember the well-known saying "We cannot direct the wind but we can adjust the sails"

We can learn how to manage ourselves in the midst of the storms. We can learn how to still the storm in our own minds and hearts. This story is a wake-up call to become conscious of what is operating and to develop skills and strategies that help us to recall our highest motives and be at peace with ourselves in the face of the storms of life.

One very useful strategy is to pause before we react to situations. Pausing is a cessation, a brief moment of quiet ingathering before acting. Our reactions are very interesting – we can learn a lot about ourselves by noticing them. If we gradually learn to pause before we react we can eventually replace our reactions with a considered response that is less likely to be overwhelmed by a storm. If we pause, even momentarily, before acting on impulse we can become more conscious and responsible for our actions. Storms once triggered can be whipped up, not only by unconscious impulses and reactions in personal relationships, which although regrettable we may learn to understand and forgive, but also by social or political motives. Thoughtless or malicious use of social media can cause devastation to individuals. We have all heard of the pain caused by cyber-bullying. This year, during elections worldwide, we have witnessed huge storms blown up by the media for political advantage, often with only the most tenuous relation, if any, to the truth.

It really helps to be aware of how fear-inducing storms can build up in our minds until we are in danger of being overwhelmed. It is even more helpful to learn how to cultivate a quiet mind and to be still in the midst of turmoil. Even spending a moment in absolute stillness and

silence can be hugely beneficial and that benefit will increase and grow with constant practice. Mindfulness, which has arisen out of the Buddhist tradition, has become widely accepted and offers many helpful ways of stilling the mind and entering a deeper state of silence. Just two minutes of conscious breathing can have a remarkable and powerful effect, not only by directing the attention of the mind, but by soothing an anxious emotional state to one of peace and calm through restoring a steady rhythm of deep breathing. Those of us who have access to the Message of The Order of the Cross often find reading, even just a few lines, has the added benefit of lifting the spirits. Or you may just affirm in your thoughts a few inspiring words such as; "Let Peace fill me, (as you breathe in) Let Love be my guide, (as you breathe out)".

Learning how to be still and conscious of the Presence, or your true self, your inherent Divine nature, is not only for those people who consciously adhere to spiritual practices. It is for everybody although they may not all know how to identify it. I heard a report recently of a study carried out on footballers in a shoot-out. Those footballers that paused for a moment before striking had a staggeringly higher rate of success than those who went straight for the shoot-out. Observe tennis players before they serve a ball, how they employ many and various strategies to calm and gather themselves before lifting the ball and racquet, how often the camera zooms in at that moment and we see the inward concentration of the eyes as they pause in absolute stillness. Now clearly no amount of pausing, praying, or ingathering in the silence would help someone who had not first developed great skill in football or tennis to score a goal or serve an ace. It is up to us to develop skill and ability, use our gifts and do what we are good at in life, but the greatest skill of all is in learning how to manage ourselves in the face of pressure, anxiety, fear and the challenges that have become a normal part of life. Not only does this help us individually but each soul who calms the storm within their mind and heart, and finds peace and stillness, contributes substantially to the sum of World Peace.

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...life was never meant to be like a sea of turbulent waters. It was meant that the Soul's Journey should be across the Great Deep of the Waters of Eternal Mystery, during which in its passage, it should learn much that the great deep contained and that the heavens reflected into it....

The individual Soul had to express effort to interpret its Divine heritage by following the Divine urge within it in endeavor; through the endeavor making progress; in the progress acquiring; in the

acquisition storing up within its memory invaluable things which it would afterwards be able to recall, to meditate upon; ...

The Soul learned first of all along the realm of the objective, for the mind gathers in knowledge through observation and reflects it back into the Soul, and so the Soul gathers knowledge on the way.....every Soul grows up from spiritual childhood unto the glorious unfolding of the Divine attributes within it. In this way it processes....it has to learn how to go in company; it has to learn how to go alone. It has to learn how to call at the havens on the way and to enter the harbours. It has to learn how to be a long time between havens, for it is part of the Soul's experience on the way.

Herald of the Cross Vol. 29 p108/9 'Amid Troubled Waters'

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By stilling the storms of the mind and restoring peace and stillness we call to consciousness something of our true inner nature, which has been asleep deep within the ship of the soul. It is we who have slept and forgotten to call on the Presence within us. In the story it is an urgent call, born out of the fear of being overwhelmed, but it can with practice become a steady state. Potentially within every one of us the Christ can arise in consciousness and become our pilot leading us through troubled waters into safety.

Perhaps you, like me, have days when your mind seems to be not so much in a storm but embraced in a fog. On those days I feel restless as if the Presence is locked in a cabin deep, deep within my unconscious mind, I have lost the key, and I search, sometimes fumbling, indulging in complaining, eating chocolate, momentary distractions, faffing and fiddling, listening to the radio or watching TV for example. But most of us have discovered certain keys that can successfully unlock the door such as listening to music, making music, singing, dancing, walking in nature, drawing, painting, even cleaning and tidying, all of which involve taking positive action. Sometimes the fog is caused by tiredness in which case the solution is to rest or sleep. The Divine Urge will always lead us to Peace and Happiness if we just remember to perceive it, listen and act on it. "*Oh ye whose faith is not little, wherefore do ye doubt*" Faith is spiritual perception. The solution may not be instant and does require effort on our part, effort without strain or striving. Finding direction with ease. Sometimes this means allowing and letting go of agendas, goals, ambitions and desires. It may simply be allowing and acknowledging a soul yearning, which is a prayer, listening and following the Divine Urge that comes sooner or later and always leads to a sense of peace. In hindsight we can always reflect on the

resultants of our well-intentioned choices and decisions and see if the direction was good and true, or not. And sometimes we can even feel relieved and grateful when we recognize that the hand of God has been actively guiding us, as it often has, unknown by us, even through the fog.

The skilled soul gradually learns to make vital distinctions either between the desires of the sense life or those urges that arise from an over-active mind, however well intentioned, and the Divine Urge. This is not easy because of the illusory nature of many of the temptations that beguile us today. The mental and sense desires when fulfilled lead to a degree of happiness which is often of a temporary nature. Kept in moderation these may not be particularly harmful and may even serve some palliative purpose in life. However when any urge becomes obsessive or compulsive it is out of balance and becomes a dominating influence in the life. Sadly certain desires lead to dependency and addiction in which case the soul finds no freedom but instead is enslaved to a constant cycle of temporary gratification. Substances such as alcohol, drugs, even some foods to a lesser extent, are responsible for this, but also over-use of technological screens, television, computers, social media, video games, all can become compulsive and even addictive. Gambling and excessively high-risk sports and thrill seeking can also become highly addictive distractions.

There is much fear generated when life goes out of balance, just like a ship as it pitches and tosses on the waves, the brain becomes rewired and loses its direction. The Presence when called upon can always arise from the hinder part of our ship and become our pilot again, even after ages of neglect. He will lead us and guide us through troubled waters into a safe haven. Because the Presence within is the Divine Love that never goes to sleep and never ceases to Love us whatever storms we get caught up into. The Divine Urge will guide us towards our professions, vocations, employment, where to live and with whom in life. It may take us across long, testing and seemingly lonely seas at times but all for our ultimate healing and growth. Life poses huge questions and decisions, which concern us all at times, but especially as we are setting off on our journey through life. It can also guide us through the seemingly small matters of daily life which are equally important as we go step by step, day by day, seeking the path to peace, happiness and fulfillment which consciousness of the Presence within brings.

Sarah Palmer after Family Week August 2017.