

Love and forgiveness

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We too feel very reluctant like the Stream in the story *'The Desert and the Stream'* to let go of our image of who we think we are and of our own idea about our role in life. What makes us so reluctant? At some level we do intuitively know that if we truly let go, we will be transformed and our individuality be reshaped like the Stream.

What stops us is fear. We accept that there is more to reality than we normally experience; we may well have had glimpses of a sense of beyond during our meditation. Yet, at the same time we do not really believe that we are worthy to enter this higher reality, to enter the presence of the Christ within us. What holds us back is our belief that we are basically sinful. Yet John Main stressed that the Divine spark is in every one of us – we are essentially good: *"Jesus has sent his Spirit to dwell within us, making all of us temples of holiness: God himself dwelling within us.....We know then that we share in the nature of God"* If that is our essence, how can we be basically sinful? John Main really regretted that we were so dominated by thoughts of our own inadequacy and sinfulness that we *"have lost the support of a common faith in their essential goodness, reasonableness and inner integrity* and have also lost the awareness *"of the potential of the human spirit rather than the limitations of human life."* He saw meditation as *the way to realize this: "Meditation is a process of liberation: we must set these truths free in our lives."*

Our sinful behaviour is a result of our wounded ego and its need to put its own survival first at all times. Our early childhood and our conditioning has warped our self-image and our consequent behaviour. But instead of rejecting ourselves we should keep in mind that Jesus in his mission focused on the weak, the suffering and the sinners. As Laurence Freeman says in *'Jesus, the Teacher Within'* *"In Jesus' vision we are not criminals in relationship to a judge. The good news is not that humanity has a more lenient judge but that the charge is dropped altogether. Sin is deleted by the very freedom of love, which sin ignores, rejects or forgets....Humanity can awaken from its ancient nightmare of self-inflicted punishment."* We are not faced by a judge but by loving compassion in the spirit of forgiveness.

In the silence of meditation we can open ourselves to the Love that dwells at the centre of our being. Then we, like the Stream, can surrender to *'the welcoming arms of the wind'*. By surrendering we allow ourselves to feel loved and accepted despite all our faults and mistakes and this in turn allows us to forgive others. With this knowledge we can then take responsibility for the actions that came out of the wounds of our ego. What is important to realize, says Laurence Freeman in *'Jesus, the Teacher Within'* that *"We are responsible for becoming more mindful so that we create less pain for others and ourselves. But because sin is the result of ignorance and illusion it does not merit any more punishment than it contains in itself."*

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