



Initiatory Aspects in the Gospels (II)

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c. The Secret or the Mystery

What may seem strange is the fact that, though Jesus says at the Sermon on the mountain that the light should not be hidden under the tub (Matthew 5:15), still He adds later on, after explaining to the Apostles the parable of the sower: *Because the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven are revealed to you, but they are not revealed to them* (Matthew 13:11), them being the crowd that listens to him. This is also one of the reasons why Jesus talks using parables and symbols, also paradoxes, which are not accessible but only for the few chosen ones, those gifted with the capacity of knowledge and understanding, because this is all about higher truths (inner and esoteric truths, we could say, if this last term had not been altered and avoided so much by the Christian theology).¹ For Jesus says again: *I will speak to you in parables and expound things hidden since the foundation of the world* (Matthew 13:35). It is true that generally speaking the light should not hide under the tub, but there are secret hidden things that are reserved for the few chosen ones.

Yet, speaking about secret things, Jesus repeats many times, mostly after some wonders, and especially the wonders of resurrection: do not tell anybody. But most of all, after the Transfiguration, Jesus tells the three chosen among the chosen Apostles: *Tell the vision to no man, until the Son of man is risen again from the dead*, death and resurrection being facts connected with initiation. The same thing after Jesus confesses to the Apostles that He is the Son of God and calls Peter the rock of foundation of His Church: *Then he gave the disciples strict orders not to tell anyone that he was the Christ* (Matthew 16:20). These are thus high truths of metaphysical or ontological nature, which Jesus does not reveal but only to the chosen ones.

¹ It is worth noting that this term has been used apparently for the first time by the Apostle Paul, who says about hope that it is what "...we have an anchor for our soul, as sure as it is firm, and reaching right through beyond (ἐσώτερον, esoteron) the veil" (Hebrews 6:19).

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d. Trials of Initiation

Therefore, if the initiatory path requires not only special qualifications, but also the keeping of some secrets, that is also because, not like the life of common believers, this path holds trials of a special kind of difficulty which culminates with death for this life, though being still alive. Jesus announces such a difficulty right from the first days when He says: *Try your best to enter by the narrow door, because, I tell you, many will try to enter and will not succeed* (Luke 13:24). Even the entering on the path is therefore a difficult task.

Many of the trails to come are almost impossible to bear. All because it is about trials hard to comprehend and so much harder to overcome by men who want to continue their existence. There goes some of these trials expressed directly by Jesus himself: *Do not suppose that I have come to bring peace to the earth: it is not peace I have come to bring, but a sword. For I have come to set a man against his father a daughter against her mother, a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. A man's enemies will be those of his won household* (Matthew 10:34-36). This is about the separation of the initiate from his natural family, in order to follow Jesus. Further He tells it even more categorically when His mother and brothers want to talk to Him: *Who is my mother? And who are my brethren? And he stretched forth his hand toward his disciples, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren!* (Matthew 12:48). The separation from the biological family is followed by the integration in the spiritual brotherhood. But as St. Paul says: *unto the Jews a stumbling block, and unto the Greeks foolishness* (I Corinthians 1:23); or further: *The natural (ψυχικός, psychios) man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually (πνευματικῆς, pneumatikos) discerned* (I Corinthians 2:14).

The separation from one of his members seems even more difficult for the “natural” man, for Jesus says: *And if thy right eye offends thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell* (Matthew 5:29). Any interpretation one could give to this passage cannot be fulfilled by a common believer and it is hardly comprehensible even for the chosen ones. And the saying of Jesus, *I have come to send fire on the earth; and what will I, if it be already kindled?* (Luke 12:49), even if symbolically it is about the fire of the Holy Ghost, it cannot be understood and followed by all the chosen ones.

Many of the stumbling and trials of those that advance on the spiritual path are bore by the first of Christ's chosen ones himself, Apostle Peter. First, in the boat, during the storm, when Jesus called him on the sea, Peter starts to sink: *O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?* says the Savior. Further more, he does not understand why Jesus has to die, attitude that brings upon him a hard reproof: *Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me...* And during Christ's trial, Peter denies Him three times, unable to overcome his fear. Let us mention too about the doubt of Thomas that follows Christ's Resurrection, in order to have a convincing picture of the trials that bestowed upon those chosen for the initiatory path, from whom is expected more than from the common believers.

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Finally, summarizing the trials that the one who wishes to follow Jesus has to bear, He says to the Apostles: *If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.* The giving up of his ego and the take upon oneself of the sufferings of the cross with the sacrifice of one's life constitute extreme trials that could appear on the path towards perfection.