

logion 33

Jesus said:

*“What you will hear with your ear, with the other ear,
proclaim it from your rooftops.*

*For no one lights a lamp and puts it under a bushel,
nor does he put it in a hidden place.*

*Rather, he puts it on a lamp-stand,
so that everyone who comes in and goes out will see its light.”*

Commentary

With your ear and with the other ear is a way of showing that there are levels of hearing and of understanding what we hear, and that if we are to understand the *hidden* meaning of one of Jesus' logia, we must hear not only with our bodily ear but with the ear of understanding, which is more subtle and inward. Many of these *sayings* need surely to be heard at least seven times, or, even better, *seventy times seven*, if we want to perceive the higher meaning that they contain. This demands of us something that is by no means easy to come by, that we attain the extreme degree of subtle perception, at the very highest level of ourselves, which the logion calls *your rooftops*.¹

This multiplicity of levels of understanding is illustrated by the example of a lamp's light which must shine forth. The lamp is, by a subjective analogy, *the old man*, meaning, the outer coverings of Being, those with which we tend erroneously to identify throughout our lives, while the light is *the life-giving spirit*, the pure, naked Self, that great unknown for our psychic consciousness. Thus, when Jesus says *you are the light of the world*, our initial understanding will represent this only as a metaphor, one that tells us we have the gift to transmit to others through our example, if it is good, a few parcels of moral behavior and knowledge. There is, however, another real meaning, one *hidden* from many, one that can be discovered

¹ Matt. 10:27

only little by little, as we dig down deeper, layer by layer. Ultimately, the light is revealed to be the very essence of every man, the Word, *the true light that enlightens all men.*²

This subtle understanding that can only be gained by assiduous reflexion is what the logion calls *hearing, first, with one ear, then, with the other*; and what will be heard in the end must be so elevated that it can be proclaimed from our rooftops, beyond the limits of ordinary understanding. The outcome of this work is, in truth, something like a ceaseless transcription *towards the spirit*. Such is the spiritual quality of the Gospel texts that we can never interrupt this work of transformation into spirit, if we mean truly to understand them.

Jesus points out the need to accomplish this transformation when he proclaims: *what I say to you in the dark, tell in the daylight*.³ In truth, Jesus' darkness is never dark but twilit through a mass of openings that let in the light. Thanks to this, whoever loves knowledge enough *to be all ears*—those of the body, those of understanding—will be able to raise the metaphor he first perceives to his very *rooftop*, thence to proclaim to all those who *come in and go out*, our traveling companions on this hard journey, the higher reality of the spirit, until they *see* their own light.

² John 1:9

³ Matt. 10:27