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**Special Points
Of Interest:**

- As Master of Wisdom Yeshua is far different than the “Lord of the Church” and the purveyor of Christian doctrine.
- The original wisdom of Yeshua centers on the teaching of Return—*Teshuva*.
- The Presence of the divine I AM is at the heart of the remembrance of the followers of Yeshua.
- Life with an Interior Master is far different from one who lives only in the past.
- The discovery of the Gospel of Thomas introduces us to Yeshua’s universal vision.

THE ORIGINAL WISDOM OF *YESHUA*

Yeshua, the powerful first-century teacher and healer from Galilee, was a *Moshel Moshelim* (A Master of the Teachers of Wisdom) whose power and influence spread from his homeland to encompass the whole known world—the world of the Greek East and the Latin West. Yet to this day he remains hidden beneath a dogmatic veil that often obscures his original wisdom in favor of doctrinal formulations about him.

Never a dogmatist and certainly never a Christian, Yeshua (his Hebrew name meaning Joshua—“*God the Restorer*”) remained faithful to the tradition of his people and yet proclaimed a wisdom of remarkable universality. True to his own original vision, his teacher nevertheless included a universal depth and breadth embracing a far wider spiritual world than his own.

Slowly today we are recovering the original vision of Yeshua and the image of him as a Master of Wisdom. His wisdom teaching is also being uncovered by contemporary scholars and students alike—those who



*The Sacred Name of the Holy One
known as the Hebrew Tetragrammaton*

are not willing to allow him to be held any longer as prisoner of Institutional Christianity where he is often treated like a “franchise”—available only to the “approved.” In his own day Yeshua remained resolutely opposed to Institutional ownership. He would not be possessed by the religious establishment, his wisdom knew better. It offered a way forward into fresh understanding and new freedom as well as intimate relationship with the *Abba* he knew and loved.

As he said, he was putting new wine into new wineskins, and yet not attempting to change or remake the

old even one “jot or tittle.” Born from an original vision, Yeshua offered wisdom that provided his students a way of living they could access wisdom from within.

Encoded in parable and aphorism, he used the traditional tools of the wisdom teacher to crack open the barricades and barriers erected within the human heart. He not only spoke wisdom through parable, his whole life was a parable—a wisdom teaching meant to illustrate the spiritual evolution and destiny of humanity. His original wisdom became light in a darkened world.

TESHUVA—RETURN

“Shock From Above”

As Jacob Needleman says, the wisdom of Yeshua was a “shock from above” meant to change us and the world around us. The ancient Hebrew word *teshuva* (and its Greek equivalent *metanoia*)—normally translated by the English word “repentance” are meant to convey something of the shock needed for change.

Both words, used in the biblical text, signal something very different from our ordinary understanding of repentance. Repentance is one of the ultimate spiritual realities at the core of Yeshua’s teaching. Its significance goes far beyond the narrow understanding of contrition or regret for sin (moral anguish over past failures and the determination to do better) normally associated with the word. The ancient words mean something equivalent to **reorientation** (*metanoia*) of heart and mind and **return** (*teshuva*) to one’s Origin and Source.

Repentance as Return

In this sense repentance is the reorientation of the soul from its fixation on the horizontal plane (turning away from what is contrary to its own true nature), and moving toward another point of orientation—the true Orient

of human being, which Yeshua called the Kingdom of Heaven.

If Yeshua’s diagnosis of the human condition is true, then human beings are asleep along the horizontal axis, oblivious to the Realm of vertical Reality. *Teshuva* marks an act of awakening and return.

Because we are alienated from ourselves, from our Origin and Source—the center within—Yeshua calls

tionship. One can in fact be physically proximate to someone, and yet “distant” in every other sense.

The person who is only walking the path of the horizontal axis, is **not** further away from God, but one whose soul is only oriented horizontally and relating to others as objects and not to the Source from which the objects come.

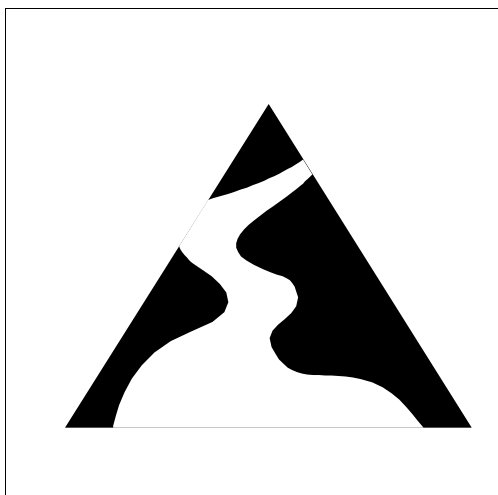
The starting point of **return** is precisely this fulcrum point upon which each individual

turns which moves us from the periphery to the center. From there, the individual is called into intimate relationship (fellowship) with the *Abba*, and with the “elder brother” to return to full-Presence passing through the Realm of the Kingdom.

The thrust of *teshuva* is to break through the ordinary limits of the self, into a new awareness.

Metanoia is no longer an isolated act, but becomes a permanent possibility, a constant process of return.

This, then, becomes the severance of the chain of cause and effect in which one’s acts of ignorance and transgression follow inevitably and blindly one upon the other. In this new state it is possible for a human being to shatter the old order of existence as we know it, and begin to nullify and alter the past.



Ours is a path of return to the Realm of the Kingdom of Heaven

us to awaken and return to our true selves (our true center) and in turning begin the ultimate journey of return to the *Abba* the Beloved One whose love, compassion, and longing for our return are intense.

Remoteness

Remoteness from God (our *Abba* and his) is not a matter of physical distance, but at heart, a difficulty of rela-

It is clear that in both root and essence the teaching of Jesus is a vision and a way that has been given to mankind from a source far above our known qualities of mind and sensibility. The luminosity and mystery of what he said and did two thousand years ago is a “shock from above” that changed the world and that reverberate in the hopes of millions over the whole face of the earth. But the inner and outer conditions of modern life are such that it has become nearly impossible for many of us to hear the spiritual traditions of the world.

—Jacob Needleman
The Gospel of Mary Magdalene

PRAXIS: THE PRAYER OF PRESENCE

The universe we inhabit is filled with Presence—the nearness of the divine I AM. It was this awareness which grounded the ancient faith of the Hebrew people, and became the center point of the awareness and nearness of Yeshua.

Practicing the Presence of God is the ultimately at the heart of all practices of Remembrance. In each of the great western Traditions this is simply called the **Invocation of the Divine Name**. The Psalmist said to “call upon the Name of the Lord.” We usually interpret that to mean that when we’re in trouble we can and should call out to God for help. Though this may be

true, it is only a beginning point, a small fraction of the full calling-and-response that is the inner activity of those who love, listen to, and use the Names of God to touch the divine Face.

To begin such a calling out to the divine Friend in friendship and fellowship start by chanting the following lines:

*There is nothing but God
There is only God
There is no one but God
There is only God.*

*There is nothing but You
There is only You
There is no one but You
There is only You.*

*There is I AM
Only I AM
Fully I AM
Simply I AM.*

The chant tune can be simply a single tone, or you may wish to elaborate it with your own melody. What is important is to chant this until you touch the Presence who is already within.

Having touched the Presence within, remain in silence listening and aware. Know that the process of inner empowerment and knowledge by Presence can only be attained as we move from “I am” to “I AM.”

I am told that there are three kinds of cultures today, each with its own “bottom line”: political cultures based on the manipulation of power, economic cultures based on the manipulation of money, and religious cultures based on the manipulation of some theory about God. These are the directions that human cultures take wherever it is left to its own devices. All three are based on some form of violence, although it is usually denied by most participants and hidden from the superficial observer. Evil gains its power from disguise, it seems. It is precisely this darkness and death that God, in Jesus, has come to destroy.

*Jesus announced, lived and inaugurated for history a new social order that is an actual alternative to each of the above—and an alternative that he said is inevitable—not inevitable by reason of scientific determinism, but by the promise and grace of God. He called it the **Reign or Kingdom of God**. It is the... guiding image of his entire ministry. It was also the reason that he was killed: “It is better for one man to die for the people” than to question our bottom line that is holding the whole system together. When we Christian accept that Jesus was killed for the same reasons that people have been killed in all of human history (and not because he walked around saying “I am God”), we will have turned an important corner on our Jesus quest.*

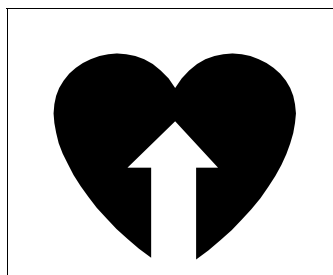
—Richard Rohr
Jesus’ Plan for a New World

LIFE WITH THE INTERIOR MASTER

Christianity has a unique view. Yeshua has come “on the inside” of humanity, at the level of the heart and there plays role of the Interior Master. Traditionally Spiritual Masters exist as external influences on their contemporary followers, or as inspiration from the past. Yeshua said he was “leaving” the seen world for the unseen world so that he could enter his students secretly and intimately from within. This is quite another point of view and should change our perspective entirely.

His students, chosen out by him, he says, are those who hear his interior voice and respond—the hearing and the choosing seem to be the connected.

Being a student of the Interior Master has certain requirements. First is the capacity to listen and respond at the level of the heart. The



Yeshua plays the role of the Interior Master

mystery of the Voice that comes to us when we listen is the core of this interior Friendship.

Second is to be in solidarity with those who also hear the Voice and experience its Friendship. Our experience together is strengthening.

Third is the movement toward union with the Master, where “twin-souls” meet in intimate forms of knowing.

Fourth is the ongoing task of learning wisdom in the methodology of the canonical Gospels where Yeshua walks with his students and together they learn from life.

Fifth is to be near people with open hearts responding to the world as a “field” of resonance, reconciliation, restoration and healing—where the work, as often as not, is anonymous and secret.



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THIS JOURNAL IS A
RESOURCE FOR ALL
SPIRITUAL PILGRIMS,
THOSE IN SPIRITUAL
DIRECTION, AND
THOSE GIVING
GUIDANCE AS
DIRECTORS AND
MENTORS.

THE GOSPEL OF THOMAS AND THE WISDOM OF YESHUA

Discovered in Egypt over 50 years ago, the collection of 114 sayings attributed to Yeshua and known as the Gospel of Thomas has continued to fascinate scholars and students alike, creating no end of question and controversy.

This collection which some believe is more primitive than the canonical tradition, nevertheless evidences a sophistication that seems lacking in the Gospels we have come to know. Addressed to the person impoverished as at the periphery of being, the Voice of the Master engages and compels the seeker of wisdom beyond the narrow world of the self into the wider world of the Kingdom "inside and all around you."

Many scholars suggest that the Gospel of Thomas represents a more original sophiology (a theology of wisdom) rather than a later soteriology or Christology (a theology of salvation expressed in traditional Christian doctrine). In Thomas Jesus speaks about finding the hidden treasure and the pearl of great price, as he does in the canonical Gospels. There it is conventionally interpreted to mean that the disciple must find salvation from sin in this world through Christ who acts to assist us from without.

The Gospel of Thomas sees redemption differently, not as something external, but having to do with finding the hidden treasure within. On this quest, the searcher is sent to discover the nature of his or her true Self, hidden

and buried in a "field" existing on the inside. Discovery brings the student into the divine Realm, which Yeshua called "the Kingdom."

Yeshua says, If you are searching, you must not stop until you find. When you find, however, you will become troubled. Your confusion will give way to wonder. In wonder you will reign over all things. Your sovereignty will be your rest."

Logion 2

Yeshua says, "If your spiritual guides say to you, "Look, the divine Realm is in the sky," well then the birds will get there ahead of you. If they say, "It is in the sea," then the fish will precede you. No, divine Reality exists inside and all around you. Only when you have come to know your true Self will you be fully known—realizing at last that you are a child of the Living One. If however you never truly come to know who you are, you are a poverty-stricken being, and it is your 'self' which lies impoverished."

Logion 3

Yeshua says, "The Father's Realm (Kingdom) can be compared to a merchant who discovered a pearl hidden in a consignment of goods. Wisely, he returned the goods and bought the single pearl instead. You too must seek out for yourselves an enduring treasure in that realm where moths cannot get in to eat or insects come to destroy."

Logion 76

Yeshua says, "The divine Realm (Kingdom) is like a man who owned a field with treasure hidden away in it. Unaware of it he died leaving it to his son who also knew nothing about it. After taking possession of the land the son practically gave it away for nothing. But the one who bought it began plowing and discovered the treasure, and immediately started lending money at interest to whomever he pleased."

Logion 109 (8)

Thomas places Yeshua at the epicenter of this form of searching. The Gospel presents itself, therefore, as a **theophany** (a divine self-disclosure), unveiling the inner secrets of the Realm of divine Reality disclosed first to the eye of the heart of Yeshua, but opening also to all who in their searching receive his word.

His seeing conveys not only wisdom, and a visionary topography of the many dimensions of transcendent reality (the divine Realm or Kingdom) beyond the known world, but a knowledge of the fullness that holds all things in perfect Unity. As its expression, Yeshua becomes the "Voice of the Invisible," the conveyer of secrets and interpreter of the divine mysteries—at whose heart is the Mystery of Oneness. In the cosmos, he is speaking this truth for God.