

Part II: Know Thyself

A. Contemplation in theory

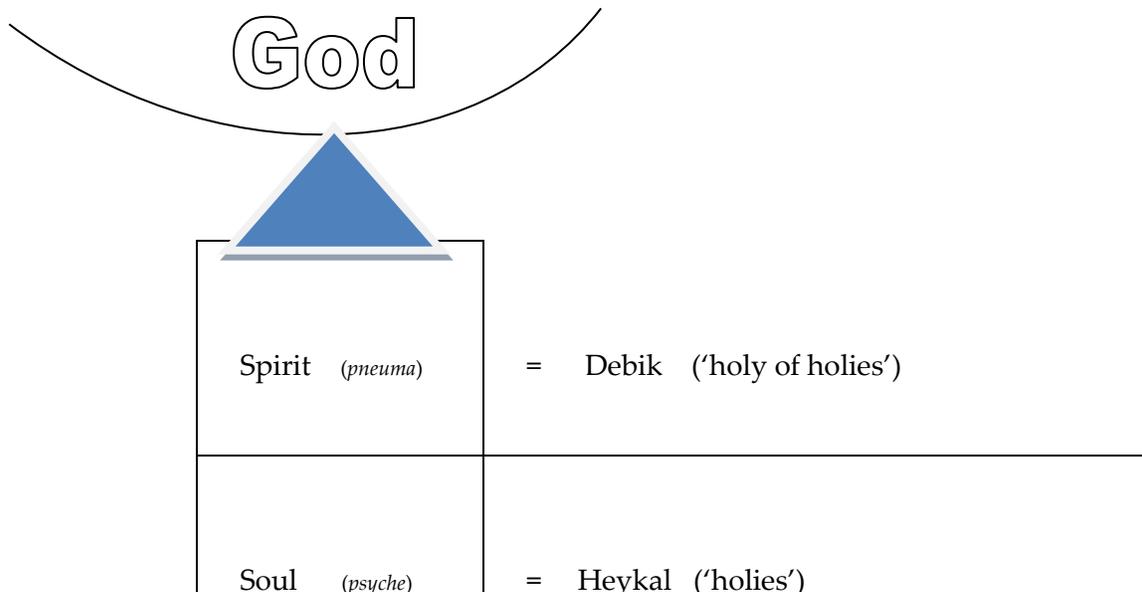
We are the temple of God

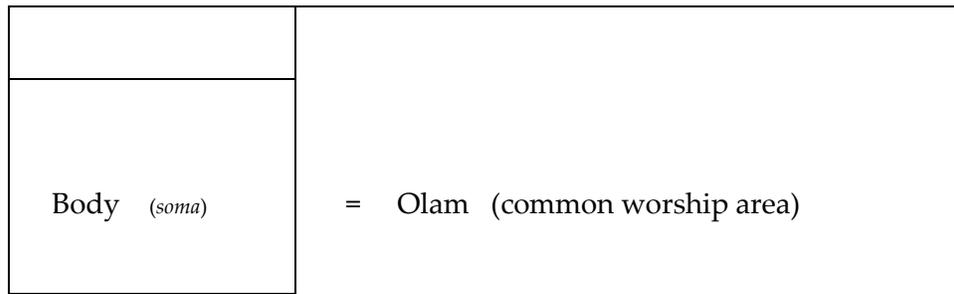
Mother Agnès Mariam: “Let’s’ enter the second section, “know yourself.” Contemplation is based on knowing who we are, because we have to enter inside ourselves to meet our Lord. So who are we? Saint Paul, when speaking of the “whole” person, says that we have three parts: a body, a soul, and a spirit, “May the God of peace himself sanctify you wholly, and your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved.” (1 Th 5:23). For Paul and the church Fathers, there was a tripartite division of the human. Early Christian tradition proposes that the three parts of the human being correspond to the three parts of the temple, and there is biblical evidence for this, “you are a temple of God where his Spirit dwells” (1 Cor 3:16).

Three parts of the human:	Three parts of the temple of Jerusalem:
Spirit (<i>pneuma in Greek</i>)	= Debik (‘holy of holies’)
Soul (<i>psyche</i>)	= Heykal (‘holies’)
Body (<i>soma</i>)	= Olam (‘common worship place)

There were three parts to the temple in Jerusalem. In the old temple you had the *olam*, this is the open area where everyone could come—it corresponds to the human body. Then you had the *heykal*, or “The Holies”, where only the Levite priests, or the sons of Aaron, could enter—it corresponds to the human soul. And finally there was the *debik*, or “Holy of Holies”, where the high priest could enter once a year on the day of Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement. The *debik* corresponds to the spirit.

The *pneuma*, or spirit, is the place in us that enters in God. The point of contact with God is internal not external. Thus the Lord says, “Behold! The kingdom of God is within you” (Lk 17:21). Our spirit connects to God.





Without baptism, the spirit is completely closed - our spirit cannot not enter in God, and we cannot even enter in our spirit. Original sin beheaded us, and left us completely insensitive to the spirit. For God said, "My Spirit shall not abide in man forever, for he is flesh" (Gen 6:3). There is like a concrete barrier, blocking the way into the spirit. With baptism, coming out of the sacrificial death, the resurrection, and ascension of Jesus Christ, the way to God is opened. Jesus brought back the Spirit of God, and broke down the barrier so that we could know the Spirit. The veil is broken. Jesus speaks of the barrier that makes humans insensitive to spiritual things, "I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth, *whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him*. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you" (Joh 14:16-17).

In Christ we can come to know "God who is Spirit" and come to know our own spirit who in Christ unifies us to God, revealing our own true identity and spiritual destiny at the same time. With Christ we are like the high priest¹, we can enter in the Holy of Holies² where God is truly present and waiting for us inside ourselves. This Spirit is our center.

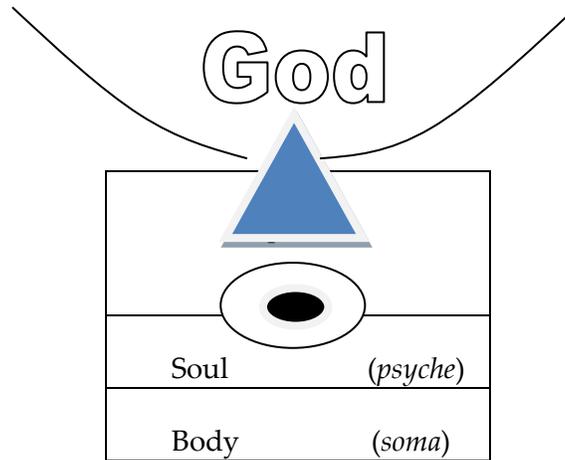
Most of our lives we are not in the spirit, we are neither present to ourselves nor to God, we dwell in the body. We are always dwelling outside ourselves, outside our center. It's our normal human condition to dwell outside the spirit, and yet it is the spirit that makes us most human. It's a terrible situation, and no one helps us to enter inside ourselves. For example: at school they might give you information on how to be nice, on how to eat well, on how to memorize. Our parents may tell us how to behave well but people rarely teach us how to see with our hearts. We dwell in the body and we barely touch the soul, the *psyche*. And notice that even the highest ranks of the *psyche* are out of reach, or completely unused, they don't even move. The soul and the spirit are dead. It's only when the light of Christ strikes us in baptism that the soul begins to live. And even though we are baptized our soul remains a barren wasteland until we enter in it to seek our Lord's face.

¹ Catholic doctrine from Vatican II affirms the priesthood of all believers. Christ "who loves us has freed us from our sins by his blood and made us a kingdom, priests to his God and Father." (Rev 1:5-6). Just as priests offer sacrifices, so Peter writes, "You yourselves are... a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ." (1Peter 2:5). And Paul helps us understand what sacrifice and priesthood means for Christians when he encourages us "to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship" (Rom 12:1). Paul rejoices that he himself is "being poured out as a sacrificial drink offering" (Philp 2:17, 2Tm 4:6). And the author of Hebrews says that just as Christ was sacrificed outside the city so his followers should "suffer the same shame he did... offering up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that acknowledge his name." (Heb 13:14-16). The Bible affirms that the sacrifice of a Christian is himself, united to Jesus in a deep union of love. So deep is this union of love in sacrifice that Paul can say that Christ's sacrifice and his own are one sacrifice: "I have been crucified with Christ, and I live, yet not I but Christ lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me" (Gal 2:20). Paul's sacrifice is in Christ and unto Christ for the sake of his body the church: "I rejoice in my sufferings for you, and in my flesh I am filling up what is lacking in Christ's afflictions" (Col 1:24). "The world has been crucified to me, and I to the world... I bear on my body the marks of Jesus" (Gal 6:14, 17).

² Hebrews 10:19-22 states it eloquently: "Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the Holy of Holies by the blood of Jesus, by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water."

The eye of discernment (Mt 6:22)

The *psyche* (soul) has like an eye—when the soul is used it becomes aware, it perceives because it is our capacity for higher modes of perception. This eye is the eye of our heart.



The Lord says, ‘The eye is the lamp of the body. So, if your eye is healthy, your whole body will be full of light, but if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness³’ (Mt 6:22, Lk 11:34). The eye here is in the singular because he is talking about the eye of our heart. This eye is a lamp because it can be enlightened by God’s light. But even without God’s light the eye of our soul will always make judgments. It is the part of us that tells us, ‘this is wrong’, ‘this is right’, ‘this is important’, ‘this is more important’, ‘this is good’, ‘this is not good’, ‘I want this’, ‘I don’t want this’. Thus the function of the eye in the soul, the *psyche*, is to judge, the eye of our judgment.

Saint Paul says this part of us is renewed as we put on the “new man” who is the likeness of Christ: “Be renewed in the spirit of your mind!” (Eph 4:23, Col 3:10)—be renewed in your judgment. This eye is meant to receive the light of God, “in your light we see light” (Ps 36:9). Therefore if we see by God’s light we no longer “judge by appearances” but we can “make the right judgment”.

“The crowd answered, “You have a demon! Who is seeking to kill you?” Jesus answered them, “I did one work, and you all marvel at it. Moses gave you circumcision (not that it is from Moses, but from the fathers), and you circumcise a man on the Sabbath. If on the Sabbath a man receives circumcision, so that the law of Moses may not be broken, are you angry with me because on the Sabbath I made a man’s whole body well? *Do not judge by appearances, but judge with right judgment.*” (Joh 7:20-24)

The spirit by which we walk is Christ who is “the true light that enlightens every man” (Jn 1:9). “I am the light of the world,” says the Lord, “he that follows me will not walk in darkness but will have the light of life” (Jn 8:12).

Being conscious of ourselves to enter into the Spirit

And this eye is also a door from the *psyche* to the *pneuma* [= the spirit]. Through it we enter the spirit, the part of the temple where we come to seek God’s face, as Paul says, “You are a temple and God’s spirit dwells in

³ The word translated “healthy” here is the Greek word *haplous*, which in the New Testament only occurs in this particular teaching of Jesus. The word connotes simplicity and singleness of heart.

you" (1Co 3:16), and David says, "One thing I desired... to behold the beauty of the LORD and seek him in his temple" (Ps 27:4). However we cannot enter into ourselves without being attentive, without being conscious.

How to enter into ourselves? By being present – being conscious

How do we become conscious? The consciousness of our self is not like the consciousness of a Buddhist or a Hindu. Their consciousness is impersonal: "I am conscious that I am *the one*—I am *the whole*," or "I am not conscious because I think this or that," or "I am conscious that *the whole* exists in me." What is the whole? It is non-existence. And so their contemplation is to be open to the nothingness. The Buddhist is impersonal. This is terrible. We are *not* impersonal; each human being is unique. So the followers of Christ are conscious, they know they are individually created beings, "created in the image and likeness" of God (Gen 1:26). We are part of the nothingness, yes, but we are also called to go from the nothingness into existence. In God's plan every human is meant to express the divine image in a unique way. We are created from nothing *into* something very special, something that is meant to receive the living God.

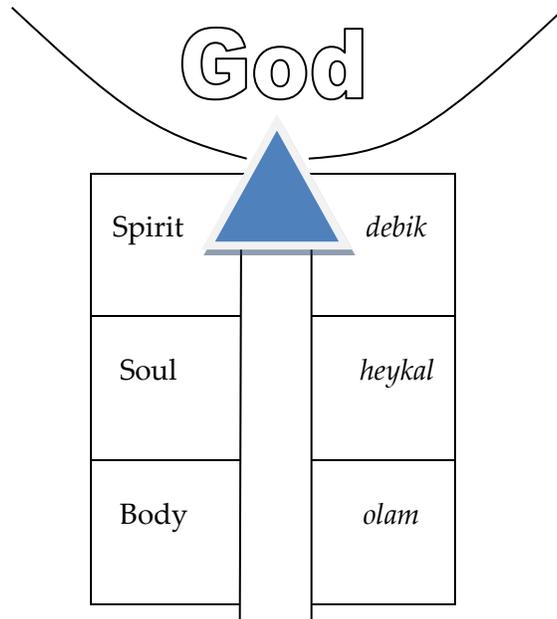
When we are conscious about our own self we know that the self is *the place* where God is dwelling. Where does He dwell? He is dwelling in this very place within me where I can be conscious, the *protikerion*. On top of the Ark of the Covenant there is a place where the two wings of the two cherubim meet⁴:

The place where the wings of the cherubim meet is called the *protikerion*, in English the *seat of mercy*. In this place, said the Lord, I will put my name and presence, to speak to the priests, the sons of Aaron: "And there I will meet with you, says the Lord, and I will commune with you from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubim which are upon the ark of the testimony" (Ex 25:22, cf. Lv 16:2). The two cherubim here represent *me* and *myself*, I and myself—and the place where the wings meet, the mercy seat, is the possibility inside myself to be conscious. It is the distance between me and myself.

Christ is the light which enlightens every human being come into the world (Jn 1:9). This light comes from the Lord, it is the light in which we are conscious. An animal is not conscious. This consciousness is the most sacred gift we have. It is the attitude in which we are responsible. When you are in an unconscious state, you are not responsible. It is only in the upper *psyche* that we start to make decisions beyond the level of self-preservation, that we begin to make decisions based on faith, and "faith expresses itself in love" (Gal 5:6).

We are the center, we are the temple. We are constructed to be temples of the living God. And that's why Jesus Christ says *I am* the temple—"Destroy this temple and I will raise it up again in three days" (Jn 2:19, Mt 26:61, Mk 14:58). He is the temple and in Him we are a temple - every soul is a temple. Thus we have a goal, burning, through the veil of our body, of our soul, **and of our spirit** HERE.

⁴ "You shall make a mercy seat of pure gold. Two cubits and a half shall be its length, and a cubit and a half its breadth. And you shall make two cherubim of gold; of hammered work shall you make them, on the two ends of the mercy seat. Make one cherub on the one end, and one cherub on the other end. Of one piece with the mercy seat shall you make the cherubim on its two ends. The cherubim shall spread out their wings above, overshadowing the mercy seat with their wings, their faces one to another; toward the mercy seat shall the faces of the cherubim be. And you shall put the mercy seat on the top of the ark, and in the ark you shall put the testimony that I shall give you. There I will meet with you, and from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubim that are on the ark of the testimony, I will speak with you about all that I will give you in commandment for the people of Israel". (Exo 25:17-22)



[She draws a path through the person's body/soul/spirit up to God]. This way, we are like officers, priests who celebrate the Lord. Moreover we are like the seven Spirits who are always in the presence of the Lord. And yet, like them, sent out on a mission⁵.

To remain in the presence of the Lord we have to *know* that we are with Him, and that He resides in us. Jesus says, "If anyone loves me, he will keep my words. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him (John 14:23)" – this is inhabitation. The Lord does not inhabit a temple of stone. Solomon says, "Behold the heavens, even the heaven of heavens, cannot contain you. How much less a temple I have built!" (1 Kgs 8:12, 27). But in our hearts He can reside because it is a *spiritual* dwelling place. So we know by faith that, through Jesus Christ, God resides in us – very important. Thus we ask ourselves today: "Do I know, do I believe that my God dwells in me?" And also: "Is it important for me that He resides in me?" Let us take this question and reflect upon it. "My God, how great and merciful are you that you come to live in me. You do not inhabit an angel, a cherub or a seraph, these are servants—even though they are beautiful and glorious. You make me your son. And you come and reside in me."

When the Lord speaks to the Samaritan, she says, "Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, but you Jews claim that the place where we must worship is in Jerusalem" to which Jesus replied, "Believe me, woman, the day will come when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem ... God is Spirit, and the real worshippers the Father seeks must worship in Spirit and in truth" (John 4:20-24). This is the goal of this contemplation workshop: to enhance our possibilities, to open a way inside ourselves into the presence of the Lord. Believe me, the whole body of Christ will be regenerated.

Life flows from **the sanctuary**, because "the river of the water of life flows, pure as crystal, from the throne of God and of the Lamb" (Rev 22:1). Jesus came, through his sacrifice, to stand before the altar of the Almighty to intercede for us. From this altar flows the river of life. And whenever we go inside our heart in the presence of the Lord we are with Jesus Christ before the altar of the Lord. In the very moment we are conscious - by

⁵ Revelation 5:6: "And between the throne and the four living creatures and among the elders I saw a Lamb standing, as though it had been slain, with seven horns and with seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth." See also Rev 1:4, 1:12, 4:5.

faith – that we are standing before our Lord we are in the very place where Jesus Christ is, interceding before the altar as *the* great high priest. Hallelujah.

The “attention” as the first step of contemplation

Know yourselves. What is the importance of knowledge? What is the importance of consciousness? How shall we enter in ourselves? To be conscious of something is to have something hold our attention – and our attention is drawn by interest or by fear. For example: a snake is close to me, there is danger, I am aware. My desire also awakens my attention. For example: I am hungry and I am aware that there is a good cake in the kitchen.

Thus our attention is like a compass: it leads us towards what interests us. The more attention we pay to something, the more important that thing will become for us; on the contrary, the less attention we pay to something, the less important that thing will be for us. When we are attentive we are conscious, we are present. When nothing holds our attention we’re not present.

You are listening to me now, but if you are bored you can go in your mind to Damascus, to Portland, to Hawaii ... With your mind you can go where your heart drives you. Thus the attention is the orientation of the heart. “Give me your heart”, says the Lord (Prv 23:26). “These people honor me with their lips but their hearts are far from me. They worship me in vain.” (Matt 15:8, Isaiah 29:13). The Lord *feels* if we are with him or not. Take a man and a woman; if they are in love, they feel it when the heart of the other is far - the Lord feels it much more. God looks at our hearts and our souls. Jesus says, “Know that I am he who searches hearts and minds” (Rev 2:23). So he knows if we are with him or not. Contemplation begins with attention to the Lord and attention to the Lord begins with consciousness. How often do we live by routine? In a 24 hour day we use our consciousness hardly 15 minutes.

Each time we are conscious we take a drop of living water from the river of life, which we said flows from the altar (Rev 22:1). If we are conscious just for *ourselves*, we take a drop of personal welfare, we become more ourselves and God blesses us. If we come with a *spiritual* consciousness—in faith—we receive a drop of the water of eternal life. So there is a quality to our interior attention. How are we living our personal lives, with what kind of quality? The Lord is always looking at our hearts, thinking “Will they reflect, will they think about their lives, yes or no? In the book of the prophet Haggai God says, “Reflect on your ways⁶.” God is waiting for us to become conscious of the reality of our situation.

We are meant to find this very precious gift that is given to us, but we don’t make use of it [unfortunately] until the day our hearts are broken. We live in abundance. Since our birth, we have all we need. Thus we continue in that pattern until the day we discover that we *don’t* have what we need, that what we have is not enough, that we are in great need. “You say, ‘I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.’ But you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked” (Rev 3:17). The very day we discover that we are naked, poor and blind, *then* we begin to see; the eye of our heart opens up. We come back to ourselves. This is the real conversion, this is the *metanoia*⁷.

The very day we come back to ourselves; that we are aware of ourselves, that day we begin to have consciousness. It is the Lord who enlightens our mind to come back to ourselves. Notice how contemplation

⁶ The Hebrew expression used in Haggai 1:5 and 1:7 is literally *simi lebabom el derek*, “put your hearts over your ways”. In other words consider yourselves carefully, become conscious of your situation.

⁷ Greek word for repentance, from the verb *metanoeo*, to ‘think differently’, ‘reconsider,’ lit. ‘to change (*meta*) the exercise of the mind (*noieo*).’ The gospel of repentance, namely, “Repent for the kingdom of God is at hand” is the first message preached by not only John the Baptist (Mt 3:2) but also by Jesus’ apostles (Mk 6:12), Peter (Act 2:38), Paul (Act 26:20), and Jesus himself (Mt 4:17, Mk 1:5).

comes forth from attention, and attention from conversion/*metanoia*⁸.

Conversion → attention towards God → consciousness → contemplation

We cannot come to the presence of the Lord if we are not ourselves or if we think of ourselves as different from who we really are. Who is coming to the Lord then? Nobody! A zombie cannot come to the presence of anyone. Most of our lives we live as zombies, without having a quality of presence to ourselves in what we are doing or why we are doing something. And St. Jude says very harsh things about those people who are beings without spirit. He speaks of poor sinners who pretend to follow the way of Jesus but who are actually rejecting him by committing more and more sins. They are without the Spirit of the Lord but they are also without their *own* spirit, “like clouds without rain” (1:12, 19). St. Peter says of them, “They are like irrational animals, creatures of instinct, born to be caught and destroyed... They have eyes full of adultery, insatiable for sin” (2Pe 2:12, 14).

If we leave the Spirit of the Lord, we will end up without spirit. Then the donkey of Balaam will be cleverer than us and we’ll become blind to spiritual dangers⁹. So we cannot let our hearts be hardened. When we do that we fall down from the *psyche* to outside the *soma* – we become defiled, outside ourselves. But when our heart is broken we weep and we seek the face of the Lord. We then wake up very early in the morning to seek his face and tell him, ‘O Lord, I beseech you, when will my soul come to your presence?’ When our heart is broken we discover that we are in exile, outside of paradise. We then realize that we are starving without the tree of life, and that nothing is enough to fill our weakness and our emptiness, not even the whole world. And that is why, when we are converted, the Lord is enough for us. And thus we are oriented.

The Lord is our orientation

If we don’t know the direction to Damascus, we might think we’re going to Damascus but we’re actually going to Aleppo because we’re not oriented. We have energy but we need to be oriented. Imagine the following: I have a very nice car while driving it someone asks me, “Where are you going?” to which I answer, “I don’t know.” This means my nice car is entirely useless. We need to be oriented, being completely drawn to *orient*. Paradise was located in the orient of Eden, (cf. Gen 2:8) which was the orient of everything. And *our orient* is inside of us - the Lord doesn’t reside anywhere else but in myself. “If they tell you, ‘He is here!’ and ‘he is there!’ don’t go—he is in yourselves” (cf. Lk 17:21).

Our Lord is inside ourselves. And when we are trained to stand in His presence, we will shine. You want to have a good ministry, you want to become a big prophet, you want to have knowledge and be a good teacher?—stand before the Lord. He will give you everything He is. And when He will ask you, “What do you want from me?” don’t ever say anything except “I want you Oh my God, I don’t want anything from you, I want you!”

Thus you will get everything - this is the contract of love. That is why contemplation is the very place where great things happen to the body of Christ. It’s the concert of the Lord with his saints and angels. The Lord doesn’t do anything without giving notice to his saints. When you draw near to the throne of mercy you *know* the counsel of the Lord, the plan of the Lord. And this is prophetic; you are entrusted with the secrets of the

⁸ Greek *metanoia* usually translated as “repentance” here is spoken of as conversion.

⁹ i.e. Balaam’s donkey sees and avoids the angel of the Lord who would kill Balaam if he came near it. But Balaam, because of the hardness of his heart, cannot see it. He ignorantly punishes his donkey for swerving in the path to avoid the destroying angel (Num 22:22-35).

King. Prophecy is not divination; it is not a magic wand that tells you stupid things like: "in one year you will have cancer." Prophecy has something to do with God's plan, and God's plan always has the purpose of saving men. In contemplation we get to know the secrets of the King because we are near the King, because we're in love with Him, and He's in love with us, period.

"Know yourself" leads to contemplation

So, attention through conversion will put us in the right spot, oriented to the very sun of our lives. This 'knowing yourself' is very important for the Fathers. St. Anthony the Great was the first historical monk. Monk in Greek means *monakoi* which comes from *monos* meaning 'alone.' *Monakos* is the *ish* of the Hebrew Bible; he is the individual, the unique. He is a *monakos* because he left everything to stay *by himself* before the Lord, to be alone before the One, and to come back to his inner unity so that the Lord can have with him a real relationship of divine union.

So the title of the biography of Saint Anthony of the desert is *Know Yourselves*. Now, this 'know yourselves' has a Platonic tradition. And long before Plato it was inscribed in the entrance of the temple of Apollo in Delphi, *gnothi sauton*, 'know yourselves.' Nevertheless, 'know yourselves' is fundamental in sacred Hebrew tradition and 'knowing yourselves' always relates to knowing your relationship to God. What's the first thing that happens to Adam and Eve when they eat from the tree of knowledge of good and evil? "Their eyes were opened and they knew they were naked" (Gen 3:7). They knew that they were naked, just like Judas knew he had betrayed the Lord.

The tragedy is that they put "a period": they knew that they were naked ... period. It would have been better if they would have run back to the Lord to tell him, "We are nothing without you!" It would have meant salvation for them. Here you see where their real pride is. It's not in eating the fruit that lets them know that they are naked, but rather their refusal to go to the Lord to tell him, 'Please, what we will do now? We are naked!' Instead they became tailors and used fig leaves to hide their nakedness: "Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths". (Gen 3:7). *Know yourselves* is leaving this false knowledge where you pretend to cover your nakedness.

In chapter 3 of Genesis we notice two costumes for Adam and Eve, the fig leaves and the one of dead animals made by the Lord to cover their nakedness¹⁰:

¹⁰ "Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths. And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. But the LORD God called Adam and said to him, "Where are you?" And he said, "I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself." He said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?" Adam said, "The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate." Then the LORD God said to the woman, "What is this that you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate." The LORD God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this, cursed are you above all livestock and above all beasts of the field; on your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life. I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel." To the woman he said, "I will surely multiply your pain in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children. Your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you." And to Adam he said, "Because you have listened to the voice of your wife and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you, 'You shall not eat of it,' cursed is the ground because of you; in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life; thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return." The man called his wife's name Eve, because she was the mother of all living. And the LORD God made for Adam and for his wife garments of skins and clothed them". (Gen 3:7-21)

What does this mean? It means that the poor Lord could not cover them with anything but dead animals because they did not return to Him to ask for his glory. They did not turn to the Lord when they knew that they were naked. "Come to me to buy from me... a white robe to cover your nakedness and ointment for your eyes so you can see," says the Lord (Rev 3:18). He will fulfill us, He will clothe us, He will give us eyes to see, he will fill all that is lacking in us. Contemplation is to take from the Lord. Never stand alone, never stand apart from God—*to know ourselves is to know that we cannot do anything without him.*

Adam and the woman thought that they would be able to solve the problem themselves. That's why they became like God. They became like God in that they would *do it themselves*—but poor gods, poor gods indeed (cf. Gen 3:22)! Thus we are called to know ourselves in His light. Contemplation is a challenge. It is a conversion of our judgment to know what Adam and the woman did not know: without God we can do nothing. They received everything from the Lord and yet they didn't realize their own dependency. And suddenly they knew their nakedness and they didn't go back to the Lord. They said 'Oh well, we will do it on our own'—This comes from the devil. Know yourself during your whole life; a real Christian is invited to deepen his knowledge more and more, and this is called humility. Humility is to know ourselves and not to seek something else, not to seek to hide our nakedness, not to seek to become something else. To know ourselves is to accept ourselves. It is very simple, but also very complicated.