

THE HEALING OF BLINDNESS

*Linking an EARLY CHRISTIAN TEXT concerning ENLIGHTENMENT
using the Indian NAMASTĒ greeting*

Jesus saw, as he travelled, a man blind from birth. His students asked him, "Teacher, who was God displeased with, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" Jesus answered, "God was displeased with neither this man nor his parents. He was born blind that God's work might be seen in him." And saying this, he spat on the ground, made mud with the spit and smeared it on the man's eyes. Then he told him, "Go and wash in Siloam Pool". (Siloam means 'having been sent'.) So he went and washed and came away seeing.

Then the neighbours and those who had noticed him before when he had been a beggar, said, "Isn't that the man who used to sit and beg?" Some said it was and others said not, but someone like him. "It was me", he said. So they asked him, "How is it you can see then?" He answered, "The man called Jesus made mud, spread it on my eyes and told me to go to Siloam and wash. So, I went and washed, and now I see!" They said to him, "Where is that man?" "I don't know", he said.

So they took him to their religious leaders, this man once blind. The day that Jesus made the mud and smeared it on the man's eyes was a Day of Rest, a day when God was to be honoured and no one was to do work or become dirty in any way. The leaders asked him again how he came to see. He said to them, "He put mud on my eyes and I washed and I see". As they discussed the matter, some among the leaders were saying, "This man is not from God because he does not keep the Day of Rest". Others were saying, "How can one displeasing to God be able to do such a thing?" There was division among them. So they spoke to him again. "What do you say about him since it was your eyes he opened?" He said, "He must be a prophet".

These leaders could not believe it about him, that he used to be blind and now could see. So they summoned the parents of this man now seeing and interrogated them. "Is this your son who you say was born blind? How then does he now see?" His parents answered saying, "We know that this is our son and that he was born blind. How he sees now we do not know, nor do we know who opened his eyes. You ask him. He is of age. He will speak for himself." His parents said these things because they were afraid of their leaders because they had already agreed that anyone equating Jesus with The-One-Who-Was-To-Come-From-God would be banned from their assembly. It was this that made his parents say, "He is of age. Ask him."

So for a second time they summoned the man who had been blind and said to him, "Give glory to God. We know that this man who made you see is displeasing to God and could not do this thing." He replied, "I don't know if he is displeasing to God, but one thing I do know. I was blind and now I see." So they said to him, "Tell us again. What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?" "I have told you already", he said, "and you would not listen. Why would you hear it again? Do you too want to follow him and to learn from him?" They sneered at him saying, "You may follow him if you wish, but we follow Moses. We know that God spoke to Moses, but we have no idea where this man comes from." The man answered them, "This is a wondrous thing! You do not know where he is from yet he opened my eyes. We know that God does not listen to those who displease him. But if one is devout and does his will, God would listen to him. From the beginning of time it is unheard of that the eyes of one born blind should be opened. If this man were not from God, he could do nothing." They retorted, "You were born entirely displeasing to God. Are you to teach us?" And they threw him out of their assembly.

When Jesus heard that the man had been expelled, he went looking for him. When he had found him he said, "When I saw you first, you did not see me. But as I saw you, I saw in you the place where the creating Source, our sole Parent is present, the place where the entire universe resides. You did not see it then. Do you see it now?" The man said, "Tell me more that I may understand. What is this place? Where may I see it?" Jesus said, "It is the place where the Source is present, the place of love, of illumination, of truth, of peace. Do you see that place in me?" "Yes I do", he said, "for when you saw me blind and knew you could make me see, even though it was the Day of Rest, you did not hesitate to work with the Source to bring me sight. Work or dirt did not stop you from giving so great a gift to me. So now I see that place and I honour that place in you where the Source of all love resides." Jesus said, "My heart reached out to you. For I honour that place that is in you too and in every being. When you dwell in that place within you, and I dwell in that place within me, we are one. You have seen it in me. May you see it in every living being. And when you meet another, greet this place in the other saying, 'Namasté.' For we are all one with the Source of life within us."



NOTES

The first part of this text comprises most of chapter 9 of the Gospel of John. The second part connects an interpretation of Jesus' root life stance with that of the Indian namasté greeting. Faithfulness to the spirit and meaning rather than an accurate word for word translation has been made since 'accurate' translations are commonplace. The text is used both to reimagine the experience that galvanised the original writers into speech, and to express the mystery and fruitfulness of contemporary religious experience that takes into account a commitment to truth that can be found in our present day culture.