

The Park Church
Adult Study Group
“Praying the Lord’s Prayer”
Rev. Wayne E. Gustafson, D.Min.

Session 6 – “Letting Go, Heartbeat by Heartbeat”
March 16, 2008

Questions and Comments from last class

Washboqlan khaubayn (wakhtahayn) aykanna daph khnan shbwoqan l’khayyabayn
And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors

washboqlan – forgive, but can also mean “return to its original state” [mend] , “reciprocally absorb”, “reestablish slender ties to”, and “embrace with emptiness”. Also, to “set free, let go, loosen, leave out, omit.”

“The prayer reaffirms that our original state is clear and unburdened, one where our slender ties to creation are based on mutual releasing, with every breath we breathe.”

To forgive implies that we foster relationships by releasing (in both directions) whatever stands in the way, and that this is an ongoing process, not a discrete event.)

In my experience, forgiveness is not something we can do as a matter of will. It takes place over time, but we can affect the conditions that facilitate or impede the process of forgiveness.

khaubayn – (In Matthew) - obligations

can also mean “hidden past”, “Secret Debt”, “hidden, stolen property”, and any “inner fruit” that affects the intelligence and the soul negatively.

khtahayn - (In Luke) - sins

can also mean “failures”, “mistakes”, “accidental offenses”, “frustrated hopes”, or “tangled threads”(or a wrongly sewn thread) – implying that some mending or restoration is needed.

“It derives from the word meaning to dig out or to sew – both having to do with an effort (**KH**) made against a resistance(**T**).”

Also, “So the seeds of restoration are, so to speak, implied in what has been broken.”

aykanna – as in Line 4, implies that “releasing must be done consistently and regularly (a process) if our knotted relationships are to become whole and stable again.”

It is clear from the Aramaic that this line has nothing to do with morality, nor does it have to do with a fear of God holding something against us. It is more about the process of being connected to life. It recognizes that we get “tangled” up and that some things get in the way of our connectedness.

This line asks God to facilitate the process of disentangling so that we can thrive in reciprocal relationships with others and with the cosmos.

From the standpoint of psychotherapy, I see a number of things getting in the way of relationships. It may be a belief about oneself as shameful that was embedded by the words or abusive behaviors of others.

It may be an old way of coping that may have been necessary at one time, but is no longer useful. It may be a self-judgment that because we are imperfect, we are not worthy. At least half of the process of psychotherapy involves helping people disentangle from the events and beliefs of the past so they can live in the present. Sometimes the grudges we hold from past events stand in the way of new experiences.

Finally, it is clear to me that forgiveness of self and forgiveness of others are two aspects of the same process, not unlike the aspects of the breathing process by which we take in what we need and release (forgive) that which we no longer have use for. If we don't release it, clutter results. (See Line 2)

Mystical Prayers

1. The process of forgiveness is embedded in the body. Lie comfortably and let your hand "listen" to your heartbeat. Visualize the process of the breathing that keeps the body supplied with oxygen, and the flow of blood that supplies nourishment and oxygen to the cells, while removing what is no longer needed so it can be released. What we no longer need can imprison us if we don't let it go. Perhaps Jesus' reference to his blood, given for the untying of mistakes and failures, enriches our understanding of this sacred process.
2. In pairs or a group, hold hands or connect in other physical ways, meditating together on the embodied process of nourishment and forgiveness. "Forgiveness is here, *now* – not outside somewhere.
3. Try intoning the words of this line (see below*). The –kh- sounds continue to bring us back to places in the body where we need to release. Perhaps we need to recognize and acknowledge our "knots" before they can be integrated.

Reading List

Prayers of the Cosmos: Meditations on the Aramaic Words of Jesus, Translation and Commentary by Neil Douglas-Klotz, Harper San Francisco, 1990.

The Hidden Gospel: Decoding the Spiritual Message of the Aramaic Jesus, Neil Douglas-Klotz, Quest Books, Wheaton, IL, 1999.

*Wa-shb□q-láhn khow-b□ yn wa-kh-tah-h□yn eye-káhna daph kh-nan sh-b□-qan l'kh-eye-ya-b□yn

6. Letting Go, Heartbeat By Heartbeat

Loose the cords of mistakes binding us,
as we release the strands we hold
of others guilt.

Forgive our hidden past, the secret shames,
as we consistently forgive
what others hide.

Lighten our load of secret debts as
we relieve others of their
need to repay.

Erase the inner marks our failures make,
just as we scrub our hearts
of other's faults.

Absorb our frustrated hopes and dreams,
as we embrace those of others
with emptiness.

Untangle the knots within
so that we can mend our hearts'
simple ties to others.

Compost our inner, stolen fruit
as we forgive others the spoils of
their trespassing.

Loose the cords of mistakes binding us,
as we release the strands we hold
of others guilt.