Correspondences

Myths, Symbols and Parables

From Dr Philip Groves

The realisation that we have an inwardness which is different from the material world provides us with a new way of approaching the reality which stands behind the appearance of things. Such is the nature of our spirit that it is able to procure an inside view of the world, and can uncover aspects of reality which are beyond the range of the bodily senses and of scientific exploration. But even here a difficulty arises because spiritual observations and insights must be expressed in human terms before they can be known.

The words and terms of language are largely but not entirely sense-based and therefore limited. It is not possible to compress the endless details of spiritual experience, knowledge, wisdom and energy into finite speech so that everything can be known in a few words. However, there are devices which enable some of these difficulties to be overcome, and they are correspondences, myths, symbols and parables.

A parable is an instrument of communication in which elevated instructions and meanings are intimately juxtaposed with familiar earthly images. The term 'parable' comes from Greek 'parabolē' which is composed of 'para-' '*near to, alongside'* and 'bolē' '*to cast or throw*'. Hence a parable is the casting of one thing beside another for the sake of comparison or to indicate a relationship.
In a spiritual sense a parable is much more than a simple comparison: it is a device which points to states, processes, meanings and values which lie far beyond its literal form. Parables have their origin in spiritual things and terminate in natural forms.

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From The Divine Allegory

by Hugo Odhner

Our whole lives consist of chains of activity by which we invite the presence of the heavens and the hells. There is something in the human race which is as essential to those departed spirits as their influx is to us. The reason is that when those who die enter the spiritual world their memories of earthly objects, things and languages are closed up and now they live only in the spiritual associations and the inner thoughts and affections which were attached to the physical world environment they were in before. Freed from the limited scope of material things, their lives now become less bound and their delights more complete as they move more fully into the contents of inner states they had only had a foretaste of here.

Yet if there wasn't at least an indirect touch with something material, there could be no order and progression in their inner lives now being lived outwardly. So it is provided that while a spirit no longer exists on his own individual basis, he finds a common basis which is the human race. His spiritual life flows in to those ultimate or material ideas that people have here which correspond to his own affections and thoughts, which is to say those activities and occupations that have a sphere similar to his own and receptive of it.