



The Wooden Bowl

A frail old man went to live with his son, daughter-in-law, and four-year-old grandson.

The old man's hands trembled, his eye sight was blurred, and his step faltered.

The family ate together at the table. But the elderly grandfather's shaky hands and

Failing sight made eating difficult. Peas rolled off his spoon onto the floor.

When he grasped the glass, milk spilled on the tablecloth.

The son and daughter-in-law became irritated with the mess.

"We must do something about father," said the son.

"I have had enough of his spilled milk, noisy eating, and food on the floor."

So the husband and wife set a small table in the corner.

There, Grandfather ate alone while the rest of the family enjoyed dinner.

Since Grandfather had broken a dish or two, his food was served in a wooden bowl.

When the family glanced in Grandfather's direction, sometimes he had a tear in his eye
as he sat alone.

Still, the only words the couple had for him were sharp admonitions when he dropped fork or spilled food.

The four-year-old watched it all in silence.

One evening before supper, the father noticed his son playing with wood scraps on the floor.

He asked the child sweetly, "What are you making?" Just as sweetly, the boy responded,

"Oh, I am making a little bowl for you and Mama to eat your food in when I grow up."

The four-year-old smiled and went back to work.

FROM LIGHT TO LIGHT

VAHE SIVACIYAN



TORONTO
- 2013 -

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The Spirit and the bride say,
“Come!”
And let him who hears say,
“Come!”
Whoever is thirsty,
let him come;
And whoever wishes,
let him take
the free gift of the
water of life.
(Revelation 22:17)

NOTE

The quotations from the Bible
are taken from
the NIV Study Bible
by
Zondervan bible publishers
Grand Rapids, Michigan. USA
1985





ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

My deepest appreciation and thanks
to a few of my friends,
for their input, their critique and suggestions and their help
during the writing and preparation of this book.

I am forever indebted to them
and pray that
God grant them
a healthy, happy and long life.

*

I also thank, from the bottom of my heart, all those who
took, posted and provided the pictures used in this book. I
pray for them, that God's blessings follow them all the days
of their lives.



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BIOGRAPHY

The author was born in Kadiköy, one of the suburbs of Istanbul (Constantinople), he received his elementary school education at the Aramyan-Unciyan Armenian School. He subsequently continued his education at Saint Joseph private French high school in Istanbul.

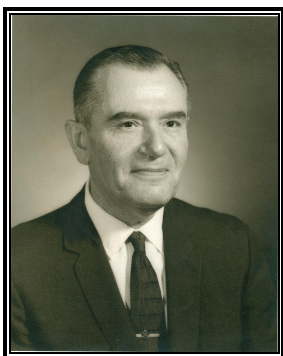


He immigrated to Toronto, Canada with his parents, where he completed his high school education. In 1968 received his Bachelor of Science degree from the University of Toronto, and in 1972, his Medical Doctorate degree from the same university. He specialized in Internal Medicine and in the sub-specialty of Cardiology. He has been on the staff of both St Joseph's and St. Michael's hospitals in Toronto and is an assistant professor at his alma mater. He has presented papers and given lectures, locally and internationally. He has published original research work on cardiac physical examination, in peer reviewed journals and in 2007 also published the textbook: "The Art and Science of Cardiac Physical Examination"

From the age of seven he has been in the Armenian Church choir, and in the late 1960s, was given the right to wear an amice. He was ordained as deacon in St. Gregory Church in St. Catharines by the hand of Bishop Aris Shirvanian. At various times, he has served in the Holy Trinity Armenian Church as well as Holy Cross Armenian Church in Toronto and also St. Gregory church in St. Catharines. He has been instrumental in starting the Holy Cross Armenian day school in Toronto. He has also served on the Board of Trustees of the same school for many years and as chairman for several years.

His curious and inquisitive character has pushed him to investigate not only in the field of medicine but also in the field of religion.





1911-1985



1904-1994



LOVE AND RESPECT
IN MEMORY OF MY
BELOVED PARENTS
**JIRAYR & ISGUHI
SIVACIYAN**



**“YOU ARE THE BOWS FROM WHICH YOUR CHILDREN AS LIVING
ARROWS WERE SENT FORTH.
THE ARCHER SEES THE MARK UPON THE PATH OF THE INFINITE,
AND HE BENDS YOU WITH HIS MIGHT THAT HIS ARROWS MAY GO
SWIFT AND FAR.
YOUR BENDING IN THE ARCHER’S HAND WAS FOR GLADNESS;
FOR EVEN AS HE LOVES THE ARROW THAT FLIES, SO HE LOVES
ALSO THE BOW THAT IS STABLE.”**

(Paraphrased from Kahlil Gibran’s “The Prophet”)

IN MEMORY OF AYDA

The sun rises and the sun sets. This appears to be an absolute reality because the entire world sees and experiences the phenomenon every day. But from the perspective of an astronaut, from space, the real truth, that the sun never rises nor does it set, is revealed. Instead, it shines its light in all directions at all times.

When people are born and they live, we say that they have life. Then they die and we say that they gave up their lives. From our human perspective, this appears to be an absolute truth. It is hard to deny this when we see the lifeless body of the deceased. From this we surmise that Life and Death are opposites. Birth may be the opposite of Death, but not Life.

Christ said "I am the Life and the Truth". Since the only truth is God, then Life also must be of God and with God and therefore, it must be eternal and can not die. If we believe this, then we should also believe that people do not have life but are life and can not die.

On November 10, 1955, Life found it necessary to incarnate itself in an infant who was named Ayda Ozzorluoglu. She was born to her parents, Fidan & Vartan. Through Ayda, Life brought joy and laughter to all that got to know her: her parents, her brother, Arman, to whom she was very close and loved dearly, as well as to his wife, Elena and their children Matthew and Nadia, and also to their many relatives.

Then Life shone its light on Vahe when she took his name on February 21st, 1987. Once again through her, life brought happiness and joy, wisdom and bliss to Vahe, his family, relatives and to all their friends.

Life, using the excuse of a year-old illness of ovarian cancer, in all its wisdom and with the Will of God, decided to leave behind Ayda's mortal shell and returned to its source, to God. Therefore, because of this knowledge, in the Armenian Church, a song of joy, "I verin Yerusaghem" (Jerusalem of the highest), is sung at funerals. Today, also let us rejoice by singing in order to celebrate the joy, happiness and wisdom that Life brought to this world through Ayda.

She will be remembered for her wisdom, knowledge, ideas and insight, but most of all, her contagious laughter.



1955-2010



**I DEDICATE THIS BOOK
TO THE MEMORY OF MY
BELOVED WIFE**

AYDA SIVACIYAN





If you are you and I am I
Nor will you be you, nor will I be I
But if you are me, and I am you
Then you will be you, and I will be I

(Dr. Levon Kasardjiyan)

FOREWORDS

I would like to express my gratitude and thanks to His Grace Bishop Bagrat Galstanian, Very Reverend Prof. Levon Zekiyian and Reverend Prof. Solo Nigosian for their dedication and willingness to read this book prior to its publication and for providing the comments within the following few pages to serve as forewords for the book.

V.S.



THE PATH OF LIGHT

With heartfelt gladness, we welcome the publication of the book titled “From Light to Light”. It is the culmination of years of dedication by the author, Dr. Vahe Sivacian, representing his thoughts and the synthesis of his faith and an expression of his personal life experiences.

The purpose of this book is clearly documented in his Preface. Dr. Sivacian writes: “My purpose in writing this book is to bind tradition with personal experience, personal experience with science, and science with tradition. In other words, I try to interpret traditional beliefs without going against sound scientific principles and emphasize the importance of personal experiences. Hopefully it will also bring out the importance of what Jesus said”.

This is an original journey for the readers that will take them to the depths of faith with simple words, examples and ultimately, raise many questions. This book also emphasizes the truth that religion and science are not contradictory, but rather complimentary; hence, it is a complete and total representation of the human condition (life).

This publication is a mirror that reflects the best representation of the deep spirituality and virtues, of the author, Dr. Vahe Sivacian, who is armed with the knowledge of, and the love for, our Holy Church.

From the Holy Mother Sea of Etchmiadzin, we express our love and appreciation to our dear Dr. Sivacian and pray to our Lord Jesus for steadfast perseverance in his work as well as in his writings. We also pray for the soul of his beloved wife Ayda to find peace.

May the blessings of our Lord Jesus Christ and the Love of The Father and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Amen.

With Love and prayers

Bakrat Galstianian

Director of the Department of the Social Doctrine

The Holy Mother Sea of Echmiadzin

“AND WE GO TOWARDS THE SOURCE OF THE LIGHT ...”

It is with great regret that I am unable to include the English version of Very Reverend Prof. Levon Zekiyan’s “Foreword” to this book. He has kindly provided over 6 pages long “Forward” for the Armenian version of such high calibre of literary writing that, in my dreams I could not do it any justice with my attempt to translate it. I am greatly indebted to him and grateful. Knowing that he is also proficient in English I did dare ask him for the English version of his “Foreword”, but he was unable to dedicate the extra time and declined. Although disappointed, I was not surprised.

A short excerpt from his Armenian “Foreword” pertaining directly to his comments about the book I have translated in the next three lines:

**“This book is a treasure of reflections, meditations,
prayerful ideations, heaven bound contemplations,
enlightening suggestions and spiritual inspira-
tions.”**

I consider myself privileged to have had my book read by him and to have received an outstanding review. May God grant him long and healthy life to continue with his incessant sacrifice and dedication to his work spreading enlightenment in the Armenian communities worldwide.

V. Sivacian



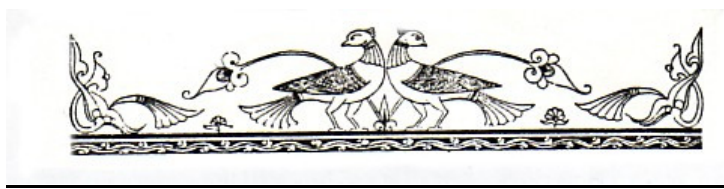
THE ROLE OF SCIENCE AND RELIGION IN HUMAN LIFE

If you think reading a collection of personal reflections is boring, open this book--and think again. Instead, get ready for a pleasant surprise, since this book is not an anthology of sermons. Its pages present thoughtful viewpoints on science and religion.

Today, scientific and religious knowledge are among the most important issues in the history of humanity. Do the ideas of scientific and religious pioneers have any meaning for us today? Dr. Vahe Sivaciyan thinks so. He believes that if we listen to the voices of those pioneers, we could enrich our cultural, social, and spiritual heritage.

This book is an interesting volume. Whether you agree or disagree with its contents, its purpose is to demonstrate how the mixture of science and religion plays a major role in human lives.

Rev. Dr. Solo Nigosian, PhD
University of Toronto
Victoria College



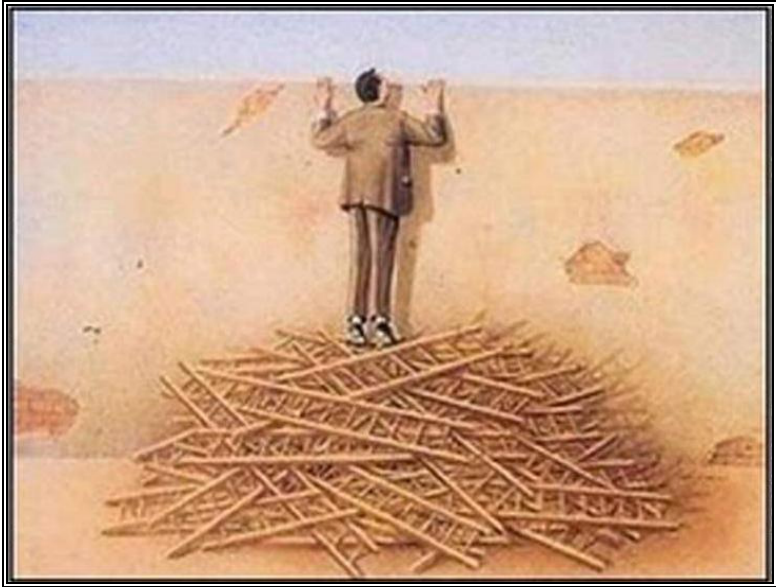


LOVE

**Love Must Be Progressively
Expanding**

**The purpose of Love energy
is to express Divinity Itself,
on all levels.**

This is what creativity is.



It doesn't matter
how many resources you
have
If you don't know
how to use them,
they will never be enough

PREFACE

A

I find it appropriate to start the preface with the following story.

THE FIRE

There was once a remote island that had been inhabited hundreds of years ago. Four different tribes lived on the four corners of the island. These tribes were not in contact with each other. Somewhat late but in the remote past, fire was introduced to the island and all four tribes were aware of the existence of fire.

An anthropology teacher, for his students, organized a field trip to this island and after an arduous boat trip, they arrive at their destination. They visited the first tribe and lived with them for a few days. They noticed that only the shamans of the tribe used fire. While they enjoyed warm meals and cooked meat and stayed warm, the general population ate raw meat and shivered at nights because of the cold. Apparently they believed that the fire was a holy gift from God only to those that were privileged, as were the shamans. As they were departing, one of the students requested to stay behind in order to teach the tribe the proper use of fire, for the benefit of all.

The rest of the group left on foot and after some traveling, met with the second tribe. They noticed that this tribe also was aware of fire and considered it as the power of God. They had all the

implements to make fire and had put these implements on an altar and worshipped them. But no one was lighting any fire with the implements. These implements were considered sacred. As the group was leaving, another student volunteered to stay behind and teach the tribe the proper use of the fire for the benefit of the whole village.

The remaining students and the teacher left and eventually came upon the third tribe. The members of this tribe had made totems of the man who had brought the fire there for the first time. These totems were placed all over and the tribe was worshipping them. They had decided that he must be God. Strangely, they did not light any fire, because fire was sacred and only God could light it. Another student decided to stay behind and teach the tribe the proper use of the fire.

The group went on further until they reached the fourth tribe. The inhabitants of this village worshipped the fire itself. They also were not lighting any fires, but had all sorts of weird stories about the fire and its powers and believed in these stories as being the story of their God. After a few days, when the group left, another student remained behind to teach them the use of the fire.

The rest departed and traveled for a few days on the island, and not having found any other native groups, decided to return back. They passed by each village to pick up the students that had stayed behind. When they arrived at the first village, they found out that as the student was trying to explain to the villagers about the fire, the shamans accused him. Instead of believing a stranger, the villagers had sided with their

shamans and killed the student by burning him.

When the group reached the second village, they found out that the student in order to explain the use of fire, had used the implements that they worshipped. They had considered this act to be a great sacrilege and had killed him on the spot.

The group made their way to the third village and found out that the student had told them not to worship the wooden image of a man and that he was not God because he had brought them fire. This did not sit well with them and they had tortured and killed him for blaspheming their God.

In the fourth village, as the student had tried to explain what fire was, the villagers had killed him even before he could start his next sentence. How had he dared explain the unexplainable God?

The group, short four students, returned to their boat and departed. During the voyage back the teacher concluded the result of their trip in the following sentence: "To teach is much harder than to learn or to know. Specially, to teach those who do not want to learn is extremely difficult, if not impossible. The ignorant believe only in what they know and oppose any new knowledge. Regardless, they feel disturbed and anxious; hence they despise those who know, to the point of burning and killing them."

*

This book is on religious and philosophical ideas that I hope will stimulate the interest of readers, arouse questions in their minds, and help them reach their own conclusions. I should make clear, however that my purpose is not to convince the reader about any particular religion, but rather just to express several views/ideas in the hope that the reader

will arrive at his/her own conclusions.

There are numerous religions and denominations, all with their own belief systems, that, more often than not, criticize, condemn and judge ideas that are not in line with their beliefs. The faithful, as a result of following a particular belief system, unwittingly lose sight of the "Truth". The sincere faithful always search only for the Truth throughout their lives. But the ego (the devil) is always ready to institutionalize any spiritual experience, establish laws, rules and regulations, and create a tradition, giving it an official status. This is not to say that such institutions do not have their strengths or benefits; they do, but they also have weaknesses and faults.

Childhood Recollection

The great majority of people are quite satisfied with what has been indoctrinated into them ever since their childhood. The parallel of the present human condition can be seen in the following observation.

When a baby elephant is tied with a chain from one leg, it is not allowed to go beyond a circle defined by the length of the chain. Surprisingly after full growth, the adult elephant if only tied by a thin string from the same leg, will not venture beyond the length of the string, although it is fully capable of doing so.

In the same way the chains given to us in our childhood have become the strings of today, preventing us from achieving any spiritual growth or advancement. Few are brave enough to break the chains (strings) and get some spiritual advancement and knowledge; but then the ego steps in and makes us think we know it all or have found the Truth; hence, we stop searching. So, is there a remedy for those caught in such a dilemma?

In this day and age, despite the fact that the thirst for

spiritual knowledge and wisdom appears to dwindle, by carrying out our duties faithfully with diligence, dedication, pride, and most importantly love, our lives can become at least a force that could bring about change. In the personality of an individual the victory should belong to the intellect (rationality), not to the emotions. All actions should be performed with love and not anger or resentment. The purpose of our life should not be the desire to live long or to be rich, but rather it should be to cultivate a spiritual being. Unfortunately however, most of us only come to this realization at the time of our death. Alas, it's too late! Why not come to such a realization now?

Truth/Reality

Religion and spirituality are not opposites. On the contrary, in many circumstances religion may be very helpful in instigating spiritual growth. Those who actually experience spiritual growth do not oppose religion; rather they live it. Here it may be appropriate to remember the word of Jesus

Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill (Matthew 5:17).

For such people religion becomes only an internal, mental idea of moral behavior, a way of life and an outlook, without the rituals and other external props. In the past, and even now, in some circles the religious conservatives, unaware of reality and facts, especially in the area of recent scientific knowledge regarding quantum physics, have blindly opposed science, and scientific methods, that deal with religious matters.

The individual has to liberate himself/herself from the tyranny of the ego. Indeed, intellect and rational thinking are good, essential and very beneficial for the spiritual journey, but they are not sufficient for understanding and

experiencing the Truth. In fact, even this limited ability is further wasted with meaningless divisive arguments, even wars. Instead, one needs to observe and appreciate the silent beauty and magnificence of the universe that sings the glory of the Almighty. And yet, what do we do? We live a miserable and useless life, completely impotent to make any difference. If we could only come to the realization that through that silence of the universe God is inviting us to have at least a glimpse of an experience of that Reality (Truth). Alas, in general, humanity has always ignored that call. Thus by rejecting that Light, we have lived in misery instead of living in bliss.

Unfortunately, during the last 40 to 50 years, those institutions that had at least superficially preserved for centuries the truth about the "Mystery of Mysteries" in their rituals are now dismantling them brick by brick. Rituals that represented the truth of the "Unattainable Mysteries" are no longer being performed properly; hence, they have lost their power. We need not seek the Truth here or there. The Truth is within us.

True faith will have more questions than answers. Answers will come eventually, bringing with them many more questions. There is more faith in doubt and uncertainty than in all religious denominations and dogmas. Just as we respect the truth in our own beliefs, so also we need to respect the mystery of others' beliefs. In this spiritual journey, what will guide us forward are the questions, not the answers. Truth is not something tangible but rather a bridge, connectivity between thought and "Reality". Believing is not the end of the road, but only the beginning. Because of our ignorance, we tend to continue our illusory lives. We always have the ability to choose the way of spiritual knowledge, but we always choose instead the illusion, probably because we are familiar with it and consider it to be safe.

At different times and in different cultures, the experience of Truth has been described in different ways. Future generations will look back to our times and will declare us as being "primitive and retarded". This is not surprising because we (including esteemed scientists, philosophers, prophets and clairvoyants), are lost between two extremes: the no-longer existent past and the unknown non-existent future. We need to live the present only, because that is the only reality.

In general we waste all our time, effort and energy to provide for our "daily lives"; hence, no time, energy or will remains to pursue spiritual knowledge. And those few individuals, who do attempt the pursuit of spiritual knowledge, lack perseverance. Why? Because we prefer to follow certain predetermined belief systems that are handed to us on a platter. This seems to be easier and does not take any effort, or at least very little effort. It also puts the onus on the shoulders of certain "experts", taking the responsibility away from us. This seems to make life easier. Today, through the use of radio and television, these experts tell us to believe in what they preach. Both radio and TV are very powerful tools in disseminating information and in shaping our minds. But in the wrong hands it becomes "the blind leading the blind".

Traditions bring us experiences of centuries of living. For the sake of being natural and innovative, we should not ignore tradition. To trust only one's own opinion or belief as to what is good or bad, or what is right or wrong (sin), ignoring many centuries of moral wisdom brought to us by tradition, is wrong, conceited and outright dangerous. At the same time it is important to pursue and have personal experiences, and live accordingly. This appears much harder. It generates many questions and doubts, and on top of it all, we may be subjected to disapproval and ridicule by others.

Therefore to live according to tradition is much easier because it does not require effort or any critical thinking or decision making, and as a bonus we enjoy the approval of others. But which is right?

Nerses of Lampron (1153-1198), a theologian of the period of Cilician Kingdom, has written: “The pursuit of knowledge is an expression of love of God”. My purpose in writing this book is to bind tradition with personal experience, personal experience with science, and science with tradition. In other words, I try to interpret traditional beliefs without going against sound scientific principles and emphasize the importance of personal experiences. Hopefully it will also bring out the importance of what Jesus said:

Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes in me will also do the works that I do; and greater works than these will he do, because I go to the Father.
(John 14:12).



B

I used to talk about these and related topics quite often with my wife Ayda. We decided to write a book together as soon as my workload had reduced. Unfortunately, we too made the mistake of “living in the future”. Our wish was never realized as death separated us from each other. During her last days in the hospital, she asked me to write the book as we had planned. I learned quite a lot from her. May God bless her soul!

* * *

C

Chapter 1: **“From Light to Light”**

This work on the topic of “Light” represents a sermon which I prepared and read at the request of the pastor of the Holy Trinity Armenian Church during the “Arrival of Light” (“Arevakal”) service on a Thursday during Lent a few years back. This was published in its entirety in the Church organ “Nor Serount.”

Chapter 2: **“What is the Purpose of Knowledge?”**

I had written this work many years ago, having in mind the Holy Cross Armenian Day School and its mission. This work was published in the school organ “Masis.”

Chapter 4: **“Is there a God or Not?”**

This work is based on notes that I took during a lecture that I had attended. It represents the ideas of the lecturer. I was in full agreement with him and adopted his ideas. I considered it appropriate to present them here.

Chapter 14: **“Interpretation of the Holy Mass of the Armenian Apostolic Church.”**

This work represents a promise I made to Fr. Levon Zekinyan in 1991, at the end of the Classical Armenian Language Classes that I had attended in Venice. This was to be my graduation thesis. Alas, due to work responsibilities, this was not accomplished until ten years later. Due to this tardiness, I did not have the courage to present my work to the esteemed father.

Vahe Sivacyan



For these commands are
a lamp,
this teaching is
a light,
and the corrections of discipline
are
the way to life,
(Proverbs 6:23)



-I-

**FROM LIGHT
TO LIGHT**



FROM LIGHT TO LIGHT

In the rituals or liturgy of the Armenian Apostolic Church we often encounter references to Light. In fact, Light is the object of worship in the prayers, litany, and hymns. Consequently, some think that the worship of Light and specifically the «Sunrise Service» (Arevakal) of the Armenian Apostolic church has remained from pre-Christian times when Armenians were Sun worshipers.

The Light that we worship is not left over from Sun worship or from the pagan era. Rather, it is the Light that emanates from the Gospels. The Biblical passage in 1 John 1:5 clearly states:

“This is the message which we have heard from Him (Jesus) and declare to you, that God is Light and in Him is no darkness at all.”

hence, we worship and yearn for none other than GOD. This worship of Light is the worship of God.

Moreover, in the Gospel of Matthew: 5:14-16 Jesus says:

“you are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden, nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in Heaven.”

At first glance it appears that the two ideas are in conflict. But then Jesus says in John 8:12

“I am the Light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the Light of life.”

And in John 1:4 we read

“In Him (Jesus) was life, and the life was the Light of men”.

So, as long as we live and are “alive” we must have part of that Light in us. Our “candle” is also lit. It is up to us to decide as to where we put that “candle”, on a candlestick so that it is revealed through us to all that is around us or under a bushel so that it is hidden from us and to those around us: in which case, we deprive ourselves of the Life it can bestow on us. Instead, we exist in a slumber, in an illusion and are dead to real life.

The purpose of religion and church services is to wake us up from this illusory death sleep we are in and to lift us up to the Grace and Glory of God. I find the services of the Armenian Apostolic Church singularly unique in expressing life itself, the fall of human beings, their separation from God, and their return to join God once again. We will see that the successive services depict those three stages: fall, yearning to join with God, and finally reunion.

The **“Evening Service” (Vespers)**, also known as the service announcing the start of Sunday, is performed at sundown on Saturdays. Having separated ourselves from the Light, we also are living the evening of our lives. The yearning for the Light is obvious from all the hymns and prayers of the service. The congregation sings the song **“Blissful Light...”** and the priest in his prayer says **“You are the glorified Light, Holy and the First Light, Lord, we beseech you to shine and dawn your living Light in our hearts”**. During this service we become aware of our loss, and yearn for the reunion.

The “Evening Service” is followed by the **“Service of Peace”**. During this service it becomes obvious that we are yearning for peace. We sing the hymn **“Lord grant us...”** where we plead for **“heavenly peace during this night”**. Now having full loss of sight of the Light, we are now living the night period of our lives. The priest’s prayer also reflects the same plea: **“Grant us Lord to pass this night in peace**

without disturbance". Here, in preparation for reunion with God, we try to achieve inner peace first.

This "Service of Peace" is followed by the **"Service of Tranquility"**. During this service, the priest prays: **"Lord, our God, we plead for You to grant us to pass this night of tranquility in peace and reach morning"**. Here we prepare ourselves by the grace of God, to reach that tranquility of our minds (Cessation of the incessant chitter-chatter of our thoughts), so that we can be ready to wake up from our "sleep" and see the dawning of the morning light. We return from "death" to "life". In the Gospel of Luke 1: 78-79 we read:

"Through the tender mercy of our God, with which the Dayspring from on high has visited us; to give light to those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace."

In the procession of the services the next one is known as the **"Nocturn Service"**. This service should be performed in the morning just before dawn. The service more or less starts with the song **"Lord, at night we remember Your name, ..."**. In this song 12 times we are invited to wake up (from our spiritual sleep). We read in Paul's letter to Ephesians 5:14:

"Therefore He says: Awake, you who sleep, arise from the dead, and Christ will give you Light."

The priest in his prayer gives thanks to God because it is only through His mercy that we wake up. The priest also asks God to grant our minds to fully wake up so that we can see His salvation.

The "Nocturn Service" is followed by **"Matins" (Morning Service)**. During this service, having fully awakened from our spiritual sleep, we glorify God and again

yearn to reunite with the “Light” that we have once again become aware of. During this service we sing the hymn **“Glory to God in the highest ...”** The priest prays saying **“We thank you Lord our God, for bestowing bliss on your creation with your visible Light and enlightening your faithful with your intelligible Light”**. The service ends with the hymn **“Children of Zion, awaken and give the good tidings to the bride of Light, ...”** If we carefully follow and penetrate deep into the meaning of what is being said in the rest of the hymn, we will understand that it is pushing and guiding us towards that Light that we already worship and adore.

Next Follows the **“Sunrise Service” (Arevakal)**. From beginning to the end this service is for the glorification of that Light, and at the same time, a plea for the dawning of It in us. We sing **“...dawn in our soul Your intelligible Light”**, and the priest in his prayer says: **“Christ with Your light everyone is enlightened.”**

After this final invitation of the Light there is the **“Midday Service”**. This service actually is comprised of 3 successive parts. It is performed only on days that Mass cannot be performed. In the Armenian Apostolic Church Mass cannot be performed on any Friday, Holy Saturday (day before Easter) or the day before Christmas. Otherwise the “Sunrise Service” is followed by the Mass. The faithful reach the pinnacle of their yearning by having communion with and joining God. Now spiritually fully awake they radiate the Light of Christ as a “candle put on a candlestick”. We should also remember the words in 1 John 2:9:

“He who says he is in the Light, and hates his brother, is in darkness until now.”

What is the secret to be worthy to receive this Light? We read in Psalm 112:4

“Unto the upright there arises Light in the darkness; He is gracious, and full of compassion, and righteous.”

And again in Proverbs 4: 18 we read:

“But the path of the just is like the shining sun, that shines ever brighter unto the perfect day.”

It appears therefore, that to be worthy to receive the Light, we need to prepare ourselves by being upright and just and free from the seven deadly sins.

The period of lent is a period of self examination, contemplation and meditation. By fasting, prayers, and with the grace of God, we should prepare ourselves for the resurrection, namely the dawning of the Light in us, or the day of our spiritual resurrection. During this period of repentance, special attention is given to the “Sunrise Service” because the arrival of the “Sun” or “Light” reaches its zenith with the resurrection.

The prophet Isaiah says the following with regards to fasting in 58:6-8:

“Is this not the fast that I have chosen: to loose the bonds of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, to let the oppressed go free, and that you break every yoke? Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and that you bring to your house the poor who are cast out; when you see the naked, that you cover him, and not hide yourself from your own flesh? Then your Light shall break forth like the morning, your healing shall spring forth speedily, and your righteousness shall go before you; the glory of the Lord shall be your rear guard.”

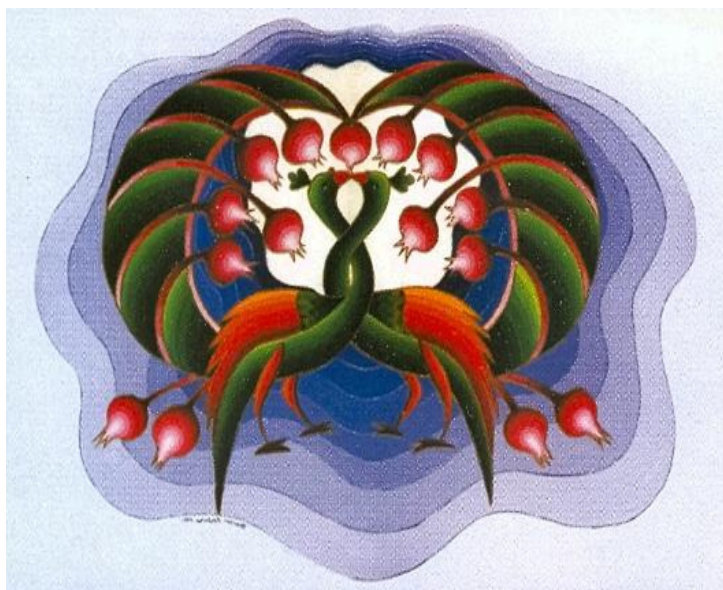
This period of spiritual preparation is also called the “period of repentance”. To repent is to have a change of direction of mind, of thinking. The mind, which is usually

under the control of our ego, is centered on worldly things, instead of being centered on Christ, on that Light that is within all of us. We read in 1 Corinthians 3:16:

“Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?”

“May the Light of the Lord shine upon us”.

(The part of the church services is repeated in the chapter “The interpretation of the Holy Mass”





**“I am the Light of the
world. ...”
(John 8:12)**

**“You are the light of
the world. ...”
(Matthew: 5:14)**



...How long will mockers
delight in mockery
and fools hate knowledge?
Repent at my rebuke!
Then I will pour out my
thoughts to you,
I will make known to you
my teachings.

(Proverbs 1:22-23)



-II-

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF KNOWLEDGE?



WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF KNOWLEDGE?

The terms “education” and “knowledge” imply two different meanings: a “general/common” meaning and a “special” meaning (as stated in the Bible). Education imparts “common” knowledge. Thus when we speak about education, we understand information and knowledge obtained in school. We usually tend to be proud of sending our children to the “best” schools to give them the “best” education. Educational systems provide only information to the student; it does not instill in the individual the supreme goal of life, let alone the purpose of the individual’s life. When an individual does not have that goal of life, then s/he cannot progress in life towards that goal. Thus, education prepares the individual to be able to live only one facet of her/his life. But it does not prepare the individual to reveal and reflect “The Truth”. Therefore the real purpose of education should be to prepare and guide the student to seek and find out through her/his own efforts the “Truth” or “divine spark” that is within each individual.

In the past, an advanced person had summarized the purpose of knowledge as follows: “The result of knowledge is the end of wrong understanding.” Therefore, once we realize that anything, such as an idea, thought or belief is wrong, we generally distance ourselves from it. We identify with the correct knowledge and live according to and by this new knowledge. This would have the tendency to change us totally. Our outlook, our relations, our morals and our deeds all change. Consider the following story:

A man while walking on a remote road sees a bright golden object shining in the sunlight. Thinking it is some article of gold, he immediately bends down and picks it up. After a

short examination, it becomes apparent that it was a small stone wrapped in a gold-colored foil paper, so he throws it away.

When the man first decided to pick up the object he thought it was gold (false knowledge). When he found out that it was only stone and paper (true knowledge), he threw the object away (“getting rid” of false knowledge). He quickly forgets his miscomprehension and never tells anyone else about it (because no one wants to brag about her/his mistakes). This story also illustrates that when we arrive at true knowledge, we realize a sense of humility because we realize our previous state of ignorance. Therefore, the purpose of true knowledge is to end all false beliefs and misconceptions.

Consider the following Biblical quotation:

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge. But fools despise wisdom and instruction. (Proverbs 1:7)

In general, we live our lives based on certain dictums that are usually wrong. Consequently, our thoughts and deeds that stem from these belief systems must also be wrong. Here are a few examples of such beliefs:

- Money gives (buys) happiness.
- Our experiences through our five senses can give us true happiness.
- We are only this visible and touchable body.

Only when we awaken to that true knowledge, will all misery and suffering truly end.

CLASSIFICATION OF KNOWLEDGE

Through the five senses of our physical body, and the more subtle emotional body, we interact with the external world. We see and experience multiplicity, differences, and duality, such as me versus you or them. Despite all the multiplicity, it is possible to see the unity, the only Reality

that permeates all. The knowledge that allows us to see the unity in multiplicity is the Supreme Knowledge. Our physical body is the best example of this. The body has many parts: hands, legs, feet, head, stomach, and so on. Although the parts are many, we know very well that we are the totality of all those parts. We pervade and permeate all of them. It is easy to comprehend this overall pervasiveness when it applies to the body. Therefore when someone touches our shoulder, we do not say “Why did you touch that shoulder?”, but instead we say “Why did you touch me?” In other words, all the parts of my body are a single entity. Therefore the “Supreme Knowledge” is that which gives us the ability to see that “Truth” that pervades all things and beings in the universe. Consider the following Biblical verse:

Abide in Me and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. (John 15:4-5)

There is also a lower form of knowledge that allows us to see only the duality and multiplicity in the universe. We see all things and beings as separate from each other. Everything appears to be compartmentalized as in our own lives. The painter only paints, the ophthalmologist only studies the eye. Usually we do not see the world or universe in its totality. We believe that everything and everybody is separate from each other and an entity unto itself. This, results in, us making distinctions as mine and yours. God created one world; man divided it into many nationalities and countries.

The lowest form of knowledge is present when one splits a small part of totality. In that case, one’s whole mind

is captured by that particular object, idea, or belief - an obsession that results in inflexibility. For instance, words that reflect such a narrow view are:

My way is the right way.

My way of worship is the only right way. Yours is wrong.

My way of doing this work is the only right way. Yours is wrong.

My religion is right and yours is wrong.

This view reflects the lowest form of knowledge. Those in this group usually end up being intolerant and fanatical. They tend to be very narrow minded; hence, always emotional, argumentative and often disturbing and disruptive.

When one has the Supreme Knowledge, in other words, sees the unity in multiplicity, usually her/his thoughts, attitude, behavior, demeanor and deeds will always be noble, generous, magnanimous and peaceful.

LOVE AND SERVICE

The understanding that we have regarding our physical body, as discussed above, can also be applied to the Supreme Knowledge. Imagine that accidentally you poke your eye with your finger. Would you not use the same finger to rub your eye to relieve the discomfort? I am certain that for hurting your eye, you would not punish that finger by cutting it and throwing it away. Similarly if I bite my tongue accidentally, I would not break that tooth to punish it for its deed. I do not have any hatred towards my tooth, since it is part of me, and has just as much importance for me as do all other parts of my body; hence, wherever there is the idea of unity, we immediately take a loving position towards all. Wherever there is love, the urge and desire for service naturally follows. Today the full dedication to service does not appear to prevail; not because we cannot love, but

because we do not have the consciousness of the unity in the apparent multiplicity. This knowledge or level of consciousness is called true knowledge or Wisdom.

Thus the purpose of education should be to lead us and impart to us this Supreme Knowledge so that through it we can change ourselves to be better. Note the following Biblical passage:

All the words of my mouth are righteous; there is nothing crooked or perverse in them. They are all straight to him who understands and right to those who find knowledge. Receive my instruction instead of silver, and knowledge rather than choice gold; for wisdom is better than jewels, and all that you may desire cannot compare with her [i.e. wisdom]. Proverbs 8:9-11

When a person is truly able to change oneself, s/he also changes her/his surroundings and environment. There are very few real saints but they have actually affected the multitudes. The wise person hates no one, instead befriends everyone. The knowledge of that Unity changes everyone's life. We should not wait for others to change, but should try to change ourselves. We are in the world, and the world is not separate from us. Change your attitude and your vision of the world will also change. Everything becomes good, kind, and peaceful. True Wisdom is the Supreme knowledge of the Unity in this apparent duality. To conclude then, consider the following exhortations by the Biblical writer:

Then I saw that wisdom excels folly as light excels darkness. Ecclesiastes 2:13
For the protection of wisdom is like the protection of money; and the advantage of knowledge is that wisdom preserves the life of him who has it. Ecclesiastes 7:12



It is impossible
to begin to learn
that which one
thinks
one already knows.
(Epictetus)



-III-

WHAT ARE THE HUMAN CHARACTERISTICS?



WHAT ARE THE HUMAN CHARACTERISTICS?

Both the Book of Genesis and the Darwinian theory of evolution indicate that the creation first started with energy (light), then with body (physical manifestation) and this was followed by the mind and finally so far with the development of intellect. All the elements of the periodic table of chemistry that form all insentient matter have a physical body. All the members of the plant kingdom also have a physical body, but they also have a rudimentary mind. The leaves know to face the sun and the roots know to grow towards water. The creation has continued with the evolution of the animal kingdom. Animals have fully developed body and also mind. Recent findings tend to suggest that at least some also have rudimentary intellect. Some appear to have surprisingly more intellect than previously expected. The last major evolution of the creation appears to have been man, who in addition to body and mind also has a fully developed intellect.

The physical body experiences its environment through its five senses. The mind, which we may also call the emotional body, interprets the input from the five senses of the physical body and forms emotions and feelings about them and expresses them through the same physical body. The intellect, which we may also refer to as the intellectual body, allows the individual to have logical thought.

The life force that enlivens all beings functions through these three bodies. In some individuals, the physical body is more dominant than their emotional or intellectual bodies. These people tend to be more physically oriented, and excel in all physical activities, as seen in athletes, etc. Others may have a more dominant emotional body. They tend to be more sensitive, usually oriented towards art and may be more

sensitive. Those in whom the intellectual body dominates usually end up being researchers and scientists.

All human beings function through these three bodies, but one of the three usually dominates and determines the character of the person. Rarely, we may come across a well balanced person in whom all three function equally. As a result of this variability, individuals do not understand each other's psychology, giving rise to conflicts.

The man of action, where the physical body is more dominant says: "One has to help the less fortunate. This is what the bible requires of us." These are usually the volunteers we see working in humanitarian organizations, in hospital or hospices. The emotional man, in whom the emotional body is dominant, says: "You have to worship God and you need to pray incessantly". On the other hand, the intellectual man, in whom the intellectual body dominates, will ask: "Where is God? Who is God?"

The physical man looks at the emotional man and says: "You will not get anywhere by praying and saying "I believe. Therefore I am saved." Instead, you need to do good deeds and help others. Jesus also acted by healing the sick and resurrecting the dead". The emotional man looks at him and says: "What you are doing is good, but it will not save your soul. You have to have faith and believe, so that you can be saved". They both look at the intellectual man and say: "That is an atheist, lazy, good for nothing, condemned to eternal damnation". On his part, the intellectual man will find a thousand and one excuses as to why he should not act in the same manner as the physical man, and he likens the emotional man to a young man, Jacob, who tells his friend that he is madly in love. When his friend wants to know as to whom he has fallen in love with, he answers: "I do not know, I have not met her yet".

Let us see what the Bible says about these three

differing characters. Which one of these three is more desirable to be?

We read the following addressed to the man of action:

If you say, “But we knew nothing about this,” does not he who weighs the heart perceive it? Does not he who guards your life know it? Will he not repay everyone according to what they have done?

(Proverbs 24:12)

For the Son of Man is going to come in his Father’s glory with his angels, and then he will reward each person according to what they have done. (Matthew 16:27)

What good is it, ... if someone claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save them? ... In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead. ... that faith without deeds is useless ... You see that a person is considered righteous by what they do and not by faith alone. ... As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead. (James 2:14-26)

These three quotations clearly emphasize the importance of action. But is this sufficient?

We read the followings directed to the emotional man.

Jesus said to the woman, “Your faith has saved you; go in peace.” (Luke 7:50)

He said to her, “Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace and be freed from your suffering.” (Mark 5:34)

For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God not by works, so that no one can boast.... (Ephesians 2:8-9)

At first glance it appears that those written for the emotional man are in conflict with those written for the physical man. With some patience, let us see what is said for the intellectual man.

to be made new in the attitude of your minds;

(Ephesians 4:23)

Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is his good, pleasing and perfect will. (Romans 12:2)

... I myself in my mind am a slave to God's law, but in my sinful nature a slave to the law of sin. (Romans 7:25)

Wisdom, like an inheritance, is a good thing and benefits those who see the sun. (Ecclesiastes 7:11)

To the person who pleases him, God gives wisdom, knowledge and happiness, ...

(Ecclesiastes 2:26)

In John 3:3 Jesus tells Nicodemus, a Pharisee, a man of law and of knowledge that he needs to be born again. Born again, means a change in the direction of thinking. Instead of centering on man-made rules, regulations and laws, thoughts should be centered on God. It is also written in Matthew 10:16

Therefore be as shrewd as snakes and as innocent as doves.

hence we need to be fully awake and alert as the serpent, but single-minded as the simple-minded dove that cannot think about more than one thing at a time. That single mindedness should be centered on God, instead of ourselves being "scatter brains", with a million thoughts racing through our heads, that usually get us into trouble.

According to the bible, it appears that all three characteristics, physical, emotional and intellectual are equally important. One wonders if any one of these three perhaps is somewhat more desirable than the others. The following verses make this very clear:

Jesus replied: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ (Matthew 22:37)

Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.’ (Mark 12:30)

He answered, “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind’; and, ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.” (Luke 10:27)

There are different kinds of working, but in all of them and in everyone it is the same God at work. Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. To one there is given through the Spirit a message of wisdom, to another a message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues.

(1 Corinthians 12:6-10)

For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to

**perseverance, godliness; and to godliness,
mutual affection; and to mutual affection, love.**

(2 Peter 1:5-7)

These five quotations make it clear that all three are equally important and to every individual has been given what is needed for that individual. Each person follows his way according to these divine gifts bestowed on him since birth. We can at least hope that we make the way back to the Father, as the prodigal son, which is the purpose of our lives. Blessed is the one in whom all three bodies are equally operative and function in harmony. He would be like a bird taking flight from the branch on which it had perched towards its destination. It would have no difficulty in reaching that destination. Let us assume that one wing of the bird represents the emotional body and the other the intellectual, and the legs that thrust it off the branch, the physical body. If the feet do not push it to take flight, or if they do, but one wing is shorter than the other and the bird takes flight, it can only fly in circles and would have great difficulty in reaching its destination.

When we hear that the above mentioned Jacob does not know to whom he is madly in love with, we laugh because we know this to be stupid and silly. But when we talk about God and we say "I love God, I worship God" and we ask the question: "Who is God? Or Where is God?" and the answers turns out to be "I do not know" for some reason it does not appear to be unusual. Does not this paradox sound somewhat funny?

Would it not be desirable to know where God was or who or what God was? Only then it would make sense when one says: "I love God or I worship God"

The intellectual man always searches and wants to know and understand and find the answers to the above questions. The emotional man expresses that love and

devotion. The physical man expresses that love and devotion through his works.

Three brothers get a telegram from a lawyer, indicating that a distant rich relative has left each one of them a large sum in his will. The only stipulation is that they have to present themselves in the lawyer's office by a specified time otherwise the total sum will be given to a charitable organization. The lawyer's office happens to be in a nearby city. One of the brothers, an intellectual man, takes the map and tries to find the best route to take to reach there on time. As he is trying to figure this out, the second brother, an emotional man, runs up and down in the house saying that they should get going and that they are rich. The third brother, a physical person, already in the only family car, is driving faster than the speed limit, but alas, not knowing the way happens to be going in the wrong direction. All three miss the deadline and the fortune goes to the charitable organization.

If all three had collaborated, the emotional enticing them to get going, the physical driving them in the correct direction, specified by the intellectual, they would have made it to the lawyer's office on time and each one would have received his inheritance.

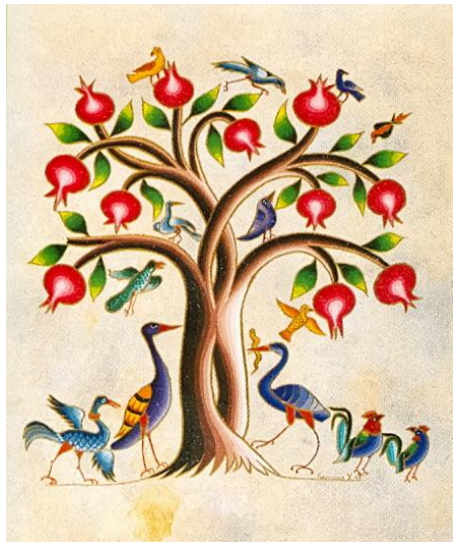
The above verses including Luke 10:27 clearly indicate that we should love God with our heart (emotional), with our mind (intellectual) and with our strength (physical), also with our souls (with our total being), with all three, by the degree that has been given to us. People with differing characters, instead of following different ways and reproaching each other, should collaborate and respect each others ways, so that the vision of the verse 2 Peter 1:3-7 is realized and to

our godliness we add brotherly kindness and to this we add charity (love).

A Roman Catholic monk once said: “I believe in something, so that I get to know it, to have faith in it”. If we get that experiential knowledge about God, would it ever be possible not to love or worship Him or have true faith in Him instead of the lip service faith that we hear most of the time? And if we truly love Him, would we also not act according to His will?

We are all given whatever is necessary for each one of us. The important thing is for us not to waste this short opportunity of life that we have and we should strive to be wise and alert as the serpent but at the same time single-minded and harmless as the dove.

“The Lord is my shepherd, I lack nothing.” (Psalm 23)





**Blessed is the man whose
right hand is extended to
religion and the left one to
science (knowledge).**



In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through Him all things were made; without Him nothing was made that has been made. In Him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind.

(John 1:1-4)



-IV-

IS THERE A GOD
OR NOT?



IS THERE A GOD OR NOT?

The creation continues through evolution. First came about energy (light). This was followed by physical bodies, subsequently the mind (emotional body) and finally the intellect. It is very possible that evolution will continue with the creation of intuition. Presently, the human race is endowed with the first three and as a result of the intellect, has the ability of logical and critical thinking and problem solving. Some may also exhibit at least rudimentary intuition. This appears to be more common among women.

From a very young age we have been told about the existence of God. Our parents, our teachers and specially our clergy, have taught us to pray, to be religious, to love God and church. But the Bible says:

But you are not to be called ‘Rabbi,’ for you have one Teacher, ... Nor are you to be called instructors, for you have one Instructor, the Messiah. (Matthew 23:8,10)

Why do we need religion? If I do not pray, will God kick me? Is it not sufficient to be born healthy, have a happy childhood, get a good education, marry someone who is loyal, beautiful and loving, have a couple of healthy children, a good job (little work and high pay), a comfortable sum in the bank, to grow old gracefully and die away peacefully. Where does God fit into all of this?

If this is all that we want out of life, we do not need religion. Animals also do the same and they never pray. The cow lying down in the pasture eats the green grass and gives white milk. She never wonders as to why the grass is green and how green grass turns into white milk. If a person also says that s/he does not need religion, than, s/he has not started critical thinking yet.

A man walking down a country road sees an apple fall

to the ground off of an apple tree by the side of the road. He picks up the apple, wipes it clean on his coat sleeve and eats it, enjoying it very much. He represents 80% of humanity that sees only the utilitarian value of the apple.

A second man also walking on the same road also sees an apple fall. He also picks it up, but he marvels at the kaleidoscope of colors that so harmoniously reflect the beauty of nature. He takes the apple home, puts it on a stand and illuminates it from different angles until he finds the best direction of light that brings out that beauty in its fullest. He takes a canvas, and with paint and brush in hand, paints it, immortalizing that beauty. He also eats the apple. This man represents 10% of the humanity. These are the artists.

A third person also sees an apple falling. He also picks it up, looks at it and says “Alas everything that grows and ripens must fall away and die.” He also eats the apple. He represents humanity’s 7%. They see abstract ideas in physical events and figurative meanings in literal texts. They are the poets.

A 4th man also walks up the same road and he also sees an apple falling. He asks the question as to why the apple fell down and not up. He represents 2.99% of humanity. They are the scientists. Thanks to them, today we enjoy the results of all their discoveries.

There is also a rare person representing 0.01% of the humanity, who also sees the apple falling. He wonders as to where all these came from: the apple, the tree, the road, the earth, the sun, all the stars and the whole universe. We are not scientists, but some night when sitting on the porch as we marvel at the multitude and the beauty of the stars, we may also wonder as to where they all came from. But the question is so monumental that we soon forget about it, because its answer, we feel, is way beyond us.

To find the answer to any problem, one needs to

examine it objectively. But in this case, it is impossible to build a laboratory large enough to contain the universe where it can be objectively studied. These mental giants have not given up. In science, when direct investigation is not possible, indirect investigation is an accepted and valid method of examination. They have decided therefore, to use this method of indirect investigation. They have based their study on the following premises:

a- The universe exists, therefore it is an effect.

b- We are looking for the cause of this effect

Therefore, they decide to examine the relationship between cause and effect. They find 3 laws.

1- The first law dictates:

Effects cannot exist without a cause.

Since I exist, I must have a cause: my mother and my father. If I say, "I do not have a father", what do we understand? That my father had died or I deny and disown him for whatever reason, but no one will say I came down from heaven during a snow storm. A tree has its cause: the seed. A gold ring has its cause: the gold. A clay pot has its cause: the clay. The waves on the ocean have their cause: the water. Waves would not exist on dry land.

In 1948, when India gained its independence, an overzealous science teacher decides that the law of gravity is no longer valid in India because it was discovered by an Englishman, Newton. He walks out of second floor balcony. Promptly falling down he breaks his leg.

This and all similar laws are universal independent of the discoverer.

2- The second law dictates:

Effects are the cause in different forms.

The ring and the bracelet have different forms, serve different purposes, but they both are gold. There are many types and sizes of clay pots used for various purposes, but they are all clay. Waves in the ocean are of different heights and sizes, but they are all water. Occasionally there is a giant wave (tsunami). It appears as if all the water of the ocean is in one wave, then the wave can say “I am the ocean”.

3- The third law dictates:

When you remove the cause from the effect, nothing remains.

A math teacher, who was not being paid very well in this poor rural community, was having financial difficulties. One day, suddenly, he gets a brilliant solution for the financial difficulties of the family. He calls his wife and gives the good news that he has solved their financial woes. The wife also happy and excited wants to know the solution to their problem. The husband, being a math. teacher, explains it in the following manner: “ $a + b - a = b$ ”. His wife does not understand anything and when she looks puzzled he continues to explain. Do you remember the gold necklace your parents had gifted to you on our wedding day? In this equation, “a” represents the gold and the “b” the necklace. You give me that necklace. I will go and sell the gold (a) and will bring back the necklace (b). This way we can pay off all our bills. The wife had not understood much of the “a” and “b”, but she knew very well that, if you took the gold away from the necklace, the necklace would also disappear. She goes back to the kitchen without giving up the necklace.

When the cause is removed from the effect, the effect also

disappears.

Based on these three laws, these rare mental giants have examined the universe. The universe is a palpable seeable effect. Therefore, according to the first law, it must have a cause. This may be known or unknown by us. That is irrelevant. Since we do not know the cause we can just call it “x”. Our forefathers have called that cause “God”.

What have we said so far? That which our parents, our teachers and our clergy have been saying all along; that there is a God. But, which God? Where is God? How to see and/or talk to Him? A thousand and one questions come to our minds, but usually we suppress them so that we are not considered heretics. One says that he is devoted to God. When asked who is the God of his devotion, his answer usually is “I do not know”.

A young man, Jacob, tells his friend that he is madly in love. When his friend wants to know as to whom he has fallen in love with, he answers: “I do not know for I have not met her yet”.

We laugh because we know this to be stupid and silly. But when we talk about God and we say “I love God, I worship God” and we ask the question: “Who or where is God?” and the answer turns out to be “I do not know”, for some reason it does not appear to be unusual. Does not this paradox sound somewhat funny?

Let us apply the second law.

All members of the mineral, plant and animal kingdoms including humans are effects; therefore they all are the same cause in different forms. The second law dictates that the effects are the cause in different forms.

In the vast expanse of the universe, there are millions of galaxies. One of these is the Milky Way, our own galaxy. In the vastness of the Milky Way, there are millions of stars. The sun is only one of those stars. Within the solar system,

there are nine planets. One of those is Earth. On Earth, there are several continents. One of these is North America, in which there are three countries, one of which is Canada. It has many provinces and one is Ontario. There are many cities in Ontario: one is Toronto. There are several boroughs in Toronto and one is North York, where there are numerous local districts with many streets and many houses on each street. In one of those houses is where I live. There are many rooms in the house and I am only in one of them. There are several couches and chairs and I only occupy one chair. In the vastness of this universe I appear to be an insignificant speck of dust. But because I am within this creation, I also have that cause in me.

All clay pots are made of clay. They exist as clay and if broken or even pulverized, there still remains clay. In the past, a **red** pot had a unique idea and announced: “There is no clay in us”. All the other pots listened to him and also said: “Yes, there is no clay in us”. How far is the clay from the pot? How far is the gold from the ring? That far is God from you. The Bible tells us that “God’s kingdom is at hand”. Since then, 2000 years have passed. The apostles were waiting and humanity is still waiting. When it says “at hand” it does not mean “soon” in time, but rather it means literally “in your hand”. Our nose is so close to our face that we can not see it. In the same way God is so close to us that we do not see Him. Is it not written?

Don’t you know that you yourselves are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit dwells in your midst? (I Corinthians 3:16)

The clay pot does not need to go to Jerusalem, to Mecca or the Himalayas to find its God. Its God is the clay, whence come all clay pots: the cause by which they all exist. After their demise, clay will still remain. The Truth of the Creation, its cause and its substrate, whence has come the

universe, in which it subsists and at its dissolution, that which will still remain, that we call God.

If we ask the clay pot “Who are you?” it may answer saying “I am Jacob’s honey pot.” We had not asked as to whom it belonged or to what purpose it was being used. But you are you, who are you? How would a pot know that it is clay? But if we are asked: “Who are you?” usually the answer would be to give our names. But the question was not “What is your name?” Then we usually give our parent’s names, saying we are their child. We may give our address, where we live or give our vocation or profession etc. Having exhausted most inadequate and incorrect answers, we point to our body and we say: “This is who I am.” What if through some tragic accident you lose both legs and arms. Life will be very difficult and half the body you had previously pointed to is no longer there. But you are still you; therefore you could not have been that body.

Then, who am I? And who are you?

A philosopher once said “I think, therefore I am”. But others have said “I am, therefore I think”. I ask: “Who is aware of your thoughts?” Many thoughts come and go in our minds. Thoughts are not permanent: therefore I am not my thoughts, but the thoughts are mine. That, which is the only unchangeable and unchanging, which is present in everybody, which is aware of all our feelings, emotions, thoughts and acts, is consciousness.

On the breakfast table, Jacob’s honey pot is very happy because all members of the household touch it, wipe it, use it, and even sometimes lick it. In the next room there was also another pot that was being used as a spittoon, because the grandfather of the household had chronic bronchitis and therefore, was coughing frequently, bringing up copious amounts of phlegm. This pot, from the distance, could see the honey pot that was so popular and was envious. Members

of the household usually avoided him (the spittoon) and would make an effort to pass by at a distance. It constantly was crying over its fate. If it only knew that it was clay and the honey pot was also clay and each one served the community in their own way, then there would be no envy, no jealousy and there would be no misery. True love and peace would dawn and there would be only existence in bliss.

If this Life, Consciousness, had not been in us, would I be able to write this article and for you the reader, would you be able to read it? It is the same Life Force that is operative in all, in all plants, in all animals in you and me. But it appears in different forms. No two snow flakes are the same. Variety is the spice of life. Light bulbs come in many sizes, many colors and variable brightness. But the electricity that flows through all of them is the same. The differences belong to the lamps and not to the electricity. In the depth of our being lurks a "Being". Through It, our physical, emotional and intellectual bodies come to life. That Being, that Consciousness, we call God. Different religions give It different names. Indians call It, Brahma. The Chinese call It, Tao. In Islam It is called Allah. Some North American Indians call It, Manitou.

An English speaking visitor, when passing through a small town in Quebec, feels very thirsty and stops at a restaurant to ask for some water. He goes to the bar and asks the attendant "May I please have a glass of water". The attendant was strictly francophone, but guesses the request and gives him a glass of water saying "Avec plaisir, voici de l'eau pour vous". The visitor does not refuse the glass saying "I want water not eau". It does not matter what name is used to indicate the liquid. They are all the same. They are all H₂O and it quenches the thirst. Different languages also have different names for this Cause of the universe. Dieu, Theos,

Deus, God etc. Regardless of all the multitude of names God is one and the same. In Numerology, God is represented by the number 7. In the west God is represented by the letter “G” as seen among the free masons. It is the 7th letter of the Latin alphabet. The seventh letter of the Armenian alphabet “Է” also represents God. This letter (English equivalent would be “E” as in Everlasting) also by itself represents the third person of the present tense of the verb “to be” (meaning “is”). This is very apropos because God was not and will not be, but He only is. God is outside the confines of time and space; hence, there is no past or future for God, but only the present. To be free from time means to be eternal. Eternity is not endless time, but absence of time. The following verses demonstrate this.

God said to Moses, “I AM WHO I AM ...”

(Exodus 3:14)

“Very truly I tell you,” Jesus answered,

“before Abraham was born, I am!”(John 8:58)

God is not subject to time and is not in time. Time is in God. In other religions, God is represented by other letters as well. In India God is represented by the diphthong “ॐ” “OM”. Some Christians are very opposed to this OM. In reality it is not OM but “AUM”. It is invaluable to know about other religions and customs, not to change religions or beliefs but to better understand one’s own religion and most importantly to truly know that God is universal. All religions, if stripped of all the superficial cultural colorings, give the same message. To know other customs and religions also helps find our way to the Truth faster and better.

What is the meaning of “AUM”?

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. (John 1:1)

The word “Word” is translated from the Greek word

“Logos”. The word “logic” also comes from the same Greek word. The creation follows a logical progression. The other meaning which is translated as “Word” indicates sound. Sound is vibration. Quantum physics has proven that everything including energy and matter are all formed by vibration. “AUM” represents “THE WORD”, that divine sound, vibration that is the basis of all that exists. The organ of sound in man starts with the vocal chords and also includes the mouth and the lips. The sound “A” (as in Announce) is formed by the vocal chords, the beginning of the organ of sound. The sound “U” (as in pUt) is formed by the palate, the middle of the organ of sound. The sound “M” is formed by the lips, the end of the organ of sound. Therefore, “AUM” represents the beginning, the sustenance and the end of this vibration which is the means by which the creation has taken place. In Christianity, we may be more familiar with “Amen” which is the same word slightly in a different form. Both the A and the Men are there. In Islam it is Amin. “AUM” or “AMEN” both represent what is written in the Bible, where it says “I am the Alpha and the Omega”, the beginning and the end. It is also interesting to note the following similarities between Fig:1 the Indian diphthong “AUM”, Fig: 2 the Armenian stylized letter “E” as seen on the cover of a hymn book, Fig: 3 represents word Allah in Arabic script. Fig: 4 represents figure 3 rotated counterclockwise 90 degrees.



Fig: 1



Fig: 2

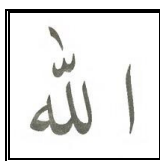


Fig:3



Fig: 4

Is this resemblance a coincidence or is there some deeper meaning to it? Is it telling us that God is one and every

religion's God is the same?

In western Armenia during the late 19th century, two close friends both graduate from the same seminary and are both ordained priests on the same day. One remains in the monastery and over the years proves himself to be worthy and is elected as the abbot in charge. The other soon after graduation, decides to live the life of an ascetic and lives as a hermit in a cave high up on a mountain. He passes his time with prayers and meditation. Many years pass. The abbot decides to send some students, for short periods of time, to learn from his friend the hermit, the benefits of an ascetic life. Some years later, when they are both old, the students urge the hermit to come down the mountain to visit the monastery. After many refusals, he finally consents. After so many years when the two friends meet, they embrace each other and retire to the office of the abbot to exchange information of their experiences. Being late afternoon and the sun mercilessly hot, the room becomes very uncomfortable. The abbot goes to the wall, turns a switch and a fan hanging from the ceiling starts rotating, creating a nice refreshing breeze. The hermit never having seen an electric fan immediately asks as to what that is. The abbot replies: "that is electricity". The hermit indicates that he had heard about a new discovery of electricity from the students but did not know what it was. Now he had understood. Some time later the sun starts to go down and the room becomes darker. The abbot goes to the wall again and turns another switch and suddenly the room lights up. The hermit, surprised, right away asks:

“What is this?” The abbot again answers: “It is electricity.” The hermit gets confused and has difficulty accepting the answer, but says nothing to keep the peace. A short time later, the abbot goes to a box, turns a knob and the box starts talking. He says he wanted to get the daily news. The hermit now even more curious asks: “What is this?” The abbot answers the same way: “electricity”. The hermit can no longer contain himself and bursts out with an accusatory tone: “You told me that the fan was electricity; I believed you. When the light went on, you said that that was also electricity. I did not believe you, but to keep the peace, I did not say anything. Now you tell me that this talking box is also electricity. I think you are making fun of me”. The abbot says: “No”. “Those are what electricity can do, but not the electricity itself.” “The electricity is in the wires and in those two holes you see on the wall”, and points to a wall receptacle. The hermit immediately goes and looks in the holes and says that he sees nothing. The abbot tries to explain what electricity is but can not make him understand. Finally, frustrated he says: “Do you really want to know what electricity is? Put your finger in that hole.” The hermit, curious to know, pushes his little finger in the hole and promptly gets an electric shock. He gets thrown clear across the room against the opposite wall all the time yelling “AAUUU”. Now the abbot, who had never been electrocuted before, asks him as to what he felt. The hermit tries to explain that some-thing had passed through him and over him. The abbot says that he was watching him at all

times and did not see anything passing over him. The hermit, despite all his efforts to explain what he had experienced, could not make his friend understand. Finally, he gives up and says: “if you also want to know what electricity is, you also have to put your finger in that hole”. The abbot, now also curious, pushes his little finger into the hole and promptly he also gets an electric shock. He also is thrown clear across the room against the opposite wall all the time yelling “UUAAA”. After this hair raising experience, as they were further conversing, they hear a big commotion in the yard. When they go to the window, they find the students fighting. Immediately they stop the fight and start questioning one of the students that appeared to be more involved then the others. The student explains that when the two were talking, the students were watching them through the open window and they witnessed their experiences of the electricity. An argument had ensued between the students of the seminary and the students that had come down the mountain with the hermit. The former was insisting that to experience electricity one had to yell “UUAAA” and the latter group of students were insisting that one had to yell “AAUUU”.

Various people will express the same experience in various ways. Therefore, this gives rise to various religions. Both the abbot and the hermit experienced the same electricity, but their expressions were different. Similarly, God is one, but the religions are many. Which one is right “AAUUU” or “UUAAA”, or perhaps both are right. People usually see only the superficial. When we look at a string of different bulbs on an electrical circuit, we usually see their

differences. We do not see the electricity that flows through them, which is the same for all and lights up all of them. Perhaps we also need to put our finger in that hole .

One summer night, a man and his wife and their 5 years old son were out for a walk by the lake shore. The child, seeing the reflection of a full moon on the surface of an unusually calm lake, asks his father as to what that light was. His father answers: “It is the moon” and he adds saying “It was on a full moon like this that I declared my love to your mom and proposed to her and we got married. Perhaps some time in the future, after you grow up, you will also find someone that you love and propose to her on a similar day when there is a full moon. You will also get married and form your own family.” The child was very happy, and they continued their walk. Suddenly a light breeze came up which was welcomed very much because the night was hot. This breeze caused some ripples on the surface of the lake. The child, noticing the reflection of the moon that now looked all broken up, started crying. When his father asked him as to why he was crying, pointing to the reflection he said: “The moon is broken, therefore the things you said will not happen to me after I grow up.” The father explained to him, pointing to the full moon in the sky, that the moon was not broken, that it was full and unaffected. It was only the reflection that appeared broken up. The child stopped crying and they continued their way happily.

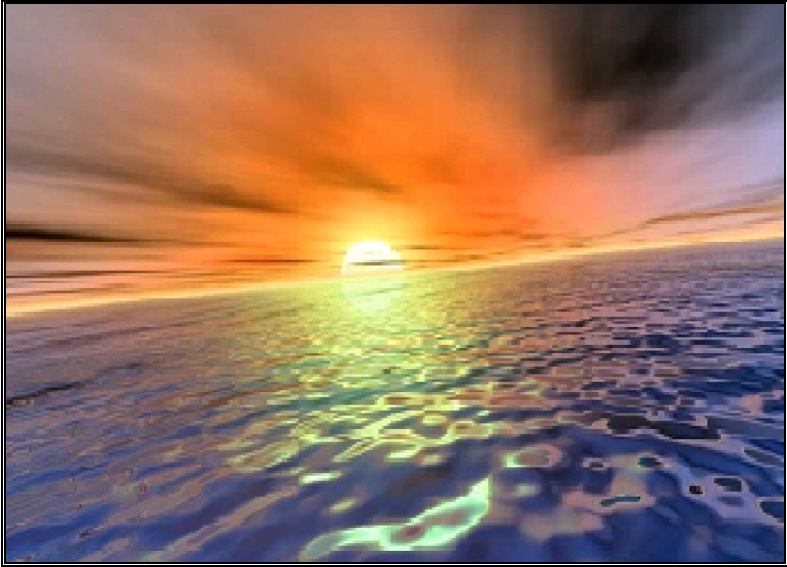
Sometimes, in humanity, we see “reflections that appear to be broken” as a result of the “winds and storms”. We call them human frailties. The winds represent the

storms of our thoughts. The waves represent the storms of our emotions. As a result of these, we feel as if we are about to sink and drown as did the apostles during the storm on the Sea of Galilee. We should not fear. The moon is full and unbroken in the sky. Christ is in the boat sleeping. There is no way that boat could sink. What we need to do to alleviate our fears is to wake the sleeping Christ. He would calm the storm calming both the winds and the waves.

If through prayer and meditation, we turn the direction of our minds (thoughts) inward toward the Christ within, then we can have that divine experience. Then we can say: "I have also put my finger in that hole in the wall." But if we continue with the direction of our minds (thoughts) outward, towards the things of the world, then we experience the world as well as hell. After all, the world is the domain of the devil, is it not?

Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; (Psalm 23)





**Then you will know the truth,
and the truth will set you free.**

(John 8:32)

**The Spirit of truth, the world
cannot accept him, because it
neither sees him nor knows
him. But you know him, for he
lives with you and will be in
you.**

(John 14:17)



-V-

WHAT IS THE TRUTH? (TRINITY)



WHAT IS THE TRUTH?

Nature itself has built-in ways to show us the way to Truth. On our part, we need to be awake, alert, vigilant and observant to be able to learn from each experience.

A king on numerous occasions dreamt the same dream. He dreamt that he was a beggar. After a while, he started getting confused. He started wondering. Was he a king dreaming of being a beggar? Or, was he a beggar dreaming of being a king?

Each person in his/her life has experienced dreaming. In fact, physicians tell us that everybody dreams every night, but unfortunately, or perhaps fortunately, does not remember most dreams. Some of the dreams can be very lively and exciting and to the dreamer, may appear real. Every person always finds himself in his own dream. The dreamer at the time of dreaming feels that it is all real, until he wakes up, and only then does he/she realizes that it was a dream. In fact, because it is thought to be real, at times the dreamer is emotionally and physically affected by the dream. As a result, he/she might wake up sweating, be in fear, have palpitations or even scream during sleep.

During my first year in medical school, I had the misfortune of failing every single subject with extremely low marks. I was devastated and was sure that I would be expelled from the medical faculty. Humiliated and depressed, I knew I had ruined my future. On top of it all, I had tremendous anxiety about notifying my parents of this catastrophic failure. They had sacrificed all for me. For my future, they had immigrated to Canada. They had all the confidence in me, and here I was a major disappointment. This weighed on me more than my personal failure. I was born

again when I woke up in the morning. It was all a dream. In fact, it was so real that I was under its influence for a few minutes, wondering if it was true or not. Finally I came to the realization that we had not even written the examinations yet. I must add that when we did eventually write the examinations, I passed them all with flying colors.

While we are dreaming, the dream appears to be real. Only when we wake up from sleep do we realize that it was a dream and not real. If during a bad dream someone in the dream tells us not to worry, that it is not real, would we believe that person? I do not think so. In our present lives (waking lives not dreaming) with its joys and miseries, if someone comes and says: "Don't worry, this is not real." Would we believe him?

In deep sleep our consciousness does not appear to be present, but when we wake up we continue the same life we experienced before going to sleep: therefore the consciousness must have been there but at the level of deep sleep (subconscious level). During sleep when we dream, the consciousness appears to function at the dream level. And when we wake up, it functions at the waking level.

Is it possible that the waking level of consciousness may actually be a secondary level as well, and that there is still higher level of consciousness?

To be able to go to sleep, we prepare ourselves in a calm and quiet environment, making ourselves very comfortable, but we can not make ourselves sleep. Many people suffer from insomnia. If they could make themselves sleep, they would do so and not suffer. Sleep comes on its own without our knowledge. In a flash it snatches our consciousness from the waking level. The same split-second change in level occurs going from dream level to deep-sleep level as well. It is also the same going in the opposite

direction. These are all just changes in levels of consciousness. If a dream turns out to be a nightmare and we want to wake up from this dream, regardless of any or all efforts, we can not make ourselves wake up. But when the time comes, in a split second, we find ourselves awake.

Is it possible that when this life ends, in other words when we die, that our consciousness would have moved to a different level than the above mentioned three levels? While we are in the dream, we know absolutely nothing about the waking world and state, and we are oblivious to it. Similarly, while in the “waking” state we know nothing about the life after death.

Could it be possible to know about the “next life” before dying?

Would it not be great to be able to wake ourselves up from an unpleasant dream? Sometimes we may wake up but still be half asleep and realize that we are awake, but the dream still continues. In fact, we do not want to wake up from the dream especially if it is a pleasant one. It appears that consciousness is playing back and forth between two different levels. Therefore it should also be possible to have experiential knowledge of the next level of consciousness without dying. Just because of this we read and can understand the following.

And do this, understanding the present time.

The hour has come for you to wake up from your slumber, because our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed. (Romans 13:11)

But everything exposed by the light becomes visible, for it is light that makes everything visible. This is why it is said: “Wake up, O sleeper, rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you” (Ephesians 5:13-14)

Just like in the dream, this life, that we live, also has its pleasant and sad as well as difficult moments. The worse situations and moments all disappear when we wake up from this “sleep”. This waking state is also just like the dream state. It is not reality. It is not Truth. It is an illusion.

William Shakespeare has said: “All the world’s a stage, and all men and women merely players”. During a stage production, players come and go according to their roles, but the play continues.

During a play, a player represented a sad, lame and blind beggar so well that the audience touched and affected, were in tears. The same player, after finishing his role, was actually very happy. He was not sad, nor was he lame or blind and certainly was not a beggar either. With his talent, he probably was a very well paid actor.

Just as in that play, this life also represents an illusion. It is up to us to wake up and come to the realization that we also are actors playing a role.

Therefore, what is Truth?

Sometimes when we watch a two hour long movie, we become so taken up by the story that we do not even realize the passing of the time. And if the subject is also enticing, it may even affect and change us. Why are we affected? Is it possible, that the succession of the scenes in the movie represent reality? The whole story, as affective as it may have been, was not reality. It was only different colored lights in harmony that appeared as moving pictures, creating an illusory story on a screen. In this whole process, the only reality was the light. Passing through the film the light took on different colors and reflected off the screen for us to see. We therefore enjoyed all the pictures of people, places and situations which made up the story. And if we change the film, the story also changes. But the light stays the same, it is

unchanging, permanent. That permanence is the only Truth. The Light of God is also reflecting off the screen of the universe creating our world and this story of our lives.

Therefore, what is Truth?

Through our five senses we experience the world and everything that exists. This appears to be real, because we are able to touch, see, smell, taste and hear all that is around us. Quantum physics, as a result of more recent discoveries, has changed our understanding of the universe.

All living organisms from plant or animal kingdoms are made of cells. All cells, as it is also with the mineral world, are made of molecules. Each molecule is made of atoms. Each atom is made of protons, neutrons and electrons. The first two are made of even smaller particles called quarks. Ninety-nine percent of every atom is empty space. It has a small nucleus in the centre and electrons rotating out in space at a distance of probably 100 times the diameter of the nucleus. If only 1% of an atom is solid, how is it that when we look at each other, we see completely solid people. It appears that our senses are fibbing and tricking us.

Therefore, what is Truth?

Let us go one step further. Quantum physics tells us that even the different particles forming the nucleus are nothing but little packets of energy. Therefore, even the 1% that was thought to be solid also is not solid and is only waves of energy. Just as, while in our dreams, the dream, including ourselves (since each one of us are always in our dreams) is not real, but while we are in the dream, we feel that it is real; and just as in the movie theater, the individuals and places seen on the screen are not real but sometimes can affect us as if they were real; is it possible that this life that we live, with all its experiences that we accept as being real, could also be an illusion? It appears that quantum physics appears to be proving this.

Therefore, what is Truth?

Truth is that energy, that light, because of which this illusory picture plays on the screen of the universe. This Truth we call God. The Bible also says the same.

“... God is light.” (1 John 1:5)

We should also yearn for that Light, for God. The worship of that Light is the worship of God. We also read in Matthew:

“You are the light of the world. A city on a hill can not be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.”

(Matthew 5:14-16)

The movie on the screen, is it not also just light?

Quantum physics is suggesting that the billions of galaxies with their billions of stars, and each star, with all its planets constitute only 5% of the universe. Twenty-five percent of the remaining 95% is called “dark matter”. It can not be seen, but because they can measure its effects, it must be present. The remaining 70% is composed of pure energy. As the nature of this energy is yet unknown, it is called “dark energy”. There is also a phenomenon called the “black hole”. It also can not be seen because its gravitational force is so strong that even light can not escape it. Although there are many black holes, the primordial Black Hole suspected of having infinite density and to be infinitesimally small (called singularity) exploded (the big bang) releasing all its energy. The energy waves radiated everywhere, in the process also forming matter. First the basic atomic particles were formed that lead to the formation of molecules and eventually cells. Through this process all members of the mineral, plant and animal kingdoms were created, including humans.

Quantum physics also tells us that both time and space are relative. Only the present and the “here” exist. Some even think that what has occurred in the past and is now part of history, what is happening now and what is to occur in the future are all occurring simultaneously. I wonder if it is because of this, that clairvoyance is possible.

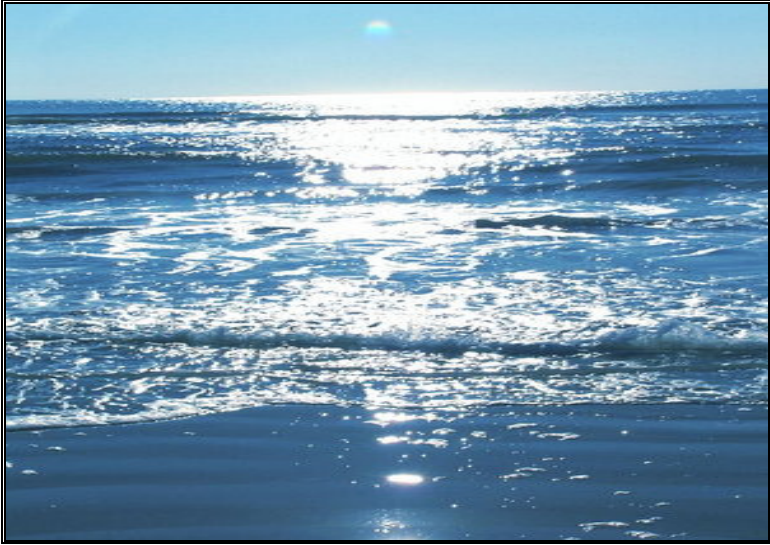
“Whatever is, has already been, and what will be has been before; and God will call the past to account.” (Ecclesiastes 3:15)

It has been postulated that there are many universes (multiverse) that co-exist simultaneously. Mankind has not even seen all of its own universe let alone others. These are postulated because of the mathematical equations and the possibilities they suggest. The laws of physics that we know apply everywhere in our universe. This is not to say that they also may apply in other universes. They may have a totally different set of laws completely and totally foreign to us. How is it possible for several universes to co-exist simultaneously and perhaps even in the same place. On the radio we are able to listen to many stations. When we fix the dial at a certain frequency, we are able to listen to that station only. On the same radio it is next to impossible to listen to more than one station at a time. It is also possible that different universes are formed by a different frequency of basic carrying energies. I wonder if this is what was meant by our parents, teachers and clergy when they were teaching us about heaven and hell. But that was to occur after death. I wonder, if it is possible for us to change the frequency of the energy that is forming us and as a result, change the universe we live in (to die to the present universe). What is the message of the Bible, to reach a more pleasant universe, or to reach the source of all universes? Jesus said:

“... I am the way and the truth and the life ...”
(John 14:6)

Therefore, during this life of ours, it is our duty to reveal that Truth, the Christ and not to be content with our illusory existence.

The Way, the Truth and the Life form a trinity.



Happiness is when
what you think,
what you say, and
what you do
are in harmony.
(Gandhi)

TRINITY

In geometry the most stable figure is the triangle. In quantum physics, we see that the Black Hole (The Singularity) is the **source** of all energy. From this source comes forth and propagates the energy. This energy is the **means** through which form the atomic particles and comes forth the whole of the creation, which is the **manifestation**.

On a bright day, when we stand at the shore of the ocean looking out to the sea, what do we see? Obviously the answer would be “the ocean”. But if we are asked: “what else do you see?” We may just as correctly say “water”. And if a third time we are asked again as to what else we see, we may once again just as correctly say “waves”. Now we indicated three distinctly different things and one is not the same as the other, yet it is impossible to have any one separate from the others. The ocean, the water and the waves form a trinity. The ocean is the totality of it all. The water is the means. And the waves are its play and the expression. As we watch, we see waves of varying sizes, traveling at varying speeds. Sometimes a large wave comes and swallows several smaller waves. A small wave looks around happily until it sees a large wave swallowing another small wave that was its neighbor. It develops major anxiety and fear that it will also be swallowed by another large wave. Instead of looking around and watching other waves, if it had even a tiny amount of idea about contemplation and meditation and looked within itself, it would see that it is water. The big waves are also nothing but water, then all anxiety and fear would disappear. Even if that little wave were to disappear itself, water would still remain which is eternal and will never die.

The Source, whence comes forth the whole of the creation, in which it exists and at dissolution that which will still remain, that we call **God the Father** which is **The**

Truth. The energy that flows from the source and through which the Creation comes about we call **Holy Spirit, The Way.** The whole play and expression of the universe we call **Christ, The Life.** If nothing else, just because of this, every individual's true self/being is Christ. We read in the psalms:

“Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me;” (Psalm 23:4)

We are not an ocean wave: therefore it is possible for us to have that knowledge and consciousness of contemplation and meditation: therefore we also have the possibility of experiencing our true nature/selves, that which is immortal in us, the Christ within. Then and only then, when Jesus says “take your cross and come after me”, would we willingly go to be crucified, in other words crucify our ego. If we get to know, experientially and not intellectually, that our true self is not the ego but it is Christ, we can easily say “Death! Where is your sting?” If we are able to crucify our egos, then and only then would Christ reveal Himself and through us His Light would shine everywhere. Then we can also announce with certainty the happy news that the angels gave two thousand years ago. Great tidings:

**Christ has risen from the dead.
Blessed is the resurrection of Christ.**





I thought God was
Truth,
Then I understood that
Truth was God
(Gandhi)



**All the religions of the
world, while they may
differ in other respects,
unitedly proclaim that
nothing lives in this world
but Truth.**

(Gandhi)



-VI-

**WHAT IS THE
SECOND COMING
(THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT -
THE BEATITUDES)**



WHAT IS THE SECOND COMING? THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT THE BEATITUDES

What is the second coming?

According to accepted tradition Jesus' birth was Christ's First Coming. Christ was revealed on earth through Jesus. The Second Coming will be His glorious return as King and Lord.

Two thousand years ago, Jesus said that the kingdom of God was at hand. The following verses emphasize this point:

and saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near." (Matthew 3:2)

... "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near." (Matthew 4:17)

... 'The kingdom of heaven has come near.' (Matthew 10:7)

"The time has come," he said. "The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!" (Mark 1:15)

... you know that the kingdom of God is near. (Luke 21:31)

The disciples were expecting this Second Coming to occur very soon, but with regards to its timing, no one knew except the Father. We read the following:

"But about that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. (Matthew 24:36)

People have been waiting for the Second Coming not only for the last 2000 years, but much longer. In 600 BC, the prophets also had said that the coming of the kingdom of God was near. We read the followings:

... for the day of the LORD is near; it will come like destruction from the Almighty. (Isaiah 13:6)

For the day of the LORD is near; it will come like destruction from the Almighty. (Joel 1:15)

Be silent before the Sovereign LORD, for the day of the LORD is near. The LORD has prepared a sacrifice; he has consecrated those he has invited. (Zephaniah 1:7)

The Bible also says that, that day will not come soon.

Don't let anyone deceive you in any way, for that day will not come until the rebellion occurs and the man of lawlessness is revealed, ... (2 Thessalonians 2:3)

According to both the Old and the New Testaments, the coming of the Kingdom of God is near. It appears that 2600 years have passed and this has not occurred yet. It is almost certain that another 2600 years may pass and It still may not come. It is highly possible that when the verses say "near", this does not mean near "time-wise" but near "space-wise". Some older translations better expressed this with the expression "It is at hand", meaning "It is in your hands". It also may be dependent on our state of readiness to experience It. The last verse tends to suggest this, that It will not come, until we rebel against the lawlessness in us. It is apropos to read here what Jesus says to one of the teachers of the law:

When Jesus saw that he had answered wisely, he said to him, "You are not far from the kingdom of God." And from then on no one dared ask him any more questions.

(Mark 12:34)

According to tradition "the Second Coming" will be the return of Jesus not as a baby in a manger, but as God through the clouds with armies of angels. This coming will be seen everywhere as the light of lightning is seen everywhere, from the east to the west. This description is in

keeping with the passage in **Matthew 24:27-40**. We need to be very careful not to interpret this and similar passages literally. Jesus has told his disciples that He has explained to them the mystery of God's Kingdom, but to the general public, He speaks with parables and stories to keep it secret. We read:

He told them, "The secret of the kingdom of God has been given to you. But to those on the outside everything is said in parables so that, "they may be ever seeing but never perceiving, and ever hearing but never understanding; otherwise they might turn and be forgiven!" (Mark 4:11-12)

He said, "The knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom of God has been given to you, but to others I speak in parables, so that, "though seeing, they may not see; though hearing, they may not understand.' (Mark 8:10)

Contrary to the above description of "the Second Coming" according to Matthew, Luke writes that there will be nothing external to see. This we read in the next verse:

Once, on being asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, Jesus replied, "The coming of the kingdom of God is not something that can be observed, nor will people say, 'Here it is,' or 'There it is,' because the kingdom of God is in your midst." (Luke 17:20-21)

Therefore, what is the "second coming", the coming of God's Kingdom?

Everybody hopes to go to heaven after death, where, he/she would lead a comfortable and live a happy life forever, meaning endless time. Job, God's devoted servant wonders if

we would even exist after death. We read this in the following verse:

But a man dies and is laid low; he breathes his last and is no more. (Job 14:10)

In the next verses he shows some hope that he may exist again when he says to be roused from sleep, and questions whether he will live again.

so he lies down and does not rise; till the heavens are no more, people will not awake or be roused from their sleep. (Job 14:12)

If someone dies, will they live again? All the days of my hard service I will wait for my renewal to come. (Job 14:14)

In the last verse he appears to decide not to wait for death to change him, but rather he will wait until the change occurs during this hard life.

People believe that during “the Second Coming”, those who have been “good” and died will resurrect and along with the living “good”, will rise to heaven and will live in God’s Kingdom for eternity. This appears to be a childish interpretation of “the Second Coming”. For starters, eternity is not an unending time, but eternity is timelessness.

Therefore, what is the “Second Coming”, the coming of God’s Kingdom?

The human condition is similar to a horse-driven chariot. The charioteer must be his true Self, namely Christ. But it appears that for the majority, the charioteer is not Christ. Then who is the charioteer of our chariot, our lives? We read the following:

He will oppose and will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshiped, so that he sets himself up in God’s temple, proclaiming himself to be God.

(2 Thessalonians 2:4)

The coming of the lawless one will be in accordance with how Satan works. He will use all sorts of displays of power through signs and wonders that serve the lie, (2 Thessalonians 2:9)

Who is this lawless, one who works through signs and lies? It is none other than our own “EGOs”, taken up by “Satan” and his lies, namely, this illusory world. We need to change the charioteer of our lives, but alas, most of us, influenced and lied to by the “EGO” and mesmerized by the allure of the world, thinking that **this** is reality, are incapable of doing so. We fear that by neutralizing the “EGO” we would also lose our individuality. Just because of this, verbally we say a lot but tangibly do nothing. We shrug off all responsibility by saying “Jesus died for my sins; therefore I am saved.” We wait for our death, thinking that we would go to heaven. If this had been true, Jesus would not have said “Take your cross and come after me”.

Therefore, what is it that prevents “the Second Coming”. We read the following:

... They perish because they refused to love the truth and so be saved. (2 Thessalonians 2:10)

Because we also refuse to **love the truth**, we are unable to experience “the Second Coming”. The Gospels also caution us not to believe, when we are told that “the Second Coming” is here or there. We read again:

not to become easily unsettled or alarmed by the teaching allegedly from us whether by a prophecy or by word of mouth or by letter asserting that the day of the Lord has already come. (2 Thessalonians 2:2)

The following verse is also interesting to read. At first glance the ideas appear to be contradictory. It sound like double talk.

Whoever tries to keep their life will lose it, and whoever loses their life will preserve it.

(Luke 17:33)

What is it that we are losing? Also, what is it that we are preserving. We need to lose the “EGO” as charioteer of our lives, and preserve the life driven by the real Self, Christ. Once we give the reigns to Christ, the power of the “EGO” suddenly dissipates. This is the reality and the truth; hence, we read:

And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will overthrow with the breath of his mouth and destroy by the splendor of his coming. (2 Thessalonians 2:8)

In the above quotations from Isaiah and Joel, they both say that the day of the Lord will come with destruction. Zephaniah also says that the Lord has prepared a sacrifice. What is it that will be subjected to destruction and will be sacrificed? Without that destruction and sacrifice, it is impossible for Christ’s “Second Coming” to occur. It is the destruction and the sacrificing of the “EGO”. The real question is, how to give the reigns of our chariot to Christ? It appears that the first step is to want to do it. We read:

But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. (Matthew 6:33)

But seek his kingdom, and these things will be given to you as well (Luke 12:31)

Without a doubt everyone wishes to have and seeks the Kingdom of God. But, how many have experienced it? How badly do we want it?

In India a young man gets the idea that he wants to see God. After many inquiries and visiting many temples and ashrams, he finally finds out that an old Guru that lives in the Himalayas in a

cave is said to have seen God and may be able to teach him how to go about it. The young man, excited, starts on his arduous journey to the Himalayas. Eventually, he finds the cave described to him by the villagers. There he finds an old man sitting with his eyes closed, who appears to be in meditation. The young man was eager to talk to him, but at the same time was afraid to disturb his meditation, fearing that he may antagonize him. As he was debating, the old man opens his eyes and asks him what he wants. The young man indicates that it is his life's ambition to see God and that he has been seeking everywhere for the knowledge to allow him to see God. He also tells him that he was advised to come here. The old man after sizing him up, sees that the young man is sincere, agrees to become his teacher, his guru. He also indicates that the young man has to be obedient and must do anything and everything that he asks of him to do without questioning. The young man also accepts the rules and the association starts. For a while they study from their religious texts. The days pass with the young man doing all the chores around the cave. He does the cleaning, the cooking, the washing, the carrying of water from the nearby river, etc. He also has his periods for study of the scriptures and meditation. A whole year passes. The young man starts getting anxious. He still has not seen God. He finally gathers enough courage and approaches his guru with reverence and asks him: "You eat. So do I. You go to the river to bathe. So do I. You meditate. So do I. You go to sleep. So do I. Where

is our difference? Why do I do all the chores, and you do not do any? Why is it that you have seen God and I have not?" The guru very calmly lifts up his head and speaking softly, says: "Who told you that we do the same things? When you are bathing, you are thinking of eating. When you are eating, you are thinking of sleeping. When you are meditating, only heaven knows what you are thinking. When I bathe I only think of bathing. When I eat, I only think of eating. When I meditate, I have no thoughts. The young man thanks the guru for teaching him a valuable lesson and goes back to his chores. The young man serious in his quest, takes to heart the guru's teachings and tries to be like him and eventually succeeds. The guru also sees the progress and rejoices for him. Another two years pass. The young man still has not seen God. He starts becoming restless again. Once again he presents himself to his guru, asking as to when he was going to see God. This time his guru says nothing, but gestures to him to follow. The guru takes him to the river. He enters the river up to his waist and gestures for the young man also to enter in the river. Obedient as ever, he goes in. The guru plunges the young man's head under the water and holding it down, does not allow him to get up. After a minute or so, the young man starts struggling for air. Just at the moment of drowning, the guru pulls the young man's head out. After panting for a while and catching his breath, he asks him why he had done that. The guru, instead of answering the young man's question, asks a question himself: "Just before I pulled your head

out of the water, what was your thought?" The young man, surprised says, "I wanted air." The guru answers back saying: "You still need much time to see God. You have to want to see God with all your being, with all your strength, with all your mind and with all your heart, to the point when even at the moment of drowning your thought still has to be on God instead of on air or breathing."

With how much zeal do we seek and wish to see "the Second Coming", the coming of "the Kingdom of God"? We need to be single minded and vigilant and without doubt. We read the following verses:

Jesus replied, "No one who puts a hand to the plow and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God." (Luke 9:62)

Jesus looked at him and said, "How hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom of God! Indeed, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God."

(Luke 18:24-25)

It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God." (Mark 10:25)

It is not the man's monetary riches that prevent him from entering God's kingdom, but rather his attachment to those riches. The above reference to "who is rich" does not necessarily apply to money, but applies to all sorts of attachments (riches of attachments), attachment to ideas, to beliefs, to work, to family etc. It could also be a flood of thoughts (riches of thoughts), a busy mind. Of course, this does not mean that we should neglect our duties. On the contrary, as hard as they may be, we need to carry them out

with joy and gladness. Even more importantly, we should not be attached to the results of our labors. We should act as if we are not the one acting, but Christ that acts through us. Our duty is to do our best and to the very best of our ability, to be a good instrument in the hands of Christ. As a horse driven chariot, we need to be responsive and obedient to the orders of the charioteer.



**Blessed are those who dwell in
your house; ...
Blessed are those whose
strength is in you
(Psalms 84:5-6)**

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT-THE BEATITUDES

In the “sermon on the mount”, Jesus tells us and points out as to who will be able to see the Kingdom of God.

“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” (Matthew 5:3)

Poor in Spirit, means those who are humble, without pride: without pride in their education, riches, beauty or fame but especially in their intellect, thinking that they have already found the Truth. Those will see the kingdom of God.

Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted. (Matthew 5:4)

This passage at times is heard at funerals, quoted by some ministers or priests. The mourning in this passage has nothing to do with the remaining family members of a deceased loved one. Most of humanity cry “rivers” of tears for a deceased loved one, or worst yet, for just some financial loss. But how many drops of tears has anyone shed for having lost the consciousness of experiencing God’s presence. This is the real reason that we should be mourning and to such a degree that God Himself will draw our mind, consciousness and total being to Him. That is the only time we truly will be comforted.

Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth. (Matthew 5:5)

Meek means to be submissive to Him with ones total being, without reservations. Try to see God in everybody and in everything. This way duality is dispelled. This does not mean leaving family, friends or wealth and becoming a hermit. It means to know and understand that everything comes from God and belongs to God. We just enjoy them for a while. For this experience and enjoyment we should be thankful. Instead, most of the time we become possessive,

thinking that all belongs to us.

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled. (Matthew 5:6)

It appears, that in reality, humanity does not appear to be seeking God's righteousness or for that matter God Himself. Should there be even a hint of a desire of wanting to see God, there would be a chance for this desire to grow and flourish to a level similar to the desire for water and food of someone lost in a desert, hungry, starving and parched, dehydrated and thirsting for water. It is only when the desire for God's righteousness reaches that level, that one may in fact be blessed and satisfied.

Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy. (Matthew 5:7)

It appears that, one of the pre-requisites to seeing God is to be merciful. Envy, jealousy and hatred are born of our 'EGOs'. As a result of our ignorance, they block and prevent the realization of our desire to experience God. We need to be merciful towards all. This is the only way to neutralize the above mentioned undesirable thoughts and sentiments, to rejoice in other's happiness without being jealous. This multiplies their joy as well. We should not judge. We should not elate for other's misery or sorrow, even if they consider themselves our enemy. Instead, we should also sympathize and cry with their misfortune. This divides their sorrow. Only then would we also be ready to receive God's mercy and have the chance to experience His presence. In this vein the wise king Solomon writes:

Those who are kind benefit themselves, but the cruel bring ruin on themselves. (Proverbs 11:17)

It is a sin to despise one's neighbor, but blessed is the one who is kind to the needy. (Proverbs 14:21)

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God. (Matthew 5:8)

What does it mean to be pure in heart? We all know some person or other that we consider to be extremely good-hearted. They may also have impeccable morals. But have any of them seen God? Good morals are important, for all religions tend to emphasize them. But, it does not appear to be enough. When Jesus says “pure in heart”, he does not mean this. The pure heart he is talking about is the mind cleansed of all thoughts. When we start praying or meditating on God, surprisingly, in a split second, myriads of thoughts come to our mind, other than what we are supposed to be concentrating on. In the above story, as the guru had told the young seeker that during meditation he had no thoughts, we should also train and clear our minds of the constant chitter-chatter of our thoughts. This we need to do, to be “pure in heart”. This flood of thoughts has its basis in our ignorance of our true nature, which is Christ. We may intellectually know that God is within us and also everywhere, but experientially we have not reached there yet. Thus, instead of seeing the unity in diversity, we tend to see diversity in the unity. As a result of this wrong perception and ignorance of the truth, the “EGO” can easily fool us and we see ourselves separate from each other and also from God. With the power of the “EGO”, we develop desires and as well, aversions. Our various desires and aversions end up being the blocks preventing us from experiencing God. We also saw this in the above story. The priority for the young man was air and to breathe rather than seeing God. We are strongly attached to this world and life. That in itself is the impediment preventing us from reaching our goal. Humans are actually very funny beings. They say that they want and desire to be with God. If by some miracle God was to come and freely offer His light and say “follow me”, the majority

would run away and prefer this illusory life. We read the following:

In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. ...The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world. He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. (John 1:4-5, 9-10)

This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but people loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil.

(John 3:19)

We fear that if we negate our “EGO”, we will also lose our individuality. To some degree this is true because individuality and self admiration are born of the “EGO”.

When walking, to advance, we need to lift (detach) our foot from one point on the floor and move (attach) it somewhere else, otherwise there would be no advancement. Similarly for spiritual advancement, we need to detach ourselves from our individuality, so that we can join the totality (God). We need to lose the life driven by the “EGO”, for the life driven by Christ to take over. Is it not what the next verse indicates?

Whoever tries to keep their life will lose it, and whoever loses their life will preserve it. (Luke 17:33)

In a small booklet called *«Illusions - Adventures of a reluctant messiah»* a few handwritten introductory pages tell a story about some creatures that live at the bottom of a river. According to their tradition and belief, they have to hang on to the rocks for dear life, otherwise, they may be swept away by the strong current to

oblivion and to death. One of these critters decides to let go of the rocks to see what there is down current. All its friends plead with him not to do so, that it would be a certain death. But it, resolute in its decision, lets go and is swept away. Its friends mourn its death and they themselves continue to hang on to the rocks. The one that lets go is swept away and surely is knocked around against the rocks to some degree, but eventually the current stops as the river enters the ocean. It finds itself in a wonderful place with abundant food and no current to worry about. This place was a million times better than the previous. It wants to go and tell its friends, but alas, as it enters the river, it finds the current too strong for it to swim up the river.

We are also similar to these creatures. We are satisfied with our miserable existence at the bottom of the river (in this illusory life), when a whole ocean is out there.

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God. (Matthew 5:9)

In one of the monasteries, a fight breaks out between the theology students. The brother-in-charge after questioning all of the students finds who the instigators of the fight were. He calls over these two students and tells them that he will recommend to the abbot to have them expelled. He telegrams the abbot, who happen to be in another city, about his intensions. The abbot immediately telegrams back, saying that he should take no action but to wait for his arrival. A few days later, the abbot returns. He does not rebuke or even question the two boys. Instead he sets up a special prayer period, where all the boys together

would join him in prayer and meditation. One week later, the tension that had been present between the two fighting groups had dissipated. They had forgotten their differences. Peace and brotherly love had returned to the monastery once more.

Those who have the Light of Christ shining through them, are able to shine it all around them wherever they may be. Those are the ones that will be called “children of God”. In reality, we all are children of God, but we are fooled by the “EGO” into thinking otherwise.

Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. “Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.” (Matthew 5:10-12)

In the Middle East there is a well known legendary character called Nasreddin Hoja. There are many stories based on his “wisdom”. In short he is known as Hoja, which is his title. One day Hoja is traveling down the road on his donkey with his son walking beside him. A passerby sees him and rebukes him for making the poor child walk when he is comfortably sitting on the back of the donkey. He thinks about it and agrees with the man. After dismounting the donkey, he sits his son there and he goes on foot beside the donkey. Soon after another passerby sees them and rebukes him as well, saying that he must be crazy to walk and get tired and have the young energetic child ride on the donkey. The Hoja thinks about

this as well and gives him credit also. He also mounts the donkey and they both ride onward. A short time later, an irate passerby starts yelling and screaming at the Hoja. "Are you not ashamed that both of you are on the back of the poor donkey. Look at him. He is about to collapse. Take pity. Think of the poor animal." The Hoja thinks about that too and agrees with this man also. They both get off the animal and continue on their journey on foot, with the donkey trailing behind. He meets one of his friends. After greeting each other, his friend wonders why the Hoja is unnecessarily getting tired walking, when he has the donkey with him and asks him in jest if he has lost a "marble" or two.

On the road to search for God we are also faced with various experiences. Different people, different religions, and different denominations will insist on their way and on their beliefs. It is impossible to please them all. Therefore, we need to follow only that inner voice that comes from the only and true teacher, Christ Himself.

The First Coming of Christ occurred with the creation of the universe including, of course, man. The Second Coming will be through the "son of man". Jesus proved that it was possible to reveal Christ through us. When did the Second Coming occur for Jesus? The Bible is not definite about this, but it is highly possible that it occurred in the wilderness when he resisted all the temptations of the "devil", namely the "EGO".

Jesus said to him, "Away from me, Satan! For it is written: 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only. Then the devil left him, and angels came and attended him. (Matthew 4:10-11)

On top of the mountain Jesus' transfiguration showed full revelation of Christ through Him. What was the meaning of this? We read:

For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of God's glory displayed in the face of Christ. (2 Corinthians 4:6)

We also with our birth represent the first coming of Christ. It is written:

You are all children of the light and children of the day. (1 Thessalonians 5:5)

Just like Jesus, it is also our duty to fully reveal Christ and partake in the second coming. Christ reveals Himself to those who are ready and at the proper time. Just as we cannot make ourselves sleep, but we can prepare to go to sleep. Similarly we can not make the "Second Coming" happen, but we can prepare ourselves for it. Just as, within a split second, sleep takes away our consciousness, the "Second Coming", the revelation of Christ will be the same way. When we wake up from sleep, our level of consciousness changes and suddenly the waking level and with it the world around us fills our awareness within a split second as lightning is seen from the east to the west. The same will also be with the "second coming". Is it not written so?

For the Son of Man in his day will be like the lightning, which flashes and lights up the sky from one end to the other. (Luke 17:24)

For as lightning that comes from the east is visible even in the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. (Matthew 24:27)

Those who succeed in bringing forth the "Second Coming" also experience the power of God come to them; hence, we read:

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; ... (Acts 1:8)

The “second coming” is not a privileged event for Christians alone. It is there for anyone to partake in. We read:

People will come from east and west and north and south, and will take their places at the feast in the kingdom of God. (Luke 13:29)

When Jesus was on earth, who had the most faith? The “pagan” Roman centurion that had asked Jesus to heal his servant. By curing his servant, Jesus had shown that he did not discriminate between religions. Why do we?

Our duty now is to prepare ourselves to allow the “second coming” to occur in us. Intellectually we may know that Christ is already with us. Because he said so:

“ ... And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.” (Matthew 28:20)

To only have intellectual knowledge is not enough, we also need to have the experiential knowledge to fully reveal Christ through us. This should be the real purpose of our lives. We should not wait to die to go to heaven. We need to bring heaven here through us while we are still alive. Why should we reveal Christ now and not wait to go to heaven after death? In the following verses we read that after death, we are nothing and do not exist; therefore whatever we need to do, we need to do it now, while we are alive and living in this lifetime.

Anyone who is among the living has hope, even a live dog is better off than a dead lion! For the living know that they will die, but the dead know nothing; they have no further reward, and even their name is forgotten. Their love, their hate and their jealousy have long since vanished; never again will they have a part in anything that happens under the sun. (Ecclesiastes 9:4-6)

Surely the fate of human beings is like that of the animals; the same fate awaits them both: As one dies, so dies the other. All have the same breath; humans have no advantage over animals. Everything is meaningless. All go to the same place; all come from dust, and to dust all return. (Ecclesiastes 3:19-20)

We can look at the universe as a "movie screen" where the "movie picture" of the creation is reflecting off of it for our experience. The revelation of God on the "screen" called the universe has three characteristics: existence, knowledge and bliss.

a- Existence:

The creation/universe represents God's body. Since we are part of that creation, we are also part of that divine existence. The Bible indicates this:

Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. (1 Corinthians 12:12)

In our consciousness this existence is temporary and belongs to our lives in this world. It starts with our birth and ends with our death. The revelation of Christ within us allows us to have an experience of eternity. This of course does not mean endless time, but to be free of the restraints of time, to be outside of time and not subject to it. Everything that is in time is subject to the effects of time. The "effects of time" is to be subject to constant change. The experiential and not the intellectual knowledge of eternity gives us the true vision and knowledge of immortality. Those who are immortal also do not have any fears. Fearlessness also keeps us free of misfortune or unhappiness.

...And it is the Spirit who testifies, because the Spirit is the truth. (1 John 5:6)

The Truth is existence and the existence is the Truth.

b- Knowledge:

Man's knowledge is limited. It is true that over many centuries, his knowledge has increased and continues to increase. Both knowledge and evolution go hand in hand and appear to constantly accelerate. One cell organisms evolved (created) approximately 4 billion years ago. Multicellular simple organisms came about approximately 1 billion years ago. Animals with a spine were created a few hundred million years ago. Mammalians came about only 20-30 million years ago. The hominid, the ancestor to today's man, was present only 2 million years ago, whereas present man has been present only a few hundred thousand years. Man developed tools and spoken language only a few tens of thousands years ago. City life; hence, civilization, started only a few thousand years ago. The industrial revolution started less than 300 years ago. The information age started only 30 years ago. Future evolutions are likely to occur much faster and be measured only by a few years and then perhaps only by a few months. The power of the computer is increasing so fast that the prediction is for it to surpass the power of the human brain by the year 2020.

To have knowledge is good, but it can be used for good or for bad. For the proper use of knowledge, one needs wisdom. Wisdom is the knowledge of making right or good decisions or carrying out right or good actions. It is one of the gifts of the "Holy Spirit". The universe (Holy Spirit) gives the individual the ability to get wisdom. Wisdom is also a knowledge that comes not from studying or books, but through personal life experiences.

The toddler sees the flame of the candle and is intrigued by it and just like anything else, tries to grab it. That is his way of learning by touch and experience. He does not have or understand logic. As a parent, we protect him and tell him it will

hurt. It does not matter how many times he is told. When no one is looking, he will still go and try to grab the flame. Then comes a major shriek and he has now acquired the knowledge of the flame and is wiser for it. Now even if you bribe him with ice cream just to go and touch the flame again, as much as he wants the ice cream, he will never go near a flame again.

Life experience is required to be wise. Older people are usually much wiser than younger ones. The latter have not lived long enough to have enough life experiences. In Proverbs we read:

Whoever heeds life-giving correction will be at home among the wise. (Proverbs 15:31)

Those, who have the misfortune of not having the “gift of wisdom”, generally do not learn from life experiences and keep repeating the same mistakes over and over again.

There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but in all of them and in everyone it is the same God at work. Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. To one there is given through the Spirit a message of wisdom, to another a message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, (1 Corinthians 12:4-8)

It is good to be wise. We read the followings:

Wisdom, like an inheritance, is a good thing and benefits those who see the sun. (Ecclesiastes 7:11)

To the person who pleases him, God gives wisdom, knowledge and happiness, but to the sinner he gives the task of gathering and

storing up wealth to hand it over to the one who pleases God. This too is meaningless, a chasing after the wind. (Ecclesiastes 2:26)

Each one of us is an expression of God, and Christ lives within us. If and when we allow the full expression of Christ through us then we develop the consciousness of the true knowledge and the wisdom to go with it. This prepares us for the next evolution where I suspect wisdom and intuition will be common to all.

c- Bliss

Jesus, in the “sermon on the mount”, called “blessed” those who would be worthy to see God. In our daily lives also we have good days and happy times, but unfortunately they constantly are subject to change and are therefore temporary. They are usually followed by sadness, misery, pain and grief.

People function through 3 “bodies”: the physical, the mental and intellectual. When one is physically healthy and emotionally (mentally) happy within a great relationship with a loving spouse etc., lo and behold at work the boss rejects all intellectual work done and even threatens to fire. Intellectually the person becomes unhappy and depressed that his brilliant ideas, for the benefit of the company, are all rejected. Some time later, these ideas are reviewed by the boss’s boss and liked so much that they are accepted and even a raise in salary is suggested. The person now is happy as a lark. During the next few weeks, when he gets his annual physical at the doctors, a shadow is seen on the chest x-ray and a malignancy is suspected. Now, he is very happy both intellectually and emotionally, but he cannot enjoy any happiness because of the physical concerns and fears. After two months of specialists and investigations and tests, surgery is recommended. Eventually, a few years after the operation, he is told that he is free of any cancer. All around

happiness comes to him again until the teen age son, 16 years old, has decided to move out and live on his own with his girlfriend. Now physically and intellectually content, his overall happiness has diminished because of the emotional stress. In similar ways, man's life passes on from one crises to another. To have all three "bodies" functioning happily together at the same time is usually rare and if it does occur, it is only for a relatively short time. For this reason we never truly experience true peace and bliss.

Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.
(John 14:27)

When Christ is fully revealed through us, it is only then that we truly experience peace and bliss.

You became imitators of us and of the Lord, for you welcomed the message ... with the joy given by the Holy Spirit. (1 Thessalonians 1:6)

It, therefore, is our duty to reveal Christ in us, to be able to live in bliss with full consciousness, so that through us, God is glorified once more.

Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your bodies.
(1 Corinthians 6:19-20)

In the medical field during the last few years, there have been new developments and one of these is the PET scan (positron emission tomography). In certain situations, it is possible to record the activity of the brain or part of the brain. In some studies, it has been shown that when the right side of the brain is active, the person feels happy. PET scans done on Tibetan monks during meditation, have shown right

brain activity. Some stroke patients who have the majority of their left brain destroyed, despite their severe physical handicap, are obviously happy without major left-brain function, as that ability is switched to the right half of the brain.

Most parents try to teach their children what is necessary for a “comfortable” life in this society. Some of these include: individuality, competition ... etc. All these belong to and are the function of the left brain.

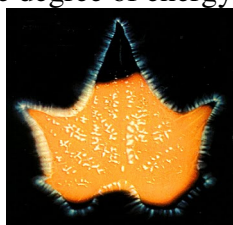
Then what is to reveal Christ in us?

It appears that the “charioteer” of the right brain is Christ and the “charioteer” of the left brain is the “EGO”. Then how do we use more of the right brain? We need to train ourselves by leaving behind or negating the left brain functions and nurturing right brain functions, such as meditation. This allows us to benefit from the universal energy flow also known as the Holy Spirit, in religious circles.

In 1939, a Russian Armenian, Semyon Kirlian while working with high voltage electricity, accidentally photographed energy emanating from living organisms. This eventually became known as Kirlian photography. During the last 70 years many experiments have been carried out, and even today there are skeptics that do not believe in the findings. Some seriously study the effect. Even the most famous inventor and scientist of the 19th and 20th century Nikola Tesla, an electrical and mechanical engineer as well as being a philosopher and a poet had started some experiments with the Kirlian photography, but alas his life was cut short.

One of the most famous pictures taken by Kirlian himself is the photograph of a leaf showing its energy field. Subsequently, he cut off part of the leaf and re-photographed it again. To his surprise, the energy was still present in the cut segment of the leaf that was no longer present, as if the leaf was complete. He has also photographed people, as well as inanimate objects, which also have shown some energy.

This in fact should not surprise us, because all of creation, mineral, plant or animal kingdoms, all are formed by the same energy flow through the entire universe. This energy we call the “Holy Spirit” that flows from the “Father”. It flows incessantly and everywhere. Some clairvoyants can see this energy around people, commonly known as “aura”. They usually can tell about the person’s physical, emotional or intellectual well being through the color of the aura. The aura may be strong weak or of different colors dependent on the degree of energy flow through the individual.



A clairvoyant tells the following story: “ In a high-rise building, I was waiting for an elevator on one of the top floors. When it arrived and the doors opened, I saw a man that was already in the elevator. The unusual fact was that I could not see any aura around him. I thought to myself that this was a dead man and did not enter the elevator. After the doors closed, there was a sudden noise and the elevator fell to the bottom of the shaft, needless to say killing the man”.

The interesting fact is that even before the man actually died, the energy already knowledgeable of the upcoming death, had withdrawn from the man. It appears that this energy is the substratum upon and by which the universe is formed and sustained. There is therefore the possibility for this energy to flow through us at much larger quantities, so much so that the aura, also increasing in intensity becomes a halo. A halo is nothing but a strong aura visible to all and not just to the clairvoyants. We are not clairvoyants but even then we

occasionally see some person in whom there appears to be a shine to their face and we may even comment saying: “that person seems to have God’s grace”. The Bible also tells us that the Holy Spirit is energy.

because our gospel came to you not simply with words but also with power, with the Holy Spirit ... (1 Thessalonians 1:5)

Chinese medicine utilizes the flow of this energy to treat patients and illnesses. The real cause of illness is related to disturbances or cessation of the flow of this energy in parts of the body that eventually show disease. As a cardiologist, I personally have palpated and felt the pulsation of this energy. Initially I assumed I was feeling some vessel and the pulse created by the heart beat. After listening, palpating and comparing, I was fully convinced that it was a totally different pulse that I had not felt before. Its rate was definitely different from the cardiac pulse. Unfortunately, I never had the opportunity to learn how to assess it and use it for the treatment of patients.

Jesus cured many sick people with various illnesses by transferring energy from himself to others. We consider these to be miracles. Yes, they are miracles for us. For the Stone Age man, lightning also was fire sent by God because He was angry at man. In Jesus, Christ was revealed fully, therefore He had the knowledge as to how to harness and transfer that energy. Because we do not have that knowledge and understand its use, like the Stone Age man, we call them miracles. Was it not Jesus who said: “you can do greater things than I have done.”?

Both Mark (5:25-34) and Luke (8:43-48) describe the same incident. A sick woman touches the hem of Jesus’ garment and is cured. Jesus senses the energy (power) drain from him and asks the question: “who touched my clothes”? The disciples were surprised because everybody was crowd-

ing and pushing him. The touch of the woman was different. It was intentional and purposeful, and energy had flown from Jesus to her. Jesus, conscious of His own energy level, had sensed the flow and the drain. It was the energy that cured the woman. It was nothing that Jesus had done. Jesus did not even have the intention until after it happened. The woman was receptive to the energy. All the rest of the people in the crowd were also touching Jesus, but not with the right intent or readiness. Therefore there was no energy flow to anybody else at that time, because they were not receptive. The revelation of Christ in us, in other words, the increased flow of that universal energy through us, is dependent on us. That is why Jesus always used to say: “your faith has cured you”. We have to allow for the flow to occur. We need to prepare ourselves by neutralizing any impediment to the flow of the energy. By analogy, this is similar to an electrical circuit, where resistors in the circuit drop the voltage in the circuit. In the same way, the energy and power of the “Holy Spirit” that flows through us meets “resistors” and the flow weakens. These resistors are basically the 7 deadly sins, products of our “EGO”. With the weakened energy flow, Christ can never be fully revealed through us. Yes we get some flow, the “life force”, enough to keep us alive, but even then we eventually become ill, even if it is just a simple cold, and of course more serious illnesses as well. How can a 220 volt flood light project any significant light any significant distance when it is powered only by a 22 volt electricity source?

During the Mass of the Armenian Apostolic Church as the deacon brings the Chalice with the wine and the Host to the Altar to give to the priest, he says the following:

“Lift up your gates, O princes: let the everlasting doors be lifted up, and the king of glory shall come in.” and the priest asks:

“Who is the king of glory? The Lord strong in his power, the Lord mighty in battle.”

This is an invitation for us to allow the flow of this energy to occur in us. It is up to us to “lift up our gates” so that the energy (king of glory) can flow (come in) through us. (Gates are the Chakras - centers through which energy flows) We need to prepare ourselves and in fact just before this, during the mass there is a caution to stay away in the distance if not prepared:

“Let none of the catechumens, none of little faith and none of the penitents and the unclean draw near unto this divine mystery.”

Let us also read the following verses:

And so I tell you, every kind of sin and slander can be forgiven, but blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven. Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but anyone who speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come. (Matthew 12:31-32)

Truly I tell you, people can be forgiven all their sins and every slander they utter, but whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will never be forgiven; they are guilty of an eternal sin.”
(Mark 3:28-29)

And everyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but anyone who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven. (Luke 12:10)

What is blasphemy and sin against the Holy Spirit that cannot be forgiven?

Quantum physics tells us that the whole creation has come about as a result of that energy. Any block in the flow of that energy also blocks the creation or what today we call

evolution. As long as we do not allow for that energy to flow through us abundantly, actually we have sinned and blasphemed against that energy. The energy flows freely through the whole of the universe and is free for all to benefit from it. By denying that flow, opportunity is lost for further evolution of mankind. Lost opportunity will never come back as time does not go backwards. Therefore it cannot be forgiven. There is no opportunity for forgiveness because we are in time. The unforgivable sin is that **“The Light came to the world and people preferred darkness”**.

Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love; according to your great compassion blot out my transgressions.





To accuse others for one's own
misfortunes
is a sign of want of education.
To accuse oneself shows that one's
education has begun.
To accuse neither oneself nor
others shows
That one's education is complete.

(Epictetus)



Do not exalt yourself in the
king's presence,
and do not claim a place
among his great men;
it is better for him to say to
you, "Come up here,"

(Proverbs 25:6-7)



-VII-



WHAT IS PRAYER?



WHAT IS PRAYER?

Clement, a theologian from Alexandria has said that prayer is a conversation with God. All the world religions direct their followers to pray. Prayer in one form or another has existed in all the civilizations and cultures of the world. Prayer comes naturally and appears to be essential for all humans.

According to the laws of evolution, any trait or tradition that is beneficial and essential for the survival and propagation of a species, flourishes. Any that are unessential or useless disappear in time. Since prayer and praying from time immemorial has survived, it must be having a positive effect in the survival of humanity.

Prayer can be private, (one on One basis), or can be congregational. The congregational prayers occur with the participation of the whole community and usually are performed in houses of worship, or in small groups or just in families.

The purpose of congregational prayer is:

a- To show us the road-map of our spiritual journey.

b- To show us the equality of all human beings. While in the church, the rich and the poor, the servant and the master, the educated and the uneducated, the wise and the fool, as well as the king and his subjects, are all equal and kneel to God at the same time, in the same way.

The real prayer has to be personal, private, internal, coming from the depths of one's heart and intensely focused. The true prayer should not be a number of requests similar to a shopping list. It is true that God is all powerful, but He is not a separate superhuman being from the person praying, that is waiting in readiness to respond and satisfy all the requests. For instance: "I am sick. Please cure me. It does not matter that I do not do what the doctor has recommended. I

trust You only.”, “Please make sure that when my child is born, he be healthy, regardless of the fact that I was abusive of my health during the pregnancy.”, “When I am away from the house, please protect my house and belongings, even though I was negligent and left the door wide open when I left.”, “Please make me successful at my work and get a raise in my salary, despite the fact that I have not been doing my best.”, “Please let me pass my examinations with good marks, even though I have not studied at all, but instead was partying.”, and on and on God is not our personal doctor, guard or police ... etc. If the purpose of prayer is to present a list of requests, it would be more appropriate to present such a list to the genie that comes out of the magic lamp. Even the genie fulfils only three wishes. Jesus, in “the sermon on the mount”, cautioned against lengthy prayers.

“And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him. “This, then, is how you should pray: “Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our

debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. (Matthew 6:5-13)

The prayer that comes from the heart joins us to God, the true Being in us. Prayer should not be to change external situations, namely controlling the environment. Instead, it should be to foster enough energy to deal with them and accept them and survive them unaffected. The grace and power of God (The Holy Spirit) flows incessantly for all and to all. All we need to do is to harness that energy and benefit from it. To pray for external controls is not just wrong, but it is also an insult to God. Because of this, the sin committed against the Holy Spirit is unforgivable. Sincere prayer should change us to become worthy receptacles for the power of the Holy Spirit. When we change, only then changes also occur to our environment and to all that is external to us. This occurs not as a response to our wish-list prayer, but as a response to the change in us. When we change, the world also changes by that much. The world, and of course us, as well, are in time & space, and therefore, subject to change and impermanence. Change usually brings misery with it. Man has always aspired to changelessness, permanence and continuity. The only permanence is “eternity” which is to be outside of the time and space continuum. The only unchanging and eternal is God. Prayer is that spiritual ladder or bridge that connects us to that unchanging eternity we call God. The real prayer should be the desire to join God, to be able to see God everywhere, in everybody, in everything and of course in us as well.

During our spiritual journey, the content of our prayers also changes according to the level of our spiritual advancement.

In the first grade of elementary school, mathematics is basically primary arithmetic, just the most simple additions and subtractions. But in post-graduate university years,

advanced mathematics reveal secrets of the universe. We all know that the following simple equation, $E=Mc^2$ represents great truths about quantum physics and has come about as a result of years of work and effort and is the final solution to many complicated multiple equations. Both the elementary and the post graduate are mathematics.

Similarly a prayer can also be a list of requests for those who are in grade I of their spiritual schooling. It can also be a silent simple look, glance or gaze, as well as a feeling or attitude. For the prayer to reach this latter level requires long periods of preparation and effort on the part of the person praying. Just as the case is with mathematics in schools, the various classes of the “spiritual school” also have prayers of various levels.

- a- Requests for comfortable life and fulfillment of desires and wants for external things.
- b- Requests for physical and mental health.
- c- Requests for forgiveness of sins.
- d- Requests to become a good, moral and spiritual being.
- e- Desire to develop a “pure heart” and nurture unwavering love for God.
- f- Desire to see and join God.

Prayer is the amusement and occupation of love. Here it appears appropriate to quote the passage for May 31st, from a book called “GOD CALLING”: **May 31 Prayer**

Without Words Hear and I answer. Spend much time in prayer. Prayer is of many kinds, but of whatever kind, prayer is the linking up of the soul and mind and heart to God. So that if it is only a glance of faith, a look or word of Love, or confidence, and no supplication is expressed, it yet follows that supply and all

necessary are secured. Because the soul, being linked to God, united to Him, receives in and through Him all things. And the soul, when in human form, needs too the things belonging to its habitation.

Prayer can be divided into several parts:

- a- Worship
- b- Supplication
- c- Glorification
- d- Faith
- e- Surrender
- f- Blessing
- g- Meditation

a- Worship

The purpose of worship as part of prayer is to show reverence and humility on the part of the person praying.

Wisdom's instruction is to fear the LORD, and humility comes before honor. (Proverbs 15:33)

One of the greatest impediments to the true prayer is the intellectual prowess. Just because of this, it is recommended that the better and smarter and wiser one becomes, one should also nurture humility to be able to receive God's grace. During the various services of the Armenian Apostolic Church, many times the deacon requests that the congregation partake in the worship of God by prostrating. During my childhood, I remember that many people would bring small pillows to church to put under their knees and during these calls, would actually get down on their knees and prostrate themselves with forehead touching the floor, as much as the Muslims do during their prayers. Today, we do not see even one person doing true prostration. A few will bend forward at the waist just a little. It appears that our ancestors were more humble then we are today. It is true that true worship is not the physical prostration, but rather the

mental one. At the same time we should not forget that our actions are the products of our thoughts and the outer reflects the inner. Was it not the same at the time of Jesus? The Jews had turned their temple into a bazaar. Jesus, with the whip at hand, threw all the vendors out of the temple. This also is an example of the “inner” reflected in the “outer”. Their minds, polluted with greed, had caused them to act in such a way that it also polluted (defiled) the temple. The whole story is also an analogy in that we (our bodies) are also temples of God and we constantly defile it with our polluted minds. We also need the revelation of Christ coming with whip at hand to clear the temple (us). Buyers and sellers represent the chitter-chatter of our thoughts. The head priest who has allowed them to open shop in the temple represents our EGO. Christ’s arrival overpowers the control of the EGO and calms the storms of thoughts and emotions in us, reestablishing the person with a “pure heart”.

b- Supplication

As mentioned above, supplication should not be the presentation of a shopping list of requests or desires. God knows what is needed for the individual. But the individual under the influence of the EGO desires a thousand and one things, whether they be essential, beneficial or useful to him or not. God has already given to the person everything essential and beneficial for that person. None the less, even this type of prayer also has its benefit, in that it reminds the individual of the sovereignty of God over him. It can also have its negative aspects. It is possible that a naïve individual, after having prayed for things that do not materialize might start losing faith in God altogether. For God, perhaps the acceptable supplication is the one for help to develop faith, hope and love. Armed with these three armors, one would be ready to defeat his EGO. The supplication then just becomes the beginning of his spiritual

journey. When the supplication is sincere and flows from the depths of his heart, it also moves God's mercy. It is said that if a supplicant takes one step towards God, God takes five steps towards him.

In their hearts humans plan their course, but the LORD establishes their steps.

(Proverbs 16:9)

c- Glorification

To glorify God should always be a part of one's prayers. Glorification is an expression of thanks for all the grace bestowed by God to the individual, for the life and the consciousness which is divine and illumines everything else. God Himself does not need glorification, but man has the need to glorify God. When the person glorifies God, he also declares God's sovereignty. By this, the EGO is diminished, which facilitates getting away from its control.

Remove wicked officials from the king's presence, and his throne will be established through righteousness. (Proverbs 25:5)

This in turn facilitates surrender.

d- Faith

As the churches have their faith described in the "Credo", and in the Apostolic Churches it is repeated every Sunday to remind the faithful, we also need to declare our faith in God every time we pray. Our faith that God knows what is best for us, faith in our relationship with God, His sovereignty and our surrender. Actions come from desires. Desires are born of beliefs. Beliefs are formed on the basis of information provided through our five senses to the mind, which is governed by the EGO. Therefore all are subject to change, the information, the belief and the ensuing actions. On the other hand, faith comes from a knowledge acquired through personal experience and it is unshakeable. A person

with true faith would be without fear and therefore brave and invincible. Due to the deceit of the EGO, doubt presents itself as meekness and we think that we are victorious. These are the blocks on the way of our spiritual journey. The person, whose mind is subservient to his senses and desires, cannot have faith in God.

No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money.

(Matthew 6:24)

The person who through his faith is able to control his emotions and desires, would be ready to become God's servant.

e- Surrender

As we had mentioned before, the "charioteer" of our lives appears to be the EGO. Surrender means to take the reigns of our lives from the EGO and to give them to our true Self, Christ.

Commit to the LORD whatever you do, and he will establish your plans. (Proverbs 16:3)

What is the role of prayer in surrendering? One of the greatest reasons for praying is fear and to some degree, hopelessness. Surprisingly, even devout atheists start praying during periods of great calamity. This springs forth from the inability of the EGO to comfort the individual. The individual, so devoted to the EGO all the time until the present calamity, comes to the realization of the EGO's impotence and starts praying to God, the only other source of comfort. This diminishes the hold of the EGO on his mind and that is enough for the power of God to move in. That power does not change events occurring, but it diminishes or eliminates the fear and the helplessness of the person, allowing him to act better and show even heroic deeds. It

allows the person to accept the situation and deal with it more effectively. This usually is the reason why difficult times in our lives can be more important and beneficial to us in our spiritual journey than all the happy and comfortable times.

**Because the LORD disciplines those he loves,
as a father the son he delights in.**

(Proverbs 3:12)

The difficult times help reduce the control of the EGO, allowing for the Light of Christ to shine through, of course only if the person has the vigilance and consciousness for true surrender. On the other hand, if the person is “asleep”, or better yet spiritually dead, he misses the opportunities presented to him to learn from them. On the Sea of Galilee, what would have happened to the disciples if they had not awakened Jesus who was sleeping in the boat? Surely they would have sank and drowned. They had the presence of mind to wake him up. Should we also not have the same presence of mind?

g- Blessing

A prayer should bestow blessings on everybody, on our family members, on our friends and also on our enemies. The person praying receives the same amount of blessings from God that he bestows on others. This type of prayer may be helpful to people that are far away. Quantum physics has shown that two electrons that previously had been in association, respond to each other. When one is subjected to some change, the other one, even though it may be on the other side of the universe undergoes the same change simultaneously, without any direct communication between the two. It appears that the electrons are more conscious of the unity of everything in God than humans are. We mostly see the diversity in the unity. This level of consciousness is the highest form of prayer. It appears that the whole universe

itself is a perpetual prayer. The experiment with the electrons seems to suggest that thoughts can have their effects on others even far away. Each thought radiates certain energy of a certain frequency. We know that thought processes are formed by the flow of electrical currents in the brain that can be recorded on an EEG. We also know that electrical currents generate magnetic fields.

Do not revile the king even in your thoughts, or curse the rich in your bedroom, because a bird in the sky may carry your words, and a bird on the wing may report what you say.

(Ecclesiastes 10:20)

The bird carrying the words is the broadcast energy of our thoughts. The following represents a true event and shows the power of a true heartfelt prayer on others. This story was told to me by my mother and represents an event that she lived through personally.

When she was 11 years old in 1915, in then the Ottoman Empire, the order came for all Armenians to take whatever meager belongings they could personally carry and amass at the train station for deportation. My grand-father had already passed away a few years earlier, of illness. Otherwise, being male and able bodied, he would have been killed already. My grandmother, with two children was getting ready, taking some food for them. Their neighbor had a mother who previously had suffered a stroke. The poor woman did not know what to do. Her mother was bedridden and could not walk and required constant care. This had been going on for a couple of years and there was no end in sight. She could not leave her behind. She would either be violently killed or die of starvation/dehydration

and she definitely could not take her with them. It is not as if they were allowed carts or horses. She was also taking care of her children. All the women of the street, including my grandmother and my mother, with her, knelt by the bed of the stricken woman and prayed in unison singing one of the songs from the Mass of the Armenian Apostolic Church called “Lord have mercy”. One hour later, the condition of the woman worsened and soon after she died. The priest was called and after a quick funeral, she was buried that evening. The next day, the neighbor and all the other Armenians of the city were deported. At least the daughter, among all other worries, did not have to worry about her mother.

God’s mercy comes whichever way is the best and good and beneficial. It appears that true prayers can have effects on others. According to (Genesis 18:32) God agrees to spare Sodom and Gomorrah only if 10 righteous people are found. It is obvious that our thoughts can even save the world of annihilation.

h- Meditation

Meditation is considered silent prayer. The purpose of meditation is to develop and nurture a “pure heart”. A mind that is fully alert, vigilant, without the floods of thoughts. In the “sermon on the mount”, Jesus also said:

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God. (Matthew 5:8)

Can there be a better prayer than wanting to see God?

We read once again:

But seek his kingdom, and these things will be given to you as well (Luke 12:31)

When the devotee sees God, or in other words, Christ is revealed through him, then the person would have glorified

God and also would spread God's blessings to all of those around himself. Since God, also has consented to be revealed through this person, that in itself is proof of the person's humility, faith and surrender.

Prayers do not change reality to suit the person praying, but they change the person to suit the reality. The true prayer elevates the individual's level of consciousness. This allows him to see the unity in diversity and increases his understanding of God's design. He realizes that all difficulties are for good reasons and faces them not with disdain or regret but with open arms and with joy. His will becomes one with God's will. This allows him to accept all that happens to him. Was it not the case with Jesus? He consented to be crucified and accepted even torture and death. Is it not true that during childbirth, the will of God is for that child to be part of His creation? This also coincides with the will of the mother to give birth to the child. The mother willingly tolerates all the pains of childbirth and despise all the pain, greets the newborn with a smiling face.

As a result of the control of the EGO, the individual, ignorant of his own true nature, creates a god (an idol) that he puts outside of himself and prays to a god that does not exist. The true prayer should be directed inward, so that all three, the body, the mind and the intellect become a laboratory for his investigations to eventually succeed in experiencing the presence of Christ within himself. When a person sees God separate from him, he also sees everybody else separate from him. God is in everyone, but it appears that at least, everyone does not have the consciousness of being in God.

The characteristics of reality are **existence, knowledge and bliss**. The mind of man is the means to reflect "the Light of God", the consciousness, as the moon reflects the light of the sun. According to the quality of their minds, people may

be lazy, busy or peaceful. The lazy man has no desires of any kind. He does not work, days pass as if he were asleep at all times.

Laziness brings on deep sleep, and the shiftless go hungry. (Proverbs 19:15)

The hungry in this verse refers to hungry of “spiritual bread”. The lazy person does not receive or partake of God’s abundant blessings. He also is part of God, therefore at least shares in His “existence”. Those who have busy minds are usually very active and productive members of society. It is thanks to these individuals that we enjoy all that civilization has to offer. They are also proof not only of “existence” but also of “knowledge”. But they, as well as most of humanity, miss the experience of “bliss”. That is also our right, privilege and gift to have. It is difficult for the rich to enter the kingdom of God. Here rich means a mind rich in thoughts.

Jesus looked at him and said, “How hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom of God! Indeed, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God.”(Luke 18:24-25)

There are very few that are “pure at heart”, meaning their minds are at peace and concentrated only on God. They have full control of their thoughts. They do not work as busy bees. Their activities are only the most essentials. Most other people’s activities are non-essential, unnecessary activities (make job projects). The busy-minded people wrongly consider them among the lazy ones. This is far from the truth. There is a major difference between the two groups. The mind of the lazy person is asleep. The mind of the “pure at heart” person is super awake, even much more than the person with the busy mind. Having experienced God, he is centered in Him. He lives in bliss. He does not act, not

because he is lazy, but because he knows that everything is as it should be and perfect, therefore there is no need to act. Do we ever read anywhere in the Bible that Jesus worked? But whenever necessary he cured the sick and even resurrected the dead. These individuals reveal the Truth fully, not just the existence and the knowledge but also the bliss.

To reach this level of bliss, the purpose of prayers should be to develop a “pure heart”. The mind is the key both to slavery and also to freedom. It is up to the individual as to how that mind would be used. One can control it and center it on Christ, but it appears that the great majority of humanity has given the control to their EGOs. The EGO, being selfish and a liar, to secure its continued control generates a flood of thoughts that keeps the mind constantly busy. This veil of thoughts prevents the individual from “seeing” or rather experiencing his true self, namely Christ.

A heart at peace gives life to the body, but envy rots the bones. (Proverbs 14:30)

The “heart at peace” is the calm mind cleared of all thoughts. It is imperative for the individual to assert sovereignty and control over his own mind. It appears impossible to stop the flood of thoughts, but it is possible to be fully awake and vigilant and consciously observe the various thoughts rise and disappear, basically denying ownership and objectifying them. The concentration should be on the split-second mental quietude (mind void of thoughts) that exists between two consecutive thoughts. If this exercise is carried out as often as possible and for as long as possible without despair, sooner or later through the crack of the “veil” the individual will “notice” or experience, even if only for a split second, his true self. This would give him the impetus to continue indicating that he is on the right path. When the attention and concentration is not centered on

the thoughts themselves, their “flood” gradually dries up. This increases the silence (thought silence) between successive thoughts and helps lift the “veil” more. The individual experiences his true Self, and Christ becomes fully revealed through him because he has developed a “pure heart”. The grace of God fills such a person. It is true that we are all endowed with the grace of God. We know this intellectually and not experientially, but the person with the “pure heart” also experiences this grace when he becomes one with God. He experiences the meaning of immortality, and then and only then he can say: “I am in this world but **...I am not of this world.**” (John 8:23) This is the true surrender that emanates from proper knowledge and comprehension and not from despair. The whole of humanity seeks physical, mental (emotional) and intellectual peace and comfort. Many a times, it has been proven that the EGO is incapable of providing permanent peace. The next psalm tells us of the proper prayer:

“Be still, and know that I am God; ...”

(Psalms 46:10)

“Be still” means to be quiet and to cease activities and thoughts to develop a “pure Heart”.

Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will. (Romans 12:2)

“Renewing of the mind” means to concentrate on the silence between thoughts, rather than the thoughts, themselves. This is how the true self can be seen through the crack in the veil. The thoughts arise from the EGO and its tendencies and attachments to the illusory world as well as its memories of the past and its desires and anticipations of the future. The last two do not exist. No person can physically live in the

past or the future. During an entire lifetime, one can only live the present. Therefore, the attention should be on the present event only and not the regrets of the past or the anticipations of the future. God does nothing to a person from outside, but only with and through the person. Just because of this we have the following wise saying: “God helps those who help themselves”. Not to block the graces of God is the duty of the individual. We read:

“Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to them; then come and offer your gift. (Matthew 5:23-24)

The “gift” is the prayer. According to this verse the true prayer should be with a “pure heart”. Any one with a “pure heart” could no longer have desires and attachments, prejudices, pessimism, self pity, complaints, jealousy, hatred, “pain” or sorrow, misunderstanding or miscomprehension, fear, neediness or be wanting, limitations of any kind, anger or passion and discontent or displeasure.

Prayer is not a “trade” subject to bargaining. Some prayers remind us of bargaining. “If my child is cured and saved from this illness, I promise to go to church every Sunday and light a candle for the next year or Promise to make a sizable donation to the church or some other humanitarian organization or pay the university tuition of a poor student”. The true supplicant that is sincerely praying should be ready only to give and not to ask to receive. Family members, friends, acquaintances and enemies come and go in our lives. The individual is born alone and dies alone. It is therefore preferable that instead of bargaining, the individual should light the “Light” of God within himself. The first step is the realization of his true identity. This is

followed by awakening and an increase in our level of consciousness which allows perception of the “Light” of God, Christ.

The human spirit is the lamp of the LORD that sheds light on one’s inmost being.

(Proverbs 20:27)

At the onset, this spiritual journey appears to be very difficult. The person engaged in such “prayers” usually looks for validation that what he is doing is helpful and will yield results. Despite all initial disappointments, perseverance is essential.

Hope deferred makes the heart sick, but a longing fulfilled is a tree of life. (Proverbs 13:12)

After a long period of patience and perseverance, when the person praying is gradually able to eliminate all that was born of the EGO and develops a “pure heart”, he may suddenly feel vulnerable and may fear. This occurs just before the revelation of Christ in him. He should not fear but trust. This period of emptiness before the revelation of Christ is important and is indicated in the next verse.

The horse is made ready for the day of battle, but victory rests with the LORD.

(Proverbs 21:31)

The ready horse is the ready mind, but the revelation is from God. The purpose of the true prayer is to literally bring forth the Christ within to full revelation and not just intellectually. The supplication and prayerfulness is not an act, condition or state for a short period of time, certain hour of the day, or just Sundays, or on Holy Days such as Christmas or Easter. It should be a constant in the individual’s life, in all his acts, thoughts or feelings. This does not mean to sit with eyes closed in “meditation”, although that may also be part of it, if the person is so inclined. We live in this world and we need to work, to earn money to provide food, shelter and clothing

to ourselves and others. We need to socialize and rejoice with friends. But the mind needs to be centered on Christ at all times. One should see Christ in all, everybody and everything. We should allow Christ to think, feel and act through us. This means that we should not be attached to the results of any of our actions.

Commit to the LORD whatever you do, and he will establish your plans. (Proverbs 16:3)

Those who become hermits and retire into isolation are trying to facilitate the victory against the EGO by withdrawing from the EGO's playground. But it should be known that one can be the greatest hermit in the crowded marketplace and also just the opposite as far from being a hermit, isolated on top of a mountain. On this point, it is appropriate to present a short Indian story:

As it is well known, in India there are a lot of renunciants ("ascetics", known as "sanyasi"s), that have withdrawn from worldly pleasures and actions, and as a sign of humility even beg for their daily food. They wear a simple orange garment as a sign of their renunciation. One of these renunciants happens to be sitting in the same location, all day long, in apparent meditation. It so happened that across the street, in a small house, a woman whose husband had died lived with her 2 small children. Not having any proper source of income, she engaged in one of the oldest professions of the world. The ascetic witnessed all day long the chain of male clients going in and out of her house and knew exactly what was going on. He constantly thought of her as a "fallen" woman that would rot in hell after death, or have the life of a lowly animal during her next reincarnation. On her part, the woman also saw

the ascetic and longed so much to be like him, saintly, not involved with worldly concerns and praying at all times, and used to cry about her fate. It so happened that in a few years time, the hermit and the woman died, surprisingly, on the same day and they both presented in front of God for judgment. God looked at the life of the woman and after pondering, called one of his angels and instructed him to take her to one of the bright parts of heaven to be served by a couple of angels. The hermit, when he heard this, became ecstatic. If this sinner was getting such treatment, his would be a thousand times better, for he had passed all his days praying. God examined his life as well and without much debate asked the angel to escort him to hell. The ascetic was irate, and demanded explanation. God said that day in and day out your mind was on that woman and on her acts of prostitution. Did you know that day in and day out her mind was on you and on being saintly? She did what she had to do to provide for two small children. She had no other choice. She was not enjoying it and even during the act her mind was on Me and was asking for forgiveness.

In this day and age, humanity's attention span has shortened significantly. This is clearly seen in the rapid scene changes of today's visual media. The stories evolve very fast.

The human mind is like a restless monkey that jumps from branch to branch on a tree. The mind also jumps from thought to thought incessantly. Regardless, both the monkey as well as the mind can be trained to sit quietly. Of course, it is harder to train a monkey that is wild, furious or mad. Today's human mind, with its shortened attention span, is like the wild, mad and furious monkey. It is a shame that the

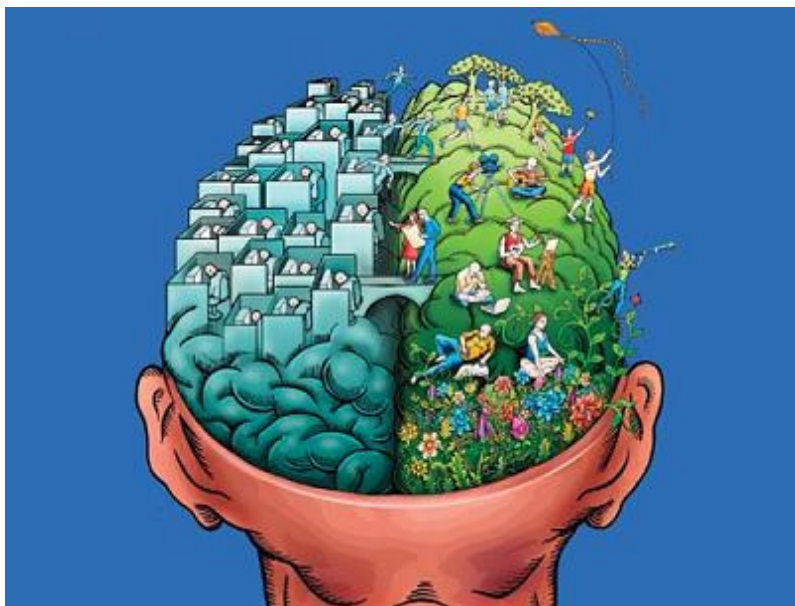
new generations have lost the capacity to train the mind. In the past, at least in the elementary and junior high school years, students were given home work, to “learn by heart” certain poems etc. This is no longer considered a worth while undertaking and a waste of time. It no longer forms part of any school curriculum. The students of today do not even learn or memorize the multiplication tables. It is easy to see the effect of this in society. Even the simplest arithmetic is impossible for them without a calculator. To “learn by heart” or memorization trains the brain as well as the mind. The important thing is not the subject being memorized, but the act of memorization. In learning memory work (learning by heart), the students need to concentrate on the words at hand with multiple repetitions. This helps form new synapses between the brain cells and also new circuits within the brain. These persist throughout the individual’s life. Is it not better to use our brains more effectively? I feel these exercises should be re-introduced into the school curricula, unless we prefer our children not to be able to use their brains and minds more effectively.

Start children off on the way they should go, and even when they are old they will not turn from it. (Proverbs 22:6)

In the present era, the education of children is focused on training the left brain. This allows the child to learn to live in this present societal environment, to make a comfortable living and enjoy as much of recent technological advancements (toys). This is what is considered to be of utmost importance. The left side of the brain categorizes and compartmentalizes everything.

The heart of the wise inclines to the right, but the heart of the fool to the left.(Ecclesiastes 10:2)

The wise person trains the right side of his brain and the ignorant (fool), the left.



**Long life is in her right hand; in her left hand
are riches and honor.** (Proverbs 3:16)

“The long life” is the experience of eternity, which is an experience that comes from the right side of the brain. “The riches” is the riches of thoughts and is the function of the left brain.

**Restraining her is like restraining the wind or
grasping oil with the (Rt) hand.** (Proverbs 27:16)

We need to change the way we use our brains. From a predominantly left-brain function, we need to switch to a predominantly right brain function. According to the Bible, the revelation of Christ appears to be a right brain function.

Mankind is only a novice in the use of the right brain, but an expert in the use of the left brain. Because of this, he even has classified prayer. Prayer before meals, prayer post meals, prayer for the sick, prayer before going to bed, prayer after waking up, prayers for the souls of departed loved ones,

... etc. There is absolutely nothing wrong in the classification of the prayers. But it is essential to know what it is that we are praying for.

Let us analyze a simple prayer that is said just before meals in the Armenian community. This is the gist of the prayer, a paraphrased translation:

“Let us eat this meal in peace, that has been prepared for us by our Lord. Lord, blessed is your gift. Amen.”

The meaning of the words are very clear and simple. It certainly does not appear to require any explanation. But what is the true purpose of this prayer? The purpose is to come to a realization that a plant or an animal has given up, sacrificed its life so that we can get our nutrition and guarantee our survival. Therefore, this prayer is nothing but an affirmation by the person that there has been a sacrifice, by the plant or animal, for him.

The North American aboriginals' main source of food was the buffalo. For centuries they had hunted them to ensure their own survival. They had eaten the meat and also made use of their hides. Before each hunt, they used to have an elaborate ceremony. This was their prayer. The purpose was to thank God (Manitou), and also the spirit of the buffalo. They hunted only what was absolutely necessary for their use and not any more. They co-existed for centuries. When Europeans arrived, out of greed, they indiscriminately killed the buffalo in order to profit from the sale of their hides. They, neither said “prayers”, gave thanks nor conducted hunting ceremonies. This resulted in the near annihilation of the species.

The original version of the above prayer says “prepared for

us”. Some object to this and have changed it to, “gifted to us”. There is no need for such a change. This is the result of ignorance. God created the plant, the animal; hence, the meat and also the person preparing the food. Did we not say before that the whole of the Creation represented “God’s body”? Then who is the preparer? Who is the gift giver? What is the sacrifice? Who is the consumer? I am certain it was with this in mind that during the Mass of the Armenian Apostolic Church the following line is uttered by the priest:

**“And thine of thine own unto thee we offer
from all and for all.”**

When the life of the devotee becomes a prayer in itself, then there would be no need for classified prayers. There are different stages of devotion. These are:

- 1- To see God in all things and in all persons. This is the peak of devotion. These people’s entire lives become one long continuous prayer.
- 2- To see God separate from the Creation. They also worship God. They respect and show pity towards the weak. But they tend to avoid those who do not worship God.
- 3- To see God only in idols, or only in church. It usually is impossible for them to pray other than with “classified” prayers.

Therefore, what is prayer and what is its purpose and its power? The whole world seems to pray at all times. Many of them thinking that they are praying to God, they pray to their EGOs, because the EGO is the “charioteer” of their minds.

**An unfriendly person pursues selfish ends and
against all sound judgment starts quarrels.**

(Proverbs 18:1)

The state of humanity is similar to a man who looks for lost car keys everywhere over and over again for hours, ignorant (unaware) of the fact that the keys are already in his

own pocket. Man also throughout his life seeks for God everywhere, ignorant (oblivious) of the fact that God is already within him (in his pocket). We ask for God's mercy or grace, and to us it appears that that act of mercy or grace is dependent on God's whim. God in His magnanimity and being the perfect expression of love has not even kept that privilege for Himself. Being the source of perfect love, in Him there is no concept of discrimination. God's mercy and grace He pours on everyone equally, without reservation. When the prodigal son returned home, his father did not discriminate against him because of his iniquities, in favor of his other son. Instead, he slaughtered and served his best calf.

When we open the curtains of all the rooms in the house, the sunlight fills and brightens them all. The sun and for that matter the sunlight does not have the freedom to brighten some rooms and keep from entering others. It shines everywhere and incessantly. Our job is to open the curtains. When light enters the room, the whole room brightens up irrespective of the fact that it may have been in total darkness for a very long time. In a split second the darkness disappears. Some consider impossible the revelation of God as did Solomon.

then I saw all that God has done. No one can comprehend what goes on under the sun. Despite all their efforts to search it out, no one can discover its meaning. Even if the wise claim they know, they cannot really comprehend it.
(Ecclesiastes 8:17)

But we know that Jesus succeeded. The following verse indicates this reality:

For those who find me find life and receive favor from the LORD. (Proverbs 8:35)

It is true that we can not bring on the revelation of Christ, the

same way we can not make ourselves go to sleep. We can only prepare ourselves to go to sleep. The revelation of God's mercy or grace is also similar. To ensure the revelation, all we can do is prepare ourselves, namely open the curtains, the curtains of a flood of thoughts. In a split second, the mercy and grace of God surges through the individual, as if filling his full being, wiping away all traces of ignorance. At that moment, Christ is revealed through that person. The devotee can never say "I saw God" because the idea and identification with the "I" also disappears. At that moment "the knower", "the knowing" and "the known" merge and the trinity becomes one unity and pure consciousness.

The goodness of God pours like rain on everyone and everywhere. It is up to us to plow and plant the seeds to benefit from the gift of the rains.

At the onset of this chapter I had indicated that Clement of Alexandria had said "prayer was a conversation with God". But the true prayer, the devotee, directs to himself, the Christ within, so that he can open the curtains and plow the land. Here are examples as to how saints pray:

PRAYER OF ST. THERESA

May today there be peace within.

May you trust God that you are exactly where you are meant to be.

May you not forget the infinite possibilities that are born of faith.

May you use those gifts that you have received, and pass on the love that has been given to you.

May you be content knowing you are a child of God. Let this presence settle into your bones, and allow your soul the freedom to sing, dance, praise and love.

It is there for each and every one of us.

THE PRAYER OF ST. FRANCIS

**Lord, make me an instrument of thy peace.
Where there is hatred, let me sow love;
Where there is injury, pardon;
Where there is doubt, faith;
Where there is despair, hope;
Where there is darkness, light;
Where there is sadness, joy;**

**O Divine Master, grant that I may not so
much seek
To be consoled as to console,
To be understood as to understand,
To be loved as to love:
For it is in giving that we receive,
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned,
It is in dying to self that we are born to
eternal life.**

* * *

It is also apropos to read “The lamentations of Nareg”





THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father who art in heaven.

Hallowed be thy name.

Thy kingdom come.

Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread;

And forgive us our debts,

as we also have forgiven our debtors;

and lead us not into temptation,

but deliver us from the evil one.

For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory

For ever and ever. Amen.

INTERPRETATION OF THE LORD'S PRAYER

In relation to this topic, it would be appropriate to discuss the meaning and purpose of the frequently spoken "The Lord's Prayer".

"Our Father"

Why do we say our "Father" and not our "Mother" or better yet, our "Lord"? God does not have a gender. God is not male nor female; therefore it would have been more appropriate to say our "Lord". But Jesus chose the words "Our Father". He could just as easily have said "Our Mother". During Jesus' life, the Jewish people were a patriarchal society. To say "Our Mother" would definitely have been unacceptable to such a society. In the eastern religion of Hinduism the expression "Mother" is used for God. Why "Father" or "Mother" at all? A male child, or for

that matter, a female child, will always try to imitate his or her father and/or mother respectively. We read:

... parents are the pride of their children.

(Proverbs 17:6)

The child also has love, respect, unwavering trust, faith in his parents and hope that they will always be there for him/her. He depends on their care and feels completely safe in their presence. Jesus had said, in one of the above quotations, not to be verbose while praying. To this end the words “Our Father” implies all that the individual should feel for God, as a child feels for his/her parents.

“in heaven”

Where is heaven? For most, common belief is that heaven is somewhere “up” above the clouds, to the point that one of the astronauts, while in orbit around the earth, indignantly had made the comment that he had not found or seen heaven. He certainly showed his level of sophistication and understanding. The Bible clearly says that our bodies are the temple of God and God lives in us. If God is in heaven and at the same time He lives in us, then it is logical to assume that heaven must also be in us. Each person can say the same; therefore, in which person is heaven? Since it is in everyone, it must be outside of the time and space continuum. Heaven is eternity. Just with the two words “In Heaven”, we profess that God is eternal, His being omnipresent, omnipotent and all knowing and also profess His sovereignty.

“hallowed be your name”

Both in the Old as well as in the New Testaments we read that the power of God’s name can be immense:

Glorify the LORD with me; let us exalt his name together. (Psalms 34:3)

for, “Everyone who calls on the name of the

Lord will be saved.” (Romans 10:13)

... therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise—the fruit of lips that openly profess his name. (Hebrews 13:15)

... Very truly I tell you, my Father will give you whatever you ask in my name. (John 16:23)

How to exalt God's name? How can professing His name be a sacrifice? How can we be saved just by saying His name? According to John, the secret is Christ. Everything should be by and through the name of Christ. “Hallowed be your name” is a wish on the part of the person praying. Is it possible that for the name of God to be holy, It is dependent upon the wish of the speaker? Whether the person wishes it or not, God's name is holy for eternity and not dependent on the person's wishes. And, what is God's name? The Old Testament says It is “Jehovah” and the New Testament preaches the name “Christ” most frequently, which means “Savior”. Many individuals commonly refer to God as “Lord”. Hindus have given 1000 names to God. They also believe that by repeating or reciting the thousand names of God, they get merits. There may be some truth in this because the repetition of His name may concentrate the mind on God, instead of other harmful, distractive thoughts, but only if the repetition is not just a habitual regurgitation of a series of memorized names that come out automatically, without thought or concentration. In the Armenian Apostolic Church, during the night service on Holy Thursday depicting the capture, torture and trial of Jesus, the whole congregation, while on their knees, sing the short phrase, “Lord have mercy”, 40 times, repeating God's “Lord” name forty times. I doubt very much the repetition of God's name was the intent of Jesus, when he said “Hallowed be your name”. Let us see what the Bible says:

Whatever exists has already been named, and

what humanity is has been known
(Ecclesiastes 6:10)

Previously we had discussed man as being adept in using the left side of his brain and therefore, has classified everything. The Bible also says that all names are given by man, and everything within the Creation is named and classified. God is in His creation and the whole of the universe that is named represents His “body”. Therefore all the “names” in the universe are also God’s names because they all represent a small part of Him. During the prayer, when we say, “hallowed be your name”, we actually express the wish to see God in everything and in everybody, so that they all look and feel holy to us. This is a wish for a change in oneself, one of awakening and an increase in the level of consciousness, so that we can see the Unity in multiplicity. Let us read:

**in all your ways submit to him, and he will
make your paths straight.** (Proverbs 3:6)

The King James version says “acknowledge”, instead of “submit”. The Armenian classical translation, It says “know him”. In this context, the Armenian classical and to some degree the King James versions, are more appropriate.

**A good name is better than fine perfume, and
the day of death better than the day of birth.**
(Ecclesiastes 7:1)

If we see God everywhere and in everything, then all “names” become good names meaning “holy”. This is possible when we see Unity in multiplicity and only possible with the “death” of the EGO. Exactly for this reason it says better is the day of death (death of the EGO), than the day of birth, of the EGO.

“your kingdom come”

Everyone’s wish is to go to heaven after death and continue living in God’s presence forever. This type of

thinking is the lazy man's wish. This part of the prayer also appears to be a wish expressed by the person praying. What is this wish? To wait until the day that God (Christ) decides to come with his armies to take over the world from the hands of the lawless, by force, by destroying them and establishing His kingdom on earth. Who are the just that will deserve to live in His kingdom? The realization of such a wish would be the destruction of all of humanity. The Bible tells us that the Kingdom of God has already come, that He is in us and our bodies are temples of God. It behooves us to actually get to know this reality not intellectually but experientially. We have to get to know that all that we see in this universe is only part of an illusion and not reality. The only Truth (reality) is God. (See the chapter on "What is the Truth"). Our prayers should reflect this type of understanding so that some day ignorance is lifted and God is revealed in all His Glory. All we need to do is to neutralize the EGO. To get rid of the "wicked officials" (the EGO) and present the "poor", the pure mind cleared of all thoughts (poor in thoughts).

remove wicked officials from the king's presence, and his throne will be established through righteousness. (Proverbs 25:5)

If a king judges the poor with fairness, his throne will be established forever.

(Proverbs 29:14)

"your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven"

This is another wish on the part of the person praying. But, how to know God's will? In the past, during the "crusades" as well as many other events in history and currently under the name of "Jihad", man has committed atrocities, destructions, genocides and wars in the name of God. Who really knows the will of God? The realization of this wish on the part of the person praying is also dependent

on the person him/herself. This requires total surrender. When the individual fully surrenders, becomes an instrument in the “hands of God” and no longer acts for himself but carries out the will of God, he is not the one acting, but has Christ acting through him. Because he is not the one carrying out the action according to his own will, he also will not be attached to the results of the actions. This also frees him from attachments. The duty of the person is to be a good instrument in the “hands” of Christ. When ignorance is overcome with the right experiential knowledge and Christ is fully revealed through the person, then the two become as one and act as one. Their wills, therefore, will also be the same. This shows fulfillment of his above wish. All such actions will therefore be with love and for the benefit of all. Those who say, they are doing the will of God and harm another person or animal, have no connection with God and are carrying out the will of their own EGOs.

“Give us today our daily bread.”

On the part of the supplicant, this no longer appears to be a wish, but a request. Realizing his own impotence in providing for himself, he asks that God give him what he can not get on his own. Previously we had mentioned that when a supplicant takes one step toward God, God takes five steps toward him. But it is imperative that the supplicant take that first step. The following verses indicate this:

A man’s heart plans his way, But the LORD directs his steps. (Proverbs 16:9)

You did not choose Me, but I chose you ...

(John 15:16)

What is it that the supplicant is requesting? Is it the “bread”, the food he needs to eat daily for sustenance of his physical body so that he will not go hungry? It is most certain that the word “bread” mentioned by Jesus is not the food we eat. The “bread” he talks about is the “bread of life”, the spiritual

bread, the graces of the Holy Spirit. Therefore the request of the supplicant is to receive God's grace. We read:

**Do not love sleep, lest you come to poverty;
Open your eyes, and you will be satisfied with
bread.** (Proverbs 20:13)

**The LORD will not allow the righteous soul to
famish, But He casts away the desire of the
wicked.** (Proverbs 10:3)

**The righteous eats to the satisfying of his soul,
But the stomach of the wicked shall be in want.**
(Proverbs 13:25)

Why daily bread and what is the meaning and purpose of "daily"? Are we to pray each day for that day's graces? Man's thoughts are usually centered on past memories and future anticipations. As was mentioned previously, one can not physically live in the past or the future. Throughout our lives, we can only live in the present. By indicating daily, the supplicant is requesting the grace and the ability to be mentally centered only in the present. Because the present is eternal, his request is also to experience that eternity. This is not unending time but to be outside of time. Past and future belong to time, eternity does not.

As one can get ready to go to sleep, he can not make himself fall asleep, but within a split second, sleep may take his level of consciousness from a waking level to sleep level. He also can not make Christ to reveal Himself through him. But he can prepare himself for this revelation and it is possible that, in a split second, his consciousness may change and the Light of Christ may fill his total being. One should be ready at all times as the five wise virgins that were waiting for the bridegroom, not knowing when He would arrive. One should not be as the other foolish five whose lamps ran out of oil and thus missed the arrival of the bridegroom. We should get ourselves ready and wait

patiently at all times. We also read:

Watch therefore, for you do not know when the master of the house is coming—in the evening, at midnight, at the crowing of the rooster, or in the morning (Mark 13:35)

When you sit down to eat with a ruler, Consider carefully what *is* before you; And put a knife to your throat If you *are* a man given to appetite. Do not desire his delicacies, For they *are* deceptive food. Do not overwork to be rich; Because of your own understanding, cease! Will you set your eyes on that which is not? For *riches* certainly make themselves wings; They fly away like an eagle *toward* heaven. Do not eat the bread of a miser, Nor desire his delicacies; For as he thinks in his heart, so *is* he. “Eat and drink!” he says to you, But his heart is not with you. The morsel you have eaten, you will vomit up, And waste your pleasant words. (Proverbs 23:1-8)

The “ruler” is the EGO. “What is before you” (the feast) represents the illusion of all the worldly attractions. “Man given to appetite” is the man with desires. “Put a knife to your throat” means to resist the desires and to not be swayed and misled by them. “The delicacies are deceptive food” asserts that they are not real but an illusion. “Do not overwork to be rich” suggests not to have “riches” of thoughts and “cease” suggests that we stop the flood of thoughts. “Will you set your eyes on that which is not?” also means, “are you going to desire something that is an illusion?” “They fly away like an eagle *toward* heaven.” “They” show themselves to be real and most-high, but they are just an illusion. The rest is self-explanatory.

And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.

Superficially it appears to be some type of bargaining; at the same time, a request for forgiveness of “debts”, namely sins to the degree that we also forgive others. This last part is the bargaining part. The bargaining appears to be righteous and may force us to be more tolerant, forgiving and civil toward others and even our enemies. Is this what Jesus meant, when he used the word “debt” and not the word “sin”? One of the major weakness of man is not to own up to responsibilities. Starting from the book of Genesis, we see that man has never accepted responsibility for his condition. We see that Adam, for his fall from God’s grace blames Eve. Eve also, in her turn, blames the serpent. The poor serpent, not being a human being, does not blame anybody else. Man is responsible for all his thoughts and deeds which are born of thoughts. These thoughts and deeds give rise to reactions which in turn give rise to our “debts”. Each person is also responsible for his own character which is dependent on his thoughts and habits. On the basis of these, the individual, therefore, is responsible for everything that happens to him in this life. Whatever situation he finds himself in is the result of previous reactions. Even when the act committed against him is perpetrated by another individual, he should take on the responsibility and consider the perpetrator as a tool in the hand of God and not to blame that person. Jesus knew he was going to be crucified and willingly accepted His fate. Even when He had the opportunity, He did not want to escape His fate. He told Judas to carry out his duty. Jesus did not blame him. Judas, self-conscious, blamed himself and committed suicide by hanging. Who was the guilty one? Judas was only an instrument in the “hands” of God, carrying out His will. Jesus did not blame the Jews nor did He blame the Romans. He instead said: “Father forgive

them, for they know not what they do”. With this outlook, one should take all blame and responsibility upon oneself. By this attitude, an individual automatically would have forgiven all that appeared to be instrumental in his misery. In fact, not that he would have forgiven them, he would not even have blamed them in the first place. Therefore there would be nothing to forgive. Only then would God also forgive his “debts” (sins). Jesus did not say, I forgive them, but requested that their actions not become their “debts”. It is interesting to read the following:

Whoever rewards evil for good, Evil will not depart from his house. (Proverbs 17:13)

Do not say, “I will recompense evil”; Wait for the LORD, and He will save you.

(Proverbs 20:22)

It is best not to have any “debts” at all. These “debts” are born of thoughts and also the deeds that follow. It therefore behooves us to curtail our thoughts, and have good, loving and helpful thoughts only. The deeds that follow such thoughts can not be anything other than good, loving and helpful also. One should not even be attached to the results of these noble deeds, so that they can be the deeds of God. When the deeds do not belong to him then they also can not generate reactions for him, therefore there would be no “debts” at all to worry about.

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one, For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

The first statement in this section has been the subject of long standing debate among theologians. Some feel that it was added later and that Jesus did not speak these words. For them, it was difficult to reconcile the God of love of the New Testament with a God that would lead us to temptation. Every single word uttered by Jesus is well thought of and

very apropos and is said for a specific reason and purpose. There is absolutely no contradiction with the idea of a loving God.

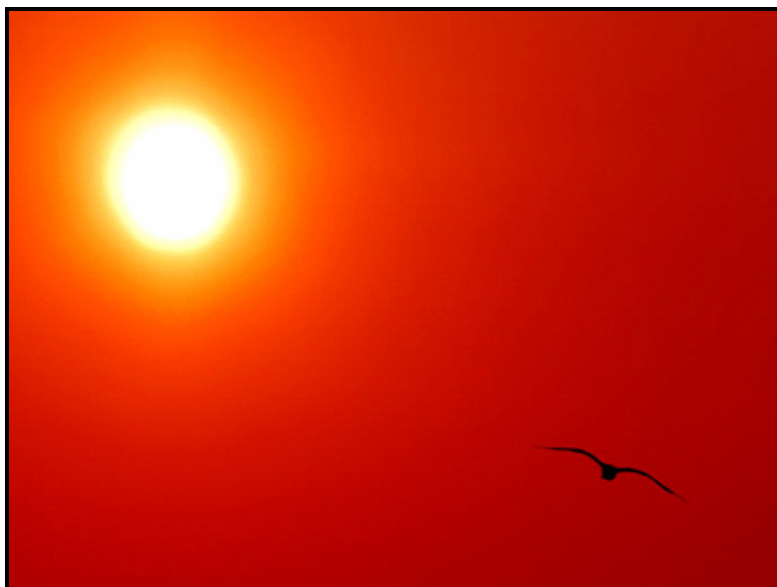
Is it not the world, and for that matter, the whole of the universe that is God's creation? If we accept that God is the only Truth, then the creation which includes the Earth and all life on it, is nothing but an illusion just like the people and the scenes on the screen in a movie theater. The creation that we seem to take so seriously and as reality is nothing but a movie playing on the screen of the universe. Man, swayed and lied to by the EGO (evil), is tempted by the apparent glitter of the world, thinking it to be real. Preoccupied by this illusion, thinking it to be real, he forgets his true Self also. He becomes a slave of the world and solidly attached to it. Ignorance conquers his mind. The temptation gives rise to addictions, and the same as a drug addict, we lose the ability to distinguish the beneficial from the harmful and the real from the unreal.

Let us interpret allegorically the story of Adam and Eve. Adam represents man's Self (being), Eve represents the EGO and the serpent the illusory creation. The EGO is tempted and deceived by the serpent, in other words, the illusory world. In turn Adam, the person, is tempted and deceived by the EGO (Eve), thinking that the EGO is his true self. We should not forget that Eve was created from Adam's rib, therefore actually is part of him. Adam also eats the forbidden fruit and forgets his divine nature. The fruit of the tree of knowledge gives Adam the ability to distinguish between good and evil. This is when duality is born, me and them. Man henceforth, identifying with his EGO, becomes content to live a life of illusion in the continuum of time and space, instead of existing in "heaven" and in eternity. In the realm of time, all is subject to change. This change is the root of all misery. To tear ourselves away from this attach-

ment to this illusion, we need to change the direction of our thoughts from the external illusory world inwards to the True Self within us, Christ. When the Kingdom of God is revealed to him, then he is also “delivered from the evil” (EGO). Christ reflects through him fully, and he also comes to a full realization that the creation has come about in bliss, it exists in bliss and should it return to its source, it will also be in bliss. He sees God everywhere, in every single person, and in everything, from the smallest subatomic particle to the greatest galaxies. Only then he can say, not with belief but with faith “Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen”.

Prayer is not asking. It is a longing of the soul.
(Gandhi)





Prayer is not asking.
It is a longing of the soul.
It is daily admission of one's
weakness.

It is better in prayer
to have a heart without words
than words without a heart.
(Gandhi)



When first the stars were made and
planets seven,
Already was it told of me in Heaven
That God had chosen me
to sing His Vine,
And in my dust
had thrown the vinous leaven.
(Omar Khayyam)



-VIII-
WHAT ARE
ASTROLOGY
AND
NUMEROLOGY?



WHAT ARE ASTROLOGY AND NUMEROLOGY?

WHAT IS ASTROLOGY?

The great majority of the organized churches and denominations condemn astrology as being the devil's work. They base this on certain verses of the Old Testament. One of the most important being:

“All the counsel you have received has only worn you out! Let your astrologers come forward, those stargazers who make predictions month by month, let them save you from what is coming upon you. Surely they are like stubble; the fire will burn them up. They cannot even save themselves from the power of the flame. These are not coals for warmth; this is not a fire to sit by. (Isaiah 47:13-14)

If we read the full chapter, we will see that the curse is not directed to astrology but to the virgin daughters of Babylon as indicated in verse 1 of the chapter. It is important also to interpret the utterance figuratively. In the same chapter in verse 10 we read:

You have trusted in your wickedness and have said, ‘No one sees me.’ Your wisdom and knowledge mislead you when you say to yourself, ‘I am, and there is none besides me.’

This tends to indicate that the curse is not even for the virgin daughters of Babylon, but it is against the EGO and selfishness. In those days, science was basically comprised of astrology. Therefore, the curse was also directed toward the pride and arrogance that the day's scientific knowledge imparted to the person. Today, science has expanded to encompass many branches of study. Astrology is almost

forgotten as a science. If the knowledge of today's sciences similarly causes one to be self-conceited, arrogant and megalomaniac, then it is very possible that such a person may also be cursed by some other person. Some may falsely think that it is not the person but the scientific knowledge they have that is being cursed. The following quotation is also used as an example against astrology:

When you enter the land the LORD your God is giving you, do not learn to imitate the detestable ways of the nations there. Let no one be found among you who sacrifices their son or daughter in the fire, who practices divination or sorcery, interprets omens, engages in witchcraft, or casts spells, or who is a medium or spiritist or who consults the dead. Anyone who does these things is detestable to the LORD; because of these same detestable practices the LORD your God will drive out those nations before you. ¹³ You must be blameless before the LORD your God. (Deuteronomy 18:9-12)

We need to be careful not to jump to wrong conclusions. There is no reference to astrology in these verses. The caution is against sorcery. Astrology is not sorcery or fortune telling and should also not be used as such. The following quotation is also a caution against worshipping the sun, the moon or other "stars". The knowledge about them is not forbidden, just the worship of them is forbidden:

And when you look up to the sky and see the sun, the moon and the stars—all the heavenly array—do not be enticed into bowing down to them and worshipping things the LORD your God has apportioned to all the nations under heaven. (Deuteronomy 4:19)

In fact, in antiquity within the Greek and Roman societies,

some of the constellations were worshiped as gods. Even older civilizations also have made similar mistakes, including the Hebrews. (This will be discussed later.) One should also not forget that as mentioned above, any science, be it astrology or more contemporary sciences, may give the knower a feeling of superiority and pride and result in self-worship. Then, the caution would not be against the science, but against the arrogance and egoism. All sciences are neutral. One may make use of their knowledge for good and beneficial purposes or may use them for evil and destructive purposes.

“Do not eat any meat with the blood still in it.

“Do not practice divination or seek omens.

(Leviticus 19:26)

The above verse is against divination and not astrology. The following verse is also against magic, sorcery and consulting mediums.

“He sacrificed his children in the fire in the Valley of Ben Hinnom, practiced divination and witchcraft, sought omens, and consulted mediums and spiritists. He did much evil in the eyes of the LORD, arousing his anger.”

(2 Chronicles 33:6)

Let us see what is written in Genesis about astrology:

“And God said, “Let there be lights in the vault of the sky to separate the day from the night, and let them serve as signs to mark sacred times, and days and years, and let them be lights in the vault of the sky to give light on the earth.” And it was so.” (Genesis 1:14-15)

It is written that the “lights” are put there to determine days, years and certainly centuries and eras, and to mark sacred times. Is not our duty to advance understanding of those “signs”? The purpose of astrology is not to make predictions,

but only to understand the signs. When one sees flames, one does not have to make a prediction that something will be consumed by the fire, but rather understand that something is burning. The magi did not use divination to foretell the birth of Jesus, but by using their knowledge of astrology and understanding the stars, they knew about the birth. (This will be discussed later.) If this knowledge was against God's will and born of the devil, does one think that God would have appeared to them in their dream? The one that was foretelling the future about Jesus' birth was really Isaiah, but for some unknown reason we do not call that foretelling the future, but instead call it prophesy, and it becomes acceptable. Is it possible that Isaiah also used astrology to come to such a prediction? If astrology had been a "negative" science, we would not read the following:

"Can you bring forth the constellations in their seasons or lead out the Bear with its cubs?"

(Job 38:32)

The constellations refer to the zodiac with its 12 constellations. The bear and cubs likely indicates the "Great Bear" and "Little Bear" constellations. Some think it may also represent the constellation of Leo (not certain).

The psalmist says that the heavenly stars are the handiwork of God. Therefore, the purpose of astrology is to understand that handiwork. Let us read the next two verses.

"When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place," (Psalms 8:3)

"The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands. Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they reveal knowledge. They have no speech, they use no words; no sound is heard from them. Yet their voice goes out into all the earth,

their words to the ends of the world. In the heavens God has pitched a tent for the sun.”

(Psalms 19:1-4)

In the last quotation it is clearly indicated that “His handiwork reveals the word of God and knowledge.” According to the next verse God has named them:

“He determines the number of the stars and calls them each by name.” (Psalms 147:4)

There are examples in the New Testament also with regards to the importance of astrology. In Matthew 2:2, one reads about the birth of Jesus and the star “of Bethlehem”. The evangelist Luke clearly writes about the signs in the heavens, that when seen, one will know that the “second coming” is at hand. It probably means a further leap in human evolution and an increased level of consciousness.

“There will be signs in the sun, moon and stars. On the earth, nations will be in anguish and perplexity at the roaring and tossing of the sea. People will faint from terror, apprehensive of what is coming on the world, for the heavenly bodies will be shaken. At that time they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.” (Luke 21:25-27)

The same churches that condemn astrology use the same astrological and astronomical knowledge to decide the dates of mobile holidays such as Easter.

Astrology is born out of astronomy. The latter is the science of stars and planets and studies the movements, births and deaths of these “stars”. In recent years, it has expanded its scope and includes also the study of the origin, birth and evolution of the universe, as well as the evolution of the laws of quantum physics. Astrology studies not only the relationship of these “stars” to each other, but also the effect of those relationships on earth and mankind. In the

past, the two sciences used to grow together hand in hand. In fact, astrology was more advanced than astronomy. When the churches labeled astrology as the work of the devil, they guaranteed its disappearance. In Europe, during the Renaissance, astronomy also started to flourish, especially after the advent of the telescope. It became more clear and certain to follow the movements of the “stars”. This allowed them to realize that it was the Earth that rotated around the Sun and not the Sun around the Earth. It was just as important to find out that the Earth was not flat but spherical. There are multiple examples that in ancient times people’s lives were very closely linked to the “stars”. A good example is the group of three pyramids at Giza that in size as well as position exactly reflect the positions of the three stars of the belt of the “Son of Man” (Orion) constellation.

Stonehenge formations, representing ancient observatories are found in many places in the world, but the most famous is in England. There are three of them in Armenia, and I personally had the privilege of visiting and seeing one of them. More recently, as a result of some excavations, another one has been unearthed in Gobeklitepe, in old western Armenia (presently Turkey), that predates the Egyptian pyramids by at least 5000 years.

Those who try to promote astrology and believe that the relationships of the “stars” can have effects on earthly events, base their belief on the following logic.

If we believe that God is everywhere, then He must be pervading all parts and content of the universe, as we pervade every single cell in our bodies. All the cells of our bodies are in contact with each other at all times. If only one part of the body gets sick, the whole body is affected. In the same way, everything in the universe, as the “cells of God’s body”, are in contact with each other; hence, a change in one location may affect the rest. Astrology is the study of this

remote effect of the “stars” on worldly events, as the saying goes “As above, so below”. The six pointed star more commonly known as the Hebrew “star of David” represents two triangles, one pointing down and the other pointing up, as if saying “As above, so below”.

Surprisingly, from the beginning of history, every important event seems to correspond to specific stellar associations. Is this an example of the above noted “As above, so below”, or are there some secret and perhaps not so secret organizations that follow the stars and deliberately cause certain events to occur to coincide with the planetary conjunctions. In fact, if the latter is true, then for what purpose? It is also somewhat difficult to reconcile natural disasters that also coincide with certain conjunctions of the planets.

Astrology has given us the first calendar. Astronomy has only perfected it approximately 1500 years later. Even the calendar we use today is not used everywhere in the world yet. Because of this the dates of holidays have been problematic. The feast of Easter was originally the Jewish celebration of Passover. The Jews celebrate Passover at different times, we celebrate Easter at different times and some Orthodox Churches (Greek) celebrate it at a different time. The time of Easter changes every year because it occurs the first Sunday after the first full moon after the spring equinox (March 21st). It is based on the lunar calendar rather than calendar based on the sun. There is a Julian calendar and a Gregorian calendar. These two calendars differ from each other by 13 days at the present time and every 100 years this difference increases by one day. (To further correct their difference, in the year 2000 the one day increase had to be skipped. The next increase will be in 2100 and there will be a 14 day difference.) At the present time, the Gregorian calendar is in general use. The Julian calendar

was established in 46BC by Julius Cesar and the Gregorian by Pope Gregory XIII in 1582. It appears that Christmas is celebrated on December 25th. Some orthodox churches, using the Julian calendar, celebrate Christmas 13 days later on January the 7th (this will change to January 8th in 2100). In the Armenian Church, Christmas continues to be celebrated on January 6th, the original date set by the fathers of Christianity. Within the Armenian Church, the Armenian patriarchate of Jerusalem only, following the Julian calendar, celebrates Jesus' birth 13 days later on January 19th. In 2100 it will be on January 20th. The Greek Orthodox Church uses the Gregorian calendar to celebrate Christmas on December 25th, but for Easter they appear to use the Julian calendar and celebrate it with the Ukrainians.

As mentioned above, the first Christians used to celebrate Christmas, Epiphany and Baptism together on January 6th. At those times, in Rome, there was a major celebration of a pagan feast on December 25th. The church fathers, despite all efforts, could not sway people from the well-ingrained celebration. They decided to move the celebration of Jesus' birth from January 6th to December 25th so that people could still continue with their celebrations, but now for Jesus' birth. They still kept Epiphany and Baptism on January 6th which they called "little Christmas".

What was the meaning of the pagan feast of December 25 that it was felt to be suitable for Jesus' birth? Does this decision for the move of Christmas have any basis in astrology? Within the time and space continuum, one always sees duality, "me and them", "good and evil" etc. The Sun represents the "good" because without the sun there would be no life. Night and darkness therefore represents "evil". In the fall months, daylight becomes shorter and shorter and the nights longer and longer. It appears as if evil is winning over the good. December 21st has the shortest daylight of the year

and this is maintained for 3 days. On December 25th for the first time the daylight starts to lengthen and it appears that goodness is starting to win over evil and this is a major reason for celebration. The sun was dying and is reborn again. It was therefore appropriate to celebrate the birth of God's Light (Jesus) on that day. As the sun sacrifices itself by giving its energy in the form of heat and light to ensure our survival, did not also Jesus sacrifice Himself so that we can also have eternal life?

Then, what is astrology?

A lot of people consider astrology to be one of the occult sciences. It is not a supernatural science. Instead, it is a science kept as the privilege of a few, hidden from the general public. In that sense, today also we have occult sciences. Governments call them "classified" or "secret" and keep the knowledge from the general public. The discovery of atomic energy, which was considered "occult" or better known as "secret" has almost become universally known. Any science "occult" or not, can be used for good or for evil purposes. This depends on the user and not the science. Atomic energy can supply energy and electricity to millions and be used for good and beneficial purposes. It can also be used for destruction as a bomb.

It is true that there are a lot of charlatans that use astrology to make predictions and to deceive the simple-minded. It was perhaps to prevent this that it was kept hidden from the general public.

Sometimes, governing bodies, ignorant of certain sciences, or the fear that the spread of such knowledge may minimize their hold on the masses, classify them as "occult", giving them the impression of being supernatural, and therefore evil. One of the best examples of this occurred within the Roman Catholic Church during the "inquisition". Galileo, who discovered that the Earth rotated around the

Sun and not vice versa, had to recant his discovery just to save his life. Today his discovery is known and accepted by all. This negative connotation for the word “occult” also helps the general public to shy away from the science, lest they also be condemned. Therefore, humanity, in general, instead of following the advice of the Bible to study and understand the heavenly signs, in order to help deepen his faith, just believes what is presented to him by the authorities, neatly packaged and served on a platter. Is there a valid reason to keep astrology secret? Or, is it possible that they do not know and they also do not want others to know? It is appropriate to read the following quotation:

“Leave them; they are blind guides. If the blind lead the blind, both will fall into a pit.”

(Matthew 15:14)

The old civilizations were more advanced in astrology than astronomy. They used to think that the Earth was the centre of the universe. Astrology goes back to the times of Babylon and earlier. They knew that the world and the heavenly stars were singing the glory and the will of God. Through astrology they revealed that glory and also His will. This science transfers to us the meaning of many centuries, as well as the wisdom developed over those centuries. Many passages in the Bible should not be read literally but should be taken for their allegorical meanings.

Astrology should not be the worship of the human or animal forms represented by the signs of the zodiac, as had been done by the ancient Greeks and other civilizations. Astrology is not a religion, and should never be made into one. The figures of the zodiac are symbols that arise from man’s psyche. They only show the relationship between human experiences and motions of the planets. It appears that certain human experiences correspond to the travels of the planet. The above quotations from Genesis and the

gospel of Luke clearly indicate that the signs given through the Sun, Moon and the planets are part of God's plans and serve His purpose. The study of these signs is astrology.

In the past, astrologers had noticed that some stars are stationary and some are wandering. They had found 7 wandering stars. Not having the benefit of telescopes, they could only see 5 of the 9 planets and the old astrology was based on the 7 wandering stars. They had called them all stars, but today we know that only the Sun is a star, one is a moon and the other 5 are planets. In this chapter, at times the word 'star' in inverted commas is used to indicate all seven (star, moon and planets). The 9th planet was actually found relatively recently, in the first half of the last century, and finally named in the 1930s. It is also interesting to know the following.

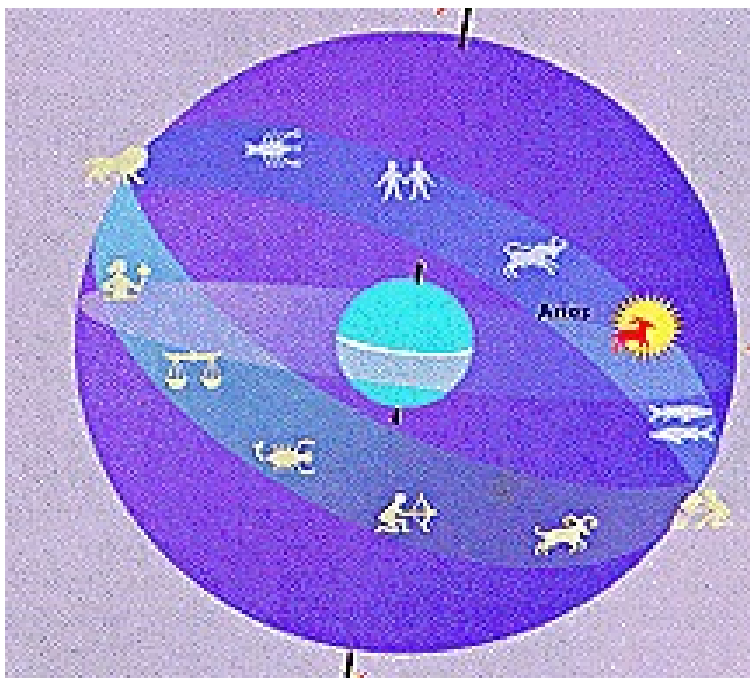
A Russian-born Jewish psychiatrist Emmanuel Velikovsky, after extensive research of available ancient information, has noticed that the Babylonian and older writings did not include any references to Venus, the "morning star". As a result of his research, he had come to the conclusion that at least 3500 years ago or earlier, a piece of Jupiter had been blown off and eventually went into orbit around the Sun and became the planet Venus. References to Venus are present in astrological documents of later times. Because of its proximity to the Sun, in the heavens it is seen as the brightest star just before the Sun's dawning in the morning. Because it appeared to announce the arrival of the Sun, it was also called "Lucifer" (bearer of Light). Today astronomers do not share his convictions about the origin of Venus. Based on his theories, he also had predicted the temperature on Venus and the fact that increased radiation should be coming from Jupiter. More recently, to the amazement of the astronomers, these predictions actually have been verified.

Therefore, what is astrology?

In the past the astronomer/astrologists have studied the relationship of these wandering “stars” with the “fixed” stars. In their imagination they have seen certain forms in certain collection of stars and named them with corresponding names. These have become the constellations of the zodiac.

Their names in time have changed, and today the names we use have come mostly from Greek and Latin sources. They have divided the 360° vault of the heavens around the Earth into 12 equal parts of 30° each. (See Fig:1)

Figure : 1 – CONSTELLATIONS OF THE ZODIAC



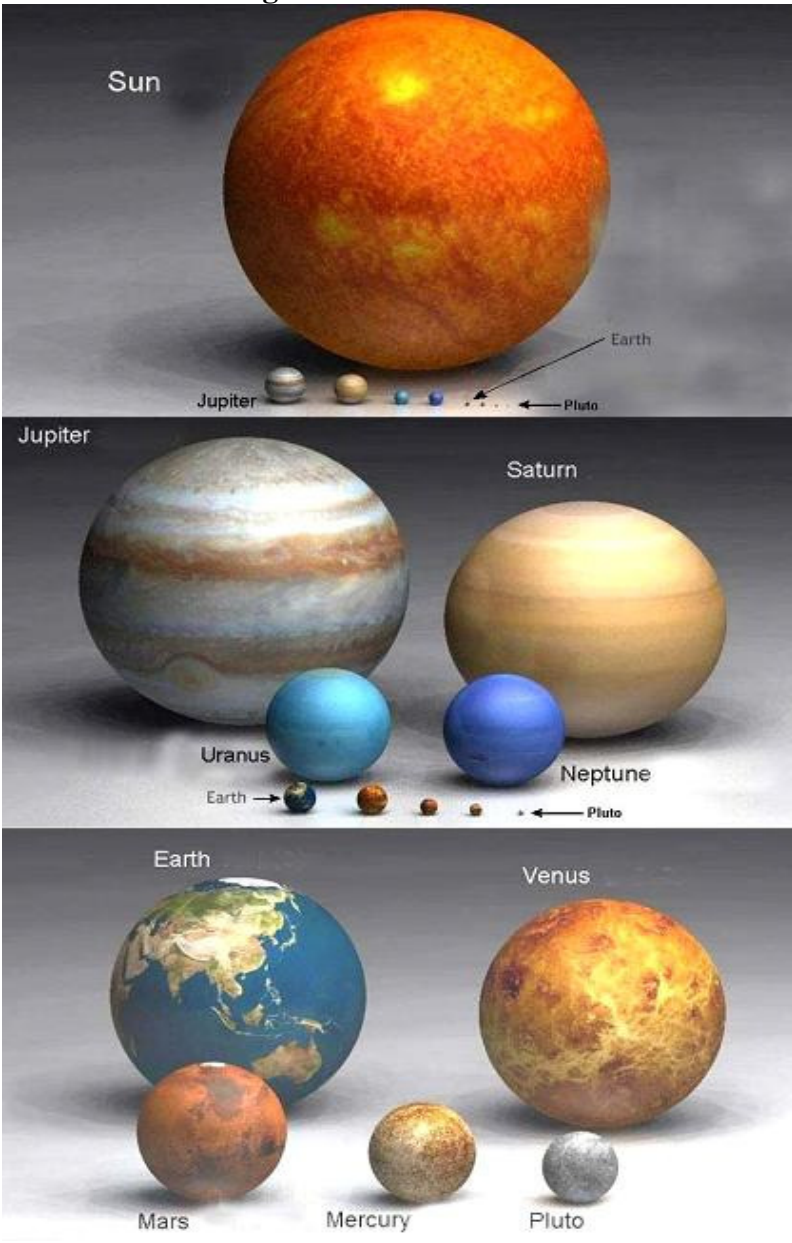
A list of the constellations, the signs of the zodiac and the “stars” is shown in (Figs: 2 & 3)

Figure : 2

**NAMES AND SIGNS & SYMBOLS OF THE 12 CONSTELLATIONS
OF THE ZODIAC AND THE «STARS» PLANET**

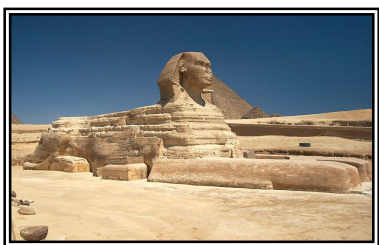
CONSTELLATIONS			«STARS» PLANETS		
		RAM			SUN
		TAURUS			MOON
		GEMINI		8	MERCURY
		CANCER		6	VENUS
		LEO		5	EARTH
		VIRGO		7	MARS
		LIBRA		1	JUPITER
		SCORPIO		2	SATURN
		SAGITTARIUS		3	URANUS
		CAPRICORN		4	NEPTUNE
		AQUARIUS		or 9	PLUTO
		PISCES	The planets are in order of their distance from the sun and the numbers represent the order of their sizes (L. to S. = 1-9)		

Figure : 3 - PLANETS



The different eras corresponding to the zodiac are determined by the location of the Sun upon rising in the morning of the Spring equinox, namely March 21st or 22nd in relation to the various signs of the zodiac. The different constellations of the zodiac from month to month proceed in a clockwise fashion. On the other hand, the eras, in other words, the location of the Sun during the Spring equinox, each year comes slightly “before” the previous year, which means that it moves counterclockwise. It takes exactly 2160 years for the Sun to move through 30° of the heavens, namely through one full constellation. The full circle of the heavens going through all the 12 signs of the zodiac therefore takes 25920 years. (Figure 1)

It is thought that “the flood” at the time of Noah, mentioned in the bible, must have occurred during the “Aquarian” period. It must have therefore occurred approximately 25800 years ago. The Egyptian “Sphinx” that has the body of a lion and the head of a man, most likely belonged to the period of “Leo”. Therefore it is likely to be 10000-12000 years old.



Let us see if there is anything in the bible based on astrology. Could it be a coincidence that the Hebrews had 12 tribes? Similarly Jesus elected to have only 12 apostles. This number was so important that after the death of Judas, the remaining apostles elected Matthias as apostle to complete their number of 12. “Jerusalem” in Revelations had 12 gates.

THE “STAR OF BETHLEHEM”:

Kepler, the renowned astronomer, around the 1600s, calculated and found that by our calendar, around 6 BC there had been a conjunction between Jupiter and Saturn. This conjunction was also in a straight line with the 3 stars of the

“belt” of the constellation of Orion. Jupiter being the largest of the planets was known as the “King of the lights”. In fact, the meaning of the name of Jupiter in Armenian is exactly that “King of Lights”. Saturn was known as the “star of the Hebrews”. See the picture of the Star of David below (Figure 4). Saturn is at the top. The Hebrews also kept Saturday as their Sabbath. From the name Saturday, it is apparent that it is the day of Saturn. The names of the days of the week all correspond to the seven “Stars” of ancient astrology. (See table below – Figure 5).

Figure : 4

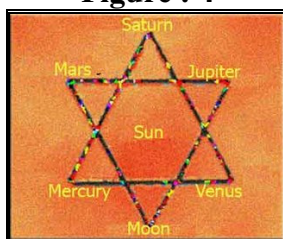
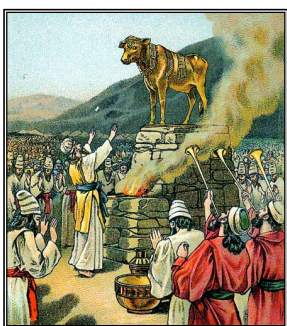


Figure : 5

NAMES OF THE DAYS		NAMES OF THE 'STARS'	
ENGLISH	FRENCH	ENGLISH	FRENCH
Sunday	Dimanche	Sun	Soleil
Monday	Lundi	Moon	Lune
Tuesday	Mardi	Mars	Mars
Wednesday	Mercredi	Mercury	Mercure
Thursday	Jeudi	Jupiter	Jupiter
Friday	Vendredi	Venus	Venus
Saturday	Samedi	Saturn	Saturne

It should not surprise us that the three magi came to Palestine to find Jesus. The conjunction of those two planets, Jupiter and Saturn, clearly indicated the birth of the “King of the Jews”. At the same time, the 3 stars of the constellation Orion suggested the visit of the 3 magi. These three stars were also known as the “three kings”, as the constellation of Orion itself was known as “Son of Man”.

According to both the Old and New Testaments, all human experiences have followed the astrological signs and eras. When the Hebrews were preparing for the exodus from Egypt, the angel of death killed every first born in the country, but the Hebrews escaped this calamity by marking the doorway of their houses with the blood of a lamb. Why lamb? This was the first sign of the coming age, the age of “Ram”. At the time, they were still in the age of “Taurus”, although near the end of it. After the exodus, at the mount of Sinai, when Moses went up the mountain to get the 10



commandments, the Hebrews made a golden calf and started worshiping it. Why a calf and nothing else? Because they were in the astrological era of the “Taurus”, in fact they were worshiping the astrological sign, which was an abomination. (See picture). When Moses descended from the mountain, he destroyed the golden calf, also indicating the end

of the age of “Taurus”. They probably wandered in the desert for 40 years so that the age would literally be over, before starting a new era. As it was foretold by the story of the Passover, the next era was the era of “The Ram”. During this era (Approx. 1400 BC) the walls of Jericho came tumbling down as a result of blowing trumpets made of Ram’s horn. Jesus, “The Lamb of God” was born at the end of this era, but still in the era of “Ram”. He introduced the next astrological era, the “Piscean” era. He selected mostly fisherman as his apostles. He told them he would make them fishers of man.



He fed the multitude of 5000 with fish. The era of Ram ended with the crucifixion of the “Lamb of God”. Jesus had told his disciples that he would be with them only to the end of the era (era of Ram).

“... And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.” (Matthew 28:20)

Paul also refers to the end of the Ram’s age. We read:

“These things happened to them as examples and were written down as warnings for us, on whom the culmination of the ages has come.”
(I Corinthians 10:11)

“... But he has appeared once for all at the culmination of the ages to do away with sin by the sacrifice of himself.” (Hebrews 9:26)

Then started the era of “Pisces”. Jesus himself did not establish a new religion, but his disciples established Christianity. The sign of Christianity was the “Fish”. In Greek, the first letters of each word of the phrase “Jesus Christ God’s Son, Savior”, spell the word “fish” (in Greek). (see Table and picture: Figure 6a & 6b). The bishop’s miter also represents the fish’s mouth. (also see Figure 7)

Figure : 6a

I	X	Θ	Υ	Σ
Iesous	Christos	Theou	Yios	Soter
Ἰησοῦς	Χριστός	Θεοῦ	Υἱοῦ	Σωτῆρος
Jesus	Christ	God’s	Son	Saviour

Figure : 6b

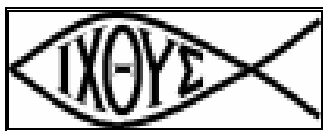


Figure : 7



In this day and age we appear to be witnessing more than the usual number of disasters involving water. Floods have occurred throughout history and some are extremely beneficial in the long term. They deposit nutrients for crops to grow better and enrich the soil, but now it appears that the disasters offer more harm than good. Sea levels are rising. Tsunamis appear to be more common. Could this be a foretelling of the arrival of the “Aquarian” age? It was a law of the Roman Catholic Church as a sign of self-control and fasting, to abstain from meat and to eat fish on Fridays. This rule has now been lifted. Is it because we are approaching the end of the “Piscean age”? The fish stocks in the seas are dwindling. Schools of small and large fish appear to commit “suicide”. Do these also indicate the end of the Piscean age?

The Bible should be read and interpreted without preconceived ideas and superstition. Then one may actually start seeing certain truths expounded in the various verses. Let us read the following:

“So he sent two of his disciples, telling them, ‘Go into the city, and a man carrying a jar of water will meet you. Follow him. Say to the owner of the house he enters, ‘The Teacher asks: Where is my guest room, where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?’ He will show you a large room upstairs, furnished and ready. Make preparations for us there.”(Mark 14:13-15)

“He replied, ‘As you enter the city, a man carrying a jar of water will meet you. Follow him to the house that he enters, and say to the owner of the house, ‘The Teacher asks: Where is the guest room, where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?’ He will show you a large room upstairs, all furnished. Make preparations there.” (Luke 22:10-12)

Is it possible that the “man carrying the jar of water” other than its literal meaning, in an allegorical way, refers to the age of “Aquarius”? It was during the Feast of Passover (Easter) during the “Last Supper” that the sacrament of communion was established. Is it an indication that there may be another level of human evolution and an increase in the level of man’s consciousness during the next astrological age, the “Aquarian age”? Perhaps because of this, symbolically, the Last Supper was celebrated in the “Upper Room” of the house, depicting an elevated level of consciousness. It is for the same reason that Altars in churches are elevated, from where the congregation stands. To reach God’s Altar, there has to be an elevation in our level of consciousness.

In Greek mythology, the myths also do correspond to the astrological ages. Just to give a few examples: the myth of the “Minotaur” (see Figure 8) must belong to the age of “Taurus”. The story of “Jason and the Argonauts” and their adventures in trying to find the “Golden Fleece” must belong to the age of “Ram”. (see Figure 9). Recent excavation in a jail in Jerusalem, has unearthed the mosaic floor of an ancient Christian Church. The mosaic depicts the picture of “Pisces” indicating that it belonged to that astrological age. (see Figure 10)

Figure : 8**Figure : 9****Figure : 10**

It is very appropriate also to read and to try to understand the following verses from the Bible:

“How you have fallen from heaven, morning star, son of the dawn! You have been cast down to the earth, you who once laid low the nations! You said in your heart, “I will ascend to the heavens; I will raise my throne above the stars of God; I will sit enthroned on the mount of assembly, on the utmost heights”

(Isaiah 14:12-13)

“... just as I have received authority from my Father. I will also give that one the morning star.” (Revelation 2:27-28)

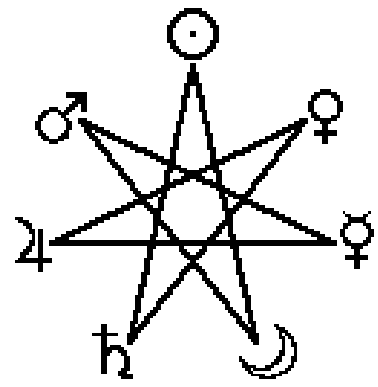
“I, Jesus, have sent my angel to give you this testimony for the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, and the bright Morning Star.” (Revelation 22:16)

The first and the third of these 3 verses appear to be contradictory. In the first verse the prophet Isaiah appears to say that Venus, the morning star, also known as Lucifer, has fallen from heaven, because it wanted to set its throne above that of God's. In general, Lucifer is equated with the devil, therefore the morning star, Venus allegorically appears to represent the “devil” or evil. But in the third verse we read Jesus saying “I am the bright Morning Star”. How to reconcile these two contradictory statements? Does Venus represent Lucifer the devil or does it represent Jesus? Who is the devil? Is it possible that Venus represents man? It is through man that the level of consciousness could and would increase further, to a point when one may have the experience of the divine that would also be the revelation of Christ. In the same way Jesus, the Son of Man, revealed His true nature, the Christ. Since the revelation of Christ is to occur through man, it is appropriate that Venus also represents Man. Venus in the morning sky announces the dawning of the Sun. In the same way, man also with his

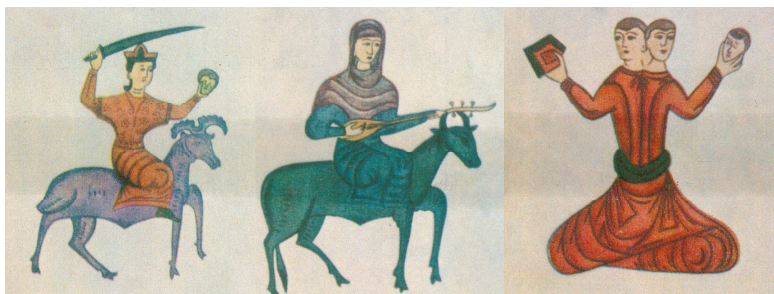
presence and ability (purpose of life) is the announcement of the revelation of Christ. God created man in His own image. This does not mean that man physically looks like God or vice versa. Rather it means that man also possesses the same consciousness that is divine and he has the potential to increase the level of this consciousness to its fullest and be an instrument of the revelation of God's Kingdom on Earth. What Isaiah has indicated is that man's EGO (the devil or "Lucifer") became the controller of man and prevented man from living out the purpose of his life, the revelation of Christ. Is it possible that the above introduction about Velikovsky's theory, that Venus was part of Jupiter and broke off from Jupiter to be its own "boss", a separate planet, may actually be true? Jupiter, the "King of the planets", likely represented Christ. Lucifer was in heaven and was cast out for wanting to be in charge. Man was in paradise with God and under the influence of the EGO, deceived by the "devil", was cast out of paradise. Man's separation from God, at least in experiential knowledge or consciousness, appears to parallel the theory of Velikovsky. Is this also not an example of "As above, so below"? Or is it possible that those who wrote the book of Genesis were astrologers and made up the stories and myths to fit astrological and astronomical events?

The second verse is also interesting and Jesus says that "to those who overcome (verse 26) as I have received, I will also give that one the Morning Star". Our duty therefore is to overcome our EGOs. In the same way that God's revelation occurred through Jesus Christ, we should also be able to perform our duty as the "Morning Star" and announce and bring forth the dawning of the Light of the Sun, "God". Exactly because of this Jesus says "I am the bright Morning Star". Jesus was a perfect man, and also a perfect God. As a man he said "I am the Morning Star", because Venus represented man, and through man revelation of God could

occur. Christ also said “I am the Life”. Because we live we are all with Christ. All we need to do is to overcome our EGO and develop a higher level of consciousness and experience Epiphany.



ANCIENT ARMENIAN ZODIAC SIGNS



ARIES

TAURUS

GEMINI



CANCER

LEO

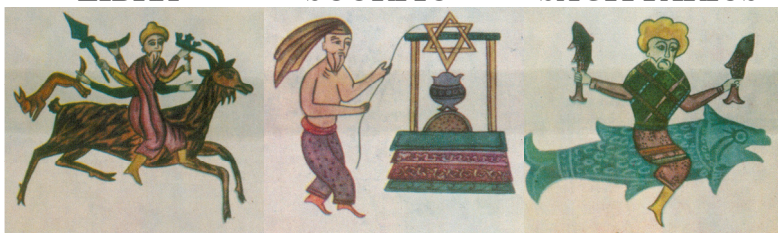
VIRGO



LIBRA

SCORPIO

SAGITTARIUS



CAPRICORN

AQUARIUS

PISCES

WHAT IS NUMEROLOGY?

Numerology also has been mostly condemned or ignored by the organized churches despite the fact that there are no references against it in the Bible.

Quantum physics, the main scientific means of studying the universe and its laws, has shown that all the laws of the creation (universe) follow specific mathematical calculations and equations. Astronomers and quantum physicists today extrapolate that there are many universes and call them “multiverse”. How could they possibly reach such conclusions when they still have not seen the universe that they are in, in its entirety? It would be absolutely impossible to see or experience other universes. These extrapolations are based on the solutions of specific and certain mathematical equations, which indicate the possibility of other universes also being present. It appears that the whole universe is based on mathematical and arithmetical calculations and laws. This tends to give some credence to the science of numerology as it may be based on solid reasoning and may in fact reveal certain truths about human behavior and interaction with the rest of creation.

What is numerology?

In nature there are certain “constants” which appear to be universal and appear to prove that the universe is based on mathematical calculations. Any minute changes in these “constants” may cause the annihilation of the world and even the universe.

The amount of heat that comes from the Sun to the Earth represents one of these constants. Every second every 1 cm² on earth receives exactly 0.0417 calories of heat energy. Should this change even a little bit, the Earth as we know it may no longer exist.

The speed of light (**c**) is also another constant. In general, it is known as being 300,000 Km/sec. The reality is

that it actually is 299,792,458 meters/sec. or 186,000 miles/sec. This was established first in 1710 by Reomer (or Rømer), but published for the first time posthumously in 1729. It was also verified once in 1790 and again in 1874. One of India's yogis, Sayana, wrote the following about the Sun, in 1387. **"With deep respect, I bow to the sun, who travels 2,202 yojanas in half a nimesha."** A yojana is about nine American miles; a nimesha is $16/75$ of a second. Mathematically challenged readers, get out your calculators! $2,202 \text{ yojanas} \times 9 \text{ miles} \times 75 : 8 \text{ nimeshas} = 185,794 \text{ miles/sec.}$

According to Sayana, the ancient yogis revered the number 108. As the 360^0 vault of the heavens is divided into 12 equal 30^0 segments of the zodiac in the west, in India it is divided into 27 equal segments. Each one of these segments is also further divided into four equal segments. The sub segments therefore add up to 108. As the number 12 is auspicious in the west the number 108 is in the east. The Sun in its travels over the years goes through all 108 segments in succession. This division of the heavens is not undertaken haphazardly, but is based on sound numerological truths. The distance from the Earth to the Sun is 108 times the diameter of the Sun. The diameter of the Sun is 108 times the diameter of the Earth. The distance from Earth to the Moon is 108 times the diameter of the moon. Based on similar information they extrapolate that there are 108 steps or levels between man's consciousness and God-consciousness.

They also believe that all human biological cycles are closely linked to the movements of the "stars". The human internal clock actually calculates automatically 24 hours and 50 minutes for each day. This coincides exactly to the cycle of the moon. Recent experiments have verified this. People have lived deep underground, without seeing any sunlight and also without any watches or clocks. They have

determined the number of days relying only on their natural internal biological clock. Surprisingly their days were exactly 24 hours and 50 min. long. It appears that by looking at the Sun and our watches every morning, we adjust our internal clocks to accommodate the Sun.

A more common and universally known constant is 3.14159... known as “ π ” (pi). It represents the relationship of the radius of a circle to its circumference or area.

It is just as and probably even more intriguing to note the less-known constant “ ϕ ” (fi). It is a number that represents the following equation: $(1+\sqrt{5})/2$, which comes to 1.618033... . In nature this number is found almost everywhere. Some examples are shown below. (see Figures 1a-g). Everything that has this proportion appears more pleasing to the eye. Because of this it is called the “Golden Ratio” or “Divine Proportion”. From ancient times, architects having known this have made use of this ratio in the edifices they have built. (See Figure 2a-d)

What is “ ϕ ” (fi)? Let us assume any given length “c” and divide this length into 2 segments “a” and “b” where $a:b = b:c = 1.618033...$. (See Figure 3) Surprisingly none of the constants of nature are ever whole numbers. They all seem to have an element of uncertainty associated with them. The dimensions of the Tabernacle as well as the dimensions of Noah’s Ark that were “given by God” also represented this ratio. (See Figures 4a & 4b)

Figure : 3

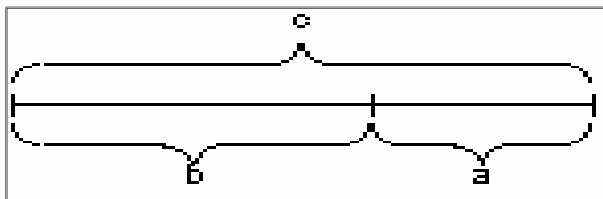
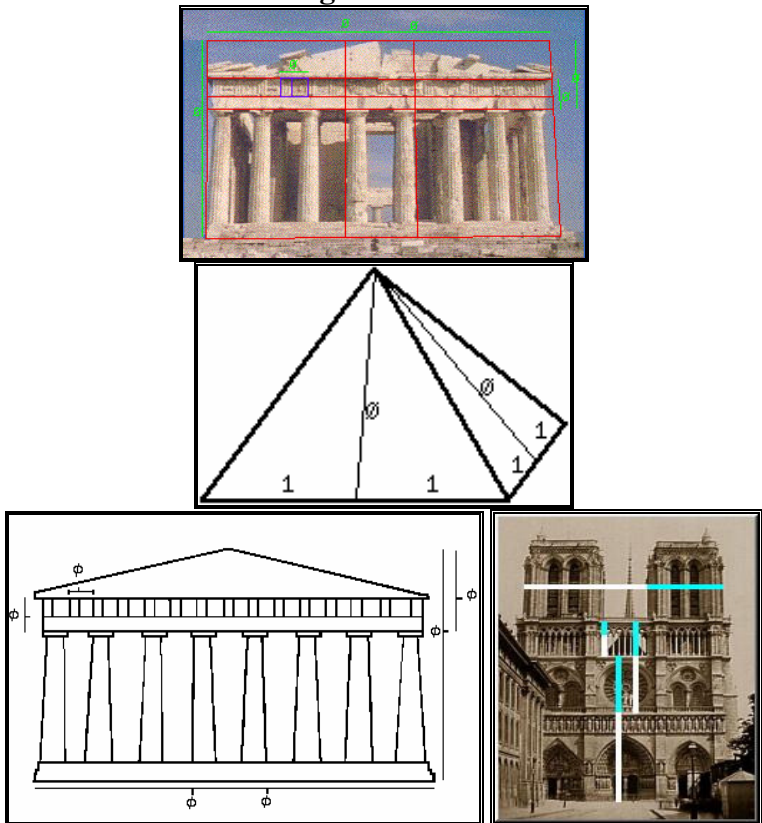


Figure : 1 a-g

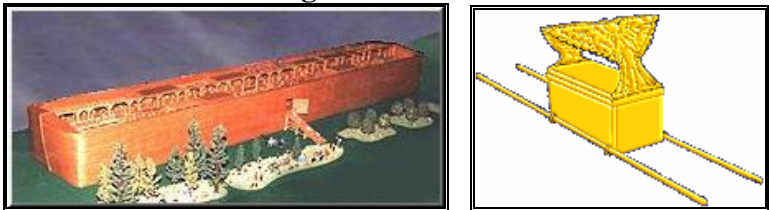


Figure : 2 a-d



“This is how you are to build it: The ark is to be three hundred cubits long, fifty cubits wide and thirty cubits high.” (Genesis 6:15)

Figure : 4a & 4b



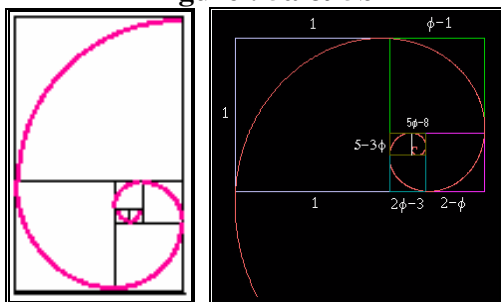
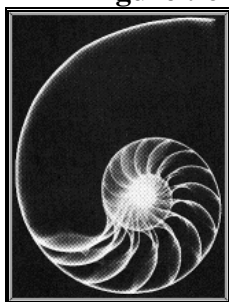
That is, about 450 feet long, 75 feet wide and 45 feet high or about 135 meters long, 23 meters wide and 14 meters high. Dimensions of Noah's ark $50:30 = 1.6666...$ very close to the " ϕ " number.

"Have them make an ark of acacia wood two and a half cubits long, a cubit and a half wide, and a cubit and a half high." (Exodus 25:10)

That is, about $3 \frac{3}{4}$ feet long and $2 \frac{1}{4}$ feet wide and high or about 1.1 meters long and 68 centimeters wide and high. Once again the ratio is the same: $2.5:1.5 = 1.666...$

This same ratio is found also in the construction and rhythm of Virgil's Aeneid. Mozart has used the same rhythm in the construction of his sonatas as well as Beethoven in the construction of his 5th symphony. The Stradivarius violin's sound holes are also based on this ratio.

There is another progression of numbers that is somewhat related to the " ϕ " ratio. In the west it was first published in Venice in 1202 by Leonardo of Pisa, who was also known as Fibonacci. His publication was a book called "Liber Abaci" in which he expounded on this progression of numbers. As much as he is responsible for introducing this progression in the west, in India this progression was well known as far back as 200 BC. The progression of the numbers start with "0" and "1". By adding the last two numbers of the progression one gets the next number in the progression. $0+1 = 1$, $1+1 = 2$, $2+1 = 3$, $3+2 = 5$, $5+3 = 8$, $8+5 = 13$...; hence, the progression becomes 0,1,2,3,5,8,13,21,34,55,89,144,233, ... etc. When any of these numbers are divided by its predecessor the results approach " ϕ ". $1:1 = 1$, $2:1 = 2$, $3:2 = 1.5$, $5:3 = 1.666...$, $8:5 = 1.6$, $13:8 = 1.625$, $21:13 = 1.615...$, $34:21 = 1.619...$, $55:34 = 1.617...$, $89:55 = 1.618...$, $144:89 = 1.617...$, $233:144 = 1.618...$, etc. The progression of these numbers has also given rise to the "Golden Spiral". (See Figure 5a-b)

Figure : 5a & 5b**Figure : 6**

If we take a square of one unit for each side and continue to draw adjacent squares with sides following the above progression we end up with a spiral where for every $1/4$ turn its distance from the center increases by " ϕ ". In nature we constantly observe spirals with dimensions exactly with this same ratio. Some of these are snails, sea shells, ferns etc. (See Figure 7a-e)

Figure : 7a-e

The famous Greek mathematician Pythagoras, who has established geometrical theorems, was also very much interested and involved in numerology. He believed that everything could be explained by mathematics. According to him, the only truth was the "numbers". Although he is not known for his philosophy, he was a great philosopher and had a major influence on Plato.

Numerology in general has been used to interpret the biblical stories and "sayings". The purpose of numerology has been to elucidate the meanings according to the numbers obtained when letters of the alphabet are given numbers and thus giving a numerical value to each word.

Figure : 8

Figure : 9

Armenian		numerals	
Armenian	Arabic	Armenian	Arabic
Ա	1	Ճ	100
Բ	2	Մ	200
Գ	3	Յ	300
Դ	4	Ն	400
Ե	5	Շ	500
Զ	6	Ո	600
Է	7	Չ	700
Ը	8	Պ	800
Թ	9	Ջ	900
Ժ	10	Ռ	1000
Ի	20	Ս	2000
Լ	30	Վ	3000
Խ	40	Տ	4000
Ծ	50	Բ	5000
Կ	60	Յ	6000
Հ	70	Ի	7000
Ձ	80	Փ	8000
Ղ	90	Ք	9000



The picture above depicts an ancient sundial found at the “Zvartnots” Church ruins, where the numbers on the sundial are depicted by letters and not numbers (See Figure 9). As with the Armenian alphabet, letters of the alphabets of some other languages also have their numerical equivalents. Some of these languages include: Greek, Hebrew, Aramaic, Arabic. There may be some other ancient languages that may also be included in this list. In Latin only few letters had numeric equivalency. These are: ***I = 1, V = 5, X = 10, L = 50, C = 100, D = 500*** and ***M = 1,000***. Presently Latin letters as well as Armenian letters are used only for depicting dates and perhaps as numbers of chapters in a book. Even this use appears to be in decline. New values are given to the letters of the Latin alphabet for the purposes of use in numerology (See table in Figure 10).

Thus, it becomes possible to calculate the number of any name, by adding together all the numerical values of the letters of any name. When the result is 10 or greater, the number should be reduced to a single integer by adding each integer of the number to each other. Each number has its meaning, therefore the names also contain similar meanings.

Figure : 10

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R
S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z	

The following is also an interesting reality. Among the Armenians it is a popular dictum that the Armenian language is the language of prayer. If it is the appropriate language to “speak to God”, then it must have special numerological characteristics. Those characteristics must represent the creation, mainly because the creation is the expression of God and represents His “body” and it is built on mathematical reality. When instead of the classical numerological values of each letter, successive numbers are given to each letter as it appears in the alphabetical order “1” to “36”, it is noted that the number for the classical names of the seven metals representing the seven “stars” of astrology come out to be exactly equal to their atomic numbers. (See table in Figure 11) (From the work of Kevork Garabedian)

The following “stars” are represented by the following metals (in same order as in the table):

Sun = Gold, Venus = Copper, Moon = Silver, Mars = Iron, Jupiter = Tin, Saturn = Lead, Mercury = Mercury.

Figure : 11

Old Armenian Names of metals			
Ω U Ψ Γ	– Gold	Au <u>79</u>	$\Omega^{24} + U^{29} + \Psi^{15} + \Gamma^{11} = \underline{79}$
U Γ Γ	– Copper	Cu <u>29</u>	$U^{20} + \Gamma^5 + \Gamma^4 = \underline{29}$
U Γ Γ	– Silver	Ag <u>47</u>	$U^1 + \Gamma^{32} + \Gamma^{14} = \underline{47}$
U L Q U Θ	– Iron	Fe <u>26</u>	$U^1 + L^{12} + Q^3 + U^1 + \Theta^9 = \underline{26}$
Ψ L U Γ Ψ	– Tin	Sn <u>50</u>	$\Psi^{15} + L^{12} + U^1 + \Gamma^7 + \Psi^{15} = \underline{50}$
U Γ Δ Γ Δ	– Lead	Pb <u>82</u>	$U^1 + \Gamma^{32} + \Delta^{19} + \Gamma^{11} + \Delta^{19} = \underline{82}$
U Γ Q Γ Ψ	– Mercury	Hg <u>80</u>	$U^{29} + \Gamma^{22} + Q^3 + \Gamma^{11} + \Psi^{15} = \underline{80}$

THE MEANING OF VARIOUS NUMBERS:

Number “0”

The number “0” has no meaning or value in western numerology, but in Chinese Taoism it represents nothingness, death or the not manifested. At the same time it represents totality of life and creation. When one asks a Taoist “Who or what or where is God?”, the answer would be always negative: “not this, not that etc.”. When one runs out of options and says “there is nothing left”, then they say “that is it, that nothingness is God and it is everything”.

Number “1”

Number “1” represents unity and singularity, and is based on the idea that God is one.

“Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one.” (Deuteronomy 6:4)

“one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.” (Ephesians 4:5-6)

“I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd.” (John 10:16)

Number “2”

The number “2” represents duality and multiplicity. It also represents choice, the choice between good and evil etc. It therefore also represents struggle and confrontation and debate.

“No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money.” (Matthew 6:24)

“Jesus knew their thoughts and said to them, ‘Every kingdom divided against itself will be ruined, and every city or household divided against itself will not stand.’” (Matthew 12:25)

“This is how it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come and separate the wicked from the righteous” (Matthew 13:49)

Every person always experiences duality. Our “chariots” have two charioteers, our EGO and Christ. In whose hand are we going to put the reins of our lives? If we make the correct decision and the opposites disappear, then comes forth harmony, peace and unity.

“Again, truly I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything they ask for, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven.” (Matthew 18:19)

Number “3”

The number “3” represents absolute stability and perfection. It is based on the idea of the trinity. Is it not true that even in geometry the most stable figure is the triangle, and yet best the equilateral triangle? As much as the word “trinity” is not in the Bible and we know that God is “One”, the revelation of God (epiphany) can only occur through the Trinity. The “Father” is the source of all. The “Holy Spirit”

is the means which makes it all possible. “Christ” is the result and the manifestation, the whole universe. All three together represent perfection.

In “Taoism” it is also said “Tao is nothingness. From Tao is born “1”, from “1” is born “2”, from “2” is born “3” and from “3” comes everything else.

The qualities of God are also three: **All knowing, omnipotent and omnipresent**. His works are similarly: **Holy** (good), **straight** and **just**.

Trinity is important in other fields as well, in order to be able to achieve perfection. Humans, the pinnacle of creation, through whose consciousness God’s revelation is possible, function through **physical, mental** and **intellectual** “bodies”. Human undertakings are also based on the trinity. From nothingness are born **thoughts**, from thoughts comes the **words** and from the words come **actions**.

The creation was possible because of the three dimensional space with length, width and height, namely the **x,y and z axis**. Time also has **past, present** and **future**. All physical bodies can exist only in three forms: **solid, liquid** or **gas**.

When the magi visited the baby Jesus, their gifts included gold, frankincense and myrrh, gold because He was a king, frankincense because He was God and myrrh because He was a man.

The Armenian Church also follows this tradition and the church is comprised of three sections. A section of the hall closer to the entrance like a narthex, for those who have not yet repented, the main hall or nave for those who have repented and the transept & apse which is elevated and where the alter is situated. It is elevated indicating the imperative of having a higher level of consciousness before true communion with God can take place. Jesus established the sacrament of communion at the Last Supper, which was

symbolically prepared in the upper room of the house, and thus also represented a higher level of consciousness. After his crucifixion and death, the purpose of His life reached perfection and completion when he resurrected 3 days after death, thus crushing death.

Number “4”

Number “4” represents the creation, the physical world and the human life.

The seasons of the year are four: spring, summer, autumn and winter. The world has four directions: north, south, east and west. Above, for number “3” we had said that the creation had taken place in a three dimensional space, but this creation without the fourth dimension, time would be static. Therefore four dimensions are needed for evolution to occur. The creation is also based on four elements: water, fire, earth and air.

The cross has four arms which represent the four dimensions of the time and space continuum. Jesus, with His crucifixion, died to the illusion of time and space and resurrected into eternity.

This life is also an opportunity for experiences; therefore number “4” also represents temptation, tribulations and experience.

“See, I have refined you, though not as silver; I have tested you in the furnace of affliction.”
(Isaiah 48:10)

“This third I will put into the fire; I will refine them like silver and test them like gold. They will call on my name and I will answer them; I will say, ‘They are my people,’ and they will say, ‘The LORD is our God.’” (Zechariah 13:9)

The rains during the “flood” lasted 40 days.

“And rain fell on the earth forty days and forty nights.” (Genesis 7:12)

Moses was on Mount Sinai for 40 days.

“Then Moses entered the cloud as he went on up the mountain. And he stayed on the mountain forty days and forty nights.”

(Exodus 24:18)

The Hebrews wandered in the desert for 40 years.

“The LORD’s anger burned against Israel and he made them wander in the wilderness forty years, until the whole generation of those who had done evil in his sight was gone.”

(Numbers 32:13)

Jesus, in the wilderness, was tempted by the devil for 40 days.

“After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry.” (Matthew 4:2)

“and he was in the wilderness forty days, being tempted by Satan. He was with the wild animals, and angels attended him.” (Mark 1:13)

“where for forty days he was tempted by the devil. He ate nothing during those days, and at the end of them he was hungry.” (Luke 4:2)

After His resurrection, Jesus Christ showed Himself alive for 40 days.

“After his suffering, he presented himself to them and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God.” (Acts 1:3)

In numerology “40” is same as “4” ($4+0 = 4$)

Number “5”

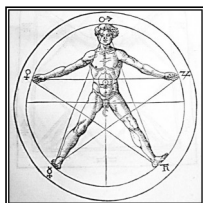
Number “5” represents grace and understanding.

“Take the following fine spices: 500 shekels of liquid myrrh, half as much (that is, 250

shekels) of fragrant cinnamon, 250 shekels of fragrant calamus, 500 shekels of cassia all according to the sanctuary shekel and a hin of olive oil. Make these into a sacred anointing oil, a fragrant blend, the work of a perfumer. It will be the sacred anointing oil.”

(Exodus 30:23-25)

Figure: 11



The oil of anointing is made up of five different oils. The pentagram depicted here is a sign of health and salvation (See Figure 11). The graces of the Holy Spirit descended on the disciples 50 days after Jesus' resurrection.

“When the day of Pentecost came,

... All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit

... .” (Acts 2:1-4)

Number “6”

The number “6” represents man. Man was created on the 6th day of creation. It also represents marriage, harmony, beauty and love.

During the wedding in Cana, Jesus turned 6 jars of water to wine.

“Nearby stood six stone water jars, the kind used by the Jews for ceremonial washing, each holding from twenty to thirty gallons.”(John 2:6)

The symbol of this number is the hexagon, (See Figure 12)

Figure: 12

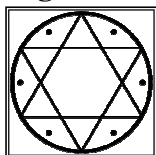


Figure: 13



where the circumference of the circle is divided to six equal parts by its radius. This gives rise to two triangles, one pointing up and the other pointing down, as if saying “As above so below”.

This shows the harmony within the universe. It also symbolizes that God became man so that man can become

god. In nature it is very common to see perfect hexagons as seen in honeycombs and in the formation of many types of crystals. The six pointed star was used in ancient Armenia before it became the Star of David (See Figure 13).

Number “7”

Number “7” is the number of God. God rested on the 7th day of the creation and that day was sanctified. The 7th letter of both the Armenian (Ե) and the Latin (G) alphabets represent God. Because God is perfect, complete and the totality of all, the number “7” also represents perfection, completion and totality.

Man has seven chakras. Transfiguration or full revelation of Christ occurs when the Kundalini (the energy of the Holy Spirit also in the east known as prana) reaches the 7th chakra. Jesus himself proved that this transfiguration was possible.

Number “8”

The number “8” represents rebirth and renewal. At the same time it implies recollection and evolution.

After the flood only eight people remained for the “rebirth” of humanity (repopulation); Noah and his wife, his three sons with their wives.

“if he did not spare the ancient world when he brought the flood on its ungodly people, but protected Noah, a preacher of righteousness, and seven others;” (2 Peter 2:5)

Circumcision as a sign of change was performed by the Jewish people on the 8th day after birth.

The Armenian Church also celebrates Christmas for eight days.

Number “9”

The number “9” belongs to man and represents his

judgment. Man has the ability to judge and choose. It is totally up to him to choose the good or the evil thoughts, words or actions. When the right choices are made, this number may represent success and realization. With success the realization would be the receiving of the graces of the Holy Spirit, which are nine as indicated in the Bible.

“To one there is given through the Spirit a message of wisdom, to another a message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues.” (1 Corinthians 12:8-10)

Number “10”

The number “10” becomes “1” ($1+0 = 1$), therefore it should have the same meaning as number “1”. In the gospel of John, Jesus has said 10 times “I am ...”.

“I am the bread of life”. (6:35)

“I am the bread that came down from heaven.” (6:41)

“I am the living bread” (6:51)

“I am the light of the world”. (8:12)

“I am one who testifies for myself” (8:18)

“I am the gate” (10:7,9)

“I am the good shepherd” (10:14)

“I am the resurrection and the life.” (11:25)

“I am the true vine” (15:1,5)

**“I am the way and the truth and the life”.
(14:6)**

Number “12”

Number “12” can also be reduced to “3” ($1+2 = 3$), therefore, it must have the same characteristics as number “3”. It is somewhat important to mention this number separately because it has a prominent place in the Bible. The Hebrews has 12 tribes. Jesus had 12 apostles. The constellations of the zodiac are 12 in number. In the vision of John, the Jerusalem as he saw indicated in Revelations had 12 foundations, 12 gates and 12 angels. The size of the city was 12,000 stadia and the thickness of the walls 144 cubits, which is 12×12 . (Revelation 21:16-21)

It is interesting and important to note that Jesus’ name was pre-determined. In Hebrew it means “savior”. Is it possible that the name Jesus was chosen because of it’s numerological value? In the Armenian language, if each letter of the name of Jesus (*Յիսուս*) is given its numerical value, the number of the name becomes “4” (*Յ* = 300, *ի* = 20, *ս* = 2,000, *ու* = 600, *ս* = 7,000, *ս* = 2,000, their total becomes 11,920. $1+1+9+2+0 = 13$, $1+3 = 4$). As we mentioned above this number represents the creation. Jesus’ birth was part of God’s plan. With His birth, God descended into His creation. The Bible also says that He was a perfect man. Despite this, it was fitting for His name to represent the whole of creation and not just mankind. If His name had represented man only, the number would have come to be “6”.

Let us see what is the numerological value of Christ (*Քրիստոս*) in the Armenian language. *Ք* = 9,000, *ր* = 5,000, *ի* = 20, *ս* = 2,000, *տ* = 4,000, *ո* = 600, *ս* = 2,000, when we add these we come up with 22,620, This results in the number of “3” ($2+2+6+2+0 = 12$, $1+2 = 3$). This number represents stability and perfection which is the trinity. Christ completes the Trinity. When we take the total name “Jesus Christ”, the number comes to 7 ($4+3 = 7$). This number is the number of God. This is indicative of the fact that Christ’s,

therefore God's, full revelation occurred through Jesus. It also follows that the revelation of God can only occur through His creation.

It is true that Christ is in all of us, in the saint as well as in the sinner, otherwise we could not be part of the creation. As Jesus was asleep in the boat on the Sea of Galilee indifferent to the storm of winds and waves, Christ is also asleep in our "boats" (bodies), indifferent to the storms of our thoughts and emotions. Just as the disciples woke Him up, we also need to wake the sleeping Christ within us to calm the winds and the waves of our thoughts and emotions. We need to follow His words when He said: "take your cross and come after me", in order to take part in the revelation of Christ (God).

During the Soviet era, in eastern Armenia, the authorities were forced to change the classical spelling of the language in general that had been universal among all the Armenians in the world. One of the changes was also the spelling of the name "Jesus", where the first letter was changed from "j" (**յ**) to "h" (**հ**). This of course changed the numerological value of the name "Jesus" to "8", and the value for "Jesus Christ" became "2". This last number represents duality. If for a second we accept that it represents the dual nature of Jesus (man & God), it would have been much more appropriate for this number to represent the name "Jesus" alone. Christ represents God and God does not and cannot have two natures. It is important, if for nothing else because of numerology, to at least change the spelling of the name Jesus back to its original form.

In the English language, according to the numerology of the Latin alphabet, the number of "Jesus" comes to "2". This is appropriate because it may represent His dual nature, man and God. The name "Christ" is represented by the number "5". This is also appropriate and represents God's

grace. The complete name “Jesus Christ” once again comes to number “7”, as it should.

In the Bible there are few other interesting numbers that probably should be commented on.

“Jesus answered, “I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times.” (Matthew 18:22)

Peter had asked Jesus as to how many times should we forgive our brothers (Here brother means any other person and not just family member). Jesus’ answer was 77 times, in this version of the Bible. In the King James version the answer is 70×7 . The numerological values of these two different translations will obviously be different as well. The version “ 70×7 ” would become “4” ($70 \times 7 = 490$, $4+9+0 = 13$, $1+3 = 4$). On the other hand “77” becomes $7+7 = 14$ which becomes $1+4 = 5$. Number “4” represents creation and this would not have any numerological significance in relation to the question and answer at hand. On the other hand “5” represents “grace” and this is more apropos. Therefore to receive divine grace, we need to be forgiving towards all, at all times. Is it also not clear in the Lord’s prayer as well? We say: “forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us”. For the same degree that we forgive others, to the same degree we are forgiven and to that same degree, we receive the graces of God. It appears that the latter translation of “77” times is more correct, at least according to numerology.

It is just as interesting to note the next two numbers:

“... and with him 144,000 who had his name ... except the 144,000 who had been redeemed from the earth.” (Revelation 14:1,3)

“This calls for wisdom. Let the person who has insight calculate the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man. That number is 666.”

(Footnotes: a: Or is humanity’s number)

(Revelation 13:18)

In numerology the number “144,000” becomes “9” ($1+4+4+0+0+0=9$), and the number “666” also becomes “9” ($6+6+6 = 18$ which is $1+8 = 9$). It is apparent that both numbers must represent the same thing. In fact, in the recent translation of the Bible, the footnote after the last verse tends to suggest that it represents mankind. As we had discussed above, the number “9” represented judgment and choice. It appears that man, as a result of his judgments and choices that he makes, may attain salvation or may become the “beast”. Why indicate this with such a complicated long number “144,000”, instead of just writing the number “9”? Let us analyze this number. The number “1” represents “unity” and singularity. Man’s mind should be single-mindedly centered on that unity, God, to such a degree that he unites and becomes one with God. The next two “4”s (44) represent the man, as he lives within the creation and as part of the creation. Although mentally he is centered on God (“1”), both physically and emotionally he is still part of the creation; hence, the two “4”s. When the person reaches a heightened level of consciousness in as much as he lives in bliss and in eternity, indifferent to the lures of the illusory attractions of the world, then he physically, emotionally and intellectually becomes dead to the world; hence, the three “0”s. Each “0” is for each one of his “bodies” (physical, emotional and intellectual). As we had indicated above “0” represented death. In this situation the number “9” becomes the number of his salvation.

As the number “666” represents the “beast”, it is said that the number “777” represents God and Holiness. I do not think this number requires any further comments because it is not mentioned in the Bible at all.

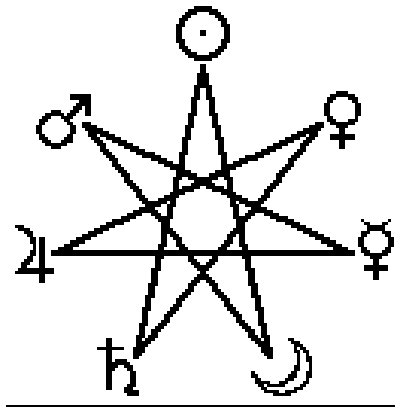
The number “6”, as mentioned above, represents man. In the number “666”, the “6” is repeated three times. When man is under the control of the EGO physically, emotionally

and intellectually (mentally), his thoughts would not be single-mindedly centered on God. In this instance, he represents the “beast”, his EGO. In this situation, the number “9” represents man who, as a result of wrong judgment and choices, has failed. It all starts with the control of the mind and thoughts. One needs to curtail thoughts. It is well known that first comes the thought, from thought is born the word and from the word is born the action. When the thoughts are centered on God, number “1”, then the EGO would have no chance to control the words and the deeds. Then and only then, the person can say with certainty, as Jesus did “I am in this world but I am not of the world”.

“... You are of this world; I am not of this world.” (John 8:23)

“While I am in the world, I am the light of the world.” (John 9:5)

It behooves us also to become the Light of the world.



REVELATION OF GOD
THROUGH THE CREATION

(In numerology # 4)

WITHIN THE CREATION
THROUGH MANKIND

(In numerology # 6)

THROUGH MAN'S

FREE WILL AND THE ABILITY TO
DISCRIMINATE & CHOOSE THE CHARIOTEER OF HIS/HER
LIFE

(In numerology # 9)

CORRECT CHOICE

CHRIST
(144000)

MANKIND

In numerology

WRONG CHOICE

EGO
(666)



ENTICEMENTS & REASONS FOR THE CHOICES WE MAKE

WISDOM
LOVE & COMPASSION
SERVICE

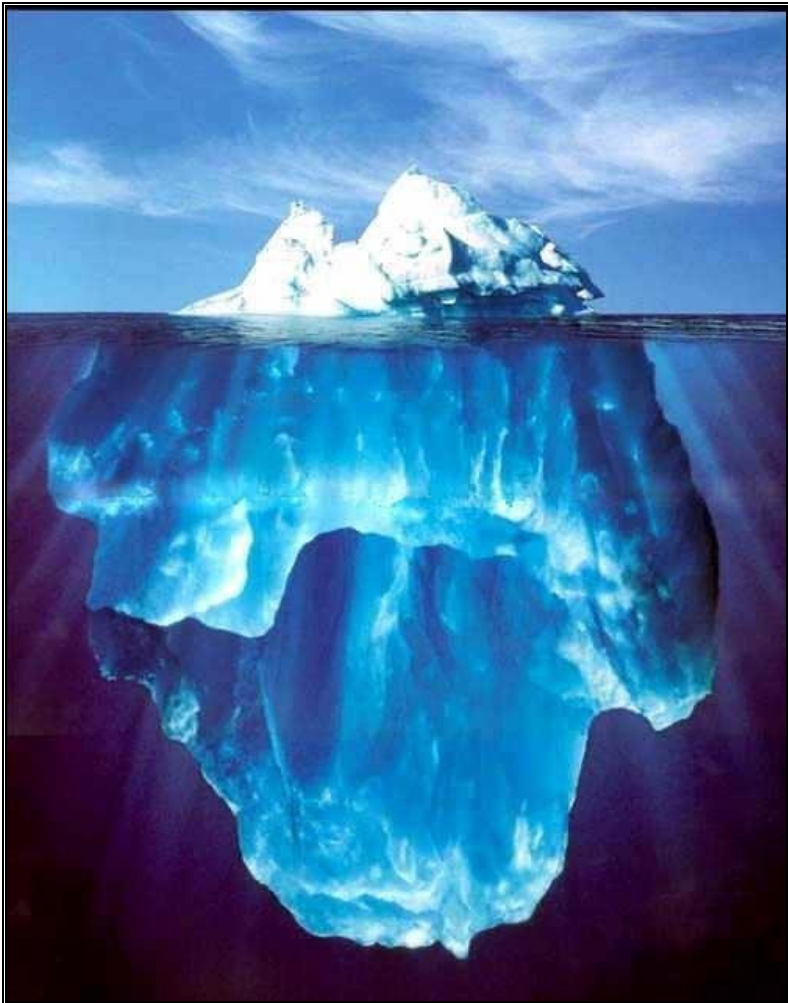
INTELLECT
LOGIC
SENSATIONS
DESIRES
PASSIONS
POWER
CONTROL
PRIDE
PLEASURES

THE RESULT OF THE JUDGEMENT & CHOICE

KNOWLEDGE
BLISS
EXISTENCE - ETERNITY

IGNORANCE
SUFFERING
DEATH

(See Chapter VIII "What is Numerology?" Pages 205, 207, 208, 212-214)



though seeing, they may not see;
though hearing, they may not
understand.

(Luke 8:10)



-IX-

WHAT IS REINCARNATION?



WHAT IS REINCARNATION?

My curiosity in this subject was aroused when I was watching a documentary on television about the Christian church founded in India by Jesus' disciple St. Thomas. The commentator indicated that it was the only Christian church that believed in reincarnation. Subsequently, I did further research and found out that the commentator was wrong and reincarnation was not part of the doctrine of St. Thomas' church. Nonetheless, I found it interesting to note that their rituals were very similar to the rituals of the Armenian Apostolic church.

Reincarnation is a major and essential part of the doctrine of the eastern religions. According to these religions, the soul needs multiple reincarnations to improve and result in full revelation of God, which they call Nirvana. Reincarnation appears to be the bridge or the chain connecting the individual's improvement with the evolution of the universe. It, slowly but surely, is progressing towards full revelation of Christ, which they call Atman.

The idea of reincarnation satisfies certain human desires. Individuals identifying with their egos desire immortality and eternal life. Unfortunately, when they look around, they realize that poor or rich, educated or uneducated, king or servant, all are destined to die. The idea of reincarnation, with its promise of coming back, may not be a total conciliation, but it may soften the dread of death.

When we watch humanity, we see a lot of cruelty, pain and suffering and for a great majority, life appears to be a difficult journey.

Everything appears to be left to chance; hence, very tragic. Some are born weak, lame, physically and mentally challenged and poor. On the other hand, others are born healthy, smart and rich. This appears to be dependent on God's whim and wish. The universe and God, therefore,

appear to be unfair to some. Heaven forbid. If God is love, omnipresent and omniscient, why does He allow suffering and misery? Our physical lives appear to be driven by our desires and physical needs and there does not appear to be any other reason for our existence. Yes, we believe that after the death of our bodies, we will have an eternal life, but, where? That appears to be dependent of our present lives and how we live it. We could live eternity in “heaven” or “hell”. Reincarnation tends to satisfy also this dilemma, because the individual appears to be in his present circumstances based on previous lives and it is not God’s whim or chance that he is where he is in his present life. Individuals therefore have only themselves to blame or thank for their present conditions. This also validates the universal law that “every effect must have its cause”. In the eastern religions, this law is called the law of “karma”. This law is also in keeping with the following verses from the Old and New Testaments of the Bible.

Sow righteousness for yourselves, reap the fruit of unfailing love, and break up your unplowed ground; for it is time to seek the LORD, until he comes and showers his righteousness on you. (Hosea 10:12)

As I have observed, those who plow evil and those who sow trouble reap it. (Job 4:8)

Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. (2 Corinthians 9:6)

Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. Whoever sows to please their flesh, from the flesh will reap destruction; whoever sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life. (Galatians 6:7-8)

**... Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord
...they will rest from their labor, for their
deeds will follow them. (Revelation 14:13)**

**Do no evil, and evil will never befall you. Stay
away from wrong, and it will turn away from
you. My son, do not sow the furrows of
injustice, and you will not reap a sevenfold
crop. (Sirach 7:1-3)**

In the Holy Books of the eastern religions there are multiple references to reincarnation. The following are only two such references.

**Just as in this body the embodied soul passes
through childhood, youth, old age, so also
passes into another body. The learned man
does not grieve at it. (Bhagavad Gita 2:13)**

**Just as a man casts off his worn out clothes and
puts on new ones, so also the embodied self
casts off its worn out body and enters into
another which is new. (Bhagavad Gita 2:22)**

According to the eastern religions, when the body no longer serves well and is no longer conducive for further progress, it is cast off and a new one taken up. The characteristics of the new body are determined by the individual's thoughts, words and deeds during previous lives. The new body is conducive for the realization of the individual's desires and the dissipation of accumulated "karma". It is the individual's choice to be able to facilitate spiritual growth by exhausting the desires that are a hindrance for this spiritual advancement. Alas! New desires are created. Therefore, the wheel of life-death-reincarnation perpetually turns.

All religions recommend that we have noble and loving thoughts, words and deeds, because during this life we weave the fabric of our future lives. Noble and loving

thoughts result in a more appealing future life, whereas base and hateful thoughts result in just the opposite. Similar deeds may have completely different results dependent on the thought pattern and the motivation of the person. For example: to cut someone's belly open with a sharp knife. If the act is carried out with malice in mind and hatred and the desire to hurt or even kill the individual, it certainly would have its negative effect on the "karma" of the perpetrator. But, if the exact same cut is made by a surgeon with love and utmost care and the intent of helping or curing the individual to minimize his suffering, the effect on the "karma" of the surgeon would be a very positive one. More than the deed, it appears that thoughts and intentions are more important. Is it not true that all words and deeds spring forth from thoughts?

The opposite of reincarnation is exhibited by the Middle Eastern religions, namely Judaism, Christianity and Islam. According to these religions, man has only one life to live. Based on his thoughts, words and deeds during this one life, it is determined as to where he passes eternity, in "heaven" or "hell". According to the next verse is it possible that all of humanity will end up in "hell"?

for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, (Romans 3:23)

Where is "heaven" and where is "hell"? Who is worthy to go to "heaven"?

If the variable births are the result of chance, then what happens to the universal law of "cause and effect"? If we say, that the cause is God's wish, then why punish the thief and the murderer? Are they not acting according to their nature?

Even a wise man acts in accordance with his own nature, beings will follow their own nature. What can restraint do? (Bagavat Geeta 11:33)

Then should we not punish God for their deeds, having created them with their base natures. Heaven forbid.

When an infant dies, we usually tend to ask “what was his fault? What sin had he committed that he died so young? Where is justice?” Then we are told that infants are innocent, therefore they go straight to “heaven” and live eternity in the presence of God, in His Kingdom. If we truly believe in this, why do we mourn their death? We should be happy instead. Is there anything better we can aspire for our children than for them to live eternity in God’s presence? If this is in fact true, should we not make sure that they die before reaching an age when they may start sinning and lose the opportunity to go to heaven? Why punish those who commit infanticide? It appears that we do not have faith in what we believe in.

According to certain sources, it appears that in the old times, the Hebrews believed in reincarnation. In their “Kabala” there are references to several lives.

Josephus, a Jewish historian, who used Talmudic interpretation of Old Testament passages (the book "Wisdom of Solomon" is not in the canonical books of the Jewish scripture) has quoted from Solomon’s “Book of wisdom” the following statement:

To be born with sound body and limbs is the reward of the virtues of past lives.

From this verse it becomes apparent that at least Solomon believed in reincarnation. It appears that in Judaism, there are many branches, where some believe in reincarnation and some do not. During the last 200 years, as a result of the influence of the European Jews, presently Hebrews do not believe in any kind of life after death.

Those belonging to the religion of Islam believe in “heaven” and “hell” and not in reincarnation. They believe that, if they die for God or for religion, they go straight to heaven. This of course gives rise to the suicide bombers that

we hear about. It would have been better if they had understood their Koran somewhat better. To die for God or religion is the death of the “ego” and not the body. As much as the Moslems do not officially believe in reincarnation, there appears to be a belief among some of the general populace that when someone is a wicked person, after death he comes back as a dog or cat. That is why they also despise these animals. For the same reason to call someone “dog” or “son of a dog” (son of a bitch) is a major insult. In Sufism, a sect of Islam, they appear to be much more in harmony with the idea of reincarnation. Rumi has said the following:

**I died out of the stone and became a plant. I
died out of a plant and became an animal. I
died out of the animal and became a man. Why
then should I fear to die? When did I grow less
by dying? I shall die out of a man and become
an angel.**

This appears to be a reference to reincarnation, but to me, it is more of a reference to evolution.

According to some sources, Christians also, in the early days, believed in reincarnation. As we read in the early periods of Christianity, there were varying opinions and beliefs among the bishops of the day, to such an extent that some were martyred, some exiled and some were considered heretics. During the 4th century, the ecumenical meeting was greatly influenced by the emperor Constantine. His view became the accepted order and reincarnation was left out of the “Credo” and the Christianity we know today was molded. Constantine felt that control of the masses through religion would be easier than with armies. If there was only one life, then people would behave and not revolt or use aggression, even in the face of injustices, just not to miss to go to heaven. In 638 AD, at the ecumenical meeting of the bishops in Constantinople, under the direction of emperor

Justinian, reincarnation once and for all was declared a heretical belief subject to excommunication.

According to the orthodox churches, after death the individual goes into a deep sleep, until the “day of judgment”, when, if worthy, he gets a new body (of light) and lives with God in His kingdom eternally. For this reason, Armenians do not refer to their dead as “dead” but rather as “sleepers”. In the Roman Catholic Church, the belief is that there is a purgatory, where souls of the dead wait until the “day of judgment”. Other than Jesus and the few He resurrected, we do not know of anyone who has come back from the dead to tell us which one is correct. The Bible that has reached us today, with all the alterations It was subjected to, may still have some information to give us on this subject. In the Old Testament there are many examples against the doctrine of reincarnation. The following are only two such examples.

For the living know that they will die; But the dead know nothing, And they have no more reward, For the memory of them is forgotten. Also their love, their hatred, and their envy have now perished; Nevermore will they have a share In anything done under the sun. (Ecclesiastes 9:5-6)

Live joyfully with the wife whom you love all the days of your vain life which He has given you under the sun, all your days of vanity; for that is your portion in life, and in the labor which you perform under the sun. Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might; for *there is* no work or device or knowledge or wisdom in the grave where you are going. (Ecclesiastes 9:9-10)

In the New Testament there are a few passages that require giving some thought to:

When Jesus came into the region of Caesarea Philippi, He asked His disciples, saying, “Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?” So they said, “Some say John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.” (Matthew 16:13-14)

But I say to you that Elijah has come already, and they did not know him but did to him whatever they wished. Likewise the Son of Man is also about to suffer at their hands.” Then the disciples understood that He spoke to them of John the Baptist. (Matthew 17:12-13)

It appears that at the time of Jesus, the Jewish population believed in reincarnation, for they thought that Elijah or Jeremiah had come back as Jesus. Some raise the argument that this does not prove reincarnation because Elijah never died. He just went up to “heaven?” in a fiery chariot. Then how about Jeremiah and other prophets: they had died. We also have a very good account of the birth of Jesus; therefore, He could not have been Elijah come back to earth again as an adult in the fiery chariot. In the second verse, Jesus clearly seems to say that Elijah had come back as John the Baptist, and we also know about John’s birth.

During Jesus’ transfiguration, his disciples saw him talking to Moses and Elijah. At that time John the Baptist had already been beheaded. Who was Jesus talking to, Elijah or John the Baptist? The Bible says Elijah. Which incarnation is the most important then, the most recent one or the older ones?

Jesus answered and said to him, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.”

Nicodemus said to Him, “How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother’s womb and be born?”

(John 3:3-4)

The answer Nicodemus gives tends to suggest that he does not believe in reincarnation. In this context, when Jesus says “to be born again”, it is usually understood in a more abstract sense, indicating a change in the direction of our mind and thoughts from external things toward the real Self of the person, the Christ within. Is it possible that Jesus actually believed in reincarnation and actually meant literally for Nicodemus to have one more incarnation to see the Kingdom of God (the Christ within)?

He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go out no more. I will write on him the name of My God and the name of the city of My God, the New Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God. And *I will write on him My new name.* (Revelation 3:12)

This verse also appears to suggest the presence of reincarnation. It appears that until one “overcomes”, he will keep “going out”. But if he does “overcome”, he will become “a pillar in the temple of God” and will no longer “go out”. “Going out” likely indicates the constant turning of the wheel of death and reincarnation. To “overcome” which means overcoming the ego, stops this revolving wheel, thus becoming a permanent part of God’s temple (living in God’s house).

It is also interesting to read the following conversation taking place between Jesus and His disciples:

Now as *Jesus* passed by, He saw a man who was blind from birth. And His disciples asked Him, saying, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or

his parents, that he was born blind?” Jesus answered, “Neither this man nor his parents sinned, but that the works of God should be revealed in him. (John 9:1-3)

The interesting part is the question asked by the disciples. How is it possible that a blind man could be born blind because of his own sins? He must have sinned before birth and this could only be in a previous life. From the question, it becomes apparent that at least the disciples believed in reincarnation. Jesus’ answer is also very apropos. He tends to indicate that everything that belongs to this illusory life has no meaning or significance. He knew very well that the only Truth and reality was God and everything else only an illusion. Even if at this level of illusion, reincarnation was to occur, what does it have to do with the Truth or reality? When we go to sleep at night, we dream, and in the morning, we wake up. When we wake up, the dream and every person and thing in the dream disappears and dies. When we dream again the following night, are we to say that the characters in the dream have reincarnated? In the morning they die again. Their lives appear to be very short. Are not our lives also very short when compared to eternity? When we wake up from the sleep, do we mourn the death of the ones in the dream? I doubt that very much. Just for this reason Jesus’ answer was the best, because all of Creation exists only to reflect the “Light” and glory of God.

Then, is there reincarnation or not?

So far, we have analyzed the Holy Books and what they say about reincarnation. For humanity, it appears to be a very confusing subject and belief. The religious views also need to harmonize well with personal experiences and also with science. In popular literature, there are books with stories regarding reincarnation. Some years back I had read one of these stories in a book and was intrigued by it at the

time. Unfortunately, I have forgotten a few details such as names and dates, but I will try to convey the story to the best of my recollection.

In Lebanon, a young girl (4 or 5 years old) keeps telling her parents that her name is (forgotten, but something different than her present name) and in a nearby village, also giving the name of the village, she was killed by being knifed. At first the parents do not pay attention, thinking that it is all a childhood fantasy influenced by the stories that they watch on television. When the girl keeps on repeating this incessantly, despite discouragement from the parents, they finally try to get some help. Eventually, they end up going to the nearby village and making some inquiries. To their surprise, a young woman by the name given by the child was actually knifed and killed approximately 9 months before the girl was born. The child herself had never been to that village before in this life.

This and similar stories are difficult to authenticate and for me do not prove the existence of reincarnation one way or the other. The story may in fact be true, but it could also be a fabrication to sensationalize and sell books.

Psychiatrists, through hypnotic regression, are able to get information about the past lives of their subjects. Memory is a function of the brain. We know this well, because when certain parts of the brain are damaged the individual loses his memory. We also know that through old age dementia or through illness such as Alzheimer's, the number of brain cells decrease significantly. We can no longer put new memory into our brain's memory banks. Even if reincarnation is present, the brain is new and belongs to the present body and has not had the same experiences of

the previous lives to register any such memory. Then what is it that goes on during hypnotic regression? From quantum physics, we know that time is relative and may even be an illusion, because it is present only as part of this “reality” which we seem to consider to be an illusory existence. If that is the case, then the past, the present and the future may all be occurring simultaneously. The hypnotized subject, having cut off his identification with the illusory world, may be tapping into all sorts of events that he experiences on a purely energy level and for us, while in this illusion, they appear to be as having occurred in the past. Once the subject comes out of hypnosis, back into identification with this “reality”, he does not remember anything because his experiences do not belong to the illusion of time.

All of Creation, the universe, represents God’s body. Everything in the universe, stone, plant, animal and humans are part of God’s body and represent Its “cells”. In nature, everything seems to follow the dictum “as above, so below”. Nature gives us examples in the microcosm for what goes on in the macrocosm. Our bodies are also formed by cells. Each day millions of cells die and millions more are born. The cell that dies does not come back itself. Let us take skin cells as an example. They willingly sacrifice themselves to form a layer of dead cells to protect the individual and for the well being of the individual. Eventually the dead skin cells are shed off and will never come back to be cells again. It is true that the progeny of that dead cell does survive and carries on the tasks until its time also comes to die. Don’t humans do the same? We die and we leave our children behind. But we do not come back, or do we? Cells in our bodies sometimes may mutate. Some of the mutations can be very beneficial to the individual and afford a long and healthy life. Some others can be bad mutations and cause disease and suffering to the individual and may even threaten his life, as with cancer

cells.

Similarly each person, as a cell in God's body when he dies, is not likely to come back. He does leave behind his progeny, the next generation that carry similar genes. The way in which we conduct our lives, we can also mutate ourselves. As in the body, a beneficial mutation helps the body and makes it better whereas a harmful mutation causes illness and threatens death. We may also change the frequency of the energy forming us for the better or for the worse. The latter, just like the cancer cells, would obviously be a major hindrance for the revelation of Christ through us. If we "mutate" for the better, meaning changing the frequency of the energy forming us, even when we die, the energy which is never destroyed would become part of the energy of the universe and if it were to form another human being in time, it would be a nobler person according to the frequency, but would not be the same person. Therefore, what we strive for and achieve in our lives, in the grand scheme of things, is never lost and becomes part of the evolution. Each person's life energy is divine, comes from God and upon his death returns back to God. If that same energy forms another individual in time, it will be according to Its frequency. We know well that energy can carry information. We have the example of radio waves with FM (Frequency Modulation) or AM (Amplitude Modulation) being able to carry information that can be known through a receiver. Our bodies are the receivers. Each station will play according to the received message so will our bodies behave according to their natures as determined by the frequency and amplitude of the energy that forms them. A cancer cell brings forth other cancer cells. Cells with "good" mutations bring forth "good" cells. When the cancer cells increase and threaten the individual's life, surgical removal of the tumor is indicated, before it becomes too late. Is it possible that the

story of the “flood” and the destruction of “Sodom & Gomorrah” were such surgical excisions of the ever increasing numbers of bad mutations that were threatening the evolution towards revelation of Christ on a macrocosmic scale? Sometimes the cancer cells grow so fast that they outgrow their blood supply and die of lack of oxygen, forming a liquid centre of dead cells in the tumor. Is it possible that the news of wars and millions dying during wars are the result of negative thoughts driving people to self-annihilation?

Then, is there reincarnation or not? And what is reincarnation?

Is it possible that all religions are saying the same thing, but people’s understandings are different? If a man’s thoughts, words and deeds are important and cause him to change and after his death, this change remains and is passed on to some other person, then it means that reincarnation should exist. Therefore what we think, speak and do today will have their influence on the future. This is also in keeping with the law of cause and effect (karma).

Who is the individual? If the self identifies with the ego and believes this illusory life to be the reality and believes in reincarnation as in the eastern religions, and thinks that the ego will return, then I say he is wrong. With the death of the individual, the ego also dies. A person from one of the Middle Eastern religions who also identifies with his ego and thinks this illusory life to be reality and says there is no reincarnation, he would be right because he knows that the ego will never come back. On the other hand when the individual is not fooled by the ego and the illusory existence and identifies with his true Self, which is a spark of Christ and Divine energy, instead of identifying with his ego and as a member of one of the eastern religions, says “this energy that forms me will never be destroyed after I die. It will still

exist and may form another human being, therefore there is reincarnation”, he would be right. Similarly, a person belonging to one of the Middle Eastern religions and who has the full realization that he is nothing but energy formed by the Holy Spirit (what quantum physics calls dark energy) and reflects only God’s consciousness and still insists that there is no reincarnation, then, he would be wrong.

When the Lord takes up a body and when he leaves it, He takes these and goes, even as the wind takes scents from the seats (flowers).

(Bagavat Geeta 15:8)

The seed of a tree may be an insignificant small thing, but in it is concealed a whole large tree. In time it will germinate and grow to be a large tree. Any seed can only give rise to the tree it harbors. Bad seeds give rise to bad trees and good ones give rise to beneficial trees. Remember Jesus’ parable of the weed seeds that were sown among the wheat. As the seed religiously follows the law of “cause and effect”, similarly, so do our thoughts. Our thoughts are the seeds that give rise to events of the future. They appear to be insignificant and most of the time, we do not even act them out. But in time, enough people with similar negative thoughts may shape world events. Our thoughts should not be like “weeds” and negative, but should be only positive thoughts. To be able to have only beneficial and positive thoughts, we need to change the desire for pleasure or passions to compassion and the judgment to discriminating wisdom. Pleasure, passions and judgment belong to the ego, but compassion and discriminating wisdom belong to Christ our True Self.



Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. (Philippians 4:8)

Therefore, ... fix your thoughts on Jesus, whom we acknowledge as our apostle and high priest. (Hebrews 3:1)

For who knows a person's thoughts except their own spirit within them? In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. (I Corinthians 2:11)





Only a breath divides belief from
doubt,
'Tis muttered breath that makes a
man devout,
Yea, death from life only a breath
divides--
O haste to drink before that breath
is out.
(Omar Khayyam)



... “Because you have seen
me, you have believed;
blessed are those who have
not seen and yet have
believed.”

(John 20:29)



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WHAT ARE BELIEF AND FAITH?



WHAT ARE BELIEF AND FAITH?

In the Armenian language, both words “belief” and “faith” are translated with the same word. This may be a shortcoming of the language. It may also indicate that both processes i.e: belief, or its verb, to believe and faith are nothing but part of the same continuum. Belief is the beginning of the mental process and development of faith is the end. I prefer two separate words just because it makes it somewhat easier to write on the topic. It has also caused confusion in peoples minds, especially the uneducated. At times, both are used interchangeably in statements such as “I believe: therefore I am saved”.

Faith is part of human nature. Every person is born with this virtue. Every infant from birth has absolute faith that his parents, especially his mother, will care for all his needs. With his cries, the infant lets his mother know of the need for some sort of care, with full faith that they will be met. Otherwise, he would stop crying. Neglected infants, once they lose faith, stop crying. When a stranger starts feeding the infant, despite being hungry he may refuse the food because he does not have the same faith in this person. But if and when the mother gives the same food, he devours it with a smile on his face.

Sometime in childhood, we seem to lose our innocence and also our faith.

He called a little child to him, and placed the child among them. And he said: “Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. (Matthew 18:2-3)

Jesus said, “Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.” (Matthew 19:14)

From the above verses it seems to be obvious that we need to develop the same degree of faith to successfully continue our spiritual journeys.

Faith is not the privilege of any one religion. During the times of Jesus, who was the person with the most faith in all of Israel?

“Truly I tell you, I have not found anyone in Israel with such great faith.” (Matthew 8:10)

According to Jesus, it was the Roman centurion who actually was a pagan and believed in many gods had the greatest faith. (See: Matthew 8:5-10)

The cause of the loss of childhood faith is the development of intellect. This does not mean we should not be intelligent. We need to use the same intelligence tempered by wisdom to recover our childhood faith. At this juncture, it is appropriate to include a couple of quotes from Ghandi.

Faith is not something to grasp, it is a state to grow into.

Faith... must be enforced by reason... when faith becomes blind it dies.

To develop faith, the individual passes through several stages. The first stage is to believe in what others tell him. The great majority of humanity is stuck at this stage. They believe in what they are being fed mentally by others, the same way a herd of sheep follow the shepherd.

Some reach the second stage of belief. This is based on the information they personally receive by reading and interpreting the Holy Books, such as the Bible. It is useful to find the right teacher for proper interpretation and to develop the belief system. At the same time, we should also take heed from what Jesus said:

“But you are not to be called ‘Rabbi,’ for you have one Teacher, ... Nor are you to be called instructors, for you have one Instructor, the

Messiah. (Matthew 23:8,10)

If and when the individual is sincere and his prayers are for revelation of Christ, it is impossible for the right teacher not to show up. This undertaking is the first step in the progression from belief to developing faith. Jesus said “blessed” to those who are at this stage of their journey.

“Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.” (John 20:29)

They are blessed because they have embarked on the journey to developing faith. Once a Roman Catholic monk said:

“I believe in something so that I get to know it to have faith in it.”

We believe in something that we do not know. To have faith requires experiential knowledge.

The third step of belief requires wisdom and intellectual understanding. Of course, the presence and the use of the intellect are paramount at this stage. For the development of faith, it is not necessary for someone to be smart or educated or even intellectual but it is essential for the person to be sincere. It may be interesting to recount a story my mother had told me during my childhood. Her purpose in telling the story most likely was to teach me exactly this same point.

One weekday, when the priest was decorating the altar to get it ready for the Sunday mass, he heard a member of his congregation who, for some reason was visiting the church, was kneeling and praying. Being the only person there, he was praying somewhat aloud and the priest could hear his prayer. The priest noticed that in his prayer he was saying: “God I forgive You Your sins”. He was shocked, and quietly approached the man and told him that what he

was saying was blasphemy and taught him how to pray properly, saying: “God forgive me my sins”. The man happy, on the way home, repeated it to himself many times so he would not forget. Unfortunately, he had some distractions on the way, by the time he reached home, he had forgotten and had reverted back to repeating what he used to pray before. The man was very upset. He took a paper and pencil with him and ran back to the church to write it down. Unfortunately, the janitor told him that the priest had left and had gone fishing by boat. He ran to the sea shore and seeing the boat in the distance, he ran to the priest, all the way yelling and asking how the prayer was suppose to be. The priest, seeing this man running on the surface of the water, realized the strength of his faith and said: “You keep on praying the same way you have been praying all along”.

In a prayer, it is not the words that are important, but the heart, the intent and the sincerity.

The third stage opens the way for the fourth and final stage of this continuum which is the experiential knowledge which leads to true faith that is immovable. These four stages of the belief-faith continuum in general correspond to the four human characteristics. (See chapter III “What are the human characteristics” Page-47)

To better understand the level of belief and understanding of each level, let us analyze the answers one would give to the following questions.

Is there God or not?

Do you have a soul or not and what would happen to your soul if and when you die?

Is there life after death?

a- Those whose minds are centered on taking care of their physical bodies only and are in the first stage of the belief-faith continuum, would answer the following way: “My parents, my teachers and my priest have all told me that there is a God; therefore, I believe there is. They also told me that I have a soul but animals do not; therefore I believe I have a soul. I am told that if I am good in this world I will go to heaven and live with God forever after I die. I try my best to be as good as possible, but occasionally I fail.

b- In general, at the second stage of the belief-faith continuum, we find those who are mostly emotional people. Their answers to the same questions are somewhat different: “I believe that there is a God and I have a soul because the Bible tells me so and that is the word of God. God sent his only begotten Son so that I could be saved. He died on the cross and shed His blood for my sins. He took all my sins upon Himself. All I have to do is believe and I will be saved. Yes, when He returns with his army on the day of the second coming, even if I am dead, I will resurrect and live in His Kingdom forever.”

c- The person who has reached the third stage of this continuum, usually those functioning more at an intellectual level, hopefully with their thoughts and minds centered on the Christ within, may say: “Nothing comes from nothing. The universe and this world exist therefore they must have a cause. It is fine with me if we call that cause God. I also did not come from nothingness, therefore I must have existed somewhere in some form before I was born. If you want to call that a soul, then I have one, but so do the animals. After I die, I will be back where I was before I was born; therefore I will exist after death in some form or other.”

d- A person having reached the fourth stage of the continuum which is faith is rare to find. They have fully developed intuition. Fully developed intuition is likely to be

the next major evolution for humankind in general. When this person answers these questions, it is difficult to be sure what they mean. He would say:

“I and the Father are one.” (John 10:30)

“Holy Father, as we are one.” (John 17:11)

“I am the light of the world.” (John 8:12)

“I am the bread of life.” (John 6:48)

“I am the resurrection and the life.”(John 11:25)

“I am the way & the truth & the life.”(John 14:6)

“Very truly I tell you,” Jesus answered,

“before Abraham was born, I am!” (John 8:58)

“I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End.” (Revelation 21:6)

To nurture intuition, one needs all his faculties the physical, emotional and intellectual, working together and in harmony. Ignoring any one of these three will impede the development of faith. Faith requires experiential knowledge. The scriptures tell us that in time each one of us, like Jesus, could attain the experiences and the understanding which faith brings.

The human mind is such that it constantly looks for proof of the things it wants to believe in. We usually get proof in the following various ways.

a- Proof comes to us through our five senses. We usually believe in what we see, hear, feel ... etc. In chapter V “What is the truth”, we note that quantum physics tells us that what we see and feel to be solid objects are nothing but 99% space. It appears that our senses are not telling us the truth, therefore the senses are likely to be unreliable.

For we live by faith, not by sight.(2 Corinthians 5:7)

b- Proof can also come to us by inference. A good example of this is that when we see smoke, we infer that there is a fire. When we observe nature and we see its beauty, its force, its abilities, its harmony, its complexity and its perfectly balanced existence, it is impossible not to

believe that there is a consciousness behind it all and all nature is not there just by pure chance.

c- Proof can also come to us through revelation. Humans, through an elevated level of consciousness, have the ability to experience revelation and understand what is incomprehensible to the human mind during normal waking states. Scientists that have made new discoveries often say that the solution to a problem comes to them in a sudden revelation. The greatest scientist and discoverer of the 19th-20th centuries, Nicola Tesla, apparently often used to see his inventions first in a vision and perhaps some in a dream. Then he would test them in real life and lo-and behold, they worked. It is true that these revelations do not just occur without a reason. The true discoverers spend years thinking and concentrating on the problem at hand. In other words, they were meditating. Their minds centered on the problem at hand that they were trying to solve. To see the degree of this concentration, all we need to do is to note Tesla's life. His concentration was so intense that even when his consciousness was at the dream level, it was still centered on the problem. I also do not doubt for a second that he was having periods of a higher levels of consciousness when he was experiencing his visions. In a similar way, in our spiritual journey, with similar determination and sincerity, with patience and unwavering perseverance, can we not also attain the level of consciousness to experience revelation and the knowledge that comes with it, through God's mercy and grace?

When I was in medical school, we learned about many diseases and their treatments. I believed that I could care for the sick. When we started going to hospitals, face to face with sick patients, I realized fast that I had no clue what to do. Under the supervision of experienced teachers, slowly I developed the faith needed in my abilities to be able to carry

out all the necessary procedures etc. required for the betterment of the patient. At university, I had learned only the language of medicine, but not the confidence to treat. The latter comes with experience and only when we develop full faith in our abilities are we let loose on the unsuspecting public. I truly learned medicine by experience working in hospitals. In the same vein, to develop faith in spiritual matters as well, we need the “classrooms of the university”. We need to use our intellect and go in the direction it takes us. But intellect alone is not sufficient for us to understand the Truth, or develop faith. It is good and necessary to read and learn what the Bible teaches us. But similarly, as the classroom alone without the clinical exposure is impotent in producing a doctor, all the intellectual understanding without the devotion that comes from experiential knowledge is also useless and impotent in developing faith. Mohammad has said:

All our intellectual knowledge is like a donkey carrying a load of books.

Does not the Bible also say the same?

For a person may labor with wisdom, knowledge and skill, ... This too is meaningless and a great misfortune. (Ecclesiastes 2:21)

What advantage have the wise over fools? ...This too is meaningless, a chasing after the wind. (Ecclesiastes 6:8-9)

When knowledge comes through personal experience, all doubts disappear.

What should we have faith in?

As discussed above, we should have faith in:

a- That our present worldly lives are nothing but a dream and an illusion. It is not the truth.

b- That God exists.

c- That it is possible to have an increased level of

consciousness and experience the revelation of Truth. Since others have done it, such as Jesus, then it must be possible for us as well. Jesus said it himself, that if we believe in what he is saying, we can perform even greater things than He has done.

Very truly I tell you, whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father. (John 14:12)

How to develop faith?

a- The first step is hearing about it, that this possibility exists. I am certain by now most of the people in the world have heard because all religions say the same. It is not important that different names are given such as “saved”, “freedom from suffering”, “going to heaven” ... etc. This should be the start of understanding.

b- The second step is in the domain of the intellect. The great majority of the world’s population lead their lives according to their nature which they have inherited from their parents. Each person’s nature is pre-determined from birth. As much as genetics determine our natures, we also should not forget the influence of the environment which also helps mold one’s nature. It appears as if we act according to our free wills, but careful observation shows us that most decisions we make are in harmony with our natures. It is essential for us to use our intellects and assess each situation properly and wisely in order to decide if our actions are good and beneficial or bad and detrimental to us and to everyone else. We should exercise true free will coupled with wisdom in what we think, in what we say and in what we do, to make sure that they are good and the best and beneficial, even though they may be contrary to our natures. This is the first step in changing ourselves and it opens the way to trust and surrender. It is possible for a

person with perseverance and constant effort to change his nature in a positive way.

c- The third step is prayer and meditation, which put to action all that one has learned. This also tests determination, sincerity and perseverance. The purpose of prayer and meditation is to change belief to unshakeable faith. The subject of prayer should be for God's mercy, so that He strengthens the person's resolve and will-power, for him to be successful in changing his personality, his nature and making surrender possible. Meditation centers the person's mind on his true Self, the Christ within. It also illuminates the way to spiritual growth.

Faith in itself does not change life circumstances, but it does change the person. People with faith have their minds fixed on God. Sincerity and perseverance are essential because there will be questions and doubts that will rise in one's mind. These are also essential to test one's resolve and the strength of one's faith. When we were in school, we were constantly faced with tests and examinations. The examinations are not for the benefit of the teacher, but rather for the benefit of the student, so that the student finds out the level of his accumulated knowledge. When I started teaching medicine at the university, I was surprised to find out that my impression of a given student's level of knowledge and the mark I would give hardly ever changed after examinations. Similarly, in the field of spiritual growth, in our journey from belief to faith, the trials, namely, the doubts and the questions are not for God to test our faith. God knows the Alpha and the Omega of us. The trials and the tribulations are for us, for us to know the level of our faith and resolve. In time, with perseverance and an unwavering steady mind, one enjoys the fruits of his faith. Having stopped the chitter-chatter of his thoughts and with his mind centered on God, he waits with hope for the "Groom", as did

the five wise virgins. When we go to bed at night, don't we also have the same hope that we will be able to sleep? As sleep comes without our efforts in a split second, so can revelation of Christ come in a split second at its own time. Then the Light of Christ shines through the person. The faith in step three was still subject to tests. That was the working faith, but when the revelation occurs, the doubts and questions also disappear. The student has graduated from the school and is no longer in need of examinations. The faith that replaces it gives such a peace that it surpasses all understanding.

And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4:7)

What is the degree or level of desire needed by us to develop such a faith? In short, how badly do we want faith? How satisfied are we with our present level of belief? When a thief finds out that there is a fortune in a given house, he loses his peace and sleep until he can successfully steal the fortune. I wonder if we lose the same degree of peace and sleep to have the treasure that is within us, the revelation of Christ.

To develop such a faith one has to prepare oneself. Anger, greed, egoism and pride are the most important characteristics of one's nature that need to be fully controlled. One also has to engage in developing self-knowledge, which should lead to self-criticism. He needs to decide where he is and where he wants to go with his life. Faith also, on the way, gives him the strength to successfully "educate" and change himself.

For the things that the intellect cannot comprehend, faith makes understood. Faith is wisdom's light.

The spiritual journey is full of difficulties. These difficulties are hopelessness, passions and desires,

discouragement, fear and indifference. It is only through faith that one may overcome these. Of course, the cause of all those difficulties is human nature and its shortcomings. These include a lack of self-control, desires of the flesh, lack of love, pride in one's intellect or otherwise, arrogance, lack of faith, a richness of thoughts (busy mind) and laziness.

In order for belief to occur, it should be in harmony with the person's pre-conceived ideas and desires; otherwise he is unable to believe in an idea that is foreign to him. On the other hand, faith does not require any pre-conception. Belief is firmly attached to the individual's ideas, whereas faith lets go of them. People always gravitate towards all that is familiar to them. This gives them a feeling of comfort. Similarly, we also hold on to our beliefs. Unfortunately this builds a wall on the way of our spiritual growth. Multitudes go on pilgrimages to certain places with the hope of getting some spiritual growth, thinking that those places are endowed with special powers. These are all beliefs that have absolutely nothing to do with faith. One need not go to Jerusalem, Mecca or the Himalayas to develop faith. On the contrary, the way to faith is like a ladder. We need to climb it, rung by rung, until belief becomes faith. What we believe in should also change with each step in our progress. At each step, one also becomes more tolerant and compassionate. The believer should never say: "What I believe in is better or superior", but instead should live out what he believes in and show to all with his life and works what he believes in. Faith is not a debatable subject. When a person argues about his beliefs, he shows a lack of understanding about faith.

Faith is the source of a positive feeling of confidence and trust. It is absolute surrender. It is the undisputed knowledge that our physical, emotional and intellectual bodies all belong to God, as do our lives, abilities and talents which are His blessings. Faith is the source of humility. Faith

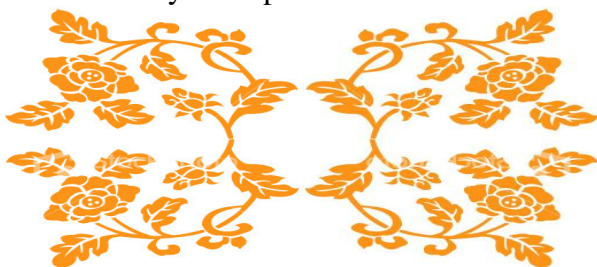
that has not been tested is not faith, just as surrender that has not been tested is not surrender. Faith requires simplicity and openness of mind as well as being guileless. When our prayers are about our needs for our physical lives, they go against faith. God's blessings are ever present for all of us to benefit from; it is our receptivity that is lacking.

On the spiritual journey both faith and determination are essential. Revelation is a spiritual experience which is impossible for atheists just because they cannot first believe to develop faith. Revelation is also impossible to all believers that believe in an imaginary God conjured in their mind, that exists only in their mind. The person who adamantly defends his belief system despite all, has great hidden pride that blocks the way to true faith. Fanaticism is always a sign of hidden pride.

One always needs to be open minded, always searching and ready to change. When one says: "I found the Truth", his progress will also stop. He thus loses also all hope of experiencing the revelation of Christ.

It is good for someone to be "born in the Church". But, if that Church has fulfilled its mission well, the person should not "die in the Church". Was not Jesus "born in the Temple"? But He gave up his life elevated on the cross. Both He and his apostles were all despised, hated and persecuted by the Temple. The apostles left the Temple and founded Christianity and its Church

Faith is the way to Hope.





**To one who has faith,
no explanation is necessary.**

**To one without faith,
no explanation is possible".**

Thomas Aquinas



-XI-

WHAT IS HOPE?



WHAT IS HOPE?

Hope is a virtue that everybody is born with. Victor Hugo has said the following:

“Hope is the word which God has written on the brow of every man.”

Hope is an emotional and psychological state where the subject convinces himself that any situation will have a positive outcome. These may be work related, involve any kind of undertaking, various beliefs and the imagined realization of desires.

Paul points out three major similar human emotional and psychological states which are faith, hope and love.

“And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.”

(1 Corinthians 13:13)

According to Paul the greatest of these three is love. I was discussing this verse with a theologian friend of mine. His opinion was that love was not the greatest but hope was. He disagreed with Paul. His take was that it is impossible to live without hope. What he was saying was true in that it was next to impossible to live life without hope and be happy. Even if the person was to live on, life would be hell. This had me thinking. It is true that we tend to put up with difficult times because of the hope of future happiness. Those who lose hope go into depression and even contemplate suicide.

With regard to our physical and spiritual lives, it appears that all of humanity lives with the hope that after death they will go to heaven. Those who follow some of the eastern religions hope for a better reincarnation in a future life. Of course, with the idea and hope of heaven comes also the fear of hell. Heaven and hell are not special places; they are both here on earth, exactly where we are. It is up to us.

We can make our lives heaven or hell. Those who have lost hope live in hell. Dante has written:

“All hope abandon, ye who enter here!”

I wonder if he meant to say “All who abandon hope, enter here (hell).” When we are faced with some difficulty and the outcome is uncertain, it is hope that gives us new energy, gets rid of fear and uncertainty, opens our minds to see a greater horizon to be able to see all possibilities and thus assuring a positive outcome and thus victory. Hope gives the person greater ability and determination. Psychologists suggest that it is possible to develop hope. According to them, hope is dependent on three things: a- **A goal or purpose.** b- **Will-power** and c- **Ability.** They also suggest that it is possible to measure someone’s degree of hope. This is possible by taking into consideration the goal, the will-power and the ability of the person. To this they also add the person’s resolve and determination regarding the realization of the outcome. The degree of will power and degree of ability are somewhat dependent on his degree of resolve and determination. The degree of hope is also dependent on his faith. The degree of faith he has as to how realistic it is to expect a positive outcome.

Most of humanity believes that they will go to heaven after death. Belief is not enough for one has to develop faith. (See also Chapter X “What are belief and faith?” Page-237) True hope is born out of faith. It is impossible to have hope without faith. Thomas Aquinas has said the following:

“Faith has to do with things that are not seen and hope with things that are not at hand.”

In the Bible we also read the following:

“Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see.”
(Hebrews 11:1)

“May the God of hope fill you with all joy and

peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.” (Romans 15:13)

As most people are content with just a simple belief and do not nurture faith, similarly they tend to be content by “simple hope” which basically is nothing but optimism and do not nurture true hope. The “simple hope” or optimism appears sufficient for them to sustain this illusory life. For the life lived without true hope, the Bible says the following:

“We are foreigners and strangers in your sight, as were all our ancestors. Our days on earth are like a shadow, without hope.”(1 Chronicles 29:15)

The “simple hope” or optimism does not put any responsibility on the shoulders of the person. The person who nurtures true hope for the realization of his desire also has the responsibility to make sure that the outcome expected is realized because the outcome is dependent on him. True hope along with the responsibility also gives the person the necessary energy, power, strength, wisdom and right judgment, courage and determination for the realization of a positive outcome. When Alexander Pope said the following he probably meant the “simple hope”:

**“Hope springs eternal in the human breast:
Man never is, but always to be Blest.”**

True hope should be based on the realization of that blessing. True hope is the dream of a spiritually awake person. We read in the Bible:

“To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.” (Colossians 1:27)

With loss of hope comes depression which affects the person’s thoughts, emotions and actions, as well as his physical health. It causes sadness, a feeling of emptiness,

worry, preoccupations, anxiety, impotence in doing anything, guilt, restlessness, nervousness, feeling of inadequacy, etc. Physically, it can cause loss of appetite or bulimia, inability to concentrate, insomnia or sleeping all day long, forgetfulness, indecision, indifference, feeling tired at all times, muscle aches and pains and indigestion. Despite all efforts, all of these turn out to be incurable. On top of this, if the person is able to collect a bit of energy, he may get enough will-power to attempt to commit suicide. W. C Fields has said the following:

**“When we have lost everything, including hope,
life becomes a disgrace, and death a duty.”**

It appears that hope or the lack of it determines a person's disposition or mood. Psychologists and psychiatrists tell us that a person's mental disposition or mood is dependent on certain chemicals in the brain such as dopamine or serotonin. When their levels change and their balance is altered, our moods also change and we may become depressed. It is not well known as to why the levels change. I am certain the cause is multi-factorial. I am also certain that it is possible to nurture certain mental attitudes that may fix these levels and make it conducive for the person to nurture hope. Depression can occur in anybody's life as a result of illness or death of a loved one, as a result of side effects of certain drugs or as a result of personal chronic illness. But, the depression should last only a short time.

As a cardiologist, I have been in the position to care for very ill people, some at “death's door” as a result of their heart attack. I have always told both the patient and the family the truth about the gravity of the situation and have never lied to them. But I also always have left a small “door” open, a hope that there may be improvement. To completely take away hope from a patient is cruel and also guarantees the patient's demise. Time and time again I have witnessed

patients who, for all intents and purposes, are not terminal, but if and when the patient loses hope and gives up, despite all efforts and against all reasonable medical expectations, the patient ends up dying before leaving the hospital. I have witnessed the opposite as well. A patient that, for all intents and purposes, is not expected to survive, based on our medical knowledge, he may against all odds, improve and walk out of the hospital, only if he has great hope. Therefore, hope is essential to lead a healthy life and it is essential for our survival.

What should we be hoping for?

Humanity hopes to go to heaven after death. To this end, everyone in their own way tries to be at least a little bit “good” to get “brownie points”. But, the hope is for what comes after death. Marcus Tullius Cicero has said:

“While there is life, there is hope.”

The Bible says the same as well:

“Anyone who is among the living has hope - even a live dog is better off than a dead lion!”

(Ecclesiastes 9:4)

Hope should be centered on a goal that should be reachable during this life and not after death. The individual has to have hope, so that he could work on the realization of that goal during his life. That would be self-improvement to the point of being worthy to experience the revelation of God. This would change his life while alive before death. Johann Wolfgang von Goethe has said:

“Those, who hope for no other life, are dead even for this.”

Edgar Allan Poe also says:

“The ninety and nine are with dreams, content but the hope of the world made new, is the hundredth man who is grimly bent on making those dreams come true.”

The purpose of hope should be the revelation of Christ within the person. The Bible says:

“I wait for the LORD, my whole being waits, and in his word I put my hope.” (Psalms 130:5)

Hope is for the future, but the time for the realization of the goal is now and not the future. Frank Lloyd Wright has said:

“The present is the ever moving shadow that divides yesterday from tomorrow. In that lies hope.” (Namely the present)

Each person needs to measure the degree of hope they have. It is important to know whether the hope we have is “simple hope”, just optimism or a true hope with a definite goal, armed with will power and determination of effort and perseverance for the realization of that goal. T. S Eliot has written the following:

“I said to my soul, be still, be still, and wait without hope, For hope would be hope for the wrong thing.”

I think he has realized that the goal of our hope is usually wrong and that we do not know what to hope for. He is cultivating “stillness” which basically is the stillness of the mind cleared of all thoughts, and waiting for the revelation of Christ. Paul has summarized very well the whole issue in the following verses:

“through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we boast in the hope of the glory of God. Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not put us to shame, because God’s love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.” (Romans 5:2-5)

Hope is that divine light that should dawn in every person's heart. When the individual takes the first steps towards that light, all else tends to lose its significance. The Bible says:

All who have this hope in him purify themselves, just as he is pure. (1 John 3:3)

Samuel Smiles has said:

"Hope is like the sun, which, as we journey toward it, casts the shadow of our burden behind us."

Many, fear even to take that first step. Hope gives that courage. Napoleon Bonaparte has said:

"Courage is like love; it must have hope for nourishment."

As much as it appears as if courage comes from hope, its real source is the Christ within. We read the following in the Bible:

"But the eyes of the LORD are on those who fear him, on those whose hope is in his unfailing love" (Psalms 33:18)

My theologian friend, at first glance, appeared to be right about hope being more important than love. It certainly gives the courage to live our lives. But there is one point that we should not forget. Both faith and hope are human emotional and mental states. God does not need faith nor does He need hope. But Love is His nature, hence, love is divine, therefore it is the greatest of all three. Paul was right.

The result of true hope is not the temporary happiness bestowed by "simple hope", but it is the eternal bliss caused by God's love that is beyond all understanding.

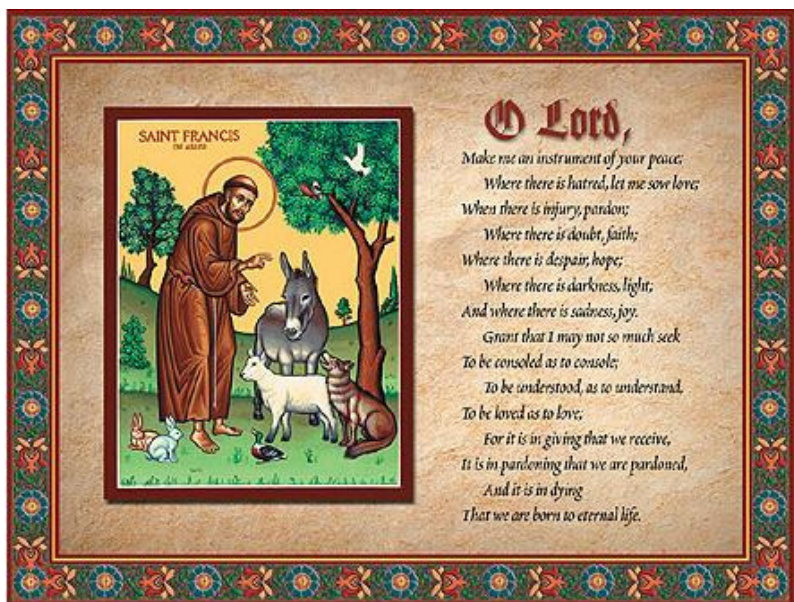
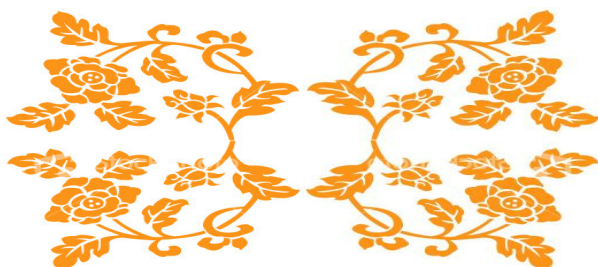
It behooves us to consciously develop the perfect faith such that it is possible to realize that divine Light, so that out of that faith is born the true hope of that realization. With the courage and determination and perseverance that comes from that Light, we can work toward making that revelation of

Christ in us a reality and be able to announce: "Great tidings,
Christ has risen from the dead."

Create your life's journey by **FAITH**

Determine it with **HOPE**

Set its foundation on **LOVE**





By such strange means did I sustain
A thousand starry flights in one,
Since hope heaven yet by none
Was ever truly hoped in vain.
Only by hope I won my way
Nor did my hope my aim belie,
Since I soared up so high, so high,
That in the end I seized my prey.
(St. John of the Cross)



Life is so short, yet sleeps thy
lovely head;
Why make so soon a death-
bed of thy bed?
O love, awake! thy beauty
wastes away--
Thou shalt sleep on and on
when thou art dead.
(Omar Khayyam)



-XII-

WHAT IS LOVE?



WHAT IS LOVE?

“The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit.” (John 3:8)

Love is like air. We do not see it, but we cannot live without it. When it moves we still do not see it, but we feel it.

“So we know and believe the love God has for us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him.”
(1 John 4:16)

Love is the most important commandment of God.

“For the entire law is fulfilled in keeping this one command: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’” (Galatians 5:14)

“For this is the message you heard from the beginning: We should love one another.”
(1 John 3:11)

“Jesus replied: ‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.” (Matthew 22:37-40)

“Anyone who does not love me will not obey my teaching. These words you hear are not my own; they belong to the Father who sent me.”
(John 14:24)

“By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.” (John 13:35)

The Greeks have classified love into three different types and use different words to indicate them.

- a- “Eros” (ερος), this represents erotic love.
- b- “Philos” (φιλος), this represents brotherly love.
- c- “Agape” (αγαπη), and this represents divine love.

It appears that the following alternate classification more or less corresponds to the Greek classification.

- a- Animal love: corresponding to erotic love.
- b- Human love: corresponding to brotherly love.
- c- Devine love: similar to the Greek divine love.

There is also a third classification and I will comment on that later.

The word “love” in general is a much-abused word and because of this, its true meaning appears to have been lost. In general we think that the positive feelings we have towards our family members and our friends represent love. It is true that they are part of love, but true love is much more than that, which we have lost.

“For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? And if you salute only your brethren, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same?” (Matthew 5:46-47)

Very few people truly know what true love is all about. The satisfaction that love gives is not that feeling what we call love, but it is the happiness and the bliss that accompanies it. Many yearn for divine love, but, alas, it always seems to escape them. The true divine love is experienced only by the pure heart, in other words a ready mind.

“Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth for a sincere love of the brethren,

love one another earnestly from the heart.”

(1 Peter 1:22)

Love is born in us only when we see the unity in multiplicity. Love is a dynamic, constant supply of energy. One of the major impediments to the expression of true love is the fact that for most, God is not a reality but only an idea. True love is one but its expressions are many. When true divine love expresses through a person, it gives peace, kindness, compassion, sacrifice, courage, humility and the desire to serve. Despite the presence of all these, true love still is not present unless all that is also accompanied by happiness and bliss. Bliss is a function of the brain and its source is the 7th chakra. But the expression of that power through the 4th “heart” chakra gives the individual the feeling of happiness. Love cannot exist without happiness.

In the universe, there are two opposing forces. One is the positive force of attraction that physics has amply identified as the gravitational force between bodies, the electro-magnetic force of attraction, the attraction between molecules as well as atoms, the attraction between sub-atomic particles. This last force is so powerful that its release has given rise to the atomic bomb. There is also a negative force of repulsion as seen between two electrons. It is because of the force of repulsion that the “big bang” had occurred. It has spread energy everywhere. Thanks to the force of attraction, some elements have come together and formed matter and the visible universe and thus the Creation. When the universal energy is subjected to the repulsive force, we get multiplicity and differences and therefore, disharmony. This is the beginning of the illusory world and the life that we seem to be familiar with. We need to align ourselves with the forces of attraction and therefore see the unity in multiplicity. This is the exciting force whence comes love.

A: Animal love.

If sex is the main reason for the marriage between a husband and a wife over and above all else, then it wastes the energy of that divine love. Sex should not be foremost in a relationship. Sex is not love. Over-emphasized sex causes possessiveness, abuse, over-familiarity and in time results in loss of friendship and understanding. Sex diminishes love to the level of animal-love. Animal love is lust and gives rise to desires, passions, preoccupations and superstitions. All these block the expression of true love. Animal love is dependent on the physical, it sees diversity and multiplicity; hence, is divisive. It always seeks happiness but never finds lasting happiness. Therefore, it is always sorrowful. When true love is forefront in a relationship, sex becomes only one expression of that love. Between a husband and a wife, each one needs to see the expression of God in the other. It is only then, that a marriage can be said to have been made in heaven. Such a marriage inspires others and becomes the envy of all.

B: Human love.

When this worldly life of illusion is the reality for us, it indicates that our level of consciousness is such that we are still stuck seeing the multiplicity. At such a level, it would be impossible for us to experience true love; hence, our love depends on an object of love for its expression to occur. This allows us to experience the love between husband and wife, love between parents and children, love between brothers and sisters, love between two friends, love between teacher and student, even love between master and servant and finally love between man and God. When the divine love that flows through us and expresses through the 4th “heart” chakra is altered and diminished commensurate to our level of consciousness and our relationship with the object of our love, it becomes the human love.

By analyzing human love we need to understand divine love. It is said that the love of a father for his child springs from the head, namely thoughts and reason. It gives him the desire to protect and to provide. On the other hand, the love of a mother for her child springs from the heart and emotions; therefore it is said that it is more spiritual. The love in a proper marriage appears to be the most sublime of all human loves, and some say the closest to divine love. Because of this we read:

“For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh” (Matthew 19:5)

C: Divine love.

The pinnacle of love is communion with God. When Jesus was invited by the two sisters Martha and Mary to have a meal, Martha was busy preparing the meals and the table, whereas Mary was sitting at the feet of Jesus and listening to him. When Martha complained and wanted her sister Mary also to help with the preparations, Jesus said the following:

“Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things; one thing is needful. Mary has chosen the good portion, which shall not be taken away from her.”
(Luke 10:41-42)

Human love requires an object to love. Divine love loves the subjective, the Self and does not require an object to love. Therefore, we need to learn to love our Selves, our being, the Christ within. This does not mean that we should love our bodies, our minds, our intellect or our egos, as these are all objects. Self-knowledge is to experience true love. It may be more appropriate to call human love as affection and excitement. It certainly can be the cause for sorrow. Divine love is devotion. Its effects can only be peace and bliss.

Every act and sacrifice done with divine love is a form of prayer. The person lives in love, as love and acts with love. We need to prepare our minds, change their qualities and abilities, to become able receptacles for the flow of divine love.

“so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.” (Matthew 5:45)

The secret to expressing divine love is worshipping God. As with human love, our minds are centered on the object of our love: husband, wife, child, lover etc. in the same way in God worship, our minds have to be constantly centered on our true being, the Self, the Christ within. As we mentioned before, the result of such love would be kindness, goodness and compassion. We need to leave behind old pains, so that they do not control our present and future. If we hold on to them, we continue to also have issues with those who have caused the pains. Letting go is the real freedom. True freedom is not what governments talk about and wage wars for, in the name of freedom. True love is not an emotional tie that forms between two people. Rather it is a state of being; it is a level of consciousness and it is an experience of revelation of God. The idea of duality blocks the comprehension of unity. This gives rise to self-protection, jealousy, a desire to control and to be domineering, guilt and eventually, divisiveness. True love is a dedication. Its expression is service.

As a child loves his parents, we also need to approach God in the same way, as His child and seek His protection and care and comfort.

As a husband and wife love each other, we also need to approach God as our spouse. For this reason, the nuns consider themselves married to Christ.

As two close friends trust each other and share their secrets, we also need to approach God the same way as our friend and share our innermost secrets.

As we trust and honor our teachers, we also have to approach God the same way as our teacher and express all our doubts.

As a servant is dependent of his master, we also need to approach God as His servant ready to carry out His will.

As a teenager in love who looks at the face of his beloved and seeing her beauty and the grace, has happiness pour forth in him; we need to approach God as our beloved to experience the bliss of His grace.

The expressions of human love are like small sparks of fire, but divine love is like an inferno. Human love is dependent on the illusory world and it chains the individual to the object of love and is never fully safe. Divine love is safety itself. We need to leave behind worldly pursuits and sense gratifications. Our true nature is a positive one; all the negative tendencies are there because of blocks in the flow of the positive forces. Love is not being close to one or two people to satisfy our emotional needs. People, situations and riches can be lost, beauty can disappear, abilities and life fade and go, but the love of Christ is eternal and endures all.

In our lives all the people and situations that we experience are nothing but an expression of dense energy accumulations that are ready to be shaped and formed by the divine love expressing through us. This kind of love makes the mind free and light, without tension and concerns towards self and others with the knowledge that all is one and all is well. The supreme love is nothing but wisdom itself. Love is to see all without fear and without desire or passion.

Animal love appears to be “subjective” in the sense that the individual thinks that the ego is the self, but in reality it is “objective”. The ego is also an object.

Human love is both subjective and objective. Animal love makes a person only selfish. Human love's object becomes another person rather than his own ego, and therefore is superior to animal love. A similar reciprocal love between two persons represents human love. It is possible at times for an individual to even harness animal love. Instead of catering to desires and passions whence all the negative tendencies of the ego come, if the individual is able to channel that energy to develop self-respect and look for his true nature that so far has not been revealed, he may in fact succeed. Jesus' next quotation I think may refer to this.

“In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you.” (John 14:2)

R. D. Laing, a psychiatrist, says that our thoughts are much less than our knowledge. Our knowledge is much less than our love, our love is much less than what we have, therefore we are much less than what we can be; hence, we should have the ability to be much more than what we now are and we should work on this. We should have the ability to change the animal love to the level of human love, changing the object of love from the ego to some other person. When the energy of love only serves to strengthen the ego, it would be of no use to anyone and the result would be death. It is important to remember Jesus' words:

“Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. He who loves his life loses it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life.” (John 12:24-25)

The nature of love is its force of attraction. Since all of the creation represents God's body and God is everywhere, we should not be surprised that in the universe everything is

acted upon by some sort of force of attraction. The planets tend towards each other as a result of gravitational force. Molecules and atoms are attracted to each other as a result of “weak force” or “strong force”. The electron and proton attraction, as well as other electro-magnetic attractions, are all nothing but an expression of divine love-attraction. Without this, the Creation would not have occurred.

“Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.” (1 John 4:11)

“A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; even as I have loved you, that you also love one another.” (John 13:34)

A mother loves her beautiful and smart child to the same degree as she loves her physically and mentally challenged child. She does not love their bodies or minds, but the Christ that is within them both which is their true natures. It is the same between a husband and a wife. If they only love each others bodies, that marriage will surely fail. But when each one is in love with the Christ within the other person, then that marriage becomes paradise on earth.

We need to nurture human love, so that divine love can follow. As forced human love does not bring happiness, forced divine love also does not bring bliss. Divine love needs to flow freely and without effort to be able to clear sadness, pain and suffering and bestow bliss. There are religious denominations that seem to force divine love; they seem to go around constantly yelling “Praise the Lord”. True love does not chain a person, but rather it gives freedom. When one is chained to a belief system and as a result stops searching, he also loses all hope of experiencing the true revelation of God or divine love. We need to remember what Jesus said:

“Not every one who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who

does the will of my Father who is in heaven.”
(Matthew 7:21)

HOW TO DEVELOP DIVINE LOVE?

A serious and dedicated student on this path first has to end selfishness. Then, his priority genuinely needs to be the welfare of others. He needs to be sensitive to the suffering and difficulties of others. He should listen intently to what he is told, but also hear what is not being told. He needs to abandon personal and worldly pleasures. He needs to purify his mind so that he can think, speak and act his best for the benefit of the beloved. His “modus operandi” should be to serve without judging and to give one hundred percent without holding back, to the point of he himself being vulnerable. He should always respect others’ thoughts and beliefs. Those without wisdom can not give divine love. To give and especially to give divine love is creative; it shows ability, power, expertise which are necessary to be productive. It gives the individual absolute satisfaction and reveals his most noble qualities.

Love is governed by the following four rules.

A: Sincere concern for others and their well being.

B: Deep sense of responsibility for their happiness.

C: Reverence towards others. When love from the heart and respect from the head coexist, reverence is born.

D: Understanding: Without understanding, reverence is not possible. Superficial understanding is not sufficient. For divine love to occur, it is imperative that the lover should become one with the beloved. Without such love the world would become hell, but with such love the world becomes paradise.

The expression of love has three stages:

A: The first- is to show kindness, sensitivity, compassion and give help.

**“love one another with brotherly affection;
outdo one another in showing honor.”**

(Romans 12:10)

**“Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the
least of these my brethren, you did it to me.”**

(Matthew 25:40)

B: The second- is to give encouragement and reassurance.

C: The third- is to challenge and with finesse call for action. The popular dictum also says the same: “It is good to give fish to a hungry man, but it is better to teach him how to fish”. The Bible says the same as well:

**“and let us consider how to stir up one another
to love and good works,”** (Hebrews 10:24)

The greatest worship is to love all of the creation. If we want to help others, it is imperative that we prepare ourselves. Since the most important aspect of this preparation is to negate the influence of the ego, meditation may play an important role to reach our goal. When the effect of the ego is neutralized, love and compassion, which are part of the universal Truth, flow effortlessly and abundantly through the individual without any further requirements. As a result of the love and compassion that is shown by the individual, he radiates the divine light all around.

In general, mankind spends love as he spends money, for buying and selling and for bartering. He spends it to buy security. He spends it to satisfy sense gratifications and to free himself of loneliness. Love should give freedom to both the lover and the beloved. Love is to share the good and the bad without taking advantage of the other.

Wisdom is an intellectual asset that emanates from the 6th chakra. Love is the same energy that emanates through the 4th heart chakra. To be able to truly love we also need to

know Truth. To know Truth, we need to cut our ties from this illusory world. Love is not something that we need to look for and find; on the contrary it is love that has us and finds us. When higher consciousness dawns in an individual, only then will he understand and have the experiential knowledge as well. It is only then that he will know how the Truth relates to reality, how God relates to the creation and how the spirit, the Christ within, relates to the individual's life. If there is only one lesson to learn from the Bible, that would be "to love".

Earlier in the chapter I had indicated that there was also a third classification of love. This classifies love only into two types:

A: Relative love.

B: Absolute love.

According to this classification, the "relative love" has demands, obligations, duties and commitments. Due to its expectations, it turns the beloved to a slave. It also demands reciprocated love. It is under the control of the ego and is part of the dualistic illusory life. It appears that the "relative love" represents the combined Animal and Human love category of the previous classification. "Absolute love" appears to be the same as Divine love.

**"Whoever does not love does not know God,
because God is love." (1 John 4:7)**

WHAT ARE THE CONDITIONS REQUIRED FOR DIVINE LOVE?

a- Forgiveness;

b- Sympathy;

c- Service;

d- Compassion.

A: Forgiveness: When the mind is busy judging and condemning, it is not free to soar and love. The first task for the individual is to forgive himself. Any dislikes,

contradictions and hatred hinder personal spiritual growth and advancement; hence, the expression of divine love. By forgiving, we bless the person we forgive, but moreover, we become blessed. True forgiveness gives rise to compassion. We judge others to the same degree that we are judged and judge ourselves. Did Jesus not say?

“Judge not, and you will not be judged; condemn not, and you will not be condemned; forgive, and you will be forgiven; give, and it will be given to you; good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap. For the measure you give will be the measure you get back.” (Luke 6:37-38)

The road blocks to forgiveness are pride and dissatisfaction. The latter is usually the result of previous disappointments stemming from desires or passions. Self-condemnation is the result of an inability to forgive the self and shows the preoccupation of the mind with the self and is part of selfishness. Forgiveness is a change of direction of the mind from the self (ego) to the Self, the Christ within. Since Christ is the being and essence of all individuals, then forgiveness also would be directed to everyone. In fact, there would be no need for forgiveness, because there would be no judging. Love is given to all without expectations. By forgiving, we can surpass the influence of the ego that blocks the revelation of Christ. To the same degree that we can forgive ourselves, we can also forgive others. To the degree that we can conquer our ego, to the same degree we can show sympathy to others.

B: Sympathy: Prejudice, ill will and hatred block our ability to express sympathy. Pride and vanity block our ability to receive sympathy. It is impossible to receive sympathy from a person that we envy. Life is one, but its expressions are many, therefore we need to show the same

sympathy to the sinner as well as the saint.

“You have heard that it was said, ‘Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you,” (Matthew 5:43-44)

C: Service: To serve is more important to the provider of the service than profits are to a merchant. Service is one of the rituals of life that reaches its pinnacle when communion with God occurs. Service reflects the level of love. Even good deeds can easily serve the ego and cause pride. Because of this the Bible says:

“But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your alms may be in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.”
(Matthew 6:3-4)

As we are to forget and forgive others' faults, it is imperative that we also forgive and forget and correct our own faults. Service is the medicine to cure selfishness. When we see ourselves separate from others and limit ourselves to a nationality, religion, caste and social status, we lose sight of the Omnipresent; hence, also block His flow of love through us. The heart in which true love resides can no longer desire only personal happiness. What is happiness when one is in bliss already? Service helps the server more than the person served. Therefore, the true service provider should be grateful to the one being served. True service is possible with perfect and full consciousness only and the person should be free from the results of such service.

“You, therefore, must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.” (Matthew 5:48)

To serve is an expression of love. It is worshipping God. I have had the pleasure of knowing some people within

our small community that express compassion and serve without expectations.

D: Compassion: Compassion is a divine quality of the mind. It is the result of such a love that it energizes the person. Despite this great power, the person at the same time expresses kindness, gentleness, harmony and softness. When our thoughts, words and deeds are in harmony, peace and compassion automatically flow and function through us, because they are expressions of love. The presence of compassion in the person also attests to his internal harmony, the sense of responsibility, concern for others, understanding and respect. True compassion flows spontaneously and always is cause for happiness. When an individual feels someone's pain through fear, it no longer is compassion, but only pity. But when love feels someone's pain, it expresses as compassion. When the need arises, it is impossible for someone who has compassion not to help. Love, as well as compassion, both give the individual a great responsibility.

“When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, “Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?” He said to him, “Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.” He said to him, “Feed my lambs.” A second time he said to him, “Simon, son of John, do you love me?” He said to him, “Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.” He said to him, “Tend my sheep.” He said to him the third time, “Simon, son of John, do you love me?” Peter was grieved because he said to him the third time, “Do you love me?” And he said to him, “Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you.” Jesus said to him, “Feed my sheep.” (John 21:15-17)

There are three aspects to compassion.

- 1- To love;
- 2- To give;
- 3- To forgive.

1- Compassion is love in action. When the choir at the church sings the song “Lord, have mercy”, it is a plea to receive God’s compassion and love. It is a call to the self to open the channels and not to impede the flow of this love through the chakras. Because this is a plea, the song is sung in a kneeling position which is a sign of humility and shows the negation of the ego.

2- Compassion is to give without reservations. Compassion is not to give from our surplus, but it is to give all we have if need be. Otherwise it is just charity. Did Jesus not give all He had for mankind’s salvation, His Life?

3- To forgive is more sublime than to give. To give purifies the mind but to forgive elevates the soul, the level of consciousness. To give, helps the recipient; but to forgive, helps the giver as well as the recipient. To forgive is to impart to others the grace of God that is received. Is it not what Jesus did?

Which is easier: to say, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or to say, ‘Get up and walk’?
(Matthew 9:5)

Our daily lives appear to be based on competition, whereas the spiritual path is based on compassion. An individual’s nobility is not dependent on his physical, mental and intellectual abilities but rather in his ability to serve. Compassion is to feel other’s pain. Compassion is to love without demands. Mercy is God’s compassion towards man. The benefits of God’s mercy are hidden in the mercy itself. The most important of these is the ability to self-analyze. Selfishness is emotionalism which is a mental process associated with a low level of consciousness, but God’s mercy gives the individual the courage to see his own

shortcomings and faults. Anxiety and hatred are the results of wrong thinking and understanding. Compassion is based on valid reasonable thoughts and understanding. Compassion and wisdom are closely related.

The blocks that hinder the expression of compassion are:

a- Anxiety: Anxiety is the result of inner conflicts, created by the ego, thus it blocks the flow of love and compassion.

b- The desire to be liked and acknowledged: This stems from pride and is a function of the ego.

We all need compassion. When we sing the song “Lord have mercy”, if it is sung and the plea is made with sincerity and not as lip service, it should change in us resentment to forgiveness, hatred to friendship & love and fear to respect & courage. The first step to compassion is prayer. To pray for others is an invitation to receive them in our hearts and to identify with them fully. This allows us to share their pain, their suffering, their anxieties, their loneliness, their doubts and their fears. It is a call for God to bless them through us. It is appropriate to remember the true event which had taken place in 1915 that my mother had personally experienced and had told me with regards the power of prayer. (See “What is prayer?” Chapter VII, page-136) This is an absolute proof of the power of prayer and the compassion and mercy of God that it brings.

Compassion is the human expression of divine love. It is impossible to tell compassion from external characteristics or expressions. It is a mental state that moulds the external expressions, namely the actions. It is a mental state that desires for all to have freedom; to have freedom from pain & suffering and to have happiness.

To have compassion is to accept not being appreciated.

To have compassion at times is to ask questions rather than

giving answers.

To have compassion is not only giving physical freedom, but also freedom of conscience.

To have compassion is to open doors rather than to close them.

To have compassion is to have faith in the person and therefore, giving the freedom to act.

Compassion is part of an individual's being. To be compassionate, all we need to do is end our selfish ways. When we develop healthy self-consciousness and sensitivity towards our true nature, without fear, without doubt or pity, but with good will towards all, honor, sincerity and right thinking, compassion becomes self-evident in us. Compassion does not come about to solve or eradicate a problem, but through compassion come all actions that are necessary.

Compassion is an expression of love; therefore it is very easy to be compassionate towards our loved ones i.e. our family members etc. This compassion may even play out to its fullest and we may be ready to give our lives for the loved one just because we love them. When I was writing this chapter, there was a news clip on the television about a child and his grandfather who were both skating on a frozen lake in Quebec. The ice broke and the child fell into the water. The grandfather, without thinking, jumped in to save the child but they both got into difficulties and the grandmother, who was watching them both, also jumped in. The grandfather died at the scene. The grandmother was hospitalized with hypothermia, and the child ended up dying in the hospital the next day. I wonder how many, endangering their own lives, would have done the same for a stranger? We need to put ourselves or our loved one in the place of the other person and act as we would have acted for our loved one or for ourselves. Is it not this what the Bible says?

“Do to others as you would have them do to you.
(Luke 6:31)

If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners love those who love them. And if you do good to those who are good to you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners do that.” (Luke 6:32-33)

I recall reading the following account of a true event that occurred in California. A family with two children was visiting the local zoo. As they were watching the chimpanzees, two male chimpanzees attacked another younger male chimpanzee. The latter, to escape its attackers, climbed the fence to the next enclosure and jumped to the other side where there happened to be deep water. In his confusion, the chimpanzee fell into the water. Apparently, chimpanzees cannot swim at all. The poor animal did sink below the water and popped up three times and after the third time, he did not come up. The father of the family watching the events unfold, immediately climbed the outer fence to the second enclosure, jumped in the water and pushed the chimpanzee out. The people outside started yelling for him to get out, because the other two attacking chimpanzees having seen what had taken place, had started climbing the other fence to get to him. As the man was getting to the outer fence, the chimpanzee, still semiconscious, started slipping back into the water. The man looked at his family and then to the monkey and went back into the water and pushed the monkey out again. By this time, the chimpanzee having awakened from his semi-comatose state, was hanging onto the grass and trying to pull himself out as well. At the last moment, the man climbed the outer fence and jumped to safety. After the fact when they asked him why he had risked his life for the monkey, his answer was as follows: “The third time he came up as he was drowning, our eyes met. I

could read in the expression of his eyes that he was pleading and saying ‘Can’t you help me?’” This is to put oneself in place of another, be it man or animal. This is the true expression of compassion. It is to act without thinking, namely without judging. It is self-sacrifice. Is it not true that the soldiers that go to war do the same? They face dangers and death and sacrifice themselves so that the rest can live in peace. Of course I am not talking of the mercenaries that fight for money, but rather those protecting their homeland from invaders. It is worth finding and reading the speech given by the late Catolicos (head of the church) of the Armenian Apostolic church His Holiness Karekin I, to the soldiers going to war against the invading Azerbaijani forces. The speech was a pure example of compassion towards the enemy.

The degree of a man’s, or for that matter a peoples’, evolution can easily be ascertained by the way they deal with problems or adversity. Do they solve their problems with a fist, a knife, a gun, bombs and war? If so, they show their low level of evolution. Or, do they solve them with understanding, forgiveness, without injury, and with love? This shows their advanced level of evolution.

At times it may be appropriate to show a superficial anger, without hatred. This is an anger born of love. A mother gets angry with her child. This anger is superficial, it is not true anger because it does not have hatred at its basis, but instead the purpose is to help the child. When the sergeant gets angry with the private, it is not because he hates the private, instead it is born of love. The lesson learned from that angry outburst may save the private’s life some day in the front lines during a battle. Jesus himself also showed such an anger with whip in hand when he ousted the vendors from the temple (See “What is sin?” Chapter XIII Page 295).

My mother often used to get angry with me and came after me with a broom handle. I used to hide under the table, so that as a result of the legs of the table and chair, she would not be able to swing the broom handle. After I grew up, I have kissed her and thanked her many times for being so strict with me, for being angry and for spanking me. As a child, of course I was not happy and even cried. However in my heart I always knew that there was no hatred in her anger. I knew she loved me because all her other actions were actions of love. Just because of this knowledge, I kept up with my shenanigans. Eventually she would give up and say: "Go ahead, do whatever you want, but wait until your father comes home. I will tell him all that you have done today." Surprisingly this strategy worked better than the broom stick. I would sit in the corner as quiet as a mouse. It is not that I had any reason to be afraid of my father. In my entire life he has not even slapped me once, but I respected him and loved him very much. I think that deep down I wanted to be just like him. When finally he got home from work, my mother would complain about me, and invariably he would just laugh about it. Is it not true that even the bible recommends such anger and spanking?

"Do not withhold discipline from a child; if you punish them with the rod, they will not die" (Proverbs 23:13)

"Folly is bound up in the heart of a child, but the rod of discipline will drive it far away." (Proverbs 22:15)

"Where there is no revelation, people cast off restraint; but blessed is the one who heeds wisdom's instruction." (Proverbs 29:18)

"Discipline your children, and they will give you peace; they will bring you the delights you desire." (Proverbs 29:17)

Nature has given us certain inherited traits through our genes; in addition to this our childhood environment and experiences determine our innate natures. We live and act according to this nature. These are the human frailties and we need to overcome our innate natures. Jesus was also subjected to them. But, he conquered and superseded these human frailties.

“I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.” (John 16:33)

“Jesus said to him, “Away from me, Satan! For it is written: ‘Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.’” (Matthew 4:10)

“... My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will.” “... The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.” (Matthew 26:39,41)

“... Abba, Father,” he said, “everything is possible for you. Take this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will.” “... The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.” (Mark 14:36,38)

Truth is our being; hence, it should also be our nature. To this end we should strive to develop the following virtues: to always tell the truth, to never injure any one or any thing, to strive for both physical and mental cleanliness in preparation to have faith, hope and love and as a result of love, to have compassion and servitude. God will never send us to hell; that is an impossibility because He is love. It is we ourselves that create hell, and it is on earth. It is only through love that we may be able to change the world for the better. The compassion that comes forth of love is a mental state that helps the individual to change.

It is possible to learn a lot from books and lectures, but we would still know very little. Knowledge is the result of meekness and servitude. True religion exists in love and not in rituals. It is well known that quantum physicists are trying to find the unifying theory behind all the different forces of attraction. They seem to have succeeded in uniting them all except for the force of gravity. The only overall common law of attraction in the universe is love.

As the blood flows in our arteries and veins, giving life to our bodies, the same way love also flows through our being, giving life to our soul. In reality, love is not a virtue but it is an indispensable necessity. The purpose of living is to learn to love and the purpose of loving is to learn to live. Love is blind, but that blindness is the pinnacle of seeing. For an individual, it is possible to love another person only when he loves himself. This does not mean his ego, rather his true Self, the Christ within. To be one with the Christ within is to worship God. Therefore, to love and all else that follows as a result of love, is also “true worship”. In the same vein, love also springs from the worship of God. This would be the love towards the entire universe.

We are all children of God, but only the one that truly loves becomes the child that He loves and is pleased with.

**And a voice from heaven said, “This is my Son,
whom I love; with him I am well pleased.”**

(Matthew 3:17)

THE FRUITS OF DEVINE LOVE:

- To withdraw from worldly pleasures.
- To be free from any fear of punishment. Love and fear cannot co-exist at the same time and in the same place. Fear is the fruit of selfishness.
- To be free of thoughts and fears of evil, sadness, difficulties, illness and death.

-To surrender: The idea of “Thy will be done” even to the point of death, as Jesus did.

The human mind is extremely flexible. Surprisingly, the ego, for self preservation, uses the intellect to distort all and will present physical attraction as love, pity as compassion, indifference as peace and tranquility.

Everything, including our lives, is a gift from God. What we do with them is our gift to God. The following represents the list of gifts given to us:

Ability to speak: We should not use it to tell lies, but use it only to express the Truth.

Ability to feel: We should not run after sense gratifications, but rather through compassion feel the good and the bad of others, dividing their sorrow and multiplying their joy.

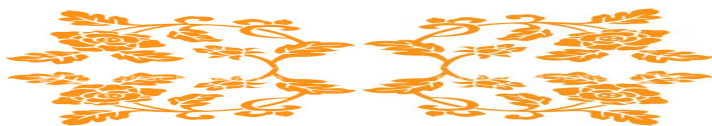
Ability to act: We should refrain from any action that causes pain to others, instead all our actions should be based on non-injury and should be for the good and benefit of all.

A mind: We should not preoccupy it with the seven deadly sins, but rather we need to make it a tool for self-restraint and a tool for the expression of love.

An intellect: We should not use it for deceit or increasing knowledge about the physical world so that we can create destructive power to the point of endangering the entire world. Instead we should use it to understand the physical laws of the external world that are so awe-inspiring and wondrous. We should use the intellect to also understand the laws governing our internal world, the Self, the mystery of Christ, to get to know the magnanimity of God. Only then will we be able to find our way back to the home of our Father whence we originally came, as the prodigal son did. That is true freedom.

It is appropriate to end this chapter with St. Paul’s dissertation about love:

“If I speak in the tongues of men or of angels, but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. If I give all I possess to the poor and give over my body to hardship that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing. Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away. For we know in part and we prophesy in part, but when completeness comes, what is in part disappears. When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put the ways of childhood behind me. For now we see only a reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known. And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.” (I Corinthians 13:1-13)





AT THE FEET OF THE MASTER

**“Martha, Martha, you are
anxious and troubled about
many things; one thing is
needful. Mary has chosen
the good portion, which
shall not be taken away
from her.”**

(Luke 10:41-42)



**The measure of
love
is known by
the degree of
longing**



**As the moon eclipses the sun,
So does sin eclipse
the hope and the light of the
Son.**



-XIII-

WHAT IS SIN?



WHAT IS SIN?

“Everyone who sins breaks the law; in fact, sin is lawlessness.” (1 John 3:4)

It appears that anything that is against the law is a sin. To be able to properly understand what sin is, we need to consider the following:

- a- Original sin
- b- The “Ten commandments” of Moses
- c- The deadly sins
- d- Unforgivable or unredeemable sin

a- **The “Original Sin:** It appears that Adam and Eve were cursed for the sin they committed. Their punishment was to provide for themselves with their own labor, with the sweat of their brow. They also lost the gift of eternal life and were condemned to return to dust, where they had come from.

“By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return.” (Genesis 3:19)

Since the days of Adam and Eve, humanity appears to have been subject to the same curse. According to Solomon, in his psalm he indicates that all are born with sin.

“Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me.” (Psalm 51:5)

The Church tells us that the Sacrament of Baptism cleanses the individual of the “Original Sin”. John the Baptist was baptizing people for the atonement of their sins.

“He went into all the country around the Jordan, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.” (Luke 3:3)

“And so John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.” (Mark 1:4)

When the disciples asked Jesus about the man who had been born blind, whether he was born blind because of his own sins or because of the sins of his parents, His answer was as follows:

“Neither this man nor his parents sinned,” said Jesus, “but this happened so that the works of God might be displayed in him. (John 9:3)

Is it “just” to be born with sin, because of a sin committed by someone else many centuries ago? In our culture, we have a popular dictum. It says: “Every lamb is hung by its own leg” (As one sees in the butcher’s shop). In spite of all of the above, I doubt that people are born with sin. If that had been the case, Jesus would not have said the following:

“He called a little child to him, and placed the child among them. And he said: “Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.” (Matthew 18:2-3)

“Jesus said, “Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.”(Matthew 19:14)

In Jesus’ time, children were not baptized, and if they were sinful from birth, how could Jesus have said “the kingdom of heaven belong to such as these”?

When people believe that they are born with sin their outlook towards life is bound to be different than when they think that they are born blessed with God’s grace.

b- “The Ten Commandments” of Moses: It is well known that during the period of the Old Testament, people’s understanding was very different from what Jesus was teaching. According to the Old Testament, God was an angry

God, very demanding, jealous and very vengeful. He demanded sacrifice for the atonement of sins. They also used to think that God punished them for their sins. They were ignorant of the fact that whatever happened to them was the result of their own thoughts, words and deeds. Jesus showed us that God only wishes the best for us at all times. His nature being love, he pours that love on us at all times in the form of His graces. The fault is with us, that we refuse to accept them and as a result of our ignorance, we block the flow of His benevolent energy's flow into our beings, denying ourselves the gift of bliss and eternal life. It appears that at the time of Moses, people were not ready yet to comprehend the idea of unity in the multiplicity, and duality was dominating their consciousness. Moses was obliged to give them laws of "dos" and "don'ts" and could not be any more subtle. These laws were designed at least to minimize the burden of their thoughts, words, and deeds. Exodus 20:1-17 summarizes the Ten Commandments.

1: "You shall have no other gods before me":

2: "You shall not make for yourself an image" (idols):

I think it is appropriate to consider the first two commandments together. Anything and everything in our lives that occupies our minds and changes its direction of thought away from the Christ within is considered to be an idol. Did not Jesus also say the same?

"No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money."(Matthew 6:24)

3: "You shall not misuse the name of the LORD your God": In "The interpretation of the Lord's prayer" (see Chapter 7), "hallowed be your name" was explained indicating that all names of all things were actually God's

name. Therefore it was appropriate to see God everywhere in everything and in every person. It was only then that His name would be “holy”. Since everything represents God, all names are also His names. Moses here is trying to say that if we do not see the unity in multiplicity, we are abusing His name. Whatever we think, say or do, if we do not see God in it we are abusing His name. This in turn means wasting our earthly lives.

4: “Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy” (The seventh day): Mankind was so preoccupied by the activities of daily living (this illusory life) that God through Moses felt obliged to give this law. Moses also added the threat of punishment, so that at least one day a week, people would be forced to change direction of thought from the outer world to the inner Christ. In having a day of rest, hopefully mankind would use that day to worship and meditate. The purpose is not, “working or not working”: instead, the purpose is to come to the realization that we need to cultivate mental cleansing. Every day of our lives should become the Sabbath.

5: “Honor your father and your mother”: How can those who do not honor their earthly parents, whom they see and through whom they have entered this world, possibly honor their heavenly Father, Whom they do not see? The Father, that has given them life and His being.

6: “You shall not murder”: To kill a person is to negate a means that God has chosen to express Himself. Our every action determines our future. It is not that God as an arbiter is watching our every action and accordingly bestows on us punishment or rewards. Our each thought, word or deed determines the quality of our energy fields. The vibrational frequency of every single cell in our bodies, every single molecule in each cell and every single atom in each molecule is dependent on our thoughts, words and

deeds. These vibrations are subject to changes based on what we think, say or do. This changes the overall vibrational frequency of our selves. We should not forget that we are nothing but pockets of energy, conglomerations of energy. It is this frequency of our vibration that determines all the things that happen to us in our lives, both good and bad. Similar and harmonious frequencies attract each other. Others are repelled. Every occurrence has its own frequency. People think that God punishes or recompenses. The truth is that we bring upon ourselves whatever happens to us. God only pours the energy of the Holy Spirit on all. This energy has all frequencies. We decide as to which frequencies of this energy we are going to benefit from or be affected by.

“Trouble pursues the sinner, but the righteous are rewarded with good things.”(Proverbs 13:21)

Even the cause of all our illnesses is our sins. Just because of this, when Jesus healed someone, He used to say: “Your sins are forgiven”.

“Which is easier: to say, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or to say, ‘Get up and walk’?”

(Matthew 9:5)

7: “You shall not commit adultery”: The cause of adultery is usually sexual preoccupation and addiction. Sexual intercourse should serve the purpose of procreation. Sexual intercourse depletes one’s energy in a major way. This energy is also needed for the proper functioning of all the rest of the bodily and mental functions. Adultery is specified, indicating more than one sexual partner. It becomes obvious that the act is not for the purpose of procreation, but the result of an addiction and the cause of a great amount of energy loss. It is not that sexual intercourse is a sin to be punished, but the wastage of that energy itself is the punishment.

“Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a

person commits are outside the body, but whoever sins sexually, sins against their own body.” (1 Corinthians 6:18)

All other sins prevent the entry of energy, but “adultery” wastes the energy we already have. In the gospel by John, 8th chapter we encounter the story of a woman caught in the act of adultery. Jesus did not judge or condemn her, instead said:

“Then neither do I condemn you,” Jesus declared. “Go now and leave your life of sin.”

(John 8:11)

8: “You shall not steal”: Whatever we sow, that is what we reap. Stealing is an **act**, a **deed** that determines our personality. The problem is not just stealing, but it implies that all our actions have their consequences in determining what happens to us. If we believe in the above dictum, which we should, the same will also happen to us. According to Sirach (see Apocrypha) if we “steal” one (or whatever other action), seven fold will be “stolen” from us. Sometimes we do not see the connection between what we do and what happens to us and we say we have no luck. The truth is that all is perfect and all occurrences that we experience must occur. If we are not happy with the events in our lives, the complaints should be directed to ourselves, because we are the architects of our lives.

9: “You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor”:

To give testimony or to bear false witness is just an indicator of all the things we say. They summarize the power of the **spoken word**. What we say also affects us and determines our future. God is Truth. To lie and not to speak the truth is to deny God. Not only lying but anything and everything we say will have their positive or negative effects on us.

10: “You shall not covet your neighbor’s ... (belongings)”: To covet is a **thought** that also affects us. To

covet someone else's belongings means not to be satisfied with what one has. We are given all that we need commensurate to our spiritual position and physical needs. Happiness is not based on accumulating more things, but to be content and satisfied with what we have. Covetousness brings on the desire to own as well. This is followed by the effort to obtain it. At last, one may finally acquire the object of their desire but the happiness this acquisition causes is only very temporary. But the lost time, the effort and the energy wasted to acquire it will never come back and is permanently lost.

It is important to note that the 8th, 9th and the 10th commandments represent what we think, say and do. I do not think their purpose is only to caution against stealing, bearing false witness or coveting; instead, to be careful about all our thoughts, words and deeds, so that they are all good and for the benefit of all. Laws are given not to make sinners of the ones that do not follow them; instead, to bring to the person's consciousness and make him realize that he has committed a sin. The Bible also says the same:

“Therefore no one will be declared righteous in God's sight by the works of the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of our sin.” (Romans 3:20)

c- **“Deadly Sins”**: The following represent the seven deadly sins: Pride, Jealousy, Anger, Laziness, Greed, Gluttony and Lust. These are considered deadly sins because they all represent the qualities of the Ego. Anyone who is displaying any one of these characteristics must therefore be under the influence of their Ego and their lives are governed by their Egos. Of all these characteristics, Jesus showed only one, likely for our benefit. That was anger. He showed anger when he cleared the Temple of all those who were defiling it by turning it into a marketplace. We need to see this in a

more allegorical way as well. The Temple represents our bodies. The Bible says so:

“Don’t you know that you yourselves are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit dwells in your midst?” (1 Corinthians 3:16)

Just like Jesus, our anger should also be directed to the seven deadly sins, so that we can throw them out of our temples, so that they do not defile us. Other than this any anger towards any one else is not acceptable. The merchants and money changers that were in the Temple at the time of Jesus, also in an allegorical way, represent our seven deadly sins.

We tend to think of these deadly sins as being “positive” mental states or feelings; positive in the sense of being real, to be dealt with. On the contrary, they do not exist. In reality does darkness exist? No it does not. Darkness is only the absence of light. The positive is the light. In other words, darkness represents the absence of light; it is not an entity on its own. Similarly, the seven deadly sins do not exist on their own. They only represent the absence of something else. In other words, when we say “to get rid of the seven deadly sins”, what we really mean is to nurture the positive aspects (the light) in order to get rid of the sins. Hatred does not exist of its own accord; it is just the absence of love. If we want to get rid of hatred, we need to make sure that the flow of love energy in us is not dampened or hampered. Anger is the lack of understanding, peace, love and forgiveness. Jealousy is the lack of love and satisfaction with our present condition. Greed and gluttony are the lack of satisfaction with what we already have. Laziness is the result of lack of love and servitude. Lust is also the lack of satisfaction and wastage and wrong use of the energy of love that flows through us. (see above in 10 commandments “You shall not commit adultery” section, page-301.)

To get rid of the deadly sins, we need not work on the

negative that does not exist, but we need to nurture the positive and if successful, the negative will automatically disappear. We need to turn on the light; hence, we need to nurture love, satisfaction that all is perfect as is, inner peace, understanding, forgiveness and a willingness to serve all. This may be summarized in one word, compassion. The flow of positive energies is usually curtailed by the “Ego”. Basically, by neutralizing the effect of the “Ego”, we can ensure the re-establishment of appropriate energy flow and the neutralization of the seven deadly sins.

Why, are these sins called the “deadly sins”? Is it because that after we die and the “day of judgment” comes, these sins that we have committed will condemn us to eternal death or damnation in hell? I doubt that very much. When we commit these sins, they are just an indicator that God’s love energy is not appropriately flowing in and through us. Therefore, we already are dead to the blissful eternal life of Christ. In other words, we are already spiritually dead. Don’t we think that Jesus’ following comments support this?

“But Jesus told him, ‘Follow me, and let the dead bury their own dead.’” (Matthew 8:22)

“Jesus said to him, ‘Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and proclaim the kingdom of God.’” (Luke 9:60)

d- Unforgivable or unredeemable sin”: The only unforgivable sin is the one committed against the Holy Spirit.

“Truly I tell you, people can be forgiven all their sins and every slander they utter, but whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will never be forgiven; they are guilty of an eternal sin.” (Mark 3:28-29)

“And everyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but anyone who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven.” (Luke 12:10)

“And so I tell you, every kind of sin and slander can be forgiven, but blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven.”

(Matthew 12:31)

Because passing time and lost opportunity do not come back, how could it be possible for that sin to be forgiven? The energy of the Holy Spirit pours on all without discrimination. Not to accept that energy and not to benefit from it is the sin. Since that specific lost opportunity will never come back, the sin against the Holy Spirit cannot be forgiven. Christ is at your door and knocking to come in. Is there a greater sin than not to open the door and allow him to “come in”? Would such a sin be forgivable? At the same time, as long as there is life, there is also hope. The important thing is to come to a realization of the sin that is committed. According to the Bible we are all sinners. We read:

“Indeed, there is no one on earth who is righteous, no one who does what is right and never sins.” (Ecclesiastes 7:20)

“for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,” (Romans 3:23)

The truth is that our sins are not our deeds, but the ideas we have about them and the reactions they produce in us. Our sins are the guilt we feel for our thoughts, words and deeds. We read:

“if I have concealed my sin as people do, by hiding my guilt in my heart” (Job 31:33)

“Then I acknowledged my sin to you and did not cover up my iniquity. I said, “I will confess

my transgressions to the LORD. And you forgave the guilt of my sin.” (Psalm 32:5)

Everyone knows himself well, and to the degree that they are sinful. Just because of this, when Jesus allowed them to stone the prostitute, but requested that the one without sin throw the first stone, no one dared to do so.

“ ... Let any one of you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her.” (John 8:7)

When we seem to be acting without realization, it appears that it is not counted as sin. If we are unaware of them, we cannot have any reactions to them. Jesus' following words seem to confirm this:

“Jesus said, “If you were blind, you would not be guilty of sin; but now that you claim you can see, your guilt remains.” (John 9:41)

“No one who lives in him keeps on sinning. No one who continues to sin has either seen him or known him.” (1 John 3:6)

Sin is: not to know Christ.

Sin is: to have the mind directed outward to the “luster” of the world.

Sin is: in the prevention of the energy of the Holy Spirit from entering and working through us.

Sin is: not to follow in the footsteps of Jesus.

Sin is: to be content with this illusory and temporary existence.

Sin is: the lack of infinite love.

Sin is: to be governed by the Ego.

Sin is: not seeing the unity in the multiplicity.

Sin is: not becoming a suitable vessel for the revelation of Christ.

Sin is: not to have the infinite desire for eternal life and divine bliss.

Sin is: to ignore God. Through the prophet Jeremiah, God has said the following:

“My people have committed two sins: They have forsaken me, the spring of living water, and have dug their own cisterns, broken cisterns that cannot hold water.” (Jeremiah 2:13)

The wages of sin are death. This means non-existence after this illusory life is over.

“Instead, everyone will die for their own sin; whoever eats sour grapes—their own teeth will be set on edge.” (Jeremiah 31:30)

It is interesting to note that people continue to sin even on their deathbed.

“Even on their beds they plot evil; they commit themselves to a sinful course and do not reject what is wrong.” (Psalm 36:4)

Since we are all sinners, what hope is there for mankind? As long as there is life, there is hope to change the direction of our minds and to truly be “born again”.

“...‘This is what the LORD says: When people fall down, do they not get up? When someone turns away, do they not return?’”(Jeremiah 8:4)

It is not possible to erase sins by talking a lot with verbose prayers etc. But it is possible for all sins to be forgiven in a split second.

“Sin is not ended by multiplying words, but the prudent hold their tongues.” (Proverbs 10:19)

How to erase our sins?

a- **It is possible to get our sins forgiven by forgiving:** To forgive all those who have offended us any which way. But it is more important for a person to forgive himself.

“For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.” (Matthew 6:14)

Stephen forgave those who stoned him to death, and just before he died “Heaven opened to him”.

“But Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, looked up to heaven and saw the glory of God, and ... he said, “I see heaven open and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God.” ...

While they were stoning him, Stephen prayed, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. Then he fell on his knees and cried out, “Lord, do not hold this sin against them.” When he had said this, he fell asleep.” (Acts 7: 55 & 58-60)

Peter asks Jesus as to how many times we should forgive. The answer turns out to be seventy times seven, meaning at all times. (Some translations write “seventy-seven” times)

“Jesus answered, “I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times.” (Matthew 18:22)

Jesus did not avoid the sinners, he sat with them and he ate with them, because He either did not see their sins, or had already forgiven them.

“While Jesus was having dinner at Matthew’s house, many tax collectors and sinners came and ate with him and his disciples.”(Matthew 9:10)

When the prodigal son returned to his father’s house, he asked first for God’s forgiveness, then his father’s. When his father saw him, he already had forgiven him and had a feast to celebrate his return. The important point was that the son had realized his sins and had left them behind. He had decided to go back to his father’s home. His mind’s direction, instead of being outwards, was now directed towards “home”. He had forgiven himself. I wonder if we also will be able to realize our sins and decide to return to the

home of our eternal Father?

“I will set out and go back to my father and say to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you.” (Luke 15:18)

Does not Jesus also say the same thing in the story of the one lost sheep? There will be great rejoicing for one person who succeeds (repents).

“I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent.” (Luke 15:7)

b- Sin disappears when love dominates a person:

When love dominates the person it means that God (Christ) is in charge of that person's life. This is because God is love. We read the followings:

“Therefore, I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven—as her great love has shown. But whoever has been forgiven little loves little.” Then Jesus said to her, “Your sins are forgiven.” (Luke 7:47-48)

“Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins.” (1 Peter 4:8)

“Through love and faithfulness sin is atoned for; through the fear of the LORD evil is avoided.” (Proverbs 16:6)

It appears as if mankind is heading towards disaster. The human condition appears to be getting worse every day: the lack of understanding and cooperation between countries, lack of respect and love towards each other, fanaticism, extreme acts of terrorism, enmity, hatred and greed all appear to be commonplace throughout the world. In newspapers, on radio and television all the news we see and hear are negative. Any positive news is very rarely heard. We should not forget that an empty barrel makes a lot of

noise. As much as sin appears to increase, there is an even greater progress in the spiritual realm, with an increase in the level of consciousness, but not being empty barrels, they do not advertise and make a lot of noise. The Bible says the same:

“The law was brought in so that the trespass might increase. But where sin increased, grace increased all the more,” (Romans 5:20)

The conscious man does not lose hope, instead with all his might, he puts all effort into personal transformation by negating the hold of the Ego on his being, by condemning the Ego to death by crucifixion.

“For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body ruled by sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin - because anyone who has died has been set free from sin. Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him.” (Romans 6:6-8)

With the death of the Ego, it is very easy to give the reins of our lives to Christ. Paul also says the same:

“Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires. Do not offer any part of yourself to sin as an instrument of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer every part of yourself to him as an instrument of righteousness.” (Romans 6:12-13)

It is also important to read the continuation of this last quotation at least to verse 23.

During the times of the Old Testament, people's understanding was that God demanded sacrifice. But according to the New Testament, Matthew writes:

“But go and learn what this means: ‘I desire mercy, not sacrifice.’” (Matthew 9:13)

God does not want sacrifice but humility and meekness and most important compassion.

“Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love; according to your great compassion blot out my transgressions.” (Psalms 51:1)

“Direct my footsteps according to your word; let no sin rule over me.” (Psalms 119:133) :

“Answer me when I call to you, my righteous God. Give me relief from my distress; have mercy on me and hear my prayer. How long will you people turn my glory into shame? How long will you love delusions and seek false gods? Know that the LORD has set apart his faithful servant for himself; the LORD hears when I call to him. Tremble and do not sin; when you are on your beds, search your hearts and be silent. Offer the sacrifices of the righteous and trust in the LORD. Many, LORD, are asking, “Who will bring us prosperity?” Let the light of your face shine on us. Fill my heart with joy when their grain and new wine abound. In peace I will lie down and sleep, for you alone, LORD, make me dwell in safety.” (Psalms 4)





“... Jesus took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying,

“Take and eat; this is my body.”

Then he took a cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, saying,

“Drink from it, all of you. This is my blood of the covenant,

which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.”

(Matthew 26:26-28)



ODE TO THE ARMENIAN CHURCH

It is the birthplace of my faith.

It is the refuge of my soul.

It is where I find myself when my eyes are closed.

It is the steady boat of my journey in this ocean of life.

It is where the incense from its altar rises to heaven,
carrying with it my prayers.

It is where the walls vibrate with each prayer,
as if each stone had a secret connection with heaven.

It is a veil through which I feel God's presence.

It is the place where I prostrate in all humility and reverence,
to Christ, my Lord.

It is where I taste the bread and wine of my life,
from its chalice holy.

It is where I commune with my God almighty.

It is the peaceful harbor where I rest.

It is the warmth and the fire during my dark cold nights.

It is the cool forest with blossoming lilies on the banks of its river of
hymns, during the hot and disturbing days of my life.

It is my armor bright.

And the sound of its bells, is my song of victory.

(Some parts are paraphrased from Vahan Tekeyan's poem)



-XIV-



INTERPRETATION OF THE HOLY MASS OF THE ARMENIAN APOSTOLIC CHURCH



INTERPRETATION OF THE HOLY MASS OF THE ARMENIAN APOSTOLIC CHURCH

Before starting the interpretation we need to understand certain facts. The Armenian Apostolic Church, similar to many other Christian Apostolic Churches and also some other religions, is a ritualistic church. This means that the worship is done according to some pre-determined rituals.

Rituals have a certain order that needs to be followed. Chanting is an integral part of the rituals.

The worship in the Armenian Apostolic Church comprises of several “services” and the mass. I will discuss the importance and the meaning of these services further on.

What are rituals? Why rituals? Rituals are an enactment of a mythology. The word myth has two meanings. One is clearly shown in the next sentence: “Do not believe that, it is a myth”. This meaning indicates something that is not true. It also has a different meaning which is indicated by the next sentence: “Mythology expresses the deepest realization and yearnings of humankind”. When we say that rituals are an enactment of a mythology, it is the second meaning that is implied. Since the rituals are an enactment of a mythology, it is important that we first understand what mythology is.

Regardless of how different the myths appear to be in different cultures, when we dive into the depths of these varying mythologies, we always find symbols that are common to all, because they all tend to express the same yearnings common to all mankind. These symbols express certain understandings, certain unexplained experiences and the yearning for Truth at the deepest level (subconscious). These symbols, powered by the spirit take the form of rituals on the physical plane. The purpose of these rituals then

becomes as a beacon to guide and advance our lives in the right direction during this worldly physical existence. Regardless of our situations and stations in life, mythology can always be useful in enlightening us, in giving peace to us, to comfort and console us, to encourage us, to empower us, to help us especially at difficult times in our lives and why not also to push us to realize our dreams to improve ourselves until perfection. Mythology is born from the depths of a person where thoughts and words cannot reach. Because of this, it has the power to free and break the chains of faith from the trappings of various cultures. Mythology is born of “mystery” and guides all of mankind toward that mystery. This is the cornerstone of the mass. Without that “mystery”, which in fact is the Light of God, our lives would be meaningless. Exactly because of this the mass in the Armenian Apostolic Church starts with the hymn “**Mystery of mysteries ...**”.

Because the mass is the crown of all the other services of the church, before interpreting the mass, we need to understand the other services as well. This gives the proper perspective and meaning to the mass.

I find the various services of the Armenian Apostolic Church unique, in that they actually represent the human life (journey). The order of the services represent the fall of man, his yearning for that Divine Light and finally joining It.

In the Armenian Apostolic Church the day starts at sunset and ends with the mass. The “**Evening Service**” (**Vespers**), also known as the service announcing the start of Sunday, is performed at sundown on Saturdays. Having separated ourselves from the Light, we also are living the evening of our lives. The yearning for the Light is obvious from all the hymns and prayers of the service. The congregation sings the song “**Blissful Light...**” and the priest in his prayer says:

“You are the glorified Light, Holy and the First Light, Lord, we beseech you to shine and dawn your living Light in our hearts”.

During this service we become aware of our loss, and yearn for the reunion.

The “Evening Service” is followed by the **“Service of Peace”**. During this service, it becomes obvious that we are yearning for peace. We sing the hymn **“Lord grant us...”** where we plead for **“heavenly peace during this night”**. Now having full loss of sight of the Light, we are now living the night period of our lives. The priest’s prayer also reflects the same plea:

“Grant us Lord to pass this night in peace without disturbance”.

Here, in preparation for reunion with God, we try to achieve inner peace first.

This “Service of Peace” is followed by the **“Service of Tranquility”**. During this service, the priest prays: **“Lord, our God, we plead for You to grant us to pass this night of tranquility in peace and reach morning”**. Here we prepare ourselves by the grace of God, to reach that tranquility of our minds (Cessation of the incessant chitter-chatter of our thoughts), so that we can be ready to wake up from our “sleep” and see the dawning of the morning light. We return from “death” to “life”. In the Gospel of Luke 1: 78-79 we read:

“Through the tender mercy of our God, with which the Dayspring from on high has visited us; to give light to those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.”

In the procession of the services, the next one is known as the **“Nocturne Service”**. This service should be performed in the morning just before dawn. The service

more or less starts with the hymn **“Lord, at night we remember Your name ...”** In this hymn 12 times we are invited to wake up (from our spiritual sleep). We read in Paul’s letter to Ephesians 5:14:

“Therefore He says: Awake, you who sleep, arise from the dead, and Christ will give you Light.”

The priest in his prayer gives thanks to God because it is only through His mercy that we wake up. The priest also asks God to grant our minds to fully wake up so that we can see His salvation.

The “Nocturne Service” is followed by **“Matins” (Morning Service)**. During this service, having fully awakened from our spiritual sleep, we glorify God and again yearn to reunite with the “Light” that we have once again become aware of. During this service we sing the hymn **“Glory to God in the highest ...”** The priest prays saying:

“We thank you Lord our God, for bestowing bliss on your creation with your visible Light and enlightening your faithful with your intelligible Light”.

The service ends with the hymn **“Children of Zion, awaken and give the good tidings to the bride of Light, ...”** If we carefully follow and penetrate deep into the meaning of what is being said in the rest of the hymn, we will understand that it is pushing and guiding us towards that Light that we already worship and adore.

Next comes the **“Sunrise Service” (Arevakal)**. From beginning to the end this service is for the glorification of that Light, and at the same time, a plea for the dawning of It in us. We sing **“...dawn in our soul Your intelligible Light”**, and the priest in his prayer says: **“Christ with Your light everyone is enlightened.”**

After this final invitation of the Light there is the

“Midday Service”. This service actually is comprised of 3 successive parts. It is performed only on days that Mass cannot be performed. In the Armenian Apostolic Church, Mass cannot be performed on any Friday, because it is the day of suffering and death of Jesus Christ, Holy Saturday (day before Easter) or the day before Christmas. Otherwise, the “Sunrise Service” is followed by the Mass. The faithful reach the pinnacle of their yearning by having communion with and joining God. Now spiritually fully awake, they radiate the Light of Christ as a “candle put on a candlestick”. The midday service actually represents the last step before we become ready to partake fully of what the mass has to offer. Still being in the suffering world caused by our EGO, we will not be ready for the mass until the EGO is sacrificed and crucified and killed. During this service, we are invited to partake of the feast of the mass, but not being ready, all three parts of this service start with psalm 51 asking for mercy.

Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love; according to your great compassion blot out my transgressions. Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin.

The mass represents the resurrection, after the death of the EGO, the resurrection of Christ and the dawning of that Light in us. Christianity calls this “salvation”. Buddha called it “freedom from suffering”. They are both the same. From the point of macrocosm we would call it “salvation. From the perspective of microcosm, we would call it “freedom from suffering”. Are they not the same? Is not freedom from suffering, salvation? Because of such imaginary differences, unfortunately there may be arguments, misunderstandings, enmities and even wars.

Therefore, we partake in the ritual of the mass to relive and to remind ourselves of that mythology that comes from

our mysterious depth, also known as our Higher Self, to guide us in the path of Truth toward that Mystery. Basically, to remind us of the purpose of our lives, this should be the yearning for the Divine Light.

The word “Badarak” in Armenian (Mass) means sacrifice and offering.

The celebrant, the priest, has two roles. He puts on white and bright garments, (garments of Light) in front of the altar which is situated on an elevated stage. He represents Christ – God to the general public. The altar is elevated because on a spiritual level it represents our Higher Selves-Christ. Again in front of the altar, in front of God, he also represents us, humanity. This time the white and bright garments represent our having been cleansed of all the sins and inequities caused by our EGOs. Why have both roles in the same person? The purpose of this is to get rid of the idea of duality of God and us; hence, the only Truth is God and we all are expressions of the same God. Therefore each and every one of us, just like the priest, also represents our EGO and our human qualities as well as our Higher Selves-Christ.

The deacon is the “master of ceremonies”, according to the procession of the ritual (mass). He voices chanting orders to the public such as; Prostrate to God, Quiet please, stand up, recite psalm etc.

The mass has four major sections.

The first section of the mass is **“THE PREPARATION”** and **“THE VESTING”**. The worshipers who partake in the mass should come prepared. The priest, who represents the worshippers, comes prepared. He as well as we should be fasting at least for that day. The fasting is only an external manifestation of a mental preparedness. Let us see what Isaiah says regarding fasting:

“Is this not the fast that I have chosen: to loose the bonds of wickedness, to undo the heavy

burdens, to let the oppressed go free, and that you break every yoke? Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and that you bring to your house the poor who are cast out; when you see the naked, that you cover him, and not hide yourself from your own flesh? Then your Light shall break forth like the morning, your healing shall spring forth speedily, and your righteousness shall go before you; the glory of the Lord shall be your rear guard.” (Isaiah 58:6-8)

The ritual must be performed with faith and with full sincerity and seriousness; hence, the worshipper needs be fasting on the days he partakes of the mass. The external is the reflection of the internal (mental attitude). The degrees by which we adhere to the external requirements therefore truly reflect our mental preparedness and attitude. The fasting shows our dedication with our total being to the cause (journey). If we are fully dedicated and in meditation with single mindedness, how could we possibly even think about food and satisfying the physical cravings.

When the priest is getting ready in the back room, the deacon and the priest recite the 132nd psalm.

May your priests be clothed with your righteousness; may your faithful people sing for joy.” (Psalm 132:9)

Whilst the priest puts on the vestments, he recites a special prayer for each article of the vestments.

I will clothe her priests with salvation, and her faithful people will ever sing for joy. (Psalm 132:16)

The vestments of mass are bright colored and radiant and each article has a meaning. The priest, to be worthy to wear these vestments of “Light”, starts with confession and asks

for forgiveness of his sins. This is followed by a prayer which starts with the words:

“O Jesus Christ our Lord who are clothed with light as with a garment ...”

The opening statement of this prayer in itself establishes the purpose of the mass. Our yearning should also be to be clothed with that Light. When the priest externally puts on each article of the vestment, he actually internally “wears” all the qualities necessary to conquer his EGO and succeed at his quest; hence, the priest as a warrior prepares for a battle. To succeed in this battle against the EGO, he arms himself with gladness, righteousness and faith. When he is wearing the white long shirt, the alb, he says the following prayer:

“Cloth me, O Lord, with the garment of salvation and with a robe of gladness and gird me with this vestment of salvation, by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ”

As he wears the stole he says the following prayer:

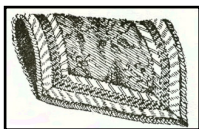


“Clothe my neck, O Lord, with righteousness and cleanse my heart from all filthiness of sin, by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ”

And when he is tying the belt, the cincture, he prays:

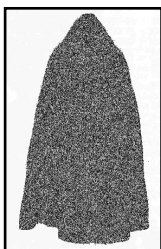
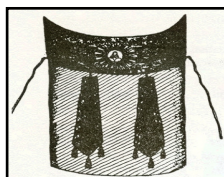
“May the girdle of faith encircle me round about my heart and my mind ...”

He then arms himself also with strength (of character) and energy as he wears the maniples. He prays:



“Give strength, O Lord, to my right ... (and later) to my left hand and wash all my filthiness, that I may be able to serve thee in health of soul and body, by the grace of our Lord.”

As he puts on the amice he again reemphasizes the importance of righteousness. When he puts on the cope he prays the following prayer:



“In thy mercy, O Lord, cloth me with a radiant garment and fortify me against the influence of the evil one ...”

Who is the evil one that can easily influence our being? That is nothing and no body else except our own EGOs. Therefore, to partake in the mass means to go to war. Is not life a struggle? Is it not a battle? Is it not true that the purpose of all the above preparations is to come out of this battle as victors? To partake of the mass is to reaffirm our commitment to this victory, and to learn from It all that we need to and come out as victors from our daily lives. Our struggle should be with gladness, with faith and with strength of character, meaning without doubt. It should also be with righteousness. All these for the purpose of being crowned with salvation, namely freed from the tentacles of the EGO. The priest ends the preparation by putting the crown on his head as he prays:



“Put, O Lord, upon my head the helmet of salvation to fight against the powers of the enemy”

The deacons and the priest enter the church in a procession, as the congregation sings the hymn “O mystery deep ...” Before ascending to the altar, the priest washes his hands, as a sign of cleansing and being holy and worthy to ascent to the altar. This means that before communion with God one has to have been victorious in this battle against the EGO; hence, be holy. The deacons alternately sing the Psalm:

**Shout for joy to the LORD, all the earth.
Worship the LORD with gladness; come before
him with joyful songs. Know that the LORD is
God.**

The ascent to the altar must be with joy and gladness and with servitude (surrender). During this time when the veil (drapes) are drawn closed, the priest prepares the wine and the host. Then, the veils are drawn open and the priest, incense in hand, and the deacons, come down from the altar and circulate through the church and ascend back up to the altar again. According to tradition, this represents Jesus' (Son of God) incarnation as man and living in the world and ascending back to God, His Father, after His resurrection. With as much ease we could interpret this also as representing our lives in this world and it is trying to show us that the purpose of our lives is also to ascend back to the altar to join God whence we originally came. Did not Jesus himself say?

“Then He said to them all: “Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me.” (Luke 9:23)
And also **“Very truly I tell you, whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater things than these ...” (John 14:12)**

It behooves us also to crucify and sacrifice our EGO on the cross and ascend towards the holy altar to join our Father, our God. During this part, we still ask for forgiveness of sins and the Grace of the Holy Spirit. This section of the mass ends with the priest quietly reciting the prayer of St. John Chrysostom (the prayer of the Prothesis):

“O Lord our God, who didst send our Lord Jesus Christ, the heavenly bread, the food of the whole world, to be saviour and redeemer

and benefactor, and to bless and to sanctify us; do thou, O Lord, bless now also this presentation, receive this upon thy heavenly Altar.”

The second portion of the mass is the **SYNAXIS** or **MIDDAY OFFICE**. Here the worshiper establishes the purpose of his life by following the good message of the Bible and reaffirming the incarnation of the “Word” and confesses his faith. The second part of the mass represents God’s word. The gospel of John expresses this beautifully in the first chapter:

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. There was a man sent from God whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all might believe. He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light. The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world. He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. ... The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth. (John 1:1-14)

In general this is taken to indicate the incarnation of Jesus,

but there is no direct reference to indicate this. Could it not be possible that the incarnation of the “Word” refers to the creation of the entire universe, including ourselves?

“I offer incense before thee, O Christ, for a spiritual fragrance. Receive it for a sweet-smelling savor into thy holy, heavenly and intelligible place of offering. Send down upon us in return the graces and the gifts of thy Holy Spirit. ...”

The above prayer introduces the idea of a presentation of a gift. The priest uses the incense as a spiritual perfume and in return pleads for the graces of the Holy Spirit. The incense that is being gifted in fact is his own life (spirit), meaning full surrender. Those who have noted the manner in which incensing is done in the church and in my experience, much more so in the Armenian Apostolic Church, is of great importance. Incense is offered first to the altar (to God), mainly because incense is for God. Even when Jesus was born he received three gifts. Incense because he was God, Gold because he was king and myrrh because he was a mortal man. In our church, there is much incensing occurring also toward the congregation, much more than other churches I have had the chance to attend. This is because the church has already accepted that humanity is an expression of God and offers the incense to Christ within each one of us, our true selves, our Higher Self, our Life Force. Indians also know this truth very well, and when they meet, they greet each other by bringing both hands together in a manner of praying and bowing down as an indication of prostration to the Christ within the person, which they call “Atman”. When the Armenians greet each other, they may say “Pari Luys” which translates as “Good Light” or they may say “Parev” which is a shortened way of saying “pari arev” which translates as “Good Sun”. Both Good Light and Good Sun

actually refer to God (remember God is Light). The greeting therefore is an acknowledgement of the Christ within the person. They realize that we are all a part of God, but not God, just a small part. Just like a gold ring is made of gold and is gold, but it is not all the gold in the world, let alone the universe. Similarly a small single wavelet in the ocean is part of the ocean but does not represent the whole of the ocean.

The deacon lifts up the Gospel and from behind the altar brings it to the left side of the altar. This is the **LESSER ENTRANCE** and represents the entrance of the “Logos”. This leads to the **LECTIONS** where reading from the Old Testament is followed by a reading from one of the letters of Paul. These are followed by reading from one of the four Gospels. The lections are followed by the professing of the faith, the recital of the “Credo”. The elevation or lifting up of the Gospel represents the glorification of the “word” namely “Logos”, which in fact means glorification of God. If we are familiar with eastern religions, we could also say glorification of “OM”, the Alpha and the Omega.

The third portion of the mass starts with the **EUCCHARIST** or **GREAT ENTRANCE**. Here, the sacrifice and the gift are brought to the altar. At the onset of this section the deacon cautions those who are not ready to stay back and voices the following:

“Let none of the catechumens, none of little faith and none of the penitents and the unclean draw near unto this divine mystery.”

What is the meaning of the “OFFERTORY”? As the deacon lifts up the prepared chalice with the wine and the host and brings it around the altar, he quietly recites the following verses.

“In the heavens God has pitched a tent for the sun. It is like a bridegroom coming out of his

chamber,” (Psalm 19:4-5)

Take guidance from him who resides (~~rides~~) across the highest heavens, the ancient heavens in the east (Psalm 68:33) Translation was incomplete

“The LORD came from the south (~~Sinai~~) ... he shone forth from Mount Paran. (Deuteronomy 33:2)

The first verse tends to indicate the awakening of the “Kundalini” and the start of the flow of energy. The second verse tends to indicate guiding the Kundalini directly up. The east is where the sun comes from and the sun is the source of the “prana” the energy flow. Mount Paran likely represents Mount Sinai where Moses saw God. So, God comes from the south and sanctity (holiness) from the top of the mountain. This symbolizes the rise of the Kundalini from below upwards and when it reaches the crown “chakra”, the person also becomes sanctified or holy. (See Chapter XV “Addendum” Page-339) This is exactly what happened to Jesus at the time of transfiguration. At this point, having arrived at the left side of the altar, the deacon and the priest exchange the following with louder, audible voices.

Deacon- **“Lift up your gates, O princes; let the everlasting doors be lifted up, and the king of glory shall come in.”**

Celebrant- **“Who is the king of glory? The Lord strong in his power, the Lord mighty in battle.”**

Deacon- **“Lift up your gates, O princes; let the everlasting doors be lifted up, and the king of glory shall come in.”**

Celebrant- **“Who is this king of glory? –The Lord of hosts.”**

Deacon- **“Even he is the king of glory!”**

Here the doors represent the “chakras” and the king of glory

the “prana” or the Holy Spirit or God. Once again we are reminded of a battle that is taking place inside of us. A battle against the EGO, and if we prepare ourselves and allow it, the King of glory, who is all powerful will always be victorious. At this juncture the deacon once again reminds us how one should approach the King of glory and voices the following:

Again in peace let us beseech the Lord. Again in faith and purity let us stand with awe and pray before the holy altar of God; not with guilty conscience and offense, not with craft and cunning, not with deceit and wiles, not with doubt and not with little faith; but with right conduct, single mind, a guileless heart, with perfect faith, filled with love, full and abounding in all good works.

It is well known that before awakening the “kundalini”, one has to prepare himself well and fully, otherwise the consequences of misdirected energy can be catastrophic.

The **KISS OF PEACE** represents the kiss of brotherly love and the solidarity with all human beings we must enjoy and show. This is followed by the **ANAPHORA**. This is where the actual sacrifice and the gift occur. The celebrant says:

“The grace, the love and the divine sanctifying power of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit be with you all.”

At this point the deacon cautions those who were told to stay far **near the door** of the church, those who were not ready yet, to use the opportunity to ready themselves.

“The doors, the doors! With all wisdom and good heed lift up your minds in the fear of God.” Also says **“And give thanks unto the Lord with the whole heart.”**

This is followed by the **ANAMNESIS**. During the last

supper Jesus said: “Do this in remembrance of me.” The celebrant repeats Jesus’ words as He took the bread and the wine and said:

“Take, eat; this is my body, which is distributed for you and for many, for the expiration and remission of sins.” “Drink ye all of this; this is my blood of the new covenant, which is shed for you and for the expiration and remission of sins.”

The bread is the staple food for the nourishment of the body. The wine, because of its alcoholic content, also known as “spirit”, represents the life-giving blood. When we drain someone’s blood, the person dies. By setting this sacrament, Jesus was trying to tell us to live this physical life but to do it in remembrance of Him. This means that the purpose of our lives is to remember Christ and to reveal Him fully. The blood - the wine, represents the life-giving force, the “prana”. One of the quatrains of Omar Khayyam’s Rubaiyat goes as follows (translated & paraphrased):

“Which is better, to drink wine and to love a beauty, or to listen to some fanatics? If the drunkard and the lover will go to hell, no one will ever see heaven.”

His comment actually is about the “prana”, the life force, the Holy Spirit. When he talks about getting drunk with wine, he means “getting drunk” with the Holy Spirit. To be in love is to be enamored or being in love with God. It is the same love that earlier we quoted from the deacon’s part, “filled with love”. We also see a similar comparison in one of the hymns of the “**Sunrise Service**”. The last verse of the hymn “Jknavork ...” (translated meaning “Ascetics ...” has the following words (Translated & paraphrased):

“Children of light, with voluntary sacrifice and perfect wisdom, instead of the milk, drank the enchanting wine.”

The voluntary sacrifice is the sacrifice of the EGO, and they have done this with wisdom. Instead of the milk which nourishes the body, they drank the enchanting wine, meaning the Holy Spirit. The priest says:

“And thine of thine own unto thee we offer from all and for all.”

This also indicates that the only Reality (Truth) is God. Whatever man offers to God already belongs to God and has come from God. Our true gift should therefore be the sacrifice of our EGO on the cross as Jesus showed us. Then Christ would reveal fully through us and the resurrection would have taken place. This would be the second coming of Christ and we would know it, not intellectually, but experientially. Exactly for this Jesus said: **“take up (your) cross daily and follow me.”** The deacon sings the following:

“That the Lord our God, who has accepted the same at his holy, heavenly and intelligible altar, may in return send down upon us the grace and gifts of the Holy Spirit, let us beseech the Lord.”

After the singing of the Lord's Prayer in rapid progression occur the INCLINATION, the ELEVATION and the DOXOLOGY. The next part is the **FULFILLMENT**. Here the celebrant immerses the host in the wine. This is an affirmation of the physical life and the rebirth of the person (not lip service born again). Then he takes the host and breaks it into small pieces. This indicates that all of humanity and for that matter, all of the creation, come from one source and they are all equal in “God's eye”. This leads to the communion. The person, by taking the communion, becomes

one with God and becomes the new man wearing the garment of Light. The hymns at this time are all one of thanksgiving and praise. The deacon voices giving the order for the congregation to sing:

“Having again received in faith of the divine, holy, heavenly, immortal, pure and incorruptible mystery, give thanks unto the Lord.”“We give thanks to thee, O Lord, who hast fed us at thy Table of immortal life...”

The last and fourth part of the mass is the **CONCLUSION**. During this short segment, the first chapter of John’s Gospel is read, as it was quoted above, and with the blessing of **DISMISSAL**, the mass ends.

The mass, in the same vein as other mythologies, represents similar ideas. It does not matter that the stories and the texts of various mythologies differ from each other. They all represent a battle, a struggle. The hero fights the dragon and by killing it rescues the object of his love. In the case of the mass, the priest, as he puts on his vestments, is preparing for battle. He kills the dragon, namely sacrifices his EGO, and “rescues” his lover, in other words, joins Christ. In western mythology, the dragon always protects or blocks the entrance to a treasure. In this case, the treasure is the person’s Higher Self, Christ. Without the slaying of the dragon, in other words, the destruction of the EGO, it is impossible for Christ to resurrect in us.

In Indian mythology, the story of Rama also tells us about a battle with Ravana. Ravana had kidnapped Rama’s wife, the object of His love. Rama ends up killing Ravana and rescues his wife. In Mahabharata, Krishna gives the “mystery of mysteries”, the supreme secret, to Arjuna, again during a battle.

Our mythology is also similar to King Arthur’s “Quest of the Holy Grail”. All those who went on the quest were

knights and thus, warriors. But only Percival succeeded, the only one who was pure at heart and single-minded. All the rest met horrible ends. During the mass, we also noted that the deacon was cautioning us not to approach if not ready, to avoid a fate similar to the knights. All those who are not ready to awaken the Kundalini, should not do so. A more recent story of “Harry Potter” also shows us that the only one who was able to find and take the “stone of immortality” was the one that did not want it for personal use. In other words, it was not the EGO that wanted it.

It is therefore our duty to prepare ourselves for this battle. Our weapons should be: peace, joy, righteousness, faith, with all our being (full energy), purity, holiness, with good conduct and morals, single-mindedness, guileless heart, love and good deeds. We should not be with guilty conscience, with craft and cunning, with deceit and wiles, with doubt or little faith.

The Chinese proverb says; “a journey of thousand miles starts with the first step”. Let us also take that first step on the journey of this mission.



PARTS OF THE DIVINE LITURGY

A: THE PREPARATION

- a- THE VESTING
- b- PURIFICATION
- c- THE ACCESSION
- d- THE PROTHESIS

B: THE SYNAXIS (MIDDAY OFFICE)

- a- THE CENSING
- b- THE ENARXIS
- c- THE LESSER ENTRANCE
- d- THE LECTIONS
- e- THE PROFESSION OF FAITH
- f- THE PRAYERS AFTER THE LECTIONS

C: THE EUCHARIST

- a- THE OFFERTORY
 - 1.- The great entrance
 - 2.- The laying of the gifts
 - 3.- The kiss of peace
- b- THE ANAPHORA
 - 1.- The prologue
 - 2.- The anamnesis
 - 3.- The epiclesis
 - 4.- The diptychs
 - 5.- The Lord's prayer
 - 6.- The inclination
 - 7.- The elevation
 - 8.- The doxology
- c- THE FULFILLMENT
 - 1.- The intinction
 - 2.- The fraction
- d- THE COMMUNION
 - 1.- The prayers before communion
 - 2.- The tasting
 - 3.- The thanksgiving

D: THE CONCLUSION

- a- PRAYER AMID THE CHURCH
- b- THE LAST GOSPEL
- c- THE DISMISSAL



**But the eyes of the LORD
are ... on those whose
hope is in his unfailing
love,
(Psalms 33:18)**



**“I have told you these things, so that
in me you may have peace. In this
world you will have trouble. But take
heart! I have overcome the world.”**

(John 16:33)

**To the one who is victorious, I will
give the right to sit with me on my
throne, just as I was victorious and sat
down with my Father on his throne.**

(Revelation 3:21)



-XV- ADDENDUM

*

**A-WHAT ARE THE CHAKRAS?
B-WHAT IS THE KUNDALINI?
C-WHAT IS MEDITATION?**

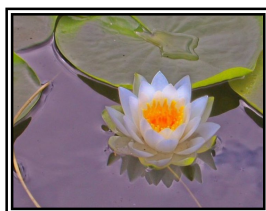
ADDENDUM

WHAT ARE THE CHAKRAS?

In general, people think that their physical bodies and the physical world are the only reality. This is mainly because, through their senses, that is all that they can experience, and that is all they can logically understand through their intellect. Previously, I had written that we function through our physical, emotional and intellectual “bodies”. (See chapter III “What are the human characteristics?” Page-47) There is also a spiritual “body”. It is our duty to be able to experience and become conscious of its presence.

FIGURE: 1

The word “chakra” is an old Sanskrit word meaning “wheel”. The chakras resemble wheels that rotate at the speed of light. In the east, they are also compared to the lotus flower with its many petals. (See figure 1) The chakras also open as the lotus flower opens. The chakras, these wheels or vortices, are the doors of our bodies, and through these doors, the life energy enters our bodies and is distributed to various parts to ensure the various bodily functions. This is a pulsatile energy and I have been fortunate enough to have personally palpated it. To any given part of the body, if the flow of this energy unusually decreases or increases, it may cause an illness affecting that same part of the body. Each chakra has its fundamental and real effect on the different parts of our nervous system, on our physiology and on our character and mood. For a harmonious life, it is essential that all of the chakras are open and are functioning in unison or harmoniously.



In the Armenian Church as the deacon is bringing the chalice with the host to the altar, before giving it to the priest says the following:

“Lift up your gates, O princes; let the everlasting doors be lifted up, and the king of glory shall come in.”

The gates (or may also be translated as doors, or more correctly as portals) are these chakras, and the king of glory is the life force, the Holy Spirit.

There are seven main chakras that correspond to and control different bodily functions. Each one functions and responds to a different frequency. These, in the visual world are in harmony with the different frequencies of light, just as the colors of the rainbow are all part of the visible light and have different frequencies. Anania of Shirag has named the rainbow “The divine belt (or arch)”. In the world of sound, the chakras are in harmony with the seven notes of the musical scale. It is also highly possible that their association with the other senses is also through vibrational frequencies. The sense of touch senses pressure and vibration. Until recently it was thought that the senses of smell and taste were purely chemical. Surprisingly recent experiments have shown that taste and smell also respond to vibration and of course, the varying frequencies.

The creation also took place in seven “days”. I wonder if each day of creation corresponds to the evolution of a new chakra. Insentient objects must have only one chakra that ensures only existence. Living organisms, from the simplest one to the most complicated, have at least the second chakra that ensures procreation. Higher organisms may have a third chakra, indicating presence of emotions. These in fact may not even be all or none but also partial. Man has seven chakras. Through the seventh, revelation of God through the Creation was complete; therefore the “seventh day” was

deemed holy, and God rested. There was no need for further addition of chakras, the Creation was complete.

“Then God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done.”(Genesis 2:3)

In addition God also gave man individuality that other animals do not have. The following verse tends to indicate this point:

Then the LORD God formed a man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being. (Genesis 2:7)

In the original Hebrew, the word used for “breath” is “nefs”, which has two meanings, breath and individuality or personality. All other animals are also living animals, but they do not have the personal knowledge of the eternal life. That is the life that was given to man; the ability to experience and live the eternal life and not just the transient one which we are presently experiencing. But what we all seem to be doing, is no different than the animals. In the Armenian translation, the verse says “became a living spirit” instead of “living being”. This tends to suggest that in addition to our physical, emotional and intellectual “bodies”, we also have a spiritual “body” (in general known as soul), the Christ within, that we have lost touch with.

The following verse is extremely interesting, important and very telling. It guides us to prepare ourselves with regards to these seven chakras, to allow the power of the Holy Spirit to enter our bodies properly, without obstruction, so that we can reap the proper benefit.

Wisdom has built her house; she has set up its seven pillars. She has prepared her meat and mixed her wine; she has also set her table. She has sent out her servants, and she calls from

the highest point of the city, “Let all who are simple come to my house!” To those who have no sense she says, “Come, eat my food and drink the wine I have mixed. Leave your simple ways and you will live; walk in the way of insight.” (Proverbs 9:1-6)

The seven pillars are the seven chakras. The prepared meat and the setting of the table indicate the self preparation, getting rid of our sins and ego. The simple and the ones with no sense are the ones with their minds cleared of all thoughts and emotions, who are simple and/or single-mindedly concentrating only on the true Self, the Christ within. They are the ones who will eat at the feast, in other words, taste eternity and have the experience of Christ’s revelation.

During the Mass in the Armenian Church the deacon cautions those who are not ready and have not prepared themselves properly:

“Let none of the catechumens, none of little faith and none of the penitents and the unclean draw near unto this divine mystery.”

The seven chakras appear to be lined up over the spine area from the bottom to the top of the head. (See picture 2)

The first one is the “root or base chakra”. It is located at the very bottom of the spine where the coccyx is found. It responds to the lowest frequency, therefore corresponds to the color red of the light’s spectrum and the musical note “do” (C) in the seven note scale. It is our link to the creation and the universe. It

FIGURE:2



ensures our physical existence, and gives us the ability to adapt, to endure, to survive and to provide for our physical existence. Without it functioning, there would be no desire to live.

The second is the “sacral chakra” which is located at a level between the pubic bone and umbilicus. It controls procreation; hence, sexual activity, as well as the link or the tie between a mother and her child. Its location also corresponds to the level of the sex organs. Its vibrational frequency is in harmony with the color “orange” of the light spectrum and the note “re” (D) of the musical scale.

The third “solar plexus chakra” (sometimes called naval chakra) is located at a level corresponding to the epigastrium between the xiphoid bone and the umbilicus. It tends to store and distribute the energy to other centers as needed. It tends to control the tie between a father and his child and inspires the individual to have self-reliance and self-confidence. A lot of gastrointestinal illnesses may be caused when this chakra does not function properly. It is also closely associated with emotions; hence, emotional problems cause gastrointestinal symptoms. The person’s ego also gets its energy through this chakra. Excess energy there may strengthen the ego and this may, in turn, make the person selfish and self-serving. It vibrates in harmony with the color “yellow” and the note “mi” (E) of the musical scale.

The fourth chakra is called the “heart chakra”. It is located at a level corresponding to the centre of the chest. It vibrates harmoniously with the color “green” and the note “fa” (F). It controls the heart and the lungs as well as blood circulation. It is the center of love. It has a very important role during the rise of the energy (kundalini). (See also “what is kundalini?” Page-353) It controls the rise of the energy to the higher (upper) chakras. Because of this we are told that love is the most important quality to have on the road to

salvation. Love should be for everyone including our enemies, all animals, all plants and all things. The sum of all this love tends to indicate love for the universe and God.

The fifth is the “throat chakra” located exactly at the level where it says. It controls the ears, nose and throat, including the thyroid gland. It controls speech, the ability to speak clearly, the ability to communicate well and the ability to form friendships. It is also in control of giving us the ability to listen, and most importantly to listen to our inner voice. It vibrates in harmony with the color “blue” and the note “sol” (G).

The last two chakras are not on the spine, but are located over the skull.

The sixth, the “brow chakra”, also sometimes known as the “third eye chakra” is located between the two eyebrows. It vibrates in harmony with the color “indigo” and the note “la” (A). It controls the eyes and the brain. It gives the individual both physical and spiritual life. It makes it possible to intellectually understand the obvious and also the hidden meanings that may be found in allegorical stories. It gives the individual the ability of intuition as well as the feeling of peace, making communion with God a possibility.

The seventh is the “crown chakra”. It is the real crown, the corona, the laurel wreath. It vibrates in harmony with “violet” as well as to the frequencies of all the colors; hence, also white. Its harmonious note is “si” also known as “ti” (B). It controls all other chakras. It is the individual’s connection with God. It is the seat of consciousness and wakefulness, in other words, awareness. It ties us to time and space. It is the entry portal of the life force, the Holy Spirit. Through it we are connected to God and to the life force. When it stops functioning, death occurs. It is the link of the silver thread, the area of connection of the silver thread which is the life-connection between man and God. We read:

Remember him—before the silver cord is severed, and the golden bowl is broken; before the pitcher is shattered at the spring, and the wheel broken at the well, and the dust returns to the ground it came from, and the spirit returns to God who gave it.(Ecclesiastes 12:6-7)

When this chakra fully, opens the person becomes a true saint and experiences the revelation of God. When this happens, the energy rushes into the person to such a degree that it becomes visible to others as an aura around the person and a halo around the head. If this had not been the case, people would not have had the idea of painting halos around the heads of Jesus or other saints. Any person who goes around saying that he is saved should also wonder if anyone sees any halo around his head. If not, he should re-examine what he believes in and it is likely that he is delusional.

The Armenian Church has a special service with regards to the opening of these chakras. On the evening of Palm Sunday, there is a special service called “Trnpatsek” which translates as “Opening of the doors”. The purpose of the service is to remind the faithful about their responsibility to open their chakras and ensure their proper functioning. It is not a coincidence that the period of lent, the period for repentance, is seven weeks long and seven days after this service of “opening the doors”, we celebrate resurrection. After the initial Lord’s Prayer, the service starts with the deacon saying:

“I wait for my God, the source of life, to save his servant and give life”

This is followed by a reading from the Old Testament, from the book of Proverbs, Chapter 8, verses 22 to 31. In these verses, the speaker is actually “the wisdom” and the advice given is obvious. In the same chapter, in verse nine, we also read:

“To the discerning all of them are right; they are upright to those who have found knowledge.” (Proverbs 8:9)

“Wisdom” also says that it existed from the beginning, from before the creation. Also in verses 32-35 of the same chapter we read:

“...Blessed are those who listen to me, watching daily at my doors, waiting at my doorway. For those who find me find life and receive favor from the LORD.” (Proverbs 8:32-35)

Then the choir sings the following song, where we plead for the opening of the chakras:

“Lord grant us the vigilance of the “wise virgins” ... open the portals for the heavenly groom of mercy. ... So that the lamps of our spirit will shine.”

The portals and the lamps of our spirit are the chakras. This is followed by a plea from the priest:

“Open to us Lord. Open to us Lord. Open to us Lord the portals of mercy and hear our lamentations we beseech you.”

A second priest or, in his absence, the deacon, says the following from behind the curtain as if the question is coming from the “altar”, since the altar is veiled from view by a closed curtain:

“Who are these that I should open. This door is the Lord’s door, only the righteous can enter through this door?”

The priest answers:

“Not only the righteous can enter, but also the sinful who confesses and repents thus becoming righteous can also enter.”

From inside the answer comes as follows:

“For this is the door of heaven ... peace for the

righteous, purgatory for the sinful, Kingdom for Christ, abode for the angels, assembly place for saints, safe place and the house of God.”

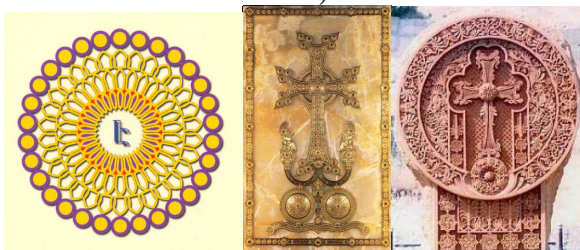
The priest continues:

“ ... For this is our immaculate mother and from her are born the children of light and truth, and this is our hope of life, and with this we find salvation of our souls, for this is the way of righteousness and through it we are able to rise towards Christ, our Father in heaven.”

The plea “Open to us Lord” is repeated three times by the priest.

It appears that there was a good understanding of these chakras in the Armenian Church. Most of the time the Armenian cross sits on a wheel, representing the chakra. The cross, which was a symbol of death since those condemned to die were crucified, is transformed to a symbol of salvation with the resurrection of Christ. The resurrection of Christ in us can only take place with the unhindered infusion of the energy of the Holy Spirit, and the entry of the “King of Glory”.

FIGURES: 3,4 & 5



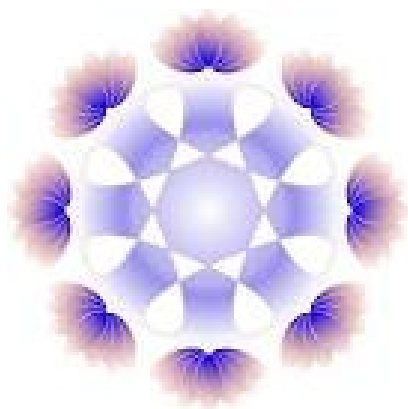
According to the Bible, we need to prepare ourselves to be worthy to receive the eternal life and the bliss that it gives. The above quotation (Proverbs 9:1-6) is very clear about this. To prepare ourselves means to withdraw from all

thoughts, words and deeds that affect us in such a way as to block the flow of the energy. We need to align and open the chakras and quiet the mind, stopping all thoughts. We also read the following:

“Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me.” (Revelation 3:20)

“From the throne came flashes of lightning, rumblings and peals of thunder. In front of the throne, seven lamps were blazing. These are the seven spirits of God.” (Revelation 4:5)

The energy that enters through the chakras is the same energy that forms every single atom of our bodies. Any increase in energy therefore also increases the frequency of vibration of every single atom in our bodies. This changes a person's overall energy frequency. Surprisingly, what John, in his vision, appears to be seeing is as if seven little “atom bomb” explosions (seven blazing lamps) are taking place. This represents the tremendous level of energy.





**For the Son of Man in
his day will be like the
lightning, which flashes
and lights up the sky
from one end to the
other.**

(Luke 17:24)



**“In the heavens God has pitched
a tent for the sun. It is like a
bridegroom coming out of his
chamber,”**

(Psalm 19:4-5)

**“Take guidance from him who
resides ~~(rides)~~ across the highest
heavens, the ancient heavens in
the east”**

(Psalm 68:33)

(Psalm 68:33) Translation is incomplete

**“The LORD came from the south
(Sinai) ... he shone forth from
Mount Paran.”**

(Deuteronomy 33:2)

(See interpretation of the Holy Mass Pages:329-331)

WHAT IS “KUNDALINI”?

The word “Kundalini” is a Sanskrit word and its meaning is serpent. In the chapter about the “Chakras”, we discussed the power and energy of the “Holy Spirit” entering into us through the chakras, especially through the seventh “crown” chakra. The energy from the Holy Spirit comes from “up” “downward”, representing the incarnation of God. When the energy rises from “down” “upward”, it results in the experience of the revelation of Christ in the person. Does not the Bible tell us that we are children of God?

The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children. Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory. (Romans 8:16-17)

FIGURE: 1

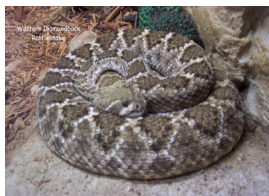


FIGURE: 2



“Kundalini” is likened to a sleeping serpent all wound up under the first “root” Chakra. It is possible to awaken the kundalini. The awake kundalini will rise. Of course what rises is the energy. (See Figures 1 & 2) One should not do this without preparing the self. During the Mass in the Armenian Church, let us examine the meaning of the “OFFERTORY”. As the deacon lifts up the prepared chalice with the wine and the host and brings it around the altar, he quietly recites the following verses.

“In the heavens God has pitched a tent for the sun. It is like a bridegroom coming out of his chamber,” (Psalm 19:4-5)

Take guidance from **him who** resides ~~(rides)~~
across the highest heavens, the ancient heavens
in the east (Psalm 68:33) (Translation was incomplete)
“The LORD came from the south (Sinai) ... he
shone forth from Mount Paran.
(Deuteronomy 33:2)

The first verse tends to indicate the awakening of the “Kundalini” and the start of the flow of energy. The second verse tends to indicate guiding the Kundalini directly up. The east is where the sun comes from and the sun is the source of the “prana”, the energy flow. In all Armenian churches, the altar always faces the east. Mount Paran likely represents Mount Sinai where Moses saw God. So, God comes from the south and sanctity (holiness) from the top of the mountain. This symbolizes the rise of the Kundalini from below, upwards, and when it reaches the crown “chakra”, the person also becomes sanctified or holy. This is exactly what happened to Jesus at the time of transfiguration. At this point having arrived to the left side of the altar, the deacon and the priest exchange the following with louder, audible voices.

Deacon- **“Lift up your gates, O princes; let the everlasting doors be lifted up, and the king of glory shall come in.”**

Celebrant- **“Who is the king of glory? The Lord strong in his power, the Lord mighty in battle.”**

Deacon- **“Lift up your gates, O princes; let the everlasting doors be lifted up, and the king of glory shall come in.”**

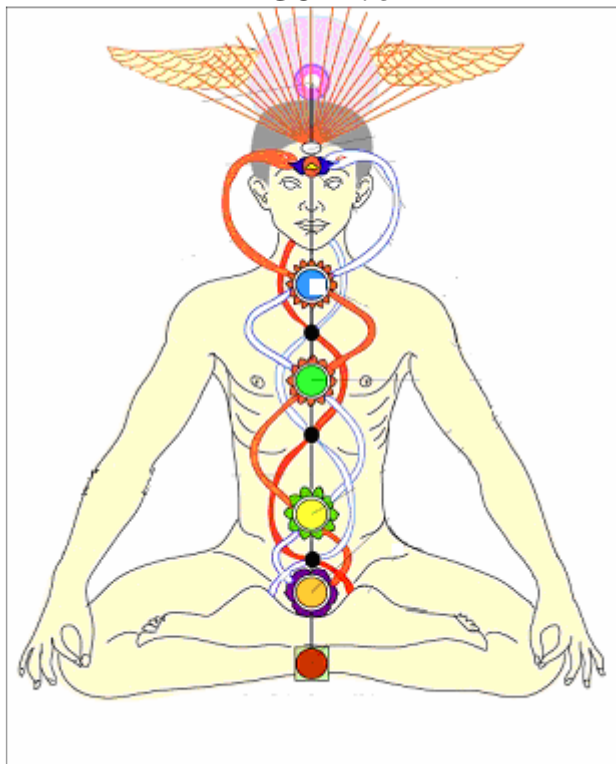
Celebrant- **“Who is this king of glory? –The Lord of hosts.”**

Deacon- **“Even he is the king of glory!”**

Here the doors represent the “chakras” and the king of glory, the “prana” or the Holy Spirit. At this juncture the deacon once again reminds us how one should approach the king of

glory and prepare himself. (See Figure 3)

FIGURE: 3



The biblical story of the boat being in danger of sinking on the Sea of Galilee during a storm is interesting and likely has a hidden message in it. The disciples were in a panic and Jesus was sleeping in the boat. The events may be and most likely should be interpreted in an allegorical way. The boat represents us, our bodies. Each disciple represents, a different human characteristic within us. Jesus sleeping in the boat represents the Christ within that appears to be sleeping. There should be no concerns while He is with us, the boat will never sink. All we need to do is to wake him up. He will calm all the storms of our emotions and thoughts.

When the Kundalini awakens, the energy rises from one chakra to the next. When the person has not prepared himself well and there are blocks on the way of the energy rise it can have serious consequences. For example; if the block is between the second and third chakras, the energy can not rise beyond the second chakra and therefore is spent totally by the second chakra, which controls sexual activity. The person may become a sex maniac. If the block is between third and fourth chakras, the energy can strengthen the ego to such levels that the person becomes extremely selfish and self-serving. Of course, all sorts of destruction follow when the ego is so dominant.

Is it possible that the story of Adam and Eve in Genesis, when interpreted allegorically, is representing the same thing? In both Adam and Eve, the Kundalini was awake and the energy flowed all the way to the seventh “crown” chakra; hence, they were both in God’s presence, therefore in paradise. In Eve, during the rise of the Kundalini, there may have been a block of sorts between the third “solar plexus” chakra and the fourth “heart” chakra. This has increased the power of the ego, causing Eve to see good and evil; hence, duality was born in the human mind: good and evil, I and them, God and me. With duality, man has also lost sight and knowledge of the fact that he is with God. This of course is the same as being thrown out of paradise. The interesting point is that it was the serpent that deceived Eve, in other words it was the energy of the Kundalini that caused the problem. When the ego became strong, it became the “beast” and the serpent its agent, Satan. God cursed the serpent to always slide on its belly and not be able to rise. Since then, the Kundalini has been laying low under the first “root” chakra. Don’t we always say: “Sin entered this world through Eve and salvation through Jesus Christ”? Jesus awakened the Kundalini after preparing

Himself for thirty years. His last victory over His ego was in the desert and He called it Satan. He showed us what to do to obtain salvation. He said: “believe in me (in what I say), and take your cross and come after me”.

“Very truly I tell you, whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father.” (John 14:12)

Whoever does not take up their cross and follow me is not worthy of me. (Matthew 10:38)

Then Jesus said to his disciples, “Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. (Matthew 16:24)

“...Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me.” (Mark 8:34)

“Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me.” (Luke 9:23)

In the Old Testament we see that the serpent can be a symbol for both death and salvation. Before awakening the Kundalini, if the person has not prepared himself well, then the serpent for him becomes a symbol of death and represents Satan. It strengthens the ego. Just because of this, during the Mass in the Armenian Church, just before the Eucharist is brought in, the deacon cautions the faithful by saying:

“Let none of the catechumens, none of little faith and none of the penitents and the unclean draw near unto this divine mystery.”

Preparation should include the following as the deacon once again spells it out:

Again in peace let us beseech the Lord. Again

in faith and purity let us stand with awe and pray before the holy altar of God; not with guilty conscious and offense, not with craft and cunning, not with deceit and wiles, not with doubt and not with little faith; but with right conduct, single mind, a guileless heart, with perfect faith, filled with love, full and abounding in all good works.

When the Hebrews left Egypt, they wandered in the desert for forty years. During that period, they were confronted with an epidemic of snakes. Every person that was bitten was dying. The serpent once again had become a symbol of death. Moses made a bronze serpent and put it on a pole, and whoever was bitten by the snake and looked up upon that snake would be saved and healed.

Then the LORD sent venomous snakes among them; they bit the people and many Israelites died. (Numbers 21:6)

So Moses made a bronze snake and put it up on a pole. Then when anyone was bitten by a snake and looked at the bronze snake, they lived. (Numbers 21:9)

If we look at the story in an allegorical way, we will see that what happened was a spiritual cleansing. Those, who had awakened and could not raise the kundalini to the seventh chakra, were doomed to “death”. Those who could see the serpent rising high were saved. It is also interesting to note that it takes place in a desert. The emptiness of the desert also represents the mind emptied of all thoughts. When the energy of the kundalini rises to the seventh “crown” chakra, the person also develops a heightened level of consciousness and experiences the revelation of Christ. He lives in bliss; hence, in paradise in God’s presence, which is eternity. He takes on a new body, a body of Light (energy) as

happened to Jesus during His transfiguration. The halo around his head becomes visible to all that see him. It is because of this that the medical symbol of health and healing is the two serpents around a pole mounted by two, what appear to be, angelic wings. In the Armenian Church, the staff of all celibate priests and bishops also carries the serpent. (see pictures 4-7)

FIGURE : 4-5**FIGURE : 6-7**

As much as the concept of “chakras” and “Kundalini” does not exist in the Muslim religion, in Sufism, a sect of Islam, the following seven stages of spiritual development are indicated. I think these stages correspond to the rise of the Kundalini through the seven chakras.

1- “Teslim feragat”- Surrender: The individual who has freed himself from the seven deadly sins has awakened the “Kundalini” and the surrender represents this awakening and reaching the first chakra.

2- “Sheriat”- Practice of the law: The law is the law of nature. It represents the rise of the Kundalini to the second Chakra. One should not abuse the laws of nature. It also represents cleanliness of body and mind and with prayer, to strengthen faith.

3- “Tarikat”- Faith: Through meditation to advance in the spiritual quest, to increase the level of consciousness. It indicates the rise of the energy of the Kundalini until the third chakra. It is at this level that the individual professes his faith, in other words, decides that the Christ within is the driver of his life and not the “Ego”. (Although in Islam the

word Christ is not used, the idea is the same.) At this stage the aspirant should have declared victory over the Ego, in his Holy war (Jihad). The “Jihad” of the Koran is the war against the “infidel”, and the infidel is the Ego.

4- “Sadakat”, “Merhamet-Rahmet”- Devotion & Compassion: At this stage the individual will have true expression of love. The result of such love directed towards God becomes devotion and, directed to the world, becomes compassion. This is a function of the fourth chakra.

5- “Talimat”- Communication & teaching: When the energy reaches the fifth chakra, the individual’s expressions and teachings become only those that the Christ within teaches through the person.

6- “Marifat”- Abilities: At this stage, at the level of the sixth chakra, the individual replaces intellect and rationalization with intuition and develops some limited experiential knowledge and understanding. One may also experience what we now consider “superhuman” abilities, such as clairvoyance or deeds that we may see as being miraculous.

7- “Hakikat”- Truth: At the level of the seventh chakra, the full revelation of the Truth, namely Christ, takes place in and through the individual. He becomes a saint.

Our duty now is to prepare ourselves, to crucify our ego and with patience, to wait for the resurrection.

“I wait for my God, the source of life, to save his servant and give life”





Good friends, beware! the only life we
know
Flies from us like an arrow from the
bow,
The caravan of life is moving by,

Quick! to your places in the passing
show.
(Omar Khayyam)



**Create in me a pure heart, O God, and
renew a steadfast spirit within me.
(Psalm 51:10)**

**Blessed are the pure in heart,
for they will see God.
(Matthew 5:8)**

WHAT IS MEDITATION

Ten foolish friends, while hiking come to the shore of a river and decide to swim across to get to the other side. After they all arrive to the opposite shore, they all start counting, to make sure that each and everyone has arrived safely. To their amazement they all count nine people. They all run to the shore to see if their tenth friend is in trouble and may require some help. But they see nothing unusual, and there is no one in the water struggling. They surmise that their tenth friend must have drowned and the current has washed his body away down stream. They all sit by the water and start crying and mourning the loss of their friend. A passer-by sees them and asks why they are crying. They explain what had happened and, meanwhile crying, they indicate that they were ten friends and now there were only nine of them left. It does not take long for the stranger to understand their foolishness. He asks them to count again; perhaps they had made a mistake the first time. The friends get new hope and enthusiasm and all of them start counting again. But alas, they each come up again with a count of nine and become depressed. The stranger asks them to stand in line and, starting with the number one to count. Each successive person would yell out the next number. The first in the line says “one”, the second “two” ... when the turn comes to the last one he says “ten”. Great joy overcomes them; they had found their lost friend. Who was the tenth friend? Each one of them had found himself; previously, when they were counting,

each was forgetting to include himself in the count.

Humanity in general is just like these foolish friends. People put up with all sorts of difficulties. They struggle, increase their knowledge about many subjects but still do not experience true lasting happiness. This is because they have lost themselves and can not find it.

The purpose of meditation is to be able to answer a simple question “**Who are you?**” It is a very simple question but to find the answer is extremely difficult. Humanity, since the beginning of creation, has been trying to find the answer and has been unable to do so, except for a very few.

Everybody's life purpose is to be happy, unaware of the fact that his true nature is bliss. Due to his fanciful imagination, man has always sought happiness in objects outside of himself. Even if he has found some happiness, it has always been temporary and short, and sadness and pain have followed.

All of the Creation exists based on five principles. These five principles are:

- 1- Existence, 2- Knowledge, 3- Bliss,
- 4- form and 5- name.

The first three are the basics and divine. The last two are man-made and therefore, belong to the illusion. Surprisingly, man has always looked for happiness in the last two, having forgotten that bliss is part of his true nature. Meditation is the means to connect with our true nature. What we are seeking in fact is our consciousness and the source of it, which is Christ. It is the same consciousness that is functioning throughout the whole of the universe; hence, we are not separate from anything else or any other person. The purpose of meditation is to get experiential knowledge of that consciousness so that we can actually see the unity in multiplicity. Meditation by the individual is to know the

individual with the use of the individual; that is when the subject, the object and the means become one. The trinity becomes unity. Intellectual appreciation of these is not enough; the individual needs to actively pursue and get that experiential knowledge. This does not imply neglecting any duties that he may have and only sit with his legs folded and eyes closed, chanting “OM” all day long. On the contrary, all duties of living in this world have to be performed, and to the best of his ability, with a smile, eagerness and gladness in his heart. There should be no complaints about the job, the hours of work, or being taken advantage of, etc. He should not be attached to the results of his work. He should be happy as long as he knows that he has done his best. He should be indifferent about the results. The results belong to God. He should act and work as if he is fulfilling a request from God. This is only possible if we see the unity in multiplicity. When we are able to see Christ in everything and each and every other person, then we have succeeded in meditating.

No person should condemn himself; he should forget all his past sins. The important is the present, what we think and do now. When he forgets his past sins, then God also forgives them. Each one of us has a horrible enemy, our uncontrolled mind. But we also have a fantastic and helpful friend, the same mind that is under control. The purpose of meditation is to control the mind, to change the direction of its attention from our physical, emotional and intellectual bodies to our being, the true self, Christ within. The mind is like a monkey. It is restless and constantly jumps from one thought to another, as does the monkey in a tree constantly jumping from one branch to another. It is important to quieten the mind and then change direction of attention. He should concentrate on the subjective, his consciousness, the Self, his true being - the Christ within, instead of concentrating on objective things found outside of him. The mind,

with its imagination, creates desires. These are acted upon to realize them with the hope of getting satisfaction; hence, happiness. In the universe, everything that is created, including our own bodies, our senses, with all their experiences, our emotions, our minds and our intellect are all objects and do not represent our true Self.

Meditation is to train and control the mind; in other words, to cleanse it and make it holy. This is possible only by concentrating its attention on one point only, on the one thing that is holy in us, Christ. The mind should be “simple (single) minded as the dove” but “alert as the serpent”.

During meditation, one may be faced with many obstacles. The important ones are the followings:

a- Sleep – One may relax so much that he may end up going to sleep. It is true that during deep sleep all thoughts seem to stop, but too bad that the individual is not awake to experience his true self.

b- Restless mind – A mind, where thoughts do not stop. A person may be carrying too much “baggage”, regrets and expectations etc.

c- Mental tendencies – Tendencies that have been suppressed but never resolved, may surface during meditation.

d- Lack of persistence – Some may have the idea that they can accomplish the goal in a short time, and when they do not get immediate results, they get discouraged and lacking perseverance, quit. This is a lifelong undertaking. It took Jesus thirty years before he arrived at his desired point.

e- Unexpected powers – When the mind is controlled, the person may notice certain abilities that he did not have before, such as clairvoyance, telekinesis, etc. These are usually distractions and may easily change the direction of attention of the mind and cause failure.

f- Objectification of the experience – This is probably

the most important hindrance. When the person objectifies the results of meditation, namely the peace and the bliss, once again he is creating duality. When this happens the ever ready ego gives him the pride of having succeeded. That in itself is “mortal” and will prevent true success. One should always be vigilant not to objectify any experience.

The fruits of successful meditation are the following:

a- Peace – A peace that is not subject to change. Jesus Christ has said:

“Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.”

(John 14:27)

b- Contentment – A contentment and a feeling of well being that is unparalleled. It is the contentment of finding the tenth lost friend, of finding the Self.

c- Bliss - This is infinite, everlasting happiness. It is like the noon sun; when you look at it, the eyes automatically close. To see the unity in the multiplicity automatically gives the experience of bliss. When the person identifies with Christ, how could he not be in bliss? Because God is love, automatically love sprouts forth from the person towards every thing and every person. He feels total freedom and gives total freedom to all. He accepts every thing and every person as they are without any judgment. He does not differentiate between a lump of clay and a lump of gold. He values both the same.

It is said that every single person sooner or later does get such an experience during his life, albeit for only a split second. Because he is not expecting it and not vigilant, he does not even realize what he has experienced it. The person should be fully awake, attentive and vigilant. It is also said that meditation should be performed in a clean, comfortable,

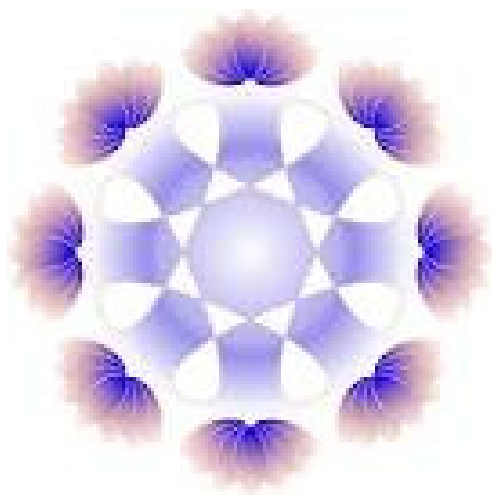
quiet place, with the eyes closed. All these are to minimize sensory inputs that may distract and shift the attention and focus of the mind. The person mentally has to watch his own thoughts objectified as if they belong to someone else. He has to concentrate the mind on the “being” that is aware of the thoughts. With utmost attention, he should concentrate the mind on the split-second silence that exists between two successive thoughts. When the thoughts are no longer the focus of the mind, gradually over time, the flood tends to slow down and even stop. This automatically reveals to the observer the Christ within, unhindered by the thoughts. As far as I am concerned, meditation should not be a daily one-hour undertaking, but every single moment of our lives should be an opportunity for meditation. We should continue all our activities as always without changing anything. Meditation should not change our activities. But when our minds are centered on our consciousness which we all have if we are alive, then we will see Christ in everyone, in the saint as well as in the murderer. We relate to both exactly the same way. It is only then that we may also be able to say “I and the Father are one”. This is the real “to be born again”, the change in the direction of our minds.

In general, people feel that if they have a loving life-partner and one or two good, obedient children and a decent job to be able to provide the necessities of living, we would be happy. Unfortunately, according to the statistics, a significant proportion of these marriages turn out to be “hell”. Even for those who are truly in a wonderful relationship, illness or death may take away the happiness and cause pain or suffering. The purpose is not to find happiness in relationships but to find happiness by finding our true Selves, because Its nature is bliss. We are like a man looking all day long for the keys to his car, ignorant of the fact that they are in his pocket. We are like the mother who

takes her child, the love of her heart, the love of her soul, to watch a parade. The child goes across to the other side of the street for a better view of the parade. The mother does not mind because her eye is on the child at all times. The parade starts; all of a sudden she no longer can see the child. The people in the parade are blocking her view. She jumps up and down, but to no avail. The police have cordoned off the street and do not allow anyone to get across. She cannot see the love of her soul until the parade is over. As soon as the last man in the parade passes by, the child is in full view. Eve started the parade. The people in the parade, that block our view of the Love of our soul, are our thoughts. Only when the parade ends, will we automatically be able to see our Love. We are the spectator of the parade but also the organizer. It is up to us also to stop the parade. Jesus stopped his parade. Why can't we?

The purpose of meditation is to be able to answer the simple question "Who are you?" The answer would be:

"That, I am".





You see many stars in the sky at night
but not when the sun rises.
Can you therefore say that
there are no stars in the heavens during the day?
O man, because you cannot find God
in the days of your ignorance,
Say not that there is no God.
(Sri R. Paramahansa)

EPILOGUE

“Where the value is diminished, the adjectives indicating the greatness of it increase.”

The above dictum represents an absolute truth. Years earlier when I started working in the hospital, it was being run by nuns. It ran like clockwork. No one used to advertise any missions or patient rights, etc. They were all carried out without any questions or thoughts. That was the norm and the absolute that was expected. When the “Sisters” left, within a relatively short time, posters on the walls of the hospital were advertising the mission of the hospital and the care and rights of the patients. The irony was that they did not appear to be a priority any longer. During the period of the “Sisters”, when the mission was observed, no one talked about it. But later, when it was not observed, everyone kept talking about it at meetings, etc. Before, the center of attention was the patient, and later the center of attention was finances.

During our spiritual journey, those with true progress are usually very quiet and they can only be known by the quality of their actions and works. Those who go around claiming that “they believe therefore they are saved” or that “they are born again” are like empty barrels that make a lot of noise for nothing. The true salvation is to reveal Christ in ourselves during this life here on earth. It is to find our true Being (Self), our “spiritual body”, our soul. In this vein to know is not the result of accumulating data and increasing our knowledge. It also is not to understand with our intellect. These usually are obstacles to the true knowing which occurs spontaneously, without thought. The individual sees and gets to know himself not the way he would like to be but the way he actually is. For this, a little effort is useless. The person should change totally or it is better that he does not change at

all. That change is the self-preparation. We all wish “to go to heaven”. This is a wish that is born of the mind and desires. The true desire must be born of the heart and not the mind. Because of this, love is an absolute essential. The desire of the heart becomes the revelation of the individual’s true Self. It gives the individual a power that nothing can destroy. It is difficult to comprehend this type of knowing, whereas the knowledge that comes through the mind is clear, precise and understandable. It is not possible to transfer or give faith to some other person. It is not born of thoughts, but it comes directly from that knowing that is the result of being, that consciousness. To think, to know and consciousness are completely different things.

The purpose of this book is not to convince anyone that its content is absolute truth. They just represent my present way of thinking. Who knows what is right? It is highly possible that in the future I may also think differently. Ideas and thoughts always are subject to change. The purpose is only to show that there are varying interpretations and points of view. It is important for each person to seek his own way that is conducive to his nature.

There are a few basic givens and truths that should be indisputable and unchangeable.

- a- There is no discrimination in God and He is just.
- b- God is love.
- c- God is omnipresent.
- d- God is omnipotent.
- e- God is all knowing.

If we believe in these truths then it would be impossible to hate anyone. If we believe that God is everywhere, then He is in each one of us. Therefore hating anyone, would be hating God. It does not matter what religion the person belongs to, Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism etc. If God has allowed for a person to be born

into a religion that other religions may view as condemned to hell because of their beliefs, then God would be unjust and discriminatory. This obviously is not the case. Therefore, all religions are valid in God's eye. We need not preach to others with the idea of converting them from one religion to another. Jesus did not discriminate; He sat with the Samaritan as well as with the Jew. He called the Roman centurion the man with the most faith in Israel. He told the disciples to go and preach the way of salvation to the "heathen" of the day, the non-Hebrews. If God does not discriminate why do we?

Men are like machines, and at that, a very complicated one. Man is capable of understanding the most complicated machines and operate them very effectively, but man is impotent to understand his own machine, his self. We tend to live as a machine according to some given inputs, just like any simple man-made machine operates based on certain given inputs. The astonishment is that we seem to be satisfied living as machines. This incongruity is the cause and also the result of deceit, lies and ignorance. Medicine today is considered quite advanced. This so-called progress is also based on and in keeping with the level of ignorance we have regarding the human "machine". We act as machines not knowing what we do.

I have had the privilege to have been born "in the Armenian Apostolic Church". It has been the birthplace of my soul. At the age of seven my father took me to church and presented me to the choirmaster for me to participate in the church choir. The choirmaster of the day, Nigoghos Tataryan, told my father that I should have started earlier. From that day onwards, I fell in love with my church. I have never missed any service throughout my life until the last approximately ten years. I love my church as I love myself. When I used to be sick, my mother would say: "don't go

today, rest and get well, you have a fever.” My answer would be: “when I go to church I get well”, and would go, and in fact would come back home feeling much better. She also had told me: “don’t ever leave your church.” I use to answer: “If they throw me out the door, I would go in through the window.” I find my church unequalled by any other church. In its rituals are hidden and preserved many spiritual truths, but alas, they are no longer recognized or understood. I am not bragging about my church because I happen to be Armenian. Actually there is no cause to be proud; on the contrary I am extremely troubled. The promise I made to my mother, I am unable to keep, not because I changed, but because my church has changed. To take part means to give consent to all the changes, which I am unable to do.

In medicine, when a patient comes for help, for whatever ailment, it is customary to take a history and to do a physical examination before making a diagnosis, so that appropriate treatment may be prescribed.

Using the same approach, I have examined the “birthplace of my soul”, my church and its present condition. My church has survived for 1650 years, very healthy, despite numerous epidemics that have threatened its life. Surprisingly, during the last 60 years, it has suddenly weakened. I wonder if it is getting too old. I doubt it. After a full history and examination I found the following symptoms and signs:

a- It has two heads. I wonder, what is this a sign of?

b- The services, including the sacraments, are not performed fully, even parts of the Mass. The present generation does not even know how they used to be. There does not appear to be any teachers left, nor are there those interested in learning the proper rituals. There was even a short form of the book of sacraments published.

c- The Sacraments have lost their powers. I am not surprised, because they are not performed properly. Even the “Confessions” are abridged; I wonder if the following communion still would have the same power and effect?

d- The churches in general are empty during the Holy Mass and other services. When the population in the community is 30,000 and one only sees 30 people in attendance, or even 300, that only represents 1% of the population. Does not one think that this is a serious symptom? Is it possible that people do not attend because the sacraments have lost their powers?

e- The mysteries have ceased to be a mystery as well. With the idea of making the text of the services understandable, the language is gradually changing from classical Armenian to the vernacular. By using the vernacular has anyone understood anything more than before? That which is understood stops being a mystery. Since we, as humans, do not have the capacity to comprehend God, why do we embark on thoughtless and senseless deceptions that we are going to make Him understood by the unsuspecting public? It would be much better for mystery to remain undisturbed as a mystery. I do not understand why we still insist on starting the Holy Mass with the song “Mystery of mysteries.” There must still be some partial mystery left. I had the opportunity to converse with His Holiness the late Karekin I, the supreme Catholicos of all Armenians, during his last visit to Toronto. He also was against the use of the vernacular during the rituals. May God rest his soul in His Light. Why classical Armenian and not the vernacular? Every language in time evolves and changes, mainly because they are not perfect to start with. The meanings of words change as needed. For instance, sixty years ago, “gay” meant something totally different then it does today. The Armenian language also has two major

dialects. It is the same language but the same word may have two totally different meanings. In the Armenian version of this book, I had used the example of the word “bantog”, which for a western Armenian would mean “hotel”, but for an eastern Armenian would mean “brothel”. In time the written words’ meanings or interpretations also change. In the classical Armenian language the etymology and inclinations as well as spelling and grammar are precise and not subject to change. The sounds of its letters are precise and perfect. Being a perfect language, it need not change. It is a reliable language because the meanings of its words are precise and unchanging. Every sound of every letter is based on a specific frequency of sound. We should be thankful to the genius of St. Mesrob Mashdots, the creator of the Armenian alphabet. When it is deliberately used with special attention, it can also influence the person, changing his way of thinking, making his thoughts more beautiful, more certain and more reliable. As a result, the person feels uplifted and this results in happiness. To listen to the classical Armenian is like listening to a symphony that inspires you to have a spiritual flight. This effect can persist throughout the week during all mundane activities as well. It is a language with perfect rules and regulations. Why do we think that it is said: “the classical Armenian translation of the Bible, is the “queen” of all translations from the originals.” Because of this, in this book (at least in its Armenian version) I have made all biblical quotations from the classical Bible. I have also added the vernacular as well, to make it better understood, since this is not a ritual, but a book to be understood. Rituals are not for understanding, but for living them. Understanding the words are useless, the important thing is to understand its spirit. At times, it is easy to see the significant difference between the classical Armenian verse and the vernacular as to how different they

are. Aren't all the present religious differences and conflicts a result of misunderstanding of the written words' meanings, because they are translated into imprecise languages where meanings of words have changed in time? The classical Armenian also can express the truths of the harmony of the universe in a very concise and simple fashion. It is a language where one learns the rule by understanding and not by memorization. Its grammar is exact and precise. A few years ago in the UN, it was proposed to make Armenian the international language. Why do we think that they suggested the Armenian? Because it is a precise language not subject to change. With its basic root words, it is possible to make many more compound words. But unfortunately, this did not materialize. Instead a made-up language was created, "Esperanto", which appears to have gone the way of past history. Did you know that NASA was considering in making Sanskrit their international language, because it is the only other language on earth with similar properties to the classical Armenian? Sir Byron had studied and was very proficient in the Armenian language. Did you know that the Armenian he learned was the classical one? Do you think for a moment that he learned Armenian because he was enamored with the Armenians? I doubt that very much. He learned it because he had found a perfect language. To pray and show devotion to the Perfect is best done with a perfect language.

f- The foremost concern of parish councils as well as the clergy appears to be the financial requirements of the church, rather than the spiritual needs of its parishioners. They must have forgotten Jesus' following words:

Consider how the wild flowers grow. They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you, not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. (Luke 12:27)

Are we afraid that Christ would abandon His Church? Never, if it is still His Church. It is convenient and human to blame the clergy for the ills of the church. But it is not up to us to judge and condemn them. Does not the Bible say?

“Do not judge, or you too will be judged.”

(Matthew 7:1)

Every person knows himself well. Every priest should examine, judge and decide as to his motives of becoming a priest. If, after such analysis, he finds that his motives are money or the power that the position yields, rather than sacrifice and service to God, then he should resign. Despite his own condemnation if he decides to continue holding office, we should not be upset or angry. It is said that a population will get the leaders they deserve. If we want a God-fearing and saintly clergy, it is imperative that we, each one of us, should examine ourselves and work on changing ourselves to be better, saintly and develop a higher consciousness. When a critical number of people in the population achieve such a noble level, then the clergy and leaders also change. It is impossible for them not to change.

You must be the change you wish to see in the world. (Gandhi)

g- To my understanding all the church Sacraments should be provided free of charge to all faithful. Today, a baptism or a wedding imposes a significant financial burden on individuals. We even have to think twice about dying. I am certain there will come a day that even communion will be given for a payment. If it is acceptable for one sacrament, then why not another? I wonder if Jesus was charging for the cures he was performing. Heaven forbid.

h- Over the last few years, there has been an unprecedented number of defrocking of priests worldwide. I was not aware that so many unworthy people had previously been ordained as priests. I wonder how many more unworthy

persons remain that are still functioning as priests? We should not be surprised that the church is ill.

i- Again according to my understanding an Armenian church that has been opened cannot be closed, ever. A bishop has the right to allow a new church to start functioning, provided it has enough parishioners, but does not have the right to close it. Even if the parishioners move away, the church may remain non-functional but cannot be closed. Today we note with great pleasure the celebration of the Holy Mass in “Aghtamar” and “Dikranagerd” in eastern Turkey, formerly western Armenia. These churches were non-functional for 100 years, since the deportations and massacres. Unfortunately, as if opening and closing stores, I witnessed the closing of the Holy Cross Church of Toronto. In its place another church called “Varaka” was started and a short time later, it was also closed. And now, I understand in Nice, France, an 85 year old church recently has been closed. When the fundamental laws of the church are not respected, the foundations of the church also crumble. We should not be surprised that the church is ill.

j- From the altar of the church, during sermons, I have heard derogatory terms and adjectives used especially during the requiem Masses performed for the 1.5 million genocide victims on April 24th. After hearing these words, the April 24th requiem Masses were the only time I had not attended services. Did Jesus from the cross curse his executioners and called them names? No! Instead He forgave them all and prayed for them saying: “Father, forgive them for they know not what they do.” Even for a second, do we think that Jesus would have resurrected on the following Sunday, if He had cursed them from the cross?

I am not surprised that my beloved Church has weakened. Over the years I have seen a lot: Mass being performed with “ouzo” for lack of wine; smoking behind the

altar during Mass; use of profanity in front of the altar during Mass; a deacon being physically pushed off the vicinity of the altar during Mass; and a “Lotto” card (gambling) next to the chalice being filled out during Mass.

I have learned about medicine for the human body, but the church is Christ’s body. Therefore, I am not certain of the diagnosis based on the above symptoms and signs. I will leave this to our bishops, as it is their specialty. At the same time, it is difficult not to be concerned. I do not have a specialty in this branch, but it is possible to guess at a diagnosis and consider some treatments, of course always to be validated by the experts. Some family physicians also refer patients to me with their diagnosis and plan of action with regards to treatment. Some I agree with and find very appropriate and for some, I change the diagnosis and treatment plan as needed.

With this in mind my recommendations are as follows:

a- The two heads should become one. This is an issue to be resolved between the two Catholicoses. I leave the issue completely and totally for them to come to an agreement and resolve it. Here I like to remember Jesus’ words:

“Jesus knew their thoughts and said to them, ‘Every kingdom divided against itself will be ruined, and every city or household divided against itself will not stand.’” (Matthew 12:25)

“If a house is divided against itself, that house cannot stand.”(Mark 3:25)

“Jesus knew their thoughts and said to them: ‘Any kingdom divided against itself will be ruined, and a house divided against itself will fall.’” (Luke 11:17)

“For those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves

will be exalted.” (Matthew 23:12)

“whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all.” (Mark 10:43-44)

b- There is a need for a renaissance to perform all services as they should be without abbreviations.

c- Remove all vernacular Armenian language from all rituals and services, including the readings from the Bible and the four Gospels, during all rituals and services.

d- The first concern of the parish councils and especially the clergy should be the spiritual well being of the parishioners. The financial concerns should always come second. In this vein all Sacraments should be available for free to all. I come from Constantinople. At the time I was there, the late patriarch, His Holiness Karekin Khachadurian had forbidden even the passing of a collection plate in the church for the usual collection. There were no membership dues. Plates were outside in the church yard. The faithful gave whatever they wanted on the way home from the church. Financially, it was the best time for the church. Membership fees should also be abolished.

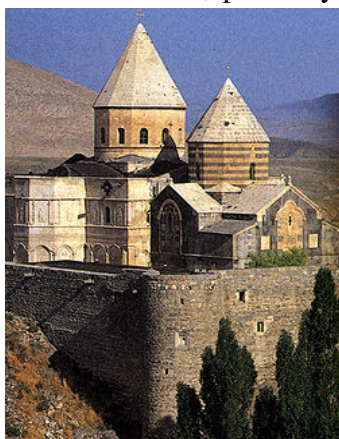
e- We should never forget the 1.5 million victims of the genocide. My mother was also deported at that time at the age of 12. She was fortunate to have survived.

It is not possible to vanquish hatred with hatred, but it is possible to vanquish it with love. On April 24th, let us remember our fallen brothers and sisters and let us continue to pray for them, but let us also pray for the perpetrators of the genocide who acted as a result of ignorance. After the Mass, let us perform the requiem service remembering all. After the requiem service let us add a short prayer session for our Turkish brothers and sisters of today, so that God blesses them. When they receive God's blessings, they will forget their hatred and animosity towards us. All these years of

hatred! What have they brought for us all? Nothing! Just more hatred. Do we believe in what Jesus said?

“You have heard that it was said, ‘Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, (Matthew 5:43-44)

f- To announce to the entire world that the Armenian Church recognizes all Christian denominations and all other religions as valid, true and equal without any discrimination. If any person from any religion wants to receive any of the Sacraments, to give them without demanding that they go through various ceremonies for the purposes of having them converted, first into Christianity and later into the denomination. Armenians have always been proud to be the first Christian state in the world in 301AD. Most, probably do not even know that the first church ever built in the world was also in Armenia (now Persia). The Church of Thaddeus was built by Jesus’ disciple himself in 68AD. Destroyed by an earthquake, it was rebuilt in 1329 and it was fully renovated in 1810AD. Foreigners called it “Kara Kilise” meaning “dark church” because the original was built with black stones. (see



picture) In those days, everywhere else Christians could only gather in caves or catacombs for worship. If we truly want to be proud, let us be the first nation and Christian denomination that accepts all denominations and all religions as equals and does not discriminate. No, we should not be proud. Pride blocks the powers of the Holy Spirit from working in us. Besides, no one should be proud for doing

what is right. We should only feel ashamed for doing what is wrong.

g- To learn and to teach to all, the true road to salvation, the road that Jesus showed us. I tend to agree with Ghandi when he said:

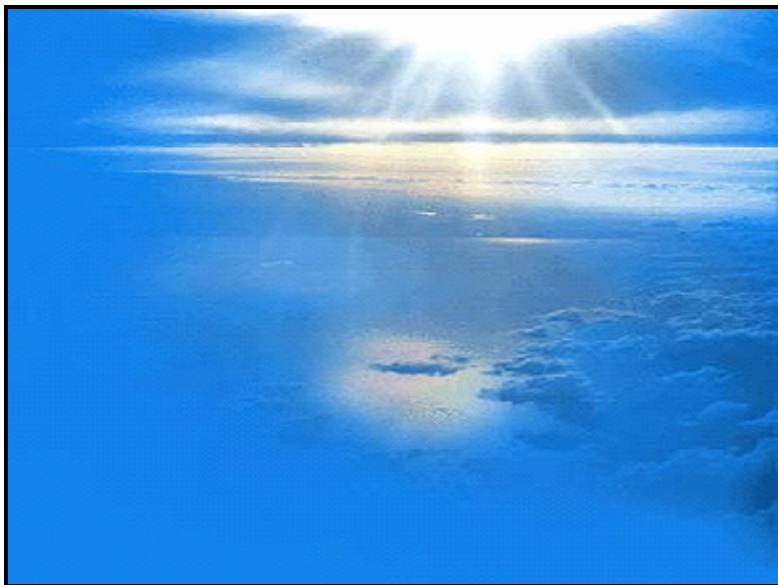
“I like your Christ, I do not like your Christians. Your Christians are so unlike your Christ.”

Let us be once more the heaven for all religions, without discrimination and spreading love everywhere. Let us be like Jesus.

Before anything else, these recommendations need to be validated by the experts and implemented. And if these are wrong, the specialists have to decide on the proper treatment.

Christ’s “second coming” depends on us. We should make this possible, so that the whole world once again announces “Christ is risen from the dead, Blessed is the resurrection of Christ”, and why not, this time in Armenia, instead of in Palestine.





SUMMARY OF PERFECTION

Ignoring the created and inferior;
Remembering above all things
the Creator;
Attention to the life that is
interior;
For the Beloved
love that's always greater.
(St. John of the Cross)

CONCLUSION

Self-realization, revelation of Christ is more difficult for those who fix their mind on a God that is formless, because the comprehension of the unmanifest God the Father by the average human being is very difficult. But, to those who worship Christ as their personal God, renouncing all actions to Him; setting Him as their supreme goal, and meditating on Him with single minded devotion; He swiftly becomes their savior, from the world that is the ocean of death whose thoughts are set on Him. Therefore, focus your mind on Him alone and let your intellect dwell upon Him through meditation and contemplation. Thereafter you shall certainly go to Him.

If you are unable to meditate (or focus your mind) steadily on Him, then seek to reach Him, by practice of any other spiritual discipline or worship. If you are unable even to do any worship, then be intent on performing your duty for Him. You shall attain perfection just by working for Him as an instrument, just to serve and please Him, without selfish motives.

If you are unable to work for Him then just surrender unto His will with subdued mind, and renounce the attachment to and the anxiety for the fruits of all work by learning to accept all results, as God-given, with equanimity.

Knowledge is better than mere ritualistic practice, meditation is better than mere knowledge, renunciation of the fruit of work is better than meditation, peace immediately follows the renunciation of (the attachment to) the fruit of work.

One who does not hate any creature, who is friendly and compassionate, free from the notion of "I" and "my", even-minded in pain and pleasure, forgiving; and the one who is ever content, who has subdued the mind, whose

resolve is firm, whose mind and intellect are engaged in dwelling upon Him; such a devotee is dear to Him.

The one by whom others are not agitated, and who is not agitated by others; who is free from joy, envy, fear, and anxiety; is also dear to Him.

One who is free from desires; who is pure, wise, impartial, and free from anxiety; who has renounced the doer-ship in all undertakings; and who is devoted to Him, is dear to Him.

One who neither rejoices nor grieves, neither likes nor dislikes, who has renounced both the good and the evil, and who is full of devotion, such a person is dear to Him.





-XVI- PROVERBS

A- EPICTETUS - GOLDEN SAYINGS

B- DERVISH'S ADVICE + THE SUFI VIEW

C- OMAR KHAYYAM - QUATRAINS

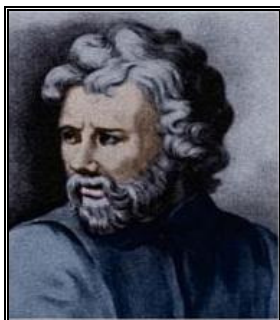
D- GANDHI - FAMOUS SAYINGS

E- BUDDHIST PROVERBS

F- NORTH AMERICAN INDIAN PROVERBS

G- LAO TZU

H- POPULAR EXPRESSIONS & PROVERBS



EPICTETUS

Golden sayings

All religions must be tolerated...
for every man must get to heaven in his own way.
* * *

You are a little soul carrying around a corpse.
* * *

There is nothing good or evil save in the will.
* * *

When you are offended at any man's fault,
turn to yourself and study your own failings.
Then you will forget your anger.
* * *

Whenever you are angry,
be assured that it is not only a present evil,
but that you have increased a habit.
* * *

Control thy passions lest they take vengeance on thee.
* * *

Freedom is not procured by a full enjoyment of what is
desired, but by controlling the desire.
* * *

Freedom is the right to live as we wish.
God has entrusted me with myself.
* * *

Is freedom anything else than the right to live as we
wish? Nothing else.

* * *

No man is free who is not master of himself.

* * *

It is the nature of the wise to resist pleasures,
but the foolish to be a slave to them.

* * *

Difficulties are things that show a person what they are.

* * *

It takes more than just a good looking body.
You've got to have the heart and soul to go with it.

* * *

Know, first, who you are,
and then adorn yourself accordingly.

* * *

We have two ears and one mouth
so that we can listen twice as much as we speak.

* * *

Keep silence for the most part,
and speak only when you must, and then briefly.

* * *

First learn the meaning of what you say, and then speak.

* * *

It's not what happens to you,
but how you react to it that matters.

* * *

It is not he who reviles or strikes you who insults you,
But your opinion that these things are insulting.

* * *

Never in any case say I have lost such a thing,
but I have returned it. Is your child dead? It is a return.
Is your wife dead? It is a return.
Are you deprived of your estate? Is not this also a return?

* * *

Men are disturbed not by things,
but by the view which they take of them.

* * *

If evil be spoken of you and it be true, correct yourself,
if it be a lie, laugh at it.

* * *

If you desire to be good,
begin by believing that you are wicked.

* * *

If you want to improve,
be content to be thought foolish and stupid.

* * *

If thy brother wrongs thee, remember not so much his
wrong-doing, but more than ever that he is thy brother.

* * *

If you seek truth you will not seek victory by
dishonorable means, and if you find truth you will
become invincible.

* * *

Make the best use of what is in your power,
and take the rest as it happens.

* * *

To accuse others for one's own misfortunes
is a sign of want of education.
To accuse oneself shows that one's education has begun.
To accuse neither oneself nor others shows
That one's education is complete.

* * *

It is not death or pain that is to be dreaded,
but the fear of pain or death.

* * *

The essence of philosophy is that a man should so live that
his happiness shall depend as little as possible on external
things.

* * *

There is only one way to happiness
and that is to cease worrying about things
which are beyond the power of our will.

* * *

Whoever does not regard what he has as most ample
wealth, is unhappy, though he be master of the world.

* * *

Wealth consists not in having great possessions,
but in having few wants.

* * *

He is a wise man who does not grieve for the things
which
he has not, but rejoices for those which he has.

* * *

No greater thing is created suddenly,
any more than a bunch of grapes or a fig.
If you tell me that you desire a fig,
I answer you that there must be time.
Let it first blossom, then bear fruit, then ripen.

* * *

The world turns aside to let any man pass
who knows where he is going.





ADVICE FROM A DERVISH

Do not betray a trust
Do not complain of your lot
Do not order your elders
Do not argue about unimportant issues
Do not discuss with the ignorant
Do not waste your breath in vain
Be punctual
Take care of your environment
Do not waste your life
Do not be obligated to anyone
Do not praise people in their presence
Do not curse or revile anyone
Do not tend towards evil; stay away from evil
Do not waste what you have
Do not give out your secrets
Do not worry about everything
Do not disown your mistakes
Be honourable; do not lose your respectability
Do not leave your fatherland
Always aim to be good
Respect your elders
Be patient during difficult times
Be satisfied with less
Keep your word

Use your knowledge
 Admit your faults
 If useless, get rid of it
 Economize what you have, save for a rainy day
 Associate with learned people
 Fight your ego
 Share your bread with others
 Forbid the harmful
 Express your love
 Conquer people's hearts
 Respect your guests
 Help the needy
 Even though you know, consult others
 Avoid danger
 Give what is due
 If you will forget, write it down
 Do not refuse, but grant
 Be compassionate towards the unfortunate
 Try to win over
 Appreciate hard work
 Congratulate success
 Accept the excuses
 Always do your best
 Visit the sick
 Discipline your child
 Always preach goodness
 Smile to everyone
 Even though you trust, always check
 Prove it to the non believers-Convince the doubtful
 Show mercy to the poor
 Do not hold back from charity



THE SUFI VIEW

I am neither in temple nor in mosque
 I am neither in Ka'ba nor in Kailas
 Neither am I in rites and ceremonies
 Nor in Yoga and renunciation
 Lamp burns in every house. Oh blind one
 And you cannot see them
 Your Lord is near, yet you are climbing
 The palm tree to seek him.

* * *

The moon shines in my body, but my
 Blind eyes cannot see it.
 When all the Love of I and mine is dead, then
 The work of the Lord is done

* * *

I searched for Him among the Christians and the Cross;
 On the Christians' Cross, I found him not;
 I searched Him in the Temple and the Pagodas;
 In the Pagodas and the Temple, I found Him not;
 In the mountains of Heart and the heights of
 Qandhar both hill and dale; I found Him not;
 With a set purpose, I went to the top of Mount Qaf;
 There the Phoenix dwells; but I found Him not;
 In the Ka'ba I went with an expectant heart;
 In that shrine of young and old I found Him not;
 Avicenna, I plied with questions galore, beyond
 His range He was; I found Him not;
 Even two bows length distance from God, I tried;
 In that Exalted Court I found Him not;
 Then I searched for Him in my own heart;
 There did I find Him; elsewhere I found Him not.





MOTHER TERESA

People are often unreasonable and self-centered.
Forgive them anyway.

If you are kind, people may accuse you of ulterior
motives.

Be kind anyway.

If you are honest, people may cheat you.

Be honest anyway.

If you find happiness, people may be jealous.

Be happy anyway.

The good you do today may be forgotten tomorrow.

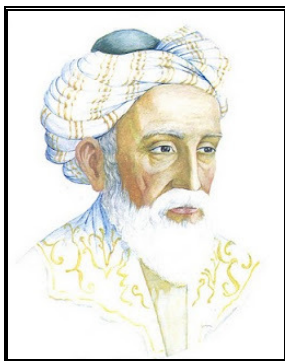
Do good anyway.

Give the world the best you have and it may never be
enough.

Give your best anyway.

For you see, in the end, it is between you and God.

It was never between you and them anyway.



OMAR KHAYYAM

Quatrains

Omar Khayyam uses wine, women, beloved, rose, rose petals, nightingale, vine and love as metaphors, symbols of his mystical philosophy.



Drunkards! so be it--yet, if all were wise,
All would be drunk like us, with dreaming eyes:
Poor sober world, so doleful all the day,
Leave mosque and mart, and join our Paradise.

* * *

There are no sorrows wine cannot allay,
There are no sins wine cannot wash away,
There are no riddles wine knows not to read,
There are no debts wine is too poor to pay.

* * *

If thou wilt keep my head well filled with wine,
I care not if the whole round world be thine;
O fading kingdoms and forgotten kings,
I know a better kingdom--drink red wine.

* * *

Within the haunted wine-cup more than wine
It is that makes a mortal man divine,
We seek a drink more deadly and more strange
Than ever grew on any earthly vine.

* * *

Within the tavern each man is a king,
Wine is the slave that brings him--anything;
O friend, be wise in time and join our band,
Drink and forget, and laugh and dance and sing.

* * *

Like a dead man within thine arms I lay,
Entranced beyond the bounds of night and day--
O cruel breath of the dissevering dawn
That bids me fly who would for ever stay!

* * *

Only a breath divides belief from doubt,
'Tis muttered breath that makes a man devout,
Yea, death from life only a breath divides--
O haste to drink before that breath is out.

* * *

You say, "There are so many crowns to win,
Yet you lie sunken in your sleepy sin";
Bring me a crown of gold and big enough,
And I will wear it--all these are of tin.

* * *

Whether you would abide or go away,
Wine will befriend you, friend; for, if you stay,
You'll forget going; and, if you must go,
He'll drown you in the very sweetest way.

* * *

Wine is the tender friend of suicides,
You drown so softly in its gentle tides;
You know not you are dying, yet you die;
And love with rose-leaves all the ruin hides.

* * *

Once in the tavern you have reached the end,
No more to fear from enemy--or friend;
No more to hope, no more to do or say,
Nothing to pray for--nothing to pretend.

* * *

Art thou aweary, friend, in all thy bones?
Drink wine, red wine, and so forget thy groans;
Wine is unlawful, sayst thou? then say I—
Who loves not wine had best, I think, eat stones.

* * *

I cannot help it--were it in my power,
I would forsake my sins this very hour,
Forsake the Rose, and bid the Vine good-bye,
Kiss my last kiss--if it were in my power.

*

O good old friends, what is it I have said?
It was the wine that got into my head--
Forgive me, O forgive, I meant it not,
I shall forsake you only when I'm dead.

* * *

This is no way my learned life to use!
Tell me a better, then, that I may choose.
Shall I for some remote imagined gain
My precious little hour of living lose?

* * *

And to my solitude sometimes I bring
A gracious shape to sit with me and sing,
Losing, to find, myself in her deep eyes--
Ah! then I ask no other earthly thing.

* * *

Good friends, beware! the only life we know
Flies from us like an arrow from the bow,
The caravan of life is moving by,
Quick! to your places in the passing show.

* * *

Set not thy heart on any good or gain,
Life means but pleasure, or it means but pain;
When Time lets slip a little perfect hour,
O take it--for it will not come again.

* * *

Each day a leaf falls withered from the tree
Whose leaves make up the life of thee and me,
The leaves are counted and the last is there--
Ready to fall before thy destiny.

* * *

I pray you, gentle Saki, of your grace,
Carry the wine-jar to some pleasant place,
Where, in a green and rose-hung sanctuary,
I'll gaze all day on my beloved's face.

* * *

The grave of beauty is its cradle too.
And new is old, and old is ever new,
Little grows great, and great grows small again,
And I to-day--perchance to-morrow You!

* * *

O love, how green the world, how blue the sky!
And we are living--living--you and I!
Ah, when the sun shines and our love is near,
'Tis good to live, and very hard to die.

* * *

Though my estate be poor, my raiment torn,
I am not really sorry I was born,
For God has given me my heart's desire--
Wine, and the Well-Beloved, and the morn.

* * *

Like to the inter-twisted melody
Of harp and lute shall our true wedding be,
And such a marriage of fair music make
That none shall separate the Thee from Me.

* * *

The bird of life is singing in the sun,
 Short is his song, nor only just begun,--
 A call, a trill, a rapture, then--so soon!--
 A silence, and the song is done--is done.

* * *

Yea! what is man that deems himself divine?
 Man is a flagon, and his soul the wine;
 Man is a reed, his soul the sound therein;
 Man is a lantern, and his soul the shine.

* * *

Yet sometimes on a sudden all seems clear--
 Hush! hush! my soul, the Secret draweth near;
 Make silence ready for the speech divine--
 If Heaven should speak, and there be none to hear!

* * *

Allah, perchance, the secret word might spell;
 If Allah be, He keeps His secret well;
 What He hath hidden, who shall hope to find?
 Shall God His secret to a maggot tell?

* * *

Drunken myself, and with a merry mind,
 An old man passed me, all in vine-leaves twined;
 I said, "Old man, hast thou forgotten God?"
 "Go, drink yourself," he said, "for God is kind."

* * *

Our wildest wrong is part of His great Right,
 Our weakness is the shadow of His might,
 Our sins are His, forgiven long ago,
 To make His mercy more exceeding bright.

* * *

When first the stars were made and planets seven,
 Already was it told of me in Heaven
 That God had chosen me to sing His Vine,
 And in my dust had thrown the vinous leaven.

* * *

So in the tavern pass I all my days,
And sing and drink, and give to God the praise;
Ready, at any summons of His hand,
To do His bidding in still harder ways.

* * *

O my beloved, may your glad to-morrows
Stretch out before you, endless as my sorrows;
Haste not away, I have but wine and you,
Yea! life is nought unless from you it borrows.

* * *

Eternal torment some sour wits foretell
For those who follow wine and love too well,--
Fear not, for God were left alone in Heaven
If all the lovely lovers burnt in hell.

* * *

He who believes in hell and knows Thy grace
Shall surely find in hell his resting-place,
Keep for the mosque these fables of Thy wrath--
No man believes them who hath seen Thy face.

* * *

I am not lawless, though I break Thy law,
Drunken am I with very love and awe;
'Twas ever thus with veritable seers--
Too drunk with joy to tell us what they saw.

* * *

I break one law, another law to keep;
The laws of death and hate I scorn to keep,
The law of Love that is the law of Life--
That is the only law I dare to keep.

* * *

O Love, I come to worship in your shrine,
There is no part of you is not divine,
There is no part of you not human too,
There is no part of you that is not mine;

* * *

This sounding world is but a dream that cries
In fancy's ears and lives in fancy's eyes,
Death lays his finger on the darkening soul,
And all the glowing shadow fades and flies.

* * *

Shall death, that shuts the ear and locks the brain,
Teach us what eager life hath sought in vain?
Yet have I heard, so wild is human guess!
This dullard death shall make life's meaning plain.

* * *

White as the moon and as the cypress slim,
O how my jealous heart doth envy him
Who calls thee his to love by sun and star,
Rules o'er thine heart and owns each little limb.

* * *

My days are filled with wonder and with wine,
(Wine helps the wonder, wonder helps the wine.)
But in the night my bosom fills with tears--
Tears, tears, for one who never can be mine.

* * *

Even sad eyes must sparkle in the sun,
But when the miracle of day is done,
Down in a bankrupt darkness deep I lie,
Haunted by all I lost--and might have won!

* * *

Strange in a world so wonderfully planned
The thick-wit fool should always rule the land,--
Ah I well, the cup must solve that riddle too,
'Tis more than we shall ever understand.

* * *

Yet is it well the vain world never knows
True riches from their counterfeited shows,
For what would happen if the vine were dear,
And men must sell a world to buy a rose!

* * *

Allah is good! he blinds the rich man's eyes
That he the weary and the worthless buys,
Gaining great store of all uncomely things,
And leaves the lovely for the poor and wise.

* * *

Moon of my night, and art thou really here!
My happy eyes dare not believe thee here!
O love, love, love,--come let us drink for joy--
Until again I doubt that thou art here!

* * *

Who knows the meaning of a grain of sand
Knows the whole meaning of the sea and land,
And simple One by thousands multiplied
Is no more difficult to understand.

* * *

And what should pious Khayyám have to do
With all your screaming sects seventy and two?
Sin, Faith, and Islam--these are only words,
And my desire, Beloved Friend, is You.

* * *

You to the mosque, with howling hymn and prayer,
I to the temple of the vine, repair,
The one true God in divers ways to seek;
I find him here--but do you find him there?

* * *

So great a brightness is the soul of wine
That even in the darkness it will shine,
And cocks will crow, mistaking for the dawn
The apparition of its light divine.

* * *

Sunday is good for drinking, Monday too,
Nor yet on Tuesday put the wine from you,
Wednesday drink deep, Thursday nor Friday fail--
On Saturday is nothing else to do.

* * *

The sixtieth cup makes me so wise with wine,
A thousand riddles clear as crystal shine,
And much I wonder what it can have been
That used to puzzle this poor head of mine.

* * *

When I am drunk the sky of life is clear,
And I gaze into it without a fear,
As I grow sober horribly I dread
The shadows of my vultures drawing near.

* * *

Yet think not wine is wisdom for the fool,
'Tis but the wise should follow wisdom's rule;
The sot, the brawler, and the ugly-tongued--
Believe not these of gentle Khayyám's school.

* * *

If only this green world might last for ever,
And love be love, and wine be wine for ever!
Eternal Rose of the Eternal Spring,
Would that mine eyes might burn on thee for ever.

* * *

Love, the fair day is drawing to its close,
The stars are rising, and a soft wind blows,
The gates of heaven are opening in a dream--
The nightingale sings to the sleeping rose.

* * *

Heart of my heart, in such an hour as this
The cup of life brims all too full of bliss,
See, it runs over in these happy tears--
How strange you seem! how solemn is your kiss!

* * *

Whether at Naishapur or Babylon,
Whether the Cup with sweet or bitter run,
The Wine of Life keeps oozing drop by drop,
The Leaves of Life keep falling one by one.

* * *

Alike for those who for To-day prepare,
 And those that after some To-morrow stare,
 A Muezzin from the Tower of Darkness cries
 "Fools! your Reward is neither Here nor There".

* * *

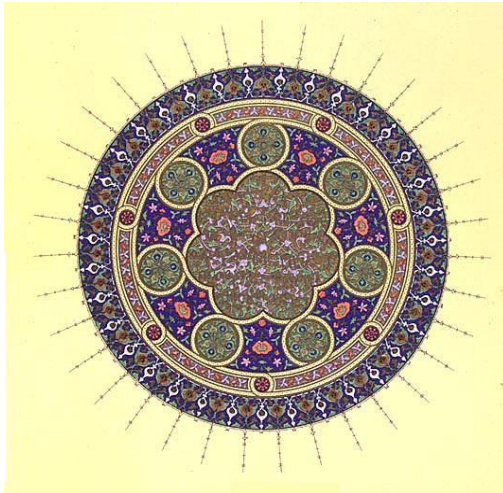
Waste not your Hour, nor in the vain pursuit
 Of This and That endeavor and dispute;
 Better be jocund with the fruitful Grape
 Than sadden after none, or bitter, Fruit.

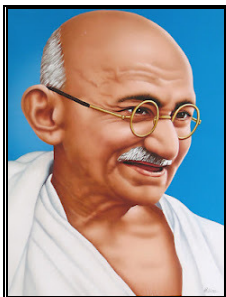
* * *

Oh, threats of Hell and Hopes of Paradise!
 One thing at least is certain — This Life flies;
 One thing is certain and the rest is Lies;
 The Flower that once has blown for ever dies.

* * *

Strange, is it not? that of the myriads who
 Before us pass'd the door of Darkness through,
 Not one returns to tell us of the Road,
 Which to discover we must travel too.





GANDHI

Famous sayings

Faith is not something to grasp, it is a state to grow into.

* * *

**Faith... must be enforced by reason... when faith becomes
blind it dies.**

* * *

**Fear of death makes us devoid both of valor and religion.
For want of valor is want of religious faith.**

* * *

**And a living faith will last in the midst of the blackest
storm.**

* * *

Intolerance betrays want of faith in one's cause.

* * *

Non-violence is the article of faith.

* * *

**It is easy enough to be friendly to one's friends. But to
befriend the one who regards himself as your enemy is
the quintessence of true religion. The other is mere
business.**

* * *

**The essence of all religions is one. Only their approaches
are different.**

* * *

All the religions of the world, while they may differ in other respects, unitedly proclaim that nothing lives in this world but Truth.

* * *

One's own religion is after all a matter between oneself and one's Maker and no one else's.

* * *

Truth is by nature self-evident. As soon as you remove the cobwebs of ignorance that surround it, it shines clear.

* * *

Truth never damages a cause that is just.

* * *

Truth stands, even if there be no public support. It is self-sustained.

* * *

God, as Truth, has been for me a treasure beyond price. May He be so to every one of us.



The only tyrant I accept in this world is the still voice within.

* * *

To give pleasure to a single heart by a single act is better than a thousand heads bowing in prayer.

* * *

In prayer it is better to have a heart without words than words without a heart.

* * *

Prayer is a confession of one's own unworthiness and weakness.

* * *

Let everyone try and find that as a result of daily prayer he adds something new to his life, something with which nothing can be compared.

* * *

Prayer is not asking. It is a longing of the soul.

* * *

When I admire the wonders of a sunset or the beauty of the moon, my soul expands in the worship of the creator.

* * *

Each one has to find his peace from within. And peace to be real must be unaffected by outside circumstances.

* * *

Happiness is when what you think, what you say, and what you do are in harmony.

* * *

Healthy discontent is the prelude to progress.

* * *

If patience is worth anything, it must endure to the end of time.

* * *

Those who know how to think need no teachers.

* * *

Live as if you were to die tomorrow. Learn as if you were to live forever.

* * *

When restraint and courtesy are added to strength, the latter becomes irresistible.

* * *

You must be the change you wish to see in the world.

* * *

To believe in something, and not to live it, is dishonest.

* * *

Self-respect knows no considerations.

* * *

As human beings, our greatness lies not so much in being able to remake the world - that is the myth of the atomic age - as in being able to remake ourselves.

* * *

An error does not become truth by reason of multiplied
propagation, nor does truth become error because nobody
sees it.

* * *

An eye for an eye only ends up making the whole world
blind.

* * *

I do not want to foresee the future. I am concerned with
taking care of the present. God has given me no control
over the moment following.

* * *

I like your Christ, I do not like your Christians. Your
Christians are so unlike your Christ.

* * *

In matters of conscience, the law of the majority has no
place.

* * *

Anger and intolerance are the enemies of correct
understanding.

* * *

Providence has its appointed hour for everything. We
cannot command results, we can only strive.

* * *

Nearly everything you do is of no importance, but it is
important that you do it.

* * *

Satisfaction lies in the effort, not in the attainment, full
effort is full victory.

* * *

The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the
service of others.

* * *

Man becomes great exactly in the degree in which he
works for the welfare of his fellow-men.

* * *

Service which is rendered without joy helps neither the servant nor the served.

*

But all other pleasures and possessions pale into nothingness before service which is rendered in a spirit of joy.

* * *

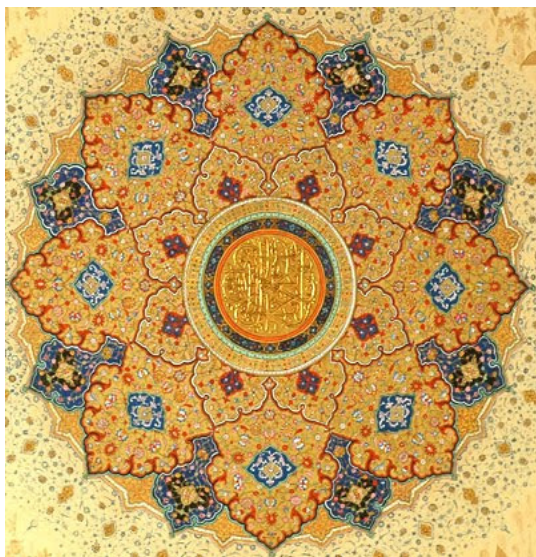
The main purpose of life is to live rightly, think rightly, act rightly. The soul must languish when we give all our thought to the body.

* * *

The moment there is suspicion about a person's motives, everything he does becomes tainted.

* * *

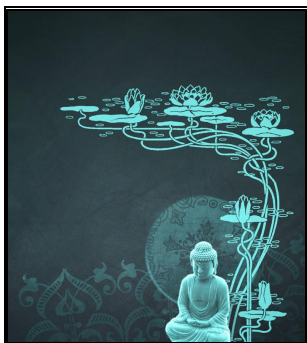
Infinite striving to be the best is man's duty; it is its own reward. Everything else is in God's hands.





**Do not envy
the honors of a sinner,
for you do not know
what his end will be.**

(Sirach 9:11)



BUDDHIST PROVERBS

Joy comes not through possession or ownership but
through a wise and loving heart.

* * *

Death is not the greatest loss in life. The greatest loss is
what dies inside us while we live.

* * *

Courage is not the absence of fear, but rather the
judgment that something else is more important than
fear.

* * *

The practice of forgiveness is our most important
contribution to the healing of the world.

* * *

To forgive is to set a prisoner free and realize that
prisoner was you.

* * *

Judge nothing, you will be happy. Forgive everything,
you will be happier. Love everything, you will be
happiest.

* * *

We must each lead a way of life with self-awareness and
compassion, to do as much as we can. Then, whatever
happens we will have no regrets.

* * *

The way is not in the sky. The way is in the heart.

* * *

All the wonders you seek are within yourself.

* * *

We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by
what we give.

* * *

It is better to take many small steps in the right direction
than to make a great leap forward only to stumble
backward.

* * *

Life is a process of becoming. A combination of states we
have to go through. Where people fail is that they wish to
elect a state and remain in it. This is a kind of death.

* * *

You will not be punished for your anger, you will be
punished by your anger.

* * *

Man stands in his own shadow and wonders why it's
dark.

* * *

The past has no power to stop you from being present
now. Only your grievance about the past can do that.

* * *

Don't cry because it's over. Smile because it happened.

* * *

Pain is inevitable. Suffering is optional.

* * *

Judgments prevent us from seeing the good that lies
beyond appearances.

* * *

Sometimes questions are more important than answers.

* * *

Believe nothing no matter where you read it, or who said
it, no matter if I have said it, unless it agrees with your
own reason and common sense.

* * *

The truth you believe and cling to makes you unavailable
to hear anything new.

* * *

If we learn to open our hearts, anyone, including the
people who drive us crazy, can be our teacher.

* * *

I would rather have a mind opened by wonder than one
closed by belief.

* * *

Whenever something negative happens to you, there is a
deep lesson concealed within it.

* * *

When you learn, teach. When you get, give.

* * *

Nothing ever goes away until it has taught us what we
need to know.

* * *

Your mind will answer most questions if you learn to
relax and wait for the answer.

* * *

You must love in such a way that the person you love
feels free.

* * *

It is astonishing how little one feels alone when one loves.

* * *

All that we are is the result of what we have thought.
The mind is everything. What we think we become.

* * *

There are only two mistakes one can make along the
road to truth; not going all the way, and not starting.

* * *

You cannot travel the path until you have become the
path itself

* * *

When you judge another, you do not define them. You
define yourself.

* * *

However many holy words you read, However many
you speak, What good will they do you If you do not act
on upon them?

* * *

Do not believe in anything simply because you have
heard it. Do not believe in anything simply because it is
spoken and rumored by many. Do not believe in
anything simply because it is found written in your
religious books. Do not believe in anything merely on the
authority of your teachers and elders. Do not believe in
traditions because they have been handed down for many
generations. But after observation and analysis, when
you find that anything agrees with reason and is
conducive to the good and benefit of one and all, then
accept it and live up to it.

* * *

Hatred does not cease through hatred at any time. Hatred
ceases through love. This is an unalterable law.

* * *

He who experiences the unity of life sees his own Self in
all beings, and all beings in his own Self, and looks on
everything with an impartial eye.

* * *

On life's journey faith is nourishment, virtuous deeds are
a shelter, wisdom is the light by day and right
mindfulness is the protection by night. If a man lives a
pure life, nothing can destroy him.



JAPANESE BUDDHIST PROVERBS

All evil done clings to the body.

* * *

Goodness [or, virtue] is the return for goodness; evil is the
return for evil

* * *

Meeting is only the beginning of separation

* * *

All lust is grief.

* * *

All things are merely dreams.

* * *

All sensual desire invariably brings sorrow

* * *

The task of the priest is to save mankind

* * *

One blind man leads many blind Men

* * *

Cause-and-effect is like a wheel

* * *

Life is a lamp-flame before a wind

* * *

Hell and Heaven are in the hearts of men

* * *

This world is only a resting-place

* * *

The mouth is the front-gate of all misfortune

* * *

Nothing will grow, if the seed be not sown

* * *

The blind man does not fear the snake

* * *

There is no King on the Road of Death

* * *

The Wind of Impermanency does not choose a time

* * *

In even a cat the Buddha-nature exists

* * *

There is no rest within the Three States of Existence

* * *

Pleasure is the seed of pain; pain is the seed of pleasure.

* * *

To become an abbot one must begin as a novice

* * *

Joy and sorrow exist only in the mind.

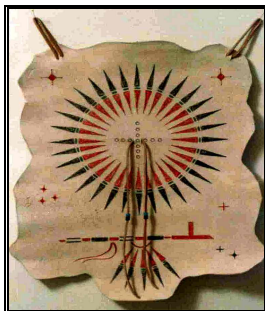
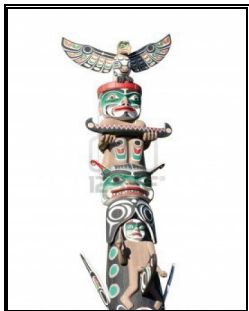
* * *

Human life is like the dew of morning.

* * *

**The only real differences of condition are differences in
knowledge of the highest truth.**





NORTH AMERICAN INDIAN PROVERBS

The Feathered Sun: A Metaphysical Message

Everything stems from the Center and the Center is present everywhere; and still, the Center lies beyond all the circles through which It radiates.

The Great Spirit is both transcendent and immanent to all that comes from Him. The radii evoke His immanence while the concentric circles suggest His transcendence.

* * *

We were taught to believe that the Great Spirit sees and hears everything, and that he never forgets, that hereafter he will give every man a spirit home according to his deserts;

* * *

It does not require many words to speak the truth.

* * *

All things in the world are two. In our minds we are two, good and evil. With our eyes we see two things, things that are fair and things that are ugly.... We have the right hand that strikes and makes for evil, and we have the left hand full of kindness, near the heart. One foot may lead us to an evil way, the other foot may lead us to a good. So are all things two, all two.

* * *

In the beginning of all things, wisdom and knowledge were with the animals, for Tirawa, the One Above, did not speak directly to man. He sent certain animals to tell men that he showed himself through the beast, and that from them, and from the stars and the sun and moon should man learn... all things tell of Tirawa.

* * *

All things share the same breath - the beast, the tree, the man... the air shares its spirit with all the life it supports.

* * *

Man does not weave this web of life. He is merely a strand of it. Whatever he does to the web, he does to himself.

* * *

Trouble no one about their religion; respect others in their view, and Demand that they respect yours. Love your life, perfect your life, Beautify all things in your life. Seek to make your life long and Its purpose in the service of your people. Prepare a noble death song for the day when you go over the great divide.

* * *

When you arise in the morning, give thanks for the food and For the joy of living. If you see no reason for giving thanks, The fault lies only in yourself. Abuse no one and nothing, For abuse turns the wise ones to fools and robs the spirit of its vision.

* * *

So live your life that the fear of death can never enter your heart. When it comes your time to die, be not like those whose hearts Are filled with fear of death, so that when their time comes They weep and pray for a little more time to live their lives over again In a different way. Sing your death song and die like a hero going home.

* * *

Each person is his own judge. (Pima)

* * *

We will be known forever by the tracks
we leave. (Dakota)

* * *

It was our belief that the love of possessions is a weakness
to be overcome. Its appeal is to the material part, and if
allowed its way, it will in time disturb one's spiritual
balance. Therefore, children must early learn the beauty
of generosity. They are taught to give what they prize
most, that they may taste the happiness of giving.

* * *

Speak truth in humility to all people.
Only then can you be a true man. (Sioux)

* * *

With all things and in all things,
we are relatives. (Sioux)

* * *

Love one another and do not strive for
another's undoing. (Seneca)

* * *

Do not judge your neighbor until you walk
two moons in his moccasins. (Cheyenne)

* * *

There is no death, only a change of worlds. (Duwamish)

* * *

What is past and cannot be prevented
should not be grieved for. (Pawnee)

* * *

Knowledge that is not used is abused. (Cree)

* * *

It is easy to be brave from a distance. (Omaha)

* * *

Seek wisdom, not knowledge. Knowledge is of the past,
Wisdom is of the future. (Lumbee)

* * *

When a man moves away from nature his
heart becomes hard. (Lakota)

* * *

Take only what you need and leave the
land as you found it. (Arapaho)

* * *

If a man is as wise as a serpent, he can afford to be as
harmless as a dove. (Cheyenne)

* * *

Everyone who is successful must have
dreamed of something. (Maricopa)

* * *

Life is not separate from death.
It only looks that way. (Blackfoot)

* * *

It is no longer good enough to Cry peace, We must
Act peace, Live peace and Live In Peace. (Shenandoah)

* * *

We are friends; we must assist each other
to bear our burdens. (Osage)

* * *

Ask questions from your heart and you will be answered
from the heart. (Omaha)

* * *

The soul would have no rainbow if the eye had no tears.
(Tribe Unknown)

* * *

Native American Ten Commandments

Treat the Earth and all that dwell therein with respect

Remain close to the Great Spirit

Show great respect for your fellow beings

Work together for the benefit of all Mankind

Give assistance and kindness wherever needed

Do what you know to be right

Look after the well-being of Mind and Body

Dedicate a share of your efforts to the greater Good

Be truthful and honest at all times

Take full responsibility for your actions

* * *

When you were born, you cried and the world rejoiced.
Live your life so that when you die, the world cries and
you rejoice. (Cherokee)

* * *

If we wonder often, the gift of knowledge will come.
(Arapaho)

* * *

God gave us each a song. (Ute)

* * *

Lakota Instructions for Living

Friend do it this way - that is, whatever you do in life,
do the very best you can with both your heart and mind.

And if you do it that way,
the Power Of The Universe will come to your assistance,
if your heart and mind are in Unity.

When one sits in the Hoop Of The People,
one must be responsible because all of Creation is related.

And the hurt of one is the hurt of all.

And the honor of one is the honor of all.

And whatever we do effects everything in the universe.

If you do it that way - that is,
if you truly join your heart and mind as One -
whatever you ask for,

that's the Way It's Going To Be.

(Passed down from White Buffalo Calf Woman)





LIFE

Life is an opportunity, benefit from it.

Life is beauty, admire it.

Life is a dream, realize it.

Life is a challenge, meet it.

Life is a duty, complete it.

Life is a game, play it.

Life is a promise, fulfill it.

Life is sorrow, overcome it.

Life is a song, sing it.

Life is a struggle, accept it.

Life is a tragedy, confront it.

Life is an adventure, dare it.

Life is luck, make it.

Life is too precious, do not destroy it.

Life is life, fight for it.

Mother Teresa

*Watch your thoughts;
They become words.
Watch your words;
They become actions.
Watch your actions;
They become habits.
Watch your habits;
They become character.
Watch your character;
It becomes your destiny.*

Lao Tzu



**In the pursuit of learning, every day something is
acquired.**

**In the pursuit of Tao, every day something is dropped.
Less and less is done Until non-action is achieved.**

**When nothing is done, nothing is left undone.
The world is ruled by letting things take their course.
It cannot be ruled by interfering.**

**There was something undefined and complete,
coming into existence before Heaven and Earth.
How still it was and formless,
standing alone, and undergoing no change,
reaching everywhere and in
no danger (of being exhausted)! It may be regarded as the
Mother of all things.**

**I do not know its name, and I give it the designation of
the Tao**

**(the Way or Course). Making an effort (further) to give it a name
I call it The Great.**

The thirty spokes unite in the one nave; but it is on the empty space (for the axle), that the use of the wheel depends. Clay is fashioned into vessels; but it is on their empty hollowness, that their use depends. The door and windows are cut out (from the walls) to form an apartment; but it is on the empty space (within), that its use depends. Therefore, what has a (positive) existence serves for profitable adaptation, and what has not that for (actual) usefulness.

* * *

So long as we persist in separating Yin and Yang we could not hope to achieve them [...] if someone wants to ride somewhere by bike, he cannot push both pedals at the same time without remaining nailed. In order to advance he must simultaneously push one of the pedals and release the other one. The complete movement consists of push/release. 'Pushing' is the consequence of 'releasing' and each of them becomes in turn the other's cause.

* * *

A truly good man is not aware of his goodness
and is therefore good.
A foolish man tries to be good,
and is therefore not good.

* * *

The master does nothing,
yet he leaves nothing undone.
The ordinary man is always doing things,
yet many more are left to be done.

* * *

The highest virtue is to act without a sense of self.
The highest kindness is to give without condition.
The highest justice is to see without preference.

* * *

When the Tao is lost, there is goodness.
When goodness is lost, there is morality.
When morality is lost, there is ritual.
Ritual is the husk of true faith,
The beginning of chaos.

* * *

The great master follows his own nature
And not the trappings of life.

It is said:

"He stays with the fruit and not the fluff."
"He stays with the firm and not the flimsy."
"He stays with the true and not with the false."

* * *

Death might appear to be the issue of life,
Since for every three out of ten being born
Three out of ten are dying. Then why
Should another three out of ten continue breeding death?
Because of sheer madness to multiply.

But there is one out of ten, they say, so sure of life
That tiger and wild bull keep clear of his inland path,
Weapons turn from him on the battle-field,
No bull-horn could tell where to gore him,
No tiger-claw where to tear him,
No weapon where to enter him,
And why? Because he has no death to die.

* * *

Those who know do not tell, Those who tell do not know,
Not to set the tongue loose but to curb it,
Not to have edges that catch but to remain untangled,
Unblinded, unconfused, is to find balance,
And he who holds balance beyond sway of love or hate,
Beyond each of profit or loss,
Beyond care of praise or blame,
Has attained the highest post in the world.





WISDOM

“Knowing yourself is the beginning of all
wisdom.”
Aristotle

“The only true wisdom is in knowing you know
nothing.”
Socrates

“The fool doth think he is wise, but the wise man
knows himself to be a fool.”
William Shakespeare

“Whenever you find yourself on the side of the
majority, it is time to pause and reflect.”
Mark Twain

POPULAR EXPRESSIONS AND PROVERBS

Be kinder than necessary because everyone you meet is
fighting some kind of battle.

* * *

A sharp tongue can cut your own throat.

* * *

If you want your dreams to come true, you mustn't
oversleep.

* * *

Of all the things you wear, your expression is the most
important.

* * *

The best vitamin for making friends..... B1.

* * *

The happiness of your life depends on the quality of your
thoughts.

* * *

The heaviest thing you can carry is a grudge.

* * *

One thing you can give and still keep...is your word.

* * *

You lie the loudest when you lie to yourself.

* * *

If you lack the courage to start, you have already
finished.

* * *

One thing you can't recycle is wasted time.

* * *

Ideas won't work unless ' You' do.

* * *

Your mind is like a parachute...it functions only when
open.

* * *

The pursuit of happiness is the chase of a lifetime!

* * *

It is never too late to become what you might have been.

* * *

Life is too short to wake up with regrets.

* * *

Believe everything happens for a reason.

* * *

If you get a second chance, grab it with both hands. If it
changes your life, let it.

* * *

Sometimes we are so caught up in who's right and who's
wrong that we forget what's right and wrong.

* * *

You can take the Donkey to the water; but you can not
force that donkey to actually drink.

* * *

The Pig needs no soap as the Fool needs no advice.

* * *

Not all beautiful and enticing roads lead to glory.

* * *

The dogs keep on barking but the Caravan moves on.

* * *

One thief stole from another thief, God was scratching his
head astonished.

* * *

Think about it a thousand times, but say it only once.

* * *

One fool can roll a huge stone down the hill; Ten wise
men can not bring it back to the top.

* * *

Actual eggs are counted only after they are hatched.

* * *

The Straw is blown away while the Grain stays.
(real value prevails)

* * *

Sweet talk can charm the snake out of its hole.

* * *

You have to shape the iron while it is red hot.

* * *

Every day the water stream does not bring a log.

* * *

Pretty simple to be happy, but pretty hard to be simple.

* * *

The satisfaction of revenge lasts only a short time. The
happiness as a result of forgiveness is eternal.

* * *

Eating sour will make you appreciate the sweet.

* * *

To take revenge is to stoop to the level of the enemy, but
to forgive is sublime.

* * *

A good reputation is worth more than gold.

* * *

When your hand can not give mercy, your heart should
show it.

* * *

Make yourself an example of "love" by the life you live.

* * *

Effort is useless, unless it is accompanied by perseverance.

* * *

True happiness is the reward of a clear conscience.

* * *

Annoyance is born out of laziness.

* * *

To do good to the good is easy.

To do good to the evil best exemplifies a noble character.

* * *

To associate with and to listen to evil is the beginning of
becoming evil.

* * *

Do not brag about your happiness to someone who is less
happy than yourself.

* * *

Experience is a gem of great value;

to get some, no treasure is enough,

for to attain experience requires a lifetime of struggle.

* * *

The most powerful mind is the one that recognizes its
own weaknesses.

* * *

Do not ask others to do what you yourself do not want to
do.

* * *

When the fox can not reach the grapes, he says they are
not ripe anyway.

* * *

A single rose does not a spring make.

* * *

Silence is the ruse of the ignorant, but the virtue of the
wise.

* * *

There is no greater enemy than anger that can threaten
our minds.

* * *

One minute's unhealthy pleasure can poison our lives
forever.

* * *

The mind does not necessarily grow with the beard.

* * *

Your deeds, good or bad, will repay you in kind.

Whatever you sow, so shall you reap.

* * *

One is worth thousands; there are thousands that are not
worth one.

* * *

There is luck that brings disaster. There are also disasters
that bring luck.

* * *

Do not be friends only for good times, but also be a friend
during difficult times.

* * *

Listen a thousand times but speak once. Think a thousand
times before acting once.

* * *

It is better to take care of health than to take care of
sickness.

* * *

It is better to sleep with a clear conscience than to pray
with deceitful thoughts.

* * *

Evil is like charcoal. Even if it does not burn, it will stain
you.

* * *

A good attitude is more precious than a good position

* * *

It is impossible to control a horse without reins, or a high
position without wisdom.

* * *

Profit is sweet; it charms man.
For profit, even the donkey is glorified by man.

* * *

Those who talk a lot are not enamored with work.
Those who work a lot are not enamored with talk.

* * *

The strength of a tree is in its roots.

* * *

To pray is to love and think at the same time.

* * *

Laziness is a nest where evil lays its eggs.

* * *

Blessed is the man whose right hand is extended to
religion and the left one to science (knowledge).

* * *

When you are rich, people believe your lying words.
When you are poor, who is going to believe your truthful
words?

* * *

An honorable man will never debase himself just as a lion
would rather die of hunger than eat spoiled meat.

* * *

Where the value is diminished, the adjectives indicating
its greatness increase.

* * *

First know the person, then trust to him the treasure.

* * *

To respond to evil with evil is the work of a "little" man.
To respond to evil with goodness is the work of a "great"
person.

* * *

It is better for the eyes to be blind than the mind.

* * *

There are three things necessary for advancement in life:
A healthy body, a cultivated mind and a noble and gentle
heart.

* * *

One is good; two is enough; three is pain.

* * *

Where the value is diminished, the adjectives indicating
its greatness increase.

* * *

A joyful disposition is the best remedy against sadness.

* * *

Truth is the sun of knowledge.

* * *

Love is creative; jealousy is poisonous; hatred is
murderous.

* * *

Virtue is like a precious gem; the more simple, the more
beautiful.

* * *

It is the emotion that controls a person; the mind is only
its servant.

* * *

There are four things that will never come back: A stone
that is thrown, a word that is uttered, an event that has
occurred and time that has passed.

* * *

Though you know a thousand things, ask the one who
only knows one thing. Perhaps his answer will be new
and better than the thousand.





-XVII- STORIES

*

**A-THREE TREES
B-THE KING OF KASI
C-THE KING & THE SLAVE
D-POEMS**



THREE TREES

Once there were three trees on a hill in the woods. They were discussing their hopes and dreams when the first tree said, 'Someday I hope to be a great treasure chest. I could be filled with gold, silver and precious gems. I could be decorated with an intricate carving and everyone would see the beauty.'



Then the second tree said, 'Someday I will be a mighty ship. I will take Kings and Queens across the waters and sail to the corners of the world. People will feel safe in me because of the strength of my hull.'



Finally the third tree said, 'I want to grow to be The tallest and straightest Tree in the forest. People will see me on top of the hill, look up to my branches, and think of the heavens and God and how close to them I am reaching. I will be the greatest tree of all time and people

will always remember me.'

After a few years of praying that their dreams would come true, a group of woodsmen came upon the trees. When one came to the first tree he said, 'This looks like a strong tree, I think I should be able to sell the wood to a carpenter, and he began cutting it down. The tree was happy, because he knew the carpenter would make him into a treasure chest.



At the second tree the woodsman said, 'This looks like a strong tree. I will be able to sell it to the shipyard.' The second tree was happy because he knew he was on his way to becoming a mighty ship.

When the woodsmen came upon the third tree, the tree was frightened because he knew that if they cut him down his dreams would not come true. One of the men said, 'I don't need anything special from my tree, I'll take this one,' and he cut it down.



When the first tree arrived at the carpenters, he was made into a feed box for animals. He was then placed in a barn and filled with hay. This was not at all what he had prayed for.

The second tree was cut and made into a small fishing boat. His dreams of being a mighty ship and carrying Kings had come to an end.



The third tree was cut into large pieces, and left alone in the dark.

The years went by, and the trees forgot about their dreams.

Then one day, a man and woman came to the barn. She gave birth and they placed the baby in the hay in the feed box that was made from the first tree. The man wished that he could have made a crib for the baby,

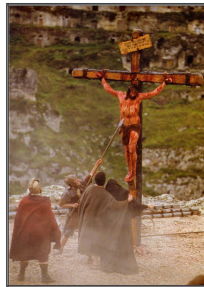


but this manger would have to do. The tree could feel the importance of this event and knew that it had held the greatest treasure of all time.

Years later, a group of men got in the fishing boat made from the second tree. One of them was tired and went to sleep. While they were out on the water, a great storm arose and the tree didn't think it was strong enough to keep the men safe. The men woke the sleeping man, and he stood and said 'Peace' and the storm stopped. At this time, the tree knew that it had carried the King of Kings in its boat.



Finally, someone came and got the third tree. It was carried through the streets as the people mocked the man who was carrying it. When they came to a stop, the man was nailed to the tree and raised in the air to die at the top of a hill. When Sunday came, the tree came to realize that it was strong enough to stand at the top of the hill and be as close to God as was possible, because Jesus had been crucified on it.



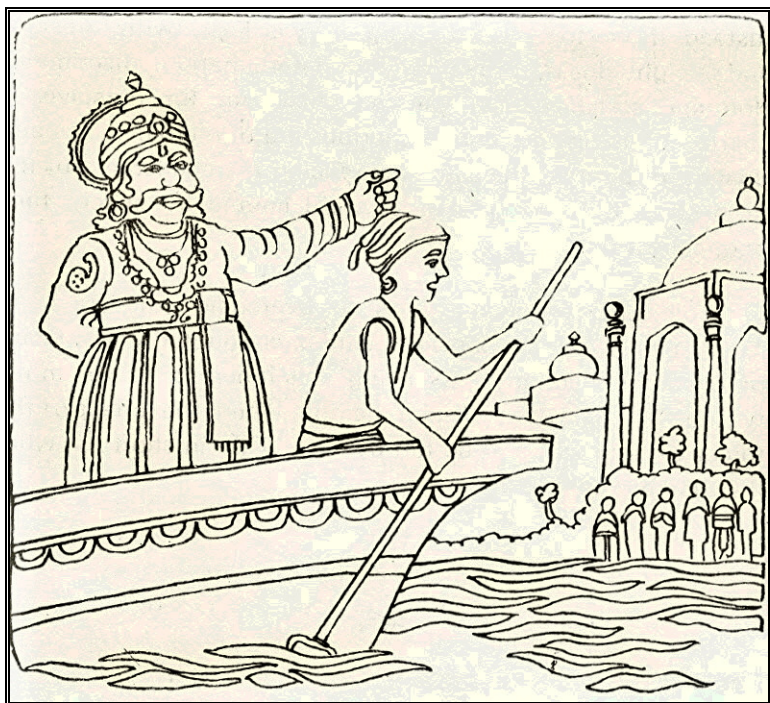
Each of the trees got what they wanted, just not in the way they had imagined.

* * *

The moral of this story is that when things don't seem to be going your way, always know that God has a plan for you. If you place your trust in Him, God will give you great gifts.

We don't always know what God's plans are for us. We just know that His Ways are not our ways, but His ways are always best.





THE KING OF KASI

In days of old, in the city of Kasi, its people followed a peculiar political philosophy, according to which anyone of its citizens could become its ruler just for the asking. The tenure of ruler-ship was five years. But after the fifth year the king would be bound hand and foot, ferried across the river Ganges to the other bank and thrown as a prey to the wild and hungry beasts infesting the forest on the other bank of the river. So, very few chose to become the king. The few that did choose were those that felt that at least for a brief period of five years they could live in regal splendour and be above want. When the term of ruler-ship came to a close, many a king wished he had not chosen the self-ordained doom, for mercilessly

and speedily was he despatched by the ministers to the other bank of the river to face his doom. Not a single king had escaped this doom. So, prudent people judiciously avoided this crown of thorns.

It was the custom of the people to gather on the bank of the river Ganges every fifth year to see the king making his unceremonious exit. On such occasions, invariably they had heard the piteous entreaties of the king for a lease of life which, as was usual, fell on deaf ears. But on one such occasion, they were surprised to see the king coming to the wharf maintaining his regal dignity in a silent composure of serene kind. The king was followed by his retinue of ministers. The boat was there ready for the king to embark. Looking at the ministers the king said, "Well, am I not your king until I reach the other bank of the river?" They in unison said, "Yes, your majesty". The king said, "In that case I feel I have not been honoured properly. This boat is not rigged properly. It is unbecoming of a King to sit on the hard plank of the boat. So get me cushions and pillows and arrange them in such a way that I can have a comfortable trip to the other bank of the Ganges". The ministers carried out the king's command immediately. The king's seat was made comfortable. The king smiled at them and in a cheerful way took leave of them.

The old ferryman, who took charge of the king, was surprised to see the king in a good cheer. He thought that the king perhaps was unaware of his doom. Ferrying the boat slowly, eyeing the king askance, he asked the king how he could keep himself cool and collected in spite of the fact that soon he would meet his doom. On hearing this, the king laughed loudly and burst into a song of joy. The ferryman was all the more perplexed. He mused for a while and said to the king, "If your Majesty is thinking of escaping from me, I have to say humbly but firmly

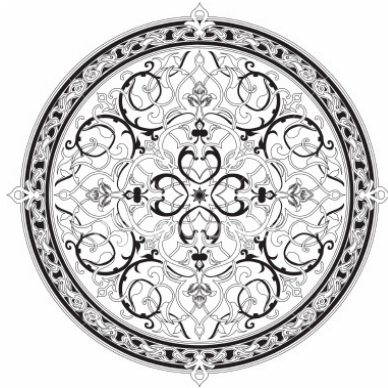
that I at all costs will avert such a contingency. I have to take all precautions. So permit me, Your Majesty, to bind you to your seat". The king again laughed, but permitted himself to be bound to the seat.

The boat had sailed half way when the ferryman asked the king whether he was not afraid of the wild beasts on the other bank of the river. The king in surprise uttered, "What did you say? Wild beasts! Where? On the other side of the Ganges? Oh! Then, innocent man, you don't know what has happened. I shall tell you what I did. Listen for a while. This shows that you have not been to the other bank of the river for the past five years nor have you noticed the trafficking that has been going on all these five years on the waters of this mighty river. There is no wild forest on the other side of this river, and there are no wild beasts either. I was not like the other kings when I was ruling the country. Right from the moment I assumed kingship, the thought that I would be unceremoniously and mercilessly despatched to my doom after my tenure of ruler-ship, haunted me. I felt I should find a way out. Though at first this haunting thought of my doom rankled me and could have prevented me from enjoying the comforts of kingship, I mastered myself and mustering the sinews of my sagacious mind, with a gusto began to enjoy the comforts. I drew up a five year plan. I could of course not avert going to the other bank of the Ganges after the fifth year. But I felt I had the power in me to make a heaven of hell. So I decided to make the forest on the other bank of the Ganges, which till now was a hell to all the other rulers, a heaven for me. So during the first year of my rule I sent a platoon of hunters and ordered them to destroy all the wild animals in the forest on the other bank of the river. In the second year, I sent two thousand wood cutters to fell the trees and clear the forest. In the third year I sent worker

masons, architects and engineers to the same place and made them build lovely palaces, develop graceful pleasure gardens, beautiful parks, exquisite pleasure bowers, handsome swimming pools and lovely stadiums for me, and thus I made it a paradise of pleasures. In the fourth year I selected trustworthy and loyal men from my court, appointed them as ministers, bade them go thither and plan how a country could be made beautiful and righteously ruled. In the fifth year, picking and choosing those of the people who were good, virtuous and loyal to me, I ordered them to migrate to Vyas Kasi – for that was the name I had given the new city – conferring on them the ownership of houses they would occupy. Now am I really bound for that place to assume kingship of that city. Oh! Ferryman, look for yourself how grand my city is, for we are nearing it now. Just glance that way. Don't you see my ministers in their best, with garlands in their hands, are ready to welcome me? Don't you see the musicians, pipers and symphonists with their jingling appurtenances rendering a soulful song of ecstasy welcoming me their cherished Lord? There will I rule permanently, unhampered by any of your pentagonal pestilences. I have mastered my fate. Am I not a Man of Destiny? If you want, you too can come and be my ferryman”.

The ferryman did see on the other bank of the river the mighty city of splendour and glory. He saw also the colourful gathering awaiting their king. A caparisoned elephant waited with its howdah, ready to receive the king! Thither did the king alight. In mute wonder did the ferryman gaze on and on at the glorious spectacle... From then on the king spent his days in gay abandon, living his full span of life, ruling righteously and augustly the land of Vyas Kasi.

The life that we lead in this world is this Kasi. We are the self-appointed rulers of our lives. But there is a tenure for our stay here. Not a second more than the one allotted to us, we will be allowed to live here. We lay waste our precious powers, thoughtlessly vegetating, earning, spending, breeding and indulging in frivolous pleasures. Then when the sad end comes, we blame our fate, our stars, nay even our God, not realising that it is all our own making. But instead if we too, like the king of Vyas Kasi, with foresight and farsightedness, strive on with determination, discrimination and steadfastness, we can chalk out for ourselves a charter of happiness and glorious era of eternal peace and unalloyed bliss at the same time facing the challenges of the interaction of the forces in a world limited by space, time and causation. We have an inherent power in us to overcome our fate. Fate is undoubtedly the result of our wrong actions. By using this inherent power in us, we can lift ourselves to such heights where the effect of the forces of fate will not be felt by us. This in short is what the parable tells us.





DEATH

A sick man turned to his doctor as he was preparing to leave the examination room and said: 'Doctor,

I am afraid to die. Tell me what lies on the other side.'

Very quietly, the doctor said, 'I don't know.'

'You don't know? I know you're a religious man, and don't know what's on the other side?'

The doctor was holding the handle of the door; on the other side came a sound of scratching and whining. As he opened the door, a dog sprang into the room and leaped on him with an eager show of gladness.

Turning to the patient, the doctor said:

'Did you notice my dog? He's never been in this room before. He didn't know what was inside.

He knew nothing except that his master was here, and when the door opened, he sprang in without fear. I know little of what is on the other side of death, but I do know one thing...

I know my Master is there and that is enough.'



THE KING AND THE SLAVE

“Everything God does is perfect, no mistakes”

A king once had a slave who, in all circumstances said: "My king, do not be discouraged because everything God does is perfect, no mistakes," One day, they went hunting and a wild animal attacked the king, the slave managed to kill the animal but couldn't prevent his majesty losing a finger. Furious and without showing gratitude, the King said; "if God was good, I would not have been attacked and lost one finger!" The slave replied: "Despite all these things, I can only tell you that God is good and everything he does is perfect, He is never wrong!" Outraged by the response, the king ordered the arrest of his slave. Later, he left for another hunt and was captured by savages who made human sacrifices. In the

altar, the savages found out that the king didn't have one finger in place so he was released because he was considered not "complete" to be offered to the gods. On his return to the palace, he authorized the release of his slave saying: "My dear, God was really good to me! I was almost killed but for lack of a single finger I was let go! But I have a question: if God is so good, why did He allow me put you in jail?" His reply: "My king, if I had gone with you, I would have been sacrificed for you because I have no missing finger." Remember, everything God does is perfect, He is never wrong.

* * *

Often we complain about life, and the negative things that happen to us, forgetting that nothing is random, and that everything has a purpose.

Every morning we need to glorify God, and pray and seek His guidance to direct our thoughts, words and deeds as well as control our feelings.

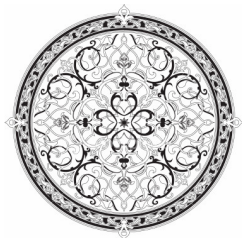
Everything God does is perfect, no mistakes.

God's ways are perfect and His "word" is the truth, for He is the Way, especially for all those who rely on Him.

* * *

Why did I ever decide to write this book? Only God Knows.

"Everything God does is perfect, no mistakes."





LOVE

I opened my eyes
I saw my mother
And I loved her
I knew, I was born with love.

My father held me
I felt the warmth
And I loved him
I knew, I was born with love.

I started walking
My horizon expanded
And I loved it
I knew, I was born with love.

I started to understand
I saw the multivariate world
And I loved it
I knew, I was born with love.

I saw the flame
Of a lit candle
I also loved it,
Because I was born with love.

I reached for the flame
I touched it
It burned my finger
I learned to hate.

I went to school
I had many teachers
Some I loved
But some I hated.

I learned to judge
And started judging
To either love
Or to either hate.

I saw an angelic face
I fell in love
Then I remembered
I was born with love.

When I was loving
I loved life
I also loved time
But I learned to hate time.

Time took from me
Mother, father
And angelic lover
All that I loved.

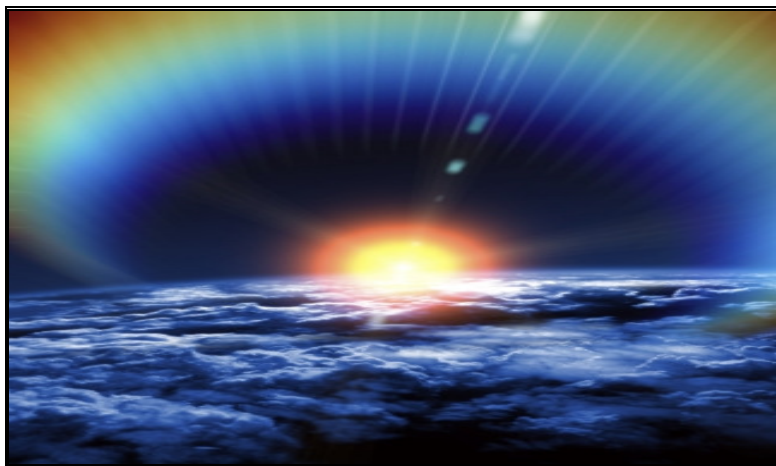
In one of my dark days
I heard a silent voice
From the depths of my soul
Murmuring

A Light was lit again
It was the light of hope
When I heard It say
Love again, again and again.

Love without mother
Love without father
Love without angelic lover
Love all without discrimination

It is my duty to love all
All that is in the universe-my God
For I came with love
I also have to depart with love.

Vahe Sivaciyan



THE PATH OF LOVE

For the physical
It is the force of gravitation
Of the insentient
The divine order for creation

For the living
It is the force of seduction
Of sexuality
The divine order for procreation

For the emotional
It is the force of fascination
Of interaction
The divine order for infatuation

For the mindful
It is the force of compassion
Of self-sacrifice
The divine order for elevation¹

For the intellectual
It is the force of comprehension
Of God's will
The divine order for dispensation²

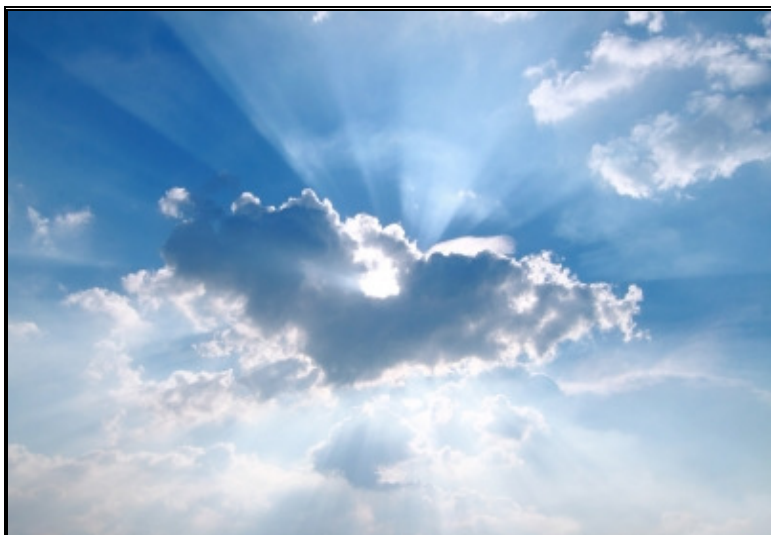
For the spiritual
It is the force of progression
Of wisdom's way
The divine order for intuition

For the Christ
It is the force of attraction
Of every living being
The divine order for sanctification

V. Sivachiyam

1: "Elevation" indicates elevation in level of consciousness, developing nobility of character.

2: "Dispensation" indicates dispensing goodness, showing benevolence towards all.



FREE WILL

Man differs from animals
Because of his free will
A gift from God it is
For actions to fulfill.

The animal has no responsibility
For its deeds good or bad
Nature dictates its activity
Without free will. How sad.

Man is capable of judging
What is virtue, what is sinful
Hence, he can be choosing
The beneficial or the harmful.

Majority of humans
Thinking they use free will
They formulate all their actions
Their natures' desires to fulfill.

It is wisdom that we need
For right thinking and speech
So with free will indeed
Our right actions will teach.

It is difficult to override
The nature of our layers'
Except with God's might
In response to our prayers

Then how do we differ
From the animals' lot
If not for the fact that we prefer
The Christ that we got.

V. Sivaciyan

1- "Layers" refers to: Our physical, emotional and intellectual "bodies".



WHAT IS PRAYER

For the ignorant
It is a shopping list
Of desires and wants
An opportunity missed

For the man with sin
It is a confession
For the rot he is in
Worthy of redemption

For the God-fearing
It is his reverence
As the undeserving
For God's benevolence.

For the spiritual traveler
It is a plea to receive
The status of His lover
Faith and hope to conceive

For the serious aspirant
It is a capitulation
To the will of the Omnipotent
From results - separation¹

For the awakening
It is the glorification
Of the all Knowing
Bliss in manifestation

For the compassionate
It is the blessing he bestows
On the unfortunate and fortunate
It is God's desire that he allows

For the one meditating
It is his profession
Of a pure heart developing
The imperative for sanctification

V.Sivaciyan

1: We should not be attached to the results of our actions and
“separation” is disowning the results



THE JOURNEY OF FAITH

It is with God's grace
That, with faith, man is born,
But when starts the worldly chase
It becomes quickly forlorn.

With limited understanding
In the mind of childhood,
We develop believing
In many a falsehood.

It is a lifelong journey of mine
To be taken seriously
Belief is the starting line
Faith, the finish definitely.

Belief is shakable indeed
Much affected by life events,
And multiple thoughts feed
Questions that the mind vents

It is the doubting of our belief
That opens the way to faith,
It is indeed a major relief
When we see belief's death.

True faith is unshakable
When wisdom is its teacher,
With an armor unbreakable
Experience as its preacher.

With true faith armed
And hope developing
Man is definitely blessed
With infinite love evolving

"By FAITH Create your life's journey
With HOPE determine your life's journey
On LOVE set the foundation of your life's journey"
And walk with CHRIST your life's journey.

*

V. Sivaciyan



WHO?

Who am I and who are you?
Straight questions they seem
With a simple answer too
Both, for me and for him.

We gave our names indeed
That was quickly decided
But the question was missed
Names had not been asked.

Then I quickly remembered
The dictum "I think therefore I am"
A philosopher's words heard.
And answered "My thoughts I am".

Thoughts constantly come and go
They are never permanent
We cannot be our thoughts also
Despite the pronouncement.

This creates some confusion
The answer is not as simple
We give our profession
This also is not acceptable

Now in utter desperation
We say we are our sensations
Quickly comes the refutation
Of our silly ideations.

"A light" we see suddenly
And point to our physical
A voice from within quietly
Says: "Think first, then rebuttal".

Millions of cells every day
Are born and also dead they lay
The body is not the same today
As it had been yesterday

It does not appear easy
This question, to answer.
It keeps our minds busy
And stays there to fester.

Thoughts - Who is aware?
Our bodies - Who permeates?
Our sensations - Who is aware?
That, to all of us relates.

It is the consciousness
Of every living being
The Light of greatness
Of the eternal being.

It is the Life of every one of us
The Christ in each one of us
Then we can answer without a fuss
"That I am and That thou art" lass

*

V. Sivaciyan



KNOWLEDGE

In our school years we learn
Many important subjects
That help us easily earn
The means for our life's projects.

Is that the true knowledge
That is the yearning of our soul?
The knowledge that is the privilege
Of freedom from suffering and more.

The purpose of knowledge
Is to get rid of false notions
Hence, meet the challenge
Of enlightening promotions.

Knowledge of this type
Is not in school's providence.
But you know it is ripe
When seen in one's consciousness.

It is to see and to know
The unity in multiplicity
And it is to feel and see the flow
Of God's energy in its simplicity

Faith and hope are important
On the road to this quest
Awakened is also love dormant
Before this knowledge is expressed

With unyielding perseverance
We need to develop wisdom
And with personal experience
Get to know God's kingdom.

V. Sivaciyan

COMPARATIVE GLOSSARY

RELIGIOUS		SCIENTIFIC AND EXPERIENTIAL
MIDDLE EASTERN	EASTERN	
God the Father	Brahma	Singularity
Holy Spirit	Vishnu	Dark Energy
Christ	Shiva	Manifestation of God
		Creation, universe
		Super Ego
Salvation	Nirvana	Awakening - full consciousness
Sin	Bad karma	Deranged or blocked energy flow and change in frequency
Soul	Atman	Life force
Spirit (see Soul)		
Devil	Jeeva	Illusory self, Ego, Id
Worldly Life	Maya	“Waking” level of consciousness
		Illusory existence





The Wooden Bowl (cont.)

The words so struck the parents so they were speechless. Then tears started to stream
Down their cheeks. Though no word was spoken, both knew what must be done.
That evening the husband took Grandfather's hand and gently led him back to the family table.
For the remainder of his days he ate every meal with the family. And for some reason, neither
husband nor wife seemed to care any longer when a fork was dropped, milk spilled, or the
tablecloth soiled.

o o o

On a positive note, I've learned that, no matter what happens, how bad it seems
today, life does go on, and it will be better tomorrow.

I've learned that you can tell a lot about a person by the way he/she handles
four things:

a rainy day, the elderly, lost luggage, and tangled Christmas tree lights.

I've learned that making a 'living' is not the same thing as making a 'life'.

I've learned that life sometimes gives you a second chance.

I've learned that you shouldn't go through life with a catcher's mitt on both
hands.

You need to be able to throw something back sometimes.

I've learned that if you pursue happiness, it will elude you.

But, if you focus on your family, your friends, the needs of others, your work,
and doing the very best you can, happiness will find you.

I've learned that whenever I decide something with an open heart, I usually make
the right decision.

I've learned that even when I have pains, I don't have to be one.

I've learned that every day, you should reach out and touch someone.

People love that human touch - holding hands, a warm hug, or just a friendly pat
on the back.

I've learned that I still have a lot to learn.